Mainstream

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THE ORDEAL

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Review and Comment:

William L. Patterson: "A Raisin in the Sun"

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The Day the Worker Blows a Bugle: *Sean O'Casey* 1

They Are Beating Jews Again: *Edith Anderson* 7

A Knock at the Door: *Ruth Mahoney* 14

The Ordeal of the Abbe de Prades: *Barrow Dunham* 26

Folk Wound: *Alvaro Cardona-Hine* 34

The Overstreets' *Kampf*: *William Z. Foster* 39

Right Face 45

"A Raisin in the Sun"; *William L. Patterson* 47

Books in Review:

The Search, by C. P. Snow: *Helen Davis* 50

Comrade Venka, by Pavel Nilin: *Kay Pulaski* 53

A Painter of Our Time, by John Berger: *Charles Humboldt* 55

Seven Shares in a Gold Mine, by Margaret Larkin: *Viola Brothers Shore* 58

The Other Side of the Coin, by Pierre Boule: *Martin Calder* 59

On the Boss's Time, by George Bratt: *Walter Lowenfels* 60

Selections from Paroles, by Jacques Prevert; *Time of the Calliope,* by Aaron Kramer: *Alvaro Cardona-Hine* 61

Books Received 64

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THE DAY THE WORKER BLOWS A BUGLE

SEAN O'CASEY

THE FIRST OF MAY! The Anniversary, the great day, when the workers parade themselves to take pride in what they have done, nd what they are determined to do in the days to come. The Day when he banners are unfolded, freshened up to take the air with colour and vith gaiety; the Day when the workers march in column of companies, rade following trade, each with its own symbol of what the trade does, ll blending together in unity of achievement and harmony of endeavour; he Day when the workers remember their strength; the Day when the vorkers show that work, far from being a curse, is the activity that lesses all men; the Day when all workers, those of the skilled hands nd those of the clever minds, join together in parade and party to cheer s partners, and to cheer as one; the Day when sound of revelry by night ell of the joy, in song, in dance, and in story, of how blessed a thing it is o work together for the good of all.

These demonstrations, in the U.S.S.R. on the first day of the month, n other countries, not yet socialist, on the Sunday before or after the rst day, show the importance and the power that Labour has achieved n many countries. Labour is now, thanks to the people of the Soviet Jnion's tremendous revolution, well on the road to a sensible and rogressive society, to socialism. The socialist countries are approaching ne top, and face now towards the peak of communism; other lands are ut half-way up, but climbing; others still are but planting their feet n the foothills of the higher ranges; but all face forward, and all look p to where they are determined to reach. It has become now but a uestion of time till the lowest in the climb join their comrades higher p, for now they can clearly hear the cheering of the people who have eached the higher or the highest parts, and their longing eyes can see em weaving a coloured pattern of life, bringing into being a safer, a ore comfortable, and more colourful and joyous civilization. All have ow heard the battle cry of "Workers of All Lands, Unite!" And all are hoing it, or singing it, as they climb upwards. Victory is certain now,

and, even in the lowliest states, reactionary forces are kept on the d
fensive, presaging their final defeat.

To get where the workers are now was a bitter, long testing, and
bloody climb; a long road first to the climb, then a rough and ofte
perilous ascent. When did the climb begin? When and where was th
first effort made to find the road on which the fight forward could b
made to reach the place whereon to climb? God only knows. All w
know—all I know, anyway—is that it began a very, very long time ag
thousands of years, if all were told.

We do not know what stirrings went on in the hearts of the herd
men who tended the flocks of their patriarchal masters; or of the disco
tent smouldering in the breasts of those who toiled in the building of th
pyramids; who silently resented the crack of the foreman's whip arou
their shoulders, or the hatred for the scorn of those who flung away
die, those who could no longer do the work demanded of them. We ca
not tell how many mute-tongued rebels are now but deep dust in th
plains of old Mesopotamia, or deeper still in the sands of the Egyptia
deserts. We can surely guess that they were many, and, perhaps, spok
their resentment and their hatred in whispered words to their toilin
comrades, or enshrined their feeling in a simple song, as so many worke
did in the years that were to follow.

We do not know when the mills of man's mind first began to grin
out thoughts of resentment, or think of ways by which to loosen the ho
their masters held over them. All we can be sure of is that these wh
thought of them were braver than the many, and that they were few. B
there they were, and a few seeds must have been sown before the life
history began.

We know that there were artists among them by the way in whic
they decorated their primitive pots and pans, and the lively, and ofte
beautiful, way in whch they painted the walls of their caves. We kno
the story of Spartacus, the great gladiator, who hated the Roman grandee
those who used the toil of the slaves to produce their wealth, and tho
who used the stronger ones to provide their sport. This gallant Thracia
slave organized his comrades into an army that defeated again and aga
the well-trained Roman Legions sent against him; but the time was n
yet, the rest of the workers remained bewildered, for there had been
previous theory to guide them into co-ordinated thought, and Spartac
and his army were finally defeated, and the gallant leader was slain. A
fought and many died, becoming, perhaps, the first fine bugle-call f
the workers of the world to hear and stand up for the freedom of
downtrodden men. No memorial yet marks the graves of these hero

who fell on the slopes of Vesuvius, but the time is coming when the name of the brave Spartacus will suddenly appear on the banner of Italy.

AFTERWARDS the revolutionary ethical turmoil of Christianity, its tenets and teaching falling like the gentle dew from heaven upon the poor and the oppressed. However poor and miserable one might be, he and she now became, not only sons and daughters of men, but also daughters and sons of God. It was an hilarious thought! Do unto others as ye would that others should do unto you, promised a new life and a fine freedom from want and care. The life of the Christians set an example; goods were held in common, and, for a while, a new earth seemed to be within the process of a great birth; a new dawn had come to all men, so all those who suffered, who were weary, all who laboured and were heavy-laden, flocked to the new idea. The workers had only to believe, and all would be well.

It didn't turn out that way.

The poor and the needy remained as poor, as needy, and as miserable as ever; the grandees, the rich, their lick-spittle followers became the governors, not only of the Church, but of the State, too; and the lot of the workers became worse than ever; they could have heaven if they wished, but the rich and the privileged continued to inherit the earth. The workers lived in the earth's worst room; they still had a world to win. The poor workers! They had had the rich on their backs before; now they had the prelate and the priest there as well.

During the centuries following, we are only now beginning to forage out records of how the common people lived; they are few, but we know that life for them was both miserable and uncertain and short. They must have muttered together about their hard lot; maybe made rhymes in their own way, and chanted them softly as they toiled in the fields; but, by and large, the workers were poor dumb mouths; bearing all too patiently, depending on the talismanic benefits from Catholic sacrament and Catholic relic, fearful now not only of their earthly master, but of their heavenly one too.

Obedience to their masters was what they had to keep in mind, in pain of punishment in this world and eternal penalties in the next. The workers most certainly rejoiced in the legend of bold Robin Hood, the outlaw who made the woods unsafe for the travelling rich, and who often raided them in their manors, exacting from them much money and goods for the better provision of those who needed those things more than they who had too much. The toiling people must have longed for a Robin Hood on every estate, close to the walls of every monastery, and

among the clusters of filthy mud huts where the common people lived and died.

THESE PEOPLE, throughout the long or short journey of life between birth and death, toiled for eighteen hours a day, fed on the coarsest food, lived in a verminous mud hut, slept on a pallet of straw, owning a rough bench at which to eat, a stool or two, and a few pots to boil their porridge in. If they were of the more fortunate few, having two cows and a plough, a reaping hook or scythe, when the possessor died, the lord of the manor took the better cow, the better agricultural tool, and the priest of the parish took what was left, leaving the weeping widow with her mud hut, her pot and her pan, and her pallet of dirty straw.

It took a long time and many terrible lessons to teach the common people that they had no aid to hope for in anyone, or anything, but their own unity and organization to compel the privileged and powerful to recognize their right to live decently, and to enjoy the fruits of their labour.

The development of thought went on in the minds of the workers, and each attempt for freedom brought fuller confidence, fuller knowledge, even in defeat. The peasants rose in France, and showed their power for a time, shaking the nobles with not a little fear. The peasants rose in Germany, and the masters saw the fire and felt the blows of the risen workers; and the peasants in England, galled into desperation by the poll tax rose in revolt under Wat Tyler, swarmed from Kent and Essex towards London, and took the city, but they were so destitute of a preparatory plan, that one dagger-blow ruined them and turned a triumphant army into a fleeing rabble, followed by a merciless slaughter of the peasants by the very nobles who a moment before had promised them every reform they had demanded.

The old slavery came back on them, but the echo of what they had done lingered on, thought grew, and man, slowly and unconsciously, went forward. The workers worked for their masters, fought the wars for their masters, amassed new wealth for them and went unrewarded; toiled till they could toil no longer, and then died wherever they happened to be; but the worker crept nearer and nearer to his vindication.

A rifleshot! From Bunker Hill, and colonialism, with all its evils suffered its first defeat; a rifleshot that proclaimed the birth of some of the world's grandest democrats—Jefferson and Lincoln; and the flag of the world's first wide republic was born; to be followed by the French Revolution that shook Europe, put a cap of death on absolute monarchy

and the Third Estate came to political life, and the workers defeated the trained armies of Europe. Social evolution was quickening its stir. The industrial revolution came racing in on the scene, and the peasant now had a powerful comrade in the proletarian. Organization began, and the self-educated miner, Keir Hardie, with his cloth cap, appeared among the tall silk ones in the British House of Commons.

The spearhead of revolution was being fashioned by trades unions all over Europe, and political Labour movements fashioned the workers' shield. Labour leaders appeared out of corners into public places, and voiced a revolt against the filthy and slavish conditions under which the workers lived; while Lenin, bent over the works of Karl Marx, gathered into his wide-ranging mind the visions of the poets, thinkers, and scientists of the centuries, and forged them, with gigantic skill, into an amazing plan of offensive and constructive action to convert the upheaval of a revolution into a thriving and invincible socialist republic. The workers were halfway up the hill.

WE HONOUR those who fell in the many defeats suffered by the struggling workers; honour them as much as we honour those who rejoiced within the glory of victory, for those who fell went down willingly for a cause they knew could never find defeat final. Labour never suffered a defeat, for each defeat meant another step on the way to the hill and so we honour the numberless heroes equal to the greatest heroes known. The Red Flag, respected now the world over, waves for them as it waves for us; for the dead as well as the liivng.

It was a long, long fight, and those who carried it on in the earlier days of desperate odds mingle with the dust of many places, Chicago, Detroit, Moscow, Peking, Dublin, Manchester, and many lesser places, laurelled with no less of a glory.

When Keir Hardie, the ex-miner, became the first Labour leader to enter the English Parliament, I was a young man of twenty years, and now, during my own lifetime, I have seen the workers become the great power of more than half of the world, with the other half beginning the climb of the hill; I have seen the workers, peasants and proletariat, widen their ranks to welcome home as workers, too, the poet, the artist, the scientist, the doctor, the teacher, and the thinker, who in their labour in their differing ways are all one, proving the truth of the old slogan of Each for All, and All for Each. There are many countries still within whose borders the workers still struggle; whose lives are unhappy and whose chances are few to enjoy a fuller and more harmonious life. But they are learning from those others who have done so much.

So, we the workers blow a bugle on May Day morning; blow long, blow loud for all to hear: a merry, merry sound. In the old days, the peasants used to dance on this day around the maypole, danced to depart for a moment from their hard life, and to colour their imagination with hope. So we dance now, not to forget our unhappy life, but in loud rejoicing that we have done so much, and that the worker now is a power, a great and eternal power in the world of life.

On this first day of May, under the birch tree or the oak; under the cedar of Lebanon or the palm; in the sandy places, the cold snows, or where the rich grapes grow, the worker blows a bugle: a moment for a dance and a song, a kiss from a girl, and a merry meal, for all of us who are "too busy with the crowded hour to fear to live or (fear to) die."

THEY ARE BEATING JEWS AGAIN

EDITH ANDERSON

IN MY ARTICLE on Berlin which appeared in your March issue, I referred to the alarming rise of anti-semitism in West Germany, including official anti-semitism, and declared that it was not accidental. I could not, within the scope of that article, fully document my claim, but I would like to add certain data here by way of a postscript.

In my article I mentioned without giving any figures the desecration of Jewish cemeteries. There are 1700 Jewish cemeteries in West Germany, and between 1948 and May 1957 there had been 171 acts of desecration. (The figure was set at 300 by the *Deutsche Universitatszeitung*, No. 1, 1957.) Since then there have been relatively more of these incidents, for anti-semitism is spurting up like a geyser, unhindered, apparently even smiled upon by the government. I also referred in my article to what was then the latest official act of anti-semitism, the acquittal by a Hamburg court of two men responsible for an anti-semitic pamphlet. It is significant that of all the West German parliamentarians to whom this pamphlet was mailed, *only one* took legal action against it. But the First Court of the Hamburg Provincial Court dismissed the case with the following opinion by Dr. Budde, Director of the Provincial Court, and his two Provincial Court Councilors:

> "The pamphlet makes a clear distinction between the Jewish people and international Jewry, and only urges certain measures against the latter."

Who is Dr. Budde? He was a warm advocate of Hitler's racial theories, and so were 37 other judges now functioning in Hamburg. He published an article in 1935 which it is a temptation to quote at length. To save space I give you just one line: "After 1866, the great Jewish invasion from the east began, to the great detriment of the maintenance of the race."

The Hamburg public prosecutor appealed the decision to the high est court in the province of Hamburg, which rejected the appeal withou giving any reasons. In West Germany, despite repeated urging fron Jews and progressive groups, no law against racist propaganda has eve been passed and therefore no legal step can be taken against the person responsible for the pamphlet or the judges who protected them. But th thing had come out in the open and was becoming embarrassing t the Adenauer government, whose cloak of polite liberalism is still s useful for fooling people in the west. The Mayor of Hamburg went t confer with Adenauer (the man who called Mendes-France a "Jew lout") and his State Secretary Hans Globke (who wrote the official legal com mentary to the Nazi Nuremberg Laws) about ways and means of dealin with the scandal. The result of the conference with this noble pair, whic took place in January can be surmised from two facts: 1) Nothing ha been done to the publishers of the anti-semitic pamphlet or the Ham burg judges. 2) A young trade unionist was arrested and charged wit painting swastikas on a synagogue in Düsseldorf allegedly at the instru tions of the banned Communist Party of West Germany!

THIS story must be told. It is the new Reichstag fire. It is th Adenauer government's way of having its anti-semitism and eatin it too. It even has its van der Lubbe—a drunk in a bar in Düsseldo who boasted that it was he who smeared the swastikas on the synagogu A reporter heard him, sat down with him, and asked a few clo questions. He replied eagerly—yes, he had done it, it was only a sma thing, "a drop on the hot stone", as they say in German, but not enoug Jews had been gassed and it was necessary to take some action. He himse was a member of the German Reich Party (neo-fascist). The report rushed to police headquarters and was listened to cooly. That was th end of January. No wonder:

At the beginning of January, Globke, acting for Adenauer, had give instructions that in all cases of anti-semitic demonstrations the crimina were to be sought among former members of the Communist Part This instruction was received by the Düsseldorf police, according two witnesses, ten days before Klier's arrest on January 22nd. Dr. F. Kaul, Berlin lawyer who specializes in the defense of West Germ political prisoners, and who has taken Klier's case, stated that officials the West German criminal police, whose names are known, convers in front of the synagogue about the fact that the head of Departme K 14 in the Düsseldorf Police Headquarters had already been inform the day before the crime and had been given strict instructions not

go after the criminals but after former members of the Communist Party who were known to have been particularly active.

Why Klier? It's like asking "Why Ethel and Julius Rosenberg?" The Bonn Ministry of Defense has a secret service called the *Militärische Abschirmdienst*—MAD for short—which ordered the young man's arrest. A captain in the MAD and friend of Defense Minister Strauss, Willfried Parge, publishes in his *Deutsche Informationsdienst* a blacklist of "suspicious persons" based on a "warning file" in the possession of the MAD. Parge is also the MAD officer in Düsseldorf. Klier is in the MAD file. As a house carpenter, all his working clothes are smeared with white paint from the building site. The swastikas on the Düsseldorf synagogue were painted with white paint. See how great minds work? Klier has a perfectly good alibi. He's a hard-working boy, he came home tired, ate dinner and went to bed, and while he was sleeping the local van der Lubbes painted the swastikas on the synagogue. Klier didn't get up until the alarm rang and it was time to go to work. His mother and his sister assured the police, who were ransacking the flat, that Klier had been home, that the white stains were always on the boy's clothes. As if they didn't know! But the public is not being given a chance ot hear Klier's alibi. He is being held incommunicado.

That is the most significant of the anti-semitic stories, because it represents a turning point in West German government policy, which amounts to this: Let's have more and better anti-semitism, but let's pin it on the Communists. After all, the Reichstag fire trial is still very much alive in the West German government. Dr. Braschwitz, assistant head of the criminal police in Dortmund, had been assigned by Goering in 1933 to "investigate" the Reichstag fire. Dr. Zirpins, head of the Federal Criminal Office in Hanover, held the hearing for van der Lubbe. The whole world knows that Communists do not go in for anti-semitism, that they are the ones who fight it most consistently, more than the Jews themselves. But didn't Hitler always say that a lie really had to be big to be believed?

BUT THERE ARE more, and truly horrible, stories which you ought to hear. I have space for just one typical one. A Jewish baker named Kurt Sumpf returned to Germany in 1956 after 20 years in exile. (He had been driven into exile with his parents when he was 13.) In August 1958 he took over a cafe in Koeppern, in the province of Hesse. His application for permission to serve alcohol was "lost" by the local authorities but meantime, expecting to get the license, he began serving wine and beer. He was summoned by a local court and acquitted, but

only after considerable harassment. On August 20th his bakery was raided by food control inspectors and this was followed by a series of attacks by fascists from Koeppern and nearby villages. In November, the son of a notorious stormtrooper appeared in the cafe with five companions, interfered with the waitresses and attacked Kurt Sumpf. One yelled, "Shoot down the Jews!" and another man—an innkeeper who is also an undertaker—shouted, "I'll bury you free!" Fifteen minutes later a shot was fired at Sumpf in the courtyard. The bulet only missed him by inches. On November 30th, the stormtrooper's son and five former Nazis returned to the cafe and knocked Sumpf down. Far from helping him, the village policemen encouraged the Nazis to beat up a customer who had tried to protect the Jew. After the rowdies had withdrawn, one policeman said to Sumpf, "You ought to shut your damn shop." Since then Sumpf's little boy has not dared to go to school. Twice a day the school children stand under Peter's window and chorus, "Jew, Jew, Jewish swine!" The principal of the school has refused to take any action. On December 14th, a customer threw his glass at the wall at closing time and shouted, "I can't drink out of this dirty glass!" Talk about "Jewish swine" and "gassing" followed. Frau Sumpf was punched in the face. The rowdy smashed the cafe door on the way out. After the *Frankfurter Rundschau* aired the case on December 20th a perfunctory investigation was started by the police, in Koeppern and the neigboring village of Friedrichsdorf, but nothing has come of it, of course.

Even Dr. von Dam, General Secretary of the Central Board of Jews in Germany, a man who bends over backwards to be unpolitical, stated on December 18th, 1957 in an interview with the semi-official Bonn newspaper *Das Parlament*:

> All in all conditions in Germany are not such that one can, with a clear conscience, advise the return of Jews who emigrated after 1933. . . . There is a strong anti-semitic potential. . . . Anyone who has a profession where the supply of applicants is greater than the demand will repeatedly find that non-Jewish applicants are given preference, and that a Jew only gets the job if there is no non-Jewish applicant.

That is a very careful understatement.

Helmut Klier is being kept in jail without trial because "there is danger of his becoming a fugitive." But the high SS officer Krumey was released from arrest by the Upper Provincial Court in Frankfort because "there was no danger of his becoming a fugitive." No indeed! Where

should he run to—Poland, where his extradition as a war criminal was requested in 1949? Czechoslovakia, where in June 1958 documents were produced showing that Krumey helped deport and murder 88 children from Lidice? Greece, where the West Berlin lawyer Max Merton was just picked up during his vacation (so mean!) for the deportation of 10,000 Greek Jews? No, West Germany is the only safe place for Krumey. He had been briefly arrested in 1957 because there was documentary evidence that he cooperated in the deportation of about 450,000 Jews in Hungary, Austria and Poland. Now the Frankfort Court has acquitted him "for lack of evidence."

There appears to be an underground fascist organization—not very deep underground, to be sure—which spirits away anti-semites who have been so rash that the government was compelled to arrest them or threaten them with arrest. For instance: Ludwig Zind, a teacher in Offenburg, was sentenced to a year for stating publicly that he and "his men" had killed hundreds of Jews during the Nazi years by breaking their necks with spades. He was brought to court by the Jewish citizen Kurt Wieser, whom he had cursed and told that too few Jews had been gassed and that he would like to gas Lieser and his family. Instead of being held because of the "danger of his becoming a fugitive," he was met outside the court by a guard of honor of prominent citizens of the town. Even before the trial he had been offered a well-paid post in industry. Now "one one knows" where he is. Dr. Eisele, a physician practicing in Munich, was exposed in 1957 by a former concentration camp inmate as the man who killed hundreds of prisoners by means of injections with evipan-natrium. The Munich Public Prosecutor, von Decker, had known of this for years but taken no action. He himself had been a member of the Nazi Party from 1931. Arrest was postponed so long that Eisele fled to Egypt. From Egypt he went to Spain.

SOMETIMES the West German government does actually imprison an anti-semite, in order to save face. We then see a wee little helpful echo in the *New York Times,* as I did about a week ago, to the effect that "German Anti-Semite Gets Three Months". These people who take the rap are always little fish, like the male nurse Reinfried Freuneck who told patients in the Woellersdorf TB Sanatorium near Neustadt: "If there were liquidation camps in the Federal Republic, I would volunteer and help to kill by injection the rest of the Jews." The Association of Jews in Bavaria took action and that is why Freuneck got the sentence of three months, which is ridiculously light.

When a big fish is involved in a scandal, like Dr. Otto Bräutigam,

head of the Eastern Department of the West German Foreign Offic until 1956, he is quietly transferred to a nice job where the public lose sight of him. After the East German press published Bräutigam's secre war diary of the years 1941 to 1943 there was such a storm of protes in Germany and abroad that the West German government was force to suspend him and make an official investigation. On July 11th, 1941 Bräutigam wrote, "With our silent complicity Lithuanian auxiliary polic have carried out many pogroms against the Jews." On September 14th 1941, he noted details of the plans which had been made for th deportation and murder of all the Jews in Central Europe. He state that on that date he had submitted the plans for liquidation, which h had made with Alfred Rosenberg, to Hitler's adjutant, Colonel Schmund and that Schmundt had shown full understanding for this "importan and urgent affair." Bräutigam is now West German Consul in Hongkong And speaking of West German Consuls, the one in New York, Hans vo Saucken, called the Swiss journalist Max Beer "a dirty Jew" in Augus 1958.

A reporter for the Bavarian Radio recently found that none of th works of Heinrich Heine were to be found in any school library o Bavaria. Only a very few of the pupils asked knew that Heine was poet. The only thing they had learned about him was that he was Jew. In September 1958 a West German magazine, *Der Derendorfe* referred to Heine as a "dirty alien scribbler." In Wuppertal, poste advertising the play "The Diary of Anne Frank" were smeared wit slogans like "Too few Jews went up in smoke", "Death to the Jewis swine." In November 1958 a play by a Jewish authoress, Else Laske Schüler, was heckled in Cologne with shouts of "Take off this Jewis play", "Disgusting, stop," and constant whistling. A stink bomb wa thrown during one performance. The neo-fascist German Reich Par officially described the play as "culture-bolshevism". The Cologne new paper *Kölnische Rundschau* stated: "This was a planned anti-semit demonstration against a play by a Jewish author."

The teacher Karl Lockewitz, now at the Third Highschool in We Berlin, told colleagues that Germany would never again become powerf until all the Jews were liquidated. Nothing happened to him, but Frä lein Rust, the teacher who reported the case to the authorities, receive threatening letters which called her "a Jewish whore." Dr. Mikorey, professor at Munich University, published in 1936 this statement (amo others) about Jewish scientists: "The political face of Jewish crimin psychology is only one aspect of the great historical drama of the cla between the power groupings of fascist-National-Socialism and Jewis

Bolshevism, the clash which marks our century." Dr. Herbert Scholl, head of the Finance School at Hersching, Ammersee, wrote a commentary in 1940, "The De-Judaisation of German Landed Property." Dr. Siegfried Ruff, Professor of Air Medicine and Physiology at Bonn University, conducted low-pressure experiments on concentration camp inmates which killed 70 to 80 percent of them—mainly Jews, Poles, Germans and Soviet citizens. He told the Nuremberg Tribunal on December 9, 1946, "Personally I do not regard such experiments as immoral, particularly in time of war."

WHERE TO STOP this record? If I were only to list the more blatant demonstrations of anti-semitism, and official cooperation with it, in West Germany in the past few years I would need this whole issue of *Mainstream.* So I will stop, arbitrarily, here.

Just a word about East Germany—the German Democratic Republic. Are there anti-semites here? I wouldn't be surprised. But they are keeping their mouths shut. There is a law in the German Democratic Republic against racist propaganda, and the sentences are unpleasantly long. The fact is, there are not more anti-semites (in relation to population) in Germany as a whole than there are in the United States. On the contrary, anti-semitic prejudice in the United States is far more common than it ever was in Germany *before Hitler.* Anti-semitism had to be worked up artificially by the Nazis. And it would have simmered down to practically nothing in West Germany after the war, as it has in East Germany, if the West German government had cared to pass a law against it. But our illustrious protege and NATO ally, West Germany, did not care to pass such a law.

The facts merit international attention, particularly in view of the Berlin crisis and the cooperation of Washington with the neo-fascist government in Bonn.

A KNOCK AT THE DOOR

RUTH MAHONEY

"I DON'T want no more old ladies," the landlady says sharply. She glares at me. I sit calmly, seeming relaxed, and give her a steady polite gaze that expresses, I hope, sympathetic interest in any trouble she may have had with old ladies.

"She lived here fourteen years," she says accusingly. I wait cautiously for her to go on. The longer she takes the better my chances are that she'll say, Yes.

She sits at her cluttered second-hand desk on a second-hand folding chair. I watch her thin, rigid face, the flaps of her nose quivering a little and her bright malevolent eyes and too-straight pose. Something must have made her mad. I hope she will tell me about it. I would rather listen to her telling me what made her mad, since it couldn't have been me, than listen to her telling me how much I'll have to pay under the table before she will rent me the apartment.

"When she was taken out," the landlady says, "I had to bring men in and pay them to clean the place. For three months I didn't let nobody rent it." She keeps on looking as if it was all my fault.

"I am very careful who I am going to let to live in that house. No more old ladies." She is relaxing. She's going to say Yes.

"No Porto Ricans," she barks, stiffening again. Then she relaxes. She fusses about the desk. She draws out a lease form from somewhere. She picks up a pen.

"I'll want a month in advance," she says. What, nothing under the table? . . . So I get the apartment, for being neither an old lady nor a Puerto Rican.

There is a knock on the door. The linoleum is down and the painter is working on the walls.

Mrs. Glatzer's hoarse voice asks, "Let me come see your apartment." Her pale gaunt face, topped with white hair, appears under the sparse hall light. Mrs. Glatzer was the one I had to see first, to get a look at

the apartment, even before I had the talk with Mrs. Fedik, the landlady who rented it to me. Mrs. Glatzer and I are already friends. I like her special ready-to-throw-the-world-over-her-shoulder smile. I say, "Sure, come in."

The door is still open and another lady stops, looking in. She is chubby and very blonde. She comes in trailing her paper shopping bag. "Mrs. Zarycki from upstairs," Mrs. Glatzer explains.

What friendly neighbors, I think, to come and pay me a visit even before I have completely moved in. I hope they like the linoleum. In the store around the corner, when I picked out the pattern I wanted for the front room the man said, kindly and firmly, "Oh no, Mrs. I won't sell you that linoleum for your front room. That's a *kitchen* linoleum. If you want to buy it I'll sell it to you but I don't want to sell it to you because if you was to put a kitchen linoleum in your front room you'd be criticized." Are they going to criticize it?

They look around the front room. There's not much to see. No furniture yet. Their eyes take in the newly painted walls, the ceiling. They certainly look impressed.

"Different," Mrs. Glatzer explains.

"I never thought," says Mrs. Zarycki, "that this apartment could look this way. So ni-i-ice."

"Lady was here before," says Mrs. Glatzer, making a sweeping upward gesture at the wall, "have stuff pile up." "I never seen such a heap of things," says Mrs. Zarycki, "when it was all out on the street."

They keep on looking about. They are seeing the room as it used to be when the former tenant lived there, and for a second I can even see her myself—old, bent, moving slowly among things, possessions, cardboard boxes stowed under the bed, stacked up to the ceiling, covered probably with dust, and each one too precious to throw out. Fourteen years, the landlady said.

"Have a look at the other room," I say. My neighbors peep routinely into the kitchen where the painter is still at work, and where the gleaming new sink, new gas stove and new fridge are visible. No excitement now. They have seen what they came to see. I could have put down any kind of linoleum.

"I wish you luck," Mrs. Zarycki, leaving, remembers to say. "Are you Polish? No? Well, I wish you luck anyway."

Mrs. Glatzer, grinning widely, is pointing a skinny knobbed finger at a narrow two-inch object that is firmly fixed to the door jamb and seeming a part of it, covered with the same paint that is on the rest of the surface. Mrs. Glatzer is looking at me, pointing, laughing, challenging.

"Leave it there," I say. "A *mazuza* can bring good luck even to a *goy.*" I hear her laughing all the way down the hall.

People in the street are wearing coats, and along the sidewalk the wind chases the loudly rustling leaves from the trees in Bunson Square Park. But some of the women still bring chairs and sit outside under the fluctuating remnant of sun. Mrs. Feinglish sits in front of her house, her back bent into a semi-circle, her wrinkled face surmounted by a reddish blonde wig with spears of gray hair sticking out beneath. Our conversation is limited to smiles, and to the few English words she knows and the few Yiddish words I know. I put my chair down besides Mrs. Grunewald. She's over sixty, with gray keen eyes. Her house dress is pulled low over her legs that have been twisted by arthritis.

"If I'd wanted to worry, I'd been dead long ago. . . . My son is after me to come and live with them. They have such a lovely apartment up in the Bronx," she says. "But I like it here. There's *people* here."

"Aren't there people up in the Bronx?" I ask, dull-wittedly.

"Ye-e-es," she says, turning down her hand and the corners of her thin flexible mouth. "But . . . oh, I don't know . . . it's not the same. There's people there but I can't *talk* to them. I don't know what to *say.* I don't. . . .

"Hello, Mrs. Weissman." She stops the young woman going by, carrying a shopping bag. "I seen one of your boys yesterday but I couldn't remember if it was Murray or David. So I didn't say hello to him."

"God forbid," the young woman says. "Their father makes mistakes so why shouldn't you make mistakes? You could've called him Murray David." And walks on.

". . . And it's like this, Mrs. Mahoney. I sit here, and I see people go by. I say to myself, that woman lives on the next block. That one lives over across, two flights up. I know what each one *means.* They're my *friends.* If you want trees you've got to plant them. . . . Hello, Margie. So what d'you hear about Hymie?"

Margie, stopping alongside, seems to be trying to recall if she knows any person named Hymie. Mrs. Grunewald asks again.

"I don't see him." Margie makes a small gesture, indicating That's that about Hymie. "I don't hear from him."

"He was at Alex's the other night." Mrs. Grunewald puts this statement down flatly, challengingly; she is smiling, teasing. Margie smiles too, puts up her hand as if to say That's far enough. "What d'you want from me. I don't see him. He don't come to see me."

"You know what'll make him come to see you?"

"No, what?"

"Send him an invitation to your wedding," says Mrs. Grunewald leaning back, and making a gesture with her ringed hand. "That's the only thing'll make him come."

"Wedding, shmedding," says Margie lightly, going.

". . . and I go up to the Bronx and visit with them once in a while, when they ask me, but I don't feel right up there. And when I get back home, d'you know, Mrs. Mahoney, I kiss the walls of my room. Here I'm independent. My son and my daughter-in-law live their life and it's right they should, and I've got my life right here. . . ."

A knock on the door. A young woman in a house dress, with her hair tied round in a scarf. When I open the door she is startled. She looks past my head into the front room and says, "Oh!" Then she says "I'm sorry I bother you."

"No bother," I say.

"You Hungarian?"

"No."

She swallows, takes a breath and seems to be thinking hard what to say. Then she asks, "She moved out?"

"Who?"

"The old lady. Used live here."

I think hard for a minute. "I guess she must've moved out," I say, "because she wasn't here when I moved in." She seems to take this as a rebuke, and I try to smooth over. "Why, was she a relative of yours?"

"No." Quick shake of head.

"A friend?"

"No."

"What was here name?"

"I don't know," says the young woman seriously. "She was here many year. She sat always out there. She had dog," says the young woman pointing out of the front door, at the stoop. "She talked to people. She talked to everybody who went by."

Now I remember Mrs. Fedik said, ". . . she was taken out. . . ."

"I think maybe she went to hospital," I say.

"O-o-oh," says the young woman softly. She does not ask what hospital. She stands there with an overwhelmed expression, as one who has just heard of the death of a good president. She stands there a few seconds longer, then smiles awkwardly and says, "Thank you, lady. I'm sorry to" and then she's gone.

She is the first of many people who come knocking on my door, to ask what became of the old lady.

Nobody sits outside today. Through the closed windows I see people walking laboriously, bent forward against the wind. This morning it took will power to get me out of my warm bed. But while I am drinking hot coffee I notice something new. Seeping into the still, dead indoor air is a faint perfume, a barely noticeable blend of old dust, old aluminum paint, slowing warming and something else, something damp and familiar, an old friend re-encountered. I inhale joyously. The steam is coming up.

I put on a coat and go out.

"How are you, Mrs. Glatzer?"

"Oh," she says, "half and half." She turns toward me for a moment, her old face smiling widely, and then goes back to looking into one of the garbage cans, whose cover she holds up on a slant, peering inside.

I look inside too. There's nothing in it but garbage. Since before dawn people—men with licensed carts, housewives with homemade cloth bags, our super, and the feeble-minded boy from next door—have been coming by, lifting the covers of the two cans and replacing them again, first having taken out paper bags, old newspapers, empty bottles, cardboard boxes, half-worn articles of clothing, or anything that could be reused or sold. This goes on every day from 5 a.m. until the city trucks come by and empty the cans.

"Is cold in house," says Mrs. Glatzer, going on with her inspection. Over her house dress is an apron and over the apron is a sweater. Her white hair is pinned up in a bun. "No shteam in radivator," she says. "You got shteam?"

"Yes," I say. "It just started coming up."

"I no got shteam. By me, cold."

"It just started coming up. Go in, you'll see. Maybe your place'll be warm by now."

"Is cold by me," says Mrs. Glatzer, shivering. "No shteam in radivator." Her red sweater gives a deceiving bulky look to her thin body.

Through the closed window I can hear someone calling, "Mrs. Grunewald!" over and over. I am too busy to look outside, so for me she is only a disembodied voice, unashamedly loud, repetitive, compelling.

"Mrs. Gru-u-unewald!"

My neighbor answers. I can hear her talking out of her window which is one flight above mine; her deliberately-spoken words, her habitual tone of voice, its warm inflection spiced with irony, come through to me.

But I cannot make out what she says. What the woman who is standing on the sidewalk says, I have no choice but to hear.

"Don't you know, that one has to open her big mouth again," she says, enjoying what she says. "Believe me, if I was her husband I'd give her such a slap she wouldn't get over it. She's a nothing, that woman. She's a nothing in nothing, I say."

Mrs. Grunewald says, "Listen . . ." To me the rest comes only as a mumble.

"Wait till you hear what I'll tell you! She's out there this morning when I come along with Beauty, and he takes a liking to the curb. And she's out there like she was already sent out to specially boss the job, and she says to me. . . ."

Another long mumble from upstairs. The other woman goes on; her voice climbs, expands; surely everyone living in the front apartments of our house hears it, and in the houses to the right and the left of ours; they may even hear it across the street.

"And I says to her, 'Don't you know a dog has got to be taken out,' and I says, 'I got him on a leash, ain't I,' and I says, 'Who says I make the street dirty, don't you see it's there on the curb, where else can you take a dog,' and I says, "What d'you want me to do, pick it up and put it in my pocket?' "

Someone in the hall has been rapping on my door. He would be tall if he didn't stoop over so. He wears battered clothes and a battered-looking hat. He is Mrs. Fedik's husband. A plumber. The interview I had with her when she rented me the apartment, took place in his store-front office a few streets away from here.

His face is deeply and permanently lined. He looks always as if suffering intense physical or mental pain.

Instead of the usual plumbers' work suit, Mr. Fedik wears a business suit that looks as if it had been salvaged out of an ash can after having been cast off by a garage mechanic who had worn it for twenty years, occasionally loaning it to a sewer repairman. It is stiff with accumulations on top of accretions of caked dried matter that have nothing in common with textile fibres.

"Mrs., I want to ask you that you should do me a favor," he begins urgently. "In your house is the thermostat." He points to a metal box attached to the wall. I once opened it, out of curiosity, and saw something inside that looked like a thermometer. I thought it was something left there by a previous tenant, and was considering prying it off the wall and throwing it out.

"You should always keep your windows open," he says. "Or the other tenants don't get no heat."

Now I am aware of another sound coming in from the hall through the open door. It is Mrs. Glatzer's heavy voice clamoring, "You should give shteam! Is cold in mine house! No shteam! I catch cold! No shteam in radivator!", again and again.

She tramps up and down the hall, continuing to shout and making rambling gestures with her large knotted hands. The plumber looks harried. But then, Mrs. Fedik's husband always looks harried.

When I buy myself a wall thermometer in the ten cen store, I buy another one for Mrs. Glatzer. I carry it down the hall and knock on her door. "Who is?" I tell her. I stand in her tiny immaculate kitchen. It's hot in there. The oven and all the top burners of the gas stove are blazing at once.

"You have to hang this on the wall," I tell her. "And you have to turn off your gas. Then watch the thermometer. If it goes down below sixty-five degrees, you can call the Board of Health." I hand her a slip of paper with the telephone number. "You can use my phone if you want."

"How long till the inspector come?"

"It generally takes him a little time," I admit.

"Till Shpring. In Shpring, come inspector."

"Well, it's the only way you can make the landlord give heat. And then, only sixty-eight degrees."

She looks at me. "Is cold in mine house," she says. "I must *bren gaz.*"

I too have to burn gas. The north wind walks right through my closed windows and bears down on me its full winter weight. I feel heavy and congealed. My hands and feet ache. So does the tip of my nose. When I sit on a chair, the cold makes itself felt right through my clothes.

The radiator goes every day through its well established routine: from 7 to 9 A.M. hot; from 9 A.M. to noon cold; from noon to 2 P.M. hot; from 2 to 5 P.M. cold; from 5 to 9 P.M. hot; from 9 P.M. till morning, icy.

Over the radio, an announcer considerately informs me that the Board of Health recommends not using gas ovens for heating, unless a window is kept open at the same time. I keep the windows closed, and the oven on.

I dial the landlord's number. Mrs. Fedik's voice answers. I tell her

it's below sixty-five in my apartment. "You should move to the Waldorf-Astoria," she says.

I tell her I'll phone the Board of Health. That brings her around in person within the hour.

"I'll have you thrown out of here," says Mrs. Fedik, with her straight rigid stance and bright hard unwinking eyes looking more like a cobra than any human being I have seen. "Organizing my tenants!" she says. (Oh, Mrs. Glatzer!) "I can have you thrown out any time," she says. "People have complained about the noise you make with your typewriter. You're running a business here. I can prove it. That's not allowed in a dwelling house apartment. And there's other things," she says ominously.

Maybe she doesn't know it, but she can't throw me out now. What does she mean by "other things"? I thought I had heard all the stock phrases of landlord's psychological warfare.

"Sixty-five degrees," I tell her. "You've got to furnish sixty-five degrees here. It's the law."

She goes out, scowling.

Again I stand in Mrs. Glatzer's kitchen. "Well, Mrs. Glatzer, shall we phone the Board of Health?"

She only says "Is cold, is cold."

I ask, "Are you the only person in the house that's cold? What about the other people? Aren't they cold too?"

Mrs. Glatzer comes closer. She takes me by the arm and makes to tell me a secret. "People in house is Jewish, is Polish," she says. "If Jewish people complain, Polish no complain. If Polish complain. . . ." She throws up her hands, and shrugs her shoulders.

I look at the thermometer, now hanging on her kitchen wall. Eighty degrees, with the gas burning. I turn and go back to my own apartment.

The cold snap is over, the north wind gone back to Hudson's Bay. Tenants and landlords can declare a temporary truce. Chairs can be brought out into the street again.

I am sitting beside Mrs. Grunewald, both of us wrapped in coats and sweaters. The sun, high above the houses, dispenses a selected golden radiance containing a trace of warmth. I see children in green uniforms going toward the Catholic school for some Saturday games. I see boys climbing from the stoop of a house onto the wall of the play yard of the public school across the street. Automobiles are making slow sinuous detours around double-parked trucks whose drivers are delivering

groceries to the stores. Through uncurtained windows I see men wearing black skullcaps and black-and-white shawls, bowing to something that is in front of them.

"Who was the old lady?" I ask Mrs. Grunewald.

She crosses her ankles (the knees can't be brought together any more) and says "What old lady?"

"The one who used to live in my apartment."

"What d'you mean, who was she?"

"Well, every week at least one or two or three people come and knock on my door and ask what happened to her."

Mrs. Grunewald shrugs, delicately raises two gloved fingers and lowers them down again.

"Who was her husband? Was he rich? Was he prominent?"

She speaks with care, holding back any word that could be belittling. "We-e-e-ll . . . he was a carpenter, and he worked all his life, God be praised, and then when God took him away, she had social security from him and that was something for her."

Then I ask "What about *her?*"

"What d'you mean, what about?"

"I mean, what did she *do?*"

"What she *did?*" Mrs. Grunewald tries hard to recall. "She stayed in her house. . . . When she wanted some fresh air, she came out and sat on the front stoop here."

"With her dog?"

"With her dog."

"Well, anyway, was there something special about the *dog?*"

"Listen," says Mrs. Grunewald, "something special is what you put into it to make something special, d'you know what I mean? To her, the dog was something special. He was just an ordinary dog. He was old. Dogs get old faster than people, you know. So here was this poor old dog paralyzed somewhere in his spine, and he had to use his two front legs to drag his two hind legs along the floor. And many times people said to her 'If he was mine I'd send him to the S.P.C.A. and let them put him out of his misery.' But what can you do? The dog was her friend. She used to say, 'He's my friend.' She lived by herself for years after her husband passed away, and the dog was company for her."

"Well then," I say, "why do people . . ."

"Listen. She had this dog, like I told you." Mrs. Grunewald hitches her chair around and is now facing me, while the full sidewalk life still goes on around us, behind our backs. "So one day the old lady

ts her toenails, and maybe the scissors go in a little bit too far but e pays no attention to that, would you?"

"No."

"So then maybe a day or two later her leg is swelled up and it hurts r. So she asks me what I think she ought to do and I tell her 'I think u should have a doctor.' But she has to think this over a while because e never had a doctor before and she thinks, Maybe God willing it will away. Then a couple days later she calls me to come in and I look her leg again and now it's all black and blue. So I say to her 'Look, u better let me go to Dr. Silverman and bring him here to look at at leg.' So by that time she's willing to let me go and get Dr. Silverman. t what can you do?"

I make a slight motion with my head and shoulders.

"Of course, Dr. Silverman says right away 'You've got to go to the spital Mrs.'"

Mrs. Grunewald sits back in her chair. Her shoulders droop. Her nds are spread out.

"Then she says, 'How can I go to the hospital?' You see, if she nt to the hospital she worried who would take care of the dog."

The sun is warm for November, but I feel cold. Mrs. Grunewald sits again. Now she sounds grieved, or angry, I can't tell which.

"So what can you do Mrs. Mahoney? I try all I can, but how can u go around in the city and get somebody who is willing to look after log? Can I come to you, and say 'Take a dog'? Would you take it if sked you?

"Well then. She gets one or two or three more people to bring in ctors. Every doctor that comes in tells her that she's got to go to the spital. By this time the leg is twice as big and it's hurting her terrible. finally she gives up and she sends the dog off to the S.P.C.A. and e goes to the hospital. By the time she gets there, they find they have take the leg off."

She takes her glasses out of her pocketbook, wipes them, squints ough them and lays them on her lap.

"But what can you do? I guess they don't have much time there to k to people, explain and smooth over like you and I would do. Maybe was just someone came along and told her, 'That leg will have to ne off.' So then she went out of her mind."

She picks up the glasses and holds them by the frame.

"And when the place healed up a little, where the leg had been, then y sent her off to another hospital way out on Long Island."

Mrs. Grunewald leans forward, her bright, steady, realistic eyes

watching me; one hand grips the arm of her chair; a finger of the oth hand taps. The words come fast. "So what can you do? I went out the a couple times, but I can't do much traveling with these legs of mine, ar each time I went it cost me a dollar and a half train fare and anoth dollar for a taxi, that's two and a half, and then I left her five dolla for what she needed and that's seven-fifty, just to go out and see he And she don't recognize nobody. She didn't recognize me. All she sa to me was she said over and over, 'Please give me fifty dollars. I nee fifty dollars or they'll send me to China.' So what can anybody do If you was in my place, Mrs. Mahoney, what would *you* do?

I dodge the question, saying, "But I'd still like to know one thin about her. How did she get to be so important, that so many peop miss her and knock on my door and ask me . . ."

"Listen," says Mrs. Grunewald wearily, "she sat on this stoop eve day, and the people went past and they saw her. If everybody sees yo you get to be well known."

He stands before me in the cold hall, tall, lean, middle aged and ve humble, looking startled as they all do when the door opens and th see me in the open doorway.

"She was very nice woman," he says sorrowfully. As I was tellin him the story, his mouth snapped open suddenly and he took in a sha breath at the most harrowing points. But he did not ask if there w anything he could do for the old lady.

"You're not from Ukraine?" he asks, looking at me and alread shaking his head. He pronounces it "Oook-ryn."

"No," I say. "Was the old lady a good friend of yours?"

He says "No." He looks surprised at the question.

"Well then how do you come to ask about her?"

Searching for an answer, he comes up with "I know only she us sit out there," he points to the stoop, "and talk to everybody. She wou talk to *anybody,*" he says.

"Did she talk to you?"

"Oh yes. Sometime she talk to me."

"What did she say?"

"What she said?" He looks perplexed.

"Don't you remember anything she said?"

He thinks, long, deeply. Then he says "No."

"Was she a philosopher?"

"I wouldn't say . . . No, not a philosopher." Now he catches on, a

willingly joins me in my search for the old lady's definition and rationale.

"Did she give people good advice about their lives?"

He shrugs his shoulders and says unconvincingly "Maybe she did."

The two of us stand there, face to face in the cold draft, and I savor the quality of his sorrow about the old lady: not personal but detached, generalized, and shared by so many others as to be a public sorrow, such as one might feel on hearing that due to some fearful national emergency the Statue of Liberty is being dismantled and will be melted down to make bullets.

"Well what *did* she say, then?" I ask him.

"I don't know Mrs," he says quickly with his apologetic smile. "She just sat every day on that stoop like I told you. . . . "

"And?"

"And talked to people," he says softly.

THE ORDEAL OF THE ABBE DE PRADES

BARROWS DUNHAM

ON THE EIGHTEENTH of November 1751, a young bachelor of theology appeared before the Sorbonne to be examined upon a doctoral dissertation. He was (so the police described him) "tall, thin, dark, with long hair and a pockmarked face: an intelligent fellow, lively and a little mad." He had dedicated his dissertation to the Heavenly Jerusalem, and in a Latin of considerable elegance he had undertaken to answer the question, "What being was it God breathed the breath of life upon?"

The Sacred Faculty of Paris listened, questioned, approved, and made a doctor of the bachelor, the young Abbe de Prades. But some two months later, after several intervenient and agonized sessions, the Sacred Faculty denounced the candidate and revoked the degree. It had found in the dissertation, a little belatedly and under official goading, ten propositions which it declared to be "false, rash, harmful to the reputation of Catholic theologians . . . erroneous, blasphemous, materialistic, dangerous to society and the public peace . . . " and many things more.

Then the blows fell fast: a denunciatory charge from the Archbishop of Paris, a prelate unusually prolific in this kind; a charge from de Prades' own bishop, Monseigneur de Montauban, lamenting that "one of our diocesans has betrayed his God, his religion, his country, and his bishop," a Pastoral Instruction from Caylus, the Jansenist Bishop of Auzerre, pointing out the candidate's "well-known associations with the authors of the Encyclopedia." And there was also the warrant issued by the Parlement of Paris, on February eleventh, for de Parades' arrest.

By this time, however, the Abbe was safely sequestered upon the estate of the Marquis d'Argenson. Thence he proceeded to Holland, and from Holland, under Voltaire's sponsorship, to Prussia, where Frederick protectd such thinkers as troubled other governments than his own.

During the first months of exile de Prades composed an apologia in three volumes, the third of which was written by Diderot. The other volumes set forth with much dignity and (I do really believe) without

isingenuousness the surprised pain, the outraged innocence, of a hilosopher assailed by rogues. Was it *his fault,* for example, that his ıpervisor, having approved the dissertation without reading it, therepon called loudly for its condemnation? Or that the Jesuits, seeing a ıance to strike the *philosophes,* were "first and noisiest precisely beıuse they were not offended?" Or that the Jansenists could strike esuits, *philosophes,* and the Sorbonne too?

The Sorbonne, for its part, was profoundly embarrassed. It had been, om the thirteenth century, a kind of tribunal where the great docines of Christendom were heard and argued, confirmed or overthrown. ome occasions, indeed, had been tempestuous; of one of these an eyeitness said that the great hall resembled a forest shaken in violent orm, the crash of branches mingling with the howls of savage beasts.

With the poor pockmarked Abbe the Sorbonne had exceptional reaon to howl, for it had listened to heresies without recognizing them to e such, and it had granted the young heretic a doctoral degree. The ause, cried the Sacred Faculty, was not our sloth but his cleverness. Impiety no longer restricts itself to invading private homes. It has tried o slip into the very sanctuary of religion, there to take revenge if haply may spread some drop or other of its poison."

How was it possible for de Prades to write heresy, and the Sorbonne o hear it, all of them unaware? They were trained ideologists, they new the tradition, and they were not (or, at any rate, were not inordiately) dolts or knaves. The answer is interesting in itself and is morever useful in times when thinking must proceed with one eye on the olice.

HERESY, like truth and falsity, is an attribute of sentences. It is not, however, identical with truth (as rebels tend to think) or with alsity (as rulers tend ot think.) Among the various sentences prounced heretical, some have been true and some false. The term is, o be sure, most often used ecclesiastically, but other terms like "subersive" or "un-American" are virtually its synonyms. In the texts of oaths ow visited upon a docile intelligentsia much is said about loyalty to rganizations, but not one word about loyalty to truth.

Again, sentences can be thought of as true or false without any ggestion of punishment. But every heretical sentence suggests at least he possibility of punishment for anyone who asserts it as his view of he case. It does this, not simply because it is contrary to established octrine, but because it ends (in the Websterian phrase) "to promote thism." Heresy, therefore, has nothing to do with whether a sentence

accurately describes the world, but with what may happen to an organization if any of the members believe the sentence to be true.

The term, in fact, has an unusually rich etymology. "Heresy" derives from the Greek word for "personal choice." Within the meaning of the term, accordingly, is this: that the free exercise of belief is, in respect of certain sentences, a reprehensible thing. These sentences are the schismatic ones—those, that is to say, which might, if acted upon, defeat or dissolve the organization.

Now, it sometimes happens that sentences are true without advantaging a particular organization in its program or in its collection of dues. Indeed, the true sentences may be such as to imply that the leadership ought to be changed or the organization abolished. But even apart from these extremes, truth is one thing and advantage is another; and if you are preoccupied with determining whether a given sentence is true, you will tend not to see whether it is advantageous to some leadership.

But rulers, administrators, treasurers, and people of such sort are mainly concerned with keeping the organization alive and, if possible, prosperous. The questions they contemplate are not of cold fact but of hot security. Yet the ideologists in their employ or within their influence are always wandering off to follow science where science leads. When this happens, it becomes necessary to remind the ideologists, a little sharply, what side their bread is buttered on.

This was, in general, why the Abbe de Prades and the members of the Sacred Faculty entertained heresies unawares. In their simplicity as thinkers, in their free exercise of intellectual choice, they had come to believe that the new Lockeian philosophy was in its main contentions probably correct. And this, in turn, was why ecclesiastical leadership, its hounds baying close upon the track, so swiftly hunted them down.

What were de Prades' ten heresies? I list them, not *verbatim,* but in briefer form:

1 That human knowledge originates in sensations.
2 That men formed society in order to satisfy their private self-interest, and that they got the idea of virtue from suffering one another's vices.
3 That true religion is simply a higher development of ethics.
4 That it is characteristic of a religion to be boastful of miracles, oracles, and martyrs.
5 That the testimony of witnesses tells more about the witnesses than about the facts, and that its value must be estimated by

observing the conflict of human interests on a large scale.

6 That the systems of chronology discernible in the Pentateuch are probably not from Moses.

7 That Moses based the moral economy on merely temporal rewards and punishments.

8 That the cogency of miracles as proofs of a divine Creator have been much weakened by the obscurities of the Schoolmen.

9 That the cures worked by Jesus very much resemble those of Esculapius.

10 That the reasonings of the Church Fathers are subject to the usual tests of logic.

THESE sentences were undoubtedly heretical, in the sense that a belief in them, spread throughout the Gallican Church, would have discouraged the payment of dues, and might even have dissolved the organization. To perceive this possibility as plainly as the prelate did, we shall need to know the nature and utility of one important concept, the Supernatural.

The supernatural is "over" and "above" the natural. These prepositions are of course meant metaphorically: they suggest that there is a world other than and more important than the one in which we get our sensations and our daily bread.

Now, the natural world, to judge from what we know of its history, seems not to be a place for final human success. Our ultimate well-being, our "salvation," the thing we want most, the thing we feel endangered by death, disease, famine, or tyranny, seems not accomplishable in our brief time within the earth's brief space. If we are to get "salvation," we must get it under different circumstances, and any agency which sought to give it us would have to work under other circumstances.

Nor does the natural world show any example of an unlimited, and hence omnipotent, power—except, perhaps, the cosmos itself. This is of course true of human groups and institutions. Whatever power a church has in the natural world is inevitably limited by other powers: those, for example, of other religions or of the nation-state.

Nor does the natural world invest any person or organization with absolute title or right. Trace any right or title backward in history, so far as that history is of events in space and time, and you will discover at the origin some act of seizure or usurpation gracefully covered by succeeding legalities.

Consequently, an organization professing with entire confidence to give every human being on earth salvation or damnation according to his

deserts would find that *in the natural world* it could not establish its right to do so nor prove beyond doubt its ability to do so. That being the case, there is no special reason for belonging to this organization rather than another, and the paying of dues brings no exceptional reward. In the blaze of this discovery, the faithful member may take his dues and his person elsewhere.

IT WAS IN order to avoid just this impoverishment and disintegration that the Catholic Church (and its Gallican branch) appealed beyond space and time to a supernatural economy. *There,* it was asserted, lay the source of all right and all power over the ultimate human concerns. *There* lay the agency and the chance for an adjustment of happiness to virtue and of misery to vice. There was a God to do it, and an eternity to do it in.

Furthermore, this God, in order to effect these goods, had made himself man, had in that capacity founded a universal organization for the purpose, and had conferred leadership of it upon a human being who should thereafter bequeath it to a perpetual series of rightful heirs. All these events were attended, and attested, by miracles—events, that is to say, in which the grand supernatural Agent showed authority over the natural world by suspending or negating its characteristic patterns.

> He Who reigns on high (wrote Pius V in *Regnans in Excelsis*) to Whom is given all power in heaven and on earth, has entrusted His holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, outside which there is no salvation, to one person alone on earth, namely to Peter the Prince of the Apostles, and to Peter's successor, the Roman Pontiff, to be governed with plenitude of power.
>
> Him alone He appointed Prince over all nations and kingdoms, to root up, pull down, waste, destroy, plant and build, so that he might preserve his faithful people linked together by the bond of mutual charity in the unity of the Spirit, and might present them, saved and blameless, to their Savior.

These are the opening sentences of a bull excommunicating and deposing Queen Elizabeth I, in 1570. The presence, in 1956, of Queen Elizabeth II on that same throne shows that sometimes only a miracle can make the natural world obey the supernatural, and that sometimes, inscrutably, the miracle does not occur.

As for the embattled Abbé, his ten heresies harmed the concept of a supernatural order, not so much in what they directly said, as in what they assumed or implied. Their "poison" came from those two fountains, the Cartesian and the Lockeian, whence flows ever into our day the knowledge of how knowledge is known. The Cartesian ideal of

knowledge is a system of sentences entirely free from contradiction and following from one or more sentences self-evidently true. The Lockeian ideal is an immediate, direct awareness of the things being described. Each of these ideals conflicts with the supernatural; together, they probably extinguish it.

For example: If the Cartesian test is supreme, then tests by authority or by mystical insight are less valid. It follows that we shall want to examine critically, and not accept obediently, what the Fathers, and the Schoolmen, and especially the witnesses of miracles have had to say. Thus wishing, we arrive at once at Numbers 5, 8, and 10 of the Abbé's heresies.

Again: in the very idea of miracles there is a contradiction which logic must either outlaw or be outlawed by. No event can be a miracle unless it is an event which is impossible; otherwise it is a mere rarity. In an effort to show that the impossible can happen, logic must destroy the notion or destroy itself. If, now, we undertake to save logic, as under the Cartesian principle we are bound to do, then the definition of miracles slides away from the strictly impossible toward the unusual and rare. In this view, the cures worked by Jesus look like those of Esculapius (No. 9). For that matter, magic in prophecy and performance, a little comparison shows, is something every religion brags about (No. 4).

BUT suppose we desert logic, being unable to control it, and defiantly assert that there are miraculous events anyway, and that they originate in the supernatural. The result is not happier. For how do we know whether any given event is the work of God or of Satan? Tertullian, indeed, had held that Satan, being "God's ape," can imitate everything God does. "Demons do harm," said this Father in a passage de Prades was condemned for quoting, "then they suggest remedies, and, having ceased harming, are thought to have been cured." It is very artful of them, and it renders permanently doubtful whether, if there *are* miraculous events of supernatural origin, they have the supernatural origin that one wants.

De Prades, at any rate, had tried to strike out one of the alternatives by saying that Satan is bound by natural law and hence cannot work miracles. But the Church needed Satan to account for the miracles of its competitors: in then recent, memory, for the cures wrought, amid multitudinous convulsions, at the grave of a Jansenist deacon, the Abbé Paris. Moreover, as a matter of ideology, if Satan is entirely bound by natural law, then Satan is very likely not supernatural. The once transcend-

ent source of evil sinks downward toward the natural world, dragging, it seems, the source of goodness after it. Ethics is on the point of being fully acclimated in space and time—which is where de Prades placed it in Heresies 2 and 3.

No wonder that the Sacred Faculty, its memory spurred by superiors, asserted such views to be "subversive of the foundations of the Christian religion."

So far as the Cartesian revolution. The Lockeian lies in a belief, once inflammatory, that the truly known is the immediately sensed. Now, all that is immediately sensed is sensed in space and time. No ingenuity of science, no refinement of laboratory, no cloud-chamber or cyclotron, has been able, or, it seems, will be able, to present to our view a single one of the celebrated supernautral entities. We have, moreover, Scriptural warrant for the doctrine that "No man hath seen God at any time." It follows from the Lockeian principles, then, that our knowledge (if such it be) of things supernatural is derivative from our knowledge of things natural. The last is made first: instead of theology's supplying the postulates for science, science supplies the postulates for theology. And rather lamely, too.

What then becomes of the good old Soul, with its inborn knowledge of God, immortality, right reason, and right conduct? Where upon that blank tablet or within that empty cabinet (two of Locke's metaphors for mind) can one find the stain of Adam's sin? If, as de Prades said, our knowledge "sprouts from sensations like branches from a tree trunk," does not ethics become mere sociology, and theology mere comparative religion—that is to say, the anthropological analysis of legend and ritual? The conclusions follow, and they are Heresies 2, 3, 6, and 7.

> In speaking of the creation of man [said the testy Bishop of Auxerre] according to the Scriptures and orthodox doctrine, one could not avoid mentioning the gift of grace, the justice and love of God . . . man's disobedience, its consequences, the remedy, the matter of the Incarnation. . . . What Christian ought not to want these basic truths recalled to his mind?

Well, I don't know about the *ought,* but it is historically the case that in the pellucid void of empiricist consciousness all these lovely wonders were lost.

Upon de Prades' first heretical sentences the Sacred Faculty pronounced the damning words, *materialismo faventes,* "inclining towards materialism." And the Sacred Faculty was not mistaken: sensations are the pitiful rubbish of Father Adam's soul. Doubtless they are themselves

supernatural entities, concealing (from empiricists, anyway) events in the brain and nervous system. But the veil of sense is the seventh and last of Salome's veils. When that is gone, you may look with joy or with horror, but you will be seeing the world as she is.

THIS was the way that science went, the way on which de Prades set his brief, adventurous feet. In the great contests between mind and government, men do what they can and as they can. The little Abbé, when he sacrificed a doctorate to freedom, did perhaps enough for one lifetime. He seems, at any rate, to have decided so, for in 1754 he recanted his errors, saying that he had not enough life left in which to atone. His work on the Truth of Religion, with a preface (so Diderot proposed) reciting his calamities, was never written. He sank into a canonry at Glogau, then into an archdeaconship; and he left a translation of Tacitus, which has been lost.

> He is [said Voltaire, when the Abbé first reached Potsdam] the drollest heresiarch ever excommunicated. He is gay, he is amiable; he laughs at his misfortune. If men like Arius, Huss, Luther, and Calvin had had his temperament, the Conciliar Fathers, instead of burning them, would have taken them by the hand, and danced round with them in a ring.

But in 1759, when the recantation and the case were cold, Diderot, the brave, the never-yielding, had a different thing to say of Jean-Martin de Prades:

> What a detestable man! Unfortunately, there are many like him.

And, unfortunately, there are.

FOLK WOUND

ALVARO CARDONA-HINE

PETITION FROM THE MARSHALLESE PEOPLE
CONCERNING THE PACIFIC ISLANDS (partial text)
April 20, 1954

To: The United States
From: The Marshallese People
Subject: Complaint regarding the explosion of lethal weapons within our home islands.

The following should not be misconstrued as a repudiation of the United States as our governing agency for the United Nations, under the Trusteeship agreement, for aside from the complaint registered in this petition we have found the American administration by far the most agreeable one in our memory.

But in view of the increasing danger from the experiments with deadly explosives thousands of times more powerful than anything previously known to men, the lethal effects of which have already touched the inhabitants of two of the atolls in the Marshalls, namely, Rongelap and Uterik (Utirik) who are now suffering in various degrees from "lowering of blood count," burns, nausea and the falling off of hair from the head, and whose complete recovery no one can promise with any certainty, we the Marshallese People feel that we must follow the dictates of our consciences to bring forth this urgent plea to the United Nations, which has pledged itself to safeguard the life, liberty and the general well-being of the people of the trust territory, of which the Marshallese people are a part.

The Marshallese people are not only fearful of the danger to their persons from these deadly weapons in case of another miscalculation, but they are also very concerned for the increasing number of people who are being removed from their land.

Land means a great deal to the Marshallese. It means more than just a place where you can plant your food crops and build your houses; or a place where you can bury your dead. It is the very life of the people. Take away their land and their spirits go also. . . .

If more signatures are needed we will promptly supply them. The only reason we are not supplying more now is because to do so would mean a delay of some three months, the time necessary to make complete circuit of our far-flung atolls and islands by ship.

STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR HENRY CABOT LODGE, JR., REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS CONCERNING THE MARSHALLESE PETITION ON THERMONUCLEAR TESTS IN THE PACIFIC TRUST TERRITORY.

The United States Government is very sorry indeed that some inhabitants of the Marshall Islands apparently have suffered ill effects from the recent thermonuclear tests in the Pacific proving grounds, as described in the petition to the United Nations. . . . I can assure them, as well as the members of the United Nations, that the authorities in charge are doing everything humanly possible to take care of everyone who was in the area affected by a shift in the wind during the March 1 test.

The 236 Marshallese citizens in the affected area were immediately given the same medical examination as the American personnel of the test group who were similarly exposed. . . .

Prends l'eloquence et
tords lui le cou

It's bad enough
to live
in immense prairies
and have the wind
be stealing grains
of sand
behind our back

bad enough
to see
the murky rivers flow
with timber tusks
and pocketfuls
of loam

for land is sacred
ours to rule
and till
ours to love
rise from
and surrender to

but when

you have conquered
the measureless waters of an ocean
and have found there
a bit of rock
a slope
suddenly green
when you have childishly turned
to the horizon for a plow
and have become its rooted shout
before another man
it is bitter
bitter
to be
kindly and politely
firmly and irrevocably
told to go

yes
when there have been men
intrepid enough
to discover
the myriad-miled atolls of the Marshalls
on bare canoes
and tidal winds
when they have settled
danced
and built an age
of ancestors to worship
it is sad
bitter
and most bitter still
to see an invader
snatch the isle
the hillock
the harbor
have him look at the daughter
of your children
with a lit of eyes
and wage his war
from your shores

bitterest yet
to have the new-come victor stay
have him
one fine day
move all the folk
off Bikini and Eniwetok
set off a gadget
and whirl your islands
to the sky
tragic defloration
the skin
the sea
the dirtied tampered processes
of sea-life
and foolish mannerism
of a Faust in need
to drink his glory
in the twisted
have-to's
of his history

they request a stop
the Marshallese people
they beg to be heard
and speak
to ease their sores

in the United Nations
there was a ready answer
upon a lawyer's tongue
forgive us
meaning well
careful study
in the interests of
general peace
and security
(past Blake's concrete particulars)

the petition speaks
in high restraint
speaks

at four and five in the morning
it speaks alone
to those who acknowledge land
as to clutch between the fingers
and keep dark
inside the fingernails
or smell and kiss and wed and die in

but trampled and ignored
as a weed
beside the corn's high favor
that petition
will lie fallow
and fallow cast
its seed of mustard
in the wombs of violence

if spiders ever weave
a tale for Euclid
by the broken wheel and tendrilled smokestack
of the violent
if ever loudly piping swallows hatch
on antlers of suburban waste
and the cyclic markets grasp
the native craft of sunrise
over a thousand hills of tamarack and sea
the only men alive will be
those far-away islanders who penned
their letter to the world in quiet anger
who spoke of land
in terms of its generous value
and spiritual maintenance
and lamented someone's waste
not their own innocence
men who begged as men
to be left their own few miles of bread
who asked to keep their footprints soiled
and counted (their shadows
bordering on water)
the maimed count of coral
on the fingers of one hand.

THE OVERSTREETS' *KAMPF*

WILLIAM Z. FOSTER

AT the time of this writing a new and elaborate attack upon communism has reached fourth place on the non-fiction best-seller list.*

The title of this book should be: How to Keep the Cold War Going. t is essentially a statement of government policy, posing as a private nd impartial study. It is being ostentatiously touted by Pres. Eisenhower, Dulles, and other high official "students" of the subject, and their back- ng naturally guarantees it a big circulation. Since it would be too flagrant o finance such a production out of government funds, a more round- bout—and cheaper-form of subsidy has been chosen.

Here is assembled an extensive collection of prejudices, distortions, nd so-called arguments against the Soviet Union and socialism. In addi- ion to the run-of-the-mill reactionaries cited as authorities, there are the pportunists: Djilas, Koestler, Lovestone, Browder, and John Gates. The ed-baiting has a faint tinge of liberal pretense—it is Hooverism with shave and a haircut. But its purpose is to keep the cold war going, and o make it hotter if possible, in the face of mounting worldwide pressure or peaceful negotiations. It is sheer propaganda for the most reactionary hases of government policy, particularly in their "theoretical" aspects.

The Overstreets make the usual bourgeois idealization of capitalist ociety. They blithely pass by the two world wars, which were monster rimes of capitalism, as though it had nothing to do with them. They re just as myopic about other capitalist disasters—fascism, depressions, ass unemployment, etc. They seem to have no inkling that the system in a general crisis, mortally sick, that one-third of the world has one socialist in the past few years, and that the bottom has fallen out f the system of colonialism. The Overstreet naive assumption is that apitalism is a sort of God-given system beyond the reach of criticism. hey certainly put no blame on it for keeping hundreds of millions of eople in Asia, Africa and Latin America in semi-starvation for so many ears. They do not even mention this world tragedy.

* *What We Must Know About Communism*, by Harry and Bonaro Overstreet. W. W. orton, $3.95.

The authors undertake to tell the readers what communism is. Her the thesis is familiar. It is the FBI "theory" which we have heard ex pounded in many witch-hunting trials *ad nauseam,* that the communis movement is a conspiracy, a plot against democracy. The Overstreets in form us that the whole plot began with Lenin—and before him, Mar Lenin "made all Communists around the world heir to his tactics an stratagems of conspiracy. They did not decline his legacy, and they hav never since repudiated it." The Soviet Union is that "gigantic fruit o conspiracy, the Bolshevik revolution," the result of the plotting of a fe misguided and desperate men.

Through such thought and scholarship, history is reduced to non sense. The authors expect us to believe that the tremendous achievement of the USSR are only the work of an evil, ignorant and reckless caba The Soviet Union, as the whole world knows, has made an unequale record of industrial progress, not to mention its other gigantic achiev ments, in a short 40 years. Starting then as a backward peasant countr it is now outstripping the leading capitalist country, the United State Its unparalled achievements have kept the world agape for many year Revolutionary China is now repeating this process, on an even grande scale. But all this, we are asked to believe, is merely a conspirac

Karl Marx, and V. I. Lenin were the two greatest political figur of the modern era, if not of all time. Marx's works on dialectical m terialism, the class struggle, surplus value, and a host of other subjec are unequaled in the whole range of world political writing. Lenin, wi his basic analysis of imperialism, his restoration of the revolutiona heart to a Marxism which had been weakened and almost destroyed b the revisionists and opportunists, his matchless revolutionary strateg etc., was a worthy successor of Marx. But the Overstreets, who set out tell us what communism is, do not consider it important enough to mak even an outline statement of their great work! Instead, they picture the two world figures as a couple of blundering plotters. But the truth Marxist analysis is proven by the current world situation, and I rath suspect these two great men will survive the attacks of the Overstree

The Overstreets' casual estimate of American capitalism is useles All the usual clichés are there; all the parroting of stale phrases. Th even talk of the "tenderness and compassion" of the American system a reference no doubt to the slave auction block, the massacres of t Indians, the bloody battles of the workers for simple human rights Homestead, Republic Steel, Ford, etc. etc., the mass starvation of t

people in the various depressions that are a built-in part of that "tender" and "compassionate" system!

The authors have no explanation for the intense wave of anti-Americanism now sweeping the world—naturally enough, since the cause of this is the anti-democratic nature of American imperialism, which deeply offends and injures the peoples of all countries. This expresses itself in the war threat which Washington keeps hanging over the world; by the arrogance of American diplomacy; by the domineering attitude of the U.S. in its trade relations; and by this country's notorious support of dictators, kings, and other autocrats throughout the world. Furthermore, there is the shock given to world democracy by the Jim Crow barbarism practiced against the Negro people, by the strong elements of McCarthyism and Ku Klux Klanism in American domestic policy. Peoples who experienced war and suffering following upon persecution of Communists and other progressives in their own countries do not look with favor upon similar persecutions in the USA.

NATURALLY, the Overstreets' book lays big stress upon the reactionary clamor that communism, especially in the Soviet Union, is anti-democratic. They say that there is an "irreconcilable antagonism" between communism and democracy. They cite, among other "facts," that Lenin crushed Russia's sprouting democracy in January, 1918, when he abolished the scheduled Constituent Assembly. But the fact is that the revolutionary Russian people had run far ahead of the Constituent Assembly. The workers and peasants, in their overwhelming majority had swung behind the Bolsheviks. To have supported the Constituent Assembly under such circumstances would have been to take a long step backward, to attempt to reverse the course of the revolution. Naturally Lenin refused to do this.

The Overstreets advance the thesis that because Communists believe sian democracy in the Kronstadt revolt of March, 1921. To back this up, they simply resort to fiction. The reality however was somewhat different. Instead of being led by progressive democrats, the Kronstadt revolt was actually headed almost entirely by anti-Soviet anarchists, as well as others, who raised the slogan, "Soviets Without the Communists." Significantly, Lloyd George, at that time, said that the Russian Revolution was going through a decisive test in the Kronstadt Revolt, and if it surmounted that trial, the capitalist leaders would have to sit down and do business with it. And he was essentially right. For if the revolt had succeeded, there was grave danger that it might have been the end of the Soviet government in the critical conditions that then prevailed. Lenin was fundamentally correct in the way in which he understood both the Constituent Assembly and the Kronstadt revolt as counter-revolutionary,

and history has fully justified him. In any case, the Soviet system of socialized industry and the land, and the socialist institutions connected with them, have proved themselves to be incomparably more democrtaic than the capitalist system of private ownership anywhere in the world.

Since then, the Russians have demonstrated time and time again the democratic content of the Soviet government. During World War II they confounded the pessimists by breaking the back-bone of Hitler's army, although the bourgeois experts, with their "theories" that the Soviets did not dare to arm the peasants, almost unanimously declared that Hitler would win the war in six weeks. What could be more democratic than the fact that world democracy was saved by the Soviet people? What was more democratic than smashing the Hitler Wehrmacht, bent on enslaving millions of human beings and murdering millions of others? The Overstreets, however, quite possibly themselves alive and free because of this fact, give them no credit whatsoever. Even General MacArthur was moved, at that time, to declare: "The hopes of civilization rest upon the worthy banners of the courageous Red Army." (A.P. dispatch, Nov. 23, 1954). The repeated strategic victories of the Russian Revolution were also fundamental in unleashing the tremendous democratic, anti-imperialist revolutions now sweeping the colonial and ex-colonial countries of the world. The Overstreets, and the Dulles and Eisenhowers, may not like this, nor consider it "democratic." But the colonial peoples see matters otherwise.

The Overstreets drag out the old canard that the rest of the Communist-led countries are under the thumb of the Soviet Union, which exploits them, checking their growth, for its own advantage. No proof is given, nor possible. The opposite is plain to see, if in no other instance than the magnificent progress of People's China, which had the massive material and economic support of the Soviet Union.

The Overstreets advance the thesis that because Communists believe in the socialist revolution, they cannot truthfully advocate the peaceful coexistence of the two systems. Peace and socialism are represented as antagonistic and irreconcilable. Communists are alleged to believe in peace only for tactical reasons.

This is nonsense. Present-day communist strategy on a world scale has two basic aspects: a) to prevent the capitalists from plunging humanity into a devastating atomic war; and b) to build world socialism, in the meantime, in the various countries.

Obviously, this is a hard double task, as are indeed all other major revolutionary tasks. But it is now, nevertheless, being successfully carried out. The Overstreets say it is impossible. But they are merely saying 'impossible' once again to the latest of a long series of tasks which the

workers have successfully carried out over the years. The workers will maintain peace, and they will also build socialism.

THE Overstreets declare flatly that we cannot negotiate with the Communists. They make much of the time-worn argument that Communists do not live up to their agreements. "The Soviet empire rests upon broken promises," they say, and, "During its forty years of existence, the USSR has set a world's record of breaking pacts." This stuff has nothing to do with reality. It was Winston Churchill himself, who knows at least as much as the Overstreets on this matter, who said in Parliament on February 27, 1945: "I know of no government which stands to its commitments, even in its own despite, more solidly than the Russian government."

The Overstreets barely mention China. About one-half of their book, however, they devote to communism in the United States. But here, too, there is no improvement. It is full of fantastic distortions regarding the dictatorship of the proletariat, the united front, the vanguard role, and other Communist principles and programs. The policies of the Communist Party of the USA, as such, are presented in a confusion of misstatements, half-truths, and outright falsehoods. Nothing is recorded, except with rancor, of the Communist Party's pioneering role among the persecuted Negro people, of its decisive organizing work in building the CIO, of the Communists' leadership in the fight of the unemployed for work and bread, and their recent heroic struggle against the war danger and McCarthyism.

THE Overstreets do me the honor of making me a special object of abuse and misrepresentation. They quote me, for example, as having written, in August 1953, an article in *Political Affairs,* entitled "The Explosive Situation in Latin America," in which I stated, among other correct things, that "during the past couple of years, there has been growing a renaissance of the anti-imperialist national liberation movement . . . primarily directed against the leading imperialist aggressor, the United States. . . ." I should say this whole article was a pretty good forecast of what is actually taking place in Latin America today; but this is enough to condemn it in the eyese of the hopelessly biased Overstreets.

Naturally, these two authors consider it mandatory to drag up the old slander that the Communist Party advocates the violent overthrow of the United States government. They carefully ignore the fact, which upsets their force-and-violence frame-up, that the Communist Party has long since adopted the policy of achieving socialism in this country by

peaceful means. And so have other Communist Parties in their respective countries. (See the 12-Party Declaration).

The Overstreets use the typical anti-Communist misrepresentation that the Communists exploit the workers' grievances, instead of trying disinterestedly to help them win their demands. In the same fashion the various segments of the democratic masses—workers, Negroes, farmers, etc.—become "targets" for the Communists in the Overstreet lexicon. Of course Communists do not join trade unions and other mass organizations, as workers generally do, but "infiltrate" them. I would like to know who "infiltrated" the auto, textile, steel and other unions that were set up in the days of police terror, and whose first organizers were often Communists.

The Overstreets, flying in the face of daily experience of the corruption of our times, claim that the Communists break down the moral stability of the people—as if the highest mental illness, divorce, drug addiction and murder rates were the work of Communists and not of a rotten social system! In this respect, it would be well to compare the militant and alert youth of all the Communist parties and socialist countries, with the capitalist-minded young students in our own country—the "beat" and "silent" generations.

THE authors devote 22 pages of their book to whether or not the Communist Party should be outlawed. Their method is to fire a whole series of manufactured charges against the Communist Party, in no whit differing from similar attacks in the various courts of Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, Franco Spain, and Adenauer's Germany, and then, on the basis of these, to condemn the Party's claim to ciivl rights. They say that "as long as the C.P.U.S.A. holds fast to the divisive Marxist-Leninist theory of the state, and in behalf of this theory, to set class against class, it is *outside the law* whether or not it is proclaimed *illegal.*" It does not occur to the Overstreets that such an argument is self-incriminating, an appeal to brute force in the absence of fact or other justification.

The general effects of *What We Must Know About Communism* will be to blind even more the reactionary elements, who will be the main readers of this book, as to what is actually taking place in the world. The book will provide soothing syrup answers to a lot of their political fears and wishful thinking. In it, however, they will learn nothing of any value about the Communist movement, either of this country, or of the world. Those who really want to find out just what communism is, and what it means for the welfare of humanity, must look elsewhere than between the covers of the Overstreets' *Kampf.*

RiGhT FaCe

Halleluja!

A Noble Prize scientist yesterday called on American writers to reate the visions to guide the burgeoning human and technical powers f the world.

He is Dr. Arthur H. Compton, director of the metallurgical laboratory f the Manhattan Project from 1941 to 1945. He spoke at the tenth nnual National Book Awards ceremony.

"The scientists—and I am one of them—do believe in miracles," he aid. "We have lived miracles, and we know how miracles work."

The atomic bomb was such a miracle, he said, because on the surface : appeared impossible—yet men had conceived it and brought it to ass.—The *New York Times.*

People's Capitalism

Sheriff T. H. McGovran of Kanawha County (Charleston) said the umber of men arrested for non-support had risen steadily during the ast fourteen months of deepening unemployment.

He suspected that in some cases the man was driven by desperation o seek a jail sentence for non-support so that his wife could then pply to the State Department of Public Assistance for benefits. "A man vho can't support his wife can do it by going to jail," the Sheriff xplained.—The *New York Times.*

Tanks to the Rescue

The long term answer to Michigan's unemployment problem, compe- ent analysts of the situation say, is greater diversification to insure a etter balance and less dependence upon the economic fate of one or wo major products. Additional defense work, drastically reduced here nce the emphasis has been in missiles, would perhaps provide more nmediate help.—The *New York Times.*

No Flies on Him

The *Times* of March 9 contains a letter from Dr. Harry Gideonse

and George Field of Freedom House recommending that the Federal Government and private parties help to offset the effects of Communist literature in various countries by supplying their reading public with copies of writings by Jefferson, Franklin, Hamilton, etc.

There is no denying that Jefferson, Franklin, Hamilton and others were thinkers. But even the best of them were too verbose and too time-consuming. They possessed extremely scanty stocks of factual knowledge.

If the Russians flood other countries with the "creations of Marx and Lenin," they are hammering in a single, precisely couched idea, which neither Voltaire nor Jefferson could refute on the basis of their nebulous, purely emotional thinking. Marx and Lenin can be refuted only by deeds, not by books.—Letter to the *New York Times.*

Friendly Persuasion

The New Jersey Supreme Court shortened the third hole at the Ramsey Golf and Country Club today.

The court did not do it out of any consideration for the harassed duffer. It ruled that the present par 4 hole, requiring a drive across a pond, was ruining the home life of Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Sans and their two children. . . .

Justice Francis said that a golfer once told the Sans children to keep their dog quiet and then knocked it unconscious with one of his clubs —*A. P.* dispatch.

Prediction and Control

How do you spot a potential juvenile delinquent before he causes trouble?

The National Education Association's delinquency project advises school principals and teachers to watch for the following characteristics:

Those with parents who do not belong to organized groups such as parent-teacher associations, women's clubs, the Elks, Lions, Redmen or other lodges.

Those who use such expressions as "ain't" and "we don't hardly."

Those who do poorly in school, miss classes often, show no respect for public property and who are more concerned with "being" than "becoming."

Those with male kin who are tatooed.

Those who dress sharply, "hip" and "jazzy" and affect "offbeat" haircuts."

Pupils meeting all these specifications, the association reports, should be placed in a "primary reference group."—*A. P.* dispatch.

"A RAISIN IN THE SUN"

WILLIAM L. PATTERSON

"A RAISIN in the Sun," the new play by Lorraine Hansbury, opened on Broadway in March, and made theatre history. It made history in many ways, and the discussion it has started, not only in art circles but among Negro theatre folk, will go on for a long time to come.

The theme of Negro life is, of course, not new, even for Broadway. What makes this play different from the others is that it comes to Broadway at a moment when the struggle for Negro integration into American life in general has reached a critical point. Just as this play was more than half-propelled onto the stage by the people's freedom struggle behind it, of which it is a product, so its significance cannot be expressed in the conventional theatre critic's vocabulary.

It is an integral part of the struggle for Negro rights. This fact does not diminish its artistic value but, on the contrary, enhances it. Simply as a play, it performed a practical role—a bread-and-butter role for the actors that play in it, for the director, and numerous other Negro theatre folk who have been generally jimcrowed out of the theatre for lack of jobs. It proved to thousands of theatre-goers, as Jackie Robinson proved to other thousands of baseball fans, that Negro actors and actresses are every bit as talented as are their white colleagues. But, first, there had to be a play, it had to have the kind of support behind it that would overcome certain obstacles, and there had to be a moment in the objective struggle when the people, mostly white, were not only ready but anxious to welcome it.

Does this mean then that the Negro people will now receive the full rights belonging to them? And, again, precisely how did this serious treatment of Negro life come to Broadway?

These questions demand serious consideration and an answer.

Lorraine Hansberry is the first Negro woman playwright to come to Broadway. That is history. Her play was directed by Lloyd Richards, a Negro, and that too is history. The acting is superb, and the cast, with one exception, is all-Negro, and all that together constitutes the unique side of this theatre opening.

And yet all these attributes, important as they will be in determining the time this play will run, were only contributing factors in bringing it to Broadway.

"A Raisin in the Sun" was as much a product of struggle as was the May 17, 1954 desegregation decision of the U.S. Supreme Court. As Frederick

Douglass once said: nothing comes from those who rule without a struggle and it never will!

The voice of millions, white and Negro, American and foreign, castigating the cult of white supremacy, denouncing the terror of Little Rock, has been heard by the "power elite." The time was ripe. The play was written. And this combination of circumstances brought it to the stage.

HISTORY—and history is millions of people in motion seeking freedom, fighting and dying for it—broke through on the cultural front. In no sense can this truth depreciate from the talent and valor of the men and women involved in the play itself. On the contrary, it should give them a deep sense of belonging to the epic struggle, and great pride in expressing it so successfully.

It proves again what can never be proved too often: that in a monopoly-dominated America Negro citizens will as a people, as citizens, be handed nothing by nobody: those who would control their own destiny must fight for that right.

But in its turn this play, a product of struggle, will add its force to the tempo of that struggle. It is a blow aimed at the policy of ghettos and segregated education. And anything that adds depth and power to the freedom movement in the U.S.A. aids freedom loving people the world over. It is in this that one will find the full value of this play.

Racism in culture has been at once subtle and concealed, vicious and open. On the pretext that books, plays, movies dealing seriously with the Negro question would not attract a paying public, the social force behind racism succeeded in concealing the part it played in holding back the development of the Negro people.

From behind this curtain the Negro was pushed upon the stage and posed in literature as a slavish buffoon, a rapist, a clown, a manchild whose mental capacity was limited, a creature who had contributed nothing to society nor to his own development. He was indeed the "white man's burden" with the master white riding on his back.

"Raisin in the Sun" has effectively refuted such slanders.

Negro actors have proved before that they have box office appeal. From Ira Aldridge, Bert Williams to Paul Robeson, from Rose McClendon, Abbie Mitchell, Florence Mills and the incomparable Josephine Baker to Ruby Dee, Eartha Kitt, Claudia McNeil and a host of others, Negro actors and actresses have made money for others on the American stage. None has gotten the recognition really deserved. Their struggle to make of art a bastion of democracy was always curtailed, as were their efforts to make a living.

But to use the stage as a weapon for democracy remains, in the U.S.A., almost impossible unless the struggle is intensified. The stage always was, and still remains, an arena for propaganda —both good and bad. It has been used to depict the kind of being whose exploitation not only seemed justified but inevitable, where Negroes were concerned. The myths of white supremacy were, and in spite of many changes still are to be seen on the stage.

But as Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Negro struggles in the USA develop, the portrayal of such caricatures ecomes increasingly more d

ficult. Racism is no longer as easy to propagate through the graphic arts, and its exporters find a dwindling world market for its sale.

New concepts of race relations in the Soviet Union, in China, in Asia, in the Arab countries and Africa are challenging the myths of white superiority. American's form of democracy is itself challenged by socialist democracy. A new morality that practices and promotes equality of opportunity is fast replacing the morality that warped men's souls and robbed their bodies.

America's talented colored playwrights, the Theodore Wards, Langston Hughes, Alice Childress' and others must be cheered by this. In the field of culture, too, the racist is being forced to retreat as he has been forced back politically. A new interpretation by the Supreme Court of the constitutional rights of the Negro forces democratic changes on the cultural front and especially the stage.

DOES this mean that we are on the verge of a change in all race relations? No. For each step toward more democracy demands more struggle. Five years have passed since the Supreme Court's decision on desegregation, but only 10 per cent of the segregated Negro students have been freed from jimcrow schools. President Eisenhower refuses to lift a finger when the Civil Rights Commission is mocked. The USA stands alone in the UN for having rejected the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on racist grounds.

If the theatre is to be used now to further the struggle for full democracy and especially against racism, leading playwrights, white as well as Negro, must deal honestly with plays of Negro life, the curse of white supremacy and its corrosive impact on national morality.

Inherent in "A Raisin in the Sun" is the problem of ghetto life. The tensions and frustrations of life in a Negro ghetto are revealed in the efforts of every member of the Younger family to achieve a better life. The lone white figure is a product of the myth of white superiority. His morality is bankrupt but he does not know it.

Obviously Lorraine Hansbury raises vital issues. But the reviewers of the New York press consciously or unconsciously avoided these issues. They asserted that such an approach is strictly "political" and was irrelevant to art criticism. But art has its politics no less than its cultural attributes.

Art as a weapon and a truly cultural medium will come into its own, but not by itself. The freedom struggle of the Negro people should and will achieve expression on every front. Those who want freedom can never relax, nor can they accept the notion that there are fronts of human relations removed from conflict.

The battle for human dignity is being won. The destruction of the racist concepts of those who rule in America would be a mortal blow to national and racial chauvisim. The theatre must be for progress and humanism. And "Raisin in the Sun" is part of such a theatre.

books in review

Science and Conscience

THE SEARCH by C. P. SNOW. Scribner's. $3.95.

IN a note explaining why he was reissuing *The Search,* C. P. Snow tells us that when it was originally published in 1934, "though it nearly made me rich (it missed by the odd vote being the **Book-of-the-Month** Club choice in the U.S.A.), I knew that for me it was a false start. . . . I wanted to say something about people first and foremost, and then people-in-society, in quite a different way, and at quite a different level, from anything in this book. . . . When at last I felt that in the *Strangers and Brothers* sequence I was doing something of what I set out to do, I found that *The Search* had an interest for me. I hope that it may now have some interest for others."

In the publishing world, where superlatives are produced more cheaply than penny candy, the modest hope for "some interest" on the part of the reader makes one pause. Yet how perfectly this quiet word expresses the essence of Snow's appeal to the mind of the reader. He *interests* us, which is to say he engages our thinking, a prime function of the novelist more and more fading from the contemporary novel, whose appeal is more and more to any sense other than thought.

Some of the interest which Snow generates with so much excitement in *The Search* flows to him gratuitously from a private source of the readers'. The world of science has created a cauldron of anxieties within us, for whatever our individual reactions to the great scientific discoveries of our age, we share a common sense of powerlessness before the forces which threaten to manipulate so much more of our lives than we care to relinquish, along with an intense curiosity to understand the men who have set them loose. We are therefore irresistibly attracted to a work which offers insight into this special, frightening world.

But there is not a trace of science fiction in *The Search.* It is a genuine account of scientific experience, derived first hand. By the time the author was 28 he had already gained considerable distinction at Cambridge as a physicist. His own important research was done in the field of crystallography, and during the war he held a high government post in England as a director of scientific personnel.

Some of this experience we are familiar with in its fictionalized form in the *Strangers and Brothers* novels. Though *The Search* is no part of this series, it is very much a part of the world of C. P. Snow, an atmophere in which intelligence probes reality and moral judgments are at least sought for if not given finality. It is the world, too, of the Snow characterization. Like Lewis Eliot, the narrator of the other

novels, the narrator of *The Search* is a poor but gifted young man who must use the full cutting edge of his brilliance to make his way in his chosen field. But the essential story of Arthur Miles, like Eliot, is his struggle to resolve or balance the conflicting values of love and work, of power and morality, of success and personal honesty.

Alfred Kazin in the February issue of the *Reporter* squeezes Snow into an ill-fitting critical theory which claims that Snow's novels "tell over and over of the struggles of poor boys for careers. . . . Snow is old enough to have grown up believing in the ascendancy of poor boys to power, in the great career as a real subject, and this seems to me the essential concern behind his novels. . . . Snow's achievement is a tragic conception of life, founded on the contrast between the will with which a gifted boy makes his way up in England and the accidents of life that determine his actual fate." Such an interpretation is better applied to another contemporary English novel, John Braine's *Room At The Top,* which thins out a Julien Sorel hero into what is essentially a narrow cliché of a modern English adventurer. Snow's concerns are not at all with the accidents of fate which upset the individual will. but with the individual's struggle to strengthen the moral basis of contemporary society.

There is a touch of Julian Sorel in Arthur Miles, but it is a touch, not the touchstone. Miles says:

> In a sense I have lived by my wits since I was eighteen; a failure in an examination, a bad start in research, a mistaken choice—and I should have been a schoolmaster all my life; and I shall be old before I forget it. . . . Love altered my life far less than did science or anxiety about money. It is not so easy to confess the part that my fears over money played all through my young manhood. But to leave them out in one's search for the depths of the soul is—to show how little one knows of the depths of the soul. The desire for security (of which money can often be the symbol) decides much of the patterns of our lives, and it is only rarely that we can dismiss it altogether, and even then we are not rid of it for long.

But Miles is no adventurer, furthering his career with whatever tools come to hand. His gift is for science, but he does not misuse it. When he has triumphed in his first important project on the structure of crystals, he equates his happiness with the ecstasy of faith.

> It was as though I had looked for a truth outside myself, and finding it has become for a moment part of the truth I sought, as though all the world, the atoms and the stars, were wonderfully clear and close to me, and I to them, so that we were part of a lucidity more tremendous than any mystery . . . Once, when I was young, I used to sneer at the mystics who have described the experience of being at one with God and part of the unity of things. After that afternoon, I did not want to laugh again; for though I should have interpreted the experience differently, I thought I knew what they meant.

Miles' decision to leave science is consistent with this faith, springing from his recognition that his scientific passion is stained as much by a passion for success and power as it is for scientific truth. He is still not free of his interest and he spends the residue furthering the career of his friend-rival, Sheriff. But Sheriff's continuing success comes to depend on a scienitfic "hoax"

and Miles is again faced with a moral choice: to let the situation be, or publicly correct the mistake and ruin his friend.

Snow characterizes Miles' decision to let it be as a "triumph of the personal things . . . I was free of a cloud that for so long had come between me and the future; I was liberated from all the faiths and superstitutions, and at least there was only the honesty I should try to keep with myself."

Personal honesty as a moral standard is beyond argument (like sin). But Snow's resolution leaves a gritty residue of questions. Where is the "triumph of the personal things" in saving an ambiguous friendship over a scientific truth? How does Miles serve a higher ethic by leaving a high position in science for a beginning one in writing? (And would he have been economically free to decide so at all without the fortuitous circumstances of marriage to a wealthy woman?) Is Snow equating science with worldly power and power with immorality? And how would this principle apply to the complex drama of an Oppenheimer, a Teller, and a Pauling, in a setting in which at least a hunk of humanity's fate might rest on *which* of the men succeeds in power. *The Search* does not sneak aside from the great issues. It was after all written in 1934 before such issues were raised in the stunning mushroom shape of today. But *The New Men,* in which Snow dealt specifically with the atomic scientists, also culminates in an act of withdrawal by Martin Eliot, again out of motivations of personal honesty, and aversion to power and corrupt success. Such a position leaves us helpless, delivered over to the hands of the bunglers, the Sheriffs and the Desmonds, and by extension to their real life counterparts—and worse—to the politicians, the industrialists, and the military they service. But of course this is not Snow's position. Snow's position is a question: How do we keep our hand in, keep the worst horrors out, and manage to stay honest with ourselves? Snow's position is the peak of bourgeois liberalism.

Still it is Snow who has written a beautifully honest testament of a liberal's stand in a review of J. D. Bernal's book, *World Without War,* in the November 15th issue of the *New Statesman.* He writes of Bernal, the Marxist:

> And now may I, whom Soviet critics quite amiably call a "bourgeois democrat," say that . . . I have not in my life met anyone who more passionately, or with more knowledge and imagination, wanted to be of some use to his brother men . . . that he feels with a force of emotion that most of us can only call on for our family and friends that hundreds of millions of men could be saved from physical misery, from hunger and premature death, if only there were a minimum of sense, scientific thinking and good will. I should like some of us, non-Marxist, to try to match Bernal in scientific imagination, brotherly charity and human concern. Those are better motives than fear.

It was of a simpler era than ours that Henry James wrote, ". . . the civilization of the 19th century . . . appears so multitudinous, so complex, so far-spreading, so suggestive, so portentous—it has such misty edges and far reverberations—that the imagination, oppressed and overwhelmed, shrinks from any attempt to grasp it as a whole." The imagination of most contemporary novelists have shrunk

right out of sight of the task. What makes Snow unique among English and American novelists is his determination to approach the depiction in art of our contemporary, irreducible society as a task of the reasoning creative intelligence. He brings as tools a novelist's eye for rich characterization and dramatic scene, a humanitarian's concern with man's responsibility for his brothers, and a scientist's passion for the study of material reality. He has revealed less of these gifts in *The Search* than in the *Strangers and Brothers* series. There are no single characterizations comparable in richness to the portrait of the elder March (though Constantine is a brilliant portrait of a creative scientist), or in moral beauty to Charles March. There is no woman in *The Search* to seize the reader's imagination with the force of Shiela Knight or the appeal of Katherine March. Nor is there in any of Snow's work the sense of a surging mass of humanity behind the highly cerebral prototypes he projects. Snow shrinks from contact with the poetry of the collective effort or of the folk spirit distilled through a single character. Snow's dependence is all on individual good sense, scientific thinking and good will. It is true that life, art and politics demand more than this excellent trio of virtues. But it is also true that most writers bring far less.

HELEN DAVIS

The Road Was Hard

COMRADE VENKA, by Pavel Nilin. Simon and Schuster. $3.75.

PUBLISHED here in translation recently, Pavel Nilin's *Comrade Venka* has been a best seller in the Soviet Union ever since it appeared in 1957. Under the title *Cruelty*, it was first serialized in the monthly, Znamia (*The Banner*), then came out in hard covers with a first printing of 90,000, and was later reprinted as a paperback in an edition of half a million. The above statistics, taken from the jacket, are quoted in the *New York Times* review by Marc Slonim who interprets them to mean that the Russians are hungry for criticism of the Communist Party and its methods, and will avidly devour anything along these lines that may come their way.

But a long, thoughtful review of *Cruelty* in "Soviet Literature" (September 1957) presents the facts somewhat differently. For *Cruelty*—or *Comrade Venka*—is the second in a series of novels in which the author has been examining the historical past that was his own youth. A large, complicatedly-related cast of characters populating a small Siberian town serves his purpose. First one group, then another, are shown as they muddle through the difficult, turbulent period in the early Nineteen-Twenties when for the first time revolutionary theory was being made to work in a flesh-and-blood world. That it did not work perfectly is not surprising. And while the youth of the Western World were busy trudging their way toward the time when they would become lost, their Soviet counterparts were grappling with the realities of adjustment to socialist society in the midst of civil war, of NEP, and of general trial and error.

Although the cast is complicated, each separate book in the series is simple and disarmingly straightforward. In an earlier novel, *Probation*, Nilin deals with the problems of sev-

eral young Comsomols on a first factory job. In *Comrade Venka,* the major characters are boys belonging to the same Comsomol group, but attached to the local office of the Criminal Investigation Department. The immediate problem facing the Department is how to cope with the anti-Communist bandits infesting the taiga. The bandit bands, excellently organized under an *ataman* who knows how to exact loyalty from his followers while putting to good use financial help and leaflets sent to him from abroad, are succeeding admirably in keeping the peasant population hostile to the new regime.

Comrade Venka is made responsible for capturing the bandits. It is an exciting assignment, the kind that appeals naturally to youngsters of twenty with more energy than they know what to do with. But it is also a subtle assignment, for in many ways it turns out to be a battle for men's souls. When physical action is no longer paramount, when the Chief demands *results* and doesn't particularly care how these are obtained, the situation suddenly acquires an unexpected dimension; it destroys Venka, who has not yet begun to learn how to make a marriage between reality and lofty idealism.

The narrative is handled in the first person, and sounds like the effortless reminiscing of a grown man trying affectionately to piece together the story of a boyhood friend who was also his much-admired superior. How is it that Venka, the Comsomol who showed such talent and promise and zeal, Venka who loved life and had an infinite capacity for its enjoyment, should have committed suicide in a public restaurant, like any character in a nineteenth-century romantic novel? The friend, in telling the story, not only shows us a contradictory character in deep personal conflict; he again lives through the difficult months of the chase and the capture, and with him we experience the pain and the shock which youngsters must go through as they learn that men in high places are sometimes callous or unscrupulous, that lies and bluff are not always exposed and punished, and that even as one builds a socialist society, human nature may still be petty, mean, and self-seeking.

Thirty years later, the story-teller has acquired what by the very nature of things he and his friends in the Criminal Investigation Department could not possibly have possessed at the time—maturity. It is this maturity, illuminating the wildly romantic memories of cops-and-robbers stories, of contact with outlaws who have "Death to the Communists" tattooed on their chests, but who at the same time are ordinary kulaks, of a night spent in the cabin of the *ataman's* beautiful peasant mistress and an afternoon in a public park with a girl on whom both boys have a real teen-age crush though they hardly know her—it is this maturity sorting out and putting in perspective the improbable and the true, which gives the book its wisdom and its meaning.

A better title than *Cruelty*—or rather, a more accurate translation of the spirit of the Russian word—might be "Ruthlessness." For it is the ruthlessness of the process of growing-up as well as of examining a society in the process of change that is the book's basic theme. This is a valid theme,

deeply honest, all-embracing in its universality. Searching for the best single word to describe the writer's approach to his material, what comes to mind is tenderness. And if tenderness and cruelty strike one as a curious combination, bear in mind that the contradiction is only a surface one. For it is only natural that the wise adult should look with a degree of tenderness on the inevitable mistakes of youth. By the same token, what may seem like a bitter indictment to the *New York Times* critic is much more a realistic appraisal of the inevitable tug-of-war between good and evil during the first forward period of a revolutionary society in flux.

KAY PULASKI

The Painter's Province

A PAINTER OF OUR TIME, by John Berger. Simon and Schuster. $3.50.

JOHN BERGER, art columnist for the British weekly, *The New Statesman,* is familiar to *Mainstream* readers as the author of the provocative article, "The Problems of the Painter" (Nov., 1956), and the series of succinct critiques, "Picasso and Others" (March, 1958), as well as last month's study of Jackson Pollock.

The respect Berger has won from British intellectuals who are hostile to his Marxist outlook may be grudging but it springs from an achievement it is hard for them to deny. In his critical writing he most often manages to strike a fine balance between the singular and the general in art, the individual work and the tradition within which it falls, the idea and the train of thought, the man and the class or group whose salient traits he exhibits. On the one hand, he avoids those panoramic pronouncements which satisfy the doctrinaire. He insists on proving his points by particulars, so that even if some should not think that he has made his case, they can understand the grounds for it. On the other hand, he does not regard the specific creative work as absolutely, that is, unqualifiedly unique. It is also, for Berger, an instance, an example of a social trend which has its own laws and presses its demands on the creator. In short, he is both a sensitive and a philosophic critic.

So, too, is his fictitious character, Janos Lavin, whose life as a painter and whose political integrity are staked against the indifference or enmity of the London art world. Lavin had fled first from the 1919 White Terror in Hungary and then from German fascism. He is nagged by the suspicion that his status as a refugee has forced, or enabled, him—he can never be certain which—to escape his responsibility to the cause of socialism by withdrawing him from participation in its crucial struggles. The execution in Budapest in 1952 of his boyhood pal, later a Communist politico-intellectual leader, aggravates his unrest; but it is not until his friend's vindication, shortly before the tragic events of October, 1956 that he resolves to cut loose and return to his homeland. He parts from his English wife, his small circle of fellow artists, and his life's work; while we are left with the notebook, discovered in his studio by his closest friend, "John," which permits us to consider the thoughts which we can now see were the reasons for his decision.

The notebook comprises, first of all,

though not centrally, a series of biting observations of the environment of school directors, collectors, reviewers, gallery owners, dilettantes and charlatans who batten on the labor of the artist, and whom he must pretend to take seriously if he is to live at all. From the point of view of action, these are Berger's most successful scenes, in that he has allowed the comic spirit to spill over a little on the painter himself. (When this soul-destroying world is deprived of dramatization, Lavin's comments on it tend to be too humorless. It is better when he can set aside his suffering to become a satiric eye.)

The importance of these scenes is not entirely self-evident. Their function goes beyond that of self-contained satire or the criticism of a milieu. Lavin's target is the hag-ridden market-profit society which spawns the parasites of art as a *necessary* condition of the survival of art itself. Does this "condition" sound paradoxical? Are the bourgeois so stupid as to support forms of expression and sometimes even to patronize individuals who can mean nothing to them, or who, as in the case of Lavin, are frankly hostile? The paradox is fostered, and solved, by the parasites. It is just they, heartless and mindless, who are needed to create the atmosphere of the "cash nexus" which reduces all works of art—and the artist himself—to their exchange values, so that their content becomes irrelevant as long as profit can be squeezed from the ecstasy of the transactions which they inspire. The parasites are the agents of the ultimate irony which stirs some artists to laughter, corrupts others beyond redeeming, and drives still others wild or mad. By converting the meaning of art to its money form they permit the spectators to consider its aesthetic form in tranquility, undisturbed by the content with which it was once indissolubly connected.

Now Lavin knows what the parasites are for; hence his annoyance is incidental to his revolutionary insight. From his description of his own canvases and his evaluation of the paintings of others, it is evident that he works within the context, or more correctly, with the perspective of a classless society before him. Confined by the circumstances of studio production he thinks of creating a monumental or mural art which will project men's labor, pleasures and aspirations, and reveal their potentialities. His bent is toward the classical and he feels that this tradition—exemplified by Leger among his contemporaries—is best suited to the aims of public expression. (Think of the French painter's builders, cyclists and bathers. It may be worth remembering that Leger considered himself a Communist.)

But that is just the beginning of Janos Lavin's long road. His discontent is deep seated and baffling, as are all conflicts that have both a subjective and an external origin. Lavin feels that while there is a bond, there can be no absolute correspondence between his political commitment and his development as a painter. Janos is not one of those who believe that commitment stifles initiative. He *is* concerned with the depth and latitude allowed the artist's imagination within the context of commitment. Thus, in distinguishing between content and subject matter, he insists that a painting be more than a description of a familiar scene that it convey more than a tactile

message, tell more than a story; in short, that it do something beyond what advertising art and the mass media obviously do more efficiently.

What is that something? Can it be old? Will not people be bored by it? Must it be new? Will they not laugh at it, as the auto workers were amused at first by Leger's mural, *Les Constructeurs,* when it was placed in their canteen? That question was answered for Leger by the workers themselves. When he went back eight days after the installation, they had stopped laughing and would look up at it attentively from time to time as they ate. Finally, one of the workers approached him and said: they will miss your picture when it is taken away. Turn that observation around; it makes sense that way, too: if his work stands a chance of being missed, the painter will know that he has added something to the world that justified his travail. Lavin's journal records the effort of an artist with a revolutionary outlook to assure himself that though the proof may take time in coming, it will come, like socialism itself. The analogy is not intended ironically, even though it applies most specifically to the relation of artist to worker under capitalism. For that relation is a constantly shifting one, depending not only on the artist's allegiance but on the education of the onlooker, the character of trade union organization and leadership, and the intensity of the political struggle in which the working class is involved. Also, nothing can substitute for the artist's feeling that he is needed.

Those who have read Berger's articles will see that his diarist, as well as "John," share many of the author's thoughts on painting and politics. Why, then, choose fiction as the means to transmit them? Well, sometimes one may wish to describe a creative intelligence at work rather than simply to convey the end product of thinking. As a matter of fact, the one serious defect of the novel is that the contemplative side of Janos Lavin is too preponderant in Berger's portrayal of him. This is surely in reaction to the film versions of the artist as a saint, demon, or both at once: the movie van Goghs, Gaugin's and Gulley Jimsons. But it makes for a certain overaustere monotony, so that one longs for a little of the exuberance of Friedrich Bergmann in Christopher Isherwood's *Prater Violet.* Yet the defect is a noble one, and Puritan, in the best sense of that word.

CHARLES HUMBOLDT

The Crime Fits the Times

SEVEN SHARES IN A GOLD MINE, by Margaret Larkin. Simon and Schuster. $3.95.

MURDER has a long lineage, but it keeps abreast of the times.

In September, 1952, a time bomb exploded in the forward baggage compartment of a plane in flight from Mexico City to the provincial town of Oaxaca. Among the 17 passengers was an experienced journalist with imagination, insight, and a deep regard for human values. Margaret Larkin was taking her ten-year-old daughter for a short holiday. "Oh my God," she cried out in furious protest at such futile loss of life for a little excursion. Later, the details of the incident assumed their proper proportion and its meaning

emerged in full complexity and horror. Only then was she ready to write her book, recording the mystery, the suspense, the chase, the capture, the tangle of court proceedings; as well as the pathos and tragedy of those involved. Humor, too: six innocent passengers congratulating themselves on their luck, while the pilot, his plane torn open and every flight instrument destroyed, urged the hostess, "Help me to pray," as he probed through banks of clouds for any kind of landing field.

These six had still to learn the extent of their luck. Hired by the supposed representative of "an American company" in Oaxaca at unusually high wages, they had given up their homes in the city, sold their furniture, been handed plane tickets—and initialed medallions and belt buckles so that they would be more easily identified if some unforeseen circumstances required it. The person who spread this bounty was Sr. Noriega, a real gentleman. In the course of the investigation which followed, they learned that his name was actually Emilio Arellano Schtelige, and that he had insured the six of them and one other, an old man, for two million pesos. As the picture became clearer, the old man confessed with grief and shame that he was Arellano's uncle. His favorite nephew had offered to treat him to a vacation in the south. He had also manufactured the bomb which would make certain that his uncle would not arrive.

Even more incredible was the appearance on the scene of the popular singer and theatre manager, Paco Sierra, whose unknowing tool Arellano claimed to be. The story of the downfall of this handsome, talented man, whom no one could believe guilty of so monstrous a crime, is told with delicacy, tact, and unsparing judgment.

The author, who was aided by her friend and interpreter, Carmen Molina, has given us a remarkable description of Mexican court procedure. Particularly notable is the *careo* or confrontation of witnesses, which enables them to refute one another and argue it out under the watchful eyes of the judge. Miss Larkin also secured interviews with both men in jail. Her comments on prison life are infused with social insight and human consideration. She notes that money can buy anything: a private "room," and every luxury, including the personal services of other inmates. But even the poorest prisoner is entitled to privacy during the biweekly conjugal visit, a feature which puts our own penal procedure to shame.

Both Arellano and Sierra were eager for a good press and talked freely if not entirely frankly to the interviewer, whom they did not know had almost been one of their victims. She tried to discover—and they to conceal—whatever relationship there might be between the plausible and nimble-witted but friendless Arellano and his optimistic fellow conspirator, still basking in the warmth of admirers and awaiting the specially prepared dinner brought each day to his cell by an adoring spouse. (He referred to her as *"senora esposa,"* addressed her as "mi reina"—my queen—and used to say of her: "She is a true Mexican wife. For her the home is everything.")

The visit to the home of Sierra's wife, Esperanza Iris, the former stage idol of all Latin America, ranks with the best of reportage. How vivid is the scene in which the "Queen of the Operetta and Empress of Grace" conducts

her visitor on a tour of her trophies and mementos of happiness: a jewelled crown resting on a tasselled velvet pillow; a misty portrait of a young beauty seen through an archway; huge albums of photos, programs, costumes, wigs, props, librettos, ribbons from her bouquets. . . . How touching when, through the heaps of finery in charming or trivial taste, one detects the underlying notes of regret and grief and wishful loyalty to a weak and foolish man who wept easily at misfortune and could not do without the constant support and homage of others.

It is easy to fix the motive for the repulsive crime which the half-mad "engineer" and the hapless singer had planned. What is harder to come by is the state of mind at which they must have arrived before the motive could lead to the act. In describing the kind of egoism which animated her subjects, Miss Larkin sees it as not just an attribute of distorted individuals but the stamp of an acquisitive society which elevates money above human life. In such a world people do not appear as men and women but as ciphers; and it is possible to look at the travelers—victims to be—on a plane as simply Seven Shares in a Gold Mine.

VIOLA BROTHERS SHORE

Counterfeit

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN, by Pierre Boulle. Vanguard. $3.50.

ALTHOUGH Pierre Boulle is the author of some half-dozen novels he is chiefly known for *The Bridge Over the River Kwai* with which he hit the Hollywood jackpot. Using the device of mechanical ambiguity which he employed in that work, Boulle has given his characteristic twist to the time-honored plot of the Communist fanatic who is won over and humanized by contact with the West.

His story is laid in the jungles of Malaya and the soul to be saved is that of a Chinese girl called Ling who is a member of a band of partisans or "terrorists," as Boulle more frequently calls them. In a raid on a rubber plantation Ling is wounded and is rescued by Patricia, the wife of the plantation manager, Bernard. Instead of turning Ling over to the police as her husband wishes, Patricia embarks on an ambitious program of rehabilitating her savage by Christian charity and love. Patricia's saintliness softens Ling's hard-heartedness and she is further seduced by more substantial gifts of gowns, jewels and cosmetics. After treatment in a beauty parlor Ling turns out, it goes without saying, to be a ravishing beauty and Patricia's husband falls in love with her. Ling repays Patricia's devotion by arranging her kidnapping by the band of terrorists to which she previously belonged, and then runs off with her husband. The point of the novel is that Ling has absorbed all the values of western civilization, the good and the bad. From Patricia she absorbs the spiritual values of Christianity and democracy and puts her teachings into practice by a reconciliation with her own family whom she formerly despised. At the same time she learns the materialistic values of the West—the other side of the coin—and becomes an egotist and opportunist. As Boulle judiciously

sums it up, "One of us, that's what she has become."

The seduction of an intractable Communist automaton by the blandishments of the West is no novel theme. Not content with this classic plot Boulle strives for higher things and adds his stock switcheroo to an otherwise commonplace commercial plot. There is a great deal of Boulle's brand of irony throughout the book. For example, in a series of farcical quidpro-quos he compares the plantation bureaucracy with the bureaucracy of the partisans. He will have plantation officials checking statistics on rubber production and, on the other hand, a partisan official going through his filing cabinets containing his production statistics, i.e. assassinations. The author constantly nudges the reader's elbow to be certain that none of these delightful absurdities are missed.

This pretentious rubbish is presented in a style, the flatness of which I thought might be due to translation. Fearing I might be unfair to Boulle I dropped into a French bookstore and browsed for a while between the uncut pages of the original until I was convinced that the translator had faithfully rendered the original into English. It is cheering to realize that this kind of writing is not confined to the English speaking world.

A movie is being made out of Boulle's novel. It will be better than the book—if not worse.

MARTIN CALDER

Shop Talk

ON THE BOSS'S TIME: Shop Poems and Other Poems by George Bratt. Bay Region Publishers. San Francisco 26, Box No. 2647. $1.00.

ON THE BOSS'S TIME succeeds better than any book of poems I know in combining the jet stream of modern verse usage with shop and trade union experience plus a politically literate working class eye.

Here, for instance, is a short lyric that any avant garde poet from the days of Horace or Tu Fu to Williams would be glad to sign:

O Blanche!
I rebel!
I resist!
I burn!
O damn you!
I am yours!
What now!

Elsewhere from this carefully designed and beautifully printed paperback I quote from a scene from a long elegy for a shop foreman:

Power sucking away on the dust controls
Young people projecting plans and profiles
into intricately machined, dimensionally exact components.
Bench men assembling, joining, handtooling,
integrating cabinet form and entrails

What counts in a poem, is not where it comes from but where it is going. However, in this book it is hard to separate one from the other.

Bratt's poems come out of a "peculiar concatenation of events" (as they used to say about the birth of our planet) that is not likely to happen again. The book is based on contemporary experience that millions of shop workers will recognize, not only at work or laid off, or hurt on the job, but

play, in bed, in love, on the beach, on the highway motorcade, et al.

Add to this, before Bratt got into the shop in San Francisco in the early 30's, he had already spent a good part of half his present 60-odd years in and around the modernist literary and theatre world abroad and in the States.

He is an Amherst linguistic graduate who taught English in Constantinopole before World War I. He has been a teacher, an actor, in plays like "The Dybbuk" and E. E. Cummings "HIM." In the depression days he was written up on the West Coast in an article on "How Reds Live On Relief."

When the angels of the word began to operate through Bratt's larynx a few years ago he was able to bring to his poems a unique combine of advance guard know-how and vanguard working class political experience.

I think Bratt is now at his best as a politician when he is most a poet. Occasionally the Muse does go to sleep "On the Boss's Time," and you hear the type of sloganeering Bratt's verse usually transcends.

The George Bratt I read best is heard in a poem like his "Ode to a Pedestrian" which starts off:

The dinosaurian crane with fabricated
steel skeleton
and borrowed reflexes
swings around the corner
and proceeds to lower the concrete bucket
over the expectant forms

and then works its way to the pedestrian:

with locomotive extremities
geared to a pair of high heels and
nylons . . .
don't keep running this gauntlet
of organized teamsters
operating engineers . . .
without once looking back and waving
your hand
in token of working class solidarity!

I picked up my copy of *On The Boss's Time* just to glance over the book, but—(as they say about detective stories)—I couldn't put it down until I had read it through. I hear in it the voice of a San Francisco Renaissance with roots not only in the jazz counterpoint of the word but in the San Francisco General Strike.

There are underground and high altitude levels of experience for which you have to go to poets such as Neruda or Eluard, but they don't have the closeness to workers you get from Bratt's style.

I wish every young modernist as well as old timers could learn from Bratt that what is really revolutionary in contemporary art is a new relationship with a new kind of audience. You find that in Mexico among the mural painters and the artists of the Teller Grafica. But few painters or poets are even attempting this kind of "arte publica" in the U.S.A. Bratt has done it.

The result is a real Voice of America, sometimes off key, sometimes raucous, but always cool with a quick smile and a light for any fellow traveller who knows what it is to have the "owner . . . breathing down our necks:

. . One who has never produced
anything
but who wants PRODUCTION!"

WALTER LOWENFELS

Poems of Two Cities

SELECTIONS FROM *PAROLES*, by Jacques Prevert. Translated by Law-

rence Ferlinghetti. Published by City Lights Books. $1.00.

I WANT to ask you, dear readers—once you have bought this little paperback—to be careful because, after all, a poet is coming into your life. He wants to enrich it with his poverty, strengthen it with his weakness, gladden it with his sadness. Be careful; that is, pay attention. You may wish to ask questions later but, for the moment, listen with a measure of respect. It may be that, like a good friend, he will bore you on certain occasions, or abuse your privacy; but in the main, you might agree that he is all you've got, and that here is the purpose, the meaning of life: that in this relationship between the two of you is contained the functioning heart.

Is Prevert that good? I haven't taken out my slide rule and calculated his exact proportions, comparing carefully and taking into consideration all the damned and all the heralded hewers of existence. He may not compare, and the subsequent size we may assign to him on a cold day is really of no importance. He is a poet, over there, in France, with a war on the shoulders of his memory; a fellow with a lively tongue, whimsical, capricious, too gentle to be naughty, condoning love and hunger as they lead their victims to delinquency. He is a rather concrete someone over there saying his Pater Noster:

Our Father who art in heaven
Stay there
And we'll stay here on earth
Which is sometimes so pretty . . .

Concrete, and probably unpleasant for some because he is honest and doesn play their game:

. . . your spinal cord
pranced with pride and joy
in front of the army barracks
your head went haywire
when the handsome hore-guards passed
and the military music
tickled you from head to toe
tickled you
and the kids you carried on yo shoulders
you let them slide off into the t colored mud
into the clay of the dead. . . .
(Hard Times)

With a poetic touch which the Encyc pedists never had, he has decided th he, too, might just as well begin *Inventory* of things:

One stone
two houses
three ruins
four gravediggers
one garden
some flowers

one raccoon. . . .
. . . one day of glory
one week of goodness
one month of Mary
one terrible year
one minute of silence
one second of inattention
and . . .

five or six raccoons

one litle boy who goes to scho crying
one litle boy who comes out laugh
one ant
two flints
seventeen elephants. . . .

And so, we thank Ferlinghetti for p ing him through that cruel sieve, chicken wire fence around the to of Babel. He's done a good job.

we thank our lucky stars for naked words, for these *Paroles*. It may be the times, a time for truth—it may be that.

ALVARO CARDONA-HINE

THE TUNE OF THE CALLIOPE, Poems and Drawings of New York. Poems by Aaron Kramer, drawings by twelve contemporary artists. Thomas Yoseloff, Publisher. $7.50.

INTRODUCING this large, composite book, Saul Lishinsky writes: "The drawings were done within a period of years. They were not thrown together haphazardly with the poems, but rather consideration was given to what was artistically portrayed, and particular drawings faced by particular poems." Aaron Kramer states: "More than half of the poems were gathered from books and magazines published over a span of twenty years. The reader may therefore find variations not only in mood and outlook, but in degrees of artistic development as well."

The ticklish job of blending the two arts was done fairly consistently, as stated by Mr. Lishinsky. However, if the poems gain by the drawings, the opposite cannot be said to be true. In many instances, the poetry is overwhelmed by the power and sincerity of the pictorial art. Generally speaking, the poetry is trite and much too homogeneous, belying the statement of Mr. Kramer quoted above, while the drawings go on to proffer variety and freshness. They range from simple sketches of a few lines to crowded portrayals of neighborhoods. The most striking single drawing is entitled Agony,' if I am not mistaken, a takeoff on Kaethe Kollwitz. The artist, Theodore Fried, betrays the widest stylistic outlook. Jean Hale has a heavy symbolic style that is not too appealing whereas Herbert Kruckman, Alice Neel, Philip Reisman, Louis Harris, Saul Lishinsky and Joseph Solman each have qualities that bring out their world with amazing clarity. Estelle Tambak has a fuzziness and arresting disarray all her own. Hilde Weingarten works in a nostalgic geometry somewhat akin to Modigliani's.

New Yorkers searching for a backward glance at their city will take to this book. Its whole tone is somehow residual of former days, say from 1910 on; there is little or nothing of the present or the surge of life in it. Mr. Kramer bends over backwards in an endeavor to provide easily accessible material for the enterprise. The poetry in this volume can only appeal to those with conventional tastes; people who rather than diet on the stern bone of reality, always give in to that craving for rhyme which is so fattening for the spirit. I refer to things like:

I've got a hunger, don't know where;
it cries like a baby into my head;
I bought five hot dogs, but it didn't care;
frozen custard, but it wouldn't be fed.

which later in the poem continues as:

Five wooden men stood up in spite;
I pitched my heart with every ball.
After an hour they were out of sight,
and the manager gave me a kewpie-doll.
("Boardwalk Blues")

The jacket blurb quotes Shaemas O'Sheel as saying: ". . . He is a poet born as truly as ever were Shelley, Keats, Blake, Yeats, and Gerard Hopkins." But after stuff like:

All the night without a sound
slow white snow-flakes paved the ground;
and now the eyes of children glow
while they sculpt their man of snow.
("Snow")

I tend to believe that it's what you do after you are born that counts!

ALVARO CARDONA-HINE

Books Received

TIBET, by Alan Winnington. International Publishers. $4.00.

THE suppression of the counter-revolutionary uprising in Tibet makes this a most timely book. Alan Winnington was the first Western correspondent to visit that region after the Chinese army crossed its borders in 1950. His report is an excellent eye-witness account of the awe-inspiring tasks facing the Peking government as they prepared for its eventual transition to socialism a country whose economic life and outlook had remained unaltered for the last thousand years.

Tibet is one of the least mechanized societies in the world. When the Chinese arrived, there was not a single yard of road in the entire country. Vehicles were non-existent, indeed the use of the wheel was unknown with the exception of the famous Tibetan prayer wheel—a somewhat non-productive instrument. The country was torn by incessant bloody wars between the tribes for grassland. Serfs were forced to supply free labor to their overlords. One quarter of the male population was immured in monasteries, thus creating a labor shortage which negated any chance of progress.

The Chinese have attempted to modernize this region without violating the social structure or the religious customs. This creates fearful problems since the Tibetans are probably the most religion-ridden people in the world. Unexpected taboos are constantly encountered. Modern medicine is being introduced, though surgery is forbidden by the Tibetan religion. Flies and lice cannot be killed since all life is supposed to be sacred according to Buddhist law! The introduction of modern industry is complicated by the fact that disturbing the earth, therefore mining, is forbidden by the monks. At the time of Winnington's visit, the only industrial establishment in the entire country was a printing plant employing six workers.

Nevertheless, modernization is underway. Schools, hospitals, and roads are under construction. A postal system is in operation. Industrial projects are planned. Most important, however, is that the young people are being won away from the customs of their elders. This is what the newspapers have been calling "indoctrinating the youth to become troublemakers."

I REMEMBER. Sketch for an Autobiography, by Boris Pasternak. Pantheon. $3.75.

IN a letter dated July, 1958, the author, it is said, refers to this 100-page grouping of childhood and literary reminiscences as being one of his two chief works. The other is, of course, *Doctor Zhivago,* which was completed somewhat earlier. Unhappily, it has even less claim to notice as a chef d'oeuvre than the novel. In it, Pasternak has gone over much of the material of his autobiographical essay of the Twenties, *Safe Conduct,* trimming

here, expanding there, and adding to his memories of Scriabin, Mayakovsky, and one or two other leading figures, recollections of a number of minor talents and personalities. He has, as he says, eliminated the disfiguring mannerism of the earlier memoirs; but his narration is as abrupt and arbitrary as ever. The reader's expectations of some sharp insight or firm judgment is constantly baffled by trivial and inconclusive observations that he must accept as final only because nothing follows them. Compared to Herzen's *My Past and Thoughts* and Gorky's autobiography, this is small potatoes indeed. More interesting is the essay, *Translating Shakespeare,* which the publisher has thrown in as a consolation prize. This is the article which appeared, in a different translation, in the April, 1957 issue of *Mainstream.*

THE GREAT PRINCE DIED, by Bernard Wolfe. Scribners. $4.50.

IN 1937, the author, 21 years old at the time, served as one of the secretaries of Leon Trotsky, who was living in the outskirts of Mexico City. Three years after Wolfe's departure, Trotsky was killed by a man in whom he had apparently sufficient trust to allow him access to his private study. The present novel is a curious cocktail of events and speculations having to do with the murderer, the 1921 mutiny at Kronstadt, the whorehouses of the metropolis, and the visions produced by eating certain mushrooms from the highlands of Oaxaca. Mr. Wolfe's assumption is that Trotsky was assassinated by a luxury-loving sadist whose mother was being held as hostage by OGPU agents in Mexico pending the successful completion of their aim. It is hard to see why her peril should have disturbed her son, since their relationship is depicted as warm as the love of two scorpions. However, since most of the inmates of the Trotsky household are shown to have a similar emotional rapport, one can only say: each men to his theory. Apart from his unfortunate characterizations, Mr. Wolfe's style resembles a well-shaken can of nuts and bolts. The novel is supplemented with his own "unsentimental" political reflections in behalf of all underdogs, from which it may be gathered that Mr. Wolfe considers himself the one and only heart of the heartless world.