Mainstream

THE MIDAS TOUCH

EVE MERRIAM

HOW SOVIET WRITERS SEE THEMSELVES

Jack Lindsay

Alexander Tvardovsky

Konstantin Paustovsky

THE RIGHT TO GO AND COME

Scott Nearing

Poems by Thomas McGrath

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HE MIDAS TOUCH

EVE MERRIAM

ORIS and Walter Holcombe belonged to that specialists' club that flourishes in New York. Contrary to popular belief, it does not ist in Greenwich Village alone. The members are bounded by no ographical area: you can find them on the upper West Side, down on ouston or Grand Street, out in Queens, Ridgewood, Brownsville. It is inter-racial, multi-national group, and some are even native-born New orkers. Come summer, come snow, they live in a constant atmosphere anticipation; rarely affiliated to any formal church, their gods are the mmick and the personal contact. Any day Heaven may descend in the rm of a letter from an agent, telegram from a producer, or call from a blisher's secretary.

A surprisingly large percentage of the club, like Doris and Walter, e talented, clever, reasonably young and attractive. It is just unfortunate at there are thirty thousand painters alone in Manhattan, and at a nservative estimate ten times as many writers, since their tools are less pensive and not so cumbersome. The number of potential producers, rectors, actors, dancers and singers is equally depressing. At any rate, is impossible to enter a subway, board a bus, or cross a street corner thout encountering them singly or in groups. They wear no distinctive signia, but you learn to spot them readily. The would-be model with r patent leather hatbox; the Graham dancer with miniature suitcase in nd; the actor's hair a bit too long like an after-dinner speaker's re-arks, the writer with his manila envelope and penciled notations. The ord "darling", as they speak it, means *How do you do, You dirty so-d-so,* and occasionally *darling.* Last names are seldom used, not in fear the F.B.I., but as a sign of intimacy with Mr. Hammerstein, Mr. Paley, iss Bankhead, Mr. and Mrs. Luce.

Doris and Walter conformed to the pattern very well. She was little, d darkly vivacious, slightly plump, with a soft bang falling over her rehead. Walter was sandy-haired, thin, not quite round-shouldered, th horn-rimmed glasses that somehow managed to look rather rakish him. Their one-and-a-half room studio apartment was in a mouldering ownstone in the East Forties. The Chinese bowl in front of the arti-

ficial fireplace contained drooping masses of lemon leaves, while abo the mantel swung a home-made Calderlike mobile. Their most wo records were a late Mozart quartet and Bunny Berrigan's arrangeme of "I Can't Get Started". On their book shelves, Joyce, James and Jam Henry were separated by Rilke, Isherwood, Kafka, Horney, Peacock a Lorca. Their coffee table was a reproduction of an early American co bler's bench, and on it rested a huge ceramic ashtray which their frie Didi Golden had fired for them. During the last five months, the sa book with its marker on the same page, lay next to the mammoth bowl, copy of Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*. The Holcombs had taken tu reading the first few chapters enthusiastically aloud to each other. N the partly read book remained there, dusted sporadically, a successf nighttime spark to the grey cigarette ends of conversation at late parti

In so much they belonged to the group. But they departed in variety of ways, so that it was difficult to pin them down and say He these are the Holcombes dehydrated, just add water and mix. You s they had no pets, this was a first marriage for both of them, they we faithful to one another, and they wanted to have children. A year a in 1957—a century ago—it seemed as if they might almost be able afford parenthood: Walter was writing a twenty-six week documenta series for Columbia Broadcasting, and Doris had sold a jewelry desi to a small manufacturer. But the series was dropped, the manufactu went out of business, and then the Veterans Administration cut Walter's psychoanalytic treatments with Dr. Kauders, and most of th reserve funds went to pay the twice a week visits. After a few mont Walter stopped seeing Dr. Kauders, and though he never mentioned now, Doris knew that if ("when," she corrected herself—he finished play and sold it, he would want to use at least some of the money continue with Dr. K.

Meanwhile, they could afford at least to be optimistic, for althou both of them would wince at such a mundane metaphor, they had a gr many irons in the fire. There was foremost the possibility of a n documentary film unit to be set up on the East Coast, and for whi Walter would write narrations. Good old Walt was assured that as so as the backers were decided upon, and a lot found for the studio, h be told to get on the ball and go out and get a big fat sign painted w his name on it for the head of the writers' department. He kept a fol for documentary film possibiilties in the top drawer of his desk. For t time being he was free-lancing radio scripts to some of the smal stations, turning out occasional advertising copy for a non-fiction b club, and finishing the rough draft of his play.

Doris, who had attended the Neighborhood Playhouse, had a wav

cquaintance at Sardi's, Lindy's, and the tiny Algonquin bar. She had cted one summer in stock with Maureen Stapleton recited several ance poems for Valerie Bettis, and aside from her poems and slight xcursion into the field of design, she had written a short story which, lthough printed in a mimeographed journal which paid her nothing, as picked up by Martha Foley and included in the Best Short Stories of ne Year. Four publishers wrote asking if she had a novel under way. dvances, they told her regretfully, were rarely being granted nowadays or first books—the price of paper, binding, uncertain market, etc., etc., ut they would consider it a favor, deem it a privilege, feel it an honor o consider her finished work, sincerely, admiringly, faithfully yours. She ould like to take six months or so and try to write a novel or (perhaps ven *and*) a collection of poems, the publishers' letters of inquiry were arried around in her pocketbook as a reminder and talisman. She would o it, too. But first the Midas touch had to let in some steady sunlight. f she could win a Guggenheim, or a Fulbright, some kind of scholarship n the arts; design something revolutionary, invent some object practical et simple. She spent one entire weekend moving about the apartment, taring at objects, fingering them, sketching new variations of them on aper. She hated housecleaning even more than dirt, and decided to con-entrate on a household short cut for her annoyance. Walter, too, was xcited by her idea: a new kind of disposable dry mop that you wouldn't ave to shake out or wash. But the patent attorney, who was a friend of neir friend the theatrical lawyer, discouraged them by explaining how nuch the search through the Washington patent file would cost, let lone the five hundred dollar fee for a workable model of the idea. So ney walked home and switched on the radio, scoffed at the jingle con-ests for soapsuds and automobiles, sat there on the studio couch looking ut at the nostalgic dusk of Manhattan, then turned to each other, arms rapped close and comforting, feeling in lovers' silent Braille for some ign of the Midas touch.

Spring was late aud cautious. It was a good omen, the Holcombes ecided, proof that their personal Spring would be real when it arrived, o facsimile tendering premature hopes and then rough reddening wind. ud Markey sold a piece to The New Yorker; they were only ninety-five er cent envious, for Jud was a decent sort, plugging away at manu-cript upon manuscript without even the encouragement of an agent to andle his rejection slips for him. Walter's agent treated him to a couple f back-slapping drinks at the Commodore, suggested that if he changed he war background of his play there would be a better chance to get a Broadway angel interested. Walter promised to think it over again seri-usly, and took a taxi home because he was late for dinner.

In the cab, he felt the package in his pocket for Doris' birthday. The square ends were tangible, hard, sensible. Last year he had written a burlesque Person-to-Person script about her, had a few actors perform it in the studio he hired. He had slipped the record into an album of Bing Crosby singing Ave Maria, and was delighted as a small boy watching the expression on his wife's face. An expensive gag, but worth it.

He tipped the cab driver an exact ten per cent, and ran up the brownstone steps, the cardboard box bumping in his coat pocket.

Doris smoothed out the tissue paper, held the scarf up to the light. "It's beautiful, darling. The bluest blue I've ever seen. Looks like April."

Walter knotted it around her neck. "On you it looks very good. Sorry I had to be late—hope I didn't spoil dinner."

"You can't spoil stew."

"Okay then, start serving."

"Yes, sir." Doris bowed in an exaggerated mock gesture, kissed him and began bustling around the stove. Walter watched her, the blue birthday scarf flying like a windsock. Nice bright color, easy to recognize, he thought. If she were in the park wheeling the baby's carriage, I could spot her right away. "Anything much in the afternoon mail?" he asked.

"That story's back from Harpers—the fantasy one."

"The stinkers."

"And an advertisement for a clearance sale at Bloomingdale."

"Uh huh." (On a rising note. They always reported the mail to each in itemized order, starting from the bad news first.)

"And a letter from Brady." Her voice was final; no Spring today, no Midas touch until tomorrow.

"What's with him? Anything new in lotus land?"

"It's over by your dinner plate." Walter opened the typed pages, grinned at the salutation. Bern Brady was an ex-radio scripter; the two of them had once collaborated on some documentaries, later Bern joined a stable of television comedy writers, shifting from Caesar to Hope to Garry Moore and back to Hope. When his brother-in-law became a junior producer at M.G.M., Bern changed over to screen writing. It struck him as extremely funny that the nepotistic joke about relatives in the movie industry should have come true in his case. "From boff to brother-in-law to boffola", he wrote in his first letter East to the Holcombes. "Come out and pick some oranges with me. Real live Nedick's trees, with a baby starlet in every branch." He flew back to New York for a few weeks, and spent almost all the time with Walter, concocting a screen original. With his new connections, it seemed positive that it would sell to one of the studios.

Bern's letters were full of anecdotes about meeting Marilyn Monroe

nd Marlo Brando, and what Sinatra said about fan-clubs, and ghastly ›uns that he insisted he had heard Hitchcock make on the set. Their oint scenario was going the rounds, he always added, and they better get heir bags packed. Lately, though he still expanded on how wonderful t would be if the Holcombes joined him, he omitted all mention of the cript. Now, in this most recent letter, he wrote enthusiastically of a nodern version of As You Like It that he was collaborating on with nother writer at M.G.M. In reading the letter, Doris had obviously een angered for his sake, Walter realized. She was in no mood to play long with Bern's whimsy, or his still sincere wish that the Holcombes ome out to Hollywood. "It's so easy when you're right here on the spot", he letter urged. "Something would be sure to break for you both. And lon't believe all those Florida rumors about no place to live out here. can find you a neat little apartment right around the corner from the trip."

But Doris and Walter had agreed that they were not going to run off on any Walt Disney goose chase. At least here they had a lease on heir apartment, and if the new documentary unit was set up in the East, nd besides there was Walter's agent for the play, and the radio contacts ie still had, and hadn't Doris written the prize-winning story in this oom, and they had roots, they had ties, why you couldn't just pull up takes and start over again someplace else without a contract or some ort of dotted line assurance.

"How do you want to celebrate tonight?" Walter asked when he inished drying the dinner dishes.

Doris shrugged. She was sitting cross-legged in the arm chair by the vindow, head bent over a magazine.

"Want to go out with Larry and Bea, or the Newmans, or ask some eople up?"

Doris turned back the magazine page excitedly. "Just look at this!"

Walter came over. "Pretty nifty layout." She was pointing to a photo- raph of an ultra-modern house, the walls almost all glass, the landscape wide rolling lawn and fruit trees.

"See the inside of the house? That fireplace in the living room must o clear across the whole width."

"Mm. I like that circular sofa arrangement, too. Oh well, someday. ome sweet someday." Walter lifted the bang from her forehead and issed her gently.

"Louise Nagel. She was a year ahead of me at the Playhouse and the iggest drip you ever saw. Her voice sounded as if it was stuffed with icks all the time. So now she's married to some real estate trust, this vhats-his-name, Loomis character, and look at where she lives." Doris

was scanning the text rapidly, head tilted to one side in concentration.

"Baby, I asked you how you want to celebrate tonight. Should we have a bunch over or go out someplace?"

"'The gracious Mrs. Loomis . . . famous for her weekend . . . continued on page one sixty-eight'." Doris flipped the pages; the cover ripped slightly in her haste.

Walter took the magazine from her "Famous for her weekend weltschmerz", he said. "Come on, honey, don't knock yourself out." He lifted her up from the chair.

"Put me down."

Walter swung her around in his arms.

"I said put me down."

Walter set her back on the chair immediately, so suddenly that they both nearly toppled. Neither of them laughed. Doris took up her magazine again and Walter watched her for a moment or two. "Let me know when you want to talk out loud", he said quietly. He picked up *Being and Nothingness* and walked across to the studio couch.

"That's a terrible light to read by," Doris commented without looking up.

"Why would I want to read on my wife's birthday?"

Doris sighed. "I apologize. I'm a heel."

"Now, baby——."

She rose, moved across the room towards him. "It just", she raised her arms in a vague gesture, looked around as though searching for something, "I don't known how to say it, and it's probably nothing."

"Old Doc Kauders wouldn't agree." Walter held her lightly, surely. He switched off the lamp and they sprawled out on the couch, Walter's hand cradling her head, feeling the pillow under her head and the cold plaster wall alongside.

"Happy birthday, darling". Doris nuzzled nearer.

"Very happy." Walter made a fist of his hand. If he forced it hard enough, he could shove it past the soft obstructing pillow, right into the wall, and out clear.

The telephone rang. "Oh, hell." Walter groaned, stirring himself to answer it.

"Let it go", Doris said. "It's my birthday. We're not home."

He leaned back gratefully, but as the ringing continued, they both tensed. His thoughts slammed around like pellets in a pin ball machine and as Doris shifted and tried to settle herself comfortably again, he could sense she was thinking the same things. The telephone, the jagged lightning flashed; it could be the golden gimmick, the Midas touch. "You stay here," he said, "I'll get it." He lifted the receiver just as the last

ıg seemed to be growing faint. "Oh, hello, Norm", he said heartily. Io, not a thing. Yes, sure, oh just being lazy." "The Newmans," he iispered to Doris, and at her nod, he said, "Good deal. Why don't you. ıe, bring them along."

They showered and dressed; Doris tied the birthday scarf around her ist as a cummerbund sash. Walter looked at her admiringly, she was e a young girl masquerading as a young boy. He went down to the rner grocery to get some soda, and seeing a child's tricycle on a front op, he remembered winding the blue scarf around Doris' neck and nking about the park and a kid. Would it be possible to take the r background out of his play; could the characters hold up if he did? ere wouldn't be much actual cash in the beginning, if a producer only ok an option on it, but if it turned out to have any kind of run on oadway! He sought to ask his agent about those clubs that took theatre rties; last season they kept one flop going for months just with those ck bookings. The movie sale, of course, that's where you made most it. He bought the soda they needed and some new kind of appetizers e grocer had on display. The shiny cellophane container seemed to igh as much as the contents, but then you always had to pay through e nose for anything that was a novelty.

The Newmans and their friends had already arrived. And Doris told n that she had called Lora and Danny—they would try to drop in tween their supper and late show at the night club.

Several hours later, using up the last of the ice cubes in the kitchen-e, Walter listened from behind the folding screen as he refilled the ghball glasses. It was a flourishing party. He ought to be very pleased. ere was Norman Newman, the painter, with a gouache in the current hitney exhibition, and his wife, Christine, assistant editor on a man's magazine. She still felt called upon to explain why she couldn't y any of Doris' stories. "We're a service magazine, darling, and I ow that sounds stuffy and arbitrary to you. I'd adore to have some-ng by Doris, but I wouldn't dream of changing that poetic style. It uld be like putting arch preservers into a pair of sandals." The New-ns had brought along Ralph Beals, the pianist and composer, and a evision actress named Leslie who was talking about the time she played posite James Mason on an Omnibus show and one of his cats ripped nylons. Lora and Danny came in a flurry and had to leave after ging the new number they were introducing at the club. It was a tter song about psychiatry. "You're darlings for laughing so much," nny said. "Now please all come and be paying customers some night n." They left in the same flurry of excitement, Lora's perfume tracing air like a skywriting machine.

There was a let-down. Christine Newman asked Walter to read t
first act of his play and insisted he was just being coy by refusing. "I
sure it's marvelous, Walter darling. We'd love to hear a preview."

"Oh, it's marvelous all right." Walter wasn't drunk at all. Do
watched him sharply. "It's a perfectly darling play," he was saying. "Ho
now brown cow. It couldn't be more darling."

Beals, the composer, picked up the book on the coffee table. "Th
looks rather interesting."

"Oh, it is." Doris was grateful. "Not easy reading, but fascinati
if you have the time and patience."

"Being and Nothingness." Beals balanced the book in his hand,
though trying to assess its worth. They got involved in a slight discussi
of semantics for a while, then Leslie helped Doris serve coffee, a
eventually the guests were gone.

Their living room, now bedroom, was stale with smoke and crack
crumbs. Walter tilted the empty bottle of Scotch. "And another Redsk
bit the dust."

Doris was cleaning out the ashtrays with a paper napkin. "We oug
to serve plain whiskey—it's really good enough."

Walter yawned. "You're right. That Christine wouldn't know t
difference."

"You certainly got nasty with her about your play."

"She annoys me." Walter yawned again, removed the cushions fr
the couch, and began folding the spread. "They all annoyed me.
maybe I'm in a state about the play."

"Too bad Larry and Bea couldn't come. They'd have made things
better."

Walter grunted non-commitally. "Yes," he said, unbuttoning his sh
"the good grey Doctor K. would tell me I'm taking out my aggressi
because I'm afraid. I'm scared about the damned play, I know th
Maybe I don't want to write it at all."

Doris hugged him. "It's good. You know it's going to be good. Y
just stop thinking about changing it, that's what."

"Interesting," Walter kissed her casually. "Very interesting. I be
don't want to write at all. No play, no documentaries, no nothing. I
you don't either. Let's go crawl into the cave."

Doris undressed quickly and slipped under the bed covers. "T
Leslie got quite chummy with me over the percolator. She's apparen
living with Beals. Says he's going to be the new Leonard Bernstein."

"The cave," Walter mumbled. "Come on down into the cave."

"I was thinking—I might ask her if she thinks Beals would want
work on something with me. He could set a group of poems to mu

put them out as an album. We might start with children's songs. Did you see the figures in Variety last week on children's record sales?"

"Stix nix hix pix. The Leslie babe was shining up to me as soon as she heard I was writing a play. Tell me, Mrs. Anthony, do you think I should give her the lead in the new coast-to-coast commercial I'm writing for Pepsi-Cola? Or should I stick to the wife and kiddies?"

"Mmm. Over to your side of the bed, please. I'm sleepy and so are you."

"Oh, so you think I'm too tired, do you?"

"All right, you're not tired. I love you and you're Hercules and Samson, you're Superman, you're by the shores of Gitchee Goonee. Only it's late, so good night. Period."

They slept late, and by the time they finished breakfast, the best work hours of the morning were gone. It was necessary to build a pyramid of plans, and today's schedule had fallen behind. Doris deliberated about calling Beals by way of Leslie. "Call him yourself," Walter suggested.

"I don't like to do that."

"Why not? The Newmans must have given you a big enough build-up."

"Thanks. Thanks very much."

"Now don't take it that way," he added hastily. "Don't you think I know for myself how lousy it is when you always have to explain our background and give it the blah and the blah. All I meant was that Beals would already know what you've done he'd have an idea of how good you are."

Doris frowned. "The way you put it, I sound like a vitamin pill he should take."

"Go ahead and give him a ring," Walter urged. "He may want to go in on some kind of deal with you."

"It's not a deal."

"Collaboration. He might even have something outlined himself. He mentioned Aaron Copland, he's probably got lots of contacts through Aaron. Recordings, television, Hollywood, God knows what all. That was a custom-tailored suit he was wearing if I ever saw one."

"Movie, television—why leave out radio? You think I'm stepping over into your territory."

"Honey, what do you think I am? One big monopoly for two? I was just shooting off my mouth, that's all. I don't know any more about Beals than you do."

"But you could work with him as easily as I could."

"So what? You don't think we're in competition with each other,

do you?"

"Give me a cigarette." Walter lit it for her, went over to the stove and reheated the coffee. "Thanks," Doris said. She looked at him anxiously. "Only I mean thanks this time, I'm not trying to be sarcastic. What's the matter with me?" She punched out her cigarette in the saucer. "I hate people who do that. Always want to shove an ashtray under their noses." She smiled nervously. "I'm in great shape, huh boss?"

Walter brought in the coffee. "The business to be in these days is psychoanalysis. Only sure thing. A couch, a filing cabinet, notebook, and you're onto your first million. Here, drink it while it's hot. Then call Beals. I'm going down for a paper and some cigarettes—we're almost out."

Doris called Norman Newman and took down Beals' unlisted number. It was kind of Walter to leave her alone. Beals was kind also when he answered, thanking her cordially for last evening, regretting they had not become acquainted sooner.

Walter banged open the door exuberantly. "It's a wonderful day. We ought to take off and spend the afternoon walking around the reservoir. How about it?"

"I don't know. I never seem to have much energy after sleeping late."

"Well." Walter handed her the front section of the Tribune. "Get hold of Beals?"

Doris nodded, scanned the front page and turned to the book review. "He was nice. Said he'd like to look up the back issues of Poetry I've contributed to. Also my story in the Foley collection."

"And?"

"He's going to Guatemala for several months on a concert tour."

"Leaving soon, is he?"

"Friday. The tour's being arranged by the Rockefeller Foundation. He explained the whole set-up, but I don't remember the details."

"So that's that, I guess. Tough luck—chalk it up to bad timing."

"There's no reason to be disappointed, there probably wasn't the remotest chance anyway. No pep talk please, darling. Let's drop it."

"Okay if you want." Walter whistled softly as he read through the back section of the paper.

"Are you going to read every paragraph including the marine and shipping columns?"

He looked up quickly. "Let's go out," he said, controlling his voice so that it would sound neither cheerful nor solicitous. "We can take the bus over to Fifth, and walk up towards the park."

When they reached the bus stop at Second Avenue, Doris wanted to walk the crosstown blocks. The sun was rich, like molasses poured over the store fronts, the pavement. They stepped lightly, as though to keep their feet free of the sticky sunlight. They stared at the windows, the news stands, the other passers-by, feeling a little scornful of the idle shoppers, a little piteous and envying of the workers in shops and buildings along Forty Second Street.

They turned right at Fifth Avenue. The street itself seemed to rise on an incline as it headed north, expressing the more expensive displays and decorations, the heightened mercantile power. The furs, the ribboned hats, the matched sets of luggage, upholstered furniture in the show windows all merged into a montage; the mannequins' faces became the walking faces, and the sun, sweet and cruel, poured over all.

The area around the park zoo, beyond Sherman's gilded statue, was sprinkled with children and their guardians. Walter consciously led the way further west. They found an unoccupied bench near a small lake spanned by a thin convalescent-looking bridge; the rocks behind them formed a partial wall. "My cave, Madam." Walter bowed towards the bench. "Come into the cave."

Doris sat down solemnly, holding her pocketbook formally in her lap as though at a public gathering. Walter lounged beside her, hands shoved deep into his pockets. The lake looked soft and warm, reflecting flowering bushes and trees around its borders, the emphatic concrete towers of Central Park South shimmering, uncertain as they fluttered upside down in the water.

"We have no insurance," Doris said, her words sent out across the diminutive lake like pebbles.

"I know."

"I don't mean just the medical kind."

"I know." Walter jammed his fists harder into his pockets. "It's that old devil moon—."

"Now look," Doris linked her arm through his. "I didn't mean for you to go sticking pins into yourself."

"Sure, baby. Sure." He squinted at the lake; the reflected buildings were darker, more like caverns. The sky, the color of Doris' scarf, stretched far, dipped out of sight behind an enormous advertising sign at Columbus Circle. A park attendant walked past their bench, speared a copy of yesterday's Daily Mirror, the metal prong rupturing the faces of Elizabeth Taylor and Eddie Fisher.

"How about if we go and have a drink someplace?" Walter stood up. Indoors, confined by a curtained room, the definitions might come easier.

"No."

"A beer. We can at least afford that."

"No. It's those little things that mount up. Don't make me into a nag, please."

They walked out of the park, each saying mutely, Understand, I'm not blaming you.

At their bus stop, Walter took the shopping list from Doris. "You go on home, I'll get the stuff." But they were reluctant to leave each other. Whether they sought common consolation or an opportunity for their rising tension to flare into the open, neither could have said for sure.

The Supermarket was not yet crowded with last-minute shoppers on their way home from work. Walter looked at the posters on the window announcing special reductions on canned goods and vegetables. "Safeway," he read the name of the store aloud as he pushed open the door for Doris, "the great American safe way." He slurred the word "American" as Wendell Willkie's middle western accent used to pronounce it.

Doris wheeled one of the wire carts over to the vegetable stall. *Salad* Walter noted on the shopping list she had given him, and reached among the lettuce on the ice beds.

"Here," Doris handed him a head of cabbage, the outside leaves turning brown and drooping. "Coleslaw's cheaper. See how much the weighs."

He set it down on the hanging porcelain scale. "Little over two and a half."

"You're sure it's over?" Doris studied the sign stating "Cabbage, six cents per pound."

"If you want to figure it out exactly," Walter informed her, "the damn stuff weighs two pounds and five-eighths. That would make sixteen cents, plus a few hundred drachma."

"Very funny." Doris reached under the stall for a paper bag, held it out silently for Walter to slip the cabbage in. He put the package in the top of the wire basket, started to wheel it down the aisle. Doris took over from him. "I'm not finished with this part yet."

So it was to be a competition, he decided, watching her finger the bunches of carrots and then put them aside in favor of the single vegetables in the bargain corner.

He strolled on by himself, peered into the glass doors of the dairy department. Doris came alongside. "Want to wheel this a while? I'm getting pretty heavy." This was an apology. Walter grinned to show that it wasn't necessary but that he appreciated it none the less. "Some butter, then the meat, and we're finished," she said, standing by, deferring

him. "They talk about butter coming down—it's still almost a dollar."

Walter hesitated. "Margarine's half as much—how about trying it r once?"

"We do—all the time."

"No, I mean not just for cooking—but for the table, too."

"Why not." It was a statement rather than a question.

Waiting in the meat line, Walter studied the margarine wrapper. Good Luck," the brand name spelled out in shining golden letters, and four-leaf clover stared up blatantly.

The phone was ringing as they reached home—Walter ran up the eps. It was Larry and Bea Ward calling to ask if they wanted to have nner out together.

"No," Dora pantomimed fiercely. "Tell them we can't make it."

Walter shrugged helplessly. He had already told Larry they were ee for the evening. "We'll come over to your place if you want." Larry fered. "Got to get onto this thing hot in a hurry—been calling you afternoon. Bea got a sensational idea for an article series. Could be a dio show at the same time, maybe a tie-in with the Post and one of the tworks. Wait'll you hear."

Doris took over the telephone. "I'm awfully sorry, Larry, but Walter rgot we're tied up for dinner. Why don't we come over to your place terwards—say around nine or so?" It was arranged that way.

"You might at least have given them some excuse for dinner."

"Larry and Bea won't mind. And we'll see them later."

"Why not over here?"

"I'd like this room to air out for one evening anyway."

"Okay, okay."

"Look." Doris put down the knife she was using to shed cabbage. Whatever restaurant we go to, even that Italian place down on Fourenth, it's going to cost three dollars, not counting the tip. That's if u say we're on the wagon and don't have a cocktail first."

"I said you were right."

"If Bea and Larry can afford to live in an apartment hotel and eat t all the time, that's their business. Or rather Bea's family's, though nope I don't begrudge it to them. But if we have them over, then erything we saved marketing this afternoon is gone—right down the ain."

It was perfectly logical, and there was no argument, but they were coming a little wary of each other, boxers circling around before the ut. Every remark was considered cautiously before a reply was chanced. alter praised the meat loaf and Doris wondered. Did he mean there s enough to have invited the Wards? Or did he know they were going

to eke it out for several more dinners and he was manfully not minding.

The Wards saw nothing amiss when they arrived later in the evening. They were both elated at Bea's idea, already drawing up an elaborate presentation. "I hate to throw cold water as far as the radio angle is concerned," Walter said, "but none of the networks are taking on any new programs. NBC hasn't even considered one in the last eight months."

"But, Walt, if a magazine—a big magazine puts it across with them! Why, the idea's terrific." Larry, a big rather soft man, beamed at his wife.

Bea, blonde and taller than Larry, sat hunched into a circular chair. She coughed deprecatingly, lit another denicotinized cigarette, as her husband continued. "Forget radio for the time being then," he waved. "the Post will grab it. Or Cosmopolitan . . . we ought to call Bill Donahue first thing tomorrow."

It was the kind of evening the Holcombes knew by heart. Walter felt suddenly tired, old. His hand went up to his head, as though unconsciously reassuring himself that all his hair was still there. From across the room Doris smiled at his gesture, prompted him to explain that he was too involved with finishing his play to speculate on anything else at the moment.

"We'll sell it anyway and buy out the house for your opening night." Larry clapped him on the shoulder. "It is good, though—don't you think so?" He looked from Walter to Doris anxiously. "Old idea, pure corn to start with, and then that twist. That beautiful little twist."

"First rate," the Holcombes both agreed.

"Not that you would, of course," Bea rose as they were ready to leave, "but don't spread it around. We haven't registered it yet."

"Didn't even see you guys tonight," Walter assured her.

"You might talk it over with Chris Newman," Doris suggested. "His magazine ought to be interested."

"Just about five hundred thousand circulation." Larry rubbed at his chin. "I don't know. And that limited women's audience. Still, you could call Chris, couldn't you, honey?"

Bea nodded. "I don't know her terribly well," she paused, and then as Doris was silent, "certainly I can call her."

They kept the door open while Walter rang for the elevator.

"That's a stunning blouse," Bea called out. "Exactly your shade of blue."

"My smart husband," Doris called back, unbuttoning her suit jacket to show the blouse was actually a scarf. "We'll call you," they both waved to the closing door as the elevator arrived.

"Dullish." Walter said the word as a half-question on their way out

waiting for his wife's reaction.

"Oh well. Just about as usual. You have to take Bea and Larry for what they are."

"Definitely on the dull side tonight. Although I guess the good grey doctor would find all sorts of interesting situations hidden underneath the cushions and the cliches."

There was a comfortable silence between them going home on the subway. From the car cards overhead a representative of the State Department invited them to join him in smoking a scientifically filtered cigarette. Joe Brown urged atomic bubble gum, and Greer Garson offered to share the secret of her soft, adorable hands. Only two more citizens had become gentlemen of distinction.

The next morning at breakfast, Doris ate some of the margarine on a piece of toast, forgetting momentarily that it wasn't butter. She grimaced. "Tastes rancid."

Walter licked it experimentally. "Nothing wrong. You have to get used to it, that's all." He spread a generous amount on his roll.

Doris watched him bite into it. "How can you?"

"Don't think about it. Besides, it's fortified with Vitamin A. I'll turn into a real Rock Hudson type if I eat enough of the stuff." His tone was faintly annoyed and Doris felt ashamed.

The margarine soon became routine. They evolved a set of other miniature economies, sometimes reporting to each other, often not. Walter took to reading Variety in the public library instead of buying it every Wednesday. Doris fixed sandwiches and reheated the breakfast coffee for lunch. They kept fewer lamp bulbs burning and went over the telephone altogether, of course, it was an indispensable link with the dotted line future, and success demanded a direct wire into their home.

Bern Brady flew in from California. "Just for laughs," he said. "In between I'm supposed to line up radio and television publicity for our latest and greatest turkey. Ten million dollar cast, and the sneak preview was so bad they decided to reshoot the last six reels. Even Ingrid won't help it."

Bern's girl was Nelle Lewis, a starlet, tawnily beautiful, her suntan deepened to gold by a smooth complexion base. She seemed relaxed and fond of Bern, sat back amused while he talked about her job. "So they take her out of the De Mille dance group, put her in a Dick Tracy serial, and now they send her East again with this singing quartet. Tell them about the stills—you know, the last batch."

Nelle groaned. "It's not that funny, Bern."

"Sure it is. Go ahead."

"Well, it's the usual thing they do with all contract players. They

take four or six of us at a time, go through the wardrobe department, and pose us in different publicity shots for all the holidays."

"All at once—can't you see it?" Bern chuckled. "Bathing suit and bow and arrow for Valentine's day, red, white and blue bathing suit for the Fourth, sleigh bells on a bathing suit for Christmas."

"I told you it wasn't so funny." Nelle smiled deprecatingly. She walked over to the coffee table, picked up the copy of *Being and Nothingness*. "Lucky people. I borrowed a copy from a friend of mine on the Coast, but I took so long reading it, I had to give it back."

"Bern didn't tell us he was smart enough to pick a girl who was interested in philosophy," Doris said.

"Didn't know it myself."

"Oh, I used to write little essays and poetry on what-is-life and the meaning-of-it-all—by the ream, the way every adolescent does. All of it terrible, too. Bern tells me you're the real thing, though."

"I don't write as much as I should. Not that an audience is exactly standing in line for my poems—or anyone else's today."

Bern looked a little unhappy. "Listen," he said enthusiastically, "I almost forgot to tell you! They were going over next year's schedule for the lot just before I left. And they're not kidding this time, Walt. Going to cut down, way down on the Bs and start producing some decent shorts. Not just cartoons, either—all kinds of special human interest stuff. A whole series of documentaries, how do you like that?"

Walter whistled softly "That Old Black Magic." Both girls started to hum the words unconsciously, "Round and round I go, down and down I go, loving the spin of it. . . ."

Bern cut in. "I mean it. Schedule's practically blocked out. Three documentaries going into production the first of the year—one on housing, one about juvenile delinquency, and I forget the third, but it's all the kind of dope that's right up your alley, Walt."

"And we're crazy not to move out there, where we could be right on the spot," Doris said. "Drink up, dinner's ready. Oh, Bern, would you do me a favor, please? I forgot the margarine. You'll find it in the refrigerator—in the butter dish."

Bern and Nellie left about ten. He had an appointment with a man who had recently patented a triangular razor. It would provide three shavings sides instead of one; a couple of other writers and directors at Bern's studio were putting up a pool to invest in the newly formed company. "Doesn't need much capital, and it ought to sweep the market. When the depression hits for real, even the Wall Street boys will be wanting to get more shaves out of every blade. Right now, anybody can come in on the razor for next to nothing. Sorry I've got to break

ings up here so early. I'll call you tomorrow or the day after—make it rly, around noon." Nellie thanked them again for the delicious dinner, nd were they sure they always left the dishes till the next day, she'd ave been glad to help.

They closed the door after their guests. Walter scraped the plates, anded them to Doris. "He's still a nice guy," he said. "One of the est."

"I like Bern very much." She sloshed the soap dishrage around the nk. "I like a lot of people. And things. I'd like—"

"What?"

"To finish *Being and Nothingness.*"

Walter wiped a glass carefully, circling it in his hands. "I went round to see Fred Reller yesterday. He said they fired their first reader st week, he won't be surprised to get the sack himself."

"Bring in the ashtrays, would you, please? Might as well do a horough job."

Walter piled them on the drain board. "I thought I'd try Jay Curtis morrow. They must be coining the stuff—two Book-of-the-Month sections in a row."

Doris squeezed out the rag. "I called Jay myself when I was out arketing this afternoon. He said it would be better to try one of the naller firms, like Fred Reller's."

"You know, in a way, some of what Bern says makes sense. There's o real reason we couldn't pull up stakes and try it out on the Coast r a while. It isn't as if we had anything terribly important to keep us ere."

"That's right. It isn't as if we had children to tie us down, or anything ke that. We're a couple of free agents—no responsibilities at all."

"I'm sorry." Walter put his hand on her shoulder. "That was a usy dumb thing for me to say."

"No reason not to. Let me get finished here, please."

"I'm sorry as hell. Don't be angry with me."

"I'm not angry."

"Then let me do the rest of the dishes."

"I'm almost through." She reached for an oblong glass cover on top the refrigerator.

"You don't have to wash that—there's still some butter left in the sh."

"Butter." She underlined the word as she spoke. "I'm going to wash out anyway." She held the dish under the faucet, but as the bright llow substance started to run, she pulled it back, as though her hand had ddenly been scalded. Crying, as if from the burning pain, she scraped

off the margarine, wrapped it neatly in wax paper and stored it in th refrigerator. Then she washed the dish, scouring it with steel woo pressing down and down until her hands were rubbed raw.

Walter had straightened up the room. The copy of *Being and Noth ingness* was gone from the table. He was making up the studio couc for the night; her robe and slipper waited quietly for her on a chai "Come on," he spoke almost harshly, "I hope I'm going to be a goo father."

TWO POEMS

THOMAS MC GRATH

GONE AWAY BLUES

Sirs, when you are in your last extremity,
When your admirals are drowning in the grass-green sea,
When your generals are preparing the total catastrophe—
I just want you to know how you can *not* count on me.

I have ridden to hounds through my ancestral hall,
I have picked the eternal crocus on the ultimate hill,
I have fallen through the window of the highest room,
But don't ask me to help you 'cause I never will.

Sirs, when you move that map-pin how many souls must dance?
I don't think all those soldiers have died by happenstance.
The inscrutable look on your scrutable face I can read at a glance—
And I'm cutting out of here at the first chance.

I have been wounded climbing the second stair,
I have crossed the ocean in the hull of a live wire,
I have eaten the asphodel of the dark side of the moon,
But you can call me all day and I just won't hear.

O patriotic mister with your big ear to the ground,
Sweet old curly scientist wiring the birds for sound,
O lady with the Steuben glass heart and your heels so rich and round—
I'll send you a picture postcard from somewhere I can't be found.

I have discovered the grammar of the Public Good,
I have invented a language that *can* be understood,
I have found the map of where the body is hid,
And I won't be caught dead in *your* neighborhood.

O hygienic inventor of the bomb that's so clean,
O lily white Senator from East Turnip Green,
O celestial mechanic of the money machine—
I'm going someplace where *nobody* makes your scene.

Good-by, good-by, good-by,
Adios, Au 'voir, so long,
Sayonara, Dosvedanya, cha'o,
By-by, by-by, by-by.

A SECOND NOTE ON THE TRIAL

The Judge says: "It will go on forever."
But his honor is mistaken.

Milton Blau

Nevertheless it has gone on a very long time,
And it is a trial that cannot be ended by law
Since it involves not only the seasonal scapegoats
(Foster or Hall, like corn gods, condemned toward solstice
For a ripening of stocks and a high yield of dividends)
But involves as well the wide wheel of that world
Galileo saw turning.

A long time; it has gone on a very long time,
This trial; has had many changes of venue—Joe Hill
Tried by the Papal Courts; Vanzetti and Herndon
By the English Star Chamber. The courts of the King of the Sea
Condemned all the continents; courts of the Inch condemned
The yards and the roods. And the poor are always indicted
For misery and want.

A long time, and still a long way to the end—
For Monique and Dudah, they are on trial also,
And yourself, and me, and millions of total strangers
Who crowd the court. On the calendars of the circuit
Is the lynched Negro, the unwanted child, the miners
Dead underground, and the fatal furious lovers:
Condemned before trial.

Nevertheless, the wheel of the world, turning
Winter to Spring, reverses a verdict of darkness.
The trial will end. Will end on a certain morning
When (as we say) the cops will be wearing roses
Stuck in their hair, when ourselves have created a meaning
For justice. That morning ourselves and a hard-won world
Wake young together.

HOW SOVIET WRITERS SEE THEMSELVES

JACK LINDSAY

Mr. Lindsay was present at the Third Soviet Writers Congress, which took place in May of this year. Readers will find interesting confirmation of his comprehensive report in the speech of the poet Alexander Tvardovsky, and in the article of the novelist Konstantin Paustovsky, which follow Mr. Lindsay's account.

THE Third Congress of Soviet Writers differed in many ways from the Second, of 1954, which I also attended. The Second was explosive, yet crisscrossed with so many divergent trails that its total effect at the time was hard to define concisely. The Third, held less than five years later, was much shorter, and, though not lacking in argument, gave an overall impression of eagerness to get down to the job of writing. The occasions of the congresses determined these differences. The Second came twenty years after the First, which launched the Writers Union and the idea of Socialist Realism; it had behind it the troubles of the later Thirties, the war years, and the difficult last period of Stalin. It confronted a heavy problem of reassessment and revaluation, which it only partly tackled, and it thus was in effect the precursor of the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party. The Third Congress came on the heels of the 21st of the Party with its inauguration of the Seven Years Plan and the goal of reaching the Foothills of Communism. The writers had to get on with thinking things out in a scene where the tempo was set and the perspective determined by a sharp forward movement with widened plans and the everpresent concept of transforming socialism into communism. Their Congress was inevitably one of consolidation; a review of resources and an attempt to brace the thews for hard work. The stress was put on raising the quality of writing, deepening the psychological grasp and keeping in pace with the profound changes going on in people, and clarifying the problem of "innovation" in this situation.

Two matters dominated the Congress. On the one hand, the implications of the Seven Years Plan; and on the other, the growth of the various national literatures in the Soviet Union since 19545. The multinational nature of Soviet culture is at last becoming an effective feature. That is, the exchanges and influences are beginning to flow in all direc-

tions, even if Russian culture still remains dominant; a new stage has been reached in the autonomy and confidence of the national cultures, which is going to have accumulative effects in the future.

The opening report by Surkov failed to set the right keynote; and for this the whole leadership of the Union was to blame. The report was one of those omnibus efforts to combine the detailed findings of a horde of committees. Nobody liked it. Tvardovsky summed up its indigestibility: "A whole village can't write one letter." And Smirnov the new editor of the *Literary Gazette**, deplored the lack of individuality produced by "a maze of formulas" and "the fallacy that a report must be all-embracing:" put in everything and you bring nothing out. He wanted an imaginative probing of the literary process as a whole for the essential trends and problems.

The result was what Tvardovsky called a "fragmentation." (There were only five days for the delegates of 49 nationalities, not to mention the many guest-speakers, to put their points; and things were not made easier by the indiscipline of delegates, not one of whom kept to his allotted time.) Yet, despite the lack of a comprehensive analysis or give-and-take in the speeches, at the end something like a coherent picture of the present phase of Soviet literature did emerge.

The main questions were: the creation of a literature that had close links with the people; the development of what was called the Topical Theme (though Contemporary gives a better idea of what was meant), the rival claims of Realism and Romanticism, the nature of innovation, of the new forms needed for expressing the new content of life; and (to a lesser degree) the nature of language in literary process.

All these questions were interdependent. A literature with relevance to the thoughts and feelings of the men and women of the Seven Years Plan would necessarily be both "close to the people" and concerned with the "contemporary theme." Without both realism and romanticism (that is, without truth and a many-sided penetration into reality, all the elements of lyricism, fantasy and aspiration that stir in such a scene), it would fail to define the fullness of the developments going on. And it would also fail without a deepened power of expression and a vital use of language, a readiness to find and explore new forms or methods of writing. No speaker however tried to synthesize the issues or relate them in specific ways to the society of the Seven Years Plan—to the situation which seems to me summed up in the Resolution of the 21st Congress:

* He detailed his excellent efforts to reorganize the *Gazette* after the mess it had been left in by Kochetov. All remarks to the discredit of Kochetov evoked applause, e.g. when Kirsanov declared that in *The Brothers Yershov* he deliberately painted a false picture of the 1956 conflicts as between solid proletarians and demoralized long-haired intellectuals.

> . . . the main emphasis in the development of the socialist state is to be laid on the all-round development of democracy, on drawing all citizens into taking part in the management of economic and cultural affairs and conducting public affairs. It is necessary to enhance the role of the Soviets as mass organizations of the working people. Many of the functions now performed by state agencies should gradually pass to public organizations. questions related to cultural services, public health, physical culture and sport should be handled with the active and broad participation of public organizations.

If the speakers had concretely related their comments to the problems of this emerging phase in Soviet society, they would have brought their generalizations down to earth.

IT may seem odd that after more than 40 years of socialism the writers feel it necessary to exhort themselves to get close to the people. Our middleclass writers in Britain, for instance, are anything but aloof from their own class and its day-to-day concerns; and I have been inclined to blame the continuance of the problem of isolation in the Soviet Union on a sort of conservatoire tradition of an intellectual caste built up in Tsarist days. Remember that the very term *intelligentsia* is Russian and reveals the intellectuals in a professional grouping that stood apart from the ramshackle feudalism and the imperfectly developed bourgeoisie. One has also to keep in mind the vastness of Russia and the ease with which intellectuals can slide into clusters located in the big cities, especially Moscow and Leningrad. And the problem of keeping pace with the changes of society under socialism has certainly contributed toward making writers play for safety and retreat into the segregation of the many easy jobs going. But when all is said, the phenomenon is baffling and must be related to the political situation in the postwar years when the No-Conflict Theory dominated and too close a knowledge of what was going on among the people was liable to be uncomfortable, since it made the writer less capable of turning out works with the accepted pattern. However that may be, Sholokhov, who has always resolutely stuck to his home village, felt it necessary in 1954 to pour scorn on the mass of writers as living in one village outside Moscow and one street inside Moscow without even knowing anything about the people in even those restricted areas.

The conventional solution has been for the writer to go on a holiday to a construction site or collective farm after "material"—the so-called Creative Trip or Journey. This procedure, I am pleased to say, roused no enthusiasm at the 3rd Congress; in fact it was treated with sarcastic scorn.

The decentralizing trends in all spheres of Soviet life, which have already much increased the powers and initiatives in the hands of the provincial and republican groups of writers, are clearly going to continue with yet more momentum. Khruschev and others spoke with encouragement for writers who preferred to stay on at their place of original work rather than slide into cushy metropolitan jobs. Khruschev (as also Tvardovsky) contrasted the hard self-dedicated lives of the great writers under Tsarism with the easier ways of many Soviet writers. He remarked that difficult conditions could not be artificially created—that would be a backward step—but writers must create their own "difficulties": the way of life which embodied for them the most effective creative discipline and fulfillment.

Though the question of the Contemporary Theme was much invoked in speeches, no one specified what was meant by it or analyzed any types of significant confiict. Yet here was the essence of the problem of being close to the people, a part of the people. (Paustovsky pointed out strongly that the Contemporary Theme must not be understood journalistically, as a superficial topicality, and that a profound historical novel could be "contemporary" whereas an up-to-the-minute triviality had no claim to the term.) Again, though there was much said about Innovation—generally with agreement on the need for new forms expressive of new content—the comments were almost all of a general kind.

THE question of language, though only raised definitely by Paustovsky, seems to me extremely relevant to the questions of contemporaneity and innovation. For long the efforts to use literature in a narrow and mechanical way as an educative agent has meant that "correct writing" has too often been interpreted as "writing that helps not-very-literate peasants or workers to talk and write in academically correct Russian." As a result, not only solecisms or ungrammatical forms (used to define character) have been condemned, but also dialect variations, folk forms, popular diction, speech with a vivid immediacy, a lyrical sparkle, an original turn of phrase, have been frowned on or ironed out as "incorrect," a deviation from the Tolstoyan norm set up for all eternity. As a very talented writer said to me, "Some remarks of Gorky were seized on and applied in a rigid and comprehensive way that Gorky never intended. In the argument bewteen Gorky and Panferov on language, Panferov was in the right—though I don't generally support his views." The problem of renewing language is in fact identical with that of being close-to-the-people. A conservatoire tradition favors the preaching of academic correctness, whereas a writer in real contact with the people at their places of work and play could not help being strongly moved by the need to

implement "correct diction" with the lively imagery, the wordplay of all sorts, the humorous and satirical phrase-invention, the moments of poetic concision, which are characteristic of the common folk everywhere. Paustovsky declared that the salvation of the Russian language was an urgent and immediate task; language was being bureaucratized from top to bottom, from radio, speeches, newspapers, to every moment of daily life. And at the same destruction was going on in all the various republic languages. Nearly all were being "groomed down to the level of mutilated Russian." The rich singing speech of the Ukraine was being murdered by the universal tendency to flatten, level and deaden by bureaucratism and jargon. He then cited several young writers whom he stated to be anti-jargonists, working in a style that came truly from the life and poetry of the people, the colors of Russian earth.

I should now like to give some summaries of speeches, to bring out more clearly the sorts of thing that were said. The Georgian poet Abaschidse attacked the idea that simplicity in art meant poverty of content; it meant a work from which nothing could be taken, and to which nothing could be added, without injury. He traced the many weaknesses of Soviet writing to the extreme novelty of the themes and problems confronting the writers. Theoretically, they did not lower their standards; but in practice? If however the writers treated their works on the level of consumer goods, they were the ones to blame for the cheapening of their wares. He suggested a Society of the Friends of the Poetry, Union-wide, on the lines of the new People's Universities. Kirsanov recalled the 1925 meeting of Proletarian Writers. Looking back, could we say that those men had met the demands of their epoch? Yes. In the same distance of time from now, when people looked back to 1959 and asked the same question of the writers of today, what would be the answer? Yes—but also a very loud No! Readers were too often ahead of writers. To a man of advanced technical level in work the writers offered mediocre confections of outworn technique. The two main obstacles to progress were the systematic logrolling and clique-advertisement of tame, mediocre works, which thus became elevated into models, and the backwardness of the critics, who never lost a chance to attack any non-naturalistic writer. "Do we need this intolerance of new and intelligent work?" The pioneering spirit was a complex matter, not just a matter of devising new forms but also of sharing the experience of the people who were breaking into new dimensions of life.

Okhlopkov attacked "shallow realism," wanted deep passions, called for tragedies and "truth and nothing but truth." Novichenko like several speakers, dealt with Romanticism, praised it as necessary, but stressed the weakness of too many books which lacked a realistic grasp of psychologi-

cal analysis and sought to compensate with hyperbolic romanticism; a fullness of approach was needed.* Tvardovsky stressed the need for quality and made fun of the equation of books and consumer-goods. More writers were ready to be responsible for managing, directing and running letters in general than for doing their own writing. A writer's responsibility must be centered at home. To answer for oneself was a wholetime job. "I want to serve my country with my pen"; that sounds a noble sentiment, but it's just conceit. We need the self-dedication of the great writers of the past. No theoretical formulations can justify bad or drab work. "Even if you put sugar on a frog I won't eat it." Write as your conscience and knowledge tell you; don't fear critics and publishers beforehand; a big book can always beat any ban. At the same time be self-critical. Granin of Leningrad raised the question of happiness. In the past a happy hero was liable to look merely insensitive; but now the problem of happiness was becoming a crucial one for the author's powers of presentation. Sobolev defined the Contemporary Theme as awareness of the scale of struggle on our planet.

PAUSTOVSKY, too ill to attend, had his speech printed in the *Gazette*. He began by saying that Surrealism and the rest of such movements represented the natural and right revolt of youth against staid and set positions of their elders. "Don't get into a panic about them." Perhaps we shout so much about truth in literature because we lack it? The moment a writer put his pen to paper he gave himself away. Pitiful indeed was the writer who surrenders the truth for non-literary reasons. The people see all, understand all, and will never forgive a writer his falsity and deceit. Nothing offends more than an author's hypocrisy. Authorship is a life vocation and the writer must fight for reason, truth, justice, in entire readiness to sacrifice everything for his ideas. There was no need for writers to "pay their compliments to the public" like a clown running out of the circus ring—following up any admission of shortcomings or distortions with a reassuring catalogue of all the Soviet Union's achievements, and falsifying their works with a sweetly-happy ending, a false balance of light and shadow in a rosy-blue diffusion. It was fortunate that Tolstoy wrote *Anne Karenina* before this tradition appeared. "He could allow Anna to break up her family and depart from life for purely personal, and consequently impermissible, considerations. Further, it was necessary to put a stop to calling friends foes because they told unpleasant truths and showed a lack of hypocrisy—

* Much emphasis was laid by speakers, especially Gonchar, on the highly lyrical and romantic work of Dovschenko in film-scripts. One gathered that they were replying to earlier denigrations.

men selflessly devoted to their people and land, and making no claim to monopoly of devotion or rewards. It was necessary to fear, not being misunderstood, but being incorrectly interpreted.*

There were a few blanket-references to Western Culture as decadent; but much more typical of the Congress were the speeches making a serious and sympathetic effort to enter into the problems of writers in a non-socialist culture. Chakovsky, declaring there was no "third way," spoke with respect of writers like Greene and Sartre. Zelinsky insisted on the need to examine works on their merits, to avoid all abuse, and to give precise definitions of terms like Modernism, Decadence, Abstraction; if one looked without preconceptions inside the work of writers who had been carelessly labeled with those terms, one would find many who were close to the new ideals.

Khruschev's long impromptu speech in many ways made the Congress, gave it is distinctive note. In a homely easy style, quietly familiar, humble and humorous, without a gesture or the least raising of the voice, he made a call for the ending of animosities and for a confident trust in people. He used his famous Stalin-speech as an example of the non-prettifying approach to reality. "To stop any repetition of the grave errors of the past, it is necessary to lay wholly bare the shortcomings that have come about, so that the musty smell will stir up disgust for what has outlived itself." And while deprecating what he called the privy-focus as the means of showing the life of a man, a society, he spoke amiably of Dudintsev as no foe of the Soviet system.

Khruschev made it clear, against the wishes of some diehards, that the government had no intention of interfering with publications and imposing bans; it was up to the writers to sort out their own problems. His speech was strongly aimed against the undercover intrigues, backbiting, and careerism which has too often distinguished the inner life of the Union and which has been made possible by the segregated mode of working. It would be too much to hope that some of the astute cliques of mediocre and heavily conservative writers will now collapse; but it is clear they are fighting a losing battle. They have been responsible in the past for the worst features of Soviet intellectual life and constitute the main obstacles to the new forces and ideas; I have a good idea that

* Many writers, probably the majority at the Congress, would take the line that Paustovsky the "liberal" and Kochetov the "sectarian" were both demagogues trying to win over the youth. This would be the centrist position. I feel however that such a view reflects the overwhelming weight of old and exhausted writers, who do not want to be disturbed and who have resented Khruschev's "revelations." Many changes will be needed before the "dead weight" goes and the young writers play the correct part in the Union, which will then become an effective discussion-ground and seeding-plot for new ideas, new forms.

The isolation of the older writers who form the majority of the Union appears in the almost total neglect of mass-media, in the absence of any adventurous documentary forms, etc. Also, the lack of any serious consideration of the relation of science and literature in such a society as the U.S.S.R.—the fundamental relation, not minor offshoots like science-fiction.

it was they who stampeded the Union into the actions against Pasternak which have done such incalculable harm to the prestige of Soviet culture abroad—in this they got ahead of the leadership, which however did its best to stop things going any further. (Khruschev's speech may be taken to represent both a personal victory and a defeat for the cliques. Many of the older writers have opposed him for his revelations; one of these at least was moved to tears by this speech and went afterwards to him, saying, "I make my peace with you.")

THE Congress, then, I felt to mark a very considerable advance in the Soviet cultural situation. It showed a serious and solid desire to get down to creative work in the area cleared by the controversies and discussions of the last five years; and the election of Fedin as General Secretary, a non-party man of deep culture and wide sympathies, was certainly the direct expression of this desire.* (The organizational changes in the Union, though not completed when I left, have as clearly been along the lines of breaking down the top-heavy organization and of no longer involving numbers of writers in heavy administrative work. They will therefore help to break down the cliqueism with all its bad effects.

The main weakness of the Congress was illuminated by the figures analyzing the ages of delegates. Of 497 writers elected by secret ballot, only three were under the age of 30, and only 56 were between the ages of 31 and 40; and there were only 33 women. There were 176 of 41-50 years, 188 of 51-60, 54 of 61-70, while ten were over 71. The fear of youth seems evident in these figures: only 14% of the delegates being under 41 years and well over half being over 50. I gather that the breach between the young and the old is further shown in the disinclination of many young writers to join the Union.

I have already touched on my main lines of criticism, but I should like to return to the lack of concreteness in the discussion. As a result there was a lack of an historical outlook, of a Marxist need to penetrate into the essential conflicts and contradictions of the situation, to relate the personal issues and cultural problems to the phase of Soviet development in which the Congress was meeting. There has always been a tendency to lump the whole Soviet period together as a simple struggle of a given Socialism with Bourgeois Survivals. In a very broad way, of course, that is true enough as a description of what has happened since 1917; but it is so general and vague that it is not at all helpful to the

* I discussed Pasternak with several writers and found them ready to argue about *Zhivago* in a conciliatory way. No one denounced it or insisted that it could not have been published: only that the inflated idea provocatively built up about it made it impossible to publish it now—at least for the time being.

writer who needs to know with clarity and fullness exactly what is happening to people, what is the precise form of the dominant tensions and conflicts at any particular moment. A large number of crucial matters, of theory and practice, hinge on the way in which the questions about those tensions and conflicts are posed and answered; and if they are not asked at all, the result is to make discussions over-generalized, cloudy, with an empirical and tangential approach.

And yet, despite this shying-off the key-points, I felt a new energy, a new birth of creative purpose, leavening the Congress. These positive aspects in turn were linked, as I said at the outset, wtih the new expansive life of culture in the Republics and with the needs of the people who are vigorously entering the period of the Seven-Year Plan—the people who are showing the keen desire to keep abreast with the world of knowledge and culture in general, in the People's Universities which have been created by demand from below—the people who in scores of such ways are expressing their intellectual maturity. The self-criticisms of the Congress must be understood against this background, and then the positive side of the situation becomes clearer; the need of the writers to shake themselves free from outdated forms of organization and of thought is seen as ever more urgent. Certainly, a considerable effort was being made to overcome the weaknesses that the 1954 Congress confronted and to learn from the arguments of the last five years. In 1954 Yashin cogently asked what was the inner censor, the inhibition, holding them all back from the full creative release. In 1959 the inhibition had not been completely broken down, but it clearly was in process of giving way and the new liberation of creativeness will be on a level incomparably more secure than were the achievements of the 1920's and 1930's; it will possess an organic quality which can only come about stably when the masses have reached a certain point of educational and cultural development. I have the feeling that the post-war period has been in the Soviet Union a far more complex set of growing-pains than has yet been understood, and that the disclocation and weakening in many of the cultural spheres, which is now being tackled, involved a far larger number of factors than the obvious political ones of Stalin's later years. There was, for instance, precisely the problem of creating a literature far more integrally socialist than had been possible in the 1920's and 1930's when writers had validly carried on many patterns and forms from pre-socialist bases, finding in them an effective way of grappling with the early conflicts of a socialist society. Here it is that the plea of extreme novelty has a real meaning. The disturbances of the war-years and the difficulties of Stalin's later period no doubt confused, impeded and partly distorted what was thus at stake, but in any event a very

complicated and arduous process of growth was going on, which it is now possible to get in something like a clear focus. There are still many difficulties and problems ahead; for there are no easy solutions in the task of creating a culture at once original and integrated, solidly based and yet responsive to the colors and shapes of a society rapidly expanding in unprecedented ways. But there is also the huge stimulus of the new possibilities, and I felt in the Congress the intellectual ferment which will nerve men to seek the new forms and images. That, after moments of irritation and disappointment, is the conviction into which my considered view of the third congress of Soviet Writers has settled down.

THE MAIN THEME

ALEXANDER TVARDOVSKY

COMRADES, the main theme of our Congress is the Seven-Year Plan and the aims of literature. Although these words have been frequently repeated, to my mind they have not yet sounded with full force. They have not yet crystallized the many diverse, large and complex questions that confront us in our new stage of development.

This is hardly because we have not heard good, sensible, even vivid speeches from this platform, particularly from the representatives of the national literatures and from certain Muscovites and Leningraders.

But the point is that we still pay a certain homage to the inertia of the life of yesterday.

I refer chiefly to the main report with all its flaws, for which, incidentally, in all honesty, Alexey Surkov is not alone to blame, since this document was prepared according to the method objected to by Gleb Uspensky's muzhik, the one who said that you can't expect a whole village to write a letter. (*Laughter. Applause.*)

This homage to inertia could also be felt in a number of the delegates' speeches, which were full of the lifeless phraseology of "on the spot" reports, of colorless statistics, and the like.

From this, from this inertia, stems the fragmentation, the lack of coherence of parts within the whole, the random nature of the argument—in a word, as it is with many of our novels and stories where the theme is clear and everything seems in its proper place, but from which the reader derives no deep satisfaction.

Of course, I am not tackling the job, so to speak, of "rectifying the situation." I only want to explain how I see this matter and what I think is most important about it.

Most important for us is that we realize seriously and profoundly our task in the Seven-Year Plan, which, incidentally, while we talk and weigh matters here, is already progressing at full speed. We must realize our task of attaining high quality in all types of literature beyond comparison with our former "general level."

The period of extensive construction of communism does not imply simply or nominally new conditions for the existence of literature. It im-

plies a new and different set of standards demanded by the people. It separates us decisively from the past period.

We cannot go on living in the old way. We must say this to our literary yesterday and even to our today. And we shall not go on living this way!

This is what I think is most important in the content of the work being done by our Congress. Of course I am not at all original in my understanding of this. But the main point is that the realization of this task must be driven home profoundly, not in words but in essence. It must become the personal task of every one of us and not just the "task of the entire collective."

We speak of the quality of literature, of the significance and impact of the images which it must convey to the people of our epoch. And here certain things must be made clear and defined in the simplest terms.

In all fields of human activity quantity and quality exist in a certain proportion, in equilibrium, so to speak. More and better—the phrase applies to all material values created by human effort. It may even happen that "the more" is of greater importance than "the better." Quantity, at least temporarily, may be preferred to quality.

But in the sphere of spiritual activity, particularly in literature and the arts, quality should have preference. Furthermore, quantity here has limits to its growth, which quality has not.

What need have I, as a theater-goer, of "700 plays written in the current period"? It's enough for me to see seven good plays that I'd want to see more than once. (*Laughter*)

Even if I were more than fond of poetry, what need have I of hundreds of books of verse published during the same period under review? (*Applause.*) What need have I as a reader of 365 novels a year? Even considering all the diversity of tastes and the virtue of having choices, this is an unnatural number. In such numbers one can consume only literature like the American detective story described for us by K. I. Chukovsky. In literature, then, first and foremost in importance is quality. This is hardly a new idea. But what is to be done if it is not clearly understood by all of us, in the face of the present demands and those to be made in the future by our readers? How often have we heard the phrase "more and better" at this Congress; but with the stress laid upon the "more" which is so much easier than the "better"? What with the Union's 5,000 members, and thanks to the colossal opportunities for printing and publishing in our country, we can now "turn it out," as the saying goes.

The task of the literary education and creative development of our writers stems directly from the great over-all task which is the main

theme of our Congress: the task of improving the quality of all our literature.

I shall not dwell on how imperfect and even harmful at times the various organizational methods taken toward this end seem to me personally.

IN our work as writers it is obviously not "organizational methods" that are of decisive significance, but *example,* specific examples of high artistry. The example is indispensable and of primary significance.

I shall take Sholokhov for an illustration close at hand. Not only has Sholokhov given us *And Quiet Flows the Don* and other works; he has incidentally and without special intent given rise to a whole galaxy of notable Soviet writers. Though they may not be as talented as he, though they may bow to his influence and follow in his wake, they have nevertheless immeasurably extended the *area of reality* portrayed in our Soviet literature. They exist, they have their readers, and they represent the many facets of the vast literary process.

Marshak is another example. The high standard of Soviet translations of poetry from foreign languages and from the languages of our fraternal peoples, a field which contains brilliant craftsmen, owes much to the "example" of the rarely gifted pen of the poet-translator Marshak, who follows the Russian classical tradition of the art of translation. The same may be said of the constellation of talented children's poets and writers who owe their being to Marshak's "example."

These two names do not of course exhaust the roster of "examples." I have mentioned them simply as representative of two highly different styles and genres of our rich and varied literature.

The writing of exemplary works is by no means the privilege of a small and narrow group of the "elite." Today we have Sholokhov, tomorrow he will be joined by someone whose name we do not yet know. Yet the process is not a depersonalized one, a task which we, so to speak, put on the shoulders of the "entire collective," which we view as a sort of divinity upon which we can rely while we take it easy—the collective will take care of everything. No, a divinity it may be, but you must work, too.

The reason I have stressed the necessity of a profoundly *individual* understanding of the task facing literature on the threshold of communism is that I thereby wish to underline an even more emphatic assertion.

We frequently speak of collective responsibility for the fate of literature, about the responsibility of each of us for "literature as a whole," and so on.

I should like to say here—I have already spoken of this in part—that no matter how paradoxical it may seem at first glance, the highest form of collective responsibility in our work is a genuine awareness of one's responsibility for oneself, and not for literature as a whole. (*Applause.*) Let us note that there are not so many among us who cope with this kind of responsibility. There are probably more who quite readily offer to answer for "literature as a whole," to guide it, manage it, and direct it. (*Applause.*)

In short, to answer "for oneself" is a devilishly difficult task, requiring maximum intellectual and physical energy, long years of training, dedication of the greatest and best part of one's life, and utter disinetrestedness even in thinking.

Goethe says somewhere that if a writer nearing the completion of his work thinks of the rapture it will evoke in the reader and himself waxes enthusiastic in anticipation, he might as well put away the work. Nothing worthwhile will come of it.

A writer can produce genuine literature only if it is not external considerations that compel him, but his whole inner being—(even if my book should have no success, that is how I want to write it, that is how it should be written)—only then will his work be worth anything.

"I want to serve my country with my pen," beginners, authors of incompetent verses or novels often write. What could be nobler, one might think. In reality it is immodesty and conceit. A man doesn't learn to use an axe in five seconds, much less a pen. Years and years of conscientious, dedicated work are required even if one has talent, and not only work but personal risk, for there is risk even if one adopts all the required caution. And sometimes a man pays too dear for his choice. It's not a joking matter or a game of jackstraws.

These and many other ideas come to my mind when we talk of training our literary successors. Many young writers come to us, one way or another, not because they have had a profound experience of life, or because their feelings have been deeply tested, but because they are naively drawn to the beautiful and easy life of a writer. We must disabuse them of this illusion of an easy life in literature. There is no such thing and can never be for a writer who is worth anything. His work may be full of joy bordering on elation, but it is never easy, even under communism! (*Applause.*)

It isn't a bad idea to recall Tolstoy's advice: if writing is not a must for you, then don't write. Indeed, one can always discern the strength of this inner need from the book or manuscript itself.

It is customary among us to egg on and pester writers who have not written for a long while or who write little. But in the case of some

this is quite pointless; it might be better if they did not write. What value can a work have if it does not arise out of an urgent inner need, from passionate desire, but from motives which are, to put it mildly, mundane? As for others who, perhaps without our urging, would like nothing better in the world than to write, and who have things to say, but whose efforts come to nothing—to pester them is simply cruel.

Even such matters have to be discussed in connection with the task of improving the quality of our literature, and raising its prestige in our country and throughout the world.

I WANT to speak of the personal, moral obligations and standards of a writer's work and how these are to be brought closer to the concept of communist labor.

We will, naturally, take these moral and ethical standards from the experience of the great masters of the past, our compatriots and others. These lived in different times, set themselves different tasks, had different world outlooks, in keeping with their times, but their selflessness and noble dedication to great art still serve us as the highest example and standard. (*Applause.*)

Actually, we ought to conduct all our discussions as though they were present. We must not forget the mighty heritage behind us. Permit me to remind you that next year, in 1960, we shall observe, among other dates, two that are of truly worldwide significance: the 50th anniversary of Leo Tolstoy's death and the 100th anniversary of Chekhov's birth. This places great obligations on us. It will be the second year of our great Seven-Year Plan, and it will be radiant with these celebrations of Russian and all Soviet culture. How will we writers feel at that time with regard to our tasks and the prospects of their fulfillment?

Good or poor as we may be, neither Tolstoy nor Chekhov will do our work for us. They have done theirs, and more. And we, such as we are and should be in the face of the tasks that our great era puts before us, we have our own work to do.

Since that is so, let us get to work. Let us get down to our far from easy job, a job that is sometimes a torment, but joyous, elevated by the awareness of participation in the great work of building a communist society on earth, of moulding the people of that society, bringing out their full spiritual wealth and beauty. Surely that is what is most important for us, for each one of us individually, *personally!* The extent to which the importance and urgency of the task confronting all of us gathered in this palace find expression in our personal, individual efforts will largely determine the degree to which we approach the ideal each one of us cherishes in poetry, prose and drama.

IT is of course quite appropriate and perhaps not without benefit to discuss the advantages of romanticism over realism, or vice versa; but actually, when I, a reader, have a book which charms my soul and gives me the liveliest pleasure, broadening my life through its vivid imagery, I am little concerned as to whether it is pure romanticism. realism with a dash of romanticism, or something else. (*Applause.*) I am simply grateful to the author for his gift.

Who, in any case, objects to romanticism if it gives birth to splendid works of art and celebrates our time? Or to realism that conveys with powerful conviction authentic pictures of real life? No one. But when I am presented with something banal, which portrays life so artificially that I feel like shutting my eyes in embarrassment, and am told this is romanticism, then I say "No." And when I am shown some wretched, petty imitation of life, dull as a list of tenants in a lobby, dimly lit by a miserable idea, and am told, this is realism, I reject that, too. To both I, the reader, must say, in Sobakevich's words: "Even if you sprinkle a frog with sugar, I won't eat it. The same with oysters. I know an oyster when I see one." (*Laughter.*)

The times are with us. The times allow us a choice of any material from reality that we can handle best or like the most; and no one stands over us telling us to write this way and not that.

Write as your conscience dictates, as your knowledge of any given sector of life permits you to write, and do not be afraid in advance of editors and critics. There is a law which I have observed in operation repeatedly in my work as an editor and author: a good book, even though it be peppery, as we say, always reaches its way sooner to a reader's heart than a poor one. Personally, I do not believe in the existence in our country of manuscripts of genius that do not find their way to the reader. I don't believe it! (Applause.)

We are richer than we think, richer than we imagine when we boast of our riches. I, for example am convinced that no flaws in our organizational forms, methods of training writers or literary leadership can prevent the apperance of what must arise from the rich genius of our people, now at the best time of history, on the threshold to communism! (*Applause.*) And if we praise ourselves less, even if we are very harsh in our judgment of our modest present-day achievements, that is no calamity. Our achievements, collective and individual, will be properly judged by our just, exacting, but nevertheless well-disposed reader, our great people, our great Communist Party. (*Prolonged applause.*)

MORE DARING, MORE SCOPE

KONSTANTIN PAUSTOVSKY

EVERY phrase, every word, comma or period in a writer's text tells the reader far more than he intended when he wrote it. They reveal not only the book's content to the reader, but the author's state of mind when he wrote it—the purity of his intentions or their opportunist character, the breadth of his horizons or the ugly poverty of his ideas, the superficiality of his knowledge of the life of the people or his authentic, and so quite unadvertised bond with them.

Everything an author writes shows him precisely as he is, his good sides and his bad. And so the writer cannot find any way to hide his true face from the people, however he may wish to; and their estimate of him is just what he deserves.

This is something that every writer or critic who assumes the right to speak in the name of the people ought to remember.

A rather strange concept of the tie connecting the writer with the people is current among us today. This bond obviously cannot be created artificially. No special writers' expedition will help to do this, if those taking part intend to use it merely to play an "observer's" role, to study the life of the people with due deliberation, asking all the proper questions about their activities and jobs, sitting in at their meetings, and doing the rest of the things the other "amateurs" and tourists do, so as to gather copy.

One's life must be lived with the people as one of them, one must share their grief, rejoice in their happiness. One must be inseparable from the people, as our contemporaries Gorky, Prishvin, Malyshkin and Alexey Tolstoy were inseparable from them and as Sholokhov is inseparable from them today.

At all times and in all lands true and genuine writers have learned from the people and been linked to them organically. It could not have been otherwise, cannot be otherwise today. This is an irrefutable truth, old as the world.

If this were not the case there would be no literature or poetry or painting except for a few transient "isms" or trends. These "isms" are not born out of the living breath of the people, but out of the tobacco fumes veiling the wrangling of the artistic youth. They are almost wholly the product of bravado, not of the impulse of the heart.

These "isms" are, first of all, the offspring of the eccentricities of Paris and America. Beyond the ring of the Paris fortifications they lose their glitter, their base, come to seem forced and unnatural. But even these extremes (surrealism, Dadaism, the twelve-tone system, and the other "isms") are, actually, entirely normal for our young fighting cocks. There is absolutely no reason to sound the alarm and give way to noisy panic, for the aggressiveness of youth is useful, it keeps the older generation from becoming smothered in fat and thinking of itself as infallible and "untouchable."

Try naming even a dozen writers out of the 19th and 20th century who had no ties at all with the people. I am speaking of writers in general, not dividing them into "our" and "alien" writers, into positive and negative. Is there one of them that has no shred of his roots in the people, "no feeling of social responsibility," as they called it in the last century?

There are almost no such writers. And if in recent years there has been talk about the complete divorce of writers from the people, we should clear up the question as to whether such individuals were really writers at all.

THERE are a number of preconceptions and false ideas still prevalent among writers and critics, who, by the very nature of their profession are involved in intellectual activities. Some of the preconceptions are harmful, some harmless.

Here I shall cite no more than two or three examples of these preconceptions—or, more accurately, false conceptions, impeding the free development of literature. Of course you know that when circus performers run out of the arena they bow to the audience and blow them bewitching kisses. In circus talk this is called "taking a bow."

Well, writers also take a bow, before their readers, the audience. This consists in, first of all, providing sugary happy endings, and striking a careful balance of light and dark color in a book, with the pastel shades —mostly pink and blue—prevailing.

It's a good thing that Leo Tolstoy managed to write *Anna Karenina* before the appearance of this tradition. There was no one, not even the publisher, before whom he had to "take a bow," and he let Anna destroy her family and die, out of purely personal and thus inadmissible considerations.

It isn't the thing to write about shortcomings, however injurious to our public life, without first bowing apologetically and invoking our achievements. This bowing is done with such stubborn persistence that it seems as though the superiority of our system over capitalism had to be proved anew to each and every reader—and this in the 42nd year of

its existence, as if we ourselves doubted it, amazed at the appearance of such a very irregular miracle.

This is one of the preconceptions, one of the superfluous and burdensome traditions. The second harmful tradition is the reluctance to write about suffering, the fear of even hinting at sadness; as if all of our life had to be spent beneath sugar-candy skies to the sound of the hearty and determinedly cheerful laughter of "militant" men and women.

In some books, but especially in films (see *In a Quiet Backwater* for example), in some paintings and even photographs (especially the widely circulated, honeyed family idylls given double-spread treatment in the picture magazines) we see primitive people brashly portrayed. Out of the goodness of heart of their creators they are relieved of the necessity of thinking for themselves—thanks to the authors, this ability has simply atrophied through lack of use. They know by rote the scale of good and evil their authors have canonized. They never hesitate, never make a mistake, being empty-hearted. They are moved only by what the author intended them to be moved by, all according to plan.

This, in the view of some of our writers, is our ideal human being. And they push him into the books they write through main force.

Literature has no place for the author who seeks to combine half-truths and half-lies with catering to his own well-being.

It could be that we shout so often and loudly about truth in literature just because there is too little of it.

As I have already said, the text of an author's book shows him as he really is. And because this is so, the writer who tampers with the truth for reasons remote from literature is in a sorry way. The people see everything, understand everything, even if it is only hinted at, and never forgive falsehood or deceit in a writer, however talented he may be.

Nothing so cruelly affronts a person as an author's hypocrisy. This is because the reader is correctly convinced that writing is not a profession, but a calling. The reader believes that every genuine writer is also a fighter for truth, justice and reason, ready to make even the greatest sacrifices to see his ideas triumph.

Is this actually so? As applied to the majority of writers, yes. Unfortunately, however, we cannot say that, without exception, our writers possess high moral qualities.

The arbitrary and vulgar interpretation which criticism has given the simple concept of "the contemporary" does not allow our literature the diversity and breadth it needs.

I AM profoundly convinced that the contemporary in literature and in the arts as a whole includes everything that serves to form and develop man in communist society. This is a crystal-clear formula. But

opposing this all-embracing interpretation is another one, which holds that only what is linked to today and its aims, only the topical is, in actual fact, contemporary.

Viewing the contemporary in this manner throws aside all the age-old—and especially the revolutionary—history of our land, consigns to oblivion its great culture, one of the bases for the erection of a culture new and purely socialist in character.

This approach to the contemporary in literature throws out all the century-long—and especially the revolutionary—history of our country, consigns to oblivion its great culture which is one of the cornerstones for building a new, purely socialist culture.

In any accurate conception of the contemporary *Taras Bulba* exists alongside *The Silen Don,* and *War and Peace* by the side of *The People Are Immortal* by Vasily Grossman, with the same immediate impact on people's minds.

If the writer is really persuaded to substitute the topical for the contemporary, we shall no longer have a literature in the full sense of the word. We shall have news reports, efficeint jorunalism, a newspaper with literary touches, hurriedly written stories, or a novel ripened fast and so spoiling soon thereafter. Have we really such a dearth of writers, and are we so helpless that our literature lacks the strength to produce numbers of excellent books in all genres, and dealing with all periods, but, at the same time, contemporray in spirit and ideas? Why should we consciously act to impoverish our literature?

It is quite legitimate to ask, "Is Pushkin our contemporary in spirit, or totally alien to us? Are Shakespeare and Heine, Cervantes and Stendahl our contemporaries?"

They are in fact our true contemporaries. The writer's task is to resurrect the great figures of all epochs and all nations by the force of his talent and his creative imagination, to make them infinitely near and understandable to us, so that we may hear the breathing of Stendahl and the ironic laughter of Heine. The writer's task is to make them truly immortal. From that moment on, they will begin to live not only as creators, but as close friends and helpers of every one of us. They will begin to live and to enrich us. The magnificence of the time we live in consists in the fact that it is extracting all that is most precious from humanity's age-old culture. It does not bury these treasures whose brilliance penetrates the centuries in the dust of oblivion. The progressive people who lived in generations past are rightly part of Communist society.

We must not go counter to Lenin's belief that the man living in a Communist society should be in possession of all the achievements of world culture. We must not go counter to the counsels of greatness,

offering as an excuse the weighty issues of today. This is especially so, because we are living this day not for its sake alone, but also for tomorrow.

ALL of these are very simple ideas. It is embarrassing to keep on repeating them, so widely are they known. But yet, we shall have to go on repeating them until the lucid human mind overcomes the inertia that is especially dangerous when it hides behind a protective veil of devotion to progressive ideas.

We could talk about literature endlessly. If not for the limitations of space, articles dealing with literature would expand into entire libraries of extremely interesting books. Like life itself, literature is infinite.

I have offered just a few words on our literature, mainly about what it should get rid of; and now I feel it is time to bring this to a close, even though I feel I have said nothing of real consequence so far.

A few words now about problems of language, and about our young writers.

The Russian language is one of the major wonders of the world. For centuries Russia was poor, wrecthed, oppressed and ignorant. And in spite of this, in defiance of this, our people created a language that is truly a product of genius—brilliant, melodious, vivid, the richest in the world.

Are we cherishing this language? No, we are not cherishing it. On the contrary, our language is being more and more polluted, distorted and reduced to a state of tongue-tied impotence. We are in danger of seeing the clean lucidity of the Russian language replaced by the impoverished, dead language of bureaucracy. Why have we permitted this nauseating language to insinuate itself into our literature?

Why do we admit to literature and even to membership in the Writers' Union people who do not know the Russian language, and are utterly indifferent to it?

Why do we tolerate the meanness of bureaucratic and philistine language, with its poverty, drabness and phonetic shapelessness? We, who regard ourselves as the most advanced of people, as the creators of a new life!

By what right do we throw on the dust heap the classic and potent language created by generations of our great progenitors, from Pushkin and Lermontov to Leskov, Chekhov, Blok, Bunin and Gorky?

We come to the defense of a narrow conception of the contemporary, forgetting that the salvation of the Russian language is not only a contemporary task, but one that is urgent, immediate and completely indispensable for our country and people.

Our language is being bureaucratized from top to bottom, beginning with the newspapers and radio, and ending with the speech we use every minute of the day in our ordinary living.

Thousands of striking examples could be cited to confirm what I have said. All that is needed is to read through a few of our newspapers carefully.

The writer's duty is to fight everywhere and always for the purity and richness of the language, and to do this constantly and without delay, while the young people still are capable of perceiving its beauty and its lofty quality, and before the rising generation has come to accept this debased language as a model of the authentic Russian language.

All that I have said here about Russian can be said with equal justice about most of the languages of the peoples of the USSR. The captivating, melodious, marvellously expressive Ukrainian language is being bureaucratized as rapidly as Russian. Almost all our languages are being brought down to the level of a debased Russian.

IN all fields of art the master is concerned about the problem of who is to succeed him. The successors are bred on the experience of the older generations.

Have we talented, progressive young writers for the successors' role, who know how to work and take their writing seriously?

We have; they are splendid replacements. In some cases the older authors can rightly envy them.

Here there is no room to name all of those coming forward to take the place of the retiring generation. There are Yuri Kazakov, Sergei Nikitin, Natalya Tarasenkova, Vladimir Tendryakov, Yuri Trifonov, Rich Dostyan, Yuri Bondarev, Iosif Dik, and a series of other young writers. We say little about them, perhaps, because they have as yet published little.

I cannot discuss here all the young writers of fiction, but all of them possess one splendid and fruitful feature in common, that augurs a great and useful writing career for them.

What they all possess is their blood kinship with the people, their remarkable knowledge of the people's life, the fact that they are bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh.

Their spiritual wealth is not limited to the short span of their own lives. It already contains all the special features distinguishing the character of the people, formed through bygone centuries, and combines these with the special new traits born in the people since the October Revolution.

This feel of the people is especially deep, clear and moving in its truth

and strength in the stories of Kazakov and Nikitin. I do not mention Tendryakov since he is already a mature and well-known writer. In reading two stories of Kazakov's, "Nikishka's Secrets" and "Arcturus, the Hunting Dog," and also Sergei Nikitin's "The Taste of Yellow Water," one comes in contact with the very well-spring of our people's life and poetry. The air of our vast and beloved country, the breath of our immense native-land fills these tales. Thus a golden autumn day is filled with the clear, light winds coming over our lakes and rivers, woods and fields.

The writers' congress is now in session. Will it affirm that free and daring scope for writers which is the one thing that will make of Soviet literature the greatest literature of our time? Or will the Congress rather take up matters of petty tutelage, and long-term quarrels? If it does, it will be useless. We must at last cease calling friends enemies simply because they tell us unpleasant truths, are not hypocritical, and, while giving a selfless devotion to their people and their country, do not demand a monopoly of such devotion, or a reward for it.

THERE are two paths open to the Congress, the noble path of consolidation, and the other, the destructive path of disagreement.

I am writing about phenomena in our literary reality that are having extremely painful effects on many of our writers and our literature as a whole.

I am not afraid that I shall be misunderstood, because all I have spoken of here is so clear. But I am afraid of being misinterpreted.

What I have said has been prompted by a love for my native land no words can express. I am not ashamed to say this. I am grateful to life for everything, and above all, for having been born and living in Russia during a remarkable period of her existence. But though I am grateful for living all my life in this talented, wonderful land, the most humane in the world, I write probably weakly and incoherently about existing shortcomings. There is no contradiction in this. There is only the passionate desire for the perfecting and magnificent flowering of our culture.

THE RIGHT TO GO AND COME

SCOTT NEARING

POPULAR sovereignty is a doctrine that was widely accepted at th time of the American Revolution of 1776 and the French Revolu tion of 1789. The doctrine is based upon several assumptions. One is th dominant role of the people in government. Another is the right of popu lar revolution.

The relation of people to government is set forth in the Preambl to the United States Constitution:

> We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of North America.

It is also to be found in the Tenth Amendment of the United State Constitution:

> The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.

According to these declarations, the people of the United State (acting through their representatives in the convention which drev up the Constitution and in the state legislatures which ratified it) or dained and established the basic law of the land. In this basic law, the delegated certain powers to the Federal Government, assigned othe powers to the several states, and, as the grantors of authority, held th residue of power in their own hands.

These assignments and reservations created a power balance or powe triangle: the central government, the local (state) governments, and th people. In this pattern, the people were the source of governmenta authority and one of its three basic factors.

Should the government established by popular will fail to promot safety and happiness, the framers of the Constitution declared their righ to alter or abolish the government. The right to alter is contained i

Article V of the Constitution, which provides that by a vote of two-thirds of both Houses of Congress or on application of the Legislatures of two-thirds of the States, the Congress shall call a convention for proposing amendments which become a part of the constitution when ratified by three-quarters of the several states.

The right to abolish was written into the Declaration of Independence:

> We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable Rights. . . . That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it.

This right to abolish is spelled out in Articles 7 and 10 of the New Hampshire Constitution: "The people of this State have the sole and exclusive right of governing themselves as a free, sovereign and independent state." And "Whenever the ends of government are perverted, and public liberty manifestly endangered, and all other means of redress are ineffectual, the people may, and of right ought to reform the old, or establish a new government."

Citizens of a country whose institutions were built around the principles of popular sovereignty enjoyed their freedoms because they were part of the governmental authority in a sovereign republic. They guaranteed the freedoms in bills of rights incorporated in State and Federal constitutions.

One of the essential freedoms was freedom of movement,—the right to go and come. Feudal masters and owners of chattel slaves opposed such a freedom because their unearned incomes were derived from immobile labor. Masters of United States policy, during the early days of the Republic, took it for granted that chattel slaves and indentured servants should stay put. Migrants from Europe were readily admitted to the country until the opening years of the present century. After the Civil War, Asian migration was restricted, but the right of white Americans to go and come was taken for granted. Before the close of the last century freedom to go and come included West Europe. It was about as easy for citizens of Massachusetts and Pennsylvania to visit Britain and France as it was to go to Denver or Seattle.

A TIME of troubles came with war in 1914. Travel restrictions were imposed "for the duration." War ended, but the evil times con-

tinued. Fascists seized power in Italy in 1922. Ten years later the Nazis had gained power in Germany. Depression gripped the world in 1929. In 1932 the Japanese began their movement to occupy China. The Spanish Civil War of 1936 led into general war in 1939. After 1945 exploding nationalisms shook Asia and Africa. In 1949 China's Liberation forces, by winning control of the most populous country, tipped the world power balance against the West. The time of troubles had lasted for more than three decades, during which the right of United States citizens to go and come had been limited, restricted and violated on the plea of national security in a period of emergency. Wartime powers assumed by the Executive or granted by Congress for the duration of the war, were continued into peacetime on the plea that since no peace treaties had been signed with Japan and Germany the state of war had continued. Under the provisions of the National Security Act of 1950 the President, by declaring an emergency, automatically clothed himself with extraordinary powers.

Emergency followed emergency, colonial war, general war, revolution, counter-revolution, economic disruption and disorganization. Military necessity and the "Red Menace" joined with economic urgency to justify stringent restrictions on travel. Washington, geographically remote but one of the most active participants in the world power struggle, played a leading role in the effort to limit or deny the right to go and come.

Up to 1910 passport policy throughout the world had been easy or non-existent. American citizens needed passports only for Russia and Turkey. In the 1950's passport policy had become so tough that Congress passed a law making it a crime for a United States citizen to travel abroad without a passport, and even those to whom passports were issued were limited in their travel to restricted areas.

In line with this tough passport policy, the right of United States citizens to go and come across the home frontiers was abridged or completely denied because of their ideas and associations. Most passport applications were processed in a matter of days. The Passport Office, however, had a "political" file containing the names of American citizens who had questioned or denounced Washington's foreign or domestic policies. In such cases applicants waited months or years for their passports, if they got them at all.

Wars in Malaya, Indo-China and Korea had convinced my wife and me, by 1950, that Western civilization was involved in a major crisis which would probably result in the disintegration and perhaps in the destruction of the entire culture pattern. We decided to see for ourselves and form our own judgments on the basis of the information thus ob

tained. We spent three winters visiting every state in the United States, holding some six hundred public and private meetings; discussing United States foreign and domestic policy with about 30,000 people.

Then, in 1952, we applied for passports to see more of the world. After fifteen months of negotiations with the State Department, we secured a passport good for travel in only four specified West European countries and limited to six months. With this document we spent three and a half months in West Europe.

In 1954 we again applied for passports. They were issued to us on January 3, 1956, fourteen months after our signed applications had gone to Washington. The passports were stamped:

> This passport is not valid for travel to the following areas under control of authorities with which the United States does not have diplomatic relations: Albania, Bulgaria, and those portions of China, Korea and Viet-Nam under Communist control.
>
> This passport is not valid for travel in Hungary.
>
> This passport is not valid for travel to or in Egypt, Israel, Jordan and Syria.

With our 1956 passports we visited a dozen countries in South Asia, from Japan to Pakistan.

The following winter, in our efforts to gauge public attitudes and form some valid judgment on the efforts which were being made to build an alternative to imperialism and capitalism, we went to Central and East Europe, the Soviet Union and People's China.

These study trips which began in 1951 extended over seven years. We summarized our observations and conclusions in three books: *USA Today,* 1955; *Socialists Around the World,* 1958, and *The Brave New World,* 1958.* The third of these books dealt at length with our impressions of People's China.

Publication date for *The Brave New World* was set for mid-November, 1958. Early in October the State Department wrote to us, upsetting our plans for a return trip to the USSR and People's China in the autumn of 1959.

> Pending consideration of your entitlement to pass facilities, your passports are hereby tentatively withdrawn and you are requested to surrender them. Any attempt to use these passports may subject you to prosecution under the provisions of Section 1544 of Title 18 of the United States Code, which reads in part as follows:
>
> "Whoever willfully and knowingly uses or attempts to use any passport

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in violation of the conditions or restrictions therein contained, or of the rules prescribed pursuant to the laws regulating the issuance of passports . . . shall be fined not more than two thousand dollars or imprisoned not more than five years, or both."

We mailed an answer to the State Department on November 29, 1958, in which we stated our considered position on our right to travel:

We have your letters of October 3, 1958, advising us that the Passport Office is considering the withdrawal of our passports Numbers 816,975 and 816,976 because we traveled "to and in that area of China under Communist control in violation of the restrictions contained in your passport and in contravention of United States foreign policy." You request the surrender of our passports and give us sixty days to file this answer.

1. There is no question as to the facts. We did travel in People's China in December, 1957. We have reported upon our observations in numerous public addresses, in newspaper and magazine articles, and in a book, *The Brave New World,* published November 15, 1958.
2. We consider the restriction which forbids us to travel in People's China as unreasonable and unconstitutional.
   a. The right to go and come across frontiers is a fundamental or "natural" right of citizens, under the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.
   b. The right to go and come is guaranteed, by implication, in the first ten Amendments to the United States Constitution.
   c. If the State Department has the authority to issue passports, it may prescribe reasonable regulations upon travel, but the right to go and come cannot be generally denied.
   d. Therefore we believe that the general prohibition of travel to and in People's China is unreasonable and unconstitutional.
3. We hold that our desire to visit People's China is reasonable.
   a. We are students of social science and writers on public affairs.
   b. The developments in People's China since October 1, 1949, when the present regime was established, are of great significance, not only to the citizens of China but to peoples the world over.
   c. If the experiments now being made in People's China provide a workable alternative to the Western way of life, and our visit has convinced us that they may do so, it is vitally important for people everywhere to know the facts.
   d. Hence it is not only our right as students of public affairs but it is our duty as responsible citizens to inquire into the facts and publicize them to the extent of our abilities.
   e. Under circumstances as stated above, instead of obstrucing, the State Department should make every effort to encourage and facilitate our travel in China in order that our report on developments there should be as informative and complete as possible.

4. Under the Constitution of the United States, we, the people, are the residual holders of power and authority. We believe that the policies adopted by the present administration in Washington in its dealings with People's China are not only short-sighted and self-defeating but that they threaten the peace and happiness of millions of people in Asia and Europe as well as in the United States. We consider it our duty and responsibility to oppose such policies by every reasonable means.
5. We have decided not to surrender our passports.
   a. They are our property. We paid the required fee for the passports when they were issued on January 3, 1956 and again when they were renewed by the United States Embassy in Moscow on January 2, 1958.
   b. Our passports are the record of a contract entered into by the Government of the United States with one or more of its citizens. A contract may not be repudiated at will by one of the parties to the agreement.

As students of public affairs it is our right and our duty to study and report significant social developments. We believe that the economic and social changes now being made in People's China are significant. Within a year we should like to revisit People's China to observe the communes now being established there, to study the spectacular advances in agricultural and industrial production and the alterations in the general standards of living. If you withdraw our present passports, we shall apply for new ones and will continue to press for our rights as citizens and as students and reporters of public affairs, to go and come across our national frontiers.

On April 14, 1959 we went to Washington for a hearing on our passport cancellation. Robert D. Johnson, Chairman of the hearing, outlined the proposed procedure.

> The Passport Office has no authority to consider the policy reasons for not permitting Americans to travel to Communist China, nor does the Passport Office have jurisdiction to consider any legal objections, constitutional or otherwise, to the procedures under which this matter will be considered, or as to the general question of restricting passports as to their validity or use in certain countries. . . . The scope of this hearing will be limited to the consideration of the facts in your case and the application of the Passport Regulations thereto. Now it appears that you and Mrs. Nearing intentionally violated the restrictions contained in the passport in travel to and in the area of Communist China, and disregarded the foreign policy of this Government, and have given indication that you would do so again.

The chief task of the hearing was to prove that we knew the nature of United States foreign policy and intentionally violated it. What follows is a record of the exchange which took place there:

"Mr. Nearing, prior to your entry into Communist China in December of 1957 were you generally aware of the foreign policy of the United States with respect to travel by American citizens to and in Communist China?"

"Yes, and I thoroughly disagree with it as an American citizen. I thoroughly disagree with the policy of Washington in this respect."

"What was your concept of the policy with respect to travel by American citizens?"

"I believe that the right to go and come, as stated in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, the right to go and come is a natural right, or a basic right which may not be denied. Am I answering your question?"

"What I meant is what your concept of what the United States Government policy was?"

"It is quite clear on the passport. The passport said 'Not good for traveling in Communist China,' so we did not use the passport in Communist China."

"But your general concept was that an American citizen was not permitted to travel in Communist China?"

"No, my concept was that the Passport Office had issued a statement to the effect that this passport is not good for travel in Communist China. I know of no law which forbids us to travel anywhere, except in case of war perhaps, but as far as China was concerned, I know of no law which forbids us to travel in China. But I knew of the passport restriction. It was stated clearly on the passport."

"Do you have Passport No. 816975 and Passport No. 816976 with you this morning?"

"No sir."

"Would you be willing to submit them to the Department if we requested them?"

"You have requested them. Will the Department return them?"

"Well, we will have to come to a decision on that."

"Good, we will come to a decision on our side. This is our property. We paid for it just as we pay for a postage stamp, and we regard it as our property and we propose to hold on to it."

"When did you first formulate your plans to enter Communist China or to travel to Communist China?"

"I have been in China before and I regard the developments in China today as probably the most significant (politically and economically) social developments that are taking place anywhere in the world. . . . The developments in China we consider at the moment to be even more important than the developments in Russia, and we think that the developments in Russia are among the major developments of this period."

"At any rate, you did contemplate, prior to your departure from the United States on this trip, touring Communist China?"

"Oh yes, we were very definitely committed to cover those parts of the

world in which socialist construction is being attempted or carried forward."
"While you were in China did you contact any other Americans?"
"Oh yes."
"Could you give us the names?"
"No."
"Don't you recall them?"
"Oh no, I am not an informer, not an agent, and I don't mention names or addresses or anything of that kind. I don't want to involve anyone else."
"What was the general reaction of the people toward you? Did they know you were Americans?"
"Yes, they couldn't help it. The last time I was in China, in 1927, there were difficulties. . . . At that time there was real enmity, hatred. This time we were received with utmost friendliness from everybody from kindergarten up to public officials. They don't like the government policy of the United States. But as far as we were concerned, we were greeted in the most friendly and hospitable fashion wherever we went. In fact, we were over-fed and over-entertained."
"Mr. Nearing, if you are furnished with further passport facilities, that is, if your passport is returned to you or revalidated, will you again travel in violation of the geographical limitations of general applicability which are contained in the passport at the present time?"
"You see, the same answer which I presented in my letter to the State Department, or the Passport Office, the same answer still holds true. My loyalties to my science and to my constituency (I both write and talk, write and teach), my loyalties to my science and to my constituency come before my loyalties to the Government of the United States. I happen to have been born on the 6th of August and President Truman saw fit on the 6th of August to drop a bomb on the women and children of Hiroshima. Since that time I have been pretty much alien to the Government of the United States, pretty much in opposition. I realize we are living under conditions where opposition is not encouraged in the United States, but I differ not only with policies of the State Department but I also differ with the policies of the United States Government, and I therefore . . . You see, I don't feel committed, I don't feel loyal to the Washington Government or its agencies or bureaus. I do feel loyal to my science and I do feel loyal to my clientele."
"Would you then say, Mr. Nearing, that you would have no hesitancy in traveling contrary to the foreign policy of the United States?"
"I don't accept the foreign policy of the United States. This is not my policy. I am in opposition, I am in outspoken and vigorous opposition to the foreign policy of the United States Government as now enunciated and practiced by the State Department and by the Washington Government."

Final cancellation of our passports was announced in a letter from the Passport Office dated May 29, 1959. After noting that our passports

were restricted and that due public notice had been given of these restrictions, the head of the Passport Office wrote:

> "In January of 1957 the foreign policy of the United States Government with respect to travel by American citizens to and in Communist China was specifically called to your attention by the American Consulate General at Hong Kong. At the informal hearing you stated that you were fully cognizant of the restrictions contained in your passport and of the foreign policy of the United States with respect to travel by American citizens to and in Communist China and Hungary.
> "In November of 1957, you entered Communist China at Peiping. You toured Communist China at the invitation of and at least partially at the expense of the Chinese People's Association for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries. An account of this tour was duly recorded by you in two articles and a book which were introduced as exhibits into the record of your informal hearing.
> "Your travel to and in Communist China would be prejudicial to the orderly conduct of known and existing United States foreign policy, and would otherwise be prejudicial to the interests of the United States for a number of reasons. This would be true, for example, because (a) the United States and the United Nations are in a state of unresolved conflict with Communist China stemming from the latter's aggression against the United Nations in Korea and the fact that the Peiping regime continues to resort to force in the Taiwan Strait area; (b) in the absence of diplomatic relations with Communist China, it is not possible for the Government to provide the customary protection to Americans traveling on the China mainland; and (c) since the Chinese Communist government came into power by military force in 1949, it has consolidated its position by a series of lawless acts, including the invasion of North Korea, the attack on United Nations Forces there, flagrant violations of the Korean armistice, consistent maltreatment of Americans and the continued imprisonment of American citizens in Chinese jails as political hostages, despite its pledge of September 10, 1955, to release them expeditiously.
> "Your testimony at the informal hearing clearly supports the conclusion that you would again travel in contravention of known and existing foreign policy of the United States and in violation of the geographical restrictions of general applicability established pursuant to that policy.
> "In the light of the foregoing and after consideration of the information of record, including your testimony at the informal hearing and the exhibits entered therein, the Department has concluded that further passport facilities should be refused to you under the provisions of Section 51.136 of the Passport Regulations. This conclusion is based upon information which can be openly produced."

We cite these facts in some detail, first, to document the profound

change in Washington's passport policy made during the past four decades, and second, because the change in passport policy is only one of several instances in which the Federal Government has overstepped its authority, exercised powers never delegated to it and trespassed upon the residual rights reserved to the respective states and to the people. These changes in public policy have been made possible by a carefully planned united front from the right, which includes business, the armed forces, the apparatus of government, the channels of comunication and information, the organized churches, schools, the voluntary associations of the middle class and the organized movements of workers and farmers. Incidentally, the drive has achieved an almost complete dissolution of left wing political, educational and fraternal organizations.

HAVING achieved this organizational triumph, the policy-making oligarchy (composed of business, the military and the public relations agencies) has engineered a persistent drive to extend and strengthen its position as the dictator of United States domestic and foreign policy. In doing this it has tossed overboard the idea of popular sovereignty and converted the citizens of the Republic into subjects of its arbitrary oligarchical rule. This seizure of power from the right has been consummated without a single positional battle, through a series of scattered and little-publicized skirmishes, while the subjugated masses have been watching television, drinking beer, or riding comfortably in the family car.

Today we live under a plutocratic oligarchy which violates the basic right to go and come by denying certain of its citizen-subjects egress and ingress. Passports are issued not as a right of United States citizens, but as a privilege extended by the oligarchy to those who agree, or go along with, its current foreign policy. Our passports were cancelled because we disagree with the party now in power and because we traveled in a country which the United States oligarchy is presently blockading and blacklisting.

We are passportless because in following our profession as students and writers, we studied, observed and reported developments in a country whose existence the Washington Government does not even acknowledge.

RiGhT FaCe

Arbiter Elegantiarum

While the President insisted that he was not a critic, one of the paintings sent to the Moscow exhibition appeared to him, he said, more like "a lampoon" than art. Painted in 1946 by Jack Levine of New York, it depicts a general with his mouth full of food at a victory dinner. It is entitled "Welcome Home."

"But I'm not going, I assure you," the President said, "I am not going to be the censor myself for the art that has already gone there. Now I think I might have something to say if we have another exhibition anywhere, to the responsible officials of the methods they produce, or get to the juries, and possibly there ought to be one or two people that, like most of us here say, we are not certain exactly what art is but we know what we like, and what America likes is after all some of the things that ought to be shown."—The *New York Times.*

Deliriously

Daniel T. du P. Viljoen, amiable administrator of South West, assured the visitor that the territory's future lay in closer ties with the Union. He called in a servant and spoke to him in Afrikaans. "Are you happy?" he asked. The servant replied. "He says he's happy," beamed the administrator.—The *Sunday Times Magazine.*

Don't Forget Benedict Arnold

Southern members of the House asked Postmaster General Arthur E. Summerfield to issue a commemorative stamp honoring Jefferson Davis, confederate President, in connection with the centennial of the Civil War. —*AP* dispatch.

Malthusian

Mrs. Hathaway occupies an almost feudal position over the fiercely independent people of Sark. Among other hereditary privileges she is the only person allowed to keep a female dog.—*AP dispatch.*

Land of Practical Jokes

Violence in human relations is taken for granted, too [in Mozambique]. For routine punishment, the standard item is the *palmatorio,* a kind of table tennis bat with holes. The holes suck up the flesh of the palm in painful welts.

A Rhodesian insurance man has been coming here for years. He had a favorite Portuguese family.

"Whenever a servant got out of line," he said, "they'd simply send him down to the police station. No explanation was necessary; the *chefe* always knew what to do.

"Then one day the *senhora decided* to invite the *chefe* to dinner. They sent the same boy, the one who'd been sent often before. Before the boy could deliver the invitation, the *chefe* got out the *palmatorio.*

"I don't know if he ever came to dinner."

In Angola, a Portuguese colony on the west coast, they don't use the *palmatorio.* But late in April they had a friendly demonstration of the effect of napalm bombs. Most of the natives live in thatched huts.—The *Sunday Times Magazine.*

Try Spearmint Flavor

Or take Mr. [John Davison 3d] Rockefeller's way of handling those who have ideas for the Lincoln Center, even critical ones. If he has been reading, Mr. Rockefeller will take off his pale, horn-rimmed glasses and put the speaker at his ease. Then he will listen intently as likely as not thoughtfully chewing the tip of one of the ribbons of his glasses.

Mr. Rockefeller will break in occasionally with such an expression as "I do think that's a terribly key consideration." Always he will be encouraging. If the speaker talks beyond the patience of most men, Mr. Rockefeller has a way of stopping him and yet sending him away pleased. What he will say is something like, "Your comments are very helpful" or "You've been most helpful."—The *New York Times.*

Fight to the Death

Marshall Field, Jr. of the *Chicago Sun-Times* has bought John S. Knight's controlling interest in the *Chicago Daily News,* the publishers announced jointly. . . . The total purchase price will exceed $24,000,000. Mr. Field (who already owns the *Sun-Times*) said: "Vigorous competition will exist between them in news gathering and in the drive for advertising lineage and circulation gains.—The *New York Herald-Tribune.*

Rebel with Cause

MEMOIRS OF A DUTIFUL DAUGHTER, Simone de Beauvoir. World Publishing Co. $5.00.

SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR'S account of her grilhood up to her 21st year is, in essence, the history of the adolescent girl's struggle to achieve an individual and meaningful adulthood. Though the details of her life are special, the rebellious development of an intellectually gifted daughter of a French bourgeois Catholic family, the story's impact is universal. She has told it without pose of personal vanity or public myth. It glows with the clarity of Miss de Beauvoir's uncompromising honesty, present in all her writings. She has chosen to look hard and directly at her own girlhood and describe what she saw and felt as accurately as she can. The result is a characterization which comes as both a revelation and a recognition.

We have only to set her complex young woman beside the grotesque creations of American women in fiction to reveal the gap between these differing concepts. It has been argued that it is Simone de Beauvoir (or the type) which is grotesque, that such intense intellectual interests, such unbridled ambition, such wilfullness to be uniquely herself, such dread of the restraints of motherhood and marriage is unnatural to a woman, and that the sex-drive child and male-dominating, but othe wise submissive American heroine closer to the truth. She says of herse that the friendliness of her fellow ma students at the Sorbonne "prevented m from ever "taking up that 'challengin attitude which later was to cause m so much dismay when I encountered in American women; from the sta men were my comrades, not my en mies." But there are men and wome who will indeed find her attitudes cha lenging since they upset the stati classic picture of woman's role in s ciety. If in the process of her fier struggle, Miss de Beauvoir over-co rects the picture, this is a natural aspe of the righting of social wrongs.

Written like a novel, the memoi recount her proper upbringing and h schooling by Catholic teachers; it alive with characterization of her fami and friends and of the movements a people who influenced and chang her, as they influenced the attitud politics and philosophy of France.

The early portion is reminiscent Colette. If one misses here the sens ous beauty of *My Mother's House,* o also is happy to forego the che touches of *Claudine at School* and trade the enchanted personal world Colette for de Beauvoir's broader soc climate. To paraphrase Sartre's co ment that his generation was more u happy than the preceding one, "

nicer to know," Colette may be nicer to know, but Simone de Beauvoir will help change the world.

Not that the memoirs slight the personal element. It is, in fact, the kind of study of adolescence in depth which would do more as required reading for the young girl than all the "advice to" pamphlets ever written, clearing the air of the misty fears, the fog of isolation which traps her in the conviction that she alone is a misfit, a special case.

Simone's successful struggle to fulfill her intellectual promise, to overcome the rigidity of Catholic ritual, to step out of the frame of French bourgeois pre-arranged marriage into equal partnership and love, is beautifully counterpointed by the story of Zaza, her closest friend. Reared in the same stultifying atmosphere as Simone, she chooses a different path than the one of head-on attack, substituting skirmishes for the main battle, while struggling to attain a free, personal happiness through reconcilation of her own needs with her family's views. Torn apart in the attempt, she dies at 22. "The doctors called it meningitis or encephalitis; no one was quite sure. Had it been a contagious disease, or an accident? Or had Zaza succumbed to exhaustion and anxiety? She has often appeared to me at night, her face all yellow under a pink sunbonnet, and seeming to gaze reproachfully at me. We had fought together against the revolting fate that had lain ahead of us, and for a long time I believed that I had paid for my own freedom with her death." The echoes of romanticism in that quote should not blind us to its truth. There is indeed a feeling of comradeship, of war buddies, within that sisterhood battling in an undeclared war against the social strictures which imprison all, and a recognition that the casualties heaped along the roads (the broken-hearted, the alcoholics, the insane) are those who paid a full measure of the common price each must share.

The book ends when Simone is 22, so that the great questions still await her and one cannot accuse Miss de Beauvoir of having slighted them in the work. But the fact remains that for the woman who renounces her traditional social role without giving up one ounce of her right to motherhood or her rights as man's equal companion and lover, the problems are seriously compounded. If one approaches *The Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter* as a magic-answer book for men and women grappling with these problems, as many readers did *The Second Sex,* there will only be disappointment. Its value lies in the stature it attaches to woman's individual drives, and in the boldness of de Beauvoir's personal solutions. Since these questions are always bathed in the social atmosphere which creates the problems, her story has a significance far beyond its individual story content.

Apart from this there are some minor disappointments. In spite of her vivid intelligence, the religious question which looms so large in Simone de Beauvoir's landscape seemed vague in its resolutiton. Though she describes herself as finally free of Catholic dogma, there is a disturbing element of "salvation seeking" in the ethics she adopts as an adult. Also one finds a surprising lack of wit, though the live, probing, fervent intellectualism of her period at the Sorbonne is delightfully given. And there is certainly ground for amusement in her quote of Herbaud's description of Sartre ". . . on

a note of apprehensive admiration: 'Except when he's asleep, Sartre *thinks* all the time!' "

HELEN DAVIS

Bold but Safe

THE OPTIMIST by Herbert Gold. Little, Brown & Co. $4.50.

READING Herbert Gold's novel, *The Optimist,* is like being grasped by the lapels and addressed passionately, even brilliantly, on a number of vital topics, while one's only response is an urgent desire to get away. I feel that it is a very bad novel, and yet that the writer, far from being incompetent, is thoughtful, highly talented, and one who knows exactly what he is doing. At the age of thirty-four, Herbert Gold has brought forth four novels and a number of short stories, won a Guggenheim fellowship, been invited to teach at Cornell University, and achieved the praise of critics like Malcolm Cowley, Granville Hicks and Maxwell Geismar. This book has both interesting subject matter and an adept style. Yet these two elements clash with one another. The material of the novel is that of a realistically critical examination of American middle class life. Of the three episodes which make up the story, the first touches among other things, upon the bestiality in the fraternity houses connected with a mid-West state university. The second takes up the inhumanity of army training and the black market corruption that took place during the second World War. The third deals with the chicanery and lack of democracy in the operation of the big political parties, as in the selection of candidates and campaigning for votes. Yet everything about the novel has an atmosphere of complete unreality. So pervading is this, that only one conclusion is possible. It is that the air of unreality or unrecognizeability is built into the very style, the method, the tools of his trade that the author has fashioned for himself and uses so ably. Four factors seem to be involved in this.

One is the conviction that the significance of every social situation is to be found solely in how it influences the sexual activity and love life of the people involved.

Another is the substitution of formulae borrowed from psychoanalysis for the job of examining and probing psychology and human character.

Third is an imagery which shows less eye for the interesting and revealing data of life, than a desire to be striking and brilliant at all costs.

Fourth is the lack of an ear for the varied music of speech, and its revelation of personality, with the result that everyone seems to talk alike.

The novel is made up of three sections, each of which covers a crucial year in the life of its central character, Burr Fuller. The first of these introduces him as a sophomore in an unnamed state university in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Described are a series of attempted or realized copulations with two women, Lucille and Laura, both of whom Burr loves madly; a wild party, including a drunken sexual orgy, involving the "intellectuals" of the university, both students and teachers; and a bestial hazing ordeal to which Burr is subjected, in a fraternity house.

I have no doubt that things like this go on. But other things of importance to the making of a person's mind and personality went on at the universities

n the late 1930's. I am not saying that Gold should have given us some classroom scenes; only that even in the scenes he did select, the mentality of Burr Fuller—who, we are told, is an honor student—might have shown a little more content and depth, with something of the impact of ideas and awakening to problems that university life does bring to people in it. The milieu of Burr's adventures might just as well have been Madison Avenue or Hollywood. Some critics might call such writing on Gold's part, "universality." The effect however is to make Burr Fuller an unreal, unconvincing person in any mileu.

It is the same with the next episode, of Burr's army year. While he is in training, a sensitive Jewish recruit is driven to suicide by a sergeant's anti-Semitism and brutality. When Burr is on furlough, we are treated to another copulation scene. He then goes overseas, knocks out an enemy tank single-handed on the Italian front, gets to Paris, and there discovers the army black market racket. And here too, every scene is unreal. There certainly were brutal and persecuting first sergeants in army companies, but an army company was also a little society, involving officers, the whole group of soldiers, and a complicated set of relaitonships among them, nothing of which appears in the author's account. Weinstein's suicide could just not have happened the way Gold describes it. And similarly, the battle scene has an unreality which would be obvious not only to a person who had been in a battle in Italy, but also to any one who had seen one of the better Hollywood war movies.

The last and longest episode of the book shows us Burr Fuller now in his early thirties, married, with two children, building a career as a lawyer and chosen to run for Congress on the Democratic ticket. Here there is some talk about progressive and reactionary political matters, mostly through Burr's discussions with his idealistic college friend, Mike. But as this episode develops, it becomes nothing more than a political background for sexual problems. Burr finds that his relations with his wife are increasingly unsatisfactory. For example, just when he wants to love her, she decides to take sleeping pills for her headaches. And so Burr develops an affair with the daughter of the local political boss. And the climax of the book comes when Burr discovers that his high-minded friend, Mike, is having an affair with his (Burr's) wife. Burr reels under this blow to his self-esteem. Is life worth living? Suicidal thoughts possess him. But he rejects them. And on a hopeful note, the book ends. "Eyes clouded by longing, he reached out to take a cloud in his arms. More. More! More! More!" This cues us to the title of the book, *The Optimist.*

The writing is vivid in the descriptions of sex life, as for example this:

> "Yes, let me free, let me *go,*" she hissed.
>
> But I locked her struggling to me, and as we fought, our arms mingling, hot and wet, we felt desire renewed and the uncalculated passion of conflict.

After a number of repetitions, however, this kind of scene gets boring. And as an example of the psychoanalizing, here is a passage from the wild party scene in the university episode.

> Johnny Ho and Donna Murphy, wrinkled at the lap, swollen-faced, wandering dazed after their petting, came

up to him in the kitchen with identical smirks on their mouths. "Looking for Laura?" said Johnny. "Looking for Laura?" said Donna.

"No, cooling myself off," said Burr, putting his wrists under the faucet and running cold water. Donna and Johnny went off in high explosions of laughter as the stain spread up his shirt: he had forgotten to roll his sleeves. Well, well, we have jokes, he thought: but my intention is to keep cool. And they're laughing together like idiots because they only know to make sex by petting.

"If you are maybe looking for Laura," Donna said with tipsy politeness, "and that's why you're so sour"—pulling and tugging at little Johnny so that it made three heads, two in cashmere, at her bobbling bosom—"why don't you go find Professor Cantius?"

"The father image," said her middle head, owlish Johnny.

"In the cellar with his worms," Donna added. "Well?" And she came brightly to focus on him. This was better than necking for her. It teased like necking, but it didn't leave that sticky congested feeling for which there was no remedy in the advertisements in *Charm*.

The passage also provides some idea of the general tonelessness of the conversation, and of the imagery—the "three heads" in the bosom for example—which make the entire novel seem like a running commentary aimed at revealing what a bright, clever fellow the author is.

It may be that this kind of novel is a product of the "cold war." The writer takes up central social problems, but plays safe by pushing them to the background, while the book becomes mainly a kind of exercise in smart language, imagery and the portrayal of sexual conflicts. The result however is only that gifted people produce bad novels.

SIDNEY FINKELSTEIN

Woman Alive

SUSAN B. ANTHONY, Rebel, C
sader, Humanitarian, by Alma Lu
Beacon Press. $5.75.

"IF SALLY ANN knows more abo
weaving than Elijah, why do
you make *her* overseer?" Susan B. A
thony once asked her father, with all t
unprejudiced logic of the eleven-ye
old. She had been watching the p
ceedings in his small cotton mill fr
the doorway, and she'd noticed th
whenever something went wrong w
one of the looms the man in cha
depended on a tall woman weaver
find and remedy the trouble.

The question did not seem to both
Daniel Anthony at all. "It would ne
do," he assured his daughter. "It j
would never do to have a woman ov
seer in the mill."

The year was 1831, the manufactu
of cotton was a major industry in t
United States and especially New En
land, and women and children labo
in the mills from can to can't
wages which barely kept them ali
While Susan's father, a Quaker, treat
his help more generously than the av
age owner, his daughter's inquiring mi
wasn't satisfied with the answers he ga
her any more than she was satisf
with the *status quo*. Nor was she e
to learn to accept that status, and
her entire life became one long qu
for answers that searched out the tru
leading inevitably from skirmish to ba
to bigger battle, until she became
dedicated crusader not only for equal
of the sexes but for the right to eq
treatment, decency and dignity for
human beings alike.

All of us know Susan B. Antho
as the outstanding leader of the Wo

n's Rights Movement whose goal was Woman Suffrage. Her being hailed into ourt in Canandaigua in 1873 to answer o the charge of having cast a vote was o dramatic it has even been used as V material. We think of her name s bracketed with Elizabeth Cady Stan-on, Lucy Stone and, more recently, Er-estine Rose. But beyond this our knowl-dge of the details of her life is likely o be sketchy, even though many vol-mes have been written about her. So : is good to have this scholarly, pains-akingly searching, compact biography y Alma Lutz made available to us.

Completely familiar with her subject nd at home in the period, Miss Lutz races Miss Anthony's life (somehow ne hesitates to follow Miss Lutz in eferring to her subject with affection-te familiarity as Susan) in a way to nake it synonymous with Nineteenth-Century history in the making. First. ogically and appropriately, there was emperance work, crusading for the ight of women to a college education, nvolvement in the battle for extension f the Married Women's Property ights Law to give mothers equal rights ith fathers in regard to their children nd to prevent the original law from be-g negated by hostile legislators. In-vitably, there was also involvement ith the Abolitionist movement. But sues and emotional attitudes were so nfused, the role of women on a pub-: platform so controversial of itself, d causes for anger so frequent that san Anthony was at first as likely to d herself espousing an issue like the oomer costume as attending to the ily grave problems of the day. She might thus have easily turned o a facile do-good reformer, followed e path of least resistance and settled : a less harsh if equally colorful life.

But she was constitutionally incapable of compromise, fearless in spite of ingrained lady-like timidity, and gifted with a mind so clear and logical that her reasoning on major issues never fails to amaze us with its broadness of sweep and its fluid, dialectical approach. It was impossible for her to pigeonhole issues. She saw political battles and social progress as one indivisible whole, and she would argue herself hoarse and risk losing friends of twenty years' standing to prove her point. Unfortunately, as happens so often with the singularly clear-sighted, she usually managed to play Cassandra. She tried reasoning with supporters of the Fourteenth Amendment that it was a mistake to separate the battle for women's rights from that for the Negro—and Frederick Douglass himself,for all of the respect and friendship between them, told her indignantly that the plight of women was as nothing compared to the plight of black people, and that first things should come first. She tried once more, at the time when the much less controversial Fifteenth Amendment was up before Congress: "Insert the word 'sex' along with provisions for equal rights regardless of race, color and creed. . . . !" But Republican politicians were afraid that to follow her urgings would mean risking an immediate attainable goal for something too big and too uncertain. As a result only half the Blacks were given temporary uneasy franchise, with the black women condemned to remain silent along with their white sisters. Thus a huge potential for progress remained untapped and reaction in the South was given a silent blessing; and who is to say that a direct line may not be drawn from the events of those days to Little Rock? Women, had they been

granted the vote right then instead of fourteen years after Susan Anthony's death in 1906, might have guided their children's destinies with greater wisdom than the men.

Because Susan B. Anthony's life cannot be separated from the history of which she was so much a part, it is a pity that the author, who knows her material so well, takes it too much for granted. Dates, places, famous names are mentioned casually, in that shorthand manner which is evocative only to those who can fill in the background without difficulty. For the rest of us it makes rather heavy reading. Susan Anthony herself is characterized and described over and over again without our ever being allowed close enough to her to feel her breathe and think for herself. But that, of course, may be too much to ask. This is a scholarly, thoughtful work and honest history, and a gold mine of information on the entire history of the Women's Movement.

KAY PULASKI

Beatnik Inflation

THE HOLY BARBARIANS, by Lawrence Lipton. Messner, Inc. $5.00.

THIS is as corrupt and almost as competent a job as ever made a fast buck on Madison Avenue. And as in most such commercial writing it is difficult to decide just where the author's cynical under-estimation of the reader's values gives place to a fatuous over-estimation of his own. The first chapter effectively summarizes the history of Venice, California, an ornate and abortive resort development of the late nineties degenerated into a "slum by the sea." Its shacks are now, we learn, occupied by poor Mexican-Americans; almost equally poor working-class fam lies with too many children to fi other rentals available in over-crowd Los Angeles; and by Lipton's own (he tells it) beat disciples, friends a admirers.

These thirty pages are efficiently salte with enough of the more familiar be terminology—cat, cool, kicks, pot, ma chick, gig, pad. etc.—to make the squar feel hip because they dig the languag and with enough technical jargon—pos coital, psychogenic, satyriasis—to mal it clear that the author is not just o of the fellows, but a scientist urbane surveying the troubled scene from mo rarified heights.

As we go on the same attempt run with the hares and chase with t hounds is more objectionably displaye in his consciously broad-minded accep ance of the most self-destructive pra tices as necessary stimuli to the mu while, he makes it very clear, he hir self (obviously one of her most favor devotees) is a hard-working, abstemiou respectably married and stable poet wh serves as kindly father confessor f her more erratic young worshippers.

Less repulsive than the pervasi smugness of this patronizing doub standard is the simple dishonesty wi which Lipton tickles the reader's "s interest," particularly in the book's fi chapters.

Under pretense of a sociological anal sis there are here a dozen or so "tr stories" (the resemblance of name is n at all coincidental) told in the cu ously flat language many psychiatric s cial workers use to sterilize their repo of abnormal case histories. In seve of Lipton's stories the family relatio sips or other background materials reflect serious social problems, but a

real interest is discouraged by the superficial summary form which evidently includes facts, or half and quarter facts chosen for their shock value (mild red-baiting alternates with other titillation here) rather than their essential meaning.

The second half of the book has a number of valid insights and some comments of interest, almost swamped in a morass of phony values. tongue-in-cheek log-rolling, synthetic tourist-trap thrills and a good deal of dull self-congratulatory pseudo-aesthetic discussion.

The most important statement Lipton has to make is his confused but genuine recognition of the anti-competition, anti-capitalist, anti-war protest at the heart of much "beatnik" life in practice as well as theory. The whole of the last chapter, for example, is devoted to this, and includes long but interesting quotations from such documents as a United States Army study of Korea, and a Peacemaker application form as filled out by a visitor to Venice West.

It would also be worth pursuing further the underlying contrast he briefly suggests beneath the superficial resemblances of the young beat and the more familiar juvenile delinquent. He mentions the former's non-violence and cult of poverty as opposed to the latter's need of violence and desperate desire for possessions, speaking of the first as a total rejection of our society's values and the second as a total adoption of them. This and a few other less original yet still valuable observations may be gleaned from the book, together with an altogether uncritical but particularized description of the life of a specific group of would-be artists and their intimates. The material could easily and advantageously be presented in an average magazine article, but the advantage would be all the reader's. It has therefore here been profitably expanded to fill a three-hundred page volume.

ANNETTE T. RUBINSTEIN

Pre-Sputnik Educator

THE BIG RED SCHOOL HOUSE, by Fred M. Hechinger. Doubleday. $3.95.

THIS book purports to be a comparative study of the educational systems of the United States and the USSR. Its author, Fred M. Hechinger, bases his claim as an authority on Soviet education on the two weeks in 1956 that he spent showing Mme. Ludmila Dubrovina, Deputy Minister of Education for the RSFSR, what he calls the "ins and outs" of American education as found in the schools of New York City and its suburbs.

Mme. Dubrovina's knowledge of the Soviet educational system appeared to Mr. Hechinger to fall very far short of the kind of material he was after. When he asked Mme. Dubrovina why Soviet education had given up the progressive method in the early Thirties, her reply was terse: "Because we found it to be incorrect."

Mr. Hechinger was not to be fobbed off by this sort of answer. He supplies his own: the progressive method had been deliberately introduced by the Bolsheviks to hasten what he calls the "withering away of the school," by analogy, of course, with the political withering away of the state.

This remarkable "theoretical" explanation for a whole decade of Soviet education is typical of the author's

approach generally. Not for Mr. Hechinger the tedium of study and research; rather the quicker way of "theory" and unsupported generalization.

It is difficult to see why this book was published in the first place. Since Sputnik, Americans have been genuinely concerned about the real facts of Soviet achievement; particularly has this been true in the field of education. And important results have followed in our educational system. There has been a real effort in mathematics and science to improve the quality of education; significant changes have been made in the teaching of languages in the school, particularly that of Russian, which is now studied in an increasing number of colleges and high schools throughout the country. Delegations of American school authorities have gone for fact-finding visits to Soviet schools; American and Soviet students have made brief exchange visits last year and more are to be made this year; and at present there are American students in Soviet universities for a whole year of regular study.

Moreover there is little reason to believe that such genuine concern will lessen. Thorough, dependable information about the Soviet Union will continue to be sought by Americans working in every field. This, as the Russian say, has been determined by life.

The Big Red Schoolhouse seems a sad survivor of the pre-sputnik period when "theory" and fantasy supplied such information about the Soviet Union as was fed to us by the publishers and our "free press."

In his preface Mr. Hechinger mentions in passing that already Soviet education has set out on a different course. Luckily, haste to get the book out made it impossible for another "theoretical" explanation of the current reorganization of Soviet education to be offered to the reader who will now, without the benefit of Mr. Hechinger, have to do some serious reading and studying for himself.

It may interest the reader to know that Mr. Hechinger has just taken over the post of Education Editor of the *New York Times*.

MURRAY YOUNG

Letter

Editors, MAINSTREAM:

I am impelled to write and congratulate you on the magnificent job of writing turned in recently by Art Shields on the recent Poplarville events. It makes us all proud. This is writing in the truly grand tradition for which we have been famous over the years. Hooray!

UNTURNED COAT