JANUARY, 1961

Mainstream

Hitching Our Wagon To A Star

NOEL FIELD

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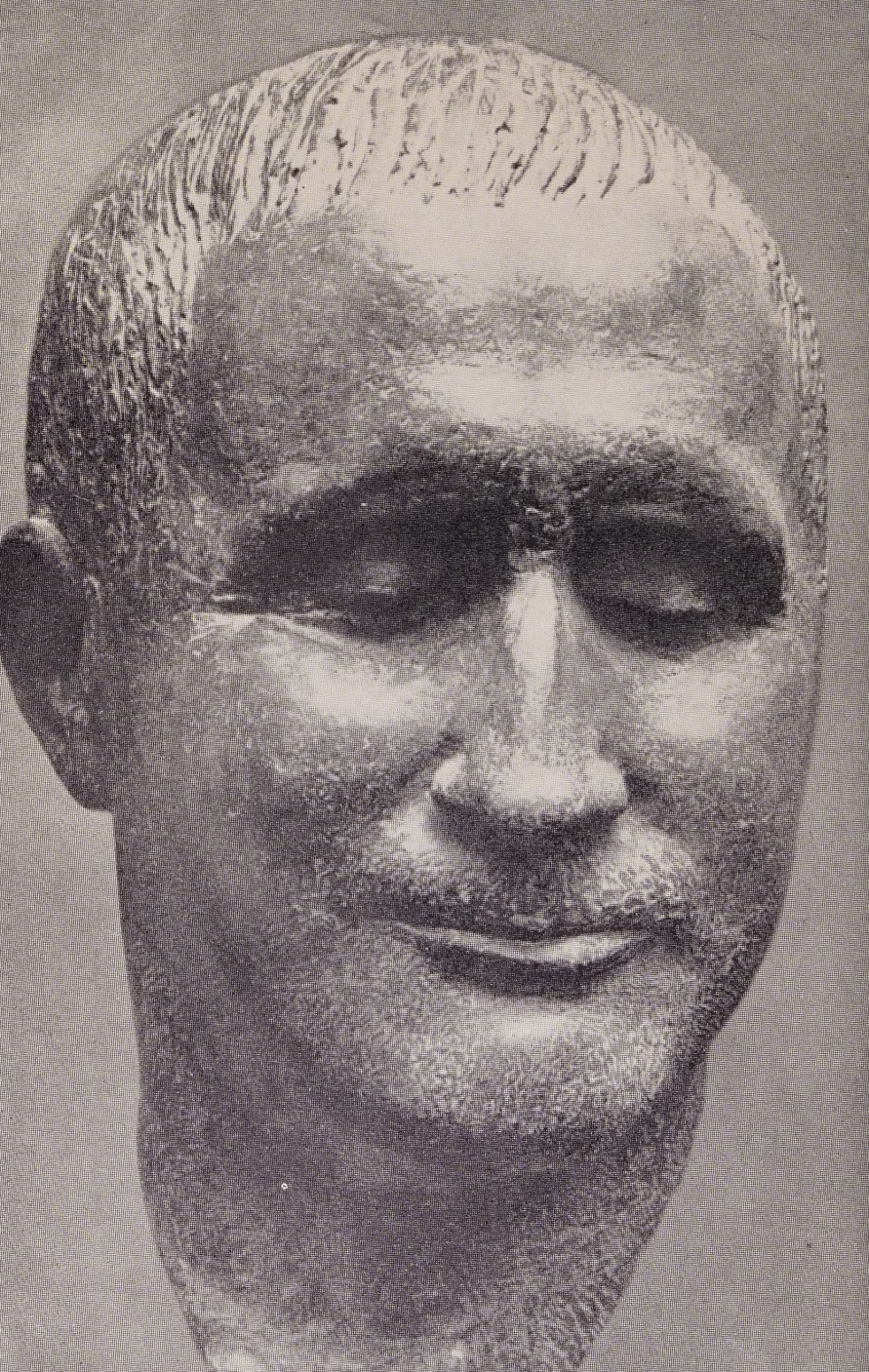

Vol. 14, No. 1

Mainstream

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AMONG OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Noel Field, author of "Hitching Our Wagon to A Star," was im prisoned by the Hungarian government for espionage in 1949. A com munist himself, he was certain he would finally be "Cleared by the ver society that now keeps me in solitary confinement." Mr. Field was cleare and freed in 1954. Along with his wife, who was imprisoned and freec also, Mr. Field remained in Hungary, firm in his belief in socialism.

A member of the Editorial Board of *Mainstream, Sidney Finkelstein'* criticism on the arts appears frequently in our pages. His latest book i *Composer and Nation.*

Bertolt Brecht needs no introduction to American readers but hi political beliefs, which are stated clearly in the poem in this issue, ar often ignored by critics in this country.

David Evanier is a twenty-year old college student. Articles by hin have appeared in *The Nation, The New Republic,* and the *New Worl Review.* This is his first published poem.

Among our reviewers, *Robert Forrey* is assistant to the Editorial Boar of *Mainstream. R. F. Shaw* is a graduate student specializing in moder European history.

NEXT MONTH

In commemoration of Negro History Week and the Civil War Cen tennial, we plan to have an article on the war by the noted Marxis historian, *Herbert Aptheker.* Also, we will include selections from the fina volume of *Dr. W. E. B. DuBois'* trilogy, the *Black Flame,* in honor o this distinguished Negro author and his life-long dedication to the ideal of true democracy.

HITCHING OUR WAGON TO A STAR

NOEL FIELD

ONE NIGHT OUT OF TWO THOUSAND

THE night is no different, the day has been no different from countless nights and days that have dragged by with deadly monotony and ipped by with incredible speed since that far-off, yesterlike moment in Iay, when life as I had known it came to an end and I disappeared into ie darkness. Deadly monotony—for externally each day and night has esembled each preceding day and night: complete solitude in a prison ell, broken only by the meals brought in by a guard with whom cannot communicate for lack of a common language, by the five or n minute walk in the courtyard with its high walls that admit only ie sun's rays and the twittering sparrows enjoying priceless freedom. ncredible speed—for the very sameness of each day, each night, has ised them into a single Day, a single Night, in which weeks and onths lose their identity, while the swift change of seasons reveals self in the budding, growth, decay and fall of the few chestnut leaves can glimpse—with what craving!—through an open air vent at the top the milkglass window. And the inner life I am leading—incom-rably richer than when an impinging outer world distracted me—akes me wish each day, with its books ranging from Shakespeare the Marxist classics, and each night, with its reminiscences out of the st, daydreams of the future, and profound thoughts of the present the meaning of life and death, might be tripled in length. More an three years have gone by, or is it four? Somehow, I have man-

aged to keep count of the months and their days by various mathematical tricks, but I tend to become uncertain of the years.

It is August 22, that I know. A strange emotion seizes me. Let me see, yes, this is the third summer. August 22, 1952. I have it: It was at this time twenty-five years ago that my wife and I sat beside the radio in our tiny Washington apartment and with waning hope followed the last-minute efforts to save the lives of Sacco and Vanzetti. From that midnight of two martyrs in a Boston jail there is a chain of events leading in an almost straight line to the present midnight in a Budapest jail. No, I am no Sacco, no Vanzetti. And I am no prisoner of the enemies of that freedom for which they fought and died. But in my own smaller, much smaller way I have remained true to the beliefs that began to take shape, oh, how vague and how slowly, during the ghastly wake, when hope changed into despair. It took a decade for those views to ripen into conviction and further years for them to result in consistent action. Many an inner conflict had to be fought out and overcome before the pacifist idealist—a typical middle-class intellectual and son of a middle-class intellectual—could become the militant communist of later years and of the present. Yes, of the present, too, though I am called an imperialist spy and treated as a traitor. For, whatever my accusers may believe, I know I am innocent, and I know that, perhaps long after my death, the truth will be established and my name cleared. Cleared by the very society that now keeps me in solitary confinement. My accusers essentially have the same convictions that I do, they hate the same things and the same people I hate—the conscious enemies of socialism, the fascists, the renegades, the traitors. Given their belief in my guilt, I cannot blame them, I cannot but approve their detestation. That is the real horror of it all. Were I a prisoner of fascism—and there were times when I faced this prospect at close range—I would know how to stand up to the enemy, I would know what to say and, especially, what not to say; my hatred would give me strength, as it gave strength to so many thousands.

I HAVE little hope of proving my innocence. Who can doubt that there *are* spies seeking to enter the socialist world and using many disguises, including that of being a communist. And there *are* superficial aspects of my past which lend themselves to misconstruction and can be twisted to fit the traitorous role I am supposed to have played. Save for one thing: my own innermost convictions, and these are imponderable.

My past! Contradictory on the surface, and yet there is a guiding

ine from early childhood. My Quaker father brought me up a human-
st and pacifist. As a high school student in Switzerland after the first
world war, I helped to organize and lead a youth peace movement. What
ights we had, as pacifists! The reactionaries and militarists fought us,
he quacks fought us, the communists fought us. During my college
lays at Harvard and the years immediately following, I remained active
n the peace movement and joined the Fellowship of Youth for Peace.
There my faith in pacifism received its first slight jolts. In a college
ourse I studied Socialism as interpreted by Ramsay MacDonald, and
Communism as interpreted by Harold Laski. In the FYP my friends
nd acquaintances ranged from Gandhi followers to anarchists and
ommunists. I began to wonder whether peace on earth could be
ssured without social justice. But I still believed in disarmament
hrough the League of Nations, wrote a thesis for distinction on the
ubject, and subsequently landed at the League of Nations desk in the
tate Department and later at the Disarmament desk. For ten years,
vith declining conviction and growing doubts, I tried to do my share
vithin the framework of American policy—which was to favor a
imited reduction of armaments without any inspection or control. The
epeated Soviet proposals for complete disarmament thrilled me, but
he Soviet Government stood alone and the rest of the world laughed.
Today, some two decades later, I cannot but think of the millions of
ives that might, that would have been saved, had an aroused public
pinion then enabled the Soviet Union to break out of its isolation
nd forced the other governments to take its demands seriously. To-
ay, the world is still divided into two hostile camps. "Today!" For
ll I know, it has been one long today in the world outside since May
949. Ah, if I but had an inkling of what has happened since. The
ast news I heard was that the Berlin Airlift was about to end. Have
he war shadows since dispersed? And what of America? . . . Again,
s so often of late, I am tempted to daydream myself to sleep with one
f my favorite fantasies of the future—a Socialist America in friendly
ompetition with a Socialist Europe, a Socialist Asia, a Socialist Africa.
ut wait, let me not shirk the task I have embarked on this night—
he attempt to trace the past that led me to my present.

THE shock of the Sacco-Vanzetti executions drove me leftward. In my free time, I began reading the works of Marx and Lenin—the ery ones I have been re-reading during the past months. I helped ound an "International Friendship Club," which opened its doors qually to members of all nationalities and races. And while, in my

official time, I gave orders to, and was served by, the deferential Negro messengers—the dray horses—of the State Department, my wife and I, after hours, would spend a happy evening in the company of Negro friends, who were often our superiors in culture and wisdom. Yet here, in the nation's capital, a stone's throw away from the Lincoln Memorial, we could not take them to "white" places of entertainment, but had to see them—all too furtively—in our home or theirs. What elation we felt on that memorable evening when a group of us from the Club managed to break the color-line at one of the Washington theatres!

The Great Depression stimulated further searching. I watched and sometimes took part in radical meetings and demonstrations, sought contact with left-wingers of different shades. Never shall I forget the evening when I induced a group of strikers from Passaic, camped near the White House and led by Anne Burlac, the "Red Flame," to come to the Belasco Theatre, where Henri Barbusse—the great French author, peace fighter and communist—was wearily addressing an audience of stuffed shirts, till he was interrupted and enthused by American workers, singing the International as they marched down the central aisle and up onto the stage. Nor shall I forget the day when I rushed from my desk at the State Department in order to take part in throwing stones and sticks at McArthur's "heroic" army driving unarmed men, women and children from the burning camp of the "bonus marchers." A dual life, reflecting a dual personality struggling to overcome the conflict between old and new loyalties.

I sought to resolve the contradictions by abandoning government service and continuing to work for peace in an international organization, the Secretariat of the League of Nations. Travels in Europe—including France of the Popular Front and the Soviet Union, and four stirring months spent in Republican Spain—resolved my wife's and my lingering hesitations, and by the time the second world war broke out, we had advanced from emotional anti-fascists to communists in thought and action. . . .

THE guard's steady tread in the corridor outside has begun to lull me. But suddenly visions from the war years tear open my eyelids and crowd my narrow cell. Once more I am drawn into the vortex of those days when my wife and I, from 1941 to 1947, directed the relief work of the Unitarian Service Committee, first in unoccupied France, and then, after barely escaping from Hitler's advancing hordes, in Switzerland. Harrowing and yet happy days! Thought and action then

und heart-warming, soul-satisfying unity in the absorbing task of ving aid to hundreds of anti-fascist victims of terror and persecu- on. Again I see the peaked faces of Jewish, Spanish, Gypsy children the kindergartens we set up at the huge family internment camp Rivesaltes; the devoted doctors and grateful patients at our clinic for fugees in Marseilles; a day of horror at the emigration camp of Les illes, when thousands were rounded up and packed like cattle into eightcars for transportation to the gas chambers of Auschwitz and uchenwald, and when the joy of having saved a few individuals on sun- y pleas was converted into consternation at the sight of others having take their place in the deathline; the escape, with our assistance, of ding anti-fascists, named in Hitler's extradition lists; the selfless aid dozens of friends and collaborators, many of them refugees them- lves, some of them secret members of the French resistance move- ent. Later, as the reactionary winds of Trumanism spread into every rner of America, we were often falsely accused of having assisted ly communists. What a vile slander, the charge that communists uld help only communists! As the truest humanitarians of our age, ey gave unstinted aid to all who fought against and suffered from e barbarian enemy. Unlike some agencies we were in touch with, refused, with the approval of our home office, to exclude the com- unists, who were renowned as the bravest and most consistent fighters ainst fascism and hence among the worst persecuted. Indeed, we re proud of having saved the lives of dozens of fellow communists. e were proud of having assisted others in continuing or resuming eir partisan struggle against the common enemy, a struggle in which nerica had joined hands with the Soviet Union. Later we helped many them to return to their liberated home lands; meeting them again in r postwar travels, we were happy to find them engaged in the grand k of rebuilding their war-ravaged countries, and it was good to know t they were our friends for life.

And now, how bitter the knowledge that this friendship is costing ne of them their freedom, perhaps even their lives, as the supposed nts of a super-spy—a ghastly conclusion, supported by reasoning d by evidence I know to be spurious! There is much that I cannot derstand, in this late-summer night of 1952. I have given up trying. ne has accustomed me to my present state. But there are moments, ecially between waking and sleeping, when despair seizes me by the oat. Why has it come to this? Will Time ever give me the answer? ere is something wrong, dreadfully wrong, somewhere. Did I take false turn twenty-five years ago? Did I, perchance, enter a fool's

paradise? Before my mental eye pass the wonderful men and women —comrades most of them—who were my friends and with whom I worked for a better world. No, they cannot have been wrong. Steadfast, clear-sighted, they were my guides and mentors. I revere them still. And the Marxist works, the Soviet novels I am privileged to read in my cell—are they not even more convincing, more inspiring than when I read them as a free man? Whatever mistakes, whatever crimes have been committed, they cannot affect the fundamental truths that began to dawn on me a quarter of a century ago. These truths will inevitably win out over temporary aberrations. And if there is blame —which surely there is—do I not carry my share? Did I not, but a few weeks before I was myself proclaimed an enemy, smugly turn my back on Anna Louise Strong, whose books helped to make me what I am? Do I still believe her guilty? And if she is not, don't I deserve what I am getting?

Oh, my dear wife, my closest associate, could I but talk to you! How often in the past did you help me to see things straight! Here, in this primitive cell, I "celebrated" our silver wedding, more than two years ago. Where were you then? Where are you now? Do you still live? Have you remained true to me and to our cause? Shall we ever meet again? . . . It must be almost morning. Soon the door will be opened to admit the broom, symbol of a new day.

AN EVENING IN THE FALL OF 1954

THIS has been a strange day. It is but the middle of the week, yet this morning the barber came, as though he had forgotten that Saturday was shaving-day. And later, I was allowed a shower and fresh underwear, out of turn. Supper comes unusually early, and then I am led downstairs into a sort of dressing room and furnished with a brand-new suit and shoes. So that's why they took my measurements a little while ago! Can this mean . . . no, don't wonder, don't speculate, just let things happen. So much has happened during the past year.

A comfortable bed, a glass pitcher, an attractive table and chair and other almost forgotten conveniences. A chessboard and chessmen —oh, the joy of being able to play again, if only against myself! And above all, new hearings, remarkable for their evident search after the truth, whatever it might prove to be. And, at the same time, something in the air that gave rise to hope, as quickly suppressed by a mind determined not to hope in vain.

I adjust my suit with the aid of a mirror. A mirror! I see myself or the first time in over five years. The shock is terrifying. I do ot look particularly ill. But the hair is white, the skin has a queer allor, and the eyes. . . . I dare not fix them, they frighten me be-ond words.

I am led into a large office. There, after some friendly conversa-on, I am solemnly told that I am free. My mind does not take it in. My wife, where is she?" I manage to stammer. "You shall see her in few minutes." Tears now, the first in years. In a little while, the oor opens, and in its frame stands she who has been a part of my life nce the age of nine. She wears a new dress, a new coat; her hair, oo, has whitened; otherwise she is herself, as I last knew her. "Do ey know we are innocent?" she whispers in my arms. "Yes," I say, nd then ask, "Have you remained true?" "Yes," she answers, "never or one moment have I doubted." "Nor I." And now, as the sobs well p, I know this is the most memorable moment of my life, bigger than appiness, bigger than sorrow. Through years of separation we have emained one.

Someone brings in a large tray full of varicolored miniature jugs, ases, flowers, dancers in wide frilly skirts, with arms and legs that an move at their creator's command, a galaxy of marionettes. All shioned out of bread—the coloring furnished by the variously baked ust, from burnt black through brown to orange and yellow. The ainstaking daily work of years. I knew my wife had clever hands; I d not know her for such a consummate artist. While I read and thought nd dreamed, she read and dreamed and created.

After a while our new friends ask us to join in a little celebra-on, right there in the office. But all of us are too moved to pay much tention to eats and drinks. The future impinges on our halting con-ersation—unaccustomed as we both have been for years to speech nd embarrassed in each other's long-missed presence. Where shall e begin our new life? Return to our country? Ask for permission remain in the land of our suffering, our rehabilitation, our wonder-l reunion? Again our thoughts are one. Our first spontaneous re-tion is: Let us stay here! At least for the time being, till we get r bearings, till we learn what has gone on in the world these past e years. We are told we can go where we wish, or remain in Hungary, we so desire; we should not make any hasty decisions but take our ne.

"Is Stalin still living?" I ask. "No, he died more than a year o." Again we are shaken by sobs. "And what of China?". . . My

last recollection of that country is the enthusiasm aroused at the Congress of the Partisans of Peace in the spring of 1949 in Paris, when the fall of Nanking to China's Red Army was announced. That was a few days before I traveled eastwards towards my doom. And now we hear that China is a rapidly developing member of the socialist family of nations. We seize each other's hands in joy, as memories of the Long March rise up in us.

Our emotion collapses at the news that there has been war in Korea, a long drawn-out, ghastly war against socialism, led by the America of Truman and then of Eisenhower. My own fate, so long the central theme of my solitude, is deflated to its true insignificance. History has moved on with giant strides during the years of my ignorance.

World news is interrupted by questions and answers concerning the fate of friends and relatives. Our hearts contract in sorrow, expand in relief. Of some that were closest, there is no recent information, but we are promised that inquiry will be made.

It is getting late. A thousand questions still await a thousand answers in the days and weeks and months to come. Let us now sally forth—a car is waiting—and let the incredible, the miraculous sense of freedom and of togetherness take hold of us!

Side by side in the car, gliding through the streets of Budapest, after dark. The sight of people loitering before lighted shop-windows, hastening to the theater, sitting in cafés is an overwhelming experience. Five years of utter solitude, peopled only by the creations of our imagination, make this milling world of flesh-and-blood men and women unreal, fantastic. Across the Danube and then up a steep hill—the Gellért, our friendly guide tells us. On top we get out and from under the statue of freedom, commemorating the country's liberation by Soviet troops ten years ago, we drink in the myriad lights of the metropolis at our feet.

AND now we enter our new home. Its key is pressed into my hands. I weigh it, feel it uncertainly. Is this key mine? May I myself insert it, turn the lock, open the door, close it? This is the moment when quantity becomes quality. "You are free," the key cries, and the sound reverberates throughout my being.

The night is sleepless. Alone, the two of us. What a different aloneness! Words interrupt words, half-finished sentences, as random items out of the past two thousand days come into focus, revealing that we were never really apart. The same daily routine, broken by the same events: the noise of fireworks on national holidays, the special

nas dinners, the doctor's visits, the dentist's. Above all, the same oks read, the same thoughts aroused by them, the same likes and likes. "How did you like *Gentlemen's Agreement?*" . . . "Too bad re were several pages missing from *Tortilla Flat.*" . . . "The length *Anthony Adverse* was the best of it, I spent all of three weeks read- it." . . . "And I took two months over Shakespeare's collected works." . "So that's why I couldn't get it for such a long time."

And the prison daydreams—of travels to lands hitherto unseen, a new life in a new-found freedom, amazing "novels" evolving dur- a thousand-and-one-nights. The thoughts about man and the uni- se. The self-critical reflections on our past life, the good resolutions the future, if. . . .

As morning arrives, we begin to realize our marriage was never errupted. We were, we are, we shall remain one. A new life is ut to begin for us, right here in a land we have been in, these many rs, but not seen. At least we hope it shall be here. Our first task o regain health and strength. Meantime we shall study and revalue past, seek out old friends, make new ones, discuss with them, learn m them, try to understand. We shall be wiser than we were, discard iefs that have proved to be fallible, replace them by knowledge more dly founded. But fundamentally we shall find our convictions ified, strengthened, unchallengeable. Having passed through the er depths, through outer darkness, we shall be more sensitive to nt and shadow. But nothing will be able to shake or break us. And e more we shall contribute our mite, however small, towards a pier future for all mankind.

The rays of the rising sun are pouring through the large bed- m window, and we too arise to greet our first day of freedom. We o out onto the balcony, arm in arm, and are dazzled by the glorious nt of the city stretching away to the horizon. It is good to breathe fresh air. It is good to be alive.

THE MORNING OF NOVEMBER 4, 1956

' IS still too dark to recognize the outlines of the hospital room, where I am recovering from a duodenal hemorrhage. The distant m of guns has awakened me, and the insurgents have just broadcast appeal for help from the West against the Soviet troops now enter- the capital.

Some there are in this building—a micropolis reflecting the chang-

ing moods and passions of the metropolis without—who are shuddering with fear, even with hate. The others rejoice that the days of counter-revolutionary terror are coming to an end. The thought of further bloodshed makes them shudder too, but well they know that this travail must be gone through, if the country is to be reborn and once more to advance on the road to socialism and communism outlined by great minds but uncharted in detail. My thoughts return into the recent past. What awful mistakes, what openings for the poison of a skillful enemy! And at the same time, what world-shaking, history-making achievements! For a short time—a mere instant of history—the eyes of many have become riveted to what was evil and have lost sight of the good. The former was a sick excrescence, tragic but curable. The latter is intrinsic. Of this I am sure. Have I not experienced in my own fate the victory of good over evil? Not through the intervention of some external force but through the regenerative power of essential health within the socialist body. And have I not, in the past two years, witnessed the steady progress of the society I have chosen to become a part of, the correction of errors in sphere after sphere of public life? Haltingly at times, too slow for the impatient perfectionist too fast, alas, for the enemy without and the traitor within, who felt they must strike now or never. Thus has come about the unholy alliance of those who wished to race ahead of circumstances with those who sought to turn the clock of history back.

From the first day, as my wife brought me accounts of what she saw in the city, as we listened to the radio, read the newspapers and talked to friends within the hospital and from without, we knew that this so-called revolution was essentially a counter-revolution. The significance of historical events is not determined by how they are reflected in the consciousness of individuals—even of those participating in them—but by the shifting balance of social forces, by the trend of their development, both within the country concerned and on an international scale. However sincere the enthusiasm of the demonstrating youngsters, their leaders are consciously or unconsciously treading the path of treason. That even the died-in-the-wool enemy continues to *talk* socialism while *acting* to destroy it, is a tribute to the people's inherent loyalty to the new social order. And, significantly, those among our acquaintances who, though innocent, suffered most at the hand of a regime they helped to build and loved as a mother loves her child have been among the first to recognize the true nature of the uprising and to throw themselves heart and soul into the struggle against it—men and women who went through longer years of imprisonment than

e, through greater suffering, through the loss, often, of their closest nd dearest. Some there are who until recently were prone to sulk nd to nurse their wounds; now they have dropped their hesitations and llied to the defense of socialism.

It will soon be two years ago that my wife and I were quietly gaining our strength in this self-same hospital, surrounded by all the re that modern socialized medicine can provide. Here we studied e records of the Rajk trial and of the related actions in Czechoslovakia, oland and Germany. Volume after volume of old newspapers, mostly merican, piled high on tables and chairs, as we avidly thumbed back learn of what had gone on in the world since our disappearance. Ve found to our amazement that we, who all our lives had shrunk om publicity, had unwittingly become front-page news. And what rant nonsense had often been written about us, even to the assertion one "in the know" that we had long ago been killed and buried!

T WAS in this same hospital that our first spontaneous wish ripened into the determination to remain and work in Hungary. A small em to that effect on the inside page of the local press was at once panded into a front-page story in the West, and for days contradic- ry speculation went on concerning the motives for our announce- ent. The most ludicrous was the suggestion that we were still pris- ers and were staying under duress. Then letters with more friendly tent arrived, revealing worry as to whether we might not some day gret our decision. If their writers could but visit us here, we would uickly convince them that we have not, for one moment, regretted d are unlikely ever to do so. Of course, there has been heartache thinking of those abroad whom, though they do not share our con- ction, we continue to love. Yet personal affections cannot be de- rminant in times when, throughout the world, family ties and bonds friendship often fail to stand the strain of basic political divergen- es. There have been difficulties of language, too, of adjustment to w surroundings, of adaptation to novel ways of living, and to a differ- t sphere of work. Today, in the throes of the counter-revolution, ese difficulties seem small indeed. More than ever we feel part of the w society now fighting for survival. To the depths of our being e have the sense of "belonging."

Those who say we have ceased to be Americans miss the point. is not a question of nationality. The Soviet troops have not come conquer a small nation on behalf of "Russian imperialism." There

is no analogy to the invading Czarist forces that suppressed the anti-feudal, democratic revolution of 1848. The Soviet troops have come in defense of socialism, the next stage in Man's evolution towards greater freedom and happiness for all. They—and not those poor misled youngsters throwing away their lives in a hopeless struggle against them—are the real "freedom fighters." America's future, too, is involved. Wherever our home, we love America, *our* America. And, as in the past, we shall continue to strive for the mode of life we are sure the American people will some day choose for itself, in its own manner, with its own institutions, and consistent with its best traditions. We are living in one of the workshops of socialism. From the errors committed here no less than from the successes, other nations—including America—will learn many a useful lesson in their inevitable march towards the same goal.

In deciding to stay here, we gave much thought to the question of whether it might not be our duty to return to our country and join the ranks of those who are fighting there for the same ideals. But fate itself pointed to a different answer. Though, in the war and early post-war years, we had often dreamed of someday living in a socialist land and experiencing the fulfillment of what we had worked and, yes, suffered for, we always planned, after a period of travel and study, to return to America. However, after five years of involuntary "residence" in a land of socialism and faced with the equally involuntary notoriety of our "case" abroad, we felt justified in following our inclination to convert involuntary residence into voluntary. The more so since that very notoriety made it unlikely that, after so many years of absence, we would be able to re-integrate ourselves with *our* America; while the other America would tolerate us only if we were willing to sell our souls for its Unamerican purposes. We felt no bitterness, no resentment towards the Hungarian people or government. The wrongs we had undergone had been righted, the wrongdoers punished, our innocence recognized. What is more, we had remained supporters of the social system which was evolving here and were happy at the prospect of participating in it. At the same time, we preserved, and still preserve, the dream of living long enough to go back to a different, awakened America, an America once more in the vanguard of human progress.

The noise of gunfire shocks me out of my meditation. I put on the earphones. They are dead—Budapest is off the air. I go out into the common hall. A group of nervous patients is frantically turning the dials on the receiver. The raucous "Voice of America" cries havoc in the name of "freedom." A shattering explosion drowns out its hypo

ritical lamentations. Some day it shall be drowned out by the real Voice of America. And our hearts shall dance with pride and joy.

A SUMMER DAY IN 1960

THE real Voice of America! We hear it, and our hearts do dance with joy. The voice of American youth in the Deep South, of American youth in Northern universities, in San Francisco. Amidst the shame of the spy flights, the rocket ring around us here in the socialist lands, the sinister plotting against Cuban freedom, the slimy antics of Captive Nations Week, the strip-tease of the nominating conventions, we follow breathlessly the signs of awakening in what, at this distance, often seems like a wasteland of the spirit. The present aggravation of the cold war cannot undermine our faith that the threatened holocaust can and will be averted. The very gravity of the crisis has brought the issues into sharpter relief. In the plain speaking of Khrushchev and of others in the socialist camp, we sense the consciousness of physical and moral strength—the prevalence, as the Chinese put it, of the East wind over the West wind. The wind of socialism realized and of communism in the making over the wind of capitalism, monopoly, imperialism. To some perhaps this may sound like the idle fantasy of denizens of an ivory tower. But I would remind such skeptics that we have lived in and gained knowledge of both worlds—the West and the East. Twelve years ago, in a decaying West, we looked eastwards with hopeful, enchanted eyes. Soon afterwards, in that very east, we went through the darkest years of our existence, followed by the joy of regained liberty and of life in the new society. Here, too, we went through the black days of the counter-revolution. And it is here that we have witnessed the marvelous years of consolidation and then of constant advance, of promises held, of plans fulfilled, of doubt converted into confidence all around us. Years of rising living standards and spreading *joie de vivre.* Each day brings new achievements that make us want to live to be a hundred, so that we too may continue to delight in the fruits of peaceful socialist labor.

Budapest grows more beautiful month by month. On every hand, an enormous amount of building is going on, and attractive apartment houses seem to spring up overnight. My wife hardly ever returns from a shopping expedition without enthusing over some new store catering to a public that is ever better dressed, or without bringing home some new article of consumption that was hitherto lacking. Each new dis-

covery makes daily life a thrilling adventure for us and for millions throughout the country. For it is not only city life that is changing. The 700,000 peasants—heads of family, most of them—who have become voluntary members of collective farms during the past year and a half—leaving only a quarter of the arable land in private hands—are a guarantee that the task of completing the foundations of socialism in Hungary will be realized in the near future. We live in a land —once known as the "country of three million beggars"—in which there is work for all, in which the curse of unemployment is a thing of the past, in which there is food and clothing for all and in which growing supply forever keeps abreast or ahead of growing demand. Perhaps most important of all, the sense of insecurity, so characteristic of the lives of millions in America, has been converted into a priceless sense of security for the individual and his family.

There is plenty of grousing—the newspapers give voice to it every day. But this very grousing reveals the fundamental progress that has been made. Workers who once walked to their factory now complain of overcrowded buses. Mothers who themselves could not go to school for lack of shoes and clothing now demand a wider choice of fashions for their children.

And to imagine that the same thing is going on, at differing levels and speeds, but all heading towards the same goal of plenty, in twelve countries embracing a billion inhabitants! I know there is greater material wealth—as yet—in America and some other countries I spent most of my life in. But it is the juster distribution, the steady forward movement and the knowledge that this march ahead cannot be stopped, short of war, that makes our life here happier than at any time before.

Short of war! If that catastrophe were to come, it would be the deed of those who fear this very progress and see in it a threat to their declining system of inequality, of wealth at one end derived from poverty at the other. "The pot calling the kettle black?"—as someone in America recently wrote me. The old liberal "objectivity" of "a plague on both your houses!" But there is a vital difference between the two houses; history knows no greater. The occupants of the one in which we have made our home are fitting in out with ever better facilities, more comfortable furniture. They are cooking increasingly lavish meals. They are making life agreeable through the most modern means of recreation and entertainment. They are enjoying the fruits of flourishing arts, of expanding science and technique. They are reforming their education. They are planning and saving—building factory after factory—for their children and children's children. And they are the

last to want all this wiped out. War is the enemy of all they are striving for, peace their breath of life. Their leaders are part of them, one with them. That is why they demand complete and universal disarmament, so that all man's material and spiritual resources may be devoted to the still more rapid advance in standards of living.

Beating swords into plowshares—this millenial prophecy has become the vital need of a new society comprising more than a third of mankind. For me it is the closing of another circle. Again, as thirty years ago, I am inspired by the Soviet Union's demand for complete disarmament. Then it was laughed out of court. Today it has to be taken seriously, for it is the demand of billions within the camp of socialism and without.

Budapest, 1960.

IN PRAISE OF COMMUNISM

BERTOLT BRECHT

It is reasonable, everybody understands it.
It is easy.

You are not an exploiter, you can grasp it.
The stupid call it stupid, and
The dirty call it dirty.
It is opposed to dirt and opposed to stupidity.
The exploiters call it a crime.
But we know:
It is the end of crime.

It is not insanity, but
The end of insanity.
It is not a riddle,
But the solution.
It is simple,
But difficult to realize.

EZRA POUND'S APOLOGISTS

SIDNEY FINKELSTEIN

SWEET is the spirit of tender forgiveness, sympathetic understanding and fair play. It is a spirit that has been somewhat rare in the public life of our country in the past fifteen years, when the cry of "subversive" has been hurled at victim after victim of the "cold war." Few novelists, poets, editors and publishers of prominence pointed out that the test of loyalty to America had become that of obedience to the interests of the big American monopolies engaged in despoiling the resources of this land and of half the world. Silence held sway when Ethel and Julius Rosenberg were executed. The trial was carried on in a hysterical atmosphere, with flimsy evidence, and charges relative to atomic "secrets" that every scientist of integrity knew to be based on impossible assumptions. Silence holds sway relative to the imprisonment of Morton Sobell and the atrocity against Henry Winston.

But there is one case in which this sweet quality of "understanding" has fallen "as the gentle dew from heaven." It is that of the American poet Ezra Pound, who made propaganda broadcasts to America from Italy in support of fascism during the Second World War. This war, initiated by fascism, was an assault upon civilization that caused the loss of more than a hundred million lives. The fascists, supported by the bankers and industrialists, killed and killed with a ruthlessness that brought something new even into a world with a long history of human sacrifice on the altar of property. Not only was the battlefield slaughter more terrible than anything in past history. Never before had battlefield horrors been matched by so wholesale an accompanying slaughter of defenseless people, men, women and children, herded by hundreds of thousands into death camps, starved, shot, gassed, and their manner of death studied with "scientific" objectivity, while their skins were turned into lampshades.

At various stages in the Pound case, when he was charged with

treason, many poets and other writers were horrified at the thought that were Pound to be convicted—and there was no question at all about the evidence— he was liable to be shot. Some had been friends of his. Others abhorred his politics, but admired his poetic gifts. William Carlos Williams wrote, "As a poet Ezra Pound had some sort of right to speak his mind, such as it had become." Robert Frost wrote, "He went very wrongheaded in his egotism, but he insists it was from patriotism—love of America." Conrad Aiken wrote, "He was a poet, perhaps a great one, long before he became a Fascist, he is still that poet, and one of the great creative influences of our time, and we must not permit these facts, nor his work, to be forgotten."

It is true that Pound never killed anybody with his own hands. When in 1939 he was called back from his self-chosen "exile" in Italy to accept an honorary degree of Doctor of Letters from Hamilton College in New York, he thus explained his attachment to fascism. "I don't want to roast little babies. I just happen to like the fascist money system." As for Hitler's Germany, where writers and editors were being murdered, Pound based his approval upon his love for art and poetry. "The function of Germany, as I see it," he said, "in the next 40 years' art is indispensable. Nowhere else is there enough force toward a purgation. The Italians are too easy-going." This great lover of poetry made no complaint when a much greater poet than he, Federico García Lorca, was murdered by the Spanish fascists, nor did Pound remove Franco from his Pantheon of heroes.

THIS is not being written to intimate in any way that those who spoke up for Pound should have remained silent, or called for him to be shot. It is only to state that poets, writers and publicists of any kind, should specially be principled people and try to find a morally principled position. Did they raise a cry against capital punishment for treason? Did they begin to examine the ruthlessness of American courts and judiciary with hangings, shootings and the electric chair, when not reaction was involved, or fascism, but a defense of the working class, and an encroachment on the sacred preserves of big property? These might have been principled positions. Did they subsequently raise their voices when witch-hunts, "loyalty" oaths and "conspiracy" trials spread fear and hypocrisy throughout American intellectual life, making catastrophic depredations in the basic right of the American people to chart the future of their own nation? Did they ask themselves why the Pound case was so "easy?"

To the last question they might soon have found an answer. For

the war over, it was to the interests of American big capital that fascism be forgotten as quickly as possible. Soon, in Germany, the industrialists who had put Hitler in power were being revived by gifts of American money, the German people were being assured that they could put their partly stirred consciences back to sleep, Hitler's siren song of anti-communism was being piped through the air with American help and blessing, former high fascists were being embraced in the army and government, and the hypocritical gestures at breaking up the cartels were ended. In Spain, where the end of the war brought hopes that Franco's murderous fascist regime might be thrown off the backs of the people, American aid rushed to the rescue. And so those who expressed their respect for Pound the poet, along with their abhorrence of his politics and of fascism, might show some concern also for the victims of the fascism he espoused; they might now show the integrity of recognizing that fascism did not end with the end of the war; that the menace of its resurgence grows, and with it the powder train of a third world war. They might now recognize that their "victory" for Pound was less a victory for free speech, or for respect for poetry, than for the "cold war"; and that the chief "enemy" of this war, the Soviet Union, has been, on the international scene, the only great power inexorably opposed to the revival of fascism in all of its guises.

So it is in the realm of the arts. The Pound case could well have suggested, among poets, novelists, critics and scholars, a careful re-examination of Pound the poet, and of the kind of "rebellion" in poetry of which he was an admired leader. For none but a shallow mind, or one preferring to evade issues rather than face them, could hold that Pound the poet, and Pound the fascist, were simply two separate compartments of the man that had no connection to one another. Equally shallow or evasive is the theory that Pound's fascism was the product of a deranged mind, and yet that the products of that same mind, produced at the same time, were great art demanding exalted homage. Yet these are the dominant attitudes to Pound in United States intellectual life today.

Here too, we can discern in the evasion of issues less simplicity of mind than the protection of certain vested interests in the cultural world. For Pound was not an isolated case. T. S. Eliot, who along with Pound became a leader of the "modern" movement in poetry, began propagating a doctrine, in the 1920's and 1930's, which was as close to fascist ideology as one could come without calling openly for support of Hitler and Mussolini, or for the murder of socialists and Jews. In Pound's and Eliot's train came Allen Tate and the group of Southern "Agrarian" poets who began glorifying the slaveholding "old South,"

spewing racism, and muttering of "violent" methods; an ideology was provided for segregation and the condoning of lynching. Today, John Kaspar, the racist, segregationist, inspirer of violence against Negroes, hero of the White Citizens Councils, is an acknowledged disciple and admirer of Pound. He has even tried his hand at poetry, in Pound's style, with lines like "Jail NAACP, alien, unclean, unchristian . . . HANG 9 SUPREME COURT SWINE (this year domine '56). . . . Destroy REDS (ALL muscovite savages). . . . DEATH TO USURERS." It would seem that a searching evaluation of a movement in which a call for the "freedom of art" opened up at least one direct road to fascism, in which the exaltation of art against a "philistine society" led to the espousal of a movement that attacked all humanity and promised the death of art and poetry, is no mere academic matter. It appears rather to be a matter of crucial importance to American democratic and cultural life.

To summarize briefly the Pound case, his propaganda talks in English on the Italian radio began with the outbreak of the war. He addressed himself to the "home folks," and especially "every native-born American of American stock," in typical racist style. America's destiny, he claimed, lay as a partner of fascist Germany, Italy and Japan. In line with fascist demagogy, he declaimed against a supposed Jewish conspiracy, dominating the world, sometimes using for Jews the poetic word "kikes," sometimes referring to a "judeocracy," sometimes calling for the American people to get rid of "Roosevelt and his Jews." In the spring of 1945 Pound was captured by Italian partisans, who turned him over to the United States army command. Late that year he was flown to Washington and arraigned on a charge of treason.

To Pound and his friends, there was only one possible defense, that of "insanity." Money and appeals came from the publisher James Laughlin (connected to the steel manufacturing family), and from many poets who abhorred Pound's politics but were either personal friends or admirers of his art. A committee of four psychiatrists examined him, and reported, "with advancing years, his personality, for many years abnormal, has undergone further distortion to the extent that he is now suffering from a paranoid state which renders him mentally unfit to advise properly with counsel or to participate intelligently and reasonably in his own defense. He is, in other words, insane and mentally unfit for trial. . . ."One of the doctors later explained a "paranoid state" as "both delusions of grandeur and delusions of persecution." When further questioned, he said "We are dealing now with the end-product of an individual who throughout his lifetime has been highly antagonistic, highly eccentric, the whole world has revolved about him, he has been a querulous person,

ne has been less and less able to order his life . . . he was very vituperative to one who opposed his will." A jury accepted the report and declared that the poet was of "unsound mind." He was remanded to a nospital.

This gave Pound's family and friends the opportunity to take a further step. After all, they said, he had not been tried for, and convicted of, treason. If he was insane, they could certainly take better care of him than the hospital. And while this appeal was for the time being denied, there never seems to have been any pretense of treatment of Pound as a mental case. The movement to restore him, fascist statements and all, to the "Hall of Fame" of American letters, started with a cumulative momentum that has continued to this day. Laughlin published new books of his, including, in 1948, *The Pisan Cantos* which Pound had written in the months after his capture, and which were replete with fascist and anti-Semitic assertions. In 1949, a committee of fourteen poets, including T. S. Eliot, Allen Tate, Robert Penn Warren and Karl Shapiro, in their capacity as Fellows in American Letters of the Library of Congress, gave this book the Bollingen Prize for poetry. Although the psychiatrists' report definitely covered the period in which he had written this work, there was not even a hint by the committee that this prize-winning book might be a product either of a fascist or of a deranged mind. Rather, it was a "poetry achievement." He remained in the hospital about twelve years. To those who visited him, he denounced F.D.R. as a "prime criminal." Clare Boothe Luce, while Ambassador to Italy, became interested in his case, transmitting appeals to free him. Representative Burdick of North Dakota took up his cause. Finally in 1958, the indictment was dismissed, the grounds being that Pound would always be too insane to stand trial, but was not so insane that he had to remain in a hospital. He went back to Italy, giving the fascist salute as he arrived in Naples, and reporting to the Italian press, "All America is an insane asylum." He is in Italy now.

Meanwhile, in this "insane asylum," the determined glorification of Ezra Pound, as one of the great geniuses and inspired poets of American 20th century literature, continually gains new ground, while a new generation has come into the schools and universities to which the late war and the wholesale murders of fascism are something existing in the remote past, merely words cursorily read in history books. The two books under review here are examples of this stream of Pound literature, and exhibit the two extremes within which it falls.

The book *Impact* can only be termed a disgrace to American publishing. It is a collection of Pound's social, economic and historical es-

says. They might be laughed at as being, in style and content, simply the product of an ignorant and irrational mind, were it not that millions of people lost their lives in the name of the fascist doctrines developed in them. Included are three of the wartime propaganda broadcasts for Mussolini. Surely if these essays are being republished today for historical reasons, it would be only honesty to present something of their historical background. But this is furthest from the publisher's mind. The book jacket offers fulsome praise of Pound, with phrases like "A whole man looking at the world whole. . . . A great mind unique in our generation." There is no mention of Pound's fascist connections, nor of the auspices under which some of these essays were prepared. A lengthy introduction is provided, written by one Noel Stock, who goes step by step through Pound's career, and then likewise suffers a remarkable lapse of memory when it comes to Pound's politics and wartime fascist activities. With its deception of the public by omitting pertinent facts, this is the kind of book that would be put out by someone interested in fostering fascist doctrine.

A book of a quite different kind is Charles Norman's *Ezra Pound.* Norman is a scholarly biographer who has assembled a considerable amount of facts about Pound's life, the literary circles among which he moved, and the opinions his colleagues in the world of literature held of him. Norman also gives a fair account of Pound's fascist activities and propaganda broadcasts. The book will probably be useful as source material for anyone who writes about Pound. Yet it fails as a biography, for Norman, who typifies in his approach to art and life the pragmatic, untheoretical attitude favored in present-day American cultural and critical circles, simply lacks the equipment to come to grips with his subject. He gives no picture of the kind of America in which Pound grew up, or of the kind of world crisis of which Pound's activities, poetic and political, were so integral a part. It is the sort of biography which ignores all the social forces which help shape a mind. And so, failing to present the world outside of Pound, it necessarily fails to grasp the inside, or psychological world. How can one give a credible or enlightening account of the answers which shape themselves in an artist's mind, if one ignores the questions which the world about raised to be answered, or the problems that demanded to be solved? The result is that no unified or living picture emerges of Pound as a person, artist and mind. The platitudinous conclusion to which Norman comes is, "What was noble in his nature will not be forgotten, and what is truly great in his work will surely endure." Dr. Jekyll will live and Mr. Hyde will die. Thus every issue raised by Pound's life and work is evaded.

When this inadequate effort is the kind of major evaluation put forth n the United States of America in the year 1960, it becomes clear that ne "Pound case" stands for something more than the question of what unishment should or should not have been given to a single individual. It an indication of how far irrationality, the inability to come to grips ith reality, the fear of taking a hard, realistic, objective look at itself, ave pervaded our intellectual, social and artistic life. If this indictment f our cultural life reads something like the psychiatrists' report on Ezra ound, the connection is not accidental. The psychiatrists' report rings ue, and what is especially important about it is how true it rings. It is n accurate description not only of Pound in 1945, but of Pound in his ntire career; it is an accurate description of his poetry. Other than in me short lyrics, his poetry is disorderly in form, made up of fragments rationally strung together with no more logic than a random stream of ssociation, imbued emotionally with delusions of grandeur and delusions f persecution, clinging to bits and scraps of ancient cultures as a refuge om a hateful modern reality, covering its flight with vituperation. The *antos* that Pound wrote while in a detention camp in 1945, were no ifferent in these respects from those he had been writing since 1917. ow could a mind like this have been raised on such a pedestal? The uild-up of Pound that has been going on since 1947, is a tacit recognition y some sectors of the American literary world which have achieved con-derable eminence, that a condemnation or realistic judgment of Pound ould have been a condemnation and judgment of themselves.

Pound's poetic gifts were genuine, but very small. Soon after he left llege, in about 1908 and 1909, he began writing about as good poetry he has written ever since. To show his style at its best, we quote e opening lines of his first Canto, published in 1919.

> And then went down to the ship,
> Set keel to breakers, forth on the godly sea, and
> We set up mast and sail on that swart ship,
> Bore sheep aboard her, and our bodies also
> Heavy with weeping, and winds from sternward
> Bore us out onward with bellying canvas,
> Circe's this craft, the trim-coifed goddess.

TS beauty has the smell of the museum upon it, or of the antique. It is part translation, part parody, of ancient verse; in this case, omer. Pound's first writings were almost all this sort of attempt to

bring the past back; parodies of Greek, Provençal, Latin, Renaissance Italian, old English. Later he would add Chinese, which he could not read, but could get the flavor of through existing translations. Pound's literary ancestors were Victorians like Browning, with his immersion in Italy and the Renaissance, and Swinburne, with his love for Greek literature. What was new, and particularly 20th century in his work, was the renunciation of Browning's interest in creating a full scene, character or story, and of Swinburne's traditional, somewhat wordy, and heavily musical verse forms. Instead Pound wrote in a much more subtle, freely accented and refined word-music, and disdaining any sweep of life or psychology, presented instead a fragment like a museum artifact to be appreciated for its own touch and texture. Sometimes the parody took the form of an infantile humor, like his turning of the old English song,

> Sumer is icumen in,
> Lhude sing cuccu. . . .

into

> Winter is icumen in,
> Lhude sing Goddamm,
> . . . Sing goddamm, sing goddamm, DAMM.

All this can hardly be called creative writing, for all the sensitivity to word-sound it generally shows. For lacking from it are the two essential and closely-connected qualities of creative writing. One is the reflection of the realities of life, of nature, people and society, about the poet, or in other words the unfolding of the senses and mind in response to the urgent activity of the real world. The other is the imagination, or the ability to reconstruct images from life based on a grasp of its movement and potentialities.

Throughout his career, Pound would continue to put out such parody fragments of antique literature. Counterbalancing them was the kind of response to the actual world of his times that one would expect from a mind yearning for the mythical glories of an ancient, dead world; namely resentment, anger and vituperation. Pound's 20th century, "revolutionary" step in this was to add obscene language. Here is one of the more printable examples, from Canto XIV.

Above the hell-rot
the great arse-hole,
broken with piles,
hanging stalactites,
greasy as sky over Westminster,
the invisible, many English,
the place lacking in interest,
last squalor, utter decrepitude,
the vice-crusaders, fahrting through silk,
waving the Christian symbols,
. . . frigging a tin penny whistle,
Flies carrying news, harpies dripping sh-t through the air.

To this, Pound added one more "gift," if it can be called that; an ility to parody various forms of broken English and dialect speech, e:

De droobs iss released vrom de eastern vront, yess?
Un venn dey getts to deh vestern vront, iss it
How many getts dere?

Norman, in his biography, describes this latter kind of writing th the abysmal wrong-headedness typical of one who must preserve e myth of Pound, the great god. "Pound's ability to reproduce speech ich characterizes the speaker . . . is probably unsurpassed by any nerican writer except Hemingway, who may have learned some- ng from him. Had he not become a consummate poet he could ve been a playwright." Pound's "dialect" writing is the opposite that of the masters of what may be called folk-speech, like Shakes- are, Dickens, Mark Twain, O'Casey, and to some extent Heming- y. Such writers prized the speech they reproduced for its special sic, or for the vitality of its imagery, with its vigorous sense of . Pound's approach is derisive, sneering, contemptuous, mocking; approach of a racist, which indeed he is.

In 1909, Pound was enthusiastically welcomed by a group of poets England, and his works were printed there. The word got back to etry followers at home that a great new American "genius" had been covered by the English. A deep interest in poetry was growing the United States. There appeared social-minded poets, in the Whit- n tradition, like Carl Sandburg and Vachel Lindsay; fine crafts- n, pessimistic in their evaluation of American society, but thought-

ful, humanist students of life, nature and people, like Edwin Arlington Robinson and Robert Frost; fine lyricists like Sara Teasdale; "imagists," influenced by the discovery of Chinese poetry, like Amy Lowell and William Carlos Williams. Most of these poets, in this writer's opinion, are superior to Pound, and some, like Sandburg and Frost, are giants compared to him. Pound appointed himself the head of this movement, declaring that he would usher in an American "Renaissance." Operating from abroad, he worked close with or edited a series of little magazines, in which he gave a hearing to new voices. In the 1920's, he moved his headquarters to Paris. A halo gleamed about his head. He was the first of the 20th century American expatriates, who had washed his hands of American philistinism, and the anti-artistic bent of industrial civilization. He came to be looked upon as a kind of patron saint of the new flock of American expatriates who poured into Paris after the end of the First World War. He welcomed these talents and published some of their work. It may be added that since his appreciation of people was limited to the extent that they agreed with him, and wrote like him, his enthusiasms generally quickly died. William Butler Yeats, the great man of Irish poetry, who had welcomed Pound as a young talent showed Pound one of his poetic dramas. Pound's comment was, "Putrid." James Joyce concluded that Pound was "mad," and became "genuinely frightened of him." William Carlos Williams wrote, "It must infuriate Ezra to know there is something in the world of which he is not the supreme master." Yet it is this sponsorship of new writers which more than anything else, has contributed to the loyalty felt towards Pound by many who otherwise disliked the fascist ideas expressed in both his prose and his poetry.

Loyalty to a friend is an admirable characteristic. But it should not stand in the way of a proper evaluation of what Pound did do and did not do. Nor does it perform any service by making a small talent into a "great poet," or a little mind into a big one. His assistance to other writers should not be taken as a sign of any warm-hearted affection for people in general, or any feeling for the troubles of the mass of people about him. Norman, Pound's biographer, makes this mistake when he tries to explain Pound's fascist turn. "Pound's involvement with economics was due to his concern for people, for the ordinary man struggling against economic odds, a fact which I hope this book will make clear." The book does not make this clear, for it cannot. The point is too important for the understanding of literature, to be allowed to be clouded over. One can search through Pound's

poetry in vain, for any affectionate or understanding portrayal of any ordinary human being; the kind which imbues the best of Sandburg's writing, or gives substance to that of Frost, despite his sad-minded withdrawal from the turbulence of social life. Such feeling for people is entirely absent from Pound's writing. For what he called the "masses," he had nothing but contempt. And this helps explain the attraction of Fascism, which he felt soon after Mussolini's march on Rome, in 1922 the murder of Matteotti, and the destruction of the Italian trade unions. Fascism gave him the line of thought through which he could see himself as a great "rebel," issue thundering denunciations against the plutocrats, bankers, "usurers," write grandiose fulmination like "The Jew, Disease Incarnate," feel himself to have thus settled all the world's problems, and evade any real grappling with the actual problems of ordinary people, the workers, the poor and the exploited. At best, in his writings, he looks upon the Italian peasants as a kind of domestic animal, in the vein of a medieval feudal lord hoping for the homage of the "happy peasantry."

WHAT sort of "rebellion" did Pound lead in poetry and aesthetics? It strated as an announcement of independence from a smug, philistine, business-run society which had no place for "lovers of beauty": a declaration of war, in words, against bourgeois society; one of the periodic revivals of the "art for art's sake" outcry which had started a century before, with the first realization by artists of how weak a standing art had in the rough and tumble of the bourgeois marketplace.

What was new, however, was that now in the 20th century, this "rebellion" was taking place at a time when capitalist society had turned to monopoly, and was in its deepest crisis. No longer could it promise progress, but only catastrophe. After the first shock it gave to bourgeois complacency, two paths lay open for the "rebellion." One was to move towards the working-class critique of capitalism as a whole. The other was to become "disillusioned" with the entire concept of progress, to conclude that the entire rise of capitalism, industry, democracy, science, out of the wreckage of the feudal world was a colossal mistake, and to uphold the mythical "order" of medieval, aristocratic or pre-capitalist society as a point of return. And thereby rises the ironic contradiction of the 20th century "rebellion" in art, a declaration calling for the "liberation" of art in which, for the first time in history, so great a part of the "rebellion" allies itself with the most gross political reaction. For despite its fulminations against the contempor-

ary bourgeois world, this idolization of the pre-capitalist, medieval and pre-medieval past exactly served the needs of the great lords of capitalism themselves. To hold their power, as may be seen in Italy, Germany and elsewhere, it was now necessary to turn against and destroy the very democratic institutions and principles with which capitalism had first fought its way out of feudal and monarchic society.

Already, before the first World War, writers like the English poet and militarist, T. E. Hulme (who was killed in the war) began to chart this reactionary path. Hulme, himself inspired by the French writers of *L'Action Française,* began to declaim against "romanticism," which he called the theory "that man, the individual, is an infinite reservoir of possibilities." The truth, he said, was that "man is an extraordinarily fixed and limited animal whose nature is absolutely constant. It is only by tradition and organization that anything decent can be got out of him." This, he said, was the "classical" approach. And so he called for a return to the orderly rules of "classicism" in poetry, to aristocracy in politics, to theology and the rule of the church in the realm of the mind.

Pound was a member of Hulme's circle. Soon the same reactionary approach would be taken by T. S. Eliot, with more shrewdness, craft and cunning than Pound. After Eliot, in America, would come Allen Tate and the apologists for the "orderly" system of the slave-holding old South, with proud tracings of the lineage of the plantation owners back to the English aristocracy.

In the 1920's Pound began to put together his social, historical and economic theories. Many of them were borrowed from C. H. Douglas, who in 1914 began espousing "Social Credit" and recommending to his readers the anti-Semitic forgery, the Protocols of Zion. To Pound, unable to make head or tail of the economics of capitalism, everything now became very simple; truth lay in the diatribes against "usury" of the medieval minds who had been frightened at the rise of bourgeois mercantilism and banking. And so the great evil in the world, he discovered, was "usury." Protestantism had been inspired by money-mad people who didn't want to pay ecclesiastical taxes to Rome. Since its rise, the world had fallen into the hands of an "international usorocracy." Similarly, in the United States, it was the "usurers" who had invented the movement for the abolition of slavery, and started the Civil War. Slavery, which compelled a master to keep slaves alive, was less profitable to them than non-slave labor. Democracy was a fraud, since it accepted "usorocracy." The mass of people were stupid. The world had to go back to the medieval proclamations against "usury"

by the church fathers. The world was now run by an international Jewish conspiracy.

THESE are the ideas expounded in the essays collected in *Impact;* a simplified version of *Mein Kampf,* now offered to readers as the product of a "whole man looking at the world whole." It is illuminating to take up one of the few passages in these essays in which Pound advances to do battle with Karl Marx. The statement which Pound objects to is, "commodities, in so far as they are values, are materialized labor." Pound's rejoinder is, "With the falsification of the word everything else is betrayed. Commodities (considered as values, surplus values, food, clothes or whatever) are manufactured raw materials." It is clear, first, that Pound hasn't got the faintest understanding of what Marx is saying. And at the same time, Pound's "correct" definition leaves out precisely the truth that values are created by human labor. In Pound's "economics," human labor does not exist. And similarly in his all-over social and economic picture, which to Norman proves Pound's "concern for the ordinary man," the working people and working class do not exist. The "ordinary man" is Pound, the poet, feeling the pinch of money.

With this theory as a base, Pound built up a Pantheon of heroes or "strong men" who at one time or another might have made a statement acceptable to him about "usury" or money. At one time or another, we find Aristotle there; Confucius; a Chinese emperor; a Renaissance war captain, Sigismondo Malatesta (who happens to have been a notorious libertine and wife poisoner); John Adams and Martin van Buren, both of whom to Pound objected to the "usurers" taking over America; Henry Ford, who "defied the banks"; Mussolini.

What has all this to do with Pound the poet, and lover of art? For one thing, while his passion for the antique was genuine, it is hard to call a person a lover of poetry, literature or art, who is so completely blind and antagonistic to most of their greatest achievements. Pound's "passion" for literature is a counterpart to his flight from reality. Wiped out from his mind are precisely the great artistic explorations of the new world of human beings, society, human psychology and human relations opened up by the end of feudalism. Shakespeare hardly has a foothold. Pound once announced a great discovery, that the whole of Elizabethan drama was "cribbed from Italian state papers." Milton does not exist for him, nor Shelley, nor Keats, nor Byron. He is oblivious to the giant achievements of the social, realistic novel. Balzac, Dickens, Tolstoi don't belong to literature, so far as he is concerned. After the

Latin poets, the medieval, and Dante, there is to him practically nothing worth reading, up to his own appearance. In a letter headed "Kompleat Kulture," he advised his correspondent that perhaps she couldn't read English poetry at all. "Chaucer has in him all that has ever got into English." And this is not simply one man's aberration. With some variations and additions (like the Eliot school's "discovery" of the 17th century English metaphysical poets) it corresponds very well to the "reshuffling of values" that is taught in the literary departments of so many American colleges; the deflation of the bourgeois democratic, humanist and social-minded heritage.

Pound's poetry for the last forty years has consisted of his series of *Cantos,* now numbering 113. Announced by him (and lauded by others) as a great epic, it is a perfect parallel to his social and economic theory. The comparatively few poetic passages in it are the parodies and imitations of ancient verse, a nostalgic dream refuge made up of bits and tatters of pre-capitalist culture. Proclaimed in it are all his fascist theories, and his anti-Semitism. Praised in it are all his "strong man" heroes. Interspersed are scraps of autobiography, fragments of old prose historical documents, printed in broken lines to conform to his poetry; dirty jokes; obscence epithets flung at modern society.

There is no cumulative development of images, drama or thought. Any part can be substituted for any other without observable loss. Its bits are strung together on the most primitive stream of association level. The structureless structure, the formless form, is a perfect example of the unity of content and form. It is the image of an irrationality of mind, one that produces an irrational poetry just as it produces an irrational set of social and economic theories.

The myth of Pound as a great poet can only be preserved by a debasement of criticism. Thus Allen Tate, in his essay on Pound (*On the Limits of Poetry,* New York, 1948) uses a verbal sleight of hand to turn Pound's irrationality and formlessness into a virtue:

"The form is in fact so simple that almost no one has guessed it, and I suppose it will continue to puzzle, perhaps to enrage, our more academic critics for a generation to come. But this form by virtue of its simplicity remains inviolable to critical terms: even now it cannot be technically described. . . . The secret of his form is this: conversation. The *Cantos* are talk, talk, talk, not by anyone in particular to anyone else in particular; they are just rambling talk."

Are the *Cantos* anti-Semitic and fascist-minded? By the same magic, all this is wiped out of the critic's mind:

"There is no reason why poetry should not be so perplexingly simple as Mr. Pound's, and be about nothing at all."

And so, writes Mr. Tate, let us worship this great god who says nothing.

"And the first thirty *Cantos* are enough to occupy a loving and ceaseless study—say a canto a year for thirty years, all thirty to be read every few weeks just for the tone."

THE "Pound case" is a question of art and morality. As against a bourgeois marketplace world, in which the guiding principle was to seek some legal methods of protecting one's own property and seizing someone's else's, with internal havoc and external wars, Pound started by asserting the morality of the bourgeois artist. One "expresses oneself," and that is all, fighting for the right to do this by every means of wit and cunning at one's disposal. But this does not free the artist from society. It only makes society's demands seem more onerous and compelling, and the artist's reactions more blind and irrational. I have tried to show the steps by which, under the conditions of the 20th century, Pound's "artist morality" was thus led to approve, embrace and become a part of the most frightful immorality of our time, in its thievishness, deceit and murder. I have tried to show that this is not a unique case, and that those who start with Pound's assumptions find themselves in an insoluble dilemma. The solution lies only in the working class view, that concern for oneself must go hand in hand with concern for all the peoples of the world, that individual freedom is a social question and must be won socially, that peace for oneself is bound up with peace for the world. These ideas have seized the mind of millions of people, because embodying on the one hand the yearnings arising in thousands of years of human history, they are now also on the practical order of the day. They work. They are necessary for the future life of society. They have also seized the mind of some of the greatest artists of our time. For "self-expression" is reborn on a new level. It becomes a social mind that now expresses itself.

That a vacant mind like Pound's should be hailed as a great creative spirit in the leading cultural circles of the "free world" would be a grotesque joke, were it not that this is accompanied by the stench of concentration camps, bombed cities, and dead bodies on countless battlefields. An honest evaluation of Pound is a necessary project today; an evaluation that would draw some lessons from his career. The conflict with which Pound was beset before the First World War has not changed in its essential character today, except that on the world scene, the issues are much clearer. Reading the "beat generation" poets in

America today, one gets the uneasy feeling that this has been gone through over and over again. There is the Pound-like "social mindedness" expressed in vituperation and obscenities hurled at the modern world. There is the poet asserting his "independence" from society, and the intimation that the basic struggle governing all life is that of the poet against the rest of the world. And the same alternatives exist. One can take the direction of the working class, as Eluard and Aragon did in France, Neruda in Chile, and Dreiser, late in his life, in our country. And one can move into the arms of political reaction, like a Pound, Eliot and Tate. There is of course also a middle road, but it promises little. This is to flit up and back between the two alternatives, recoiling from reaction with its fascist face, recoiling from the working class with its demand that one really know what the world is about and take part in its great issues, and ending up with a wasted talent devoted to the expression of how sorry the poet is for himself in a miserable world.

IMPACT, by Ezra Pound. Regnery Co., Chicago. $5.00.
EZRA POUND, by Norman Thomas. The Macmillan Co., New York. $6.95.

ART FOR PEACE

In 1959, in connection with the 10th anniversary of the World Peace Council, an international book art exhibition was arranged in Leipzig, German Democratic Republic. Graphic artists of all countries of the world were asked to depict the theme of Peace. The work of 48 artists was selected for reproduction in a handsome portfolio printed in German, Russian, English and French.

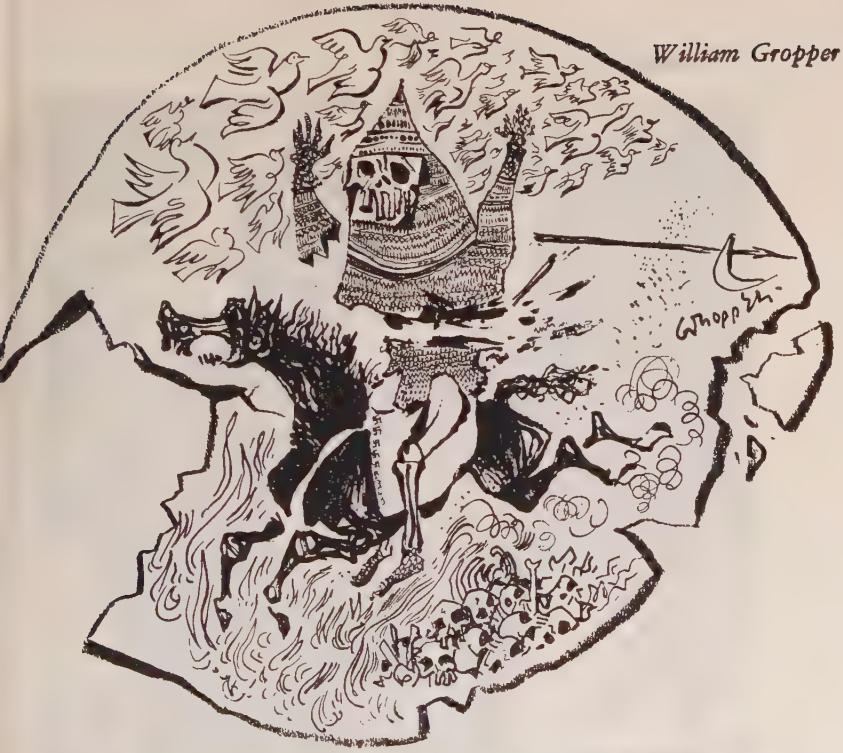
For the past year, exhibitions of the work in this portfolio have been seen by millions of people throughout the world. Part of the introduction reads as follows: ". . . The results of the competition exceed all expectations. Although the contents and artistic interpretation in many works are basically different, the more than 300 graphic sheets gathered in Leipzig form a deeply moving pictorial impression of human consciousness towards peace. Anyone accustomed to think of the artists living in an ivory tower, or who considers art as separate from political-moral responsibility must think differently, confronted with the quantity and creative force of the entries."

We reproduce here six works from the exhibition.

ANTON REFREGIER

Ruth Schloss

Frans Masereel



William Gropper

Gheorghe Ivenceno

Mirtscho Jakobov

THE GREAT DAY

DAVID EVANIER

The TV cameras and the reporters
pressed forward
When in Rome do as the Romans
HA HA HA
said Ike zestfully
as he prepared to descend the hole
where the air was safe from radiation
He waved the band played the soldiers saluted
They went down the hole first
Ike coughed into the microphone
This is a great day for America
A new happy, abundant life awaits us
Isn't that right, Dick?
That's right, Mr. President. A solemn pause.
So that all men may think and worship as they please
Ike waved again put his hat on put his arm
around Mamie and gracefully accompanied her
to the hole and manfully stepped down
Followed by Dick and Pat and Checkers
And all the members of the team
B. Goldwater came rushing forward rubbing his hands
I've been waiting for this day for a long time
And hurried down the hole
The band kept playing and followed them down
As the last team mate entered the hole
the music faded away
A reporter, the last to go, stood
above the hole and heard the thin
presidential voice say
Gosh, it's hard to see down here

BABEL ON HIS CRAFT

KONSTANTIN PAUSTOVSKY

The following is a fragment from the author's autobiography.

ONE evening we were sitting on a stone wall at the edge of the cliff. The gorse was in flower. Babel was absent-mindedly throwing pebbles down the cliff. They bounced down to the sea in giant leaps, hitting the stones with a sound like exploding bullets.

"It's all very well for you and other writers," said Babel, although at that time I was not yet a writer. "You know how to make life sparkle with—what was it you said?—the dew of the imagination. What a sticky-sweet phrase, by the way. But what's a man to do if he has no imagination? Myself, for example."

He fell silent. Below, the sea sighed slowly and sleepily.

"What nonsense you're saying!" I said indignantly.

Babel behaved as if he hadn't heard me. He chucked another pebble and said nothing for a long time.

"I have no imagination," he repeated stubbornly. "I'm saying this in all seriousness. I can't invent. I have to know everything, down to the smallest detail, otherwise I can't write. I've carved a motto on my shield: *Be lifelike.* That's why I write so slowly and so little. I have a very hard time. Every story ages me by several years. Don't talk to me about joyful Mozartian creation, the easy flow of fancy and all the rest of that rubbish. I've written somewhere that I am growing old quickly because of my asthma, the mysterious sickness lodged in my frail body since childhood. All that's a pack of lies. When I write the shortest story I still work at it like a navvy, like a man who's got to shovel away the whole of Everest all by himself. Whenever I start work on one I think it's going to be beyond me. Sometimes I get so tired that I cry. All my blood-vessels ache with fatigue. If a sentence doesn't come, I get cramp in the heart. And how often they refuse to come, damn them!"

"But you write a cast-iron prose," I said. "How do you achieve it?"

"Style, nothing but style," said Babel, and cackled like an old man, imitating somebody, perhaps Moskvin the actor. "Ho, ho, young man! Style, style's the only answer! I'll write you a story about washing clothes and if you like it'll read like the prose of Julius Caesar. It's all a matter of language and style. That, I suppose, is something I

an do. But you must understand that it isn't the essence of art but nly the building material for it, quality stuff maybe, precious even— don't know—but still no more than that. There used to be a journalist n Odessa who would say: 'Slip me a couple of ideas and leave it to me, ll make a masterpiece out of them.' Come along, I'll show you ow I go about it. I'm a terrible miser about this sort of thing usually, ut for you I'll make an exception."

The *dacha* was in complete darkness. The sea rumbled at the far nd of the garden, settling down for the night. Cool air poured into ne room from outside, displacing the hot, stuffy air bitter with the scent f wormwood. Babel lit a small lamp. His eyes were red behind his lasses (he was always having trouble with his eyes).

He got out a thick folder of typescript. It contained at least 200 ages.

"Do you know what this is?"

I was at a loss. Could Babel at last have written a long novel and ept it a secret from everyone?

I could not believe it. We all knew the almost telegraphic shortness f his stories, compressed to the extreme limit. We knew that he onsidered any story longer than ten pages to be watery and diffuse.

Was this really a novel containing 200 pages of Babel's compact rose? Impossible!

I glanced at the first page, saw the title *Lyubka Kazak,* and my surprise ew still greater.

"Forgive me," I said. "I understood *Lyubka Kazak* to be a short story, ot yet published. Have you really turned it into a novel?"

Babel put his hand on the typescript and looked at me, smiling. ine lines gathered at the corners of his eyes.

"Yes," he said, and blushed with embarrassment. "This is *Lyubka azak,* a short story, not more than fifteen pages. But here you've got l twenty-two versions of this story, including the final one. The whole anuscript is 200 pages long."

"Twenty-two versions!" I mumbled, understanding nothing.

"Listen," said Babel, beginning to get cross. "Literature isn't got by lse pretences. I said twenty-two versions and I mean it. You think at's terrible? Perhaps you think it's too much. Speaking for myself, m not even sure that the twenty-second version is fit for printing. believe it could be compressed still further. And that, my dear friend, the kind of selective work that produces independent force of language d style.

"Language and style," he repeated. "I take a trifle—a funny story,

a scrap of market-place gossip—and out of it I make a thing which I myself can't put down again. It plays. It's round like a pebble on the beach. It's held together by the cohesion of its separate elements. And that force of cohesion is so great that not even lightning can split it apart. It'll be read, that story. And it'll be remembered. People will laugh over it, not because it's funny but because to see human success always makes one want to laugh. I dare to speak of success because there's no one here but you and I. As long as I live you won't breathe a word about this conversation to anyone. Give me your word. Of course it isn't through any merit of mine that the demon of art—or the angel, call it what you like—has entered me, Babel, the son of a petty broker. And I obey it like a slave, like a pack-mule. I've sold my soul to it and I have to write the best prose there is. That's my luck—or my cross. Probably the latter. But take it away and with it the blood will run out of my veins, out of my heart, and I'll be no more than a chewed fag-end. It's work that makes me a man instead of an Odessa street philosopher."

He was silent for a few moments and then said with a fresh access of bitterness. "I haven't any imagination. I have only the thirst to possess it. Remember Blok? 'I see an enchanted shore in the enchanted distance.' Blok reached that shore, but I never shall. My mind is too rational. But I'm grateful that at least I've been granted a longing for that enchanted distance. I work with the last of my strength, I give everything I have, because I want to be present at the feast of the gods and I'm afraid of being turned away."

He took off his glasses and wiped his eyes with the sleeve of his patched grey jacket.

* * *

"And so there it is," said Babel, bending short-sightedly over the manuscript. "I work like a mule. But I'm not complaining. I chose this forced labor myself. I'm like a galley-slave who's been chained to an oar for life and who ends up by loving that oar—even the patina on it where it's been polished by the palms of his own hands. After many years of contact with human skin even the roughest wood acquires a noble color and begins to look like ivory. It's the same way with words, with the Russian language. Put a warm palm on it and it turns into a living, precious thing.

"But let's stick to one thing at a time. When I write a story down for the first time the manuscript looks dreadful, really bad. It's a col-

ion of a few more or less successful pieces tied together with the lest of functional bonds—what's known in the trade as 'bridges', ind of dirty rope. Read the first version of *Lyubka Kazak* and see yourself. It's a helpless, toothless verbal shambling, a clumsy accumuon of words.

"But that's where the work begins. That's the source. I check tence after sentence, not once but several times. First I throw out the useless words. You need a keen eye, because language is a cung thing, it hides away its rubbish, repetitions, synonyms, plain nonse. It's as if it were trying to trick us all the time.

"When this work is finished I copy the manuscript out on the typeter (the text is easier to see that way). Then I leave it to lie for or three days—if I can hold out that long—and then again I check tence after sentence. And invariably I again find some weeds and tles I'd left in. And so every time I copy out the text afresh, and on working until even with the most ferocious quibbling I can't find peck of dirt in the manuscript.

"But that isn't all. Wait! When the muck's been thrown out I ck the freshness and precision of all the images, similes and metaphors. ou can't make a comparison that holds, it's best not to make one at Let the noun exist by itself in all its simplicity.

"A simile must be precise like a slide-rule and natural like the smell dill. Oh yes, I forgot—before I throw out the verbal rubbish I ak the text up into short sentences. More full stops! Every sentence thought, one image, no more. I would write this rule into a state for writers. So don't be afraid of full stops. It may be that my ences are too short. That's partly because of my chronic asthma. n't speak long-windedly; I haven't enough breath for it. The longer sentence, the more acute my shortage of breath.

"I try to banish nearly all the participles and verbal adverbs from manuscript, leaving only the really essential ones. Participles make ch awkward, cumbersome, and destroy the melody of the language. y bump like tanks going over rubble. Three participles in a sentence at's murder of the language. All these 'offering', 'accomplishing', centrating', and so on and so forth. The verbal adverb is, after all, ter than the participle. It even gives a certain winged quality to e. But if you abuse it your language becomes boneless, a kind of ing. I think a noun wants only one adjective, the most handed one. Only a genius can afford two adjectives to a noun.

'All paragraphs and punctuation must be correct, but from the point he maximum effect on the reader, not according to a dead catechism.

The paragraph is particularly splendid. It allows you to change rhythm whenever you want, and often, like a flash of lightning, it reveals something familiar to everyone in a completely new light. There are good writers who use punctuation and paragraphing carelessly, and so, in spite of the good quality of their prose, it has a muddy surface suggesting haste and negligence. Andrey Sobol was one of those, and even Kuprin

"The line in prose must be firm and clean like the line in an engraving.

"The twenty-two versions of *Lyubka Kazak* gave you a fright. All these versions are a form of weeding, of spinning the story into a single thread. And the result is that the difference between the first version and the last is like the difference between a piece of dirty wrapping paper and Botticelli's *Primavera.*"

"You're right," I said. "It really is forced labor. I'll think twenty times before I become a writer."

"But the chief thing," said Babel, "is not to deaden the text in the process of this forced labor. Or else the whole work is fit to be scrapped. It's like tightrope walking.

"Yes, that's just what it's like," he added after another silence.

Translated by Anna Bostock

WHITMAN AND THE FREUDIANS

ROBERT FORREY

N THE introduction to *Walt Whitman Reconsidered,* published on the "Leaves of Grass" Centennial, the critic Richard Chase wrote the llowing:

> It is hard to assess such things, but I have often felt that now, one hundred years after the first appearance of *Leaves of Grass,* Whitman's reputation, despite what we may say to the contrary in our moments of public piety, is really not very high, that *Leaves of Grass* is not read as much as it used to be. (Of course, it has never been read, and never will be read, by the great democratic audience the author hoped for.) Whitman's reputation is certainly not high among the intelligent students, graduate and undergraduate, whom I meet.

t the end of the book Chase remarks that at some point or other we ve underestimated Whitman. Can it be that Mr. Chase and his inligent students themselves who have sold Whitman short? Mr. Chase es say that in these troubled days we can use a little of Whitman's thusiasm and confidence. But he says this at the end of a book nich consistently treats Whitman as a neurotic whose confidence d enthusiasm were masks which hid his unhealth and unhappiss. Whitman, to Chase, "seems more often than not to have been ssive, psychically slothful, and attached, in a mood of mystery d reverence, to the beginnings, the primitive conditions of his life." hitman's democratic philosophy is seriously compromised when it is ewed as a sublimation of homosexuality, as Chase does when he says hitman "Always found ways of converting his sexual impulses to arıic ends or generalizing them into vague, diffuse, and psychically antile feelings of 'comradeship'." Many other critics adopt a similar itude toward Whitman's democracy.* Walter Lowenfels, the poet o edited *Walt Whitman's Civil War,*** is an exception. Mr. Lowen-

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* In this category I would include Roger Asselineau's *The Evolution of Walt itman: The Creation of a Personality* (Harvard University Press, 1960), 50.

** *Walt Whitman's Civil War,* ed. by Walter Lowenfels (Alfred A. Knopf, w York, 1960), $5.00.

fels has proved himself an exception by taking Whitman at his own word. The words in *Walt Whitman's Civil War* are the poet's own—moving passages describing the bloody Civil War years and the millions of young men, North and South, who were its victims and its heroes. Describing a war in terms of the lives of the ordinary soldiers involved does not have much vogue in Western literature.* The focus has usually been on the highest in command, the generals and politicians, but such is not the case in *Walt Whitman's Civil War*—compiled from letters, diaries, and poems by Mr. Lowenfels. Whitman revered the common and average. What he loved in Lincoln was the common, unpretentious qualities of the man. Whitman saw Lincoln more than once, but he never tried to meet him. The company of plain soldiers was enough. He saw Grant: "He looks like a good man (and I believe there is much in looks). I saw General Meade, General Thomas, Secretary Stanton, and lots of other celebrated officers and generals—but the *rank and file* was the greatest sight of all." All through *Walt Whitman's Civil War* runs this theme of "the majesty and reality of the American people *en masse*."

Whitman has been accused of indifference towards the moral and political issues behind the Civil War; and of wanting only to move among the young soldiers, feeling indiscriminate tenderness for all. *Walt Whitman's Civil War* shows this is not so. It is true that he had compassion for the rank and file of both North and South. He did sympathize with the Negro regiments of the Union Army who "exhibited bravery and compelled the plaudits alike of the thoughtful and thoughtless soldiery," (and were paid much less than the white soldiers). But Whitman knew that the war was not being fought just for the Negro. "The Negro was not the chief thing. The chief thing was to stick together. The South was technically right, humanly wrong. . . ." "The war *must* be carried on," he said. Always in Whitman's mind was the vision of the U.S. as a break with European feudalism, a fresh beginning. The following important passage is included in *Walt Whitman's Civil War*:

> There is certainly not one government in Europe but is watching the war in this country with the ardent prayer that the United States may be effectually split, crippled, and dismembered by it. There is not one but would help toward that dismemberment, if it dared. I say such

* In wanting to write a democratic history of the war Whitman reflected the democratic temper of the time. On the regimental histories written during the period, Van Tassel says "they were the products of a democratic era, when the structure of the army reflected the structure of the country. . . . These volumes are . . . 'social hisories' of common men at war." *Recording America's Past*, Chicago, 1960.

is the ardent wish today of England and France, as governments, and of all the nations of Europe, as governments.

I think indeed it is today the real, heartfelt wish of all the nations of the world, with the single exception of Mexico—Mexico, the only one to whom we have ever really done wrong, and now the only one who prays for us and for our triumph with genuine prayer.

Whitman's love of comrades was not primarily sexual, as the Freudian tics claim, but political; "the main thing," as Whitman himself said, eing the average, the bodily, the concrete, the democratic, the popular, which all the superstructures of the future are to permanently rest."

Most Whitman criticism continues to subscribe to the Freudian erpretation, which subordinates Whitman's political, spiritual and istic life to his sexuality. (Even a specialized study of the influence opera on Whitman's poetry, views Italian arias as erotic stimulants the poet's abnormal tendencies.) Holloway, Catel, Schyberg, Lewisohn, wley, Allen, Chase, and, in the volume recently translated from the ench, Roger Asselineau, have all applied one or another Freudian pothesis to Whitman. Even the most scholarly of Whitman's biog-hers, Gay Wilson Allen, author of *The Solitary Singer*, is a neo-eudian who shares none of Whitman's faith in the masses. Allen ls Whitman's belief that an intelligent, ordinary workingman could be good president "naive," and his criticism of the caste system in the ion Army "unfair." Allen explains Whitman's fondness for working-n as being sexually motivated, and therefore not to be taken at face ue.

About Whitman's years in the hospitals, with which *Walt Whitman's il War* concerns itself, years of selfless serving of the sick and lonely diers, the critics again use Freudian theories to undercut Whitman's ss-consciousness. Asselineau brings no originality to his analysis of itman's "sublimation" in the hospitals:

The war was responsible for another change in his sensuality, which, at least in appearance, subsided. He was less tormented by his hom-sexual leanings, which his visits to the hospitals permitted him to satisfy in part without incurring social disapproval or even suspicion.

Whitman's habit of visiting the sick in hospitals did not begin h the Civil War. When his friends, the Broadway stage-drivers, e ill, Whitman sometimes went to see them. He knew everybody sonally at the hospital and was on good terms with the doctors. But of the doctors is reported to have said later: "We always wondered he was interested in the class of men whom he visited." The "class"

of the men to which he was attracted puzzled the doctor and continues to puzzle Freudian critics.

The picture Whitman presented as he rode next to the stage-drivers down Broadway, or visited the soldiers in the hospital with little gifts of tobacco, was that of a healthy, sociable person. This picture violates very seriously the modern conception of the artist. The ebullient Walt Whitman, the poet of "Leaves of Grass," challenges the notion of the artist as unhappy neurotic. There has taken place an intensive and almost uninterrupted search for evidence to undermine the image of Whitman as a healthy, democratic individual. Some of the evidence is drawn from Whitman's background and family. Whitman's relations included an illiterate mother, a quarrelsome, impractical father, an idiot brother, a syphilitic brother, a prostitute sister-in-law, and a neurotic sister. There is much value judgment involved in these characterizations, and (instead of looking for social causes) are arranged to suggest an innate unhealthiness in the Whitmans. Along with this unhealth was Whitman's own homosexuality. What else could Whitman do, the Freudians imply, but escape into an unreal world of art, where his own proscribed emotions could be channeled into an imaginary democracy? That real democracy in fact had much to do with American society in the 1840's and 1850's the Freudian critics would seem to deny. Whitman evolved his democratic philosophy out of his own peculiar personality. "It is clear," at least to Asselineau, that Whitman passed "gradually from his initial subjectivism into his faith in democracy simply by generalizing his own experience."

READERS looking for something other than a psychoanalysis of Whitman can turn to Newton Arvin's biography, written in the thirties (before Arvin's strong Freudian phase), and Samuel Sillen's introduction to *Walt Whitman, Poet of American Democracy,* as well as the relevant chapters in Matthiessen's *The American Renaissance.* These critics treat seriously the democratic-humanistic viewpoint of Whitman's writings, a viewpoint that is expressed in *Walt Whitman's Civil War.* Of the motives behind his proposed book on the Civil War Whitman wrote:

> One of the main drifts is to push forward the very big and needed truths that our national military system needs shifting, revolutionizing, and made to tally with democracy, the people. The officers should almost invariably rise from the ranks (there is an absolute want of democratic spirit in the present system and officers; it is the feudal spirit exclusively).

That so much of Whitman's writing is directed against feudal hold

ers is virtually ignored now. The revolutionary spirit and the pro-essive ideas of the great bourgeois-democratic poet are not popular ith the bourgeoisie of today who are no longer fighting the feudal past it the socialist future. They would rather have Whitman neurotic an progressive.

Whitman said himself that the "modern tendency" was "to turn erything to pathos, ennui, morbidity, dissatisfaction, death," but he kely never suspected that these negative characteristics were to be dis-vered by later critics as the key to his personality. When his male-tations can not "explain" his progressive attitude toward the mass of erage people, then his mother-fixation can serve just as well. When Whitman showed concern over women factory operatives, two of Allen's eas about Whitman were violated, first that he was attracted only to en, and secondly that he did not like organized labor. Allen accounts r this unexpected worry over women in factories by saying we must egard his concern over the plight of female servants, seamstresses, d women operatives in factories as another phase of his emerging other-religion, later to produce some of his major literary themes and mbols."

Asselineau's book, like Allen's, is heavily Freudian. He is not ite as "scientific" as other Freudians who reduce every detail to some ychic factor. In regard to the sources of Whitman's poetic talent, sselineau prefers to leave a few things unexplained. "The most reason-le course is perhaps to refrain from attacking this difficult problem Whitman's talent] and frankly to admit an inability to penetrate the ystery." Asselineau's interweaving of sex and religion reminds one of alcolm Cowley's psychoanalytic exegesis:

> The poems suggest that at some moment during the seven shadowy years, he had his first fully satisfying sexual experience. . . . Whenever it occurred, the experience was so intense that it became almost religious ecstasy, a moment of vision that wholly transformed his world.

THE Freudian approach creates two distinct worlds, the world of un-acceptable realities and unhealthy emotions, and the ideal world of where things are sublimated and disguised into acceptable forms. go along with the two worlds there are two Whitmans, the pre-gasmic Whitman, the dull, frustrated newspaperman-carpenter, and e post-orgasmic Whitman, mystic and transcendental poet. In Assel-eau's book a hiatus is opened between Whitman's life and his art which n only be gapped by sexual or religious theories. Asselineau kills the rnalist who was interested in politics and the lives of ordinary people

and buries him. He resurrects over his grave the transcendental poet who is interested in *"death, time,* and *resurrection."* In Asselineau's words: "Walter Whitman, the journalist is dead; he is replaced henceforth by Walt Whitman, the poet, born on the fourth of July, 1855." (The publication date of the first edition of "Leaves of Grass".)

To illustrate his point that there were two Whitmans, one the hack journalist and the other the transcendentalist poet, Asselineau compares two descriptions which Whitman made of a fire, the one in "Leaves of Grass," the other in an editorial in the *Brooklyn Eagle.* In Asselineau's words, Whitman the journalist was,

> an idler gaping at the crowd and the firemen, afraid of tripping over the hoses . . . a reporter short of copy who filled his article with commonplaces on human misfortune and with moral platitudes such as this: "And those crumbled ashes! what comforts were entombed there—what memories of affection and brotherhood—what preparation, never to be consummated—what hopes never to see their own fruition—fell down as the walls fell down, and were crushed as they were crushed."

The editorial is not poetry, but is it platitudinous? Did Whitman not show compassion and speak of brotherhood in his poetry? Is there such a gulf between the sentiments expressed in the editorial and those expressed after July 4, 1855, when Asselineau sees the resurrection of a totally new Whitman?

Asselineau's *The Evolution of Walt Whitman,* its extensive scholarship notwithstanding, adds relatively little to a clearer understanding of Whitman's politics and makes even more cloudy Whitman's psychological make-up. He envelops Whitman in the same aura of mystery that surrounds Shakespeare, as if great art must necessarily be inexplicable biographically. With Shakespeare we are separated by centuries and handicapped by a scarcity of biographical information, but with Whitman we have voluminous evidence of his democratic and humanistic convictions. The "mystery" that surrounds Whitman is the result of numerous psychologically and mystically oriented analyses of him.

In the introduction to his book, Asselineau, a Frenchman, explains how he turned to a study of Whitman during the German occupation. The reader might expect that the tyrannized Frenchman would find in the American poet a spokesman for human liberty who stood at the opposite pole from the Nazis. This is not the case. Asselineau, like Yeats, is more interested in theories about the masks and opposing selves of the artist. Whitman's personality evolved according to Asselineau, from the dandy into the ascetic, Christ-like carpenter. Asselineau calls the overalls which Whitman wore about 1850 as his "costume,

art of Whitman's renunciation of the world with its pomp and circumstance." That Whitman came from a family of carpenters does not eem terribly important to the French critic.

Chase is probably right: at some point Whitman has been understimated. But this is the price that is paid for protecting Whitman rom the people. Whitman was in no way a socialist, Gay Wilson Allen informs us, and the idea that he might be was goaded out of Whitman by his young socialist friend Traubel late in life. Even Chase s averse to anything that suggests the people or socialism in Whitman. Chase says Whitman himself was partly responsible for the "people's oet" myth. Whitman frequently fell into what Chase calls "Stalinsm," by which he means Whitman's tendency to adulate the "self-reorming powers of the people." Chase absolves Whitman of any serious elief in the people, a belief which reflects the

> corruption which has tainted and to a great extent destroyed all modern political thought. On the whole Whitman remains an old-fashioned libertarian, and the attempt to claim him for the world revolution will always be spurious.

These critics are like the selfish child who breaks a toy rather than ave another play with it. But actually Whitman is only "broken" n the eyes of the anti-socialist critics. Socialists and progressive people ll over the world have taken Whitman to their hearts, not because he as a socialist but because he was an impassioned democrat, a great iberal in a day when liberal did not mean an intellectual alienated rom life and people. Socialists value progressives no matter what eriod they live in or economic order they live under. They would no ooner reject "Leaves of Grass" because Whitman was a liberal than ney would ignore the discovery of electricity because Benjamin Frankn was not a communist. In their fear of anything that in any way reembles or is associated with socialism, important segments of our society estroy the best parts of our heritage. But they are only cutting off neir own noses, for if Mr. Chase and his intelligent students see Whitan as a neurotic who has not much to say, large numbers of mankind continue to see him as an exponent of human liberty.

WHITMAN is only one among many progressive bourgeois singled out for psychoanalysis by Freudian critics. Freud himself showed e way in his analyses of art and artists. Some of the greatest artistic hievements of the bourgeois epoch were reduced to a couple of crossed ires in a human psyche. Great figures like Leonardo da Vinci, who stered great moments in the rise of modern science and art, are seen

as frustrated homosexuals sublimating their repressed desires.

In the Special Chinese Issue of *Mainstream* (August, 1960) Pa Chin of People's Republic of China wrote:

> Four years ago we held meetings in Peking and Shanghai to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of the publication of *Leaves of Grass*. At one of these meetings I affirmed that Whitman is still living among us, fighting shoulder to shoulder with us for world peace and progress. These are not empty words: this is a fact. Indeed, not only are Whitman and his "Leaves of Grass" with us today, but all the finest men and women and the best literature of America.

Books like *Walt Whitman's Civil War* will continue to emphasize this progressive side of Whitman; books like Asselineau's will probably continue to stress sickness in Whitman's life and poetry, but despite the Freudian's the people will continue to claim Whitman as one of their own.

books in review

chizophrenic

ERMANY DIVIDED: THE LEGACY OF THE NAZI ERA, by Terence Prittie. (Little, Brown, and Co., Boston, 1960). $6.00. 381 pp.

IKE so many recent books on the "German question," Terence Pritt's *Germany Divided* suffers from a ndamental inner contradiction which tiates its usefulness and limits its apal. Mr. Prittie is in any case a rather perficial commentator on the German ene, but the main weakness of his ok stems not from the author's inllectual deficiencies but from his ideogical confusion. This confusion is unrtunately not peculiar to Mr. Prittie one. Indeed, the chief significance of *ermany Divided* may be said to lie its symptomatic relation to post-war estern policy in Germany, whose ntradictions and inconsistencies it thfully reflects.

Mr. Prittie's confusion is not difficult to explain. On the one hand, as former prisoner in a German prison-of-war camp and a loyal Englishman th firm democratic convictions, Mr. ittie does not like Nazis. As he oks around in West Germany today d observes the growing power and estige of unrepentant ex-Nazi gens, politicians and apologists, the conuing revival of anti-Semitism and n-German nationalism, the failure to ster the lessons of the past, Mr. Prit is quite naturally horrified. "Spirit apathy and the frantic quest for material gain," he sadly informs us, have become "the dominant features of German thinking and living." Despite a certain professional optimism, it is clear that Mr. Prittie has grave doubts about the future of German "democracy."

On the other hand, Mr. Prittie is obviously a supporter of the English Conservative Party and of the cold war policies to which that organization adheres. Mr. Prittie hates the German Democratic Republic for all he is worth; he believes that Walter Ulbricht "could well be a direct emanation of the Devil in person." And since West Germany is at the present time one of the leading members of the Western crusade against "diabolic" Communism, it follows that Mr. Prittie must commend Adenauer & Co. for doing the Lord's work. Anti-Communism is the saving grace which redeems a multitude of sins. And so as soon as he has said something especially nasty about the state of affairs in West Germany, Mr. Prittie must quickly explain that he is only kidding, that things are not so bad as they seem, that life can be beautiful after all.

Here are a few examples of this curious form of political schizophrenia. On page 205 Mr. Prittie quite correctly states that the "authoritarian" Adenauer does not permit the slightest independence on the part of his subordinates, that his closest advisers are non-parliamentary "experts" with questionable political backgrounds (like Hans Globke, the notorious Nazi racist), and that "it is questionable

whether this has been a boon to German democracy." But if Adenauer is another Bismarck, then how can he be a legitimate defender of the "free world"? And so on page 220 Mr. Prittie suddenly reverses himself and informs us that "Konrad Adenauer . . . has planted and tended the first tender shoots of German democracy in the uncertain springtime of the post-Nazi era." Or take the question of the Oder-Neisse boundary between Germany and Poland. On pages 80-85 it is, again quite correctly, stated that only the "desperate efforts of a minority" keep this question alive, that "the German aptitude for rewriting history with little regard for historical fact has inevitably played a big part in the German demand for the restoration of its eastern territories," and that it is "nonsense" to expect the revision of the Oder-Neisse line "by force or by negotiation with the Soviet Union." But if the demand for the return of the eastern territories (which were, of course, stolen from Poland by Prussia in the first place), is a phony issue, then why does the "peace-loving" West German government continue to support it? And so we are informed on page 90 that it is "impossible not to feel admiration and sincere sympathy for those who advocate a boundary revision," while on page 104 it is suddenly revealed that the Soviet Union "must make major concessions" if West Germany is to abandon her claim to those very same territories whose return to Germany it was "nonsense" to advocate on page 85. And so it goes. On page 159 German reunification is found to be impossible; but one page later, it turns out that the West "must not ignore" West Germany's desire for "reunification in freedom." On page 215 we learn that the Soviet Union seeks "to carry on a policy of peaceful coexistence with both German states"; but by page 343, Russian policy has evolved into an attempt to "push Communism to the Rhine." In fact, there is hardly a single assertion made by Mr. Prittie which is not crushingly refuted by . . . Mr. Prittie!

But even more serious than our author's penchant for self-contradiction is his tendency to overlook certain well known facts whenever they do not support his cold war convictions. Thus Mr. Prittie tries to show that the East German armed forces are more "militaristic" than their West German counterparts because the "ex-Nazi element is strong" in the former. In reality, out of all the officers in the East German armed forces above the rank of captain, only three served as officers in Hitler's army and these only during the early part of the war. Yet one might forgive Mr. Prittie his distortion of the facts about the East German army, had he not "neglected" to discuss the "ex-Nazi element" in the West German army. What Mr. Prittie "forgot" to tell his readers was that *every single one* of the generals and admirals in the West German armed forces held the rank of colonel or above in the Nazi *Wehrmacht*. Likewise, Mr. Prittie devotes a great deal of attention to the undeniable fact that many people moved from East to West Germany during the difficult period of the last 15 years. But Mr. Prittie "neglects" to mention that over the past few years, the number of Germans moving from east to west has sharply declined, while the number moving from *west* to *east* has in contrast been steadily increasing. I

these and other instances, Mr. Prittie avoids self-contradiction only by suppressing a part of the truth, by failing to inform the reader of facts undoubtedly well known to himself.

What is wrong with Mr. Prittie's approach to the problem of "Germany divided"? Our author's difficulties arise from the fact that he attempts to reconcile two irreconcilable elements, democracy on the one hand, anti-Communism on the other. While Mr. Prittie spends a great deal of time talking about what is wrong with West Germany today, about the revival of Nazism, the failure of post-war "decartelization" policies, the cynical vacuity of West German political life, he cannot discover any better explanation for all this than the innate deficiencies of the "German character." And how indeed could Mr. Prittie be expected to uncover the true villain of the piece, when it is in fact his own cold war ideology which is chiefly to blame? For it was the insistence of the United States and England that Germany be converted into a battleground of the cold war which more than any other single factor produced that revival of Nazism and anti-democratic sentiment which characterizes West Germany today. It was the United States and England whose repudiation of the Potsdam agreements precipitated the division of Germany into East and West. It was the United States and England, with the connivance of the Adenauer regime, which pushed through West German rearmament against the opposition (as Mr. Prittie himself admits) of the great majority of the German people. It was the United States and England whose unfailing economic, political and military assistance has been the chief prop of that Adenauer regime which, over the last eleven years, has more or less consciously conspired in the revival of Nazi influence in every sphere of West German life. Nor was this development in any sense accidental. If West Germany was to become, as Acheson and Dulles intended it to be, the Western spearhead for the "liberation" of Eastern Europe, then what better "liberators" than those who had tried the trick once before? If anti-Communism was to be the essence of German political virtue, what better anti-Communists than those who had made opposition to Communism their bloody specialty and political calling-card ever since 1919? Just as Korea sustained McCarthy in the United States and Algeria has sustained DeGaulle and Soustelle in France, so the cold war sustained in Germany those who were best qualified to fight it—the Nazis.

What then is to be the future of democracy in Germany? In the final analysis, West Germany will never achieve true democracy until it succeeds in overcoming the social and economic, as well as political, domination of the many by the few. But socialism in West Germany is probably still some distance in the future. At the present moment, what Germany needs above all else is to contract out of the cold war, to be left free to work out her destiny in a purely peaceful way. Something like Poland's Rapacki Plan, which aims at the demilitarization of all of Central Europe including Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, offers the best alternative now available. While this program will of course not lead to the immediate abolition of Nazism in West Germany, it will do away with the Nazis' most important source of strength, the exaggerated nationalist ambitions revived in West Germany by the cold war. Under these new conditions, the

progressive forces in German life, whose voice has been stilled in West Germany for nearly thirty years, can look forward with renewed confidence to the struggles of the coming years.

R. F. SHAW

Pragmatic

ESSAYS IN AMERICAN HISTORIOGRAPHY, PAPERS PRESENTED IN HONOR OF ALLAN NEVINS, edited by Donald Sheehan and Harold C. Syrett, Columbia University Press, New York. $6.00.

THE sixteen contributors to this volume of essays received their doctorate under the supervision of Allan Nevins, former professor of history at Columbia University. Most of the topics covered are focal problems in American historiography: scientific history, the Confederacy, Reconstruction, the New South, national politics and urban history from the Civil War to World War I, the robber barons, muckrakers, imperialism and racism, migration, the evolution controversy, Populism, pragmatism, revisionism, and Franklin D. Roosevelt.

The approach of most of the essays is pragmatic. Louis Filler thinks the most valuable aspect of the muckrakers was their pragmatic interest "with hard and immediate concerns." They stuck to facts and reached a mass audience. Later liberals, like those who gathered around the *New Republic* and *The Masses,* failed to utilize muckraker methods. "The intellectuals of the 1910's [sic] did not supplement muckraking methods and projects with their own insights; they treated them with contempt." When liberalism abandoned its pragmatic heritage it became doctrinaire and detached from the masses.

The pragmatist believes in the reconcilibility of all opposites. When there is violence, as in 1861, this does not reflect the incompatibility of economic systems and ways of life but the failure of somebody to compromise. Robert C. Black III, in "Thoughts on the Confederacy," thinks the Confederacy to have been a bad choice by Southerners, who made the mistake of thinking slavery and the Confederacy *"indispensable"* to assure the supremacy of the white race. Black says slavery "was not a *sin qua non.* There were, in fact, numerous alternatives all of them consistent with the white supremacy principle, and a number of intelligent Southerners came to realize it while there was yet a Confederacy." Talking as if slavery were simply bad tactics is symtomatically pragmatic. The Confederacy "represented one possible way of achieving a goal, and it turned out to be an ineffective way."

In Edward N. Saveth's essay "Scientific History in America: Eclipse of an Idea," the same, history-is-nothing-but-a-series-of-choices-to-be-made attitude emerges. Saveth concludes that history, like life, is uncertain. "With respect to the imponderables of history propounded by the philosopher most historians are willing to arrive at practical compromises." He closes with the sentence: "Perhaps, in a universe without hitching posts, we can ask no more of scientific method than that it remain a somewhat undefined means whereby honest men seek the truth of what happened in history."

We get a formal definition of pragmatism in Sidney Ratner's "Pragmatism in America." To Ratner pragmatism

is a "profoundly American union of philosophy with life . . . an expression of modern America's faith in man's ability to remold nature and society through intelligence, will power, and social cooperation."

Donald Sheehan's "Radical Reconstruction" is one of the more interesting essays in the book. He says frankly that indecisiveness is characteristic of much of American historical writing. "Historians are firm in evaluating details and somewhat fuzzy in drawing final conclusions. The monographists take refuge in complexities; the textbook writers in indecision." He does not have the pragmatist's faith in compromise, at least in regard to Reconstruction. "Reconstruction presented problems which could not be solved without violating some traditional ideals at the same time that others were implemented. Minority rights for the white Southerners sat on one end of the seesaw; the individual liberties of millions of Negro citizens on the other."

"A preference for gradual change was challenged by a situation which was intrinsically and unavoidably revolutionary. The general assumption that property rights and liberty were inseparable offered no guide to solve the problems of people whose liberty could be secured only by depriving other people of property. Neither the American Constitution nor the American experience could produce a formula."

He goes on to say that American historians are unequipped to solve a problem like this, where true incompatibles, property rights and liberty," are involved. "A willingness to look at all the facts before drawing conclusions has been joined to the easy theory that truth must lie somewhere between two extremes." Where does this put Mr. Sheehan on the Reconstruction Period, which, he warns, "especially invites suspended and divided judgments"? Mr. Sheehan is not a "middle-of-the-roader" as much as he is a "both-sides-of-the-roader." He rejects platitude in favor of paradox. In answer to his own question: "How do we evaluate a situation in which good American principles consigned millions of people to second-class citizenship?", he has the following answer: The end of Radical Reconstruction and the renewed suppression of the Negro was a triumph of "long-standing national ideals." "Thus Reconstruction ended not for cabalistic reasons [a thesis which Sheehan says is erroneously held by Marxists like Allen, Aptheker and Du Bois] but for democratic ones." He reasons that Radical Reconstruction was forced on white Southerners by military force, and that America came in time to reject such a procedure as undemocratic: "for better or worse, the American people made the decision to have the white South substantially control its own destinies." The Negroes suffered as a result of this triumph of democracy, but that, Mr. Sheehan concludes, was their tragedy.

Jacob E. Cooke surveys the historiography of the period following Radical Reconstruction in his essay, "The New South." Mr. Cooke thinks writers on the period have been obscure. But he goes on to say that perhaps the precise nature of a region is obscure. He approvingly quotes Donald Davidson's statement that the factors that make a region unique "are imponderable and almost indeterminate. . . ." This definition leaves a lot of room for sociology and psychology, and Cooke closes by recommending these disciples to future historians of the New South.

As one might expect from students of Mr. Nevins, the keynote of these essays is conservatism. In "American Historians and National Politics From the Civil War to the First World War," James A. Rawley remarks that the conservatism that "has surged through mid-century United States" ought to be recognized not "merely as a phenomenon of the present but as a perennial part of our politics." Similarly, conservatism should be recognized as the sanest of approaches to American history. "The era of the debunker and doctrinaire," he says, "seems past." Striking a like note, Hal Bridges, in "The Idea of the Robber Barons in American History," says the image of the businessman as an unscrupulous profit-maker was "Born apparently of a desire for denunciation rather than objective analysis"; he concludes that "the idea of the robber barons seems destined to fall into increasing disuse. . . ."

Harvey Wish's chapter on Nevins in *The American Historian* (Oxford Press, 1960), makes many of the characterizations of Nevins that Herbert Aptheker made in "Laureates of Imperialism." Although Wish's attitude toward Nevins over-all is one of respect, he mentions Nevins' Anglo-Saxonism, his enthusiasm for the business elite, and his less than lukewarm attitude toward labor and the Negro people. Mr. Wish suggests that Nevins' pro-business position was in part a result of the economic chaos of the late twenties and early thirties. If this is true it offers a valuable insight into Nevins predisposition for strong men in business and government. Nevins responded to the anarchy of modern capitalism by appealing, like Carlyle, to 'heroes' 'for leadership. Wish also correctly sees Nevins' view of history as giving primacy to chance. Nevins denigrates thos historians who claim to see any over all pattern to history. "Much that hap pens in human affairs," Wish quote Nevins as saying, "is accidental." There fore, "General philosophical concept of history will not bend to pragmati tests."

Essays in American Historiograph reflects Nevins' conservatism on science business, and the Negro. But the Ne gro struggle for equal rights, the Su preme Court decision on integration and Little Rock have left their imprin on this volume. The injustice of Jim Crow has been so thoroughly exposed that Nevins' students are no longer abl to treat the problem with the sam steroetypes as the teacher. Their genu ine concern is at odds with the back ward ideology they have inherited fron their teacher. In the other focal prob lems of American historiography, hi tory as a science, the muckrakers, an the robber barons, Nevins himsel might have written the essays. But th essays on the South, the Confederac Reconstruction, and Imperialism sho the incompatibility of old ways of think ing with new realities, and, one woul hope, points to fresh possibilities fo the historiography of the America Negro.

ROBERT OLSON

Big Leap

A SHORT HISTORY OF MODERN CHINESE LITERATURE, by Tin Yi. Foreign Languages Press, Pekin

THE Chinese have made availab in an English translation *A Sho History of Modern Chinese Literature* Less than three hundred pages in lengt the book confines itself to this centur

nfortunately it was published post-
mously, without benefit of the auth-
's final hand. It tends to be repetitious.
t it is highly recommended for an
derstanding of the development of
odern Chinese literature. According
it, modern Chinese literature may
said to have begun with the May
Movement.

In April of 1919, when the Paris
ace Conference gave to Japan the
mer German privileges in Shantung
giving China one master in place
another—a strong movement against
perialism broke out in the country.
is was the historic May 4 Move-
nt. Previous to the May 4 Movement
progressive forces in China gathered
der the banner of the bourgeois-
mocratic camp. As long as the bour-
ois-democratic forces had fought the
ctionary representatives of China's
dal past, they had been the party of
ogress. But the era of imperialism
ought about an alliance in China of
old feudal forces of reaction and
new imperialistic power of foreign
nopoly capital. The feudal-imperialist
ance made short work of the bour-
ois-democratic camp. The latter beat
asty retreat and left the field to the
ces of reaction.

The May 4 Movement introduced a
v adversary into the struggle. This
v adversary was a united front of
ee intelligentsia—communist, petty
rgeois and bourgeois. The revolu-
ary movement in modern Chinese
rature arose on the foundation laid
the May 4 Movement. Led by the
mmunists and supported, after the
e 3 Movement, by the proletariat,
May 4 Movement helped spread
ideas of Marxism-Leninism in China.
as Marxism-Leninism which formed
ideological backbone of the new
movement. When the revoutionary and petty bourgeois elements in the alliance tended to vacillate, the communists held fast to the Marxist-Leninist ideology.

On the literary front, the new revolutionary movement advanced a double-pronged attack against feudalism and imperialism. Because the enemy was sometimes within the revolutionary camp, the ideological struggle was internal as well as external. The main struggle between the revolutionary and reactionary forces gave rise to lesser struggles of a similar nature. Thus within the revolutionary movement itself one found the same divisions that existed in China as a whole. A rightist element of the revolutionary movement in literature gathered around a magazine called the Modern Review. As Chu Chiu-pai pointed out, this Modern Review group was not simply an out and out enemy of the new. The Modern Review group represented a division within the new. That is, the general contradiction between the new and the old was unfolding itself within the new itself. This was perhaps an even more dangerous kind of opposition because it bore a superficial resemblance to the forces of progress. This group payed lip-service to the new while really desiring a return to the old order.

Perhaps the most harmful of all the ideas that the right wing of the revolutionary movement in literature supported was that which sought to place literature above politics. In proposing this idea they, of course, unwittingly or not, played into the hands of the enemy. If the feudalists and imperialists had succeeded in neutralizing literature they would have deprived the Chinese people of one of their most precious weapons in the fight for emancipation.

AT the inaugural meeting of a group of revolutionary writers in 1929—a group led by Lu Hsun and to be known as the China League of Left-Wing Writers—the following resolution was adopted:

In a period of social change art cannot remain stagnant to become a conservative element and a tool of support for the die-hard rule. It must veer boldly towards progress and become a weapon in a war of liberation. Only by keeping pace with the march of history can art spread its brilliant rays.

The League of Left Wing Writers became an important part of the revolutionary movement. The role it set for itself was not that of an objective bystander. Art was integral to revolution. Literature enjoyed no prerogatives, in the eyes of the League, which set it above the needs of the people. It was proud to identify itself with the aspirations of China's toiling millions. The reactionary Kuomintang sought to destroy the League through murder and repression. But the League and other heroic organizations like it fought back. Members were kidnapped and murdered by Kuomintang agents but the tide of revolution continued to rise in China. Lu Hsun promised:

Our proletarian literature will continue to grow, however, because it belongs to the great ranks of the revolutionary toilers; and as long as the people exist and gain in strength, so long will this revolutionary literature grow.

LU HSUN might be called the father of modern Chinese literature. He was born Chou Shu-jen, on September 25, 1881, in Chekiang Province. On his father's side he was related to government officials and intellectuals. His mother was of peasant background a it is from her family that he to the name Lu. Family misfortunes—t discrediting of his grandfather in bribery case, his father's illness a death—forced Lu Hsun out into t world, where he got a new perspect on society. An eager student from l earliest youth, he absorbed the n political and scientific ideas that w in the air. But the political ideas w of a reformist and the scientific id of an evolutionary cast, and it was o as he gradually outgrew these ideas t Lu Hsun came to full intellect maturity. From 1918 to 1927 he w still a revolutionary democrat, stron influenced by a crude Darwinism in scientific thinking and bourgeois dividualism in his politics. During t period he published stories, poe essays, and translations from Russ literature and criticism. He was duri this period a teacher, first at Pek and then at Amoy and Canton. In 19 he left the profession in disgust wh Chiang Kai-shek betrayed the revoluti and massacred students and Communi He remained in Shanghai from 19 to the year of his death, 1936, devot his life to the revolutionary liter movement, which was under the le ership of the Chinese Communist Pa It was during the last ten years of life, when the Kuomintang was try to encircle an annihilate the revoluti that Lu Hsun came to full maturity. Hsun, the communist, became, in M Tse-tung's phrase, "the giant of Chi cultural revolution."

Lu Hsun's career is significant i much as its path of development capitulates the development of Chin cultural life in the period in which lived. In this connection it must remembered that at the time "Ch

as a country with a huge petty-urgeois population, where petty-bour-eois writers and artists constituted an nportant force on the literary front a whole." From his own starting oint in society as a member of the etty bourgeois class, Lu Hsun rose to e front ranks as a true spokesman r China's masses. In this clear line f ascent, he is to be distinguished from ose petty bourgeois who rose no gher than the first stage of political velopment—alienation from their own ass. These petty bourgeois made over-ures to the working classes but they ere never able to make the big leap. Iao Tse-tung said, in his *Talks at the enan Forum on Art and Literature,** at the petty bourgeois intellectuals in eory and word claimed to be more terested in workers, peasants and sol-ers than they were in their own petty urgeois brethren. But in practice, he d, such is not the case.

. Many comrades are concerned with udying the petty bourgeois intellectuals, alyzing their psychology, giving em-atic expression to their life and ex-sing or defending their shortcomings, ther than with leading these people, gether with themselves, to get closer the masses of workers, peasants and ldiers, to participate in their actual ruggles or to give expression to their e and educate them.

Lu Hsun's political consciousness was vakened, as it was with many intellec-als, by a sense of estrangement from s own class. But he learned that simply ting one's class is not enough. To spise the society in which one lives thout actively seeking to change it is fruitless. Lu Hsun analyzed and did away with these traits in himself.

. . . And my way of talking constantly of myself, of how I keep "knocking my head against a wall" and of what a snail I am, as if all the miseries in the world were concentrated in my person and I was a scapegoat for everyone else, is a bad failing of middle class intellectuals. It is true, though, that while I started by simply hating my own class which I knew so well, and felt no regret over its destruction, later on the facts taught me that the future belongs solely to the rising proletariat.

Lu Hsun was better able to attack what he himself had outgrown. In particular, he waged a spirited war against reactionary ideas on the so-called classless character of art. He insisted that art produced in class society cannot be classless. The notion that art should be entirely free of politics evoked from him the reply that everything ultimately served one side or the other. To place art above poltics is to place it out of the reach of the people, and deprive them of a powerful weapon.

AFTER the May 4 Movement, Mao Tse-tung's *Talks at the Yenan Forum* are perhaps the next most important milestone in modern Chinese Literature. In these talks the Chinese leader opened a full scale assault on petty bourgeois ideas in art and literature and made important contributions to revolutionary aesthetics based on socialist realism. The *Talks* "summed up the history of literature since the May 4 Movement, pointed out a new direction for literature and ushered in a new era in the literary movement in China." (*Short History,* p. 80.) The main trend in the May 4 Movement had been realism, heading always in the

*These talks have been published in a mphlet in this country under the title roblems of Art and Literature" (Interna-nal Publishers).

direction of socialist realism. But the petty bourgeois point of view persisted in spite of the main trend. At Yenan the contradiction between the petty bourgeois and proletarian point of view was intensified. As long as things in China had been unsettled, the contradiction between the two points of view could be hidden. But when the artists and intellectuals went over into those areas where the workers and peasants had taken control they became disillusioned. The allegiance the intelligentsia had pledged in theory badly faltered when brought face to face with reality.

Art had first of all to be put in its proper place. Mao Tse-tung stated firmly that art and literature are subordinate to politics. But through subordinate to politics, art and literature are nevertheless *indispensible* parts of the revolutionary process.

> . . . Revolutionary art and literature are part of the entire cause of the revolution, they are its cogs and screws; though in comparison with certain other parts they may be less important and less urgent and occupy only a secondary position, yet they are, as cogs and screws, indispensable to the whole machine, and form an indispensable part of the entire cause of the revolution. If we had no art and literature even in the broadest and most general sense, then the revolutionary movement could not be carried on to victory. It would be wrong not to realize this.

In Mao Tse-tung's *Talks* art retains a revolutionary role. The artist's role is not simply to mirror the existing state of things but to seek in the actual the seeds of the new and the better. One of art's tasks is to create the ideal type. The ideal in this case is not an abstraction but an ideal based on the existing particulars. The artist should create his ideal on the basis of the masses. M Tse-tung's theory of art bears rese blance to the best features of Hege theory of art as presented in *The L tures of the Theory of Art*. Hegel h that art should be a signpost to future, pointing to the best that mig come. Subjective art was severely li ited, in Hegel's view because in deali solely with the feelings of the individ artist the social world was excluded fr examination. How, therefore, was artist to point to what was coming if did not first turn to the world that It is a materialistic principle impl in Hegel's aesthetic theory that artist, in order to create signific works, must deal directly and hones with objective reality. But materialism finally usurped by idealism in Heg aesthetics as in the body of his ph osophy.

For in telling the artist to return reality, Hegel is not saying that tr resides in the material world. He not saying, Study the material wo for that is the source of truth. Rat he says, go to the material world, that is where the idea (spirit) chosen to unfold itself.

THE ideal is the source of life Hegel, but in Mao Tse-tung's the of art the ideal is merely one of potentialities of life. The artist's jo to help bring this ideal, implicit life, to realization. He does not as to art the merely mechanical task recording what is. Rather the artist i seek the best that may yet be. It wo be wrong to exclude the ideal fro socialist theory of literature. The i has a rightful place in the cultural of the masses, for without the ideal would not be nearly as rich.

Though man's social life constitutes
ne only source for art and literature,
nd is incomparably more vivid and
icher than art and literature as such,
ne people are not satisfied with the
ormer alone and demand the latter.
Why? Because, although both are beau-
iful, life as reflected in artistic and
iterary works can and ought to be on a
igher level and of a greater power and
etter focused, more typical, nearer the
deal, and therefore more universal than
veryday life.

But the masses are not to rely on
terature alone to hold up the ideal,
Iao claims. There is a form of social
fe which presents the ideal—the best
be—even more clearly than art. That
orm is politics. It is in politics that
ne over-all needs of the people are
esented in their most forceful manner.
is characteristic of an effete class to
ok to art alone for fulfillment. Art
ould be one facet in a full life, one
de of the many-sided interests of the
eople. Since it is but one facet it must
ot claim to be the chief vehicle of the
eal and usurp the place of politics.

. . Revolutionary struggles on the
eological and artistic fronts must be
bordinate to the political struggle
cause only through politics can the
eds of the class and the masses be
pressed in concentrated form.

In China the problem in the cultural
ld was a difficult one. Culturally the
ople were especially dependent upon
e revolutionary bourgeoise for aid.
t forms had been monopolized by the
ing classes as had land and tools.
advance their own rudimentary art
hniques the masses required the col-
oration of the petty bourgeois artists
l intelligentsia. But the petty bour-
ois, were not willing to lend their
vices gratis. Their price was the
opagation of petty bourgeois ideas on
art and life. Consequently bourgeois ideology found its way into proletarian literature and literary theory.

The bent of these bourgeois ideas were, naturally, idealistic. The intelligentsia and artist group exhalted itself via the media of art. The bourgeois artist claimed for himself the privileges of a priest. For if art is closest to the ideal then it follows that artists have preeminence over politicians, scientists, workers, and the others who deal more directly with the workaday world. This tended to separate art from life and prepared the way for an estrangement between artist and society.

In giving politics primacy over art, Mao's theory of aesthetics aimed at overcoming any separation between artist and society. It has important consequences for aesthetic theory. The tendency in Western society was to think of the ideal as something opposed to life. One had to transcend life in order to find the truth. In Mao's theory this situation is reversed: art is valuable only insofar as it investigates and concerns itself with actual problems and people. There has been a strong reaction against his theory, and this reaction is part of the history of Chinese literature in the last decade.

Struggle against rightist critics has been one of the functions of Chinese literature in the fifties. But literature is playing many roles in the socialist reconstruction of China. Poetry there is not confined to little magazines. Mao Tse-tung's poems are put on pottery and fans by the people. In one year alone it was estimated that a million poems were written on walls and billboards or recited orally.

Modern Chinese literature is a literature of a liberated people. Two lines from a recently published folk song

express this prominent feature of Chinese literature very simply:

> No more press-gangs,
> No more bailiffs drumming for rent;
> Yesterday we were slaves,
> Today we are the masters.

Ting Yi's *Short History* is require reading for an understanding of th role literature played in the revolutio ary changes in China.

With this January, 1961, issue, we shall once more bring the graphic statement into the pages of MAINSTREAM. In the great tradition of the *Liberator, Masses,* and *New Masses,* in the great tradition of social statement, of Bellows and Art Young, Boardman Robinson, Bob Minor, Fred Ellis, Gellert and Gropper, and many other powerful artists.

In the States, today, there is no other journal that will open its pages to the younger artists who are looking with critical eye at the life and times arou them. And to those older artists w have been with us before.

It shall be our policy to include dra ings in each issue—drawings that ma their own commentary. We shall pu lish the best we can find of the Ame can artists as well as new creative wo coming out of various parts of world.

Appeal to Readers

MAINSTREAM is striving to build up and enlarge its collection of art on themes of social protest and progressive struggle, and takes this opportunity to appeal to its readers either to contribute or offer for sale drawings, etchings, water colors, paintings and sculpture of social significance by artists who have appeared over the past half century in the old NEW MASSES, weekly MASSES, LIBERATOR, and other predecessors of the present-day MAINSTREAM. Among these artists have been Becker, Bellows, Burke, Burliuk, Dehn, Ellis, Evergood, Frasconi, Gellert, Glackens, Gibson, Glintenkamp, Gordon, Gropper, Gross, Heliker, Hirsch, Jules, Karlin, Keller, Kent, Klee, Kleinholtz, Kruckman, Lozowick, Marsh, Minor, O'Higgins, Rea, Refregier, Robinson, Sloane, Soyer, Sternberg, Tromka, Weber, White, Young, and many, many others.

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