APRIL, 1961
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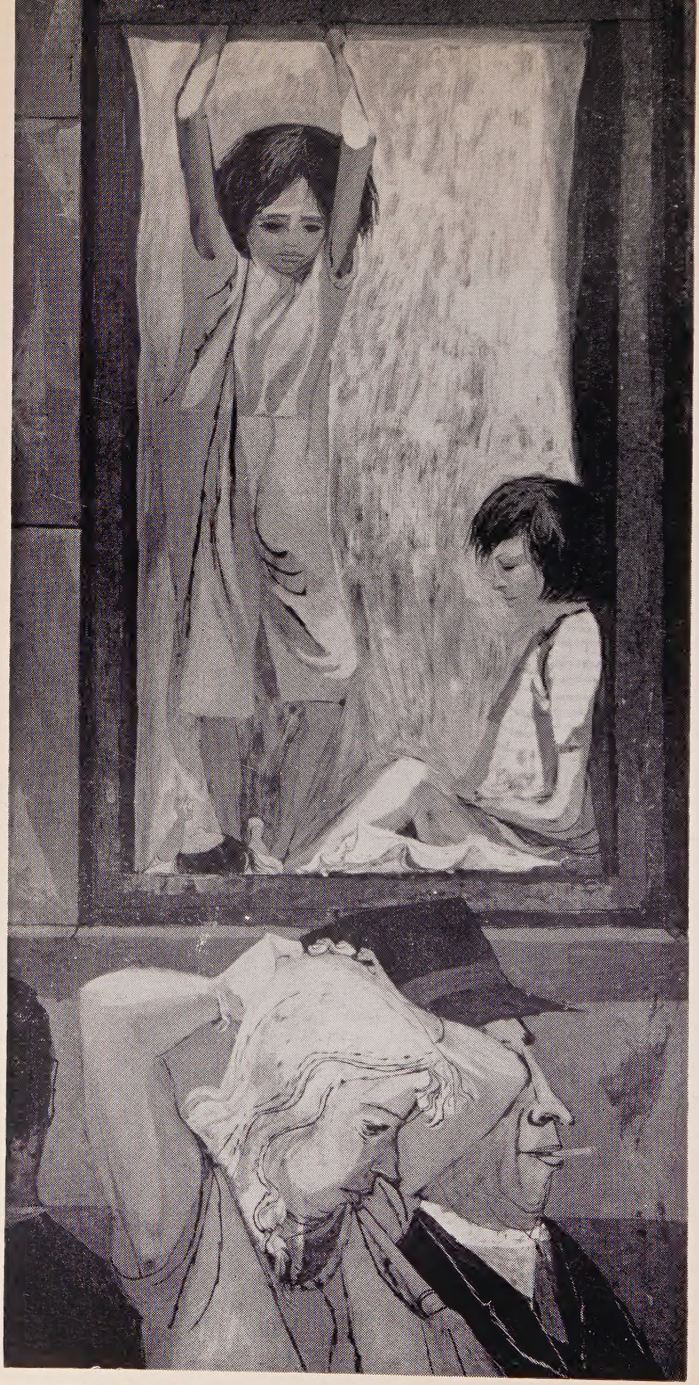
Mainstream



THE WINDOW

ANTON REFREG

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Mainstream

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Among Our Contributors

Anton Refregier, whose art is featured in this issue, is an artist of international reputation. Active in the peace movement, his work reflects a humanistic involvement with people and life.

Rockwell Kent gives us an excellent account of the story behind his gift of paintings to the Soviet people. The article is accompanied by one of the artist's drawings, which, like all his work, is forceful and unforgettable.

Oakley Johnson is an educator and author. His "Story of a Woman," the second half of which will appear in our June issue, gives us a memorable portrait of a progressive American woman.

Sidney Finkelstein is the well-known Marxist author, critic and lecturer.

Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Chairman of the CPUSA, recently returned from a trip through socialist countries and has recorded her impressions of culture in the workers' republics.

Victor Perlo is an economist, author of numerous books and pamphlets, and an authority on American economic developments.

Arno Reinfrank was born in Germany in 1934 and has lived in London, where he is a member of German Speaking Writers Abroad, since 1955. He has published two volumes of poetry and two of fables. He was awarded the Kurt Tucholsky book prize, in Hamburg, in 1957.

Our reviewer, *R. F. Shaw,* is 23 years old, and a graduate student specializing in modern European history.

Next Month — Cuba!

We will devote an enlarged, 96-page edition, entirely to material from and about Cuba. In it our readers will find first-rate articles directly from Cuba on the national theater, on the Year of Education, as well as first hand reports and impressions by our own correspondents, Irene Paull and Joe North. All important aspects of Cuban life will be dealt with, the prospects for the future, the danger of American-financed counter-revolution, the omnipresence of poetry and song in the life of masses, stories, interviews, and reviews of important books on Cuba that have appeared in English. This is a must issue and we are getting orders for extra copies. Be sure you order extra copies for your friends and neighbors. This enlarged issue will be sold at the usual price. An extraordinary bargain like the May Cuban issue of *Mainstream* should not be passed up.

in the mainstream

Hands Off Cuba

Next month *Mainstream* will devote a special enlarged issue to Cuba. We know that our readers will welcome this issue, since it will feature primarily cultural aspects of the new Cuba, which have not generally been available in this country. We hope that, to some extent at least, our May issue will open a window on that brave small country, just 90 miles from some of Florida's choicest real-estate; and even though the Kennedy administration maintains its *cordon sanitaire* around that island, nevertheless neither it, nor anybody, can keep the truth for very long from people who sincerely want to know it.

But what prompts us to refer to Cuba at this moment, however, is the appearance of the counter-revolutionary junta, heavily saturated with bankers and financiers, pretending to form the substance of a future government of Cuba when and if its policy of bomb-throwing, sabotage, assassination and political intrigue, all supported by the Kennedy administration through the generosity of Project X monies, should succeed. The political program that this self-styled "Revolutionary Council" offers to the Cuban people is transparently fascist, though sweetened a little with honey to catch the unwary. Here, too, the new tactic, which has been worked out for counter-revolutionaries everywhere, from Hungary to Cuba, is to be applied. It was outlined by the *New York Times;* but it was given earlier expression by that great democrat, Generalissimo Franco, who chided the West for its blunders in its abortive *putsch* in Hungary in this fashion:

> The passage of communism (read: people's democracy) through a nation is of such significance that, in spite of the revulsion that such slavery provokes, it awakens nonetheless a strong desire for social improvement, for efficacy and for a fair distribution of wealth that must without doubt characterize any future regime that follows.

In an editorial, as cynical as the above words of that senile traitor to Spain, the *New York Times* counsels the new would-be Franco's thusly:

> Having reached agreement, the great test for the exiles merely begins. They must stick together during the period when they can only represent a shadow government. Their problem, and it is one with which the United States policy concurs, is to overthrow the Castro regime. They must, in addition, have a program that will appeal to the Cuban people. The fact that the "Batistiano" exiles are excluded from their ranks shows a wise recognition that the Cuban clock can never be turned back to 1958.

Not only can the clock never be turned back; it must go forward. And no rag-tag group of bought-and-paid-for bankers, tied with bloody golden chains to Wall Street, can ever hope to glue together a program that will "appeal" to the Cuban people. For the program of bankers is always a program of making more and more profits for themselves out of the sweated labor of the people, and Batista's only "crime" was that he was too greedy, too stupid, too brutal. But the essence in both cases remains the same. A revolution has already taken place in Cuba; any new "revolution" must be a false one: a counter-revolution. It cannot bring freedom, only tyranny.

We will show, in our next issue, through the poems and the stories and the art work from Cuba, that that land for the first time is indeed free; and just as this is the year to end illiteracy in Cuba, let this also be the year when men of good will here in our country will move to take action against the would-be killers of the Cuban people and force a change of policy toward that brave country from the Kennedy administration.

Canaday's Critics

The *New York Times* has been warned that it has an "agitator" on its staff, in the person of its head art critic, John Canaday, who raised some questions about abstract art. This accusation appeared in a letter published February 26th, demanding that Canaday be stopped from saying what a host of people connected with the modern art world know to be absolutely true. Canaday has no objections to abstract art itself. What he has been pointing out in his columns, however, is that the art of painting nothing, known variously as "abstract expressionism," "action painting," and "devotion solely to the act of painting," has now become a staid academy, supported by strictly commercial interests. The Museum of Modern Art

put it over; a host of art galleries followed suit, and now have a sizeable investment in it; a crowd of pseudo art critics, art philosophers and publicists have jumped on the bandwagon, not only bludgeoning the public with meaningless verbiage, but also writing reviews that they know are dishonest. Talent and trash are inextricably mixed.

The signers of this noble document, presumably inviting a look at the *New York Times* "agitator" by the Un-American Activities Committee, includes a group of non-objective and abstract painters; some university professors like William Barrett of New York University and Meyer Shapiro of Columbia who have staked their intellectual standing on this shoddy goods; the editor of *Partisan Review,* William Phillips; and the editors of *Art News,* Alfred Frankfurter and Thomas B. Hess. The last-named publication has been most prolific in substituting salesmanship and mystification for art criticism. It has also resorted to cold war demagogy, proclaiming that this vacant painting, the high point of self-centredness in art, had to be supported by every patriotic American, since the Communists disliked it, suggesting instead a turn to social responsibility.

What petty and arrogant dictators these advocates are, of what they call "freedom" in art! "Freedom" means to them the freedom to advocate and sell this now lucrative commodity as art and pour out meaningless verbiage in its behalf, without a dissenting word being heard. They must rule the roost. The public must be their captive. Canaday pricked the balloon, and so they must scream for his head. As the English critic John Berger has remarked, "The Ivory tower has become the padded cell." But, to change the image, once the murky atmosphere has been dispelled, it is hard to bring it back again. Whether the letter will succeed in intimidating the *Times* and its critic, which was its obvious intention, remains to be seen. Meanwhile, of the letters received by the *Times* up to March 12, 311 supported Canaday and 56 agreed with the attack on him.

Students Upsurge

The malicious slanting of news by Henry Luce publications has been long known to many Americans. One recent distortion involves the awakening youth movement in this country. No un-biased observer would deny the demonstrations by college students around the issues of nuclear disarmament, desegregation, and the House Un-American Committee reflect the dominantly liberal character of the student movement. But of course *Time* magazine *is* biased and cannot be expected to tell the truth. In the

February 10 issue *Time* devotes its Education Section to "Campus Conservatives," in which the student movement is depicted as a kind of adolescent seven-year itch, an expression of youthful exuberance, with conservative students doing as much if not more scratching than liberals. Anyone who has been on college campuses in the last couple of years knows what nonsense this is. The swing to the right by some students is in direct response to the already larger swing to the left. *Time* quotes a Wisconsin student pumping for nuclear testing: "We should stop this neurotic brooding, brush the fallout off our lapels and stand up to the Russians in the great heritage of this country." One can find boobs like this on any campus, but on how many campuses can the Right point to a student journal of the quality of *Studies on the Left,* a socialist oriented magazine that has been published at that same University of Wisconsin for a few years already?

IT IS the same story on many other campuses. The liberal groups on campus have gained in strength and popularity and conservative organizations have been trying to form specifically to oppose the leftward trend. At Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, liberal students gathered around three organizations, The Committee for a SANE Nuclear Policy, The Committee Against Segregation, and The Committee to Abolish the House Un-American Activities Committee. We read in the Cornell Student paper, "The Cornell Daily Sun," that at least one student is going to do something to stem the tide. "Spurred by the upraised voice of left-liberal opinion, William N. Greenbaum, '63, has begun planning and organizing a group to be called 'Gentlemen of the Right'." "'On this campus almost all publications lean toward the left,' says Greenbaum."

Right student groups are operating with the backing of slick Madison Avenue type promotion. It is doubtful that campus conservatives could do much on their own. But rightist groups like the "Young Americans for Freedom," reeking of money and reaction, backed by ideologically bankrupt military men, politicians, industrialists and intellectuals, and expensive promotion and free publicity, do not reflect the upsurge by American students but rather a reaction against it.

Ugly Un-Americans

When the House of Representatives last month voted 412 to 6 to hand over, for the twenty-third year, another $331,000 of the people's hard-earned money to the most infamous thought-control body in mod-

ern history, the Un-American Activities Committee, it proclaimed to the world that the New Frontiers rhetoric about expanding freedoms the world over need not be taken seriously after all.

This Committee, which President Roosevelt found to be "sordid," and which has slandered almost everybody in public life from Shirley Temple to President Roosevelt himself, has been the refuge of many a scoundrel (Rep. A. Parnell Thomas, its one-time chairman, went to jail for lining his pockets with kick-backs from his secretaries) and a stepping-stone to higher worlds, as it proved to be for tricky Dick Nixon.

But while unprincipled politicians were using it as a springboard to further their ambitions, ordinary men and women—men and women who worked honestly for a living—were having their lives shattered right and left. "I'll be judge, I'll be jury," said cunning old Fury, "I'll try the whole cause and condemn you to death."

Begun as an instrument for attacking the New Deal, under the poll-tax Congressman, Martin Dies back in 1938, it continued on through the years, under one chairman after another, each worse perhaps than the preceding one, until it wound up with the present idea-hater, Francis E. Walter of Pennsylvania. Mr. Walter, by the way, comes from a depressed coal-mining area, where men and women are actually going about ill-fed, ill-clothed and ill-housed; but this hardly concerns him in his phobia against foreigners, especially from Southern Europe, and his penchant for witch-hunting people who are anywhere left of the *New York Daily News.*

In spite of general disapproval of its methods, the Committee has never been in real danger of losing its backing. Respectable newspapers, like the *Times,* for instance, have deplored it on the one hand but, on the other hand, made sure that it retained its lease on life by giving it the publicity without which it would die overnight. For its charges have notoriously lacked any kind of evidence which the courts could take seriously. Its victims were lynched by television and newspapers. For them there was no appeal.

But with the seal of approval that the Supreme Court has placed upon its work in the Wilkinson-Braden decisions, a new and more serious chapter in the long struggle against thought-control in America has opened. This decision has destroyed the right of free speech for every American citizen. It has destroyed the right of any individual to criticize a governmental body without suffering reprisal. The Committee itself made no bones about the fact that it took after Wilkinson and Braden because of their public criticism of their work and to-

day these men face prison. Other artists, writers, trade-unionists, etc., also face imprisonment—like Pete Seeger, for instance, whose banjo-picking has been officially declared subversive. It seems to us that anyone who considers Pete Seeger's folk-singing to be subversive really needs to have his head examined—we can't put it any other way.

Fortunately, the American people are sick and tired of this terror-committee in their lives, and it is heartening to note that among those who have fought it openly are many youth, like the San Francisco students, whose entire lives were spent under its ominous shadow. A whole generation in America has come to manhood without ever having known a time when it was possible to think and speak openly and freely on matters like peace, trade-unionism, coexistence, etc., without being dragged before a government organization, and thereby risking jobs, reputation and their very liberty.

It is ridiculous to speak of freedom of thought or conscience in the United States as long as the Un-American Activities Committee continues to exist. It is with great pleasure, therefore, that we join with the great majority of the American people, like those represented by the 250 American professors from 79 leading colleges and universities who signed a statement which demanded the end of the Committee as a "threat to our liberties." We call upon our readers to raise their voices in similar protest.

With this issue we welcome Michael Gold to our Board of Contributing Editors. Last month we also added V. J. Jerome. Both are names we are proud to have associated with *Mainstream,* for they have helped build the tradition of working-class literature in the United States.

THE AMERICAN ECONOMY

VICTOR PERLO

THE United States was in the midst of its fourth post-war slump as the Kennedy Administration took over.

Last year industrial production fell from 111% to 103% of the 1957 average. Steel output declined from an annual rate of 131 million (metric) tons in January 1960 to 68 million in January 1961, and has been stuck at this 50% of capacity level for 7 months. Production of the growth metal, aluminum, which has displaced steel in many uses, has also been curtailed. Private housing starts fell to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 990,000 in December, 32% below the year-earlier level.

Plant and equipment investment, which never regained the 1957 peak, started downwards in the third quarter of 1960. Business appropriations for new investment, which foreshadow activity 6-9 months later, fell 26% from the 1959 level in the third quarter.

The number of business failures in 1960 rose to a 27-year high, while the especially significant indicator, the liabilities of such failures, jumped 35% to a record $939 million. Manufacturers' new orders fell considerably, so that the backlog of unfilled orders at the year-end was the lowest in a decade.

Unemployment mounted sharply to 5,385,000 fully unemployed in January, 1¼ million more than a year earlier. Layoffs in late January make it likely that unemployment set a post-war high in February. The official figure signifies actual unemployment of 7-8 million, or 10-12% of the labor force. Some of the unemployed get meager benefits, which in total amount to 20% of the wages lost through unemployment.

The real earnings of those retaining employment are falling, as many industrial workers are put on part-time work, and the cost of living continues to mount. The take-home pay of a factory worker with three de-

pendants, in dollars of average purchasing power, fell from $83.08 in December 1959 to $79.66 in December 1960. This last figure was no higher than the average for 1956, and the actual situation is worse than revealed by official figures. Moreover, there is a considerable hidden loss of income and hidden unemployment, affecting millions of workers forced out of production into highly competitive selling and service jobs, with extra-long hours, without even minimum social protections, and with very low earnings.

THE slump has not been serious for many giant corporations. Corporate profits after taxes are officially reported 3% below the 1959 level, but artificially increased depreciation charges and other forms of hidden profits probably more than account for the difference; so that 1960 was another record year for actual profits—or "cash flow," as the real thing is called in investors' slang.

The American Telephone and Telegraph Co., with over $1¼ billion profits after taxes in 1960, set an all-time high for any corporation. The two largest industrials, General Motors and Standard Oil (N. J.), increased their profits. Dividend payments reached an all-time high of $14 billion, and continued to rise during the final quarter of business decline.

Employers ruthlessly slashed labor costs throughout the year, the continued slack in the labor market permitting them to exert pressure on the workers as in a depression. The monopolies have further perfected their price-gouging apparatus in post-war years. Since 1947-49 the price of finished steel has gone up 81%, as compared with not quite 20% for the all-commodities wholesale index. Through sky-high prices the steel giants have realized high profits while operating at only 50% of capacity. Of course, this "accomplishment" has undermined the whole structure of the steel market, and hastened the gross substitution of competitive products. But meanwhile the steel magnates console themselves with the excellent profits made on what market is left to them.

Working people are especially hard hit by the price chiseling of the food processing and retailing monopolies. While prices received by farmers fell 11% between 1947-49 and December 1960, retail food prices went up 21% according to the official index, and considerably more in actual fact.

For example, today the public must buy the bulk of its food in ready-made packages glamorized by the American "packaging" industry. Convenient—certainly. But this has become a device for the most heartless kind of mass robbery. With almost incredible speed, the contents of the

containers are reduced in quantity but increased in price. The breakfast cereals which are an important part of the American diet have doubled in price per ounce during the past 10-12 years, although the price of food grain is lower.

The drug and medical combines have been even more ruthless. The cost of medical care, officially has gone up 58% since 1947-49, more than any other major item in the cost of living.

Monopoly successes in raising the rate of exploitation and price robbery of the people has bolstered the stock market. After falling during the summer and early fall, it turned upwards in late October. By late January, the Standard and Poors 500-stock index made an all-time high. The stock market rose during the latter part of the 1957-58 slump, also, anticipating the rise in business to come. This rise, however, has been much more vigorous than in any previous post-war slump.

The common expectation of big investors is for inflation—a more rapid rise in consumers and other final product prices than in recent years. Inflation, the capitalists reckon, will be spurred by large federal deficits flowing from higher spending and lagging tax receipts, and may be given a decisive upthrust through devaluation.

Economic Stagnation

FROM the experience of the depression '30's the liberal Keynesian economists evolved the theory of stagnation, as applicable to the economy of "mature" capitalist countries like the United States. During the post-war decade, as U.S. imperialism ruled the war-ruined capitalist roost, and expanded its industrial power, the big business leaders puffed with pride and mocked the former "calamity howlers."

But now it seems as if the escape from stagnation was only temporary. The return of this phenomenon was seen as impending a number of years ago by far-sighted economists like Paul Baran. Now it is evident to the present generation of neo-Keynesians surrounding President Kennedy, and reluctantly admitted by many conservative big business leaders.

President Kennedy, after referring to "three and a half years of slack, seven years of diminished economic growth" in his State of the Union message, said:

> Our recovery from the 1958 recession, moreover, was anemic and incomplete. Our gross national product never regained its full potential. Unemployment never returned to normal levels. Maximum use of our national industrial capacity was never fully restored.

> In short, the American economy is in trouble. The most resourceful industrialized country on earth ranks among the last in the rate of economic growth."

He warned that the very survival of capitalism is at stake during his term. Fundamentally, this stagnation is closely related to other features which Mr. Kennedy found dismal, notably the dollar-gold crisis and the setbacks to U.S. foreign policy:

> Each day the crises multiply. Each day their solution grows more difficult. . . . In each of the principal areas of crisis . . . the tide of events has been running out and time has not been our friend.

All of these negative phenomena are aspects of the general decline in the world position of U.S. imperialism, in relation to three opposing world forces. First are the gains of the socialist world in all spheres. Second are the huge losses of world imperialism to the formerly oppressed peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America breaking out of their grip; losses which impinge on U.S. imperialism all the more harshly because of its earlier success in establishing the top-dog position among the imperialist overlords. Third are the losses of U.S. imperialism to its rivals, especially to its former enemy which it so assiduously raised from the ashes—West German imperialism.

Will the Slump End in 1961?

THE general pattern of forecasts is that economic activity will decline slowly early in 1961, level off in the second quarter, and rise in the second half of the year. This forecast assumes that the pattern of 1954 and 1958 will be repeated. But this will not necessarily be the case.

The private economy is in a less favorable situation than during these earlier recessions. Previously upsurges in sales of automobiles and house construction—aided by easy credit—helped stop the recessions and start fresh recoveries. This year started with a sharp drop in automobile sales, and with record stocks overhanging the market. The swollen consumer debt ratio, numerous repossessions by credit companies, the normal setback after a big sales year—all point to a disappointing 1961 for the automobile industry.

In both previous slumps there was a rapid restoration of the rate of profit through concentration of output in the most automated, mechanized facilities, intensification of labor, etc. Having restored the rate of profit, corporations resumed investment of fresh capital. The economy

drive is on full force again. There are signs of increased labor resistance to these profit-raising devices which also increase unemployment, and there have been successful strikes to protect workers' jobs.

But even where corporations succeed in increasing the exploitation of labor, this is less likely than formerly to stimulate investment. Since surplus capacity is now so large, new investment is more and more limited to special equipment for automating production lines, cutting costs, etc. The ratio of new investment to profits declined significantly in the 1959-60 cycle, and a further decline appears logical.

Only one "natural" factor seems likely to help stem the slump. Economists point out that production is falling faster than final product use, as companies are cutting inventories all along the line. When inventory-cutting ends, there must be some production revival, providing final demand does not suddenly collapse. This has been a significant cyclical factor throughout the post-war period. However, the process of inventory liquidation took longer and went further in 1957-58 than in 1953-54, and it may take still longer this time.

With the "natural" forces of the "free" economy so moribund the bourgeoisie looks more than ever to state monopoly capitalism to pull it out of its troubles. The Kennedy Administration talks of more vigorous intervention to stem the decline than the Eisenhower administration did. The forces behind the Democratic Party adhere more to the Keynesian method of stimulating the economy by deficit spending, although the Republicans do it while deploring it.

Indeed, 1961, or at the very latest 1962, will be the first year in history during which the Federal Government pumps out over $100 billions in cash outlays, including the years of World War II. Most of this comes out of the pockets of working people in direct and indirect taxes, and most of it flows back into or through the pockets of capital, through military, business, various subsidies, interest payments.

.... *The American People and the Economic Situation*

THE American people, first of all the workers, the Negro people, and the dwindling numbers of "family-sized" farmers, are the main victims of America's economic decline. They suffer from unemployment, from rising prices and taxes, from lack of housing and schools, from stagnant economic activity, from the sharp fluctuations in the types and location of military procurement, from anarchic application of automation and shifts in the national product mix, from the extremely backward

and limited social security system, from the growth of corruption, from the racial and national discrimination which pervades all phases of American life.

The majority of the people certainly support the President's announced goals of providing jobs for the unemployed and food for the hungry. They want good housing and schools. They favor using American food surpluses for the good of mankind everywhere. They also oppose revaluation, which would cut their slender savings and reduce their real incomes. They certainly agree with Kennedy's statement that:

"The deadly arms race, and the huge reservoir it absorbs, have too long overshadowed all else we must do";

and with his proposals to:

"increase our support of the United Nations as an instrument to end the 'cold war' instead of an arena in which to fight it";

and to:

"explore promptly all possible areas of cooperation with the Soviet Union and other nations 'to invoke the wonders of science instead of its terrors.'"

All these are the reasons they elected Kennedy.

They have no interest in the international objectives of greedy trusts and militarists, but a real community of interest, if often unrealized, with the billion people building socialism and the billion and a quarter destroying imperialism. The foreign policy crises of U.S. imperialism are not their crises.

But so far the main body of his actions and announced plans have been contrary to these noble sentiments.

It is still too early to judge conclusively.

The most constructive economic policies followed by Washington in this century were during the first two terms of Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration. These policies were not guaranteed, nor especially foreshadowed, when he took office. They were made possible during his term by the broadest, most militant upsurge of people's struggle in American history.

Again we have an administration more responsive to the popular will than the reactionary crowd which preceded it. But it will turn its sail that way only if the wind is strong indeed. The American people have their best opportunity in thirty years to turn the tide of policy from economic reaction to economic progress. But they must use it.

And to use it effectively, they will have to concentrate on the central issue of peace, which will determine all else.

ONE WEEK WITH PAY

PATRICIA LEONARD

"HONEY," Pat sang into the telephone. "Guess what! I'm getting a vacation! A *paid* vacation! I just asked Sam about it!"

"That's good," he replied as casually as though she'd said she'd be home in time for dinner. "Two weeks?"

"ONE week," she corrected—and added humorously, "it's the union contract. It restricts even V.I.P.'s like me."

He laughed. "Lousy union. Anyway, it's good you're going to get a rest. When will you go?"

"Oh, I dunno," she could feel her spirits rising as they talked. "I'll figure out a date. But now I gotta get my nose to the typewriter. See you at dinnertime."

She put down the telephone—and suddenly elation filled her. A week's vacation—with pay! She hadn't been able to grasp it—to believe it—until she told Ray about it. Now it had meaning. That was the wonderful thing about being married to Ray. Just the sound of his quiet, reassuring voice, his unshakeable serenity, was enough to make her feel good. Such a terriffic guy, Ray. Even after years of marriage, she still thought of him as a terrific guy.

The way he took it—like it happened every day. Never any excitement. That was Ray. He made everything drop into its proper perspective.

LIKE this vacation. He knew she had it coming—and now she would have it, that's all. But she couldn't be so matter-of-fact about it.

It had been so long since she'd had a vacation! Incredible that an American worker could live without a vacation for twelve years! But that was the Cold War for you. It had all started with the Committee. Pat had been one of the first subpoenaed after the Hollywood Ten and the last group to be dragged to Washington. For her—and her co-Unfriendly Witnesses, the Committee had come to Hollywood. And Pat had gotten the full treatment from the TV cameras and the press when she hurled her accusations in the teeth of the Inquisitors.

That had been the end of Pat Michaels. Jim Michaels had told her to take her Marxism and go to hell. She'd expected that. He'd played ball with the producers—and with the Committee—and they had generously permitted him to name forty people and omit his wife. They could afford to be generous. They had a couple of other stoolies who named her.

Her contract was broken the day her subpoena was served—as though the studio had been alerted before the Marshal could get to her with the dirty piece of paper. From then on, Pat was invisible to anyone who hired writers.

There were years of struggle—trying to get the rent paid on the odd jobs she could find: Selling in a department store during the Christmas or Easter rush. Filling in as a typist when someone was on vacation. (As a writer, her typing was a miracle of swift inaccuracy, and no office would keep her full time). Working as a file clerk—until somebody fingered her.

And participating in The Struggle. The Smith Act trials, the deportations, Korea, the Rosenberg Case, the Committee. Always, always, the Committee. Time after time it invaded the city like a conquering army, trumpets blaring, banners flying, fawningly welcomed by the kept press —and leaving in its wake the scores of families crucified by the stool-pigeons.

There were leaflets to write, pamphlets, news releases. Speeches to make, pitches to give, pleas for money, picket lines to walk . . . endless picket lines. . . .

SOMEWHERE, during the crowded years, she met Ray. He was head of a fighting Negro organization—and wherever there was struggle, Ray was to be found. Time after time, they found themselves on the same platform, at the same meeting, on the same picket line. They marched together, wrote together, planned together, fought together, and finally—in the all-engulfing tenderness which is the spontaneous outpouring of struggle under siege, they slept together. Because they could also

laugh together, it was infinitely right and good that they should marry.

They set the date as matter-of-factly as deciding the date of a meeting. Suddenly, looking up at his smooth, brown face, the full import of what she was about to do enveloped her.

"My darling," she whispered, wretchedly aware of her own white skin. "I love you. I love you terribly. But in the days to come, I will probably do some shameful things. Please help me. Don't ever let my stupidity pass. Please stop me quick—so I can never make the same mistake a second time."

He knew what she meant as surely as though she'd said, "I'm white and chauvinistic." Holding her close his reply had been a bitter indictment.

"I'll stop you. But I've been disappointed so many times, I don't expect too much any more."

To Pat, there could have been no deeper challenge. As the white wife of a Negro, she would be more aware than he. More sensitive. More swift to fight for his dignity.

Her first problem was how to keep them eating. They worked it out as they had agreed—he to remain as head of his left-wing organization (indifferently paid when he got any pay at all), she to try to find some kind of a job.

Somebody had told her she ought to try the advertising agencies. So many people had been subpoenaed, there had been so many names and faces, maybe hers had been lost in the shuffle.

The advice was more hopeful than accurate. The big agencies used the "loyalty-clearance" sources employed by the studios, and radio-TV departments invariably had someone who recognized the face if the new name was unfamiliar. Besides—writing film commericals was a highly specialized field and the big agencies required technical experience.

But there was another way. Los Angeles abounds in one-man advertising agencies which subsist on retail automotive accounts. Most of the smaller admen don't bother with loyalty clearances—and practically anybody can write the automotive TV lies. With faked samples and references, Pat managed to find her first copywriting job.

THE work was nauseating, the hours illegal, the pay hardly more than a tip. But it was a beginning. And in her non-working hours, she remained as active as ever—writing, fighting, picketing. And fighting for her right to her marriage—for Ray's right to be a rounded human being. There were so many enemies—the hostile neighbors, the friends (progressive as well as non-progressive) who shook their heads and

raised their eyebrows. The older women in the movement who warned her not to have a baby because "it never works." The strangers in passing cars, the waiters in cheap cafes, the guests at adjoining tables. The white Americans everywhere with their jokes, their condescension, their outright bigotry. Her hatred of white Americans burned like a non-consuming flame—forcing her to greater and greater effort, and every hour of every day fed her anger.

Ray's working hours started early, rarely ended before midnight, and his week-ends were a series of meetings. They saw each other only briefly for meals—and meals could not be leisurely. There was rarely the money for a quiet dinner in a relaxing restaurant—if one could be found which contained no indignity. In fact, they counted themselves lucky if they had the money for the rent and didn't have to skip going to the market!

For though Pat wrote with swift sureness and learned the technique of commercials easily, no job lasted. A few times, she was recognized and fingered. But more often, she was merely the victim of our economy. As the prosperity of the Korean War gave way to the recession of "peace," the automotive industry felt the pinch and dealers cut back sharply on advertising appropriations. Copywriters—even seasoned ones—were a dime a dozen, and Pat found herself in competition with advertising writers who had years of solid experience behind them. . . .

Two years in a row, it looked as though she had a job which would last long enough to include a vacation. Each time she made tentative plans . . . discussed them with Ray (who merely listened) . . . and the hope proved to be a mirage. Each time the agency lost an account—and when she should have been on vacation, she was pounding pavements with vacation-and-severance pay in her pocket.

At last she adopted Ray's philosophy. Never count on anything and you won't be disappointed. . . .

Years passed. Years in which her hair became streaked with gray, her shoulders rounded and slightly bent, and the lines in her face were etched into permanence. Years in which McCarthy died and the Cold War abated slightly. And years in which the revelations of the 20th Congress of the Soviet Union shocked many members of the Communist Party of the United States to the depths of their faulty development. People deserted the Party and the Movement by the thousand. Those were the years that solidified Pat's own faith, and spurred Ray, who'd never imagined "it was perfect over there," to greater dedication.

If understanding is rooted in experience, Pat had full reason to realize the class struggle. She and Ray passed through a period which exhausted her unemployment insurance, devoured the few dollars she had managed

to put away, plunged them into debt for the simple matter of staying alive. At last, when they dared borrow no more, and were faced with actual hunger, she found a job in a most unlikely place: as advertising manager of a ceramics factory. The owner was a kindly, pleasant little fellow, who treated his personnel with slightly more decency than the average—to make up for the abominable rate of pay, Ray commented. He was good to Pat and respected her ability—but she was utterly insecure there. For the office manager was a bitch and an informer, and at any moment some magazine reporter or printer could tip her off that Pat Johnston used to be Pat Michaels, blacklisted screen-writer. Or that she was married to the notorious Ray Johnston, Communist functionary—and, worst still, a Negro.

SO IT was that Pat had not let herself dream about a vacation. But on occasion, she and Ray had allowed themselves the luxury of dinner in a good restaurant. Not too often, however. Restaurants were constrained by law to seat them, waiters to give them service. But there is no law to keep other guests from staring, pointing, showing indignation. And a mixed couple inevitably arouses more hostility than a Negro pair.

Ray always pretended not to notice—mostly for Pat's sake. But she knew he never missed a thing. Always he stiffened, his mouth tightened and the movements of his hands were slow, careful, deliberate, as though he had to fight to keep his muscles under control. Pat, watching him, felt each stare and gesture with the impact of a burning cross. She found the viciousness of white America more bitter harassment than political persecution.

Thus, when she reached the great day of a week's vacation with pay, Pat could only wonder where to go. There were Malibu and Santa Barbara, Laguna Beach and dozens of other resorts—all lovely, welcoming, almost-attainable financially—and all equally impossible for Ray.

Then it was that her resolve was born. They would go to Mexico—out of jim crow America—and once there, she'd have a whole big, beautiful week to persuade Ray to stay. She'd had enough—and she was ready to run away.

Persuading Ray wouldn't be easy. He'd remind her of her contempt, through the years, for all those who had done what she was proposing. The big-time producers who were nowhere to be found when the Marshal arrived with their subpoenas. The actors who went to Europe, the writers who were comfortably south of the border, the directors who sat out the Cold War in nations where the cost of living was lower and the political climate milder than at home. He'd remind her gently but pointedly

of her own vitriolic comments about political refugees and ask her why she hadn't taken the easy rear instead of the fighting front.

He'd be right, too. The teachers, workers, professionals in fields unaffiliated with motion pictures had remained as she had. But this was different. Actually, she was tired not of struggle but of dirty looks and dirty cracks and dirty minds. Being a Communist or a fellow traveler in the land of the free was tough enough—but compared with being a Negro or the white wife of a Negro, being a Communist was a lead-pipe cinch.

She'd have trouble making Ray accept that. Because, though Ray would never say it that way, the memory of the little children of Little Rock and New Orleans would rise to shame her. And while it was possible that she could do less than they—could he?

Still, when they got to Ensenada, she'd try to convince him. And if she needed a clinching argument, there was always the searing poverty in Mexico, which needed the kind of help they could give. . . .

The drive to the border was swift and short, and they enjoyed the privacy it afforded. Because it was taking them away from home, Pat managed to ignore the faces in other cars, concentrated instead on the happiness ahead. Ray, too, seemed more relaxed—as though the very prospect of putting Los Angeles behind them was enough to let down his guard.

WHEN they passed the border—trying not to see the outrage of Coca-Cola-infested Tia Juana, she thought with a fierce sense of triumph, "Goodbye, United States! We're free, now—and we're not coming back. . . ."

Ray took the wheel to negotiate the wild, mountainous drive to Ensenada (like driving up a corkscrew, they laughed)—and the sun, the clear, blue sky and magnificent panorama below filled them both with peace. Tense and nervous as she was, tired to the bone, she could still appreciate its beauty . . . and she told herself she was beginning to unwind.

There was no problem in finding motel accommodations in Ensenada. The Mexican desk clerk assigned them to a room as though their appearance were the most natural thing in the world. His English was good and Pat saw, happily, that he made no distinction between herself and Ray.

With a freedom they had not enjoyed in all the years of their marriage, they undressed quickly, dove into swim suits and raced down to the ocean. The water was warm, the waves gentle, the beach semi-deserted and clean.

Returning to the motel, they found it was almost completely occupied

with fellow-Americans. At the far end, Pat saw a Negro couple, and two doors down, a mixed family, like themselves. If the white Americans took exception to this, she could not see it. Her heart sang.

At dinner-time, the restaurant was the most pleasant public experience they'd ever had. With nothing to eat since they'd breakfasted at home, they were famished very early, and the dining-room was nearly empty when they entered. Courtesy, superb food, excellent service—and no other diners to question their right to be there! What more could anyone ask?

Relishing their gayety, their spontaneous laughter, Pat's resolve crystalized. They'd have two or three days like this . . . two or three days in which Ray could get completely accustomed to this freedom. Then she'd go to work on him. . . .

They walked all evening. Through the tourist streets and away . . . to the unpaved streets where the townspeople lived . . . among the pitiful, poverty-ridden houses, innocent of electricity or running water. There were children, children everywhere—with beautiful faces, liquid-seeming eyes and arms covered with insect-bites. Little boys who begged to sell you "Chic-lets gum," to shine your shoes, to wash your car. After a few blocks, Pat was convinced every child in Mexico was trying to find a way to earn a few pennies.

"No wonder they have a strong Communist Party," she murmured to Ray.

"Sure. The greatest struggle comes from the most oppressed."

Drowsily, they discussed what they had seen before they fell asleep. "The Party sure has its work cut out for it down here," she said, meaning this as an opening wedge for her campaign.

"In all the Latin American countries. These imperialist colonies have barely emerged from feudalism. They'll achieve socialism long before we will."

IN THE morning, they wandered hand-in-hand down the main tourist street lined with motels and shops. There were tourists, tourists everywhere—breakfasting in the American-type restaurants which served ham-and-eggs at American prices. They turned away from these. After the poverty they had seen the night before, they could not bring themselves to enjoy this tourist luxury. They walked, instead, to Ruiz Street—hunting for a place where the townspeople might be found. But it looked as though only vacationers ate in restaurants. At last, hungry, they turned into a cafe which seemed so unpretentious, few tourists might select it.

It was almost deserted. Only one table was occupied—and the wait-

ress indicated a place for them to sit. Suddenly, Pat found her gaze transfixed. The four people breakfasting in the little place were Americans. White Americans. And one of them was staring at the Johnstons with loathing. His look rested on Pat as though she were some kind of monster because she was a white woman with a Negro man.

Swiftly, she slid into the seat facing them, so Ray, his back toward them, could breakfast without hindrance. But her accustomed ruse failed —as usual. She could feel Ray stiffen—and the ramrod which forced him erect entered her own spine, as well. She knew without looking that his eyes were hard, narrowed, his mouth a bitter, embattled line, the tension in his fingers so great he would not try to lift the menu. Her own hand shook as she reached for the single, fly-specked sheet.

"Just toast and coffee," she told the waitress. Looking up and past Ray, she saw the grimace behind him again. Now the man at the next table was openly pointing at them as though they were monkeys in a cage. His companions started, raised their voices deliberately so Pat couldn't miss their insolent comments.

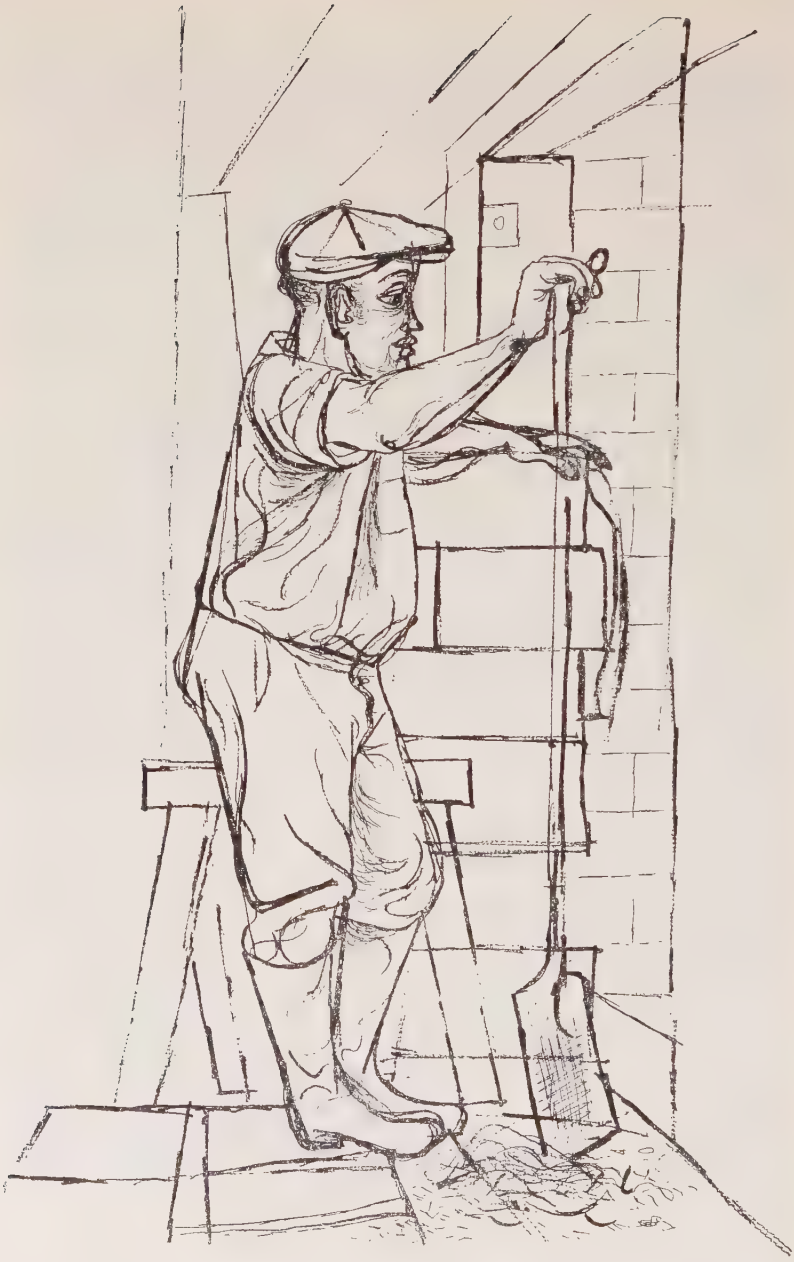
Silently, she choked down a bite of toast, then stopped.

"Not hungry this morning, honey?" Ray asked, poking resentfully at his eggs.

She shook her head. For she was gagging on her dream. She knew now that she would say nothing of her bright plan to Ray. There was no point in trying to run away. White America carried its poison wherever it went. There was only one way to live:

After vacation—go back home—and fight.

GIRL WITH BIRD



THE CEMENT WORKER

LUNCH HOUR

JOHN BERGER: DANIEL IN THE LION'S DEN

SIDNEY FINKELSTEIN

AS AN avowed Marxist, John Berger is a Daniel in the lion's den of art criticism, and he has made the lions behave, having become one of the most respected and widely discussed art critics in England today. The essays and review-articles collected and amplified here originally appeared in the *New Statesman* and other periodicals.* Apparent on every page is his love and enthusiasm for the art. He has a gift for vivid description of the kind that engages the imagination of the reader, basing this on a firm grasp of the means such as line, color, form and imagery through which pictorial art speaks. Most important is the fact that Marxism has given him a sanity of approach rare in art criticism today.

To explain what is meant here by sanity, it may be helpful to think back a few hundred years, to the time when men like Francis Bacon and Galileo grasped the achievements of natural science and of the developing scientific world view. They represented sanity in contrast to those obsessed with witches, devils and heresy hunting, bound in mind to a social order that history was throwing into the discard. So today, the Marxist scientific grasp of economics and history throws light on wars, crisis and the paths to human progress. In the political field, it represents sanity, in contrast to those holding the witch and devil theory of the working class and communism, who see nightmare apparitions behind every move for world disarmament, colonial liberation and the peaceful coexistence of two economic systems. And likewise in the art world,

* *Permanent Red: Essays in Seeing*, by John Berger. Methuen & Co., London. 223 pages, 16 s.

it helps provide a sane base of operations in contrast to the irrationality which sees a clear, steady look on the real world as sinful backwardness, exalts primitive magic and the unconscious, and militantly proclaims the impotent loneliness of man and incommunicability of art.

To observe Berger's sanity in operation, here is a lengthy passage from his appraisal of the American Abstract-Expressionist painter, Jackson Pollock, who Berger believes to have been a highly gifted artist:

> Imagine a man brought up from birth in a white cell so that he has never seen anything except the growth of his own body. And then imagine that suddenly he is given some sticks and bright paints. If he were a man with an innate sense of balance and colour harmony, he would then, I think, cover the white walls of his cell as Pollock has painted his canvasses. He would want to express his ideas and feelings about growth, time, energy, death, but he would lack any vocabulary of seen or remembered visual images with which to do so. He would have nothing more than the gestures he could discover through the act of applying his coloured marks to his white walls . . . At first Pollock was influenced by the Mexicans and by Picasso. He borrowed stylistically from them and was sustained by their fervor, but try as he might he could not take over their themes because they were simply not applicable to his own view of his own social and cultural situation. Finally in desperation he made his theme the impossibility of finding a theme. Having the ability to speak, he acted dumb. Given freedom and contacts, he condemned himself to solitary confinement in the white cell. Possessing memories and countless references to the outside world, he tried to lose them. And having jettisoned everything he could, he tried to preserve only his consciousness of what happened at the moment of the act of painting. . . . If a talented artist cannot see or think beyond the decadence of the culture to which he belongs, if the situation is as extreme as ours, his talent will only reveal negatively but unusually vividly the nature and extent of that decadence. His talent will reveal, in other words, how it itself has been wasted.

Let us compare this to a typically irrational approach, by a highly respected American critic, Sam Hunter, who is also director of the Minneapolis Institute of Art. This is from his book, *Modern American Painting and Sculpture*:

> It was one of Pollock's signal contributions to give such magnitude and impressiveness to the act of painting as to make us think of that first "division of chaos" at the origin of our world. . . . It is against this background of the individual revealing himself in the act of painting, and staking his identity on the act of painting itself, that Abstract Expressionist art makes

> its most profound claim to seriousness. The elevation of the act of painting as a subject matter is a vital reminder that painting is made by the single individual for the single individual. Set in a framework of a problematic present, the artist's decisions on canvas take on the character both of an adventure into the unknown and the expression of his free individuality. No ready-made solutions are admissible; by mutual agreement, the pictorial illusions of the nineteenth century are relegated to the less serious contemporary artists. The essential renunciations of the Abstract Expressionists are transformed to embody new, expressive liberties and a new sense of individual responsibility.

BERGER'S approach is sane because he sees Pollock's art in its connections to real life and history. With full appreciation of what the artist is doing, he puts it in the context of both the actual development of art, and the real world today, knowing both the frustrations and the possibilities of freedom and growth it gives to the individual. Hunter, on the other hand, becomes obsessed with his own words and phrases, so removed from the real life that engendered him that they come to be like magic totems, and form a system utterly opposed to actuality.

Take for example one of these totem phrases, "the act of painting." All this means is the expression of the artist's own style and manner so far as it takes the form of brush-stroke, line, color, tone and texture. But when we see it this way, it doesn't take much knowledge of the history of art to disclose the truth that this "act of painting" is in no way what Hunter assumes it to be, something which rises in the denial of subject matter taken from the actual world. Not only the great artists, like a Titian, Rembrandt, Vermeer, Velasquez, Goya, but all the gifted lesser ones, disclose a constant renewal of these plastic qualities, in handling the expressive materials of art, through the penetrating study of real life and people, and their own growth of skills and senses in response to the riches disclosed in actual life.

And so the conclusion is the opposite of Hunter's. It is that when an artist exalts the "act of painting" itself, in denial of everything else in the outer world, the basis for life and growth in the "act of painting" itself dries up. And an artist who immerses himself in social life and the problems that affect other people in the same world, does not in any way endanger "the expression of his free individuality," which is another of Hunter's catchwords. The history of art discloses that the broader the social mind, the more free and individual becomes the individual expression, for the artist has found thus the path to his own discovery of himself. But Hunter must lie about this too. Then, for realism, he uses the catchword, "illusionism," as if any respectable artist designed a realistic

work in order to fool the onlooker into thinking he was looking at a living person or an actual piece of fruit. As a climax to this deliberate obscurantism, Hunter arrives at the phrase, "a new sense of individual responsibility," to denote what is nothing more than common self-centeredness, the opposite to responsibility.

Thus in a pretentious writing on art which reaches a height of irresponsibility and falsification unparalleled in history, the entire development of art is mucked over with ignorance. And just as in politics, the witch-hunt insanity has a kind of narrow practical logic, namely the protection by whatever means possible of some vested financial interests, so there is a similar narrow logic and practicality to the above kind of dishonest art criticism. Abstract Expressionism has becomes a commercial vested interest. The work must be sold to the public in the spirit of a commercial publicity campaign. The entire history of art, and the relation of the individual to the outer world, must be stood on its head by Hunter, in order to exalt a Jackson Pollock and his associates, and protect them from any real critical analysis.

And so, the appearance of a critic like Berger is a real contribution to sanity in the field of modern art. There are differences this writer has with Berger, but one of his great virtues is that he does not see the role of a Marxist as that of sitting on a lofty height, scorning everything being done in the bourgeois world as an unalloyed mass of decadence. He enters into the conflicts of the modern art world as a partisan battler, giving a boost to whatever he discovers to be moving in the direction of social responsibility, joy in life and an expansion of human potentialities. He has as little use for the mock-realistic academic art as he has for what he describes, with fine insight, as a new academy of abstraction.

> They are both academic in the fully derogatory sense of the word because both, cut off from any direct continuous exploration of reality, inevitably degenerate into tricks and formulae to deceive their public. On one hand, highlights on curls, conveniently smudged features, identical brush strokes on every horse's haunches; and on the other hand, pseudo-cubist triangles, "interesting" textures, "Primitive" distortions, fashionable dribbles. The fight between the Academies is meaningless. They are complementary. The serious artists of our time will somehow struggle through between them.

It is the kind of art criticism which, of course, puts the critic continually out on a limb. And it is with a full appreciation of the pleasure and illumination in reading Berger, that this writer would like to indicate some limbs on which Berger has ventured out too far, in his opinion,

and lost his bearings. Put in other words, it is one thing to find heroes in the modern art world, and another to grant them more gifts than they possess, or see in them a solution of problems which are really far from solution.

An example is Berger's appreciation of the French painter, Ferdinand Léger.

> Léger's greatest works are those which he painted since the war and those in which, dealing with the human figure, he expressed directly the profound humanism of his materialist philosophy. Among those are the studies for his famous large painting of builders working together on scaffolding, and the monumental heads with their striped flags of bright colours superimposed over their contours. . . . He suddenly saw machines as tools in the hands of men, no longer as mere objects in themselves. From that moment everything he painted ceased to be a celebration of the mechanical industrial world as it is, and became a celebration of the richer human world to which industrialization would eventually lead. He painted Adam and Eve and made them a French worker and his girl granted Leisure. He painted bicycles as a symbol of the machine available to the working class which could convey them to where they wished. And he painted his monumental heads with their waving flags of colour. . . . The bright dynamic colours reflect what he learned from the machine. The unblinking confidence of the heads, expresed their faces themselves and in the steady unchanging contours which define them, reflect what he learned from those who work machines. The two then combine. These paintings incorporate all the formal discoveries of modern art and yet are classic, suggest order and yet are full of gaiety. The strips of colour run across many different forms and yet are so finely modified and placed that they give to each a solidity and definition which is nothing short of miraculous. I have called these works flags. They are emblems for something permanent and are as full of movement as pennants in the wind.

It is good to read words of such contagious enthusiasm which furthermore open the eyes of the reader to an art work, instead of bludgeoning the mind with pseudo-intellectual verbiage like so much contemporary writing on art. It is good to be told that art embracing the working class not only should deal with miseries and with political themes, but should contain a joy in life and glimpse of the future. It is good to be reminded that within Léger's most extreme simplifications there lies a fine, subtle and preceptive eye for significant movement and gesture, a genuine affection for people. But it is also true that the working class today is exploited, its lives are wasted, its bodies and those of its families

are mangled in wars. And they not only go on bicycle trips but win victories. Léger's comparatively blank faces with their staring eyes do not show any justice to the psychological reality, depth and inwardness of the working class mind. We may look on these figures as joyous "flags" but feel little kinship between ourselves and them as people. I am not saying that Berger should berate Léger for not touching on these other sides of life. I am only saying that were Berger conscious of these lacks, were he to intimate somewheres in his study that there are these other sides of life necessary for art to take up, he would not see Léger as so colossal a giant. Nor would he go out on a limb with such statements as "Léger was the only modern European artist to have created an heroic style," or "Léger is the painter of the future."

The fact is that Goya in the early 19th century, and Daumier a generation and two after him, showed what a truly heroic, classic and monumental style of painting the working class could be. If we compare Goya's blacksmiths, or Daumier's Laundress leading her child by the hand, to Léger's figures, we see what modern art has lost as well as gained. These older artists also showed joy in life, but not by making their people almost mindless. They could do this because there was no side of life from which they turned away. They could face up to tragedy without succumbing to it. If the working class is today a force that moves history, and soon will be a decisive one, we can understand better why this is so from Goya and Daumier than from Léger.

Throughout his book Berger tends to avoid the term realism. It is admittedly a complicated term, subject to much misinterpretation. Yet it represents something with which Berger will eventually have to come to grips.

A central aesthetic problem of realism rises out of the fact that art is a reflection of the real world but not a replica of it. In literature, it is easy enough to see that it is not simply a record of what happens, but someone speaking to us of what happens. In music, the effort is to convince people that it not only "speaks" to us, but speaks of the real world and its events that we all share in common. In painting and sculpture, everything that gives us joy derives from the real world unfolded before our eyes, as we examine it, live with it and change it. Yet in a work of pictorial art, every element, every iota, is also born out of physical human skills, or the builder's and shaper's craft. And so two opposing views of the art have arisen, ever since it was subjected to aesthetic dissection. In the 19th century, the tendency among critics, and to a great extent among creators themselves, was to see the pictorial artist as the narrator, the poet rediscovering himself in nature, the satirist, the teacher, the psy-

chologist. In the 20th century, the tendency was to see the artist as the builder, shaper or decorator, the creator of a concrete object. There were exceptions to this, of course. The 19th century opened with a master "builder," David, and closed with a number of others, like Seurat and Cézanne. The 20th century had such probing and poignant artists as Georges Roualt, Kathe Kollwitz and Otto Dix, with his harrowing revelation to the world of the horrors it had perpetrated in the first world war. If in sculpture, it produced such "builders" and fondlers of concrete objects as Henry Moore and Jacques Lipchitz, it also produced a Jacob Epstein.

In every work of genuine art, of course, these two aspects are present, and locked together. The subject, or the perceptions of life, inner and outer, is realized in the structured object that the work of art is. The artist's personality, his feelings about life, are seen not only in his imagery but in his brush-stroke, contour and color harmony. But comparatively rare has been the art in which the artist discloses how all of life has moved and affected him, leaving nothing untouched and unsaid, with a clarity and order that reveals the real structure and movement of the outer world. Or put it another way, it is comparatively rare for an artist to create a work that appears as if life itself had created it, so that it becomes ever after an essential and permanent part of the education of humanity. Greek classic art did this. The Italian Renaissance provided some monumental examples. Ever since then, each new achievement of such a truly classic and realistic art has necessarily had to take place on a new level, different from the past, drawn out of the most agonizing wrestling with the disclosures and changes of a constantly changing society. It is not a matter of craft excellence alone. It demands much more. It requires the artist to see the most searching inner psychological conflicts as engendered by the human and social relations in the world outside of him. And behind these successive struggles and achievements lies the constant revolutionizing of itself by the bourgeois world since its emergence from feudalism, each forward step raising new contradictions and these again resolved on a new level. A Rembrandt achieves this monumental quality by, with all his psychological self-searching, remaining a social mind, in love with people, and seeing humanity everywhere, including the poorest of the poor. A Goya aciheves this in the latter part of his life by making the whole Spanish nation, in its bitterest of ordeals, the subject of his art, and finding hope emerging out of the most far-reaching tragedy.

It seems to me that Berger leans too much to the side of the artist as "builder," at the expense of the artist as psychologist. In the fragmented art of the 20th century capitalist crisis, he seems to me to be willing

to take the neo-classic—order achieved by omitting whatever of life cannot be fitted in—and acclaim it as the classic. This bias seems to appear in his studies of modern artists, when one considers those about whom he writes most glowingly, like Matisse, Dufy and Léger. Even in his quite wonderful description of Zadkine's sculptured monument recording the bombing of Rotterdam by the Nazis, one feels that Berger is especially moved because the sculpture has so concrete and almost visceral an impact, like Picasso's painting of Guernica. I don't think that it is merely the accident of assembling already written pieces which causes the more inward-probing of 20th century artists, those who put psychological truth and tragic conflict ahead of "order," to seem to be sloughed off.

To understand what decadence is in the bourgeois world today, it is necessary to have a clear picture of what the bourgeois world created when it represented a revolutionary force eagerly welcoming the exploration of reality. When Berger says, "Chardin was perhaps the first great bourgeois artist," he seems to have forgotten the entire preceding great century of Dutch art, with Hals, Rembrandt, Vermeer, Ruysdael, Hobbema and others, unless by "bourgeois" he means only those who tended to accept bourgeois life uncritically. But part of bourgeois culture is the criticism it engenders of itself. When he praises Goya for his "honesty," and says, "he was much more interested in events than in states of mind," Berger misses, I think, two things. One is the great stature which Goya gave to art itself, by proving that nothing in life, however dangerous to or forbidden by polite society, was outside its realm. The other is his unsurpassed ability to make an event also a state of mind. But there is a logic to Berger's undercutting of certain great and crucial realistic achievements, for, like critics far inferior to him, he tends to distort the history of past art in order to fit his bias in respect to modern art.

This emerges first in his essay on the Renaissance.

> This lack of ambiguity is the Renaissance, and its superb combination of sensuousness and nobility stemmed from a confidence which cannot be artificially re-created. But when we eventually achieve a confident society again, its art may well have more to do with the Renaissance than with any of the moral or political artistic theories of the nineteenth century.

It is a neat picture; a "confident society" in the Renaissance, and after all the bourgeois ordeals, a "confident society" again in socialism. But the Renaissance was not quite so confident. An age of fierce class struggles, it already showed contradictions of the kind that would recur again and again. We see in the greatest artists—Massacio, Donatello, Leonardo,

Michelangelo, Titian—an awareness both of a brave new world of human development, and of unspeakable horrors perpetrated by people in this brave new world. What is so "confident" about the fragments we have of Leonardo's battle pictures, or Michelangelo's struggling slaves and Last Judgment?

Berger develops his picture further in the essay on Poussin which, like everything else he writes, is full of fine perceptions. Following, however, what I think is Berger's neo-classic bias, he makes Poussin into too great a hero.

> He was a revolutionary artist, not only because his work was supremely rational—and consequently was to inspire the revolutionary classicism of David—but even more profoundly, because his determination to demonstrate the possibility of man controlling his fate and environment made his art the solitary link, in this respect, between the two periods when such a control could generally be believed in; the Renaissance and our own century. Between Poussin and Cézanne there were many works of genius, but none of them suggest an order imposed upon nature before the act of painting.

But Poussin, great artist as he was, and conveying great emotional depths within his rationality, achieved his beautiful "order" by leaving out of his rational system a turbulence of life that he could not control. Berger is of course aware of this. But he does not recognize the fact that others not very distant from Poussin in time, captured this turbulence and began to make sense of it. This parallels the history of bourgeois society itself. For again and again, despite Berger's theory, there appeared the confidence that human society could shape the world and itself to fit its needs for freedom; the repeated discoveries of science, the succession of bourgeois democratic revolutions, the great political documents like the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Declaration of Independence.

In accordance with his theory, however, Berger draws what might be called his line of hope and enlightenment from Poussin, to Cézanne, to the Cubists, to Léger.

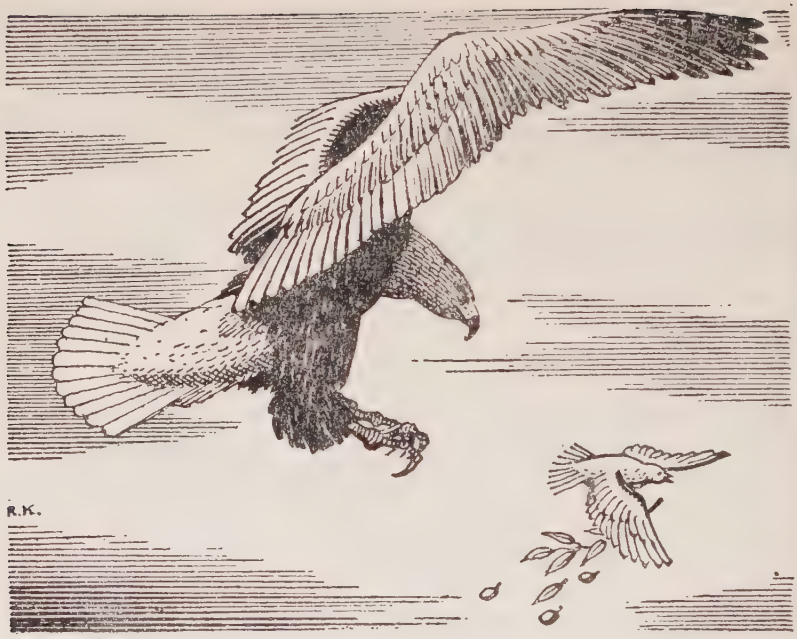
> Cézanne's incredible struggle was to find some system of order which could embrace the whole of nature and its constant changes. Against his wishes this struggle forced him to abandon the order of the static viewpoint, to admit that human consciousness was subject to the same dialectical laws as nature. And the Cubists continued from where he stopped, rejecting the Renaissance because they were aiming at the same end with quite different means. Even today the process is incomplete, the solution only partial.

I cannot see "the whole of nature and its constant changes" in Cézanne. Marvelous painter as he was, he carefully and rather narrowly selected what of life he would permit to occupy both his mind and his art. Then, on the Cubists, Berger says:

> The real subject of a Cubist painting is not a bottle or a violin; the real subject is always the same, and is the functioning of sight itself. The bottle or the violin is only the point of focus, the stake to which the artist's circling vision is tied. To look at a Cubist painting is like looking at a star. The star exists objectively, as does the subject of the painting. But its shape is the result of our looking at it.

At this point, I cannot follow Berger at all. If he means that art presents not only the thing seen, but the process of seeing, discovering and thinking about it, then the Renaissance encompassed this, just as a host of following artists did. To me, Cubism represents a decline in the imagination. What is real is now, as Cubism sees it, what you can feel and touch. It represents less seeing than feeling. The play of the hands begins to take the place of the play of the mind, which is shocked into immobility by an oppression to which it sees no solution. At best, as in Picasso, it offers an oppressive society a sardonic image of its own spiritual primitivism, within which a live human image is imprisoned.

What emerges from this book is a very good critic, but not yet the great critic Berger can very well become. The only sure base for understanding art is a firm grasp of what centuries of development have shown that art can do, along with a projection, rooted in our own struggles for progress, of what new demands and possibilities our age holds out for it. Of course, who among us can say he has achieved this? In times like this, when bourgeois society like a snake is turning upon and devouring its own past for fear that this past may inspire a leap to the future, the problems of art, like those of political and social life, have reached a peak of complexity unknown before. How well we can assist at the birth of the new depends on how much we can learn from what has been handed down to us, and thus save the precious talent of our own time. Berger makes a gallant try. If as a Marxist critic, his picture of the whole is somewhat distorted by his very love for and delight in some aspects of art as he travels among them, this is a welcome change from Marxist critics whose error goes to the other extreme, showing no love for the art that would inspire confidence in their judgments.



My God! Can that be the *American* Eagle?

MY GIFT TO THE SOVIET PEOPLE

ROCKWELL KENT

"THE TRIUMPH of culture," said Emerson, 'is to overpower nationality." Someday that triumph will be read in a worldwide recognition of the brotherhood of man, secured by full disarmament and everlasting peace.

Acceptance of the role assigned by Emerson to culture is implicit in the establishment, in the present impasse of the Cold War, of cultural exchange between potentially belligerent powers; while the effect of that exchange upon the millions it has reached is final evidence of culture's power. Most people's minds—thank God!—are subject to their hearts. And the converse of Shakespeare's fierce indictment of the man that hath no music in himself is, fairly, that he who has it is *un*fit for the

treasons, stratagems and profits of war, cold or hot; and may, implicitly, be trusted. At any rate, those who have been moved by the arts of other peoples—by their music, painting, drama, dancing, writing—are, to put it mildly, likely to be little touched by the unfriendliness that the Cold War's continuance depends upon.

LAST November the Ministry of Culture of the USSR invited the representatives of the Soviet press, and the representatives of the foreign press stationed in Moscow, to a conference at which an event in the field of international cultural exchange held by the Ministry to be of considerable importance was to be announced. The conference drew a large attendance that included all the Moscow representatives of the American press and of the international news services. The purpose of the conference was to announce the gift to the Soviet people of a collection of 80 paintings, over 800 drawings and other works in the graphic arts, as well as books and manuscripts, by an American artist—myself. The letter tendering the gift and the letter in reply accepting it were read. Their text, that of the former being slightly abridged, follows:

Mme. Nina Popova, Chairman of the Presidium
Union of Soviet Societies for Friendship and
Cultural Exchange with Foreign Countries
My dear Madame Popova:

Three years ago, at your invitation my work as an artist was given the signal honor of being invited for exhibition in the Soviet Union. Shown in several of your cities, it roused such widespread public interest as certainly has never been accorded the work of an American artist in his own land. Committed to a people's art—an art concerned, as such an art must be, with the realities of life as people in general understand them—that recognition was for me a profoundly heartening event and, as this letter will reveal, an experience never to be forgotten. The painting of pictures, the making of drawings, the creation—by whatever means—of art has been to me a form of speech. It sought for understanding, it appealed for friends. That understanding and those friends your people brought me. They are to that extent—as all mankind in essence is—my people and my friends. All art belongs of right to those who love it most. I beg you therefore to accept for the Soviet people my tender of all my work of any consequence that remains in my power to bestow.

For years it has been the noble practice of your people, through their Government, to award substantial prizes to those men and women throughout the world who have given outstanding service to the cause of worldwide peace. If my own country has shown itself neglectful of such acts of encouragement it may perhaps be excused on the ground that we as

a people are committed to "free" or private enterprise. It is, therefore, in the spirit of such enterprise that I presume to offer all that remains to me of my life's work to the Soviet people as a prize—a *Peace Prize*—for, perhaps the greatest peace act in all history: their call before the United Nations for complete and lasting world disarmament. The "prize" we offer them for such an act is, sadly, pitiably small. And yet I beg you to accept it. It is from our hearts.

I am, most respectfully yours,
ROCKWELL KENT

THE REPLY, signed by the Minister of Culture, by Madame Popova, by the First Secretary of the Board of the Union of Artists of the USSR and by the President of the Academy of Fine Arts, was as follows:

Dear Mr. Rockwell Kent,

We are deeply appreciative of your decision to grant your paintings, drawings, wood engravings, lithographs and books to the Soviet people. We understand that this decision is not casual, it shows that you have been attentively studying our reality and, being a real artist, have realized that the creative work of millions of people in our country is aimed at the well-being and happiness of common people all over the world. Your gift proves you desire to join your voice of an artist, your talent and skill with the efforts and energy of those who are fighting for a better future.

Soviet people understand and love your art. Over 500,000 men and women attended the exhibition of your works in Moscow, Leningrad and other cities of our country. The movie about your work shot by our cinematographists is enjoying success all over the USSR. Your art, being a proclamation of the love of life, beauty of Man, his inexhaustible creative power, his courageous struggle for life and happiness—is dear and comprehensible to all common people of the world. We have no doubt that your works will occupy a worthy place in Soviet museums.

We consider your gift not only as a token of your personal warm and deep feelings to our people but also as a desire to further strengthen friendships and mutual understanding between our peoples, as an evidence of the fact that ever greater numbers of progressive Americans are raising their voices for peaceful coexistence, cooperation and friendship between our countries.

We send you our cordial wishes for health and further success in your noble activities.

Following the reading of these letters and of a somewhat detailed statement by myself, many questions were asked (chiefly by representatives of the American press) and answered by the Deputy Minister

of Culture, who presided, and me. The conference lasted over two hours. The generally scant space subsequently allotted to the event by the press in America scarcely reflected the interest shown by its representatives at the conference, the attitude of our press being perhaps succinctly expressed by a short notice appearing in a West Coast paper:

> We hear artist Rockwell Kent, whom some persons think uses a lot of red paint in his brush, has given many paintings to Russia. The way we feel about it, who cares?

WHETHER or not the American press is in general and at all times representatives of the thought of the American people is at least debatable. It is at any rate only fair to our people to assume that, differing in this matter from our press, many people do care—some, weary of the Cold War and yearning for the reestablishment of peace and friendship, rejoicing in the gift as one designed to further peace; and others perhaps regretting that so much of the life's work of an American artist should have sought and found a home in a foreign land. Reading in their regret their friendship for my work, I may assure them that the eighty paintings are but a fraction of the volume of my life-time's work: that all the rest is here. At the same time regretting that, through the operation of private enterprise in the patronage of art, the vagaries of manipulated cultural fashions and the restrictions of political prejudice it is mainly unavailable to them. It is of public record that the entire collection was offered to an American museum, accepted by that museum and then, in expression of political intolerance, rejected. And since books were included in the gift it is in order to mention that all copies of my books discovered to have been included in the officially established American overseas libraries were, by congressional mandate, destroyed.

Yet, returning to the purpose of my gift, its meaning as a token of the good-will, the yearning for lasting peace and friendship that is assuredly in the hearts of millions of the American people, it is my deep regret that the collection did not, in fact, embrace a larger portion of my life-time's work. For the high cause in which it was given it is indeed —as stated in the concluding words of my letter tendering the gift—so "pitiably small." Its purpose, however, has been understood. On the day the exhibition opened I received frrom Premier Khrushchov the letter here translated:

> Esteemed Mr. Kent:
>
> With feelings of warm sympathy I have learned of your noble decision

to present to the Soviet people a collection of works produced as the result of many years of creative work. The motives which guide you arouse sincere and profound respect; they are understandable to and appreciated by the Soviet people, who value highly every step in the struggle for world peace.

I am firmly convinced these motives will be correctly understood by the American people as well, for your gift is a step along the road of strengthening friendship and understanding between the people of the USSR and the U.S.A.

With all my heart I wish you many years of health and new creative accomplishments in noble work, in the name of happiness and justice on our planet.

BUT DOES Nikita Khrushchov truly speak for the Soviet people? Immediately following the announcement of the gift and, three days later, the opening of the exhibition, letters and telegrams began to pour in—messages from many parts of the Soviet Union and stressing in every word the realization of the friendliness, the friendliness of the American people, that was implicit in the gift. And heartfelt gratitude for that friendship. A passage from one letter tells the story of them all. Following an expression of the writer's appreciation of the work itself as constituting a people's art, my correspondent writes:

We are happy not only because we realize that your paintings will hang in our best art galleries and therefore one will always be able to see them. We are also happy because your gift is a contribution to the cause of peace, toward which we all aim. You put into it your most valuable possession—your creative work.

How we wish that your people would understand us, like us, and believe that we are capable of strong love and devotion to friends—in sorrow and in joy.

It was at night that we were to board the train for Warsaw. The station platform was crowded with people, for the day and hour of our departure had become known. Warned by the engine's whistle, warmed by the embraces of our friends, and laden with last-minute gifts, we climbed aboard. Suddenly a man in working clothes pushed his way to the front of the crowd: "Thank you, Mr. Kent," he said, "for bringing Greenland to Moscow." The train had just begun to move when our taxi driver, running to the foot of the steps, called out, "In the name of all the taxi drivers of my station, thank you, Mr. Kent, for your gift."

"Who cares?", our press has asked. The people of the Soviet Union care.

January, 1961.

The most sinister thing about the United States today is its repudiation of its artists; the turning of its face against beauty as a fundamental aspect of life. Our militarism is dangerous, our commercialism is disheartening, our ignorance is appalling; but most sinister of all is the fact that the average American parent today is frightened if his child should choose as a career to be a writer or a musician, a painter or a sculptor. As an avocation, perhaps; as a pastime now and then; but for real life work we want our children to be engineers, businessmen, technicians, bankers and traders. We say do something; don't dream; photograph, don't draw; write fact, not fancy. Think, if think you must, but think of reality, not of incredible ideal. Write if you have nothing else to do, but write of what *is,* not of what might be; of America, not of utopia.

In such a situation it takes courage for an American artist to stick to his art and greater courage for him to affront his country in any way which may interfere with his popularity. If his country believes or pretends to believe that the socialist half of the world is criminal and conspiring to destroy us, then all patriotic Americans must believe this or at least act as though they do. If they disagree, this disapproval will hinder their right to paint flowers or even to eat or stay out of jail. If any American today presumes to regard the people of the Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia and China, as members of the great human family, deserving our friendship, cooperation and love, then they are regarded by thousands as unpatriotic traitors to our fatherland. To deny this means ostracism. Once Americans were proud to disagree especially with the great and powerful. Many fought the tories; scores denounced the slave power; not a few refused to handle "tainted money." But not today. Something has frightened the nation; to act as if Communists deserved our respect takes rare courage. Such courage Rockwell Kent showed when he hung his life's work in Moscow since New York failed to appreciate it. It was a fine example for Americans who today, for the most part, act the most cowardly of men. May Kent's example spread and may our art and literature roll around the world, and speak peace and good will to all mankind.

W. E. B. Du Bois.

STORY OF A WOMAN: PART I

OAKLEY JOHNSON

SHE WAS a watchful little girl, dressed primly in white dress and stockings and seated on an old box in the attic. Her body was rather thin. She had large brown eyes and olive skin, and she held her head high. She looked intently into her grandmother's face, the grandmother she was visiting in Mississippi, noting every slight change of expression, every flicker of feeling.

"Show it to me, Grandma," she asked. "Show me the trunkful of money that—that isn't any good now."

Her grandmother, white-haired, lean and straight, looked down at her with a little smile. She fingered her keys a moment, then opened the yellow trunk, and there—in the afternoon sunlight pouring through the attic window—lay bundles and bundles of bills. Confederate bills.

"O-oh!" the little girl exclaimed.

"They're no good, Mary Lea," Grandma smiles. "They're just paper, now."

"But—but aren't you sorry? You would have had such a lot of money!"

Grandmother shook her head. "No, I'm not sorry." She was serious now. "How old are you, child?"

"I'm nine," Mary Lea said.

"You're old enough to understand, then. You see, child, slavery was wrong. I'm *glad* the North won. *Glad,* you understand?"

Mary Lea looked steadily into her grandmother's eyes. This was different from what her schoolbooks said. Different from what her teachers said, too. Her grandmother sat down beside her, and told her about slavery.

"But Grandma," she asked, after thinking hard for a moment, "then Stonewall Jackson, my great-great-great grandfather was—he had slaves."

"Yes, he did. And on the other side of the family, Andrew Jackson, who didn't, was your ancestor, too. But you musn't think too much about ancestors. It's what *you* are that counts. Sometimes we must make up for the mistakes they made. Andrew was on the side of the people. Stonewall used slaves to build earthworks to win independence—and the slaves were still slaves afterward."

That part about earthworks, she knew about. The old trenches of the Battle of New Orleans were on her father's farm, and often she

and her younger brothers and sisters fought that battle over and over again in playing the War of 1812. And back home, after her visit to Grandma Jackson, she still played the old game and chased the Red coats, but she remembered that slavery was wrong.

It was quite a big farm her father had, or rather an estate, in St. Bernard's Parish, on the outskirts of New Orleans. There were a big house, beautiful old trees, a very large but uneven lawn in front, and the stables in the rear; and remnants of the old battle earthworks that the slaves had dug were in both front and back. In the estate next door lived General Beauregard, a former Confederate general.

In front, across River Road, the Jackson estate faced the Mississippi River, on which steamers passed night and day. In the house was Mama, who was sick, and her nine children, and Mrs. Jeanfreau the cook, and Pheene the house maid, and Jennie the nurse for the baby. (There was always a baby.) In the stables was Sam the groom. And, when he came home from business, there was Papa, who was tall and handsome and made lots of money as a wholesale livestock commission merchant.

Papa was proud of his eldest daughter, and took her to town with him to lectures on history and the Constitution and justice and freedom. Sometimes there was a lecture on woman's rights; sometimes on monopoly and the farmers. And the slim little ten-year-old Mary Lea sat straight and serious, and listened.

Mama, who was sick much of the time, had had a Southern belle upbringing, but she was a personality nonetheless, and a force in the intellectual growth of the children. "Why do we have to clean the house today?" Mary Lea protested once: no visitors were coming. "We clean the house, not for visitors, but because we like cleanliness," Mama reproved her. Her instruction took form as precepts. "We do our work well," she reminded her eldest daughter, "not to please others, but for our own self-respect."

Mama insisted on good manners to everybody, including the servants and the Negro workers. "You must show courtesy to others," she said, over and over, "if you want them to show courtesy to you."

Mary Lea recalled, at such times, Mama's own example at an earlier time, before they moved to this estate. It was when she was six, and they lived back in New Orleans on the corner of Third Street and St. Charles Avenue, in the house where Mary Lea was born. A Jewish neighbor named Mrs. Cohen brought over a lemon pie for Mama, while a high society southern matron was calling, and Mama thanked her and inquired after her family's health. When Mrs. Cohen had left, the high society lady exclaimed, "Why, Mrs. Jackson, do you associate

with *Jews?*" "Yes, I do," Mama snapped back. "She's a very kind neighbor, and a lovely woman."

After Mrs. High Society had left, Mama said to little Mary Lea: "I'm very disappointed in her. It's wrong to treat people of any other religion in an uppity way."

They moved to the estate shortly after this incident, and here Mary Lea and her younger brothers and sisters played with the children of the Negro workers. They all played the Battle of New Orleans, when the Red Coats were chased off the grounds. Once when Aunt Fannie—another high society Southern belle—paid one of her rare visits to them, she expostulated with Mama because the children played with the Negro children, and because Mama kissed a Negro mother on greeting here. "Why, you seem to enjoy *common* people!" Aunt Fannie exclaimed, in disgust. When she had gone, Mama remarked to her eldest daughter, confidentially, "Your Aunt Fannie is just an aristocrat gone to seed."

On one occasion, however, Mama made a mistake. She ruled that the maids should wear little caps and aprons, thinking, no doubt, that these kitchen uniforms looked neat. The maids objected, regarding them as a ridiculous badge of servitude, and Mary Lea, at twelve years of age, took their part. She explained to Mama how the maids felt, and Mama yielded. "Why, if these uniforms offended them, go and tell them they don't need to wear them."

The servants lived in a smaller building back of the big house, and ther children stayed with them. One of the Negro children was a girl of Mary Lea's age, named Lavencia. She was Mary Lea's constant companion. They studied their homework together. It was out of their companionship that Mary Lea became troubled about many things, and rebellious about them.

Though Lavencia was in the same grade at school, and a smart girl, too, eager to learn, she could not read at well. Mary Lea, in a normal way, became her unofficial teacher, and helped her with her studies. But *why* should Lavencia not know how to read well, and how to spell? They must teach differently in her school, Mary Lea thought to herself. It was only later, and slowly, that she came to understand what segregation was, and how it meant inferior education for Negro children.

On the estate, the Jacksons had their own carriage, and when they rode to town, the children and the nurses all rode together. At that time there were horse-drawn street-cars in New Orleans, and already there was segregation on these vehicles, as she could see when they drove past. The Negroes sat in the rear. Mary Lea supposed they sat there

because they preferred to, or perhaps out of modesty; but it somehow seemed unjust.

Later when there were electrically driven street cars, she too rode on them, sitting up front with her father, and looking back at other children, who were black. She played with Lavencia every day at home, and studied with her, side by side, almost every night. But on the street care, Lavencia had to ride in the back. In Mary Lea's mind—remembering her grandmother in Mississippi—it seemed something like *slavery.*

Before Mary Lea reached her thirteenth birthday, the family moved back into New Orleans. They sold the farm and the stables. It was cheaper to live in town, and closer to business. They gave up most of the servants.

The new home was on the corner of Flood and Douglas Streets, not so very far from her birthplace on St. Charles Street. Beyond Flood Street was the Mississippi River, and Mary Lea could still, as before, night or day, watch the steamers as they passed.

But the years of her childhood became more and more full of responsibility, for Mama was bedridden most of the time now. The servants left, but housework remained, and Mary Lea had to take over. She planned the meals, did the shopping, looked after the younger children, did more and more of the housework, and went to school. The time for play became less and less. Papa relied on her to run the household.

From time to time she learned of lynchings, but vaguely, because she only heard about them. Most of them were far away in other states, but some were in Louisiana, and the rumors that came to her ears were horrible. Her parents almost never spoke of them, but when mention was made by others, Papa's and Mama's disgust and shame were apparent. Years afterward Mary Lea's cousin, Judge Virgil A. Griffith of Mississippi, braved a lynch mob outside his courthouse and saved an innocent Negro's life, and was cited in *The Nation* for his courage. This fact was a matter of pride to her as a mature woman.

But she, too, once stopped a lynching, long before her cousin did. It happened right there in New Orleans, when Mary Lea was only fourteen. The story is a family legend, and this is the background.

Although in fact head of the her sizable family of brothers and sisters, and with responsibility for them on her shoulders, she was slight and frail in build, and smallish for her age. True, she was attractive and feminine in figure, with oval face and fine features, level brown eyes and brown hair almost to her waist. But her habitual expression was serious and reflective. She had a characteristic way of looking intently

into the faces of those she talked with, as though to fathom their thought and understand them completely.

She had to make adult decisions, and she grew to assume the manner of an adult. The younger children could play without restraint, but *someone* had to decide that the kitchen chores be done, and that school homework be dispatched promptly instead of forgotten. *Someone* had to act if a child cut his finger, if the kerosene lamp was knocked off the table in play, if a salesman called at the door. That someone was Mary Lea. She it was who stepped forth in every emergency. She had to think fast and act with determination. She had the habit of *authority.*

This is how it was that hot Sunday afternoon, with Papa away at a ballgame and Mama, convalescing from a recent illness, asleep in her room. The children were playing quietly, so as not to wake Mama. And suddenly a frightened man, a Negro worker perhaps twenty-five years old, ran off Douglas Street pursued by a mob, and into the kitchen of the Jackson home.

Mary Lea was there in the kitchen, and she saw the mob coming down the street. The man was shaking like a leaf with terror. He was breathing hard. He held a small pocket knife in his hand, the blade open.

"They'll kill me!" he gasped, pleadingly.

"Here," she said, "give me that jack-knife." He surrendered it without a word. "Come, go in there," she ordered, shoving him into the hall and shutting and locking the door. The jack-knife she tossed into the cupboard, the key she slipped into her apron pocket. Then she whirled to face the mob.

There was no time to think. The men, a mixture of white and Negro, came crowding into the kitchen.

"Stop!" she commanded. "Don't you dare come any further!" She pulled a kitchen chair toward her and stood on it to make herself taller and get their attention. "Stop! You have no right to come in here. Go right back out!"

"He near killed a man," voices in the crowd said. "We want to get him."

"No," she stormed, stamping her foot. "Go out!" Some of the men were ill at ease, and stood near the door. She thought quickly, and went on. "Go out to the front yard," pointing toward the Flood Street side. "Go around there. I'll talk with you from the front porch."

Some of those near the door stepped outside, and stood there. The others hesitated. "My father won't like this," she threatened, "he'll settle with you."

They felt out of place here in a private kitchen, and began moving

out. "All right," trey said, doggedly, all right," and they filed out and around the corner and into the front yard.

Mary Lea slammed the back door on the last of them, and turned to Sis. If only Papa were here!

"Go and see if any men are home next door, or the house next to them. Quick!" Sis was a fast runner. She ran.

Mary Lea looked quickly about, saw that doors were shut, and that the Negro man was in the back corridor, walked through the hall to the front of the house and out to the porch.

The crowd was gathering there, looking up at her. Voices persisted in their demand. "He near killed a man," they said, stubbornly.

Fourteen-year-old Mary Lea, weight eighty-five pounds, stood straight and responsible on the porch and looked down into their faces, quaking inwardly. If only Papa were here! There was no one to speak up but herself.

"How do you know he hurt a man?" she asked. "Did you see him?"

The man she questioned said *he* hadn't seen it.

"Did *you* see it?" she asked another. He shook his head.

"Every man has a right to a fair trial," she said, firmly. "That's the law. Every man must have a fair trial. My father will turn him over to the court, and the court will give him a trial. If you saw what he did, you can be a witness. But lynching is wrong. Lynching is against the law. You can't lynch anyone here.

"Now, everyone go home. If he is guilty, the law will punish him. If he is innocent, he should not be punished." She paused a second, and looked sharply from one face to another. "I know some of you," she went on, with a clearly implied threat. "I know some of your names. It will be serious for you if you don't do what the law says."

Many in the crowd were already moving out of the yard, and waiting out on the street. Others, seeing some leave, also went through the front gate. Those few who still wanted to "get him" thought better of it as the crowd melted away, and they left, too. (It was a spontaneous mob, not an organized murder gang; a mixed Negro and white street crowd. That explains much.)

Mary Lea went back into the house. Her mother, she was thankful to find, was still sleeping. Sis came puffing back, alone. There were no neighbor men anywhere on Flood Street in that whole block. But it didn't matter now.

When Papa got home, hours later, he turned the man over to the sheriff, and he was jailed and later tried. It was found that he was innocent. It was someone else who had "nearly killed a man."

(*Part 2 will appear in our June issue.*)

CULTURE IN SOCIALIST LANDS

ELIZABETH GURLEY FLYNN

IN MY whole life in the U.S.A. I did not take the opportunity or the means to imbibe so deeply of cultural activities, as I did during my recent visit of eight months, to European Socialist countries. My trip included the Soviet Union, Rumania, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and the German Democratic Republic. I hope to see the other three—Poland, Bulgaria and Albania on a later trip, if little Albania is by then permissible on my passport. The "programs" arranged for me were varied. I visited factories, plants, collective farms, model steel and mining towns, schools, institutes of history and economics, publishing houses, health resorts, hospitals, parks, museums, recreation centers for children and youth; also headquarters of Communist and Workers' parties, mass meetings and government offices. It would seem the day was crowded to capacity, with such a schedule. But the evenings were devoted to relaxation, such as I have never experienced in my own country.

Wherever I went in the daytime I met workers; I saw workers at all the evening's cultural events. I attended operas, ballets, operettas, puppet shows, ice revues, the circus, movies and concerts, not only in Moscow, but in other cities as well. In Budapest, Hungary, I heard the Italian operas *Rigoletto* and *Pagliacci* in a beautiful open-air theatre, on Marguarita's Island. Once the exclusive playground of the aristocracy and the rich, the hot springs baths and all recreational facilities of this wonderful island in the Danube River are now enjoyed by thousands of workers and their families. I saw "War and Peace," the American production, in Budapest, in a cinema which had been used as a center of military opera-

tions by the counter-revolution in 1956. It was wrecked in the fighting and later reconstructed.

In Berlin I heard an opera in German, based on "The Inspector General," in the beautiful white and gold national opera house, near the Reichstag. It had also been bombed and had to be rebuilt since the war by the Socialist state. But its original design was kept intact. In Bucharest a magnificent new opera house was the scene of a gorgeous fiesta to open their Third Workers' Party Congress. It featured songs and dancing, in colorful national costumes, from the many different picturesque regions of this lovely country.

In Moscow, where I remained the longest, I saw many of the ballets and operas at the famous Bolshoi Theatre, founded in 1776. In a red and gold interior, with deep red carpeting and a curtain emblazoned with the emblem of the U.S.S.R. (C.C.C.P. there), are impressive boxes, with rich draperies, once the exclusive property of royalty and aristocracy, but now used to seat honored foreign guests. I saw a Cuban trade delegation, led by "Che" Guevara, there one night—tumultuously welcomed by the cast and audience. Young people flock to see and applaud their favorite dancers, shower them with flowers, call them out for innumerable curtain calls, madly shout bravos, much like teenagers everywhere. There is nothing staid or solemn about the Bolshoi. Every dance movement is understood and appreciated by Russian audiences. I did not see Ulanova, the oldest ballerina and their greatest favorite, but I did see the next best, dainty little Lapishinskaya and also Plasetskaya, who is unusually tall but very graceful. It is hard to recollect the names of all the ballets I saw there. They included *Swan Lake, The Fountain of Bachisarai, Don Quixote, Theme of Paris, Thunder Over Africa,* one on the life of Chopin and another on Paganini, the Italian composer. Last summer, while the Bolshoi company was on tour, I saw a ballet company from Siberia, young and talented, who performed in Moscow, which took them to its heart. The American ballet and a Cuban ballet company also visited the Soviet Union and were warmly welcomed. Operas I heard included *Aida, Prince Igor, The Ukrainian Arsenal,* based on their civil war struggle, and the *Story of a Real Man,* from the book by Boris Polevoy. It is the true story of the legless fighter pilot, Alexay Meresayev, whose will power and patriotic determination made it possible for him to join his flying outfit during the war. We saw the premiere performance of this simple harmonious opera, the last work of the composer, Prokofiev. The audience, accustomed to the classical form and rich scenery of traditional opera, were strangely quiet, at first, but as the heroic struggle unfolded of a man still in their midst, enthusiasm mounted into a great burst of

applause at the end. Meresayev, the pilot, was not present. He is Chairman of the Soviet Veterans' Committee for Peace and was speaking elsewhere. Recently he spoke in Berlin to over 100,000 assembled people to commemorate the victims of fascism.

In Leningrad, the traditional home of the ballet for many decades, I saw a ballet called *The Danube,* based on the Strauss music. We were given seats as visitors from afar, in the Director's box, because the whole theatre had been taken that afternoon by a local factory. The majority of workers were women. An interesting feature of life in the Socialist countries is the presence of mass audiences from various establishments. The theatres are not something exclusive and expensive, as they are here. There they are popular, accessible to all, reasonable in price, a necessary part of the life of the people. Tickets are made available through trade unions and other organizations. The demand is great but an equitable distribution is guaranteed. The performances start early and everyone is in his seat on time. People come from work. Formal dress is not required or customary. There are always some tourists and official guests but the mass are Soviet citizens, old and young.

BECAUSE the theatres are not run for profit, but with great pride and capability on grants of public funds, to give the best possible performances, nothing is spared. Costs are not cut. There are large orchestras of the best trained men and women musicians available. The costumes, scenery, changes of scenery, lighting effects, etc., are very lavish. The costs are as large as the performance requires and all accessories necessary to create a realistic scene are secured. The results are rich and colorful in all details. Visiting performers are given a warm welcome. Van Cliburn, the young pianist from Texas, is one of their favorites, in fact they "discovered" him, as he was practically unknown in the U.S.A. No American teenagers could give him a noisier welcome. But as soon as the announcer begins, they settle down quietly to enjoy his playing. A beautiful and talented singer from Peru, Yuma Sumac, took Moscow by storm this fall. The American violinists, Menuhin and Stern, and singers Thebom, Warren and Dobbs, were all well received. The Philadelphia Symphony and the Philharmonic, with Leonard Bernstein, have been in the U.S.S.R.

In Socialist countries television (which I frankly loathe in my own country) is a pleasure. There are no commercials, no sponsors, no ads. The programs are varied, with material of human interest—folk songs, music, sports, travelogues, science demonstrations, news, etc. Operas and ballets are televised directly, as are mass meetings, so thousands who

cannot attend the performances, are able to see and hear them simultaneously with the audiences. Sports, like the hockey games between the Canadian and Soviet teams, are televised in the same manner. Speeches by N. Khrushchov and others are heard all over the country without interruptions. The U.N. proceedings and other important world events are on the TV.

The movies (cinema to Soviet people) are very popular. In all rest homes, hospitals and in the party hotel in Moscow, are daily performances of pictures currently on view in the city's theatres. I saw the "Ballad of a Soldier," the "Cranes Are Flying," "Resurrection"—honoring the Tolstoi anniversary, the "Story of a Real Monarch" and many others, dealing with post war life and problems, its tragedies and comedies. At our request several older films were put on, including "Lenin in October" and the "Gadfly," made in Leningrad and shown in color—a splendid picture. I also saw a documentary film in Budapest, Hungary, showing scenes from life during the counter-revolution. I wish it could be shown here to disillusion people who still do not accept the clerical, fascist, military nature of this attack on a Socialist state engineered from outside. The Hungarian people say: *"Our Soviet brothers twice freed us from fascism."*

In all the Socialist countries there is an appreciation of the legacy of the past—in architecture, archeology, folk lore and the presentation of beautiful objects handed down from past generations. Many old churches, damaged in the war, are carefully restored. Palaces are used for recreational and cultural centers. Some are museums like the Hermitage in Leningrad. Many relics of the past—paintings, statues, jewels, furniture, are carefully preserved. Halls of ancient splendor in the Kremlin, in Prague and elsewhere, are open daily and attract many visitors. In Constanta on the Black Sea in Rumania, there is a statue of Ovid, the Roman poet, who is buried in the ruins of the ancient city, which lies under the present one. There is a match tower built by Italian sailors centuries ago. Archeologists dig up many interesting pieces of old sculpture and other articles, which go into the local museum.

In Moscow statues of Gorky, Pushkin, Mayakovsky and other writers are land marks. The Mayakovsky statue of a tall, vigorous-looking young man, his hands in his pockets, his head thrown back, is the center of interest to young people. Fresh flowers are placed at his feet every day and in pleasant weather large groups of youth gather to read and discuss his poetry.

I visited a Children's Palace of Culture in Leningrad, in an actual palace, where every possible hobby, shop training, and handicraft was

taught, as well as arts and sciences. I visited a grammar school in Moscow, where the children took me to their library and showed me books by Jack London, John Reed, Mark Twain, Walt Whitman, and other American writers. Imagine their surprise when I told them I knew Jack London and John Reed personally! These children were amazingly well informed and alert, calm and courteous to each other. There are no so-called "comics" there, featuring crime, violence, and hate, as there are here.

EVERY book store is crowded and books are available in all languages on a wide variety of subjects, but no obscene, vulgar, pornographic books are there. In summer there are book stalls on many street corners. There are over 8,000 newspapers of all sorts published in the Soviet Union in 81 languages and more than 3,000 magazines are published in 55 languages. And all this without advertising! The average Soviet citizen knows what is going on in his country and throughout the world, as a result of the quality of articles he reads in newspapers and magazines.

The word "culture" is very elastic in the Soviet Union. It refers to manners and habits of cleanliness too. It is considered grossly "uncultured" to throw cigarette butts or waste paper on the street or in the subway. One who does it is publicly rebuked by those around him. People dress neatly at all times but are especially careful of their appearances in all public affairs. Then they wear their very best, as Soviet citizens. There is no affectation of alleged "proletarianism" in any Socialist countries. A bearded character without a tie and in nondescript clothes is identified as a "beatnik" from a capitalist country. The Cultural Exchange Agreement of 1958-59 brought the famous Moiseyev Folk dancers here. The U.S. film, "Marty," and others went there. Let us hope this will continue and grow. Thirty-five students and instructors are now in exchange and fifty more are to follow this year. Delegations of trade unions, youth, cultural clubs are very important not only to exchange culture, but to aid understanding and friendship. *Culture* they have and on a very high level. It is one of the many achievements of a Socialist society that in a few short years, backward people living in darkness in many areas, exploited, oppressed, superstitious, illiterate—could make such giant strides in education, art, music, and all forms of culture. Their achievements are a convincing part of the attractability of Socialism.

LITERATURE IN WEST GERMANY

ARNO REINFRANK

IT IS striking that German literature after the First World War had a most fruitful period of productivity such as expressionism, neo-romanticism, dadaism and realism. After the Second World War none of these schools of thought remained alive nor were there any new ones that came into being as for instance Existentialism in France or Beat Literature in America.

In the field of prose writing the influence of William Faulkner and Franz Kafka is the most prominent. Many of the German poets unless they live in East Germany have surrendered to escapism as exercised by Gottfried Benn. In the dramatic arts Bertolt Brecht's methods are not yet fully accepted because of his politics. Indeed, the literary scene in contemporary West Germany is filled with gloomy stagnation..

To illustrate the influence of William Faulkner one need only look at the most recent publication of Heinrich Boell, the celebrated prose writer whose works achieve record sales. In his latest novel, "Billard um halbzehn," Boell has swallowed Faulkner's way of writing including the technique of inner monologue. But it makes bad diet for him as Faulkner writes about a rural world; Boell knows only the Rhineland province by heart; and as he is a Roman Catholic he populates his novels with a Christian petty bourgeoisie whose greatest virtue is to avoid trouble.

HIS heroes live their sly, pseudo-humble lives and the only enjoyment Boell allows them from time to time are slightly ironical remarks. Boell does not even master his language sufficiently but overloads his

style in a careless manner which is to be deplored all the more since Arnold Zweig, a great master of the tongue who writes the most lucid prose since Thomas Mann, is still alive.

But it is not only for the personal liking of Faulkner that Boell and a group of other writers study the style of this American. Faulkner's technique of inner monologue allows room for maneuvering logic out of the back door of literature. This very thing is needed to ensure that religion governs the lives of Boell's heroes. He depicts them as practicing Christians without revealing their innermost emotions when doing so. Instead of minutely scrutinizing the people, Boell indulges in vague generalities, thus winning the approval of the state and ecclesiastical authorities. Boell is certainly not one of those who have eaten the fruit of bourgeois Enlightenment—a fact one must bear in mind when quoting him as one of Germany's outstanding writers of our time.

WHILE Boell's writing is a cross breed between Faulkner and German "Biedermann," Stefan Andres' books are an illustration of the consequences of Kafkaism carried too far.

The last volume of his much appraised trilogy, "Die Sintflut," has just been published. But surely Kafka, a Jewish writer, has not introduced his technique of analogism for the benefit of a contemporary German who avoids taking sides against those guilty of murdering millions of Jews. This indeed is the achievement of Andres, whose second volume ends with the beginning of the Second World War, while the third volume opens when the war is over. Thus the most crucial point in recent German history is omitted.

Not even the setting of his novel is contemporary Germany but Tessin and Upper Italy, about which places the author explains he could write more "dispassionately." It makes harder reading than Boell's works. Andres describes landscapes in great detail but his dialogue distorts German history. One item of his private philosophy is that people could have avoided disaster and defeat by being inactive. . . .

It is certainly no coincidence that Andres and others who employ Kafka's technique are held in high esteem among literary critics. One should not forget that in many of Germany's editorial offices there are men who received their education under Nazism. They are anxious to cover their bewildered conscience with the cloak of officially approved Christianity. They are conditioned by their own past to praise every effort that hides real problems, the roots of which lie in Germany's social history.

Under these circumstances the young generation remains the chief

hope. The disastrous politics of the ruling classes left the nation after 1945 with the shattered idols of fascism, while the restoration of democracy had to come from without. The younger generation welcomed and accepted re-education but their parents showed their disapproval in the privacy of their living rooms. It was a kind of half-baked chauvinistic discontent with the new and by no means satisfactory way of public life.

AFTER the formation of the two separate German republics in 1949 time seemed ripe to those West Germans who maintained that rearmament and obedience to the upper classes were the true aims of "democracy." Hitler Germany, they declare boldly though unofficially, was the forerunner of NATO Europe. The young people who at this stage of development were reading Sartre, Priestley, Hemingway, and Faulkner, looked at their parents in bewilderment. They could not believe that history would repeat itself; but they were being taught again by the nazi indoctrinated teachers at schools and universities. They resisted being drawn into a new catastrophe, yet their resistance bore the marks of scepticism.

The hallmark of the fascist order is not permitting protest. Especially at this time when the "Economic Miracle" myth has reached a height comparable only to the myth of the "Master Race," writers like Gerd Ledig, Siegfried Sommer, Wolfgang Koeppen or Manfred Gregor cannot therefore expect much sympathy from the critics. They are bound to feel the coolness of their reception. For fear of economic strangulation some of them do not accept advice and help from East Germany where writers like Arnold Zweig, Anna Seghers, Erwin Strittmatter or Peter Huchel care for the greatest possible clearness in style and thought.

Looking at last year's publication of "Die Blechtrommel" by Guenter Grass one might, at first sight, feel compelled to adjust one's statement about the coolness of reception an "angry young German" is to receive. This novel with a dwarf hero who beats his toy drum whenever he comes across something deserving criticism was well received by the more sophisticated critics and has proved a best-seller. Grass has written it greatly for sheer delight of original imagination which gives it the flavor of a rich baroque epic. But although the 17th century writer Grimmelshausen (who among others created the figure of "Mother Courage' later used by Brecht) is regarded the model for Grass I am inclined to agree with Karlheinz Deschner, the critic, who labels this novel for "entertainment only." Instead of creating a genuine satirical picture of contemporary Germany, a task for which Grass possesses every ability, he chooses to overload the book with sexual allegory.

It can only be regretted that none of the young writers ever attempted to produce the sort of modern didactic novel (Lehrroman) that Bertolt Brecht created with his outstanding "Drei-Groschen-Roman."

THE great care Brecht gave to the dialectical process of theory and practice does not of course permit any inaccuracy of style or thought. To write such books requires a thorough study of reality and man and one wonders if it is only pressure of time that makes young authors disinterested in Brecht's methods.

Despite the officially sponsored campaign of slander the Brechtian school of thought is becoming more apparent in contemporary German poetry. As poetry has become the most intimate branch of literature, little harm is expected from this corner.

It is true to say that the majority of minor German poets have fallen under the spell of Gottfried Benn, the medical man who wrote poetry. He drowned his disillusionment of society in highly specialized vocabulary and obscurity. Yet the more outstanding of the younger poets try to keep aloof from his obscurantism. Peter Ruemkorf and Magnus Enzensberger were getting well deserved response to the poetry of their first writing years. But since both have yielded to the temptation of joining established publishers, their rebellious spirit is gradually losing strength.

Undergraduate writers and poets find themselves increasingly placed under the protection of a "public opinion" consisting of police officers and court judges. This is part of the over-all effort in present-day Germany to stamp out any opposition to the revanchist tendencies in the government parties.

Young men who are to join the army are to be protected from literature produced by writers of their own age who do not agree to re-armament, atom bomb piling and the spreading of hatred against the German Democratic Republic.

A TRIAL is pending against "nobis," monthly journal for the students of the Mainz University which printed a very well written essay by an undergraduate who criticizes aspects of West German politics. In the case of "forum academicum," paper of the Heidelberg University, the editor was fined, in two separate hearings, 500 Deutsch Marks and costs for having published a short story in which a cripple accuses a Roman Catholic priest of adultery. The weekly journal of the Pacifist Movement, whose cultural editor Gerd Semmer recently published a volume of excellent translations of songs of the French Revolution, was

banned in the autumn of 1959. The editor of "diagonal," another magazine, is to face trial.

Accused of having written a "roman à clef," Ursula Ruett, a young authoress, had to fight hard to win her case in a second hearing—the plaintiff was a city council (sic!). In April 1960 two young Hamburg poets were served with writs for having written and published in a magazine with a ridiculously small circulation poems which criticize the army. The novel, "Das Treibhaus" by Wolfgang Koeppen was angrily removed from a bookseller's show case in the lobby of the Bonn Parliament when its satirical content became known to government officials. A man filed a complaint with the police against a poem displayed in a bookseller's window. Its author, outstanding satarist Kurt Tucholsky, unable to face nazi terror committed suicide twenty years ago. . . . Everyone not keeping in step with the government approved columns of writers must be prepared to face the sort of fascist repression that made Hitler one of the most ruthless dictators in world history.

A normal interchange of literature among the two parts of Germany, the language of which is after all the same, is made almost impossible under these circumstances. The great exception is Brecht, whose works are printed in a Frankfurt publishing house and whose plays are the only one of some avantgardist significance on West German stages. But Brecht's pupil Peter Hacks was given hostile reviews (being an East German "foreigner") when a play of his was performed in Munich.

Munich is at the present moment the only town in West Germany housing a literary club, the "Komma Klub," which invites writers from both parts of Germany to read and discuss their works. It is indeed not an easy task to do so under the present circumstances when emotions instead of common sense govern the official attitude toward writers.

CORRECTIONS:

On page 16, line 11 of "Hitching Our Wagon to a Star" in January, the words supply and demand were incorrectly transposed. The line should read "in which growing demand forever keeps abreast or ahead of growing supply."

books in review

The Fuhrer Myth

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE THIRD REICH: A HISTORY OF NAZI GERMANY, by William L. Shirer. New York, Simon & Schuster: 1960, 1,245 pp., $10.00.

IN comparison to the average run of the mill best seller, William L. Shirer's recent study of the Nazi era is a work of some distinction. Beginning with a brief discussion of the origins of Nazism and the period of Motler's rise to power, Shirer goes on to chronicle the history of Nazi rule from 1933 to 1945, with a special emphasis on the years after 1938, to which about three fourths of the book is devoted. Although Shirer is a journalist rather than a professional historian, his command of the voluminous body of source material available for this period leaves nothing to be desired, and his judgment on questions of historical fact is almost always reasonable and balanced. An especially valuable feature of the work is its extensive use of quotations and excerpts from source material, which help to provide the reader with a vivid impression of events now dim in the memory of many. Moreover, unlike many historians of the Nazi era, Shirer does not confine himself to a moral condemnation of the Nazi gangsters and overlook or gloss over the role played by "respectable" Germans. The responsibility of the Junkers and industrialists for Hitler's rise to power is amply documented, and the advantages of Nazi rule for German capitalism clearly if briefly elaborated. An especially revealing item is an excerpt from a correspondence between the U.S. and several German business firms, discussing the construction and delivery of crematoria for the extermination camps; in their eagerness to win the lucrative contract, the competing firms offer "helpful" suggestions for improving the design and operation of the furnaces. A more telling commentary on the vaunted "corporate conscience" could not be imagined. For the most part, the wide circulation which this book has received is undoubtedly a good thing; this is not often the case with a book on the best-seller list.

Yet despite all this, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* is a disappointing work. Considering the amount of research and effort which went into its preparation, and considering the basic sincerity of its author, much more might have been achieved. In the first place, although the book is supposed to be "A History of Nazi Germany," it is in reality only a history of the Nazi state. The author's attention is confined to the realms of political, diplomatic and military history; he tells us who fired the guns, and how, but not who made them, and why. Moreover, what Shirer means by the Nazi state is actually the Nazi high command, the small group of men on top and not the government apparatus as a whole. In short, the correct title for this book would be "The Rise and Fall of Adolf Hitler and his Cronies"; that is not quite the same thing as a "History of Nazi Germany."

NOW of course there is nothing inherently wrong in telling the story of Hitler's career; but as Mr. Shirer is naturally aware, that story has been told before. In fact, the great bulk of the work done on the Third Reich by professional historians in the West since 1945 has confined itself to precisely this area: the personal rule of the Nazi leaders, their diplomatic or military activities, their feuds and intrigues. In his biography of Hitler, Alan Bullock covered this same ground in a careful and comprehensive fashion; not surprisingly, the course of Shirer's narrative follows that of Bullock rather closely, in somewhat greater detail to be sure. Inasmuch as Shirer's interpretation of the events he describes does not differ materially from the interpretation of Bullock and many others, the reader of Shirer's book is often bothered by the feeling, "Haven't I heard that one before?" This is not due to any lack of professional ethics on Shirer's part, but simply to the fact that this lode has already been extensively mined and is beginning to peter out.

In view of all this, it is indeed unfortunate that Shirer did not feel the need to devote more attention to those questions which have not been so fully exploited, and in particular, to the social, economic and ideological aspects of Nazi rule. Mr. Shirer's book is 1245 pages long; out of those 1245 pages, only 45 are alotted to a discussion of German life and society under Hitler, and of those 45, exactly 12 concern themselves with the social and economic history of the period. As a matter of fact, Shirer's treatment of the problem in those 12 pages is rather a good one; but for obvious reasons, also somewhat sketchy. It is a pity that Mr. Shirer, who spent an enormous amount of time and energy in order to determine precisely who was really responsible for the German decision to halt their tanks before Dunkirk on May 24, 1940, did not expend even a fraction of the same energy in order to determine who was really responsible for the decision to suppress the German labor unions. Not every war is decided on the battlefield; classes, like armies, also know victory and defeat. If Mr. Shirer is aware of this fact, his book does not reveal it.

Perhaps because he is so little concerned with the deeper currents of German life and society under the Nazis, Shirer is unable to give us more than a very superficial analysis of those problems which he does discuss. Here is his explanation for Hitler's victory in 1933: "No class or group or party could escape its share of responsibility

for the abandonment of the democratic Republic and the advent of Adolf Hitler. The cardinal error of the Germans who opposed Nazism was their failure to unite against it." What is wrong with this statement? In the first place, it is senseless to talk about the general responsibility of all German classes and parties for Hitler without first determining the relative responsibility of each. Insofar as any of Hitler's opponents made mistakes in their struggle against the Nazis, they were partially "responsible" for Hitler's victory; but between this type of "responsibility" and the guilt of, let us say, the Hindenburg clique, there is an important difference. This distinction Shirer fails to make, and as a result, no coherent casual analysis of Hitler's victory is to be found in his book. And in the second place, it is also senseless to talk about "errors" without first determining if those errors could have been avoided. If the union of Hitler's opponents was objectively impossible under the given circumstances of the period, then it was not an "error" to fail to unite. But Shirer does not even raise such questions, much less answer them, In short, Shirer's explanation of the Nazi triumph is no explanation at all. Shirer himself appears to sense this; he admits that he finds the support of Hitler by German Conservatives to be "incomprehensible;" later on, he describes the surrender of the French and British at Munich as "a mystery." And in fact, such things really are incomprehensible mysteries, so long as one does not penetrate beyond the political or diplomatic circumstances to the social needs and antagonisms which underlie them

OVER and above these inadaquacies, and partially because of them, Shirer's book also suffers from a distorted conception of the nature of fascist rule. The clearest expression of this distortion is to be found in Shirer's discussion of Hitler himself. As Trevor-Roper so blissfully observed in his review of Shirer's book in the *New York Times,* Shirer believes that Hitler was a "genius." This conception of the Nazi leader and his role is summarized near the beginning of the book:

> The man who founded the Third Reich . . . was a person of undoubted, if evil, genius. It is true that he found in the German people, as a mysterious Providence and centuries of experience had molded them up to that time, a natural instrument which he was able to shape to his own sinister ends. But without Adolf Hitler, who was possessed of a demonic personality, a granite will, uncanny instincts, a cold ruthlessness, a remarkable intellect, a soaring imagination and—until toward the end, when, drunk with power and success, he overreached himself—an amazing capacity to size up people and situations, there almost certainly would never have been a Third Reich.

It is this interpretation of Hitler's significance which tacitly justifies Shirer's general approach to his topic: if the victory of fascism was primarily due to Hitler's "genius," then it is Hitler and not German society which we should study.

Was Hitler a "genius?" In the first place, it should be noted that when Shirer and others talk about Hitler's "genius," they are generally referring to his political talents and not to his intellectual or creative abilities. This is only natural, inasmuch as those abilities were virtually non-existent. Anyone who reads *Mein Kampf,* or Hitler's speeches, or most revealing of all, the record of his "table talk" during the war, cannot help but be struck by the

shallowness of Hitler's mind, its banality, incoherence and profound unoriginality. Alan Bullock's reaction is typical: "the most lasting impression is of the vulgarity of his mind, as commonplace as it was brutal, as unabashed as it was ignorant." If Hitler was a "genius," that genius did not reveal itself in any other sphere save that of practical politics And indeed, it cannot be denied that Hitler and his follows did seize control of a great state, score notable victories in the realm of foreign policy and subjugate most of Europe before they were stopped. Was all this the result of Hitler's extraordinary "genius"?

Obviously a problem such as this cannot be answered in a sentence or two; one can only suggest a few questions which Mr. Shirer might have asked himself and which point to the serious limitations of the "genius" interpretation of Hitler's role. To begin with, is it not fairly obvious that Hitler could never have succeeded without the complicity of first the German and then the British and French ruling classes? As Shirer himself demonstrates, not one but a dozen excellent opportunities for crushing Hitler presented themselves both before and after the Nazi seizure of power. Was the failure of the ruling class in Germany and elsewhere to take advantage of those opportunities really so "incomprehensible," or was it not rather due to the desire of those men to use Hitler as a weapon against the working class and the socialist movement? Is it not true that as soon as Hitler's price for smashing the Bolsheviks became too high, the rulers of France and Britain quickly put an end to their mysterious policy of appeasement? Was it Hitler's "genius" which led French reactionaries to say, "Better Hitler than Blum" (as it turned out, they need not have worried about the latter); and was it not precisely this kind of thinking which lay behind every one of Hitler's victories?

Moreover, does Shirer think that Hitler was the only fascist to take power during this period? Was there really such a great difference between the Nazi leader and men like Mussolini or Horthy or Franco, none of whom faintly resembles a "genius?" Was not the chief difference between Hitler and the others simply that Hitler could draw upon the resources of a mighty industrial power while they could not, so that while Hitler's grandiose pretensions appeared almost realistic, theirs do not? And finally, does not the victory of fascism in half-a-dozen European countries during this period point to a more general cause than the personality of one man; were not the rise of fascism and the crisis of world capitalism intimately connected with one another? It is of course true that Hitler was not a perfectly ordinary man; it is true that his personality exercised an influence upon the course of events. But it is equally true that Hitler's personality alone did not bring him power, just as the lack of such a personality did not prove a serious handicap for Franco or Horthy. In the light of all this, what possible justification can there be for describing Hitler as a "genius?"

ODDLY enough, Shirer himself provides us with the best refutation of the "genius" theory. As an American journalist, the author was present at the trial of the Nazi high command at Nuremburg; this is how he describes the prisoners:

Attired in rather shabby clothes, slumped

in their seats fidgeting nervously, they no longer resembled the arrogant leaders of old. They seemed to be a drab assortment of mediocrities. It seemed difficult to grasp that such men, when last you had seen them, had wielded such monstrous power, that such as they could conquer a great nation and most of Europe.

Does not the same hold for Hitler as well? Like his cronies, the "great dictator" derived his apparent stature from the circumstances which he was permitted to exploit, from the powerful interests which he served. Standing upon the shoulders of the German people, Hitler seemed to tower over the entire world; but when that support was removed or smashed, his stature shrank back to its natural proportions. At the end, in the ruins of Berlin, he appears to us as a shabby old man, unable to face or even comprehend the consequences of his crimes. By presenting this flashy but essentially mediocre personality as some kind of "genius," Shirer does both himself and his readers a great disservice. Without intending to, he helps to perpetuate the Nazi myth of the *Fuhrer*, whose "granite will" (the phrase is Shirer's) can dominate men and events. The fallacy of this legend was fully demonstrated on the battlefields of the Second World War; it is unfortunate that the historians (Shirer is not the only one) have not yet absorbed the lessons of that great conflict.

R. F. SHAW

Theatre

SOMETHING of the both sad and hopeful situation of the New York City theatre, namely, the frail but beautiful flower of art growing in the rocky soil of what is known as "Off-Broadway," was revealed in a production which opened in February at the Jan Hus Theatre on East 74th Street and First Avenue. The play was *The King of the Dark Chamber,* by Rabindrath Tagore, the great poet, dramatist, essayist, thinker and teacher of India. Tagore, who was born in 1861 and died in 1941, was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1913. His work linked the ancient traditions of Indian religion, philosophy, drama and poetry to the aspirations for national freedom and progress in modern times.

The irony lay in the fact that in other lands the great theatrical companies are celebrating the Tagore centennial with sumptuous productions. Here, in the richest city in the richest country in the world, this recognition of Tagore takes place in a small hall, actually a made-over church basement, with rudimentary facilities for both actors and audiences. Nevertheless a miraculous theatrical experience took shape, weaving together poetry, acting, music and dance.

In conceiving the action of his play, *The King of the Dark Chamber,* Tagore drew upon ritual traditions of the old classical Sanskrit drama with its highly stylized gestures, movements and characterizations, and also the satiric, partly realistic buffoonery of the folk play. The story, told briefly, is of a kingdom, the king of which has never been seen by the public, or by anybody. Even his beautiful Queen Sudarshana only meets him in a dark chamber. There is muttering among the people. Some think he refuses to be seen in public because he is too ugly. Others whisper that perhaps there is no king. A silly imposter takes advantage of the

situation to parade among the people dressed up in imposing costumes and jewelry, calling himself the king. He makes meaningless promises to the people, who are hopeful but skeptical. The queen in the dark chamber pleads with the king to show himself, and he answers that he will do so, but it will not be easy for her to find him, for he will be among the ordinary people and will look like them. A wise old man of the village tells the folk much the same; the king must be sought for among themselves, where they least expect to find him.

In one scene in the dark chamber, a flash of light reveals the king, and the queen is thrown into consternation, for he is a Negro. She runs away, exclaiming that she cannot love him. She is too enamored of outer appearance, of conventional royal appurtenances. Once, in looking out at the street, she had mistaken the imposter-king for the true king. Meanwhile, three kings from other lands come with plans to kidnap the queen. They quickly see through the imposter, and force him to become their ally. When the queen flees to her father's house, they follow. But just as they are about to seize her, the true king appears, and in a battle—magnificently danced and staged in this production—he defeats the malevolent kings. Meanwhile the queen has learned to love the true king.

The plot as told this way gives no idea of the ramifications of meaning, conveyed through the chorus made up of various village types, the characterizations and the poetry. And in such a symbolic folk tale, there is also some ambiguity. Thus the play may be said to embody Tagore's philosophy of the "Religion of Man." He said, "God loves to see me, not his servant, but himself who serves all." But there are other lessons brought home. One is that nobility of spirit, true kingship, is not to be found in clothes, jewelry, wealth and gaudy appearances. There is the suggestion that the true leader and benefactor of the people is to be found among them, and will be one like them; also the hint that perhaps the people do not need a king at all.

The director of the production was Krishna Shah, of the Indian National Theatre. There were remarkable contributions by Bhaskar, as singer, dancer, actor and choreographer, and by Surya Kumari, who as Queen Sudarshana, gave the audience a marvelous picture of how real and affecting a style of acting can be, based on the *mudras,* or fixed, stylized symbolic gestures, and on a beautifully controlled body movement. The Americans, among whom Bruce Glover as the malevolent King of Kanchi had the outstanding role, fitted into the production splendidly. It was the kind of theatre in which poetry by a gifted writer (the English translation was by Tagore himself) has the ring of simple speech and moves naturally into song; acting and gesture move naturally into dance. If at first the audience, including this reporter, looked on the production as something strange and exotic, it was not long before all were caught up in its spirit, for the tradition represented by this play and production is really that of popular theatre.

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SUNDAY IN NEW YORK