SEPTEMBER, 1961
50 cents

Mainstream

CIVIL WAR
AND SONG

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C. P. SNOW
Sidney
Finkelstein

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HIROSHIMA
Rewi Alley

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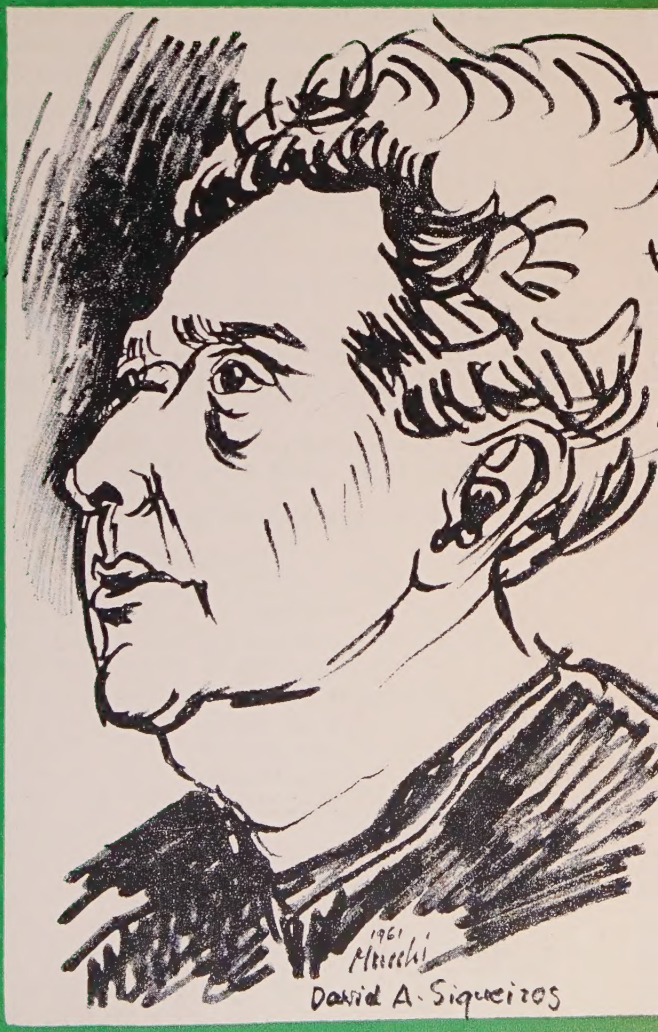
FICTION
Thomas Bell



GABRIELE MUCCHI *David A. Siqueiros*

ARTISTS DEMAND "FREE SIQUEIROS"

The Editors, *Mainstream*
832 Broadway, New York 3, N. Y.
U.S.A.

Dear Sirs:

I am letting you have a copy of a letter sent today to the Mexican President by the undersigned Australian artists and writers, moved by the unjust imprisonment without trial of the great painter, David Alfaro Siqueiros.

Yours sincerely,

Noel Counihan

His Excellency,
The President of Mexico,
Senor Adolpho Lopez Mateos

Dear Sir:

The undersigned artists and writers are horrified to learn that the illustrious painter, David Alfaro Siqueiros, has been held in jail for six months without trial.

We feel this contravenes all civilized practices and conceptions of justice and shames Mexico in the eyes of the world.

We earnestly request his immediate release.

Respectfully yours,

WRITERS

Katharine Susannah Prichard
Nettie Palmer
John Manifold
Judah Waten
Alan Marshall
John Morrison
Frank Hardy.

ARTISTS

David Armfield
James Cant
Noel Counihan
Leonard French
Herbert McClintock
Peter Miller
V. G. O'Connor
Bernard Rust
J. Senbergs
James V. Wigley

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Among Our Contributors

Thomas Bell is the author of *All Brides Are Beautiful, Out of This Furnace, There Comes A Time,* and others. Before his recent death he had lived in New York and California. A posthumous volume of his reflections in the face of an incurable disease has just been published and will be reviewed in a future issue of *Mainstream. Reuben W. Borough* was born in 1883. A native of Ohio, he has been editor and reporter and active in politics. A member of the First Unitarian Church, he now resides in Los Angeles. *Rewi Alley* is a New Zealander who now resides in People's China. His poetry is widely published and has appeared previously in our pages. *William Fay* described an "Episode in Fayette County" in our February, 1961 issue. *Francois Tichy* is a young French writer, critic, and teacher who is currently translating the poetry of Walter Lowenfels.

Next Month

We introduce a new short story writer, *Nancy Lubka. Jose A. Baragano,* the Cuban poet, author of the recent book, *Himno a Las Milicias,* is represented by a long poem, Arsenal, taken from that volume. The author lives in Havana and is a member of the militia. Be sure to read *Arno Reinfrank's* report on the cultural diet of young West Germans. *Meridel Le Sueur* reviews Philip Bonosky's *The Magic Fern.* The report by *John Pittman* on Soviet Estonia, originally scheduled for September, will appear in October.

THE MAN WHO MADE GOOD IN AMERICA

THOMAS BELL

The editors reprint this story from the Winter 1947 *Mainstream* in tribute to the working-class novelist Thomas Bell, who died earlier this year.

IN THE spring of 1910, three men were sitting in a grimy courtyard, talking. All were Slovak steelworkers, fair, solidly-built men in their late thirties. The oldest, Mike Dobrejcak, was wearing slippers and a long-sleeved undershirt; he had got out of bed only an hour or so before, and would soon be going off to a night's work in the blast furnaces. The others, his brother Joe and his best friend Steve Bodnar, were clean-faced and clean-shirted, notice to all the small world of a steel town that they weren't working. Times were bad; not as bad as they had been during the panic three years before, but bad enough.

The courtyard, its paving gritty with mill dust, was closed in by the brick row in which Mike lived, by the fire-escaped back of a Washington Street saloon, and by the board fence against which Bodnar had tilted his chair. Two doors down the row several men were playing cards, their table an old box, and at the far end of the yard, in the corner formed by the communal outhouse and another fence, a loom had been set up and some women were weaving carpets from old rags.

It was a fine May afternoon; the three men could feel the warmth of the smoke-hazed sun penetrating their clothes. The saloon-keeper's hired girl, who had entertained them briefly by coming out on the fire escape above them to wash a window, had clambered back inside, taking her ankles with her, and now the men were talking, like a good many other people in Braddock, about Andy Toth.

On a bleak New Year's Eve many years before, about midway in time between the Braddock lockout with which Carnegie began his war on the steelworkers' union, and the Homestead lockout with which he finished

it in 1892, there had been serious trouble at the mill gate in Braddock. The workers had asked for New Year's Day off and the company had refused, whereupon the day men gathered before the gate and tried to keep the incoming night men from going to work. Foremen and mill cops intervened, and very shortly a small riot was raging up and down Thirteenth Street.

When it was over there were a number of broken heads on both sides and one man, an Irish foreman, was dead.

Andy Toth, a laborer in the blast furnaces who'd just recently come to America, married and the father of two boys, was arrested and tried for murder. He admitted participating in the fighting but denied that he'd struck the foreman. He was nevertheless convicted and sentenced to hang, a sentence that was later commuted to life imprisonment. Still protesting his innocence, he disappeared into the state penitentiary, and after a while people stopped talking about him; and after another while everybody except his family—and perhaps the family of the dead foreman—had forgotten him.

Now people were talking about him again, for after all these years it turned out that he was just as innocent as he'd always claimed to be. It seemed that a man in the old country, convinced he was dying, had confessed to the crime for which another man had already spent nearly twenty years in prison. His name was Steve Toth but he was no relation. The name was a common one; *toth* was the Hungarian word for Slovak.

Contrary to his expectations, the repentent Steve Toth didn't die. Meanwhile, however, the village *notar,* perhaps wondering if Steve Toth had been in his right mind when he told his fantastic story, had written to Braddock; and after a suitable interval Andy Toth's sons, now grown men, journeyed to Europe.

Assured that he was safe as long as he didn't return to America, Steve Toth talked freely. He hadn't meant to kill anyone, he said. Everyone was fighting, and that he rather than someone else had struck the fatal blow, that it had proved fatal at all, was pure chance. He'd left Braddock at once and returned to the old country. When he heard that the police, to whom one immigrant laborer named Toth was apparently as good an another, had arrested Andy Toth, he had been afraid to reveal the truth. But he was glad, he said, to get it off his conscience at last.

What Andy Toth's sons felt or thought as they listened to him was not known. They returned to Braddock laden with affidavits and documents and set about getting their father out of jail.

There was a picture of him in the newspapers on his release, a stout,

white-haired, dazed-looking man. He carried a rosary and he was quoted as saying that he'd always known he would be freed some day because he had prayed every night and his faith in God's goodness had never wavered. Several priests took his words, his history, for a text the following Sunday.

Andy Toth did not breathe the free air of America long; almost as soon as it could be arranged, he went back to the old country. His wife, who had taken in boarders to support herself and her family, had died while he was in prison. His sons were American citizens with wives and American-born children. Andy Toth went back to the old country —to die, he said; a sentiment everyone undertsood and no one took literally.

What made the First Ward gasp, however, was the report that the steel company, in an unprecedented manifestation of generosity and remorse, had given him a check equal to all the wages he would have earned if he'd been working in the mill during his long years in prison.

People never get tired of talking about money.

"How much do you think he got?" Joe asked.

"It should be easy to figure out," Mike replied. "Fourteen cents an hour, twelve hours a day, seven days a week."

"For twenty years."

"Ah."

"That sounds like a lot of money."

A breeze rustled the drying leaves of the Pentecostal linden branches nailed over Mike's doorway, as over most of the doorways in the row. In Twelfth Street, on the other side of the board fence, a huckster was crying his chant of potatoes, cabbages and onions, and small boys with nothing better to do were echoing him, mockingly.

"You know how to figure, Mike. See what it comes to."

Mike smiled tolerantly, not unwilling to show off his learning. "If you like." He leaned around the corner of the doorway and called into the kitchen, where Mary was getting his supper and packing his lunch bucket. "Marcha! See if you can find me a pencil and paper."

She came to the door, a small, tired woman in a soiled dress, a year-old baby in her arms. The baby was gnawing gummily on a piece of bacon rind hung from a string around its neck.

"What do you want with pencil and paper?" she asked. Like the men, she spoke in Slovak.

"We want to find out how much money the company gave Andy Toth."

"*Ach*, you men! You'd do better to start getting ready for work."

But she brought him what he wanted, a brown paper and a stubby pencil.

Mike flattened the bag on his knee and wet the pencil with his tongue. "Fourteen cents an hour, twelve hours a day." He put the figures down and multiplied carefully, "One dollar and sixty-eight cents."

"I could have told you that," Bodnar said.

"Seven days a week—" Another pause. "It comes to eleven dollars and seventy-six cents."

"What about the long turn?" Joe asked. "That's twelve hours more every other week."

"Yes, but how do we know the company figured in the long turns?"

"If he'd been working he would have had to put them in, like everybody else. And they say the company paid him just as though he'd been working. What do you think, Stefan?"

Bodnar said it sounded reasonable to him. But that, he went on drily, made it almost certain the company would think differently.

"If you start figuring it so exactly you'll need a better man with figures than I," Mike said. "What about the times they cut wages?"

"And don't forget they weren't paying any fourteen cents an hour in those days," Bodnar said. "I went into the mill for seventy-five cents a day."

"And shutdowns and layoffs," Joe agreed nodding. "God knows we've had more than enough of those in the last twenty years."

Mike protested, "The more you talk the harder you make it."

They thought it over. One of the card players rose and crossed the yard to the outhouse, making some remark to the women at the loom as he passed and laughing as he shut himself inside.

"Let's keep it simple," Mike said. "A straight twelve hours a day, seven days a week, with no wage cuts or layoffs."

Bodnar grunted, "I'd like a job in a mill like that. Where is it?"

"In heaven, maybe," Joe suggested.

Bodnar turned his face and spat. "Or in hell."

"Be quiet," Mike said, "or I'll be here all day." He was putting down figures again. "Fifty-two times eleven-seventy-six—" He multiplied and added. "It comes to six hundred eleven dollars and fifty-two cents a year," he announced.

"That much?"

"In twenty years it should make a nice piece of money," Joe observed reflectively.

"Now I know why bankers enjoy their work." Mike was staring at the paper. "You put down some figures, add them up and there you are, rich."

"How much in twenty years?" Bodnar asked.

"One minute. It comes to—" Again Mike's pencil moved, while the others watched it, absorbed.

"Bohze moj!"

"Well, Well? Don't just sit there. Tell us."

"As God is my judge, it comes to twelve thousand, two hundred thirty dollars and forty cents exactly."

They stared at him blankly.

"How much did you say?"

Mike repeated the figure.

"Twelve thousand!"

Mike nodded. "In one piece, cash money."

...."*Jezis!* Twelve thousand dollars!"

"I don't believe it."

"There are the figures."

The immensity of the sum overwhelmed them. Speechless, they stared at the paper on Mike's knee.

"Good God!" Bodnar exclaimed. "When I heard they were giving him some money I wished him joy of it. I didn't think much about it. I suppose it would come to a few hundred dollars more or less, little enough for what he suffered. But twelve thousand dollars!"

"It's a lot of money," Mike admitted.

"It's a fortune! And for what?"

Mike glanced at his friend. "Do you begrudge him the money?"

Bodnar stared at the paper on Mike's knee and then struck a match and re-lit his pipe, emotion making him suck on it with loud, smacking noises. "If I do, then may God forgive me. But what I'm thinking is that I was working in the mill when they took him off to jail, and so were you for that matter, and we're working still. And do we have any twelve thousand dollars to show for it? Twelve thousand dollars? Twelve thousand turds!"

"We didn't sit in jail for twenty years."

"Devil take me if I wouldn't be glad to sit in the strongest jail they have for that kind of money!"

"Twenty years in jail is a long time, Stefan."

"Twenty years in that God-damned mill is a long time too, my friend!"

"Yes. Yes, it is."

"And what have we to show for it? Who's the better off today? Look at us!" He gestured abruptly, taking in themselves, the mean yard, the card-player reappearing in the door of the outhouse, sliding his thumbs up and down under his suspenders. "I ask you, who's the better off? Toth, gone back to the old country with a fortune in his pocket and the rest of his life to do as he likes—or we, breaking our backs in the blast furnaces to keep body and soul together?"

Mike didn't reply. Joe shrugged slightly, one hand holding his pipe near his mouth, the other cupping an elbow.

"I tell you, Mike, it starts a man thinking."

"Yes."

Mary called, "Mihal, it's getting late!"

In some upstairs bedroom a melancholy boarder, far from home, was hunched over an accordion and singing about a girl whose lover from over the wooded mountains never came to see her anymore, though once they had made love every hour, every minute, every day of the week including Saturday: "*Za hory, lesy, Ma mila kde si . . .*" The mills and blast furnaces were a low rumble on the other side of the housetops, and of his song.

"Mihal!"

After a while he got slowly to his feet. "Toth could make a pretty good speech when he gets back to his village," he said.

Bodnar grunted still seething. Joe looked up at his brother. "A speech?"

Mike nodded, and a far-away look came into his eyes and his voice took on the formal tone appropriate to oratory.

"I was thinking he could stand up before the people who had gathered to welcome him home and he could say to them, 'My friends, in my youth I went to America to make my fortune, as the saying is. I dreamt of some day returning here rich and famous. Money in my pocket, maybe even my picture in the papers. You all know what thoughts will come into a young man's head when he is going to America. So off I went and now I've come back, and here I am. Rich and famous.'"

Mike stood above them for a moment, a faint, amused, twisted smile on his lips. "Rich and famous," he repeated quietly.

Then he shook his head, as a man will when he finds something too much for him, and went inside to get ready for work.

STEPHEN FRITCHMAN: UNITARIAN CATALYST

REUBEN W. BOROUGH

ALMOST any Sunday morning, if you visit the cathedral of Los Angeles Unitarianism, you will find him flaying the devils of the profit system. A slightly stooped, middle-aged, baldish clerical in crimson-stoled robe of black, he stands behind his massive pulpit, stern eyes sweeping a packed and tense auditorium, voice crying forth indictments against the depredations of the power elite.

In the rounded assault of the year no major social iniquity escapes. The waste and terror of atomic war and the preparation for it, the idiocy of brinkmanship in international affairs, the degradation and cruelty of racial segregation and the mob violence that compels it, the perversion of the American mind by the communications media, the suppression of free speech and free thought by governmental agencies, the mounting threat of mass unemployment—all these, along with the personal foibles and sins of his listeners, are pilloried by this relentless critic. But for his springboard of resilient humanism and his colloquial habit of humorous self-deprecation, he would indubitably rank as a modern Savonarola.

Stephen Hole Fritchman, minister of the First Unitarian Church of Los Angeles, is a native Quaker caught in youth by the emotional urges of Methodist evangelism and, in his maturer years, delivered to religious rationalism and a driving social credo that embraces the world. He was born at Cleveland, Ohio, May 12, 1902, the son of Addison and Esther (Hole) Fritchman, both of German-English descent. His educational preparation and early professional work aligned him closely with orthodoxy. After a year at the Wharton School of Finance and Commerce, University of Pennsylvania, he entered Ohio Wesleyan (Methodist) University, receiving his B.A. degree in 1924. He remained with that institution a year as instructor of English Bible. In 1928-29 he was associate editor of the (Methodist) Church School Journal in New York City. His first preaching was in Methodist pulpits.

It should be noted, for whatever pull the associations may have ex-

ercised on the dictates and restraints of evangelism, that in those early years he also attended two institutions of historic cultural significance: Union Theological Seminary, from which he received his Bachelor of Divinity degree in 1927, and New York University, which conferred upon him his Master of Arts degree in English in 1929. He was a student at Harvard Graduate School, 1930-32; associate professor of English, Boston University, 1929-32; and religious news editor, New York *Herald Tribune*, 1925-27.

THE formal break in organizational allegiance came in 1930 when he began a two-year pastorate for the First Parish, Unitarian, in Petersham, Massachusetts. Thereafter he served for six years as minister of the Unitarian Church, Bangor, Maine, and then plunged full-tilt into the educational and organizational work of the American Unitarian Association at Boston as executive director of Unitarian Youth activities. From 1943 to 1948 he was editor of the Christian (now Unitarian) Register, official organ of North American Unitarianism.

It is not to be assumed that the move from Methodism to Unitarianism brought spiritual respite for this zealous crusader. For, with his heightening sophistication, as the grosser issues of theology vanished, the sharp new challenges of the social gospel replaced them. From the turmoil of platform and editorial disputation he emerged a branded radical—a "controversial figure." His notoriety—and his fame—spread westward. The Los Angeles church, in need of a minister, reached out for him and in 1948, after several trial sermons, commandeered his services.

The phenomenal success of the 12-year Fritchman ministry at 2936 West Eighth Street is a matter of happy juxtaposition: the right man at the right place. The spokesman of progress works, not in the calm and security of subsidized walls however imposing, but in a restive scene, drawing his strength from social flux and controversy. To this rule "Steve" Fritchman was no exception. His restive scene was the independent and heterodox First Unitarian Church and its deeply harrowed city and state environment.

AS TO the church: in a distinctive way it was, in tradition and substance, a progressive outpost of middle- and upper-class society. Its founder. Caroline (Seymour) Severance, at whose home, 806 West Adams Street, the organization took form in 1877, was a woman of culture and leisure, a Cleveland, Ohio, banker's daughter who at the age of twenty married a banker. As did a number of other privileged women of her day, she gave herself whole-heartedly to such humanitarian causes

s woman suffrage, world peace, and birth control. She was especially ctive in the organization of women's clubs and was widely known as he "mother of clubs." While living in Boston in her earlier years she ounded the New England Women's Club (1868) and served three years s its first president, succeeded by Julia Ward Howe. Coming to Los Angeles in 1875, she founded the Los Angeles Free Kindergarten Association, which was re-organized in 1891 as the Friday Morning Club, of which she became first president. She was instrumental in founding the Abell Club of Los Angeles. She served as trustee of the Los Angeles ublic library and also of the First Unitarian Church.

The dominating life purposes of Madame Severance, as she was conventionally known, fall into three categories. As a sensitive child nder Presbyterian indoctrination she had been tortured by the orthodox pulpit's threat of eternal damnation and she felt herself under obligation to help banish the widespread belief in hell and its related superstitions. She was under compulsion to extend to the fullest the cultural, political and social opportunities, rights and duties of women. Under the promptings of a benign solicitude for the "under-privileged" nd the unfortunate she joined with other influential California women n support of the state's welfare activities for the protection of women nd children in industry. She placed the stamp of her intelligent liberalism upon the religious institution which she founded.

It would be a mistake, however, to assume that either Caroline Severance or her new church was in alliance with the working-class radicalism that infected Los Angeles before and after the turn of the century nd drove the Los Angeles *Times* into its relentless crusade against closed-hop unionism. There is no indication that either lent sympathy or support for the Harriman Socialist-led labor-union campaign for Mayor n 1911. Like Hiram Johnson's new Progressive Party (1910-1920), the hurch and its founder remained aloof from the harsher aspects of labor's ruggles. It was not until the 1930's and 1940's that Los Angeles Unirians could boast three preachers who were advocates of socialism.

Now as to the environing city and state. If the church, though of rogressive social outlook, was circumspect in action, not so the comunity's democratic masses. In the fifty years and more preceding he Fritchman ministry the political terrain had been sown with radical eresies by organizations of startling, though sometimes brief, vitality.

Of these one of the most effective was the Progressive Party, which nder the leadership of the brilliant young San Francisco lawyer, Hiram ohnson, smashed the Republican Party's Tory machine, delivered the ate government from the control of the Southern Pacific and its corpor-

ate allies, and instituted enduring structural changes in the state's politics and business.

THE collapse of the nation's economy in the late 1920's with the accompanying catastrophic liquidation of enterprises and workers brought the Roosevelt New Deal and its revolutionary and bitterly fought contribution to the California economy, the public-power, flood-control, conservation, and anti-land-monopoly program of the Central Valley Project.

Upton Sinclair mobilized his tattered EPIC (End Poverty in California) army (1934) with the naive aim of joining idle workers, idle factories and idle land in the "production of goods for use," captured the state's Democratic Party and, despite the onslaughts of business, motion pictures, radio and press, nearly captured the state.

Simultaneously one of the country's major general strikes—inescapable nightmare to employers—paralyzed San Francisco's industry and commerce.

During these years senior citizens, traditionally "independent" and "self-reliant," built powerful, stable movements for the socialized benefits of old-age pensions and medical and hospital care.

Topping it all, in 1948, came that treasonable threat to Big Business bi-partisan politics, the competing independent Progressive Party led by Henry Wallace, with its militant, anti-imperialist, pro-peace and socialist-oriented platform.

These positive events in themselves would have constituted a cultural and spiritual heritage of profound stimulus to a church of social portent. Negative factors increased their potency: the collapse and speedy disintegration of the third party movement and, at the far left, the government's ruthless drive against the Communist Party. The popular forces were reft of leadership.

With this combined church and community history as background the new minister of the First Unitarian Church took over. His trumpet call reached the politically homeless, the distraught and the disillusioned. Eager but wary rebels of the middle and working classes, they came at first only to listen. In the pews beside the correct Unitarians of liberated mind were now the social and religious non-conformists of the Jewish, Mexican-American, Japanese and Negro communities. The church which out of creedal indoctrination had nodded benevolently to the outside world found the outside world within its folds. Some-time members wedded nostalgically to the past walked out. Most of the membership stayed.

WOULD the newcomers merge into a working fellowship—"join a church"? The words had disquieting connotations. Profess a religion? From the left echoed the phrase: "opium of the people." Affirmations and disavowals of the minister helped. A declaration of belief in brotherhood, in the equal dignity of all men, in the obligation of reverence and compassion for life? Ah, that might be implicit, unavoidable. If such a conviction is not to be fervently held, where else the battle line—wherefore the ageless struggle?

The church grew. Between 1948 and 1961 the membership increased from 540 to more than 1,200 and the annual budget rose, through broad response in both individual contributions and organizational effort, from $28,000 to more than $90,000. With the expanded membership and organizational activity of 1960-61 came the new building program to provide room for the burgeoning church school and youth groups and the more efficient functioning of the church staff.

Racial integration spread throughout the multi-phased church life—strikingly evident in the thrilling performances of the sixty-voiced choir; in the skilled and varied contributions of guest pianists, violinists, and other artists; in the corps of meticulous ushers; in the church school where brown, black and white children learn together the triumphs of an evolving social order and an evolving cosmos; in the thriving youth groups; in the tradition-shattering square dances of the "Single Adult Club"; in Sunday morning's crowded and eager auditorium. Out of the responsive rank and file, integration reached up into the leadership of church committees and agencies, including the top governing board of twelve trustees. In January, 1958, the membership, on the recommendation of the minister, selected as Minister of Administration a distinguished Negro clergyman, the Rev. Lewis A. McGee, of Yellow Springs, Ohio, whose fine scholarship, personal warmth and administrative finesse have proven a boon to the organization.

So constituted, the church functioned with increasing spontaneity and vigor in the controversial "action" areas.

FROM the patio tables of the Fellowship for Social Justice (social action arm of the church) resolutions, petitions, telegrams, letters of commendation and condemnation poured into Washington, Sacramento, and City Hall demanding disarmament, the end of nuclear tests and the cold war and a reasoned approach to world peace; calling for the abolition of capital punishment; protesting violations of the civil rights and civil liberties of the nation's and the world's racial and political minorities. While the Fellowship, like the church, abstained from partisan

politics, it did not fail to urge upon government forward movement in matters that are the unavoidable concern of party platform makers. Out of its passion for a nationally liberalized Unitarianism the Fellowship drew up its own precise resolutions on progressive public policy and presented them at the annual meetings of the American Unitarian Association, often winning their adoption.

In the cultural field the church extended itself ambitiously, courageously. Its Public Forum Committee brought to its lecture platform such eminent scientists and intellectuals as Harlow Shapley, Linus Pauling, Robert Maynard Hutchins, Brock Chisholm, Ashley Montagu and such forthright socialists as W. E. B. Du Bois, Professor Paul Baran, Annette Rubinstein and Corliss Lamont. It packed the auditorium and often filled overflow halls.

In social service its Tuckerman Guild sent food, clothing, funds to the hungry families of Idaho's striking miners; to the impoverished Navajos of Gallup, New Mexico; to Dictator Franco's victims hospitalized in France.

Surpassing all these performances in national impact, however, was the costly, gruelling five-year battle with Los Angeles County against the imposition of a tax-exemption church loyalty oath, a struggle that ended victoriously in the June 30, 1958, decision of the United States Supreme Court affirming freedom of religion.

Will this vanguard post of Unitarianism survive? The answer, it is safe to assume, is Yes. The need for it today cannot be questioned. The need in the future will be even greater. With the rising intellectual and spiritual levels of the racial minorities and their abandonment of traditional thought and emotion patterns, with the increasing disemployment of labor by automation and other factors of the economy and the resulting disaffection of the workers, the old suppliant orthodoxies are no longer competent to serve. Mankind, with the failure, current and prospective, of exploitative economic and religious systems is leaving the darkness and fear of the myths for the light of scientific and technological conquest. The transition commands, not social and spiritual nihilism—the irresponsible and uncritical surrender of values—but rather new affirmations, the security of new disciplines, and the exhilaration of new freedoms. The predominant need is for the rationale of a vital humanism, a democratic faith for the people in their historic climb. The First Unitarian Church, catalyst of progress under the redoubtable Fritchman, meets that need. As long as it continues in its present role it should live and grow.

AN INCIDENT IN MONTGOMERY

LOIS CARPENTER

My heart's a gentle heart, it suffers much. . . .
Compassion stirs my soul; with tender touch
It bids me stand apart and, all alone,
Speak out for decency. A rock is thrown. . . .
An ancient gesture of contempt and hate.
Unreasoning, this anger, and too late!
Revulsion weakens me, I turn away,
And know, in doing so, I still betray
A principle of justice. Do I care?
The fervid din that fills this sullied square
With fury drowns my whispered, "Yes! I must!"
His blood is red on Alabama dust,
And, though a deeper color shades his face,
We share a finer bond than that of race. . . .

I've met in naked honesty of night
The "Brother's Keeper" issue, black and white.
So many hands and mouths and eyes and ears
Make up this bloodied monster, no one hears. . . .
I feel its brutal push, I smell its sweat,
I hear its vulgar curse, its ugly threat. . . .
Yet mine are White Men's feet, they move along,
Swallowed whole, I'm one, now, with the throng,
One with this frightened mass I called a mob.
I hear my voice, it falters on a sob. . . .
The words I shout are THEIR words, not my own,
And, in my hand, held tight, I feel a stone.

THE CIVIL WAR AND SONG

LOIS L. BARNES

IN OUR culture the folk and popular arts commonly receive an amused patronizing attention, if any, while primitive and allegedly *avant garde* arts are treated with solemn respect. Folk or popular songs, for example, may be something to write home about, as quaintly charming, but they are not fit for serious studies. This is one reason why Silber's *Songs of the Civil War** belongs in every library, public or private, that deals with U.S. popular history and culture. It does not belong, however, for reasons that will appear, on every piano in the land.

There has been difference of opinion about this collection and the Folkways album of recordings that is a companion to it. Horace Reynolds wrote in the New York Times Book Review (20 November 1960) that the book is "in every way an admirable one." Discussing the album, which records 30 songs from the 125 full texts, Elizabeth Lawson says that the collection or selection is confused. She finds the sentimental songs worthless and the Southern reactionary songs potentially harmful today (*The Worker* 2 April 1961). She properly objects to a "completely uncritical review" of the album by Mike Newberry which, along with vast dubious speculations on the whole history of song, speaks of this "war songfest" that is "a symphony" and "a wondrous job."

Perhaps the Columbia Press is mainly responsible for the too-inclusive, "tolerant," and "confused" character of the book but certainly not for the character of the album of recordings . Miss Lawson rightly rejects the ar-

* Compiled and edited by Irwin Silber, piano and guitar arrangements by Jerry Silverman. Illustrated. Columbia University Press, New York, 385 pages. $7.50. (1960).

gument that scholarship must present both sides fairly. What if there are three sides? What if there are two and one is overwhelmingly moral and the other vicious? Scholarship can seldom be impartial and is most dishonest when bragging about its objectivity and disapproving of "value judgments." Irwin Silber, as Miss Lawson notes, says that he is not neutral, and his collection is for the Union and against slavery and white supremacy. At the same time he does seem to wear a half-halo of scholarly fair play, and I wish he had simply made a collection of the best songs he could find without being so academic and comprehensive about it.

Mr. Silber, I think, spreads himself too thin over all the kinds of popular songs of the period and their background. He lists a grab-bag full of criteria that he used for selecting the songs—among them a) popularity, b) musical worth, c) historical significance, d) representation of main trends, e) interest in singing the songs today, f) the editor's personal taste. For a *song* book, item e) must be *the* criterion. Thus, in place of sentimental and inspirational songs, there might have been many more of the best folk songs of the time. Good folk songs are consistently better than popular-commercial songs both as music and poetry, and this is a field where Irwin Silber shines.

MISS Lawson, speaking of the Folkways album, says that the worst songs are Confederate, but rather unfortunately she singles out "I'm a Good Old Rebel," which is not typical. I would agree, however, that this song should not be recorded or put into song books along with others that can best be sung when we wear our Confederate caps and wave the Stars and Bars at sports events in which Negroes are participating. At the same time, there is not much reason to fear, with Miss Lawson, that the segregationists will pick up such a song from Irwin Silber and use it against humanity, for it has been widely printed and recorded elsewhere. Elizabeth Lawson quotes "these vicious lines":

> Three hundred thousand Yankees lie stiff in Southern dust;
> We got three hundred thousand before they conquered us;
> They died of Southern fever and Southern shell and shot;
> I wish it was three millions instead of what we got.

These are ugly lines but better than "vicious" is Silber's description of the song's "defiant venom and unconquerable bitterness." Differences in class attitudes toward the war, in the South, are involved here. Major

Innes Randolph, the Virginia aristocrat who wrote the song, apparently viewed this backwoods bitterness with an amusement that was not only sympathetic but patronizing. To him, and later to British royalty, the song was at least half a joke.

TODAY, I think, a decent person singing it would have to treat it as all joke, and such comic singing would inevitably have a cynical corrupt character. I haven't heard the Folkways recording of the song and can't judge the style. But I once heard this song produced in a serious and passionate manner at a folksong festival in New England, by a clever and vicious person. While he expressed love of all folksongs if they were down-to-earth and primitive, "Good Old Rebel" was the only song that he chose to sing. Such persons might have influence on thousands of singing progressive young people. To them this book and these records may say: Folkways singers and Irwin Silber say it's all right to sing those Confederate songs. I do think that an exceptional song like "Good Old Rebel" can be usefully quoted—in a people's history of the U.S. or an anthology of popular poetry—but it is not just the thing for a wholesale family or community sing.

Worse, in general, were the inspirational songs of the Confederacy. The most popular, notes Mr. Silber, got their melodies from the North or from Europe. "Dixie" was written in New York, for the minstrel stage, by Dan Emmett, and "Maryland" had a free ride to popularity on the tune of "Tannenbaum." The lyrics of most were badly written and the sentiments insincere: these songs avoided the uncomfortable subject of slavery and their references to freedom have the ring of uncertainty.

Mr. Silber says that these songs are "extremely important" for what they tell of the "American South in the middle of the nineteenth century, and for their reflection of the hopes and dreams and outlook of both the political leaders and the common people of 'The Lost Cause'." Even if this plausible-sounding statement were true, that would not justify putting such pieces in this *song* book. And I don't believe that they tell us much about the South and the Common People. That "Lost Cause" was not theirs and, if Mr. Aptheker is right, most of them never thought it was, though, during four years of suffering many bad bitter old rebels must have been created. These "patriotic" songs do tell us a little about the slave owners and their hangers-on, especially about their feudal or cavalier affectation and their literary poses.

UNFORTUNATELY Irwin Silber barely touches on this most important aspect of the Southern songs of inspiration and sentimentality—

the chivalric nonsense that Mark Twain discussed so interestingly (as borrowed, chiefly, from the novels of Scott). Where the phenomenon can hardly be ignored, in a Northern satire called "High-Toned Southern Gentleman," Mr. Silber does note it briefly. But he fails to explain, with songs like "Stonewall Jackson's Way," just why we should sing them or why we encounter in them Displaced Persons from Camelot such as Longstreet at the battle of Antietam:

> The sun's bright lances rout the mists
> Of morning, and, by George!
> Here's Longstreet struggling in the lists,
> Hemmed in an ugly gorge.

What a rum place for the lists! By gorge! Ugly one, too.

Another example of these expendable songs is "We Conquer or Die" which begins:

> The war drum is beating, prepare for the fight,
> The stern bigot Northmen exults in his might. . . .

It is difficult to see why such verses, with tunes arranged for piano and guitar, should today be warbled forth by anyone with whatever objectivity and historical sense. In his note (page 56) Mr. Silber says this song is a good example of a "great host" (really quite a small host, he suggests on page 50) of "Southern propaganda efforts." Is this a reason for printing it, much less for singing it? The next argument is even less persuasive. "What is most distinguished about this song is the fact that its composer also wrote 'Jingle Bells.'"

One of the worst-written of the famous Confederate songs was "Maryland, My Maryland," an except for speaking of its "florid imagery" and a "high-sounding couplet" in his note on a Northern reply to "Maryland," Irwin Silber seems to think well of these verses—reactionary, pretentious, ridiculous though they are. In the second stanza we have:

> My Mother State, to thee I kneel
> Maryland, my Maryland!
> For life or death, for woe or weal,
> Thy peerless chivalry reveal,
> And gird they beauteous limbs with steel. . . .

Here again the Southern aristocracy pretends that it isn't fighting a mod-

ern war with guns but wields sword and lance and wears armor. The young knight, it seems, is kneeling for his mother's blessing before riding off to help Longstreet in the lists. But suddenly it is Mother who is the chevalier and must struggle into an iron suit.

Mr. Silber calls this one of the three "best and most popular songs of the Confederacy" (8), a "fervent plea," an "impassioned" song." When someone added "My Maryland" to three lines of each stanza to make it fit the tune of "Tannenbaum," this, says Mr. Silber, in his opinion, gave the song "an added poetic dimension" (55). This is high praise, I think, for juvenile verse that has no poetic dimensions to speak of.

Stanza 1 is perhaps exceptionally pretentious and, in it, incidentally, the editor or the Columbia Press or the printer mangles a Latin tag:

> *"Sic temper!"* 'tis the proud refrain
> That baffles minions back amain. . . .

That a University Press let "temper" replace "semper," along with illiteracies in the text, suggests that U.S. education may be worse off than we had thought. As for a refrain that "baffles minions back amain," that is such elegant archaic language that I cannot say whether it is illiterate or not. In any event, who could *sing* it?

As for the sentimental songs, a few lines from "Somebody's Darling," words by Marie Ravenal de la Coste, may be enough to make a parallel criticism of the policy of selection of songs. As a soldier dies in a hospital,

> Give him a kiss, but for somebody's sake,
> Murmur a prayer for him, soft and low;
> One little curl from his golden mates take,
> Somebody's pride they were once, you know. . . .

Artistically this could hardly be worse. Are we to sing it seriously? Impossible. Comically? A dying soldier is not a good subject.

SUCH artistic and political uncertainty in Mr. Silber's editing persists into the final section of Post-War Songs, with "The Blue and the Gray." When in 1867 women in Mississippi put flowers on Union as well as rebel graves, a New Yorker wrote what Mr. Silber calls a "tender and moving poem." Here is the last stanza:

No more shall the war cry sever,
Or the winding rivers be red;
They banish our anger forever,
When they laurel the graves of our dead.
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the Judgment Day,
Love and tears for the Blue,
Tears and love for the Gray (355)

This pious, sentimental, false, too literary piece does not move me to any tender feelings but to a mild nausea. It is sweetly tolerant and resembles many of the Confederate songs in expressing superficial ideas and emotions with a fourth-rate elegance. On the other hand, soldier parodies of sentimental and patriotic songs in the book are realistic and often amusing, and I think that many more of these would be desirable in such a song book.

SONGS dealing with national and cultural groups, their valor in war, their dialect speech, nicknames, stereotypes are of course hot with meaning today, and again the editorial policy is weak. The Irish get a lot of credit as soldiers and the Germans who, I suspect, contributed far more militarily (many being revolutionaries of 1848), are less praised. I see no mention of Jews. Perhaps there were no particular songs from them or about them but they could have had a brief polite bow in the text. Of 200,000 Jews in the whole country 6,000 were Union soldiers. There were a number of Jewish generals and colonels and 205 captains, most winning combat promotions as did my fellow-Hoosier Frederick Knefler who rose from Private to brevet Major General in the field.

As for dialect, the editor says that he has avoided it in Negro and white mountain *folk* songs because there was no single dialect (270). I think there are other reasons for avoiding dialect spelling. In the minstrel and comic songs Mr. Silber retains the spellings of the originals for Negro, Irish and German dialects, explaining that this is "a matter of historical fact and significance" and adding: "It is my view that scholarship and history must deal with authentic materials" (303). Who dares challenge this bold view? A book used by people for singing songs, however, should avoid dialect spellings and racial and national ridicule. Mr. Silber suggests that performing artists should translate the dialects into "more reasonable" English, but this will not cope with the unhappy influence of stereotypes as this song book is used in the home and elsewhere.

II

FURTHER criticism is more precisely concerned with scholarship and history. The editor says he chose 125 songs from some ten thousand, mostly from sheet music and "songsters" (song books) of the period (4). This was no doubt good archival work but for a song book he might have made more use of obvious sources such as the collections of Botkin, the Lomaxes, and Sandburg. For example, a dull sentimental song might have been replaced by a humorous one that. Carl Sandburg says, he and other children wept over, "Poor Kitty Popcorn." Apparently this was a soldier's song about a Southern kitten that perished on the grave of a Northern soldier to whom she had become devoted.

Oh, she had a happy home beneath the Southern sky,
But she packed her goods and left it when our troops came by,
And she fell into the column with a low glad cry,
"Me-o-o-o-w!"

Perhaps the well-known (now paper-bound) *Lay My Burden Down,* reminiscences of former slaves edited from WPA materials by B A. Botkin, could have enriched the notes. One old woman remembered how her owner would come to the slave quarters and make all the children sing "Dixie." "Seems like 'Dixie' his main song. I tell you I don't like it now. . . ." Another ex-slave remembered an odd little song that one of Sherman's soldiers sang in praise of his rifle, beginning

Here's my little gun,
His name is number one.

And it ends

Snap Poo, Snap Peter,
Real rebel eater.

In the current Civil War romance now playing at your local bookstore, such gallant bloodthirsty spirit is generally ascribed to rebels only.

Elizabeth Lawson finds the notes to the recordings excellent and Horace Gregory calls those in the book "meaty and interesting." They seem to me extremely uneven. Some are for specialists, others excellent for anyone, others dull and inadequate for anyone. Mr. Silber writes a very interesting short biography of one Charles Halpine who wrote "Sambo's

Right to be Kilt." But why a biography of him and not of the major composers—Dan Emmett, George F. Root, Henry C. Work, and Stephen Foster? In this as in much else there seems to have been a lack of planning and care.

MANY statements about political and musical history seem hasty, ill-considered, and journalistic. In an opening picture "nineteenth century America was a youngster among nations, a brash adolescent," and this is one of those feature-writer's half-truths that mislead so easily. This country reached a maturity, a Renaissance peak, and produced its greatest men, Franklin and Jefferson, in the revolutionary period. Irwin Silber directly or by implication minimizes all our history before the Civil War and treats this as a revolution that opened the door to true nationhood and artistic independence. This notion, very common in the Civil War industry, can be seen in more explicit statement by T. Harry Williams of Louisiana State University in the *Times* Book Review (12 March): "the Civil war is *the* episode in the American story. There is an experience in the history of all nations that is central or pivotal. . . ." Well, let me pivot with the American Revolution right along with the French, English, Russian, Chinese, Cuban, etc. The Civil War seems to be primarily the defeat of a counter-revolution.

Mr. Silber also makes the War pivotal in the development of U.S. music and literature and speech and substantially ignores all that had grown and matured before—the music on the plantations, on the frontier, in great camp meetings that was, long before, thoroughly rebellious against and liberated from "the thick crust of its European legacy" and "its hidebound alien tradition" (3). He does not mention the songs of the Revolution and speedily dismisses those of 1812, which include "The Hunters of Kentucky," a song that celebrated the victory of New Orleans and became both Jackson's campaign song and a folk song. He talks of new factories, engines, tunes and speech that "the world would soon call 'American'" as if European travelers had not already found Americans too American, as if the British had not met Yankee Doodle before the Revolution, as if there had been no Yankee Age of Invention before the Civil War, no new kind of American Man in a Franklin or a Jackson, no national authors like Cooper and Whitman.

Introducing Negro songs, the editor says that "The history of the Civil War is the history of slavery . . ." which must be bad writing or bad thinking or simply meaningless. And here (269) he basically contradicts, I believe, his prime thesis about the decisive change the War made

in U.S. music. Now the "explosion" takes place earlier, when "various African cultures came into contact with the Anglo-Saxon and Scotch-Irish musical traditions of the white South in the circumstances of slavery. . . ." And this explosion, he says, "has been responsible for every subsequent significant American musical style." This seems sound enough. And it makes hash of his former argument. Now we pivot and explode before the Civil War. But, again, the image of "explosion" fails to contain the facts. There was independent development of white and Negro music; there was mutual influence; there were limited mergers on the minstrel stage, in churches, in jazz; and still there are independent white and Negro styles and traditions. In both his contradictory theses Mr. Silber ignores almost completely the developments that necessarily preceded the explosions—if there were any.

MY FINAL objection will be to the careless or thoughtless acceptance of the clichés about sad plaintive spirituals. Songs about the "giants of Israel," "fiery prophets" like Daniel and Joshua, are ones "whose plaintive melodies and sadly beautiful refrains belied the turbulence of their expression" (270). I suppose that by "expression" Mr. Silber means "words." And he writes of "Steal Away": "It is hard to think of a melody in any music more plaintive, more fragile, less militant in spirit and tempo. . . ." But how does he know the spirit and tempo with which slaves sang this spiritual? Consider the lines,

> My Lord calls me,
> He calls me by the thunder;
> The trumpet sounds within—a my soul,
> I ain't got long to stay here.

There is nothing in the melody or words to deny the most militant and vigorous and triumphant singing. But it is an unfortunate modern tradition in the U.S. to sing the old spirituals in a slow whine, spiritless, self-pitying, non-rebellions. Usually *"Tell* old Pharaoh" sounds like "Please, Mr. Pharaoh."

III

TO SUM up. As a song book, this has fatal weaknesses; as an essay in social and musical history and theory it is a flop; as scholarship it has the rather narrow virtues of being based on the exploration of

much sheet music and many songsters, and of being accurate enough in quotation and references. Yet *Songs of the Civil War* has one large virtue that can make it valuable to many people. It collects and makes available much that is little known or hard to find: complete and partial texts of songs and a great variety of material in their musical and social backgrounds. For this alone we can be very grateful to Mr. Silber's diligence, enthusiasm, and sharp if not unfailing eye for what is interesting, unusual, valuable in our heritage of both democratic and anti-democratic songs in the Civil War period.

Mr. Silber's faults are generous ones and his sins are of commission. His big rich book, though it attempts too much and is unevenly good and bad, does avoid the over-specialization so common now in the Civil War business—which sells "The Diary of Private G. D. Fernwhistle, Covering Twenty-Seven Minutes of the Heroic Retreat of Company B, 47th Mizoo Irregulars, down the Sassafrass River."

I hope Irwin Silber will forgive me for suggesting so briefly, in a kind of list, some of the prizes that come with the book. A suggestion of prisoners' humorous courage (14):

> Oh, may that cuss, Jeff Davis, float . . .
> On stormy sea, in open boat,
> In Iceland's cold without a coat. . . .

Examples of hard-come-by (see 51) anti-officer songs—from one of the best:

> Whisky is a monster, and ruins great and small,
> But in our noble army, Headquarters gets it all. . . . (199)

Interesting indications of Confederate defeatism from a Colonel and a major: a song (54) and a reminiscence of the discouragement that resulted from the Yankees singing "The Battle Cry of Freedom" one rainy night after they had been defeated six days running (9). Frank admission in Confederate 'Yankee Doodle' songs of some real issues in the war:

> Proud Independence is the cry
> Of Sugar, Rice and Cotton.
> King Cotton is a monarch
> Who'll Conquer Abolition. (173)

There are the vulgar, vicious, and dishonest attacks on Lincoln (e.g., 93):

> You may call your black battalions
> to aid your stinking cause,
> And substitute your vulgar jokes
> For liberty and laws.

And there is a good objective folk ballad, "Booth Killed Lincoln."

A surprisingly good sentimental song, "All Quiet Along the Potomac," about a picket shot by a sniper, with strong democratic feeling: "Not an officer lost, only one of the men" (129). Soldier parodies of "Just Before the Battle, Mother," one Confederate and another from World War I:

> When I'm safely back, dear mother,
> From thy side I'll never roam,
> I will fight my younger brother
> In tranquility at home. (122).

ONE of many parodies of "When Johnny Comes Marching Home" contains delightful lines of nonsense (given here without the choruses):

> There was a man went to the war,
> The greatest fool you ever saw.
> He had a hat but ne'er a coat,
> So he buttoned his pantaloons up to his throat.
> The ladies fell in love with him,
> His maiden name, I think, was Jim. (175)

There is a fine account of the success of a peace song in wartime (167) and of the Irish and their songs and service (177-79):

> 'Twas hand to hand we fought 'em all in the broiling sun,
> Stripped to the pants we did advance at the Battle of Bull Run!

There is an interesting account of songs dealing with draft-dodging and substitutes (304-5), including "Grafted Into the Army," the most popular, which Mr. Silber perceptively calls an "oddly seriocomic piece."

Our Jimmy has gone for to live in a tent . . .
He finally puckered up courage and went. . . .

There is an excellent brief description of the minstrel stage at the time (306).

FINALLY I would like to thank Mr .Silber for a song that is of exceptional literary and political interest today. "High-Toned Southern Gentleman" seems to anticipate both the "talking blues" and Ogden Nash's rhyming lines of irregular length, two of the most effective as well as amusing devices in modern U.S. poetry. Here is one example. The gentleman plays euchre. The stanza ends as follows with the italicized words, Mr. Silber says, "chanted in a monotone at an increasing tempo":

And if he wins, why then he stops to pocket all the stakes,
But if he loses then he says *to the unfortunate stranger*
who had chanced to win, "It's my opinion you are a
cursed Abolitionist, and if you don't leave South Carolina
in an hour, you'll be hung like a dog!" but no offer
to pay his losses makes;
This "high-toned Southern gentleman," one of the present time.

Indeed he seems to be very much the same at this present time, too.

HIROSHIMA

REWI ALLEY

Dawn over Hiroshima
as we ride in from the station
taxi radio blaring the voice
of an American crooner
"I love you . . . I love yoo-uu
In the cool of the morning
we go to a shrine, where
victims come with flowers
children who have lost mothers;
parents their children; then
as the day drops its hours
and night falls, the new city
shattered dome still standing
at its centre, is blotted out,
the river becomes a highway
connecting past and present;
ten thousand lanterns floating
in dreamy, ethereal beauty,
their message—"sleep in peace
you who were burnt, seared out
of this world; who have suffered
the agony of the damned, driving in
the lesson to all people of what
is planned for them"; hands pass
lanterns down to the riverside

* The author attended the 7th World Peace Conference held in Japan, August 1961.

children's eyes open wide, with
lights that pass reflecting in them;
fingers touch in fellow feeling
as lanterns go; some of the hands
from people come from other lands
to throw in their strength with these
a whole chain of meaning going from
Hiroshima, around a world seeking a way
to halt the plunder that breeds war;
Then in the day that followed
a call at a hospital—there lie
some of those injured sixteen
years before; seeing for a moment
through their eyes, eyes doomed
too soon to rot away; listen
to stories of lives wrecked;
"my two children born with bones
so brittle they can but crawl
on sleeping mats" then "my daughter
has just died, my son longs for death,
I myself know my days are few"—tale
after tale falling on ears like
great drum beats warning humanity
of what lies in store should it not
struggle to dig out the root
of that thing which would take all;
"We victims can never feel sure until
the absolute ban is placed on all
atomic war," then again a stronger note,
"Tears are not enough; Who would do
this thing to peoples? It is these
we must hold to account; Mankind
must not suffer in resignation, piously!
We cannot forgive or forget. We organize!"

Night and we pulled out
of Hiroshima, thinking as sleep
did not come, of those haunting
faces, telling their stories; yet
knowing too that with these lay

leadership struggling to express itself,
that will not permit its cause to be
trampled under, consigned to oblivion
just because there are forces
which want just that while they plan
new deviltry against the cause
of awakening man.

The old castle at Hiroshima still
looks dreamily out to sea; swift
rivers go on flowing down from
forested hills; the streets ever
fill with children who have come
since that tragic day that now
fades into the past; much the same
yet more is changed for now the winds
that blow around the Pacific, take
something else from Hiroshima; a growing
determination that the plunderers
be halted; all children be allowed
to live as flowers should in light
and glory, growing in banks of gorgeous colour
together.

Hiroshima, 7th *August,* 1961.

THE ART AND SCIENCE OF C. P. SNOW

SIDNEY FINKELSTEIN

THE general esteem in which the novels of C. P. Snow are held on both sides of the Atlantic is a tribute to the issues he raises in them. He writes at the opposite extreme from Joyce, Proust, D. H. Lawrence, Faulkner or Kafka. There are no extended streams of consciousness, dream symbolisms, parallels to ancient myths, or naturalisms of sex and toilet to be found in his books. He has a principled objection to such forms of excessive inwardness, which involve to him not only a method but a philosophy, an outcry of man's loneliness connected to a view of the outer world as irrational and meaningless. He describes his choice in the essay, *Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution*:

> There is, in fact, a connection which literary persons were culpably slow to see, between some kinds of early twentieth-century art and the most imbecile expressions of anti-social feeling. That was one reason, among many, why some of us turned our backs on the art and tried to hack out a new or different way for ourselves.

Among the issues Snow raises in his novels is the difficulty which gifted people born among the poor have in making something of their talents, or in other words the loss to society due to the domination of educational life and opportunity by caste, class and money. Another is the quest for moral standards in a society shot through with duplicity and self-serving. A third is the two-edged sword of the "new science," the mastery of nuclear energy; on the one hand, the possibility of the elimination of disease and poverty, and on the other, the threat of the terrible destruction of human life.

Snow's style is lucid, thoughtful, socially oriented, not seeking to cast

a spell and draw the reader into his own subjective life or fantasy but speaking to the reader as one thinking person to another, about matters with which mature people should be concerned. And he knows what he is talking about. This knowledge is more than a matter of study, research or boning up on a problem. The average person is concerned enough with war and peace, nuclear energy, poverty and plenty. They involve his own life, hopes, family and future. But a great many have resigned themselves to the fact that their needs and wishes have no influence at all upon the way in which such questions are settled. Those questions involve mysterious forces beyond anybody's ability to command, so that governments merely blunder in and out of them, or else they are seen as matters decided in circles only remotely subject, if at all, to elections or whatever other way he can assert his mind. And so to the thoughtfulness with which Snow writes, the glamour is added which comes from his having been scientist as well as artist, and a member himself of the inner circles in which some such crucial decisions were made.

IT WAS after he was an established scientist that Charles Percy Snow turned to literature. He was born in 1905 in Leicester, England, in a moneyless lower middle class family. An outstanding school record, in the sciences, won him a university scholarship. He did respectable research in physics and in 1930 became a Fellow, a member of the teaching hierarchy, at a Cambridge University college. His literary apprentice works consisted of a detective story in 1932 and a science fantasy in 1933. Then, in 1934, he produced a very serious novel, *The Search*, which apparently deals with the problem Snow himself was facing in real life, the choice between the rival vocations of science and art. It tells of a young scientist who makes a fair success but then decides that this is not his real field, for he will be nothing more than a capable journeyman in it, and so turns to writing. Shortly afterwards, Snow projected a series of connected novels, all narrated by one person, which would be a scrutiny of English social life. The first of these, *Strangers and Brothers*—this also being the title given to the entire series—appeared in 1940. Three others of the subsequently appearing novels are confined to what he might have lived through up to this time. The remainder enter into the very rich experiences he had, beginning in this period. The war had started, and Snow was taken into the government service, becoming an assistant to a Cabinet Minister with the special task of alloting scientific and technical personnel to the projects where they were most needed. This put Snow in the midst of such secret projects.

as radar, nuclear fission and the atom bomb. Near the close of the war he got an inside look at big business, becoming a director of scientific personnel at the English Electric Company, one of the giant electrical combines, and later being put on the Board of Directors. In 1945 he was appointed a Civil Service Commissioner, and in 1947 was awarded a knighthood.

It was also in 1947 that the second novel of the series appeared, *The Light and the Dark,* and since then new volumes have appeared at about two year intervals, so that eight are now in print. About two or three more are said to be planned.

THE mythical narrator of the series, Lewis Eliot, has many parallels in his career to that of C P. Snow. Eliot is born, like Snow, in 1905, in a small English town, of lower middle class folk who don't have the money to give him more than an elementary education. But, pressed by the mother, he is avid to break into the circles of life and culture which are so difficult for the poor to enter and so easy for the well-born. His career, unlike Snow's, is in law rather than science. While working as a clerk he studies to become a solicitor, with whatever money his family can scrape up. Then he makes the drastic decision to read for the Bar. This will mean a life of intense austerity and backbreaking work, take every penny he has and can borrow, and end perhaps only in failure and disaster. But he is determined to make as much of himself as he can, and to break out of the meagre livelihood and depressing cultural narrowness of lower middle class life. He passes the Bar examinations, begins what promises to be a successful career as a barrister, and then, afflicted by illness and an unfortunate marriage, moves to the more quiet life of teaching. He becomes, like Snow, a Fellow at a Cambridge college. When war comes, he has also been an adviser in the employ of one of the big English industrial combines. He is drafted into the Civil Service, becoming like Snow a Cabinet Minister's assistant, and is brought into the projects revolving about atomic energy

The "Strangers and Brothers" series, which has won for Snow the praise given to comparatively few writers today, some critics calling him the most important novelist in English today, is not a thinly veiled autobiography. The protagonist, Lewis Eliot, differs from Snow not only in that he is a lawyer, but in his personal tragedies such as his unhappy first marriage, which ends with his wife's suicide. Furthermore in some of the novels, Eliot is only partially involved as the narrator, while other figures play the major role.

But on the other hand, the series is not the panoramic view of modern English history and social life which it is sometimes claimed to be. It is quite different in spirit, for example, from Balzac's "Human Comedy," which offers in a series of connected novels so broad a sweep of French history and changing social life. Snow does not have the imagination of the great social realist, with the eager desire to know how everybody lives, to probe into every class of society and every kind of experience, to put oneself into the skin of someone whose life is so different that he seems at first to come from another world.

The novels actually fall between these two poles. Snow never quite gets out of his own skin. His books represent a kind of inverse subjectivity, his personal problems turned outward and traced in terms of their social behavior. It is as if Snow were using the form of the novel, with its invented characters, to give his own life something of an objective examination, trying to clarify the values which guide him and the happiness or lack of it they brought him. The main story which he tells over and over again is the search for a way of social morality and personal integrity, for a standard of life different from a tooth-and-nail struggle for survival in a jungle world. Even those novels (like *Strangers and Brothers. The Light and the Dark*, and *The Conscience of the Rich*) in which the narrator, Lewis Eliot, moves to the wings of the stage and other characters take the major roles, are closely connected to Eliot's problems, and though this, to Snow's. For the three protagonists, respectively George Passant, Roy Calvert and Charles March, who are Eliot's closest friends, represent a kind of solution, a choice of values, different from Eliot's. And so what happens to them becomes, to Eliot, a confirmation of the validity of his own choice.

AN OUTSTANDING virtue of the writing is its bluff honesty, presenting life in its tangled motives and clashing purposes, sharply separating facts as they are from what anyone would subjectively wish them to be. There is also poetry in the novels, of a subdued, low-keyed kind, expressing the tenderness for those whom Eliot loved, or who were spiritually his "brothers" but suffered tragic setbacks and frustrations. But Snow's attitude towards truth is more that of a scientist, isolating a hypothesis for testing in a laboratory, than that of an artist who follows wherever life beckons. His novels, for all their realistic tone, tend to be laboratory "test cases," with the conditons rigidly limited to what will assist in working out his hypothesis and arrive at the clearest conclusions. Their themes make up a series of debates by Snow with himself,

soberly, honestly and in many sections beautifully written, attaining a moving eloquence. On this basis the issues raised by each of the novels will be examined, taking the novels in order of their appearance. The dates in parentheses indicate the historical period that each of them covers.

Strangers and Brothers, 1940 (1925-33).

The central figure is George Passant, whom Lewis Eliot regards as one of the most remarkable men he has ever met. They become acquainted when Lewis is twenty years old and George is twenty-five. Eliot is still in his home town, studying to become a solicitor, and attends lectures by George, who is a brilliant legal mind and as a clerk in a solicitor's office, does most of the brain work for the firm. George comes from a poor family, is abusive of the caste restrictions which make it so difficult for one in his circumstances to get ahead, and becomes a political radical, believing, as Eliot says, "in the perfectibility of man." He is always ready to empty his pockets for someone in difficulties, and lends Lewis money to study for the bar. (In England, where much legal work is done by solicitors, to enter the Bar, and become a barrister, has much more prestige than in the United States). George organizes a club of young people who meet to discuss art and politics, to criticize existing institutions, and sometimes, to make love.

When one of the partners in the solicitors' firm retires, George feels that the partnership should go to him. But he is refused this, because of his radical and unconventional tendencies. Embittered, he goes into a business operation with a friend of rather doubtful honesty. The deal takes on a shady character, which George is not really aware of. The law cracks down. Lewis Eliot, who by now is a member of the Bar, helps keep George from a conviction, but George's prospects for a career are nevertheless ruined. Two theses emerge. One is that the waste of great gifts like those of George, because of class prejudice, and the power of "family" and money in English life. The other is the fact that George, by his quixotic defiance of social conventions, has helped ruin himself, becoming an "outsider." Eliot, by compromising with the demands of society, has had a better chance at making something of himself.

The Light and the Dark, 1947 (1934-43).

THE central character is Roy Calvert, who is five years younger than Lewis Eliot, and whom Lewis had known in his youth but who becomes a close friend in the 1930's, when they both are Fellows at the col-

lege in Cambridge. Roy, like George Passant, is also an "outsider," who cares nothing for conventional opinions, but where George's approach is from the Left, Roy's is from the Right. Roy comes from a wealthy but rather unhappy family. A handsome youth, he is immensely attractive to women, but he himself seems to have homosexual tendencies, and develops a series of "crushes" on men whose personality and intellect are somewhat on the negative side. He becomes a scholar of ancient languages approaching genius. Afflicted by a deep and pervading melancholy, completely unselfish but always feeling tragically alone, he has affairs with women but is incapable of any love attachment. He turns to religion but cannot believe in God, lamenting that he should have been happier at some earlier time "when it was easier to believe." His thinking is very much like that of T. E. Hulme, and the Cambridge young conservatives, who despised bourgeois society, despised even more the common people and any concepts of social progress, and found refuge in authority, the Middle Ages, and the "new classicism." He has read Marx, and finds Marxist thought "realistic about the past," but "wildly romantic about the future. Why, it believes it's quite easy to make men good." He goes to Nazi Germany as a visiting scholar, and but for some reservations, such as the treatment of the Jews, fanatically embraces fascism. This is the "revolution" he wants to throw himself into, and he tries to convert Lewis Eliot. But as Roy later explains, when war has broken out, "I was clutching at anything, of course." In a suicidal move, he enlists in the branch of the air force which he learns is the most dangerous, that of a bomber pilot, and gets killed.

IT IS worth noting that Roy Calvert's tragic sense of loneliness is not radically different from what Lewis Eliot and his creator, C. P. Snow, feel. Snow writes in *Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution* (pp. 6, 7):

> Most of the scientists I have known well have felt—just as deeply as the non-scientists I have known well—that the individual condition of each of us is tragic. Each of us is alone: sometimes we escape from solitariness, through love or affection or perhaps creative moments, but those triumphs of life are pools of light we make for ourselves while the edge of the road is black: each of us dies alone. . . .But nearly all of them—and this is where the colour of hope genuinely comes in—would see no reason why, just because the individual condition is tragic, so must the social condition be. Each of us is solitary; each of us dies alone: all right, that's a fate against which we can't struggle—but there is plenty in our condition which

is not fate, and against which we are less than human unless we do struggle.

This is pretty well Lewis Eliot's answer to Roy Calvert's "alternative." It puts clearly and eloquently Snow's case for what he calls the "scientist's optimism," and also the limitations with which he surrounds this optimism.

Time of Hope, 1949 (1914-33).

This is one of the two novels in the series which come closest to a straight autobiographical narrative by Lewis Eliot. There is a fine picture of Eliot's family; the father pathetically helpless in the rough and tumble of business life, the mother determinedly ambitious to make something better of her children, and Aunt Milly who is intolerantly scornful of the family's ineptness, but lends Lewis two hundred pounds to help him read for the Bar. With this, a three hundred pound bequest from an uncle, a loan from George Passant, and some harsh, ascetic, disciplined years of study, Lewis breaks into a new social milieu, breathing its heady air. With careful work and some luck, there is no telling how high he can go. But most of the novel deals with his tragic love.

The woman, Sheila, is the only child of a fairly well-to-do, but disturbed family. Beautiful, sensitive, intelligent, eager for joy but unhappy, proud, unable to love anyone, she is inextricably wrapped up in herself. Eliot is head over heels in love, and the courtship takes seven years, during which sometimes she seems deeply attached to him, and sometimes leaves him abruptly for another man. Eliot's friends tell him that she can only do him harm, and when she finally consents to marry him, in the defeated spirit of one who has nowheres else to turn, what they predict proves to be true. His love is soon overtaxed, and the young barrister, who must use all his energies to establish himself in the profession, finds himself without help, and with the need to care for a mentally unwell woman. They bicker with one another, and he finally tells her that they must part. She agrees. She has brought him nothing but misery. But as she is about to leave, he calls her back.

> I could not send her away. I could not manage it. I knew with complete lucidity what it meant. . . . I was about to sentence myself for life. Yet there was no conflict within me. . . . Like all the other decisions of my life, this had been taken before I admitted it—perhaps when I knew she was lost, certainly when I saw her, upright in her pride, asserting that there was nothing for her. She faced it without pretense. I had never

known her pretend. And she would set her will to live accordingly. She would move from hotel to hotel, lonely, more eccentric as each year passed. I could not bear to let her. There was no more to it than that. Whatever our life was like, it was endurable by the side of what she faced. I must stay by her.

This scene, with its statement of the responsibility one human being must feel for another, is one of the most moving sections of the entire series.

The Masters, 1951 (1937).

THIS is one of the two novels whose setting is an unnamed college at Cambridge University. The Master—a post involving far more prestige and stature than the American term "college president" would suggest—is known to be dying of cancer. There are two candidates for his position, which is to be filled by election of the Fellows. The campaign lines are drawn, and in the jockeying of the rival parties for votes, all the idiosyncrasies, antagonisms, and jealousies in the faculty come to the surface. Of the two rivals, one, Paul Jago, is obviously the better administrator. The other, Thomas Crawford, is a distinguished scientist, but stiff, cold, insensitive, and not fitted for administration. A political factor, however, enters the situation. It is 1937, the war in Spain is raging, and feelings are hot between those who are for the pro-Chamberlain, appeasement policy, and those who are for the Spanish republic and the stopping of Hitler. Jago is on the Tory appeasement side. Crawford is for aid to Spain, and a halt to fascism.

To Lewis Eliot, who is a liberal and anti-fascist, the course for a man of integrity is clear. However he dislikes Jago's politics, he respects Jago for his human qualities, and knows him to be the better man for the job. So he votes, and tries to convince others. But not all see it this way, and while the voting is not wholly on political lines, one or two are swayed by such considerations and that is enough to throw the election to Crawford.

The novel is one of the most successful of the series, in the beautiful creation by Snow, within the framework of a college faculty, of a living, organic little society, showing the human side of these men, some of whom are among the brightest intellectual lights of England. The thesis of "fair play," of not allowing political considerations to interfere with the judgment of who is the best man for the job, emerges effectively. We can overlook the contrived "laboratory" situation, which makes the "good"

man in politics the "bad" man in administration. But a nagging question, which the author never considers, intrudes itself. At this time when Hitler is seeking support not only from anti-labor British capitalists but from an English fascist storm-troop movement, when fascism is carrying on its bloody murders, its bookburnings, its demolition of democratic institutions, when it is not only trying to turn civilization backward but carrying this out with bloody hands, is someone who agrees with this, a fit head for an educational institution? Does administering a college have nothing to do with the mind, and with concepts of human freedom? Novelist-scientist C. P. Snow has the right to set up his own laboratory, but the material he draws upon comes from real life, and that makes its own demands.

The New Men, 1954 (1939-46).

THE setting is the British nuclear fission project. Lewis Eliot, now in the Civil Service, has the task of helping select scientific personnel for it, and among his recommendations is his brother Martin, nine years younger than he. There is no "Martin" in real life of course, and all of the characters, political and scientific, are carefully reconstructed by Snow so that nothing in the novel could be read as a disguised comment on actual historical personages. The drama revolves about the moral issues and dilemmas.

These are most profound ones, revolving about the decisive change that has taken place in the whole history of science, and its relation to human progress and national rivalries. Traditionally, from the seventeenth century, science had regarded itself as free from politics and national boundaries. There were always of course the engineers, the inventors, the gadgeteers, the makers of concrete applications with their usefulness both to industry and to instruments of war. This was the realm of patents and trade secrets. But in its far-reaching theoretical aspects, expanding the boundaries of human knowledge, science knew no secrecy, no patents, no national barriers. Governments could be asked to allot money for the advancement of science, which they did, sometimes grudgingly. There was national pride in a home country having produced a great scientist, making a contribution to world knowledge. But there was no "American" or "British" physics, for example, contrasted to "French," "Russian," "Italian," "German," "Chinese." And by the same token, science knew no politics. There could not be a "Whig" science

in contrast to a "Tory" science. But now a turning point had come. If this freedom had always been part mythical, for the progress of science always rested, more or less directly, on the intellectual temper surrounding it, on the state of human freedom and the currents of social progress, now this freedom was altogether gone. Science in its highest theoretical reaches was subject to government control, to secrecy and to the demand for weapons of terrible destruction.

The first impulse of the scientists is to hope that there will be no successful atom bomb; in other words, that somehow science will evade this use for destruction, and get back to the expanding horizons of knowledge. But they must work for the bomb. The Nazis must not get it first. On this there is general agreement, from those who were Tory-minded, willing to follow an appeasement, pro-fascist line up to the point that Hitler attacked England, to those who had been consistently against fascism. Then, with the United States in the war, possessing immensely greater and safer facilities, most of the scientists, with their findings, are transferred across the water, and a new problem rises. Shall England still continue with the remaining handful of men, to carry on its own project? In other words, within the alliance against the fascist axis, there are still latent national rivalries, and conflicting interests. One must have an eye for the world picture after the war. This policy wins. But there is general agreement among the scientists that if "we" —that is, the allies—get the bomb, we won't use it We must have it before the fascists do. But to use it otherwise would not be civilized. One doesn't, even in war, go out to kill non-combatants, women and children by the hundreds of thousands, in one blow. And still more fearsome aspects of the bomb become known when, as the work is approaching success, there is a laboratory accident. Two of the scientists, Luke and Sawbridge, who had volunteered for particularly risky work, suffer severe radiation burns. As one scientist says, "There are enough diseases in the world, Eliot. It's no business of science to produce a new one."

A climax comes with the news that the bomb has been made in America, and the plan is to drop it on the Japanese. Political lines appear among the scientists. Especially those who are more to the left, raise the quetsion: now that science is unfree, now that it is an arm of government and national policy, must not the scientists assume a social responsibility? Have they no say over the use of their own creation? Do they simply take orders? There are many arguments that the bomb must not be used. One suggestion is that one be dropped where it will not do wholesale killing, but will show the Japanese its power. It is

known that the Japanese are making surrender proposals. One of the most telling arguments is that no major country can keep a technical lead for more than a short length of time. If the bomb is not dropped, it may never be dropped. But if it is, this sets a precedent. And the time will not be long before one country after another will develop its own atom bomb. Intensifying the question is the knowledge that what is involved is more than the Japanese, and the war, but post-war maneuvers. The right wing cries jubilantly of the bomb, "This will crack Russia wide open." The liberal and left scientists are in a dilemma. They can make public the fact that the bomb will be dropped. They can arouse a protest. But this means that they will be breaking their oath of secrecy, and be called traitors.

THE bomb is dropped, the war ends, and very skillfully, Snow conveys the change in the prevailing atmosphere. National lines are drawn tight, each country is on its own, a new diplomatic sparring has started. In England, the nuclear fission and bomb project must go on, in full swing. Martin Eliot writes a letter, addressed to the press, protesting the use of the atom bomb on Hiroshima, but Lewis dissuades him from sending it. This will only ruin Martin's career. One of the scientists who had been burned by radiation, Sawbridge, is charged with having passed information about the bomb to the Soviet Union, during the war. To Snow, who has no agreement at all with what Sawbridge has done, this is an extreme example of the scientist assuming social responsibility.

> The physicists, whose whole intellectual life was spent in seeking new truths, found it uncongenial to stop seeking when they had a look at society. They were rebellious, questioning, protestant, curious for the future and unable to resist shaping it. . . . It was . . . from the scientists, that came heretics, forerunners, martyrs, traitors.

SAWBRIDGE is tried, convicted, and sentenced to twelve years in prison. The politicians raise a furious outcry against him, but a scientist speculates that whatever information was passed to the Russians would have saved them "a few months at the most." The whole atmosphere, one may add, contrasts sharply with that here over the case of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, who were electrocuted without a single judicial review of the facts and evidence in the case, while the judge accused them of being responsible for the Korean War; of the living death given to Morton Sobell, on the same irrational grounds. Here the flames of hysteria were lit by the government and courts; the press

poured gasoline on them; a spreading, fascist-like witch-hunt caused even those who might have considered in their hearts that something less than justice was done, to be terrified to think about it, much less speak. It was—and this is still with us—the frenzy of an animal which, frustrated in its hopes, turns to rend whatever is in its grasp. This novel should be carefully studied in America, if for no other reason than to initiate a self-examination.

In Snow's novel, which raises the question of the social responsibility of the scientist so dramatically, the conclusion is a letdown. One wishes that he might consider, with the same dispassionate scientific attitude, something of the aftermath of the drama; the roots of the "cold war," and the developing peace movement, in which so many scientists took part. But Snow's ending is in line with what seems to be his basic conclusion. The issues are too powerful to handle, and one can only preserve one's own integrity, keep one's hands clean. Lewis Eliot's brother, Martin, is decisive, through his knowledge and evidence, in getting Sawbridge convicted. This, his personal integrity demands. The service he does brings him in line to get the coveted and distinguished post of heading the British nuclear fission project. An ambitious man, he has been seeking a post like this all of his life. But he is offered it and turns it down. For although it is a science project, it will nevertheless be run by politicians. "If I take the job, I shan't have the trouble of thinking for myself again."

To be free to "think for myself" is as good a statement as any of C. P. Snow's personal stand. If *The New Men,* in the matter of integration of character and action, is not the nearest of Snow's novels to homogeneity and perfection, it does raise the most central and dramatic of social issues.

Homecoming, 1956 (1938-49).

THIS is the second of the more purely autobiographical novels, a continuation of *Time of Hope.* The first part of the novel tells of the increasingly unhappy relation of Lewis Eliot and his wife Sheila, which she ends by taking an overdose of sleeping tablets. It is, I think, the least good section in the entire series of novels. Taking it as a real-life situation, it is queer that nobody thinks of getting a doctor at once, and when a doctor does come, about an hour or more later, Eliot asks, "There is no doubt, I suppose?" And one wonders whether Eliot could have done more for her than stoically bear the martyrdom of living with her.

After all, she was a sick woman. From a novelistic standpoint, Snow does not penetrate very deeply into the root of her troubles. He is not, I think, the kind of novelist whose psychological intuition breaks ground for mental study. And I must confess that I can't quite follow the tangled complications of Eliot's second love and marriage, which makes up most of the latter part of the book. The moral dilemma Snow raises, and the answer he gives, are clear enough. She is married to a good man, who loves her, and they have a child. Is it right to hurt them? The answer is that they must be hurt, because she and Eliot are made for one another, and their happiness is most important. Nor would it be right to meet clandestinely. They must make a clean issue of the situation. So the divorce and subsequent marriage takes place. Eliot, reconciled to loneliness, has unexpectedly found his "home." But not much warmth is generated, for me. The spectre of John Galsworthy floats here, and Snow has not quite got Galsworthy's touch.

In the middle section of the book, Snow is on the kind of ground where he can handle all his weapons. It is wartime. We find Eliot, who just before the war had gotten an advisory job with one of the big British industrialists, Paul Lufkin, now selecting personnel for the atomic project. With him in the government service is another former Lufkin employee, Gilbert Cooke. Into the government office barges Lufkin himself. He knows all about the "secret" project. Apparently industrialists have their private sources of information, and nobody, including Snow, seems to think this is worth making an issue of. Lufkin demands that his firm be brought into the project. In the subsequent discussions, Cooke argues effectively for giving the contract to a different firm, knowing that such concern for the winning of the war will lose him his job with Lufkin after the war. And that is exactly what happens. This is the one section of the novels in which British big business (other than simply people of wealth) is brought into the picture.

The Conscience of the Rich, 1958 (1927-1937).

WE ARE back in the 1930's, with the closing action taking place at about the time of the war in Spain. The central character is Charles March, whom Lewis Eliot gets to know when both are taking the Bar examinations. Charles March belongs to one of the wealthiest Jewish families in England. His father, Leonard March, is a retired banker, a kindly and generous person but ruling the children like the domineering head of a clan. The patriarch of the family, "Uncle Philip," also very

wealthy, has been a Conservative member of Parliament, been knighted, and is being considered for a Cabinet post.

Lewis and Charles become close friends. Lewis is envious, not so much of the March family wealth, but of the easy road it creates for Charles, in contrast to his own struggles both for education and for some standing as a barrister. Charles will have no problem of getting cases, through his family connections. But the point of the book is Charles' rebellion. Where Lewis Eliot's drive has been to move into the charmed circles of monetary comfort, public standing, and intellectual life, Charles, who can have these for the asking, moves out of them. After a successful case, he drops law altogether and studies medicine, becoming an obscure local practitioner. The main reason is the need to remove himself from the "clan," and have a life wholly his own.

Charles marries a Communist, and from this comes the final break with the family. She is connected to a little left-wing publication which prints exposures of financial manipulations, and their connections to Tory and pro-fascist politics. The editor comes upon some facts which if printed, would make the reader believe that Uncle Philip has used secret government information to make a nice financial profit. As it happened, Philip made his investment gamble without this knowledge, but the facts are damning. The March family is up in arms. The publication of this deceptive evidence must be stopped. It is in the power of Charles' wife, Ann, to do so, by ruining the publication itself. But although she does not approve of publishing this questionable data, she will not break the periodical, for she is loyal to the movement it represents. And while Charles can convince Ann to do otherwise, he refuses, for he must be loyal to Ann's loyalties. The publication comes out, Philip loses the Cabinet post which would have been the summit of his career, and Leonard cuts himself off from his son, which at the same time is for Leonard, a heartbreaking blow.

The novel is another Snow "test case," raising the question of consideration for human beings, over and above political drives, along with the demand for "fair play" and personal integrity. Its weakness lies in the characterization of Leonard March. Snow hasn't quite gotten inside of him. He hangs together, certainly, but he is a little too bizarre, strange, and "alien." Snow here fails in the prime duty of a novelist, which is to make his characters seem to be of the same human race as his readers. Perhaps this failure comes out of Snow's apparent belief that Jews must either be assertive of their Jewishness, like Leonard, or tormented by it and avid to escape it, like Charles. He doesn't know

the Jewish people very well, although he makes clear here, as elsewhere, his distaste for the irrationality of anti-Semitism.

The Affair, 1960 (1953-54).

THE scene is the unnamed college at Cambridge which has been the setting of *The Masters.* Seventeen years have passed. Snow skillfully shows the process of aging in the scholars whom the reader had met in the earlier book. There is also a changed atmosphere, in the younger men who are now Fellows; a falling off of liberalism, a lowering of intellectual standards, a more violently felt political division with an added intolerance and a swing towards conservatism. As in the case of *The Masters,* this is a beautifully integrated novel, hinting at a crisis in its opening pages, and developing it slowly but with mouting tension, to the climax of the final chapters. The novel abounds in fine character portraits.

One of the younger science Fellows, Donald Howard, had been quietly dismissed, because it is found that a thesis he had written some years before, used as crucial evidence a photograph that was faked. He protests that he has been unjustly treated; that he had accepted the photograph in good faith from the distinguished scientist under whom he had worked, and who is now dead. He, Howard, is being punished for his politics, a victim of class prejudice. To the college, this claim is unbelievable. Howard, furthermore, is pro-Communist, and a boorish, uncouth, disagreeable person, not fit to be a faculty member.

Another Fellow however—as it happens, a political conservative—looking through the papers of Howard's dead professor, finds evidence that the old scientist, in his dotage, might have faked the photograph. Furthermore, a photograph that was pasted on to a decisive page in these papers, has been removed. Could this have been the original of the questionable photograph? Could it have been destroyed by one of the oldest, most highly respected of the college hierarchy, because of his fanatical reactionary politics, and his desire to get Howard out of the college? The question is the kind that will raise a hornet's nest, split the college apart, besmirch its name. But in the interests of justice, a group forms to reopen Howard's case. Among them is Lewis Eliot's brother Martin. Another is Francis Getliffe, an internationally respected scientist, who by taking up this cause, stands to lose his chance to be elected the next Master of the college. Lewis Eliot becomes the attorney invited to argue Howard's case before the Court of Seniors, one of whose four

members is the very man suspected of having destroyed the photograph that might have cleared Howard. As the ugly situation develops with its bitter recriminations, people are turned inside out, with surprising flaws revealed in some and strengths in others. In the end Howard's name is cleared, although his Fellowship is not renewed.

The novel is again a fine piece of studied realism in detail, and a "laboratory case" in concept. Snow makes Howard an obnoxious character. He not only has what Snow calls here and elsewhere the "Communist" obstinacy and "black-and-white" attitude towards issues. He is bad mannered, thick-headed, insensitive to others. Nobody in the book likes him. But this serves to make Snow's point, that justice must be fought for, whatever one's political bent and personal sympathies; furthermore, irregardless of what loss it brings to those who do the fighting. The thesis is expressed by Snow in the last word of his description of Getliffe: "a man who had ridden himself hard, driven by purpose, ambition and conscience."

Since one can have a different opinion of Communists than that which Snow expresses here and in other novels, there is a temptation to argue the point. Donald Howard may have been studied from real life. To embrace Marxist thought and act on it does not automatically give a person good manners or make him more sensitive to the feelings of other people. But when the hostile cross-examination of Donald Howard near the end of *The Affair*, brings out the apparently invidious fact that he backed a "Scientists' World Peace Conference," at least some readers would get a lift out of this. Surely Howard is carrying out what Snow asserts is the social responsibility of the scientist, and on an even wider scale than those who fight gallantly to clear his name. Martin Eliot, in *The New Men*, asserted his personal integrity and conscience, by refusing to run the British bomb project, in the atmosphere of the new post-war nationalism. Howard goes further, however, and takes his stand for world peace. He sets himself against the "cold war," which by now has become official British as well as American policy. Since Howard has his real life prototypes, one thinks that Snow might have looked into these issues a little more deeply, and perhaps gotten a different view of the thinking behind what appears to be Howard's obstinacy and intransigeant attitude.

II

I HAVE tried to show, in this account of Snow's novels, that an aesthetic weakness runs through them; his social ideas and conclusions

rise not out of the convincing movement of real life but out of somewhat contrived situations. This is connected, I think, to his views of the relation of the scientist, or more generally, the intellectual, to the ordinary people. There are always social issues in his books, but there is little feeling for the presence of society itself, in the sense of the mass of people of the nation, and the great crises that shape their thought and action.

Ron Willets, in *A World Without a Hero*—"A preliminary comment on the writings of C. P. Snow—" (*Marxism Today*, London, March, 1961) writes perceptively:

> Snow's range of social reality is therefore wide and deeply observed, from the lower middle class to the aristocracy, but it has its limitations. The world he presents is almost bare of working people, just as his Cambridge is almost bare of students.

The telling weakness is not that characters fail to be included in the novels who might represent the working people, or in the college novels, the students. It is that such people, or the part of society they represent, do not even enter the consciousness of Snow's personages. In the college novels, *The Masters* and *The Affair,* we find the personages of the novel meeing in the college dining room, visiting one another's apartments, coming together in councils, but there is no intimation that any of them does any teaching; nor is there any awareness that the students in the college would in real life be quite concerned over such crises as the novels describe.

In the two novels, *Strangers and Brothers* and *Time of Hope,* which cover the 1920's and early 1930's, the leading characters, George Passant and Lewis Eliot, think of themselves as political radicals and socialists. Surely in the minds of such people, in real life, there would be some thought of the labor party, the trade unions, and the great British General Strike. Surely in people interested in socialism, there would be some consciousness of the fact of a socialist revolution having taken place in Russia, and the great experimental laboratory of socialism that the Soviet Union became in the 1920's and 1930's. But in the consciousness of these novels, it is as if such events had never taken place.

THREE of the novels, *The Light and the Dark, The New Men* and *Homecoming,* cover the period of the Second World War. This is the period of the disaster and heroism of Dunkirk, the bombing of Coventry, the evacuation of the children from London, the excitement over

the battles before Moscow and Stalingrad, the shock of Pearl Harbor and the British army and naval losses in the Pacific, the deep sense of personal loss by the people at the war s casualties, the fortitude and sacrifices which were called for from them, the call for a Second Front in Europe, the rising anger of the British people at their pre-war betrayal which made them, at the first opportunity, sweep the Tory party out of power. Certainly one would expect that among men such as Snow's creations in these novels, who are actively engaged in war operations, there would be some awareness of these matters, for in real life such men would have been affected by them and would have responded to them. But it is the absence of a consciousness of these matters, or of the feelings of a nation fighting for life, which give the wartime novels a faint air of unreality within reality, or a laboratory instead of life. It is a social picture without society.

THIS omission is not a matter of artistic economy. It is connected to Snow's own social views. In his treatise, *Science and Government*, he calls himself a "Tolstoyan" in respect to history, believing that events are shaped by imponderable forces, in the midst of which are the masses of people, rather than by individual leaders. But he counters this with an "elite" view of society. The "elite" he believes in is not, of course, of class, caste, the ownership of capital, wealth or aristocratic family. It comprises people of intellectual stature, scientific achievement, and the relative few who are concerned with moral values. But he has the scrupulous honesty to admit that this kind of "elite" cannot move history. And so he comes to the sad and impotent conclusion that the best which can be done by people who have moral standards and values above that of the jungle, is to act with personal integrity. If they cannot move history as they want to, they can at least keep their hands clean.

Thus, after all his objections to the subjectivism of modern literature, and all his exaltation of scientific rationality, Snow ends up with his own version of the "man alone." Characteristic of all the leading figures in his novels who have some sense of social responsibility is that they will exercise this responsibility to someone with whom they have some personal contact. George Passant will lend every penny he has to help someone else. Lewis and Martin Eliot, Francis Getliffe, will see that a Donald Howard, despite their dislike for him, is cleared. This is genuinely admirable. But what of people in far greater numbers whom one doesn't know, whose misery or exploitation appear only as statistics? Personal gestures no longer can operate. The problem can

only be solved by people together, working cooperatively, with common principles. Social quetsions can only be solved socially.

And this represents a crucial difference between Snow's views and Marxism. Snow has no faith in people and Marxists have this faith. This is no romanticizing of the masses. It is based solidly on the showing of history. In about a century and a half—a short time in terms of history—the working people, under the most adverse conditions, in a miasma of cultural life and propaganda which would seemingly make it impossible for people to know their own problems, organized trade unions, and political parties that brought a higher social morality even to English life. They overthrew kings, dictators and autocrats, defeated fascism, and in one country after another, sacrificing immediate pleasures for the generation to follow, they are building socialism. They can eliminate war.

PARALLEL to the contradiction in Snow as an artist, is the contradiction in his views of science, as expressed in the two short tracts, *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution* and *Science and Government.* Here a ringing affirmation that science has the future in its grasp is accompanied by a baffled feeling that he doesn't know how, or whether, this future will come about.

In *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution,* Snow charts the abyss that exists in intellectual life, separating the "traditional" and literary culture from the scientific. Neither, he says, knows what the other is talking about. And of the two, it is the literary which runs to the past, with cries of horror, and the scientific which looks to the future.

> That total incomprehension gives, much more pervasively than we realize, living in it, an unscientific flavor to the whole "traditional" culture, and that unscientific flavor is often, much more than we admit, on the point of turning anti-scientific. The feelings of one pole become the anti-feelings of the other. If the scientists have the future in their bones, then the traditional culture responds by wishing the future did not exist. It is the traditional culture, to an extent remarkably little diminished by the emergence of the scientific one, which manages the western world. (Pp. 11, 12.)

The division, Snow asserts, started far back in modern history. Western intellectuals, he says, of the literary or artistic wing, "have never tried, wanted, or been able to understand the industrial revolution, much

less accept it. Intellectuals, in particular literary intellectuals, are natural Luddites." ("Machine-wreckers"—S.F.)—p. 23.

THE case can certainly be documented. But Snow misses the root of the trouble. What is it that has forced science and art apart? We can answer this when we see what it is that unites them. Neither are independent branches of knowledge and thought. Both take their meaning from what they contribute to human knowledge of the real world, and through this, to human freedom. What Snow calls the "industrial revolution" was not so much science as "applied" science, and the basis for the triumph of capitalism in the west. When literary art addressed itself to the human condition, it found widespread misery. This is the insight of a Thoreau and William Morris (whom Snow accuses of "screams of terror") and a Dickens and Tolstoi. They discovered, as Morris pointed out, unhappiness spreading in the house of civilization. If some literary figures clothed this insight in a visionary idealization of the past, the core of their work was the truth—as valid as any scientific discovery—of the actual miserable state of human freedom and happiness. Are the scientists less culpable, in not questioning the fact that their discoveries were being used for human exploitation, for booms that led to crises and starvation, for cut-throat competition both inside the nation and on the world scene, for wars and colonial conquest?

LET us take the "second scientific revolution" in Snow's words, of the twentieth century, climaxed in the conquest of nuclear energy. It is true that in this period, the "literary culture" by and large, showed a furious antipathy to science, to reason itself, and to the concept of progress. But this period of "scientific revolution was characterized by two of the deadliest, most world-encompassing wars in human history, and by a catastrophic world-wide economic crisis. The writers were still reflecting the human condition. Did Snow's scientists provide any answers? Even today, is it altogether inexcusable for some people to see, in nuclear energy, the bomb, rather than its prospects for some future plenty?

If Snow thinks that the misuse of science today lies in the fact that those who "manage" the western world are more "literary" minded than "scientific," he is as short-sighted as the intellectuals he accuses of being "Luddites." The source of optimism today comes not from a knowledge of nuclear energy, but from the movements for world peace. And one cannot close one's eyes to the fact that the socialist countries, where a

different scientific "revolution" has taken hold, namely a science of society, seem to be the leaders in the movement and prospect for peace. Furthermore, in such societies, there seems no longer to be a polar opposition between art and science. When Snow says, near the end of his tract, (p. 38) that the Russians "have a deeper insight into the scientific revoltuion than we have, or the Americans have," the answer is not simply that they educate more scientists, which is the solution Snow urges on the west. It lies in the science of society.

A knowledge of just what is doing in society, and especially the touchy problem of social classes, rests at the heart of the question Snow raises. The "literary culture" and "scientific culture" are poles apart because the great monopolies, the industrial and financial combines which dominate western life, making profit and more profit their guiding law of operation, scorn the one because it is unprofitable, and imprison the other.

Early in his tract, describing the antipathy between the literary and scientific world, Snow says (p. 19):

> Now the politeness has gone, and they just make faces. It is not only that the young scientists now feel they are part of a culture on the rise while the other is in retreat. It is also, to be brutal, that the young scientists know that with an indifferent degree they'll get a comfortable job, while their contemporaries and counterparts in English or History will be lucky to earn 60 percent as much. No young scientist of any talent would feel that he isn't wanted or that his work is ridiculous.

But what are these comfortable jobs? Here, they mean either working for big corporations directly, or working for the military, which is to work for the big corporations indirectly, or, if one is fortunate and willing to take much less pay, getting a teaching job to train others to work for the corporations and the military. And while there is no wish to intimate that the socialist countries are or are approaching a Utopia, one could mention that for all their apparent appreciation of the scientists, they seem to give the "literary" people no feelings of inferiority, or of being unwanted. On the contrary, the latter do very well. At the close of his thesis, when Snow is arguing for more training of scientists, he says that the "whole West" should "look at our education with fresh eyes. . . . We have each a good deal to learn from the Russians, if we are not too proud." If he is taking the Soviet Union as something of a model in this respect, he could just as rightly draw the conclusion

that there should be an immensely greater support for, and education in, the literary and other arts.

THUS, Snow raises not so much a solution as a dilemma. In the closing section of the book, he makes a moving appeal to the West, particularly England and America, to devote its training of scientists, and its wealth, to the cause of removing poverty in Asia and Africa, and other industrially backward areas, helping them to industrialize. Always however a writer of scrupulous integrity, he adds:

> I confess, and I should be less than honest if I didn't, that I can't see the political techniques through which the good human capabilities of the West can get into action.

Is there no better answer?

Science and Government, which is shorter, little more than an extended essay, adds nothing new, and comes to even weaker conclusions. It starts with the fact that in any "advanced industrial society," the "cardinal choices," meaning "those which determine in the crudest sense whether we live or die," have to be made "by a handful of men: in secret." This would be a very explosive thought, were he to discuss the class basis, both of the make-up of the "handful of men," and of the character of the decisions themselves. But he is simply pointing out that scientific matters, which have become life and death matters, are settled by political minds that have no first-hand knowledge of what they are dealing with.

Most of the essay is given over to an illustration of this problem, taking up the development of radar in England, from about 1934 on, and the decision, in the years of the war, to go in for mass bombing of Germany. Snow contrasts two figures, each an outstanding administrator of scientific work, and both political conservatives. One, Henry Tizard, was the prime sponsor of radar research, and his work, Snow says, saved England. The other, Frederick A. Lindemann, whom Snow describes as a "court politician," was the science adviser trusted implicitly by Winston Churchill. Lindemann tried to sabotage the radar projects, Snow says. He was a "gadgeteer," and had fantastic gadgets of his own in mind. Had Churchill come to the Ministership a year earlier, Lindemann would have had his way, there would have been no effective radar, and the Battle of Britain would have been lost. It was Lindemann who pushed through the policy of mass bombing. Snow criticizes this for its inhumanity. It is an important point to make, when the dropping of the

atom bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the subsequent napalm and fire bombing of North Korea, have compounded the practice. It is worth remembering the universal cry of horror in the civilized world when the fascists began this practice of killing non-combatants wholesale, in the bombing and strafing of the Spanish town of Guernica. Snow's criticism of mass bombing is also that it was far from as effective in winning the war as its proponents claimed it would be, and that other scientists had proved in advance that it would be ineffective.

Snow's view of the events has been scathingly criticized by Sir Robert Watson-Wyatt, the inventor of radar (*Saturday Review,* March 4, 1961). Watson-Wyatt says that Lindemann was not the enemy of radar that Snow makes him out to be, and Snow is writing passionately partisan fiction instead of history. But this is really not the issue. The issue is that there is always a hiatus in Snow's thinking when the matters he raises touch on class interests.

LET us take the question of the mass bombing of Germany. In the United States, the air force, with its precision and effectiveness of mythical size, was the most fantastically advertised and publicized arm of the service. It had the fanciest publicity budget of any branch of the service. Behind the "public relations" were the big aircraft corporations, and the publicity had the truthfulness characteristic of most advertising; namely, very little. The airmen were not pleased with the glamour and the magical powers endowed upon them, for a lot of brave men died needlessly because of this. Whether the influence of the aircraft corporations which of course clamored for mass bombing, was true of England as well, I cannot say. But it is a matter of history that the argument for mass bombing, in England and America, was also an answer to the cry for a Second Front in Europe. It was a good policy for those who were happy that the Soviet Union was taking on the brunt of the fascist axis armies, and were looking forward to see as many Russians dead as possible when the war would be over. Churchill was too shrewd to be taken in, as Snow suggests, by a Lindemann. And other policies of the war, like the campaign in Italy, which had no effect on the fascist war potential but certainly was good for reactionary post-war politics, and the projected invasion of the Balkans, indicated that he was fighting a double war.

Let us go back to 1934, when according to Snow, Tizard, who was Baldwin's adviser, began the radar sponsorship which would later save England. Baldwin and the Tories came to power with the promise, to the

angry people, that they would put a check on the advances of fascism in Europe. The subsequent history was one of the terrible betrayals of the people and nation in English history. with the people manacled because the Tories simply refused to submit their unpopular policies to an election. Baldwin immediately proceeded to give Mussolini a ticket for expansion. Then when Chamberlain took over the reins, there was the policy of British (and American) financial investment in Hitler's industry, the assistance given to the murder of the Spanish republic, and the Munich betrayal which gave Hitler Czechoslovakia, and enabled him to attack England with the most powerful armament in world history. Behind these policies of course, were the hatred of labor, lauding fascist policy as salvation in this respect, and the insensate desire to destroy socialism in the Soviet Union. Had these policies been halted, there would have been no need for the Battle of Britain. Several million people who are in their graves would be still alive. Who made these decisions? Was the trouble simply that political leaders did not know enough science? The "cold war" of the last fourteen years is a recurrence of the same policies. This decision was made in a similar "closed" council, with the mass of people told only the result, with an unprecedented torrent of propaganda to help them swallow it. And again financial aid, this time American, largely, has been poured out to create a "reborn Germany," with the Krupp works in full bloom and the Nazis back running the government. Who made this decision? Fortunately a great mass of people have learned, from the terrible blood lettings, to trust no more such "closed councils," and the world peace movement is the brightest hope for science to get back to its business of exploring the laws of the surrounding world and paving the way for another stride to freedom.

SNOW's conclusion is, "I want scientists active in all the levels of government." He means natural scientists, and mainly physicists. Behind his quite sincere tone of reasonable argument, there is the unconscious arrogance of the nuclear physicist who somehow feels that he has a deeper insight into reality than the rest of humanity. It is like an opposite to and counterpart of Shelley's, "Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world." And there is as much combination of truth with lack of it in the one as in the other. Earlier in the book, Snow writes:

> It seems to me important that men of good will should make an effort to understand how the world ticks; it is the only way to make it tick better.

No one can disagree. But the quetsion is whether a familiarity with biochemistry or the inside of an atom really lets one know how "the world ticks." Theoretical science has its ivory towers as well as art does. I have known brilliant mathematicians and scientists who took exactly the attitude towards their researches, laws and formulas that an abstract painter takes to the meeting of a triangle and a circle. The very intense specialization of the sciences, which Snow seems never to consider, today fosters this. One of the remarkable qualities of Albert Einstein is that from youth, he rejected being sucked into one or another specialized branch of mathematics and physics. But Einstein was pretty unique even among scientists.

To know "how the world ticks," a person must know something of the methods of science, and the nature of its major discoveries. But it is only together, that the sciences make it possible really to know "how the world ticks." Each is one aspect of reality which comprises the areas all of them investigate. And it is only by joining with one another that the sciences can get back to the task of opening up roads to freedom. Central to this concept is the "science of society," which I doubt—nothing in Snow's books indicate otherwise—that Snow would consider to be a science. Yet it is a reasonable argument that the "second revolution in science," to use Snow's term, is not nuclear physics but the development in the nineteenth century, with Marx and Engels as the central figures, of such a science of society. A revolution is more than just an addition to existing knowledge. It is a transformation of knowledge, with the discovery of a new set of laws. The first revolution in science, that of the 16th and 17th centuries, of Copernicus, Kepler, Bacon, Harvey, Galileo, Descartes, Newton, Leibniz and a host of others, replaced religious theology as the dominant way of viewing the world. It demanded that the natural world be studied in its own terms, and its own reality. Great chains of investigations were engendered, with successive additions to the discovered laws of nature. But the next truly revolutionary development was the discovery that what bound people into a society, and the forces that moved history—what for example made one nation after another unify itself and develop capitalist institutions—was not a matter of personal and arbitrary desires or inexplicable accidents, but also involved laws that could be discovered, and used to change the world just as natural laws had been so used.

IT SO happened that the laws so discovered of society, economic relations and history, revolved about the presence of antagonistic classes

in society and the exploitation of one class by another; or in other words, about what were the tools and means of producing the needs of life, who owned them, who did the work, and who kept the main product. And this, together with the revelation that just as feudalism had passed away, so would capitalism, made this science a very contentious discovery and a threat to solid, entrenched and powerful interests. Thus it was either ignored or attacked. But it is worth remembering that the preceding "first scientific revolution" was also this kind of threat to established institutions, and was also hotly attacked.

I wonder whether C. P. Snow, in whose thought science holds so exalted a place, has ever gone through Marx's *Capital,* and the associated writings of Marx, Engels and Lenin, dispassionately, making allowances as one must do in every great scientific tract for the passage, additions and changes of time, to see to his own satisfaction whether this represents science. Although if any proof were needed, it would be the vast changes carried on in so short a time, wherever these ideas caught the minds of a sufficient number of people.

Snow in his books tends to look on socialism through the eyes of national rivalry, as if the fact that the first big countries to embrace it were Russia and China, made it something "un-English." But Marx and Engels were German, Marx learned from Hegel, the French Encyclopoedists, Adam Smith, Ricardo, and Robert Owen, he played a fruitful role in the English labor movement, and Engels' first scientific and theoretical tract was *The Condition of the Working Class in England.* This science, or scientific socialism, is as international as any other. Snow writes, in *Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution* (p. 48):

> There is no getting away from it. It is technically possible to carry out the scientific revolution in India, Africa, South-east Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, within fifty years. There is no excuse for western man not to know this. And not to know that this is the one way out through the three menaces which stand in our way—H-bomb war, over-population, the gap between the rich and the poor. This is one of the situations where the worst crime is innocence.

By the same token, an end of or check to the system whereby the few who profit make the decisions for the many who work, may fit very neatly into English and American life and traditions. It might be no more drastic a change than that which replaced the England of peasants, yeomen and feudal barons to one run by Vickers armaments, the English Electric Company, the steel trust and the oil companies; or no

more drastic than that which in America replaced the rule of George III with the Declaration of Independence.

IT IS shortly after the passage quoted above that Snow confesses, he can't see "the political techniques through which the good human capabilities of the West can get into action." It could be that the laws disclosed of the operation of class forces in economic and social life might help. It would be important if Snow could examine the presentation of these laws with the impartial detachment that he ascribes to the scientific mind. To represent truly the scientific world view, it is necessary to embrace every horizon opened up by scientific investigation. One cannot pick and choose among the sciences, as if to say that one believes in chemistry but not in evolution. Such an examination might remove some of the air of pessimism which infiltrates Snow's novels and treatises, and might contribute a firmer confidence in the future.

But such thoughts are aroused by the very questions which Snow raises so clearly and challengingly in his novels and essays, and which make him so important a figure in the intellectual life not only of England but of America. Whatever one's differences from Snow, and whatever the answers one offers, they amount to nothing if they are not based on the assertions of social responsibility, of the need to care for the plight of others, of fair play and moral integrity, that permeate his personality and writings.

OVERHEARD IN FAYETTE COUNTY

WILLIAM FAY

EVICTED NEGRO TENANT

I works that white folks land goin' on 15 years I reckon. He comed round one day last Fall and say me, Chet, there heap talkin' goin' round hereabouts 'bout how your people wantin' the vote and white folks naturally dead set against it. And that kind disputin', he say, bound to end in more'n just words. But I'm mighty glad you and me ain't goin' has us that kind of trouble, ain't that so, he want know. So I say, I hear say Government want colored to vote same's white folks. And I sure 'nough God fearin' man all the time and obey the law. And he get him real mad-on, and say, Well I tell you just once ain't goin' tell you no more. If you go down to election place, you better pray for sunshiny weather, 'cause by time you get back here, your everythin' goin' be strewed out there on the road somewheres no matter if it rain or shine. . . .

WHITE STOREKEEPER

My nigger trade addin' up to 'bout half my business, I reckon. But since this here nigger trouble turn up, they's throwed off jobs wholesale and turned the land they livin' and workin on, and they ain't got 'em no ready made money to buy 'em no nothin' hardly. Now supposin' I go against my color and give niggers goods on credit, if it don't get me bullet in my ass, it sure lose me all my white trade. So mister I'm in one hell of a fix. If you know somebody want 'em good business, like I got here when they ain't no kind of trouble around, I see you get you commission if you bring him so I get sellin' out fast, like I got me a mind to.

NEGRO CHILD

No thank you, sir. Don't want none of your candy. Yessir. I likes candy alright. But I ain't takin' me nothin' from no white folks, leastwise nothin' what I goin' to eat, 'cause they feedin' my dog rat poison what gives him runnin' fits so he run hisself into river and get swoled to monstrous size. And my momma told me and my poppa too, it was white folks done it' cause my people go to vote election time.

WHITE LANDLORD

Red-eyed reformers in Washington tellin' us we got to let Nigras ote, got to let Nigras sit longside our children at school, let Nigras work ur land whether we want to or not, and how much we got to pay 'em nd how many hours we allowed to work them. Next news we bound o hear they get tellin' us we got to let Nigras socialize with us, and we ot to let Nigras marry our daughters . . . let them go one inch further n the invasion of our sacred rights and we goin' take it same as engraved nvitation for us to raise up the Bars and Stripes and start fighting' Civil War all over again, by God!

NEGRO MINISTER

If in some other country in World group like White Citizen Coun- il interfere puttin' law of land into effect, what happen? Somebody ring matter before United Nations and ain't long before they names it evolution and red anarchy and United Nations force on way to put down ebels. Well, what keepin' United Nations troops marchin' through ayette County. . . . right now?

WHITE UNEMPLOYED MECHANIC

I don't know what make niggers reach out so far after that vote nyhow. I don't see how it goin' do 'em no matter of good more'n it o me or you or nobody else, 'cept big fellows what runnin' this here ountry to pleasure theirselves, for a fact. That Kennedy man e comed through here spreadin' that long green stuff like blanket and y time other side comed from underneath and see 'em daylight, Ken- edy done bought him out whole country and was sittin' in White House nair, pretty as you please. No sir, we don't has no elections no more. our vote ain't worth a damn.

NEGRO TEACHER

You've got to make them White Citizen Councils out like outlaws . with price on their heads, every last one of them to clear up all the ouble we're havin' 'round here. Otherwise you ain't goin' solve nothin' r another hundred years 'bout.

WHITE UNEMPLOYED SALESMAN

Don't mind tellin' you stranger, we got it tough and hard here now. I don't give a shit if niggers vote or not—it no skin off my teeth either way. I just want to see things like they was before this damn trouble hit us . We wasn't livin' high 'zactly but a body could get him work and eatin' money and put hisself aside a few dollars for somethin' special when he want it. For a fact if things ain't settled 'round here, I got to pick me up and leave this land behind . . . and mister I got me wife and three children . . . and a mother 85 year old!

NEGRO HOUSEWIFE

'Tain' all white folks hereabouts treatin' my people like dogs, no sir. Some like that there woman I work for one time, she been helpin' out lot, what with givin' me four blankets, and hot water bottle and some food too . . . and she say she mighty shamed her color 'cause the way they doin' me and my folks, makin' us move off land in middle of winter and live out in freezin' weather with nothin' hardly for coverin' which she say she wouldn't do with no live stock even, this time of year. But 'for God can't tell nobody who she is, and other Christian white folks who doin' for us same way . . . 'cause bound to make 'em heap trouble if them White organization people get findin' out . . . 'bout them.

Inadvertently, two paragraphs were omitted from Oakley Johnson's *Story of A Woman: Part* 2, in the June *Mainstream*. They belong near the bottom of page 60, immediately after the words, "signed by FDR." Here is the passage:

There were Marxists working in New Orleans in those days, and one of them was Emanuel Levin, a gentle, studious man, with a great gift for talking quietly with workers and explaining more fully than had been done by previous leaders what was going on in the United States and in the world. Mary Lea had the great good fortune to know him and to learn from him. It was in this period, also, that she joined and worked in the Southern Conference for Human Welfare, and cooperated with the heroes, Negro and white, who laid the foundation of the modern fight for equal rights.

This was the time that James E. Jackson came South to work with Emanuel Levin, and—barely escaping a lynch mob—was tried for alleged "disturbing the peace." Mary Lea made sure to be at the trial and to sit well up in front to help reassure him. He still remembers, as he says, "that one smiling friendly white face," the only one in the hostile court room.

books in review

xemplary

ALT WHITMAN'S CIVIL WAR, edited by Walter Lowenfels. Alfred A. Knopf, New York. $5.00. 1960.

"*La poésie doit etre faite par tous. on par un.*"

—*Lautréamont*

(Poetry should be made for everye, not just for one.)

Walt Whitman's Civil War, made of selections of Whitman's war ces, most of them already known, h yet some important additions m hitherto unpublished sources, is what Walter Lowenfels calls it: new book by Whitman."

But it took a poet to make it that, re than the "history" of the war that itman had at one point contemed writing and that he himself gave —to make it the very coherent "autography" of a great poet and of his e. It took the editor's life-long inrement in the "creative process" to demonstrate with the present book the continuity of the poetic engagement carried over from one century to the next, and to show that beyond individual works and names, this, the creative experience and the ability to record it, to make it meaningful to the "poets to come," is what counts.

I FIND the book exemplary in that it reveals Whitman's own strategic reliance on prose as a means of collective self-revelation ("journalism by other means")—and the degree to which he himself managed to cut through the glass mirror to reach beyond the reversed image to the real one of the wound-dresser and of the "real war."

Life at its sorest, plainest, and truest, at its least escapable (Whitman *could not* get out of the war) is here made vibrant almost from page to page. For the reason also that in the book the passage from the prose is editorially shown without question, the prose experience clearly appears as "pivotal"

to the *Leaves,* re-orientating the earlier poems, and making it possible, and almost compulsive, for the poet to continue, to "survive," as Lowenfels might say, after the destructive experience recorded in the Calamus poems, with which a kind of deadlock, it seems to me, had somehow been reached. The war, on the other hand, was the occasion of a renewed fusion with the deeper collective being of the people, and for that reason re-enacted positively the themes already explored, and confirmed them.

The book is lit from within by a strangely compelling "moral" light (say that I am borrowing the adjective from Beaudelaire and everybody will be happy) that qualifies the whole of Whitman's poetic search. With the war—see the end of Chapter One—had come for Whitman the time, always extremely moving to find in any poet, when no alibis, emotional or intellectual, are possible any longer; and in his particular case, a time when the triumph of life, as eternal search and daily agony, could be reached through death creatively, dialectically, and not, as does happen elsewhere in the *Leaves,* as metaphysical self-deception. Lautréamont: "One has to know how to extract literary beauties from the very bosom of death, but those do not belong to death. Here death is only the accidental cause." Never had I realized so clearly how the prose is important, I mean the *literary beauty* of it, as style: its *adequacy.* The style made one with the fact, and further with the vision—all three intimately blended in their dialectic relationship. It is one of the merits of the book that the editing realizes the "integration" of the prose and of the poetry (truly today an act of positive criticism), showing as it does how the prose nourishes the poetry, gives it flesh, blood and soul, I mean the *prosiness* of the experience the poems themselves report on, showing how the poetry comes out of a deliberate faithfulness to its "circumstances."

THE reference here is to Eluard. The recognition of the "circumstances" (both the "interior" and the "exterior" circumstances) in which a poem is born, says Eluard, is the only test of the validity of the poetry of the past—and of the present. It is the modern poet's duty, therefore, to determine with precision what the modern "circumstances" are, at the risk, if he did not, of getting lost in verbosity and meaningless verse:

"The criticism of the men and of their works will therefore consider first all the conditions of person, object, means, motives, manner and time. It will thus determine to what extent a man was moved by the circumstances and to what extent they have elevated or diminished him. A man normally identifies himself not only with the beings that are close to him, but also with those he does not know, and with the events acting on those beings as well as the ones they themselves bring about. And the poet burns to reproduce life."

But poetry of "circumstance" should not be mistaken for command poetry:

"Command poetry can only correspond by accident to the desire, deep conviction, and sensibility of the poet. True poetry of circumstance should gush from the poet with the exactitude with which a mirror reflects the image of other men. Thus poetry becomes what Maiakowski called 'social command,' in contrast with chance command which is void and not transmissible. The exter-

ior circumstances should coincide with the interior circumstances as if the poet himself had created it. Thus the exterior circumstances become as valid as love, as the spring-begotten flower, as the joy of building for life. The poet follows his own idea, but this idea leads him to place himself in the curve of human progress. And, little by little, the world replaces him, the world sings through him."

Speaking of the dialectic relationship of the prose and poetry in *Walt Whitman's Civil War*—I did not mean merely the inner dialectics of the poems—the verbal mechanism, but the objective dialectics of the "circumstances," and of the vision into which the experience and the poetry were finally "integrated." I mean the dialectics of the real world of which Eluard speaks in the same text culminating over the years, in Whitman's case, in the idea of the "life-giving wars" of the future, on which Lowenfels rightly insists, and which are now taking place under our noses in Africa, south, middle and north, in Asia, in Latin America—the twentieth century wars of liberation. I mean the dialectics of a poetic vision to be followed up through the mainstream of 20th century world poetry, both in major and minor works—an endless poem written in all languages, Russian, Spanish, French, English, etc., whether the name of the poet be Maiakowski, Neruda, Eluard, Whitman or Lowenfels, or Wilfred Owen, even, who, in the midst of an experience not unlike Whitman's own, also had the vision of other wars, "not for flags, for life." For there is this in Owen, too, that the fact of the war and the human encounter it represented, at ground level, was impossible to put into the book, and that the only way of really reporting on it was to be among the participants and let it all speak through you, as it was for Whitman also the only way; which made Owen write to his mother, on December 31, 1917, thinking back on his previous war experience in France, and explaining why, after being hospitalized in England, he found it necessary to volunteer back to the front, where he was killed:

"But chiefly I thought of the very strange look on all faces in that camp (Etaples); an incomprehensible look, which a man will never see in England; nor can it be seen in any battle. But only in Etaples. It was not despair, or terror, for it was a blindfold look, and without expression, like a dead rabbit's. It will never be painted, and no actor will ever seize it. And to describe it, I think I must go back, and be with them."

BOTH men reached a point in their existence when the inner necessities of the man and of the artist coincide, because both coincide with those of millions of other men, because their "inner circumstances" coincided with the historical "circumstances" in which they found themselves; a point when the man is truly the poet, when he is the poet the most who is the man the most, and where all men are the true collective makers of the poetry. Because those men, Whitman or Neruda, Maiakowski, Owen or Lowenfels, are above all the poets of the real world, and of the irrevocable presence of men on earth. "The most obscure circumstances become clear under the poet's pen, for they are reflected in a mirror that elucidates them, and are given back to us, visible," says Eluard. So it must be seen how, in that kind of life-size poetry, the immediacy and dailyness

that characterize the style of the Whitman war pieces are a bridge between the poetic action and the far-reaching implications of a precise historical experience, of an experience common to us all. I would refer the reader at this point to the last chapter of the book, entitled, "The real war will never get into the books," and to the notes provided by the editor. Not only do we find in it that what was essential to Whitman was the "seething hell, and the black infernal background of minor scenes and interiors . . . of the Secession War" . . . "its interior history" . . . "its practicality, minutiæ of dead and passions," but we also find in it the *political* awareness that Whitman reached of the origins and causes of the war, to a great extent bred, he says, by the corruption and anti-democratic practices of despicable office-holders in the North. Furthermore, the same chapter affords proof that Whitman was able to place war, as a human crisis, in a wider world perspective—indeed in the creative process of the transformation of the world and of the replacement of the old by the new. See in this respect his analysis of the Crusades, and of the roots and consequences of the Franco-Norman invasion of England. He was able to grasp the necessity of the development of historical complexes, to appreciate the nature of men's involvement in it, to see the impact of the past on the present, the decision being left to the living present; and the future already taking shape in the present. And his whole work testifies to the fact that it is the poet's business, the creator's businss, to help in the process and make it luminous. So that Whitman's work, together with the works of the poets I have mentioned and of many I have not, are but individual aspects of one humanistic vision of man, man his own destructor and his own creator — all men, that is, with, again in Eluard's words, their "nostalgia for a greater light".

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