OCTOBER, 1961
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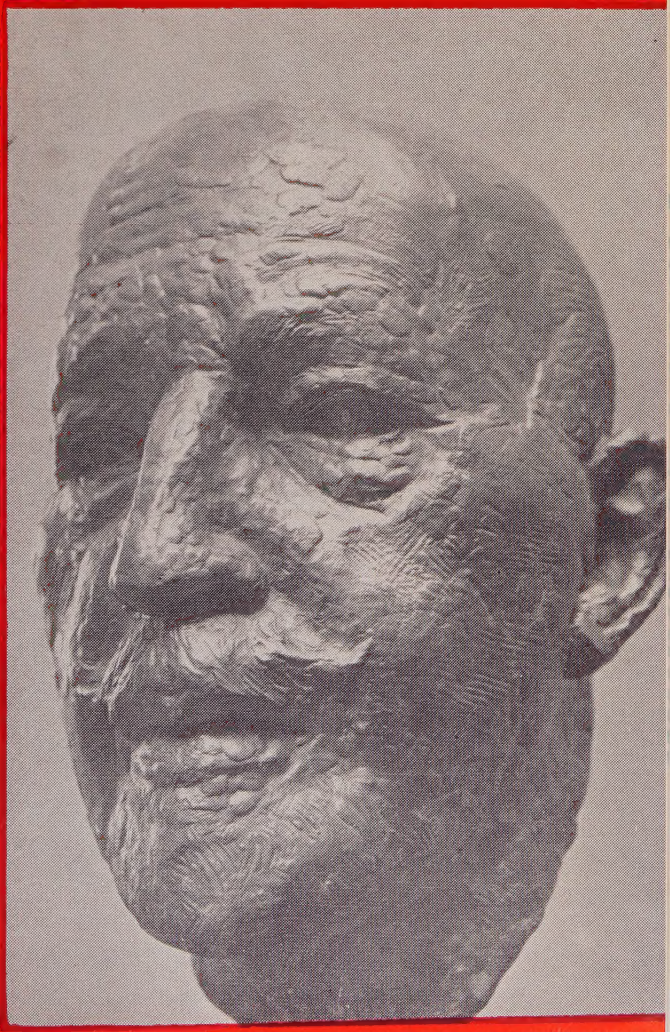

WM. ZORACH — *W. E. B. Du Bois*

ON W. E. B. DU BOIS' "BLACK FLAME"

Leopoldo Mendez

CUAUHTEM

Cuauhtemoc is the first of 146 prints depicting the centuries long struggles of the Mexican people in a portfolio produced by popular Graphic Artists of Mexico.

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Among Our Contributors

Jose A. Baragano is a Cuban poet, author of the recent book, *Himno a Las Milicias*. *Nancy Lubka* is a young writer making her first appearance in *Mainstream* with "Emmett Stark." *Meridel Le Sueur* is a contributing editor to this magazine and author of many books. *Oakley C. Johnson,* noted educator and lecturer, is author of *The Day Is Coming,* a biography of Charles E. Ruthenberg. *John Pittman* is the Moscow correspondent of *The Worker*. *Arno Reinfrank* is the young German poet, co-editor of "Elan," a journal for international youth.

Next Month

Prose and poetry from *Walter Lowenfels*. A reply by *Irwin Silber* to the piece on Civil War and Song which appeared in our September issue. Of special interest will be *Phillip Bonosky's* account of life in the USSR's penal institutions. This is a probing and important article by one of America's outstanding writers. A story by the Chinese writer *Lu Hsun* (1881-1936) on the 80th anniversary of his birth.

in the mainstream

The "German Question"

When the guns speak, the Muse falls silent. *Mainstream* and its predecessors, the *New Masses* and even the old *Masses* have had the German question with them all their life long. The "German question" in our generation, and our father's, has always tragically meant peace or war. And so it is today, in the generation of our children; and if we are to have grandchildren at all, part of the answer will lie in our ability to solve the "German question" now, in our time, once and forever.

Our pages have seen the names of almost every eminent German writer and artist for the last four decades, and during the anti-Hitler Thirties our pages were almost the only place where they could voice their hatred of German fascism and warn that German fascism meant war. We published Ernst Toller, Anna Seghers, Arnold Zweig, Bodo Uhse, Lion Feutchwanger, Clara Zetkin, Kathe Kollwitz, Stefan Heym, Ernst Thaelman, Thomas Mann, Bertolt Brecht: the list is the roll call of the best in German culture. Germans themselves, they knew what German militarism meant: they were the first victims of it. And those of them who are alive today raise their voices once again in renewed warnings that the "new" Germany remains the old Germany; that fascism has not been burnt out; and that the rise of the revenge-seekers and German NATO generals can only mean once again that German militarism has re-emerged and once again points its deadly weapons at the heart of mankind.

In each instance, however, German militarism could not reach its goal

without assistance—and if Hitler came to power with the connivance of the British and French, with the Americans playing a secondary role, today German militarism has come to power primarily with the direct help of American power. Without it, it could not raise its little finger; with it, Nazi generals sit in Washington and direct the strategy of the entire NATO force.

Therefore, for all men of good will, the solution to the "German question" today lies first of all in Washington and not in Bonn or Berlin. The solution to the "German question" lies in the hands of the American people if they choose to act.

There are many signs to indicate what the real wishes of the vast majority of the American people are—though to see and understand them distorted and obscured by the gigantic power of private monopoly that control public opinion, is often very difficult indeed. And yet the signs are unmistakeable. There is the renewed and vital peace movement which reaches to the grass roots of America. There are the great and heroic actions of the Negro students of the South for integration. There is the reawakened consciousness and activity of the American working-class with its new gropings toward new political forms. Even the victory of the Kennedy forces over Nixon was an expression of a hope by the people, almost immediately betrayed, that new winds were blowing and that peace would be brought about. The almost universal revulsion and dismay expressed by large numbers of Americans over the attempt by the Kennedy government to overthrow the Cuban government by force and violence was also an unmistakeable indication of the people's desire for a foreign policy of peace and the reconciliation of the world's conflicting forces.

But it was at Berlin that the crisis assumed its most dangerous and most characteristic features. Berlin was turned into a "crisis" where none needed to have been. Why has Berlin become such a dangerous trouble spot? What sense does it make? Why are we being solemnly told that we should prepare ourselves to die to keep West Berlin "free"?

The question of Berlin cannot be settled by untangling the legal knots involving occupation rights of the various powers, though the Potsdam and other conferences clearly laid down an anti-Nazi, pro-peace, pro-democratic policy for post-war Germany. But the problem has gone beyond the legalities. Berlin has become the crucial point where the whole concept of co-existence is being put to the test. Here is being decided whether the Western powers accept the fact that socialism exists in one-third of the world, including Eastern Germany, and whether

it will abide by that fact, with all the normal consequences flowing from it. The issue is not "better red than dead," nor "better dead than red"; the issue is better alive, as you are, as you wish to be, in a world in which there is room for many.

WE are as unhappy as everyone else, including the Soviet people, over the Soviet resumption (followed so hastily by the American) of nuclear tests. But nuclear tests cannot be separated and isolated from the question of disarmament as a whole, and a policy of disarmament is directly tied in with an acceptance of the socialist world as a fact. The proof of the sincerity of the West's intention lies in their willingness to negotiate a reasonable settlement of the Berlin issue, making West Berlin a free, independent, demilitarized, and de-Nazified city. The view at the brink shows humanity no horizon beyond. It is up to the people to speak, especially those whose talents for expressing the minds of the people—writers, artists, musicians—they have a great responsibility. For while the guns are still silent, the artist must speak: for war is the enemy of art, it is the enemy of man. Heed the German artists who raised their voices against the threat to mankind! The German problem is an American problem—and it is toward Washington that the American people must direct the demand: negotiate.

In a recent note to the U.S. government the Soviet Union asked for the extradition of a known Estonian war criminal now living in Long Island, New York. The war criminal, Karl Linnas, is accused of having supervised the killing of Soviet citizens at a concentration camp in the Estonian city of Tartu, and of having "directed the shooting of people and personally finishing survivors with pistol shots." Mr. Linnas, who fled with the German Army in 1944, *became an American citizen last year. Mr. Linnas is not the only criminal to have escaped to the West as those who read John Pittman's article on Soviet Estonia elsewhere in this issue may read for themselves.*

W. E. B. DU BOIS' TRILOGY: A LITERARY TRIUMPH

SIDNEY FINKELSTEIN

THE serious and gifted novels which a country produces in each period of its history can be looked upon not only as individual art works, but as adding up to one great novel in which the people of the land find a light thrown upon themselves, their fellow men and the land and world they are in. The separate works don't fit together with neatness and precision. Each has its own viewpoint, its partial truth, its omissions and distortions. We can find a character typical of one social milieu appearing as a hero in one writer's book, a villain in another; in one representing hopeful values, in another, decadence. Yet emerging from them collectively is the all-over reality of the land itself, the events that shaped it, and the physical and mental life, the hopes, troubles and tragedies, of the people who grew up in it.

Not every country is equally fortunate in the scope and depth of self-knowledge which its writers provide. And from this point of view, William E. Burghardt Du Bois' trilogy, *The Black Flame,* of which the third and concluding novel, *Worlds of Color,* has now appeared, is an achievement of American literature of which we can be especially proud, and which we must make our own. For besides its qualities as a novel in its own right, it provides a massive framework into which works by other authors can be fitted, and so re-evaluated. What it presents is the story of the Negro people, and Negro-white relations, from the end of the

"Reconstruction" era, in the late 1870's, to the middle 1950's. In the last three decades a host of books have appeared attempting to cope with the problems Du Bois raises, and most, not so much dealing with these problems as haunted by them. Among the latter are the works of the Nobel prize winer, William Faulkner, who reveals the decadence of the Southern gentry even as he re-asserts its myth of being an aristocratic, pure Anglo-Saxon-blooded elite; who offers savage, animal-like pictures of the Southern poor whites even as he claims a condescending affection for them; who presents the Negro people through the resurrected view of a descendant of "good-hearted," patronizing slave-holders. Du Bois' trilogy provides a rational setting in which to fit Faulkner's talented nightmares. Du Bois' novel enables us to understand better the slow and painful search for bearings of Thomas Wolfe's Eugene Gant and George Webber. It gives us a fresh insight into a book like John Steinbeck's confused and bewildered *East of Eden.* For although Steinbeck does not touch directly upon the Negro people, he wrestles with the question of why the American dream of democracy and freedom, should have moved through its own inner forces into so much grasping thievery, violence, hatred and murder. And crucial to this question of the contradictions within American democracy is the story Du Bois tells.

TO GIVE briefly the matters touched on in Du Bois' trilogy, the first novel, *The Ordeal of Mansart,* opens in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1876. On the day that the central figure of the trilogy, Manuel Mansart, is born, his father, Tom Mansart, is murdered by a racist mob. Tom Mansart had been a slave, had fought with Sherman's army, had become with the Civil War's end a leader of the Negro Stevedore's Union, and had been elected to the South Carolina legislature. His lynching is one of the events signalling the end of "Reconstruction." Slow steps had been taken, while fighting off the machinations of racists, swindlers and thieves, to bring some small land ownership to the former slaves, and to bring education and suffrage to all, Negro and poor white. But Northern capital and its political spokesmen have thrown their weight against democracy in the South. Now rising to political power in the South, avid to smash these gains and even rub them out of memory, is a class of small and large farmers and business men, looking for the progress they can make on the backs of cheap labor, Negro and white. They form an alliance with the old, former slave-holding, plantation gentry, while inciting the white working people to break off all ties with the Negro. To the heritage of the plantation aristocracy's "master class" ra-

cism, is added the new racism of the bourgeois marketplace; the black man now is a "menace" and "competitor" to the white. On the day Tom Mansart is killed, he has been making a desperate effort, on the eve of an election, to appeal to the old plantation gentry, on the basis of their own proclaimed "sense of honor," to help establish some order and decency in the South, against the rising anti-Negro violence.

The first volume goes on to tell of Manuel Mansart's youth, education, marriage and family, and the first steps in his chosen career, which is that of an educator in the segregated and poverty-stricken Southern Negro schools. The background Du Bois develops is the rise of capitalist "free enterprise" in the South, in the midst of a small farming economy from which it can draw a continuous supply of cheap labor. Step by step the gains of the Reconstruction era are broken, the Negro people are robbed of a voice in politics, and the corruption of democratic institutions causes the whole South to fester. A political oligarchy holds the reins, wielding the twin weapons of violence and racism, ensuring that there will be no organization of trade unions by Southern labor There is a blight of ignorance, for only a step higher than the primitive conditions of Negro schools is the backward situation of white education. But there are also struggles against the plunder of the land by capital, North and South, and the climax of the book is the upheaval of the Populist movement, with its promise of a voice to small farmers and labor. This too, however, is wrecked on the shoals of racism.

The second volume, *Mansart Builds a School,* begins in 1912. It tells of Manuel Mansart's work in Georgia, first as Superintendent of Negro Schools in Atlanta and then as President of one of the first Negro colleges in the South, the State Colored Agricultural and Mechanics' School in Macon. It also tells the stories of Mansart's three sons, Douglass, Revels and Bruce, each of whom in his own way tries to break clear of the South. Doggedly, Mansart tries to bring some genuine education to the Negro youth of the state, with tiny, doled-out funds and meagre facilities. Clouding his efforts are the educational principles that had been laid down by Booker T. Washington, so eagerly accepted by the white rulers. These were that Negroes should be trained as artisans, farmers, servants, and mechanics, while surrendering their right to a voice in the political and intellectual life of the country, and accepting a second-class citizenship. As Du Bois brings out, this is but a gentler form of a larger, more encompassing movement; that, fostered by the country's entire political leadership, to establish "for all time" the legal disenfranchisement of the Negro people. The movement reaches its peak in the 1920's.

THERE is a counterpart to this, Du Bois shows, in the trend over the world to "tighten the reins" on "subject peoples," especially in Africa. And behind this, as he shows, is the great power now held over economic and political life, not only in the United States but in Europe, of the emerging giant trusts, banks and monopolies. There is an allotment of interests and planned exploitation of these "backward" lands essential now in a way they had never been before to a trust-ridden economic life. As a counterforce, Du Bois sketches the rise of the Niagara movement and the NAACP. He also describes the growth of a Negro industrial working class, trying to make its way while kept out of an organized labor movement infected by racism. The First World War raises crucial questions of Negro-white relations in the country. The climax of the historical setting Du Bois recreates is the economic debacle of 1929, and the book ends with the first stages of the "New Deal" in the 1930's.

The third novel, *Worlds of Color,* takes up the thread in the middle 1930's. It begins with Mansart's travels both within the country and abroad, getting for the first time a directly observed view of the world outside of the American South. It resumes the story of his educational work, and also continues the story of his children and grandchildren. The background the author fills in is one now of world scope. It embraces the rise of fascism, the Second World War, the world impact of the socialist Soviet Union, the witch-hunts of the late 1940's and 1950's, and the emergence of the "New Africa," struggling for independence against open and hidden colonialism. The novel, and the trilogy, comes to an end with Mansart's retirement and death in 1954, "in the seventy-eighth year of his life—and of the emancipation of the Negro in America, the ninety-first." This is also the year of the historic U.S. Supreme Court decision asserting the unconstitutionality of segregation in education.

In its historical sweep, the trilogy, *The Black Flame* may be called a continuation of Du Bois' great book, *Black Reconstruction in America,* 1860-1880. It is entirely different, however, in form. The earlier book had been straight, scientific history, thoroughly and scrupulously documented. Of course, there were passages in it which flamed into poetry, and it was altogether a work of literary splendor rare in historical writing. *The Black Flame* is, however, fiction, telling the story of a flock of invented characters whom we get to know as well as if we had lived in the same house with them.

Yet as a novel, *The Black Flame* is somewhat unique. In contrast to the usual novel which prefaces its tale with the statement that any

resemblance to actual personages is unintended and accidental, *The Black Flame* introduces a number of real historical personages. It also offers its invented characters as typical figures throwing light on how real history shapes human lives. Then there are invented characters brought in solely for the historical statements Du Bois puts on their lips. And there are many passages of straight historical essays, in the author's own voice.

The question may be asked, why did not Du Bois write a straight history of the period, instead of choosing the form of the novel? He indicates the answer in the Postscript to the first volume. For one reason:

> If I had time and money, I would have continued this pure historical research. But this opportunity failed, and Time is running out. Yet I would rescue from my long experience something of what I have learned and conjectured and thus I am trying by the method of historical fiction to complete the cycle of history which has for a half century engaged my thought, research and action.

A second reason is that missing from even the best documented history is the picture of how people actually felt and thought, during the events so objectively presented. And yet this is part of the essential truth of an era.

> . . . just what men thought, the actual words they used, the feelings and motives which impelled them—those I do not know and most of them none will ever know. These facts are gone forever. But it is possible for the creative artist to imagine something of such unknown truth. If he is lucky or inspired, he may write a story which may set down a fair version of the truth of an era, or a group of facts about human history.

As in any realistic historical novel, the focus here is on the living human being. But as against the "depth psychology" so prevalent in the novel today, in the midst of which the authors sometimes forget that their characters live in and are shaped by a real society, Du Bois emphasizes the social aspect of human life. He wants us to know the real problems faced by people, the way they react to them, the decisions they make and what draws them to these decisions, and what these decisions in turn do to their lives. And if in the course of this, "straight history" plays so prominent a role in the three novels, one compelling justification for this is that this history is almost completely unknown. It is unknown not only to the youth studying in schools what is presumably

American history, and reading the standard textbooks. It is unknown even to many scholars mouthing falsehoods without knowing that they are falsehoods.

Probably no country today, priding itself on its advanced and comprehensive historical writing, has denied its people a true knowledge of their history for the past hundred years, so much as our own. This history, centered about the Negro people, approximately one tenth of the population, has been trampled underground by the prejudices and vested interests which it affronts, and which today are as alive as they ever were. How rampant they are can be gathered from the abysmal depths reached this year of the writings on the Civil War Centennial, so much of which has aimed to perpetuate the myth of the "gallant" slave-holding South. What has happened in the realm of historical writing is no more than a counterpart to what has happened to education and to democracy in America. For as Du Bois' novel shows, the denial of proper education to the Negro people in the South has resulted in an abysmal backwardness of all education in the South. The denial of civil rights to the Negro people, has resulted in the denial to the entire mass of white working people in the South, any influence on government in response to their real needs. It has also created a barrier to any democratic political life in the nation as a whole, and is a base today for the most virulent fascist movements and tendencies. Thus it is not surprising that the denial to the Negro people of the knowledge of their real history in America should disastrously rob the people of the entire country of the knowledge of the real history of their land. And for a people not to know the forces that shaped them, is to be half blind in coping with the issues of their own day.

And so, the light which the three volumes of *The Black Flame* throw on what happened in history is as fresh, needed and dramatic a revelation as the illumination they give to the human beings involved in it. The two join hand in hand.

Thus in the first volume, *The Ordeal of Mansart,* the first section depicting the rising tensions in Charleston, finally exploding in the mad riot in which Tom Mansart is lynched, is superb novelistic writing. And equally compelling are the extended historical sections near the end of this volume, revealing the social background of the problems faced by Manuel Mansart. There is a magnificent essay on the Populist leader, Tom Watson, which also shows the contradictions in the Populist movement itself, and the reasons for its collapse. There is a chapter analyzing the small town of "Jerusalem" in Georgia, where Mansart takes up his career as an educational supervisor, that is a masterpiece of sociological

study. And the chapter on the Atlanta riot of 1906 is historical writing that flames into poetry like the best passages of *Black Reconstruction.*

THE second volume, *Mansart Builds a School,* is heavily historical in its first half. It has brilliant studies of the Negro soldiers in the First World War, of the Negro community in Harlem, of the formation and development of the NAACP, and the "Negro Renaissance" of the 1920's. But in the latter part of the book there are fictional portraits of Mansart's three sons, and what happened to them, which are both powerful invention and contain the substance of what could be three full-length novels.

It is worth retelling these three stories briefly to indicate the insight with which Du Bois links "human decisions" to historical movement. All three sons, so different both from the father and from one another, angrily reject the father's way of life. He has had a chance to go North, getting an offer to teach in Indiana, but has decided to stay in Georgia. He must scheme and plead to get the smallest improvement for his school, go hat in hand to scurvy politicians, swallow repeated insults. To the sons, this is "Uncle Tom" behavior. The two older ones, Douglass and Revels, are further embittered by their experiences as Negro soldiers in the army in France, in 1917-18. Their rebellion against their father's way takes the form of wresting for themselves something of the ways of life that white people have reserved for their own. Douglass is interested in the rising opportunities for a Negro to enter business. He takes up insurance, and is introduced to the sleaziness and legal thievery of the cutthroat world of financial manipulations. He then moves to Chicago and becomes wealthy, a combined business man and politician who must reconcile himself to consorting with the unsavory elements, the underworld gamblers, who are so entrenched a part of both Chicago business and city politics.

Revels goes to New York to study law. He falls in love with and marries a white woman. They bear up under the almost overwhelming hardships facing a mixed couple in New York, but the wife's family finally breaks up the marriage. He then works up to a successful legal practice, and eventually gets one of the magistrate appointments doled out sparingly to Negroes. The light both these lives throw is on the rise of a Negro middle class, which is made possible by the rapidly increasing wealth and production of the 20th century, and which provides to superficial historians a false picture of "great gains" made by the Negro people as a whole.

The story of the third and youngest son, Bruce, is tragedy. A handsome youngster and a fine athlete, he is also a firebrand. He gets into a fight with racists and the police, and the beating he gets injures him mentally. He wanders from city to city, sometimes battling wth racisi police, sometimes in conflict with jim-crow trade unions that will not let him practice his trade of an electrician. He eventually drifts into the life of an outlaw, and is hung as a criminal.

The third volume, *Worlds of Color,* again opens with a series of "essays," presented through the form of Mansart's travels and conversations abroad. We get pictures in turn of English aristocratic liberalism, of Germany in the 1930's with its apologetics for the rising horrors of fascism, and the contradictions of Japan, a "colored" nation fervently proud of its independence of and "equality" with the "West," yet drawn on the path of alliance with fascist dictatorships. But all this is part of a remarkable picture Du Bois draws throughout the volume, of a world in which the people of Asia and Africa are now an active force moving history, regardless of how much the "West" would like to shut this out of mind. And it links up to the sections high in the tradition of creative novelistic writing. Among the latter is the story of Adelbert Mansart, Manuel's grandson, who is a soldier in the Korean War and is sickened to heart by it, loses an arm in battle, becomes an expatriate in Paris, and then lands in the midst of the turbulent movement for African independence.

FROM these life stories, we can begin to glimpse the values which rise out of this organic interweaving of the novel and history. For the combination enables Du Bois to take up central questions germane to "human history," and yet not to be found in "straight history." One of these crucial questions is that of morality; not in terms of abstract principles of "good" and "evil," but in terms of the basis on which people actually decide how they shall live and what relations they choose to their fellow men. This runs like a main thread throughout the trilogy.

It rises at the very opening of the first volume. On the first page, we are introduced to Colonel John Breckinridge, a former slave holder, owner of a great plantation, one of the old "aristocracy," and are told, "He was disturbed and unhappy. . . . He was about to tell a lie." A new society has appeared, to which he must make some adjustment. In the old life, he had lived on the backs of slaves, because the slaves were assumed to be inferior beings, created by God to serve their betters, the "elite." This granted, a man could live as the other gentry did and pride

himself on his "code of honor." One didn't consciously tell lies. But now in the post-war South, the former aristocrats must sink or swim in the chicanery of the new politics. Whichever side he takes, he must lie to the other. And there is a clash of moralities. For coming up the path to speak to the Colonel, is the former slave, Tom Mansart. And Mansart doesn't lie; he stands for a truth which is simple, and yet far more real than that of the old gentry, which had built its "code of honor" on the great lie of white superiority. Mansart says, "What we wants is work and fair pay. We wants freedom and justice. We is willing to work hard but we wants to be sure of enough to live on. Then for our children we wants a chance to learn." Mansart dies that same night, while Breckinridge eventually prospers, although he cannot reconcile himself to the "new South." But it is Mansart's morality, that of the welfare of all human beings together, that has a future.

This thread of the moralities that men live by, their clash and their working out, runs through the entire trilogy It is movingly illuminated by the stories of Mansart's sons. For while Du Bois does not pass any judgment on Douglass and Revels, what he shows is that if they militantly refused to "bend the knee" as they thought their father did, they nevertheless bent in a more subtle way. Manuel Mansart, in the way of life he has chosen, is dedicating his life to his people. It is part of his greatness that he cannot conceive any other way of living. The subservience forced on him—which he slowly and determinedly whittles away—is a harsh condition he must face to bring education to the Negro youth of Georgia. He himself is on a far higher moral plane than those supremacists who determine how much they can dole out to him. The sons' "freedom" however becomes in the end a matter of their taking over the customs, way of life, and something of the morality, of the masters.

In the last volume, *Worlds of Color,* the question of morality takes on world scope. For now the self-appointed judges of others are being judged. Along with the upheavals against colonialism and imperialism in Asia, Africa and Latin America, the financial and industrial "West" is uneasily finding itself the object of moral contempt and even pity. The social-minded morality of Tom Mansart, asking for work, democracy and education, an adequate return of the fruits of his labor, with no thought of scurvy self-interest, with no desire to live on anyone else's labor, wanting nothing for himself that cannot be gotten for all, is now the morality uheld by more than half the world. On trial with the plunderers is the entire hyrocrisy of plunder, with its usurpation of the

right to decide whether other peoples are "fit' for freedom or "capable" of ruling themselves.

I have reserved for the last what seems to me to be perhaps the most important value of this combination of fiction and factual history. It is that Du Bois is able to present not merely the real forces, economic, political and social, operating in the world faced by his typical personages, but also something more difficult and complicated; namely, the growing consciousness by the people of what these forces are.

THIS is a central aspect of the history of the last hundred years, not only of the Negro people but of all the American working people. In respect to the Negro people, the period from the abolition of slavery to the 1950's is customarily spoken of by well-meaning liberals as one of "great gains." What gains were there? For two thirds of this period there was a savage onslaught to rob as much meaning and content as possible from the true gain achieved by the abolition of slavery. In the 1930's there were gains, with racism forced on the defensive. But since then, some of those have been erased, as may be seen from the depredations forced on the labor movement in the South. Certainly through this whole period, the general expansion of productivity and wealth, together with incessant struggles, permitted some sections of the Negro people to gain an education, enter jobs and professions formerly barred to them, produce artists and writers, enjoy a middle-class income. But the great mass of the Negro people are still segregated, are still denied genuine education, still have no real voice in how they are governed, are still denied the justice given to white people, still live in or close to poverty, still suffer the most from periods of unemployment and recession.

But there have been great gains nonetheless. They have taken place in the intangible but all-important realm of consciousness. Out of the successive and unending struggles has been born a growing awareness and knowledge of what the real forces are, in the world, and what the real conditions are of liberation; namely the brotherhood of peoples, not merely within a country or nation but over the world. In the first volume of the trilogy, the growing consciousness may be said to cover mainly an education in the forces operating in the society of the American South. In the second volume, covering the period of the 1920's through the great crash of 1929, the consciousness extends to cover the forces operating in the country as a whole. In the third volume the consciousness expands to cover the forces operating over the world. This is typified by Manuel Mansart, who says, near the close of his life, "I dreamed too long of a

great American Negro race. Now I can only see a great Human race. It may be best. I should indeed rejoice——." One gets an inkling of the fact that the history Du Bois has written, so different in fact, and emphasis, from the customary histories written of our country, is something like the history that will be written in a future period, not so far away, when truth is no longer contaminated by the demands of prejudice and of vested, selfish and exploitative interests.

One of the great achievements of the trilogy is the understanding it gives of the working people as a whole, and their role in history. It is often said that Marxists and progressive thinkers "idealize" the working class, the Negro people, the colonial peoples, as the main carriers of the movement to a new level of society. What emerges from Du Bois' narrative, not in any direct statements but rising from the very inevitability of movement of the story itself, is why this special position must be so. It is not that working people or exploited people have any different bodies and brains from those of any other socal class. But it is that the very conditions under which they live, and the only conditions under which they can effectively defend themselves, begin to assert a necessary way of cooperative life and social morality. Du Bois is unsparing in his picture of narrowness, prejudice and racism in the working class, and of opportunism among white workers, labor leaders, and Negroes. But for one to rise in this way, he must have many others to step on. And the people as a whole learn that the only way they can defend themselves is to seek the welfare of all.

Whether *The Black Flame* will loom up in history as a "great novel" I don't know, but there can be no doubt of the fact that it is a work that could only have been produced by a man of genius. It is one of the most important books to be produced in our country in our times, and it demands to be read many times and slowly absorbed. I think that the best way to characterize it is as a book that offers a rich and necessary education to all who read it. In it Du Bois, novelist, historian, poet, philosopher, teacher, has drawn upon one of the richest of lifetimes and given us a source of strength, an unquenchable light to banish the surrounding darkness. Why attempts will be made to hide this light from those who need and would welcome it, the novel itself explains pretty fully. But the curtains of malice and ignorance thrown over it will eventually burn in the flame he has lit.

W. E. B. DU BOIS: *THE BLACK FLAME*—A Trilogy.

The Ordeal of Mansart. Mainstream, New York, 1957, 316 pages, $3.50.

Mansart Builds a School. Mainstream, New York, 1959, 366 pages, $4.00.

Worlds of Color. Mainstream, New York, 1961, 349 pages, $4.50.

Three volumes together—$10.00.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

W. E. B. Du Bois, who is 93 years old, left the United States with his wife, Shirley Graham, for Ghana, on October 6. He has been invited by the government of Ghana and President Kwame Nkrumah to direct the publication of an Encyclopedia Africana (*the first volume of which is expected to take ten years*), *under the auspices of the Ghana Academy of Science. Dean of American letters and recognized as one of the world's foremost scholars, Dr. Du Bois was born in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, in* 1868. *He has pioneered in many important fields, including history, anthropology and sociology, and is the author of more than a score of books, among which are such classics as* The Souls of Black Folk, Black Reconstruction, The World and Africa, *and many more, including volumes of poetry and essays. He was a chief founder of the Pan-African Congress, the Niagara Movement, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, whose magazine, "The Crisis," he edited from* 1910 *until* 1933. *..A bust of Dr. Du Bois executed by the distinguished American sculptor, William Zorach, has been officially accepted for its permanent collection by the New York Public Library in honor of Dr. Du Bois' lasting achievements and contributions. We are proud to reproduce this bust on our cover in honor of this outstanding American scholar.*

ARSENAL

JOSE A. BARAGANO

Here I am once again—I always come back.
The dark houses, the stones I walk on,
The spiny mountain top where my hot voice comes to rest:
I look and say, Avila,
Madrid, Oradour, I don't know where my brothers have fallen.
The upside-down lion at the entrance to the bank
Drinks the gold of the world's masters.
I feel myself reborn, feel tremendous in this northern wind
That stirs the grass and the eastern towers.
Like something too often repeated, my own name is lost.
Hunger is the stubborn earth,
It splits the lungs in two,
Carves a question mark between one's shoulders.
Now I light up my pipe.
We are not taking part in a play
But in a great explosion.
I write:
We aren't on the stage.
We are nursing a powder keg.
They push our name off the map,
They rub it out, dirty it up.
We are not in a battle
But on a field plowed up and coming to life again
I hold the password for the Ebro.
I do the rounds of bases made of mangrove and basalt.

I disappear in the sparse grass, I know that game.
One step more:
Sunlit towers run through my arteries.

Arsenal of ritual, arsenal of dawn,
Arsenal of words, arsenal! arsenal!
Cuba, arsenal of diamonds streaked with phosphorus,
Arsenal of the people, treasure-house of dawn and night.
In Wall Street they never mention the noose,
The house of the hanged man.
The extras in the chorus intone:
A menace is a menace.
Our own arsenal is underground.
Now enters the mangrove tree, stained with blood,
The swamp, the mountain burning olive-green,
The platinum arrow in the mouth of the hero.
Arsenal of invisible lightning,
Thunderbolt of stone,
The arsenal's sun
Striking the cold earth.
We are not part of a play
But of a great conflict.
(I have seen men peppered with grapeshot
Children blown to bits, and the bones of the tiger
In the mouth of the lamb.)
Our hands clutch at our mouths,
Resound like burning metal
In the hair of the girls we embrace.
Our hands hold back the night;
Break against the sun.
Let us cross the field, I repeat, the battle,
As you know, comrade, is between the province and the cyclone.
Our wounded country is the thing that's most alive in all of nature
Our country is the earth in which we are buried without sadness.

Our throats are good for singing;
Our throats are burning red,
With poisoned liberty.
Radioactive gases flood the junction.
It turns into a railroad. It traverses the great rivers

Between poison gases and excrement. Radioactive dust
Burns up the White House. Radioactive dust burns
In the street of the wall.
Better the hard earth of toil,
Better the white bread and the hard bone,
Better the articulated froth, the hymn of the holy,
Burning against the people's bloody battlements,
In the first Age of Joy.
The conflagration makes its entrance through Wall Street.
We are not part of a play
But of a great conflict.
You ladies bearing the name of an insect
And coral buttocks,
I hate your gloves which are being pulverized.
The Maritime Alps are also a good place to sip our blood.
In Paris, London, Sicily, you have drunk our blood,
You, with your thin vampire's hair.
But this is your exile:
The mangrove, the stone, the moss,
And the drum unite into a sky of fire,
Radioactive dust buries Wall Street.
There is nothing else worth dying for.
The people are also an arsenal of poets.
In the battle, every man defines himself.
A force without a center
At the outer edge of the fire.

The Union Burns.
Arsenal! Arsenal! Arsenal!
One million, two millions, three.
Radioactive dust.
We are not in a theatre.
We are in a great conflict.
The wind of the east and of the west
Burns in the heights of Cuba
In a purple fire of sound.

Translated by Nan Apotheker and Lillian Lowenfels.

EMMET STARK

NANCY LUBKA

AT TWO A.M. the bar on the corner of Seventh and Walnut closed and there was always a brief flurry of noise—voices, laughter, cars starting up. In the summer when the windows were open Emmett could sometmes hear bits of conversation, and he was always surprised at the significance of those few words drifting through the night—the way one or two phrases revealed whole situations and characters. One night in May he was sitting at the desk marking some themes and he heard someone, a woman, saying, "Leaving, that's all. Why should he care?" The answer was inaudible, then she continued, "No sir, no man on earth . . . get a job all right . . . sure . . . somehow."

He couldn't shut out her voice so he got up and went to the window. But he could barely see them—the woman just outside the door to the bar, hidden by the awning, the man turned three-quarters in the other direction so that he was only a short-sleeved shirt and a haze of cigarette smoke.

Emmett had just marked a large "D" on one of the themes, and this always made him feel a little depressed. His fingers ached from holding the pencil. His back hurt. He wanted to go to bed, but there were (he walked back to the desk and counted them) four more themes to read. He wandered into the kitchen, turned on the burner under the teakettle, dropped into one of the wooden chairs, and put his head down on the checkered oilcloth.

It was no use. He was killing himself for nothing. Better to have it over with. Better to just jump down the elevator shaft. Perhaps they would hang a picture of him in the corridor outside Room 105 and once a month the janitor would dust it and wonder who it was.

Various members of the faculty would each have his own theory as to why he had done it. They would argue. It would give them diversion.

Suddenly he heard the water bubbling in the kettle. He looked up, around the kitchen. Everything so normal, so everyday. A dirty dish-towel on the rack, a sugar-encrusted teacup on the drainboard, a solitary fruit fly dipping in and out of the garbage sack. He got up, chiding himself, and prepared the tea with slow but steady hands.

"Mr. Stark," said Janet Peabody. "When you said Whitman would be included on the test you just meant the three poems in the book, didn't you? We don't have to read extra."

"No, you don't have to, but if you do then you may understand him better and that will help you on the test." He got up and walked over to the right side of the room where Jerry Sutherland was dozing in his chair. "Don't you think so, Jerry?"

"Oh . . . a . . . yeah."

"I knew you would." There was a muffled giggle. "Remember," said Emmett to the room at large, "it's no use trying to memorize a lot of dates and details. Those things matter too, but more important—try to remember the ideas expressed. I was a little disappointed in the themes. I hope you'll do better on the test." He stopped, knowing that most of them had not heard and most of those who did hear immediately forgot.

The bell rang and the clamor of changing classes began again. In less than a minute he was alone in the room. The chairs were scattered in a ragged pattern and scraps of paper dotted the floor. Someone had grabbed a piece of chalk and drawn a wavy line along the blackboard as he walked. One or two students drifted in for the next class. Not speaking to him, avoiding his eyes, they sprawled in the back chairs and stared out the window. Suddenly he had that friendless, desperate feeling that had begun to bother him so much. He couldn't stay there feeling that way. He walked out into the corridor, into the sounds of tramping feet, slamming locker doors, calls, whistles.

There was Miss Matin, who had meant to be a typing teacher and wound up with classes in eleventh and twelfth grade English because they were shorthanded in the English Department. She was staying a few chapters ahead of her students. Emmett had given her some old notes and sample tests from his American Literature course.

"Hello," she said, approaching him with an expression of utmost respect. "How are you?"

"Fine. You?"

"Oh, all right, I guess. I had a little trouble last period I just can't seem to keep them under control. You think it's because I'm not much older than they are?"

Emmett smiled sympathetically. "That's part of it," he said, "but we all have trouble. It's hard to make them respect you when they don't even respect themselves."

She shook her head. "When I went to school it wasn't this bad. I keep thinking maybe it's just me."

"No, don't take the blame. It's much more complicated than that." Looking into one classroom, he saw that a good many of his students were there. "I'll have to go in. But don't let it get you down."

"I try not to. Can we talk some more at lunch?"

"Surely. I'll save a seat for you."

HE WENT in and sat down at the desk, feeling better, and at the same time a little put out with himself. He was getting terribly moody. The least little thing irritated or depressed him. He brooded over every problem that came along. And when he ran out of anything else to worry about there was always the faculty and its deteriorating standards. But that was why Miss Matin did so much for him. She was different. She cared. He wanted to think the others did, too, but it was almost impossible to keep believing. He couldn't imagine how some of them ever wound up in the teaching profession. What did they do it for? Why not work in some office where the pay was something more than could be budgeted on a 3 x 5 card, where there was no stinting of carbon paper and artgum erasers, where the work force increased with the work load? Instead they chose Wagner High with its 800 teenagers determined not to be educated, its enormous football stands and tiny chemistry labs, its words of dedication and deeds of penury. And they were apparently miserable with the choice and completely uninterested in the whole question of education. They rarely discussed it. Most of their conversations concerned each other's salary, the school administration, the the greenness of the grass of other school systems in other cities.

Yet he could not blame them too strongly. They were like report cards with nothing but "F's." And an "F" always made him feel that it was not only the student who had failed, but he himself, the school, the board of education, the PTA, and all the other things and people who should have been doing something they weren't.

He always read the morning paper during lunch. It was the first chance he had and would be the last until fifth period, his free time.

All the same, he put it down when he saw Miss Matin coming, got up, and pulled out a chair for her.

"I shouldn't be interrupting you," she said. "Go ahead and finish the paper. I don't mind."

"No, no. I'd rather talk to you." He pushed the chair back in as she sat down. She was really very pretty, and he wondered momentarily if she might be interested in him. It was true that he was at least fifteen years older than she, but he still had his hair, graying nicely now as though he were a young actor made up to look old. And certainly, during her months at the school, Miss Matin must have heard that Emmett Stark was a widower.

She leaned over to see the headline on the front page. "Oh," she murmured, "isn't that awful. They passed that enormous defense appropriation without a protest but they're still wrangling about the school bill."

"It's always that way," he answered. "You'll have to get used to it."

"No, I never will. I'm a worrier."

"How many students do you have?"

"A hundred and thirty-nine."

"Well, if you worry over every one you'll soon be taking tranquilizers."

"I'll bet you do. I'll bet you go through every theme and mark every error."

"Yes, I do." He leaned back, thinking of the immensity of that phrase, "mark every error." It meant hours of concentration, frustration and defeat, anger and despair. And what for? Most of the students never noticed. They saw only the grade. They continued to make the same mistakes over and over. The school administration in the person of Mr. Fielding, the assistant principal, lectured him about changing conditions and the need of working quickly. During the course of such a discussion Mr. Fielding always made two or three grammatical errors. But no matter what anybody said, he just couldn't bring himself to breeze through a stack of papers, occasionally applying the pencil, and finally marking "C" here and "B" there. No matter how many there were, he couldn't. He used to try. When Margaret was living, especially at first when they were new to each other and had so much to say, he had been constantly arguing with himself about it, trying to rationalize. But in the end he had always sent her on to bed while he stayed up and finished the work. Later, after she died, he realized that a lot of things had simply gone unsaid.

Miss Matin put her fork down and looked at him. "There's something I want to ask you," she said. "I hate to put any more work on you, but my senior students want to do a play to make money for the class. Right away somebody said, 'Mr. Stark would direct it.' So I had to promise to ask you. Do you think you possibly could?"

His heart jumped. "I don't know," he replied, trying to sound calm. "What would they want to do?"

"Oh, I'm sure they'd let you decide. But don't feel that you have to."

"I'd need a committee from the class. Then they'd have to get permission from the office. I'd be glad to talk to them about it."

"Oh, that's wonderful. I'll tell them this afternoon." There was a moment of silence. Finally she said, "I'm afraid I'm getting an inferiority complex. They make me feel like such a bore, bothering them with education. Sometimes I wish I could just forget it all and see if they'd like me better." Her hand lay on the table, and for a moment he thought about putting his own over it and telling her that she was always going to feel that way, that the task was insurmountable, that he could see only whirlwind ahead, that she was too young and beautiful to be caught up in it.

"Of course you couldn't," he answered. "That would be like forgetting who you are. But don't think just because I've been here so long that I never feel that way. As a matter of fact I don't take it as well as I used to. The last senior test I gave, four students cut class, and in spite of myself I took it as a personal insult."

"Everybody tells me I have to get used to it. That's just the way kids are."

He frowned. "It's true you have to accept a lot. But don't ever say that's the way kids are. They are the way we make them. And there always has to be somebody who doesn't accept, but just keeps arguing and making trouble. Otherwise the years go by and everything happens by default. We can't even stand still. We go backward."

"Do you really think so? They always say we're making progress everywhere. Maybe you just don't want things to change."

"Maybe. But don't be fooled into taking whatever is new just because it's new. There's the next text in English literature for example. Have you seen it?"

She nodded.

"Well, don't you see what I mean? It's thinner and the words are shorter, the poems are fewer and the price is higher. It's the same with everything else. Classes keep getting more crowded, students are con-

stantly less interested, less prepared, teachers come out of college without knowing how to speak or write, much less understand their subjects, school bills get kicked around and chopped at and nothing is ever left over for the teachers. So what if I complain? I just don't want things to change. I'm supposed to adjust—that's a word that covers a multitude of sins—and learn to give social promotion to the ones who can't even read."

SHE stared at him in silence and after a moment he decided that the look in her eyes was one of pity. Yes, she was sorry for him—an old man, mad at the world. How could she know about the days when he used to come in with a spring in his step and a word for every need?

He got up to go, but she touched his hand. "I'm sorry," she said. "You're overworked and we'd all be the same way if we did even a half-way job of things. I'm beginning to think they don't really want you to do that."

"I'll tell you," he said. "If you insist on being thorough you might as well expect to be disliked by most everybody. It's too much to ask of people these days that they should take time to understand things. In fact, it's a little bit heretical to talk about it too openly. It's better to pretend you're not interested in being serious. But all the same, send those kids to see me about the play." He walked away, drifting through the crowds of students, exchanging greetings with those who spoke to him. At the foot of the stairway he passed Al Dermott, biology and general science teacher, who tried to engage him in a conversation about the romance of Mr. Fielding and his new stenographer. Emmett eluded him and went on. He was thinking about O'Neill, Anderson, or perhaps even Ibsen.

Miss Elvira Sohns of the Language Department was class advisor for the senior class. She taught French, Spanish and Latin, and always assumed an air of sophistication and a faintly British accent, the origins of which were shrouded in mystery. Emmett had once held a ten-minute conversation with her after a school concert. He had been in the coffee shop having Danish pastry and arguing with some friends, and Miss Sohns had interrupted a lively discussion with a series of inane comments that landed like dead fish between the coffee cups. Since that time, Emmett had been able to avoid her. But now she came with the student committee to see him.

It was after school and he had just broken the zipper on his briefcase by trying to close it over a bulging mound of papers. Suddenly Miss Sohns appeared, flamingly rouged and teetering at the height of her four-

inch heels. "Mr. Stark," she said loudly.

"Yes," said Emmett.

"We're here to talk about the play." Three students followed her in, one boy and two girls. Miss Sohns smiled rather wildly, showing upper and lower teeth equally, and they all sat down. "We already have tentative approval from the office."

"Good," said Emmett.

He did not say that he had been up half the night rereading plays, trying to decide on something that could keep its character in spite of anything a senior class might do to it. He only said that he had several things in mind and that they should help decide. After nearly twenty minutes, just as the room was about to receive a full dose of light from the afternoon sun, they settled on "Ah, Wilderness." The group dispersed, excited, talkative, thanking him profusely, and then leaving him with his broken zipper and a feeling mixed with joy and trepidation.

He was tired—very tired. If he had not been so tired he would have stopped by Miss Matin's room to tell her about the play. But she might have been gone anyway. After a moment he picked up the briefcase and walked down the middle of the room without straightening a single chair. On the way through the empty hall, as he listened to his steps echoing from the stairwells, he resolved that he would get more rest, regain some of his old verve, see more of Gina Matin, and do a good job for Eugene O'Neill in spite of all handicaps.

On his way out of the building he stopped to get his mail. It contained a note from Miss Tate, faculty advisor for the school paper, requesting him to do an article on the importance of English as a subject. There was a typed request that he stop in to see Mr. Fielding before school the next day, and a notice of a faculty meeting Friday afternoon. He also had a test to prepare. And so, in spite of his resolution, he was just turning off the desk light when the bar closed that night, and he heard somebody shout, "Don't forget, Mac—fifty dollars and she buys the paint."

Friday morning Mr. Fielding asked him to serve as proctor for two series of senior achievement tests to be given the next week. He also requested a copy of the play to read before giving final approval. This gave Emmett a twinge of fear, but he ignored it and went on. And as it turned out, Friday was not a bad day.

SATURDAY morning at ten o'clock he arrived at school for the tryouts. The students were milling around, unusually subdued. The

stage was dim and dusty, the black piano sitting in the far corner under its canvas cover, the floor lined with faint chalk marks left by the girls' gym classes who used the stage for square dancing and gymnastics. Protruding from the wall was the lighting cabinet, posted with important-looking warning signs.

He knew which students would be there. They were the ones who had learned that they were worth something. In the beginning he had thought he could make them all like that. Single-handed he was going to change the bent of every life he touched—show them how wrongly they judged themselves—even the very worst. He had tried to tell them—"A man is what he makes of himself." That was what he, at their age, had been told, and he had made himself a teacher, a man of ideas and determination. But they looked at him as if to say, "Who, me?" And little by little he had discovered that it was not quite true—that a man is also what other men make of him—consciously or unconsciously, individually and through the impersonal aegis of such intangibles as "society" and "public opinion." The more he thought about it the more he could see how his own decisions in life had been subject to the most diverse influences, and he knew that in those days, had anyone pointed this out to him, he would have protested that he was an individual, making his own fate. Well, if that was the way it was then he would be honest about it, open and free, a propagator of ideas, an arguer. And there were those who responded—always a few—eager to cross swords with him. But he was only one voice. Forty-five minutes a day was his allotment of any student's time—hardly more than the length of one television program plus commercials—one adult western in which guns fire only six times without reloading and victims die realistically.

He kept on, but the good results were usually swept away in floods of new ignorance, and somewhere he had begun to wonder which way the road went, whether up or down. More and more the fog closed in, refusing to let him see. Still he kept on.

"Let's get started," he said. "Girls over there. We'll take the boys first."

There was Miss Sohns, daringly attired in a red suit and a white blouse with limp ruffles. She smiled at him, but he escaped her by moving out into the center of the stage. The boys lined up, noisy and awkward, trying to look nonchalant. The first was Ronnie Skinner, a "C", sometimes "B" student who always made a better showing in oral than in written examinations.

Emmett handed him a slip of paper. "Read that as if you meant it."

He backed away.

Ronnie studied the paper for a moment. Then he read. "Let them put me in jail. But how about the freedom of speech in the Constitution then? That must be a farce too." He looked up and grinned at Emmett as though he expected Emmett to say, "Okay, you can be the star." But Emmett only said, "Give it to the next boy."

One by one, each of the boys read an excerpt from the play. After a while Emmett realized he was going to have to give some of the parts to those who looked as if they were tremendously embarrassed by the whole thing. Of course it was always possible that after the excitement mounted and the ideas began coming through, some of those faces would be unable to hide their interest, and a little expression would creep into their voices. But he knew, painfully, that this was mostly a vain hope.

With the girls it was a little better. There were more of them and he had some choice. Besides, "acting" constituted less of a handicap for a girl. Her fellow students would attach slightly less opprobrium to her than to any boy who so compromised his manhood.

Emmett made no announcements after the try-outs. As a general rule he tried not to keep students in suspense, but he wanted time to think and to make the right decisions. "Everybody read the play," he said. "If you take a part and don't know the play from beginning to end you'll be dropped. All the parts will be posted on my bulletin board Monday morning."

Miss Sohns was waiting for him as he walked off the stage. "It's really remarkable how you handle them," she said. "Not one of my classes is ever that quiet."

"This is a little different," he answered. "This is something they want to do."

"You're just being modest. But I hope you're not going to give that Ronnie Skinner very much of a part. He's so conceited it would simply go right to his head."

"Conceited? Do you think that's a good reason for not giving him a part?"

"Well, I certainly do. I can't stand boys like that. It's disgusting. Besides, I caught him cheating on a test."

"Most of them cheat. You can't stop it just by punishing the ones you happen to see."

She raised her eyebrows. "Well, you can't just ignore it surely."

"No, but I try to write the kind of tests on which cheating isn't much help. I don't believe in true or false questions."

She looked offended. "Maybe that's all right with you, but it's entirely different with a subject like mine. Anyway, I still say it's all part of the same thing. He cheats, he's conceited, he's just an unpleasant child, and I wouldn't give him a part. But of course it's your decision."

"Maybe being in the play will help him. Arrogance only gets in the way in something like this. Besides, art is a very humbling thing. When you begin to understand that some human being, put together in the usual way, has created something that lives beyond him with a greatness of its own—Miss Sohns, most of these kids never have any such communication, and I'm hoping this play will give some of them a chance to have it, Ronnie Skinner included."

She smiled, made some innocuous remark, and turned away to speak to one of the girls. Emmett picked up his briefcase, holding it against his side so nothing would fall out. Several of the students noticed him leaving and called, "Goodbye, Mr. Stark." He waved and answered, "See you Monday."

THE weekend had given him a chance to rest, and on Monday he felt better. There was a rigorous schedule ahead of him. Second period he would give the American literature test. Fifth period would be lost all week because of the achievement tests. He had scheduled the first rehearsal of the play that afternoon.

In the morning he had an unpleasant encounter with three boys who were smoking in the restroom. He never made threats in such situations —only made them put out the cigarettes and cracked a joke about burning the school down. But one of them was surly and replied with an obscenity.

It was hard to know what to say. You had to be quick—able to sense the real thing behind the ugly facade—whether it was ugly too and if so, why it was so. His brain refused to rouse itself. He could only mumble something weak and meaningless—worse than nothing at all. He was weary and he had no faith. That was the basis of all his troubles, all his dire expectations. Gina Matin was the only one who had dared to tell him so, and she had said it mainly with her eyes. Yes, he was a misled Cassandra, crying doom out of his own aches and emptiness. But maybe he ought to be glad. If it was only him, then perhaps the road was turning upward and he couldn't see it.

Second period he gave the American literature test. Looking at their faces as they read the mimeographed questions, he could almost tell how the grades would run. He didn't want them to fail—none of them—

not even Jerry Sutherland, who would probably hand in a blank sheet of paper. He wanted them to snatch up their pencils with a look of confidence, as though they knew and were glad they knew and would have been glad even if there were no test. For that he would have altogether stopped going to bed at night. What would it matter?

That afternoon when he went backstage for the rehearsal, the first thing he saw was Miss Matin. She was standing by the piano talking to Ronnie and two other boys. Ronnie regarded her with an air of intense, if slightly patronizing, fascination. He was affecting the manner of the wicked bachelor confronted with a person unaware that she was a subject for wickedness. The other two boys also made attempts to appear worldly-wise. Only Gina, her head slightly bent, the lights reflecting from her dark hair, seemed natural, unpretentious.

"Hello," said Emmett, approaching the group.

The boys responded, then waited for Miss Matin to speak.

"I thought I would watch the rehearsal," she said.

"Wonderful." He looked at Ronnie. "Would you fellows go down into the auditorium and clear everybody out?"

"Sure," said Ronnie, grinning as if to add, "We know you want to be alone with her."

WHEN they had gone she looked at Emmett with a kind of sadness. "I also want to talk to you," she said. "I need help. I've been getting by all year, but I can't go on any longer without learning some things. Somebody asked me a question today and I didn't know the answer. And I don't mean a fact question. I've learned how to dodge those. This was an idea and they wanted to know what I thought about it and I just fumbled."

"They threw you in the deep water," he answered. "I'll be glad to do anything I can, you know that. But if I were you I'd take some night courses. You might be able to get the board to pay for part of it."

"I've been thinking of that. But I have to talk to somebody now. Could I come over to your place? I hate to ask. I know how rushed you are."

"Don't be silly. I'd love to. But I have a test to grade tonight. Tomorrow night?"

They agreed. He left her by the piano and went to start the rehearsal. Everybody was tremendously excited. Now that the parts had been assigned, all rivalry seemed to be a thing of the past. He even heard one girl coaching another. Well, it might be good after all. It might be

as good as some of the other plays had been through the years. He was having delusions of grandeur again—again—surely not again. Hadn't he learned anything?

No, he never learned. Only that morning he had been telling himself in rather Freudian terms that it was all because he was getting old and crochety. Now, in the results of the American literature test, he had the complete, unanswerable rebuttal to that nonsense. It was just as he had told Gina. Every year it was a little worse. If there was a low point, after which things would begin coming back up, it hadn't been reached. Of the 27 test papers he graded, 2 were completely blank and 10 were only partially completed. There were a number of answers framed in the rambling, round-about manner that showed a knowledge of the general subject but ignorance of the particular question. Only about 5 could be considered good papers. To grade realistically, only those 5 could pass. To grade as he had been forced to do for the past few years, no more than 18 could pass. Nine failures. Two who didn't even care. He fell into bed at two-thirty, exhausted and bitter.

Tuesday he returned the papers. Then he sat at his desk for nearly five minutes, completely silent, while they looked, compared, whispered, and finally, sensing his mood, became silent themselves. He noticed that Janet Peabody had tears in her eyes, and it cut him to the quick. She had memorized names and dates, understanding almost nothing, and instead of the 90 she had hoped for, had scored only 78. He expected her to challenge him, for she looked a little angry.

He got up and walked to the windows, then turned and looked at the class. "A great book," he said, "is not simply a story about how this person met that person and did something or other. Those things are only the trappings—the vehicle that carries the real story inside. Ideas are the subject of every book—ideas and thoughts about life. Now why are you so afraid of ideas? Can you tell me that?" There was a heavy silence. One or two students shifted in their chairs, impatient and uncomfortable. "I suppose you think you can get through life without bothering," he went on. "And you can. A lot of people do. But it's just like taking a shower with a raincoat on. And you might as well understand, since some of you will be in my class next year for English literature, that in here you're expected to think, however much you may hate it. As long as you don't think, as long as you read only words and not the meaning behind them, you're going to have test grades like these."

Janet Peabody had dried her tears and seemed to be listening to him. Her face was a little pale, and hardly a word escaped her during the en-

tire period. Most of the class, however, soon regained its normal attitude. They never seemed to hold it against him when he lectured them. Those who were sour remained sour and those who were friendly joked with him just as before. But Emmett could not recover so quickly.

He made a terrible effort to be pleasant and ordinary with the rest of his classes through the day. But since nothing happened to change his mood, he was completely out of smiles by the time afternoon came. As he went into the office to get his mail he heard someone call his name. It was Mr. Fielding's stenographer, emerging from the far side of the filing case, her eyes outlined with green eye-shadow and looming up like Chinese lanterns. "Mr. Fielding wants to see you," she said.

"Thank you." He paced down the corridor to Mr Fielding's office. The assistant principal was reading "The American Legion" magazine, but the paperbound copy of the play lay in front of him on the desk.

"Ah," he said as Emmett came in. "Sit down." Emmett sat, prepared for the worst. "Ah, about this play," said Mr. Fielding. "I understand you selected it?"

"That's right."

"Yes. Well, ah, this is not to say that I question your doing so, Emmett. You know that I wouldn't presume to even offer an opinion on anything literary. I'm not much of a 'man of the arts,' shall we say?" He chuckled exactly three times—"ha, ha, ha," as though he thought that the correct number in such a situation. Emmett was silent. "But I must say that it seems entirely too, ah, mature for a group like ours. And it seemed to me, since you've been directing school plays for a good many years, Emmett, that you would have thought of that." Still Emmett said nothing. "I mean, for instance, now, Emmett, surely you know we can't have any kissing on the stage. That's completely out of the question."

"Are you asking me to choose another play?"

"Well, I don't know. That would be one solution I'm sure there are a lot of things more suitable for young people. But I do see the merit of this piece. It has a lot of punch, some good laughs. And I thought maybe you, with your understanding of . . . that is, I'm certain you could just make a few crucial changes so that it would be more acceptable."

"You want me to edit the play."

"Now, Emmett, don't make it sound that way, old man. You seem to have a chip on your shoulder these days. Can't we work this out together?"

"I'm sorry." He leaned back in the chair and rubbed his eyes. "Just what do you mean by 'a few crucial changes'?"

"Well, look here, for instance." Mr. Fielding grabbed the play and leafed through it, indicating a whole series of murderous deletions and alterations. When he had finished Emmett replied in a quiet voice that he would not do it.

"Emmett, I don't understand you," said Mr. Fielding. "You just seem to be working against us. I'm afraid if things were left up to you we wouldn't have made any of the progress we have in education. It's a shame. You're certainly the best qualified teacher we've got."

"It depends on what you mean by progress," said Emmett. "I've been directing school plays for many years, as you said. And it just so happens that the first one I ever did, nearly twenty years ago, was this one—unexpurgated, exactly as O'Neill wrote it. Now it's too mature for us. I don't see that as progress. In fact, if that kind of progress continues, in ten more years we won't do plays at all. We'll be too scared that something faintly resembling an idea with teeth in it may get through to those plastic-coated kids."

Mr. Fielding shook his head sadly and refused to render a verdict until "they both had time to think it over." As Emmett left the office, the stenographer was moving things around, pretending to be very busy.

Gina arrived exactly on time. Emmett felt deeply grateful to her for being there just then, as though she had come precisely to console him. But she had other things on her mind. She had come armed with questions about Milton, Shelley and Keats, art in general, students in general, and life in general. They sat in the living room, she in one corner of the sofa and he in his desk chair, and as they talked, he began to realize that she wanted him to be a whole university to her, to answer, to argue, to stimulate.

"I'm so ignorant," she said. "I can't even discuss things intelligently."

"That's not true," he answered. But he was appalled at some of the things she didn't know—she who wanted to know and had certainly tried to absorb whatever was offered. What chance was there for the others?

"I'm not afraid of ignorance," he said finally. "It isn't very strong really. It only keeps its hold because so many other things help it and give it strength. One ray of knowledge breaking through is enough to shatter its foundations. No, what frightens me is the look I see on those faces every day—the look of complete boredom, detached, uninterested, almost incapable of human response. I've seen it more and more, like a disease. I fight it until I stagger and still it grows. I don't know why. But every day it gets harder to keep from thinking that it's just human nature—that there's no use in fighting it. I don't want to

think that, but I can't help it."

"Oh, no," she said, leaning forward. "You don't. And it isn't true. I don't know the arguments, I just know it isn't true. I couldn't go on if I thought that. I wouldn't care if they blew up the world tomorrow."

"Those kids—some of them really don't care. And why should they? It's nothing new to them—it's an old, familiar theme—brutality, violence, solving everything physically. It isn't a pipe and book anymore that signifies a man. It's a bottle of beer and a wrestling match, or a fast car and a snarl of contempt for everything and everybody. No wonder they hate you when you mark them down for not knowing about Milton. They think they ought to be praised for it, and most of the time they are."

"It's true." She leaned back against the sofa. "But it isn't human nature. It's what we've done ourselves."

"Well, we've got to undo it somehow. But it's so overwhelming that I feel helpless."

THERE was quiet for a moment. Then he got up, went into the kitchen, and began putting out cups and saucers. She remained silent. Suddenly he stopped in the doorway and looked at her. "Nobody wants to live," he said. "Not even the kids. They're not really interested in life. They've had very little to do with it. But why doesn't life pull them in the way it did me? It's as though the oxygen were getting thinner and little pieces of the brain dying off."

Again she said nothing, but her forehead wrinkled and she did not look away. "Let's have some tea," he said.

She came into the kitchen and sat down. She looked so troubled that he began to feel sorry for what he had said. He poured the tea and then sat down beside her, wondering how to soften it. Suddenly she put her hand over his and grasped it tightly. "I have a lot of respect for you," she said. "And I think you're right. But what should I do? What can I do?"

"There's nothing to do except to go on. What could I have done? Even though I've wound up further back than when I started, what else could I do?"

"You're so unhappy. It isn't fair."

He smiled faintly and touched her cheek. "Who's unhappy? What is happiness? Do you think it means tranquility, relief from the struggles of life? If so I could just take morphine. No? Then I'm not so unhappy. I've had a full life and I expect to go on with it for some time. And I haven't given up the human race. I don't believe we're going to

blow ourselves up. I hate death and I believe most people, somewhere, somehow, in spite of the life they lead, they hate it too. But I've worked all these years on the assumption that sooner or later I would begin to see results—and Gina, the thing is that I don't know myself what the answer is. Everything I'm doing seems like piece work. Oh, I know I'm working in the right direction. I've never doubted that. But somewhere there has to be something that gathers up the pieces and makes things whole."

"If there is," she said, "there's no reason we can't find it."

"But I'm old and tired."

"Oh, you're not so old."

He ran his finger around the rim of his cup. It was true. His heart was rising again; a feeling of vigor was spreading through his body. He felt like staying up all night. Well, after twenty years it was hardly a time to change—hardly a time to give up.

It had begun to rain. He could hear it on the windows, a light sound. He wished he had a car so that he could take her home. Instead, he had to submit to her insistence that she would take the bus. They stood at the door for a moment.

"I'm very glad you came tonight," he said. "I was feeling sorry for myself. Mr. Fielding is giving me some trouble about the play."

"Oh? Well, don't let him beat you. He's an ass."

He smiled, and since she seemed to be waiting for something, put his hand under her chin and kissed her.

He watched out the window as she walked up to the bus stop, tying a scarf over her hair. There was another woman waiting for the bus, a squat, dark figure half hidden by a large, purple umbrella. As Gina reached the corner he saw the umbrella move toward her, and in another moment she had disappeared beneath it, and there was only a purple canopy and two pairs of legs and the rain.

SAGA OF THE STEEL MILLS

MERIDEL LE SUEUR

"In the dark woods, all year round who can tell that it is magic? But for one moment on the stroke of midnight, then it blooms. The common grass will go down stream but the magic fern would go upstream. The magic of the fern was such that you may make a wish, yes, but that wish must not be for yourself, only for someone else."

THIS book is a measure for Lilliputians.* With Gulliver measure it exposes the meanness of the measure of chronic cultural pessimism, the cult of the alienation of modern man and the lost hero who can't go home again, the determinist fatality of our literature, all a distortion of our democratic and humanist heritage. From the fiery light of the open hearth we see the disguised fools and innocents, Mike Fink, Joe Margarac, Paul Bunyan and Davy Crockett, transformed into the heroic American worker whose suffering, individually, massive and unknown, collectively, moves into illumined acts of humanity and morality.

Phillip Bonosky, himself of a Lithuanian steelworkers family, a steel worker himself, has produced a vast mural of a steel town, in the crisis of converting to automation, the company piling up steel ready for the induced strike, putting out the old workers—the odyssey of a man's return to this corporate hell, to the smoky steel village of his dying father, to his own past he had fled from, to his own future, if he is to have any. Here is drama avoided in our literature, the monstrous scene of the company town, the incredible heroism of men who work in the open hearth, post Dante, the drama of the Union halls, the strike, the women, the Com-

* *The Magic Fern*, by Phillip Bonosky. International Publishers. $5.95.

munists, and above all the struggle of the two giants of our time, Man and the Machine. Hart Crane, Norris, Dreiser, Lewis eyed this drama from afar, obscured by the deterministic and mechanistic philosophies of the 19th century. At last a writer has wrestled with the dialectics of the forces of our society, with man spurning a fate he cannot master, emerging not as Hamlet or pigmy, but as collective man, facing the monster of his own creation, organizing destruction into its opposite for his own survival.

THIS book forces us to look back as far as Emerson and Melville. Its method sharply limns the weaknesses of the naturalist school, of American determinism defined in Dreiser, with its mechanistic psychology of ducts and glands, mechanical stimuli, the individual conceived as a mechanism driven by the equally mechanical drives of society.

The most militant of the naturalists, Frank Norris, under the influence of Zola, wrote of a determinist universe, both man and society expressing forces of huge power and chance, with wheat, oil, and the great combines almost taking the place of nature, smashing out man and his conscious knowing, making him a helpless atom among other equally tangential atoms. Jack London also made huge and unconsicous the great forces of nature and society. Sinclair Lewis carried around a vast store of notes gleaned in hotel rooms in Detroit and Kalamazoo where workers and organizers, hopefully, told him many a tale of the struggle of the American worker to organize. But Lewis never wrote this book. Melville in *Moby Dick* has great passages presaging the sensuous unity of the new democratic man, stirring the sperm of the great whale, dominated by the mad New Englander, Ahab. Again in *White Jacket* the seaman Jack, alive within the terrible exploitation of the sea and the men, is a portrait of a man who does not accept Fate as from the hand of God. Whitman went down into the Sargossa sea of the growing industrialism. Thoreau seceded from the rabble. Melville, a seaman at sixteen, felt also the whip upon his back, but from *Moby Dick* he received the silence this book will also receive, as punishment for exposing the great moguls and whaling monopolies of the rising New England capitalists. Emerson retired to his manse. The great industrial beast was loud, horrifying, culminating in the great fission of the atomic bomb.

Phillip Bonosky has attempted to come to grips with these giants in the arena. It is not easy. The modern writers, Algren, Faulkner, Hemingway, and now Saul Bellow, Gold, Swados, the nihilists, the beatniks, the melancholy danes, oppose the machine and monopoly, which they see dwarfs the individual and creates regimentation and impotence. Their

work, gruelling and realistic, powerful and poetic as it is, does not serve the people in their need. Most often the result is a paralysis, an ambiguity that is disarming, a distortion of our democratic heritage, to the point of insanity; our history is made an illusion, the strength of our people appears bucolic, regional and illusory, past beliefs that would weave into the woof, appear to be only naivete and fanaticism. In this milieu there can be no heroes, naturally, only small and crescending howls. The tide of humanity in them seems out, the alienation of modern man fatal and eternal.

THE *MAGIC FERN* reveals how this literature has dulled our senses as to what a human being is and his potential in our society. I am sure the characters in Faulkner exist. But who else also exists? And what man and what class contains the strongest resistance, the potential of growth, the surviving strain? The characters in Nelson Algren contain what their exploiters do not, humanity and beauty, but their class position renders them silent. It has become a cliche, both in right and left circles, that the American worker has become corrupted by Madison Avenue, television and plumbing, the enemy has become ambiguous, the cultural temperature anemic and cold. How creeping the disease of fatalism, the poultice of sympathy, picturesque and evocative as it can be! Why are we always surprised at the militancy and strength of our people, by their sudden emergence? Is not this a sign the cultural measurement is wrong, or we have been misled by some cultural CIA, by some miscalculation in the first place? Is not this a sign the majority of our hidden people have not even entered our culture? Must we not extend and revise our measurement of strengths and potentials? The vast emigrant and native American working class has not entered our nation, politically, economically, or culturally.

It is hard perhaps to accept a book in which the enemy is plain, where the inner weakness and strength of man is measured, the protagonist is powerful, and there is a great battle on for the life and spirit of man and there are men and women to fight it. Like *Moby Dick* in the 19th century it painfully points out an arena of struggle and does not leave you out. Ambiguity is a soft out. Such a book as this shows the usefulness as well as the beauty of literature, in the service of the time and the people, continuing the humanist line of our culture.

WHAT a disease to look forward hopelessly, to see no heroic man or woman, to believe in no apocalypse. *The Magic Fern* uses a sharp

tool Faulkner dimly perceives when he posits at least the endurance of man, but this tool cutting away the cancer, the putrescence of capitalism, discovers through the static of naturalism, of so-called realism (which most often was the detailed description of the death throes of the corpse, of maggots, of dissolution and filth) reveals not only the inertia, the horror, the immorality and violence of the mill owners, but reveals the dialectical contradictions in our society, the inner struggle of the alienated individual, the honey in the belly of the lion, the fact that the very horrors of the open hearth catapult the workers into one flesh and one hope, thrusts them together in the melting heat, fires their ulcerated flesh in the extremity of this terrible labor; as if the machine, the monster, takes their side at last, unites them by force.

At the heart of this dialectic in the stacks of steel and the machine is the burning, living man and woman, who alone can solve the problem of the new organization of the people. They bear the solution in their flesh. This very proximity gives them the necessity and the power in the ultimate cruelty of capitalism, and as the symbol of the Magic Fern indicates they alone can choose the survival of others—brotherhood necessary now as bread and breath. Alienation is consumed in the intense heat of the hearth and the bomb.

II

THE story takes place in a short crisis in the steel town, as the steel mill is converted, amortized by the government, to triple production with less men, the old workers being fired and new men from out of town brought in. The story opens with Leo, his wife Ruth and their young son Tommy, returning to Tuboise on a promise that they are rehiring in the mills, sent to him by his father, Joe, who has spent his life in the mine and the mill. He returns to the room of his childhood, also to the new terrors of automation and the rooting of himself in the town of his birth from which he has fled or been booted, under shadowy circumstances in the last strike in which he was a leader. Defended by his comrades nevertheless he had fled, and tried to strike roots in the alien city.

Will they take him back, the union, the Communists, the mill, the people with whom he has grown up? You not only can go back home but you must, to root yourself, burrow deep; as the rain staying where it falls cures erosion, so men and women rooted in their place in land and factory make a community of struggle and a hiving of salvation.

"I learned all I know," Leo says to the union fellow workers, "from this union hall and you men were my teachers. . . . I needed to know I was fighting not just for an idea, not just for justice, but for people with my face and my tongue and the color of my blood and the eyes that looked in my eyes. I knew I belonged here. I should have stayed. Men who knew me needed me. I needed them. I said, Turpin, you're my real boss and I can't stand up against you. I should have stayed. I should have knocked on the doors for handouts but I should have stayed." They elect him to be a member of the strike committee. He is hired in the mill. He works at a machine which gets rid of a man, of many men. The machine becomes the torch, the tumbler, scaler, inspector, all he has to do is sit and push—push, push and the town of his birth has been made a ghost town by two new machines. Many new itinerant workers are hired and Leo sees the plight of the men who will never be hired again—"A man's job makes a man and he's nothing if he hasn't got it. Maybe you'll never work again. You'll go off and be quiet and humble and slip away. It don't matter. This country is rich. It can afford to have you go like smoke, go away never to return again. You'll turn up in another part of the country and they'll yell scab again and you'll end up in all the skid rows." The hired men, realizing they are scabs, led by Leo, walk out with bolts and clubs and bars.

THIS is no schematic and sterile canvas. It is a huge mural full of live people with grief, passion, wrath, courage, burning and partisan. It is good to read. It is a meal, a raft of light, bread of courage. There is a question about so long and diffuse a book. Much is planted that doesn't explode or it explodes and then continues in a kind of anti-climax. Who is to read a book of six hundred pages and at this cost?

But once you are in it you won't stop. Nowhere in our literature is the Lithuanian immigrant steel worker Joe Jomaitis so portrayed and loved, his bandaged legs bleeding, the broken veins crawling, working on the casts to keep his job. One daughter has become a Catholic as protest against their hard life. One son joins the national guard and is killed in the strike. Leo is badly hurt and Joe himself dies in the midst of the struggle. The scene of the grim satire of the timekeeper greenhorns, two industrial engineers, making a time study of Joe as he works in the intense heat with stoking rod, his skin raw and red, falling back in agony, his leg ulcers afire, returning again and again until "it was as though he had been sucked dry; as though some huge, pulling and greedy mouth had fastened itself onto his body and had sucked from his pores,

his eyes, his mouth, to the very marrow of his soul. He felt a hollow inside, an emptiness as huge as a huge bell with its tongue gone. Time bought and paid for by Turpin, was like a rock on his back, weighing down heavily, bending the bones. When the day was done there was nothing left of him to take home. They trotted back to the runnels—behind time. It was time that could be recovered only with blood and bone, only by reaching forward and borrowing a portion of life, taking it and throwing it into the furnace. Death would be one hour sooner."

Unforgettable also is the portrait of Calvin the Negro Communist organizer who is deep in the roots of the town, his humor, humanity, great folk speeches and tender and penetrating relationship with the men, a man himself grown old in the mill, a heroic composite of many Negro Communist leaders.

Leona, his wife, is among many finely drawn women and children: Leo's wife who gets a job when he is blacklisted, then wounded, then arrested: the Stinners, blacklisted American workers who make potato chips to live, whose children quote Debs' speeches by heart, a carpenter who made platforms for Debs to speak upon, Olga too who says, "I'm not trapped with my man buried here and all the others the same. I don't know any place which belongs to me more than here." Also the woman whose husband has been killed in Korea used by the stool pigeon. A great mural full of rich detail and above all the warmth, the growing relationship, instead of isolation, through the climax of the strike, the red-baiting, the attack upon the union, the betrayal of the union leaders "who spoke in your holy name and sold your faith every day in the money rooms of the world."

Leo cannot vote for the contract for giving the company reassignment of all work forces and individual rehiring—two committee members are in jail. All the leaders of the strike are being arrested. Even his little son Tommy sits in the jail. Ruth is threatened if she will not turn stool pigeon. All the paraphenalia of the "communist conspiracy" is brought against the men in order to implement the automation of the mill. But as they sit in jail, as old Joe dies and his grandson is buried, as the machine seals in their grey sides thousands of jobs, machines that will be unpaid, unfed, "no arms to touch them, none to kiss them" we see how men have not only in the rumble and heat shaped steel, but steel has shaped and made men and they came to know that "you fight for what belongs to you, the country is still unwon and the workers in it were still the step-children of a murderous age . . . the worker writes no books, makes no speeches. His labor is his power." Leo is arrested before he becomes

a Communist but does not deny it and in prison as he sits with the men in the bull pen and the old Socialist Stinner as chairman, he thinks—"that's the reason for the party, every man's hate, every man's struggle can be combined into one. We give our wills to the party and they come back one hard solid will, like that magic fern. Fighting for socialism is the same thing. You wish it for yourself, yes, but you can get it for yourself only if you wish it for other people first."

THE long mural ends in the jail—" 'What is your pleasure?'—Stinner said. Leo waited for the first hand to rise."

Phillip Bonosky has given us a social mural, a parable in the great human tradition. *The Magic Fern,* more powerful than atomic bombs, the potency of men and women who must shield each other in order to survive, and turn the destructive power to their own benevolent uses, in the future organization of things for man, and the organization of man himself. In a beautiful coda in the book he says:

> *"What should they call each other? In the midst of battle when one died that the other might live what name was there for that love? In the epic struggle of the world's oppressed, by what name did one recognize the other? The sign by which they knew each other was the hard sign of labor. This made them brothers. And they knew one another even in the deepest dark, even without a word in common still they knew.*
>
> *On earth they would shape the human heaven, and in shaping it shape themselves to be worthy of it. They would raise their eyes not to heaven nor lower them to hell; they would seek salvation in each other, and together, the miracles of labor would change the world and themselves as they changed it.*
>
> *Freedom was their goal. What then was the best name for them? In each country they found it and it was the same. In this country their own Walt Whitman gave it to them. They would call each other comrade."*

Here is not the weak and lost human being caught in the tentacles of an unknown force. Here the force is known, huge and cruel, but man in the great human tradition of our time, meets the magic hour with such tenderness for his kind, with courage, honor and nobility—almost obsolete words in Madison avenue culture.

AND the spirit of a writer who is a believing man is quite out out of style — a man who is not a bull fighter, or satanic denizen of swamps or gun forests or an international cafe habitue, a

writer searching out like a geneticist the strengths of our people, putting his talents to the service of humanity in a dangerous hour. Phillip Bonosky is such a writer, a steelworker's son, himself once a steel worker, writing such a book between jobs, during the McCarthy period, without Guggenheim or patron, looking after the baby, his wife working, like Leo in his novel often blacklisted and hounded. Like Tyl Eulenspeigel pronounced dead he appears from the tamped down ground of his own grave with this mighty work.

Alexander Trachtenberg of International Publishers beset and harrassed, and *Mainstream* of which Bonosky is an editor, have nourished and published this work and this writer. In this period when standard publishers have amalgamated and gone under it is a brave annal of our history that writers have written and been published and been read. Du Bois has published a magnificent trilogy, which has not been reviewed any more than this book will be. V. J. Jerome, Albert Maltz, Neruda, Lloyd Brown, Joseph North, Thomas McGrath have written and been published and have found readers. Walt had to set up his first editions of *Leaves of Grass* himself in Brooklyn and peddle it himself. *Moby Dick* after only sixty years has become a classic. Thoreau stored his books in Emerson's cellar and Mark Twain had to start his own publishing house.

Is this review far from objective? Is it excessive and passionate? I hope so. We should get over some of the cold deliberations of our writers and publishers. Sometimes, as Robert Forsythe once said, there should be dancing in the streets. When such a man and such a work, an American saga from the steel mills, is produced, we should be proud. Better still see to it that this great mural is seen and known, that there should be much discussion, severe criticism, further estimation of what it contains, that carries forward the traditions of Dreiser, Norris, the literature of the Thirties, the extension and development of proletarian literature in its truest sense.

Why not a critique of the poets and writers of the people, of our blood and cause, while they are yet alive? A warm appreciation and love for them would not be too sanguine an excess.

Such a writer and such a book come from the wealth of our people, and is returned here as strength.

WILLIAM L. PATTERSON AT SEVENTY

OAKLEY C. JOHNSON

IN THE fall of 1951, the *Daily Worker* carried an item which began as follows:

> "A Negro prisoner in the Trenton, N. J., jail wrote him a poem.
> "Two men, that he helped snatch from the electric chair came with 2,000 others to greet him. . . .
> "A Negro woman poet from California recited her newest work.
> "Paul Robeson sang and spoke.
> "Elizabeth Gurley Flynn lauded his work."

What was the occasion for so notable and so unusual a tribute, and for whom? It was a birthday celebration for William L. Patterson.

Today it is the fall of 1961, and Patterson, who was hailed on his 60th birthday for prodigious achievements, is being hailed now on his seventieth. Many thousands throughout the world know Patterson's name, and honor and respect his work. If they meet up with him, they call him *Pat,* as we all do.

What manner of man is he, what is the basis of the greatness in him, what have been the events of his life?

William Lorenzo Patterson was born August 27, 1891, in San Francisco. His birthplace was the Sausalito section of the city, across the bay near Chinatown—a ghetto neighboring another ghetto. His family was not badly off, was in fact in "respectable" circumstances: but he was where he could daily observe the moral injustice visited upon colored people, black or yellow. He viewed conditions in his youth from a *moral*

point of view, rather than economic, partly because the ethical values of democracy were stressed in the public school, partly because his mother and father were both deeply religious, and were themselves, in their way, concerned with moral values. He hated discrimination because it was *wrong.*

Pat's father, born in St. Vincent, West Indies, was a man of some force, but misdirected. He was for some years a steward on the Pacific Mail packet which plied between San Francisco and the Chinese coast, and did well by his family—until he joined the Seventh Day Adventist church. Then, becoming a confirmed religious fanatic, he gave all his possessions to the Church and became a missionary of that faith. His proselytizing activities led him to the Tahiti Islands, the Panama Canal Zone, and elsewhere, and finally back to his West Indies birthplace, where he died in the 1920's.

Pat's mother, daughter of his slave-born grandmother, was a Methodist, and a deeply religious woman. While the religious sincerity of his parents strongly affected Pat's character, he was nevertheless repelled by the absurdity of his mother worshipping on Sunday and his father on Saturday, and by the continued fruitlessness of church worship in the struggle for justice. He was forced to the conclusion that the road of religion would never lead Black Americans to the goal of equality with their white brothers and sisters.

Nevertheless his mother held the family together, while his father defected. She took in washings, slaved at housework in white kitchens, fed him and his two brothers and a sister, saw to it that they went to school. It was tough for her, and for all of them. "More than once," Pat recalls, "I saw our furniture out on the sidewalk."

Pat's mother insisted that he go to school, and he went. In the elementary school Pat was one of a group of six colored boys who had close ties to each other, and, though they went severally into different lines of work, they never completely lost touch. All six of them were strongly nationalistic, all six strongly resented the discrimination practiced against their people and against themselves personally, all six pondered the problem of democracy, of how to get democracy for *all.* One became a life insurance executive, one a lawyer, one a bootlegger, one died of tuberculosis, and one, indeed, disappeared—"caught up in the class struggle and never understanding the cause."

Pat was the only Negro in the Tamalpais High School at Mill Valley, in the outskirts of San Francisco. His high school days were packed full of study and sport. He was a sprinter, he played football in the fall

and baseball in the spring. He was a boxer. Those were the days of the great Negro fighters, Joe Gans, Jack Johnson, Harry Wills. Pat was proud of their prowess. "They were black men trying heroically to find an answer to inequalities that Negroes found in every channel of life."

As it happened, and naturally enough in the circumstances, the first court case that engaged his sympathies was not about a Negro but a white worker: the Mooney case, in 1916. The war years 1915 and 1916 were epochal in his mental development and outlook. Pat opposed World War I as a white man's war. He met Anita Whitney, the great California Socialist—later a Communist—and she told him about Mooney and Billings, brought him to Socialist meetings, and at the same time urged him to join the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. He did join the NAACP, but not the Socialist Party; and he was, also, deeply affected by the injustice done to Mooney and Billings. "One thing kept me from actively joining the movement to free Tom Mooney: I was told by someone—I don't remember who it was —that Mooney, who was a union organizer as well as a Socialist, would not organize Negroes into his union."

It was about this time that Pat met Emanuel Levin, Socialist and veterans' leader, at the radical bookshop in San Francisco. Both he and Anita Whitney introduced him to Marxist literature. He read the *Communist Manifesto* and other Socialist pamphlets about 1915 and 1916. Through the NAACP he became aware of Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois, and took his side—with a kind of emotional violence, as he daily pondered the black man's problems—against Booker T. Washington.

The turmoil within him led him to travel to the Panama Canal Zone, where his father then was preaching, but he could find no fruitful promise there. Quickly he returned to San Francisco, and—urged by his mother and his sister—determined to complete his education. He entered the Hastings Law School of the University of California, and graduated in 1919. He became a law clerk in the office of McCant Stewart, a leading Negro lawyer. The latter's father had gone to Liberia to help the African people some years before, and had become quite prominent there. McCant Stewart's brother, also a lawyer, had courageously defended in court the Negro troops who, after the war's end, had shot up the town of Brownsville, Texas, in repudiating the crass white supremacist treatment Negro veterans were receiving. All these men were filled with nationalist feeling and nationalist aspiration—the feeling and aspiration of Negroes who were Americans but were denied the most elementary American rights.

Pat was thinking about Africa as the Negro homeland, where equality, freedom, dignity and even nationhood might possibly be found, or at least built. He determined to go there. He up and shipped on a freighter out of San Francisco, and went through the Isthmus of Panama to England. In London he chanced to find the elder McCant Stewart visiting there on business for Liberia, and conferred with him. This American Negro, now a Liberian official, urged him to go back to the United States where the main battle for Negro rights would have to take place. Pat also met George Lansbury, the founder of the *Daily Herald,* the Labor Party paper, for which Pat wrote an article. Lansbury, a Socialist and anti-war leader, also advised Pat to return to the United States and devote his efforts to the struggle here. Pat was convinced by the counsel of these two friends. He sailed promptly for New York.

In New York, though he was a college graduate and a lawyer, Pat first took a laborer's job as a longshoreman and dock worker. Soon he decided—partly at the urging of his sister—to resume his profession, and accepted a position with a Negro law firm in Harlem. Not long after this, he joined two other young lawyers to establish what quickly became New York's largest Negro law firm, Dyatt, Hall, and Patterson. Here for the ensuing three years, Pat was professionally active, financially successful, socially popular. He met actors and writers. He became a close friend of Paul Robeson, the singer (who had also been trained for the law), and he and Paul in fact married at the same time—the girls they married were roommates. One of their friends was Heywood Broun who tried to get them to join the Socialist Party—but this was in the early 'twenties, after the Communist Party was already a going concern. Pat advised Paul to wait a while. Pat himself held off from all political affiliation—until the fight to save Sacco and Vanzetti in 1926.

Pat went to Boston to join that fight, along with Mother Bloor, Edna St. Vincent Millay, John Dos Passos, Mike Gold, Clarina Michaelson, and scores of others. They picketed the State Capital and were arrested and jailed numerous times. Pat was deeply affected by the inhuman victimization of the two doomed men and by the discriminatory treatment visited upon Pat himself, the only Negro picketer. "The police said they wouldn't let me ride in the prison van with the white women," Pat remembers. "They made me ride outside."

Pat stayed with the picketers throughout the ordeal, and through the never-to-be-forgotten night when Sacco and Vanzetti were put to death. "I came to the conclusion then," he says, "that through the channels of the law and of mere legal action the Negro would never win equality. I

didn't think it possible for Negroes, under such conditions and from such institutions, to secure their rights. If a white worker like Mooney, and white foreigners like Sacco and Vanzetti, could be so victimized, what chance was there for Negroes at the very bottom?"

Pat made contact with the Communist Party, met Jack Stachel, Will Weinstone, and other Communist leaders, acted as a part of the honor guard at the death of C. E. Ruthenberg early in 1927, went to the Soviet Union to study. (His first wife, when she found that Pat cared more for Socialism than for money, divorced him.) When he returned to the United States more than a year later, his real career began. He had made up his mind what he wanted to do.

PAT first headed the Workers School in Pittsburgh around 1930, but within a year had gotten into defense work, his logical point of concentration, which off and on, in one organization or another and in one way or another, occupied his time and effort for the next thirty years. The story is so exciting, so filled with simultaneous defense battles in every part of the country, so inter-related with developments in Africa, Asia and the socialist countries, and so complicated with Pat's own combats with officials in this country who wanted to jail him, that it is impossible in an article to summarize it in a meaningful way. The best that can be done is simply to outline the events and try to highlight a moment here and there.

First came the Scottsboro case, the classic defense of nine Negro teenagers accused of rape (the youngest was thirteen!), and all sentenced to death in Scottsboro, Alabama. This case inaugurated the technique of combining a militant court defense with widespread publicity and mass protest. This was done through the International Labor Defense, headed by J. Louis Engdahl, veteran Socialist leader until 1921 and Communist leader from then on, with Pat as his righthand man. When Engdahl died early in the Scottsboro fight (which, it must be understood, lasted several *years*), Pat took his place. The Scottsboro boys were all saved in the end, but they would be long since mouldering in their prison graves had it not been for the ILD.

Scarcely had the Scottsboro case been launched than the Angelo Herndon case was before the country: a 19-year-old Negro leader of the unemployed in Atlanta, Georgia, had the nerve to demand relief for a mixed Negro and white crowd, and the Georgia courts intended to put him away for thirty years under an old slave mutiny statute. Pat went to Atlanta and hired a white attorney to defend him. Then Ben Davis, just gradu-

ated from Harvard Law School, told Pat he'd like to help defend Herndon, and Pat asked the white lawyer if it was okay with him. The white lawyer said, "Well, I'll let him carry the books." Pat tells the story dryly: "I fired him and put Ben in charge." Herndon was saved from the chain gang, saved from prison.

It must be understood that every one of these cases was carried to the United States Supreme Court, sometimes more than once, before the lynchers were defeated; and they were not always defeated. Every case was carried to the whole world, as well as to the Supreme Court, and the names of the Scottsboro Boys and Angelo Herndon were household words on five continents.

While these cases were going forward Pat took a few weeks off as campaign manager for James W. Ford, Communist candidate for vice-president in 1932—the first Negro candidate for vice-president since Frederick Douglass was nominated for that office by the Equal Rights Party back in 1872. This campaign, in which America's top trade union and strike leader, William Z. Foster, ran for president as Ford's running mate, shook the country, as workers and Negroes, stirred by events as never before, listened and watched with hope and fear as a white man and a black man demanded real democracy in the U.S.A.

In the course of time the International Labor Defense was displaced by a new defense organization, the Civil Rights Congress, and soon Pat became head of it. Among the CRC's battles was the tragic case of the Martinsville Seven, all of whom were electrocuted finally at the order of Governor John S. Battle of Virginia, who refused to commute the sentences despite world-wide outcry—and President Eisenhower later appointed him (of all people) to the chairmanship of the Civil Rights Commission.

Other CRC battles include that for Willie McGee of Mississippi, who was accused of rape but who insisted that the white woman was willing; Rosa Lee Ingram of Georgia, who defended herself against her white landlord with an axe and was imprisoned; the Trenton Six of New Jersey, one of whom died in prison awaiting trial for alleged robbery, but of whom the remaining five were eventually freed; and Paul Washington of New Orleans, who, after a long court struggle, and after an early attempt at a sneak electrocution was foiled by quick CRC action, was in the end put to death by the State of Louisiana.

In a sort of climax to the ILD-CRC campaigns thus far, Pat conceived the idea of taking the United Nations Charter at its word, and particularly the UN's Convention Against Genocide, the newly defined

crime against peoples. The Charter, to be precise, declares that the purpose of the United Nations is to promote and encourage *"respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion,"* and goes on to indicate that its job is *"assisting in the realization"* of these rights. The Convention Against Genocide went further and stated that *"Killing members of the group" . . . "in whole or in part"* merely because they belonged to that group *"as such,"* or *"inflicting on the group conditions of life"* that would bring about the deaths of many, or, in fact, *"Causing serious bodily or mental harm"* to the group's members—all these acts, the Convention said, were evidence of a genocidal policy.

Pat did not hesitate or stammer in asking boldly, what about the lynchings of Negroes, the discrimination against Negroes in public places, the segregation of Negro children, the ghettoing of Negro families, the conditions of life for the whole Negro people? Were these practices genocide elsewhere, but not genocide here?

This remarkable petition to the United Nations was translated into scores of languages, and, though the United States Government was able through power and influence, with bribe and threat, to keep the petition from formal consideration before the General Assembly, the petition nevertheless reached all delegates and all nations. Pat was completely successful in indicting the United States before the whole world.

It should be remembered, to be sure, that the very first petition to the United Nations, drawn up by Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois in 1947 and sponsored by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, also had a powerful effect. The Du Bois-NAACP document, drawn up before the Genocide Convention was adopted, had as its legal basis only the general provisions of the United Nations Charter, and relied for its evidential foundation largely (though not wholly) on general knowledge. The Patterson-CRC document, presented three years later under the specific provisions of the Genocide agreement, and, additionally, resting on a mountain of concrete evidence painstakingly assembled from the whole country for a five-and-a-half-year period and codified under the various articles of the Convention, had a far greater impact.

It would not be too much to say that the campaigns of the ILD and the CRC, together with the demands made on the United Nations by the Du Bois and Patterson petitions, and buttressed by the Communist presidential and vice-presidential campaigns of Foster and Ford, constitute the historic soil in which is rooted the present renaissance of Negro civil rights militancy in this country.

THE above recital of a summary of Pat's achievements is not the whole story. There remains, for one thing, his own struggle to keep out of the prison that reactionary interests, led by white supremacists, wanted to consign him to. There were two prolonged battles, the first covering the years 1950-52; the second, 1954-55.

The first began August 3 and 4, 1950, when the House of Representatives Select Committee on Lobbying Activities called Pat before it to demand the *names* of financial contributors to the Civil Rights Congress. Pat declared that the CRC was "not a lobbying organization in the sense used by Congress." Before Pat appeared, newsmen were given a dossier on the CRC which said that it was on the Attorney General's list of "subversive" organizations and that, among other matters, Gus Hall, a Communist leader, had actually talked on *peace* at a CRC gathering. At the congressional hearing Pat argued that the steel trust and some twenty other large firms, which annually spent millions in lobbying activities, did not register, and that their officials were not called in. Acting chairman of the Select Committee was Representative Henderson Lovelace Lanham of Georgia, who, as he later admitted in court, called Pat a "black son of a bitch." Pat was not intimidated, but a slow, incredulous shock spread round the world.

Lanham's white supremacist obscenity proved the Select Committee's eventual undoing, for the Negro population of the country refused to let it pass. Following is the chronicle of the succeeding events: On August 30 the House voted 238 to 106 to cite Pat for contempt of Congress; the trial began on January 10, 1951, in Washington, D. C., and continued through April; the judge was Alexander Holtzoff, red-baiter and Negro-baiter, who had for years been legal adviser to J. Edgar Hoover and the FBI; Holtzoff ruled steadily in favor of the prosecution, but was finally obliged to have Lanham testify, confessing his unseemly conduct at the hearing; the jury consisted of seven Negroes and five whites, and Pat's lawyers were Congressman Vito Marcantonio, Ralph Powe of Washington, and George Crockett of Detroit (the latter two are Negro attorneys); the jury disagreed, chiefly because a young Negro woman juror led the dissident members in support of Pat; Judge Holtzoff was forced to declare a mistrial.

However, Attorney General J. Howard McGrath refused to quash the case, and U.S. Prosecuting Attorney William Hitz pressed for a new trial, which was set for June 18, 1951, then postponed several times, the last date set being March 20, 1952, when U.S. District Judge Luther M. Youngdahl, on Marcantonio's motion, entered a verdict of acquittal. Pat

had won! But he gave full credit, publicly, to the support of his people, particularly the brave Negro jurors who, though government workers in Washington, risked their jobs to vote as their conscience told them, and the scores of prominent Negro churchmen who demanded that President Truman drop the indictment—churchmen who included eighteen bishops of the African Methodist and Baptist churches.

The second effort of the Jail-Patterson forces was carried out by the United States Internal Revenue Department in an income tax probe—not of Pat's income but of the income of others. He was sentenced to 90 days in the West Street Detention House of New York by Judge John F. X. McGohey in early June, 1954. They insisted that he supply Internal Revenue with the names and addresses of all who gave money to the CRC. "The ostensible reason," reported Elizabeth Gurley Flynn in her column, "is to check on whether those who contributed to the CRC paid their income taxes." Pat was willing to furnish a full record of receipts and expenditures by the organization, but this they rejected: they wanted *names.*

Many protested this high-handed action to Attorney General Herbert Brownell, including D. N. Pritt, renowned British attorney, who wrote that, if Pat had surrendered all these names, "many innocent people would have been the victims of that persecution which seems to be the national pursuit of certain circles in the U.S.A." But for all that Pat was given a *second* 90-day sentence when the first was over, on the *same* charge, and went back to prison in November. Pat's attorneys branded this action "double jeopardy," which is unconstitutional; Pat himself called it "perpetual jeopardy."

Even the New York State Legislative Committee to Investigate Charitable Agencies and Philanthropic Organizations got into the act with a special order to give CRC records to *them!*

Pat actually served 69 days of this second 90-day sentence, but the U.S. Court of Appeals finally reversed this conviction on January 28, 1955.

THE present writer was secretary of the Louisiana Civil Rights Congress in 1949, and reported to Pat the facts of the Paul Washington case, including his belief that Washington was innocent.

"I'm not interested in whether's he's guilty or innocent," he said. Not sharply, because Pat doesn't have the high-and-mighty manner some leaders have; but it had a sharp impact on me.

"But," I protested, "doesn't his innocence play *some* role here?"

"None at all. I'm not even concerned with innocence. He can be guilty for all I care. I'm concerned with his *rights.*"

Pat asked me to sit down, as he explained. It was not a matter of legalism with him; he gave no cant about "innocent until proven guilty." What we had here, he said, was a historic situation in which *the white South was guilty,* and guilty of a far worse crime than rape: *denial of justice to a whole people.*

Pat was and is a lawyer, but more than a lawyer: he is a creative thinker about law. We could call him a people's jurist. His masterful argument in *We Charge Genocide* shows that.

Another example: the recent Supreme Court decision, June 5, 1961, requiring the Communist Party of *this* country to register as the agent of *another* country—which would be tantamount to outlawing the party —brought from Pat the following counter-argument:

a) For a hundred years the Negro people have been denied political rights by governments led by the Republican or Democratic parties;

b) After a century of experience it is clear that Negroes need some explicit possibility of political expression other than the existing two-party choice;

c) If the Communist Party is outlawed, the Negro people will not have *any* voting alternative, a situation which would be a negation of the principles on which our Republic stands.

SOME years ago, Pat tells me, he toyed with the idea of writing an autobiography, and conceived his own development as in three stages: Nationalism, Humanism, and Communism. In this growth he felt, however, that he had not simply exchanged one for the next, but had retained the essential and useful content of each stage. He wanted equality and freedom for the people of color; he wanted, next, everything good for *all* the people of the world; and he came to insist that these things be *won,* not merely dreamed of, and established firmly and quickly and permanently, not made pawns of outworn rules and half-grown minds.

Real Humanism on the political front is Communism. As a member of the National Committee of the Communist Party of the United States, and chairman of the New York State Communist Party, Patterson is in the center of today's political struggle for American and world freedom.

SOVIET ESTONIA

JOHN PITTMAN

THE main task in Estonia, as everywhere else in the Soviet Union, is the creation of the material and technical base of communism, and the ideological and spiritual moulding of the generation that is to live in communist society. Both aspects of this task are reflected in the republic's music, art, literature and theater. The revolutionary, heroic past of the Estonian workers and peasants, and the contrast between life in the bourgeois past and the socialist present, are the subjects of operas, ballets, plays, novels, poems and paintings. This revolutionary past extends back through seven centuries of oppression by Germanic invaders, to decades of fierce struggle before the great two-year rebellion of St. George's Night, when the Esths fought the Livonian Order of German knights from 1343 to 1345 and suffered defeat only after the knights, establishing a pattern that was to be repeated again and again through Estonia's history, brought in troops from Prussia.

In the "Kalevipoeg," the great Estonian epic by Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald (1803-1882), the youngest son of Kalev, the legendary founder of the ancient Estonian tribe, is depicted as battling the "iron men" from the other world, in reality the Teutonic knights Kreutzwald, born of serf parents, said he had done little more than collect and write down the stories about the events of the 10th and 11th centuries which had been handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation. After the conquest and annexation of Etsonia by Peter I, the German feudal barons proved as subservient to the czar as to their former masters, and the entire period of czarist Russian rule is marked by peasant struggles and uprisings. Accounts of these are given in the Estonian

classics, and form a component of contemporary works, such, for instance, as Rudolf Sirge's recently published novel, "The Land and the People." Erni Krusten's "The Hearts of the Young" traces this struggle through the period of the 1905 Revolution. In the second half of the 1890's the first Social-Democratic organizations had been set up in Latvia, and by the time of the 1905 Revolution their influence had spread throughout the Baltic states. Krusten's work describes the strikes and rebellions of the Estonian peasants during that period. Other novels and short stories tell of the revolutionary upsurge in Estonia accompanying the 1917 October Revolution, the struggles against the counter-revolutionary regime installed by the Germans and maintained by the Allies, the second Soviet government briefly in power in 1940, the German occupation and the people's resistance movement.

IF IT be said that the prevalence of such themes gives a "tendentious" quality to present-day Estonian cultural works, the writer Friedebert Tuglas gives the reply of the republic's writers and artists. In his "Marginal Notes" he says: "It is impossible to imagine that any substantial work should not reflect, at least indirectly, the existing social situation and that it should not throw light upon social relations. Man is all the time thinking and weighing up, and his thoughts and appraisals have their own 'tendentiousness'." The fact is that Estonians are all the time "thinking and weighing up" the contrast between the bright future before them today and the bleak years under bourgeois rule. Even if they wanted to forget this contrast, events do not permit it. How can any Estonian be indifferent to the resurgence of German militarism under the Munich-like patronage of the Western capitalist governments?

Tallinn in March was the scene of a drama which could not fail to dispel any such attitude of indifference. In the dock of a courtroom improvised from the Naval Officers Club stood two Estonians. They were the kind of "Estonian patriots" on whom the organizers of "Captive Nations Week" in the United States rely to restore Estonia to the "free world." These two men—Ralf Gerrets and Jan Viik—had been members of the Estonian police under the Nazi occupation. Gerrets, the elder, had been the deputy chief, and Viik had been a guard of a death-camp erected at Jagala, about 20 miles from Tallinn and one of 30 death-camps set up in the republic by the Estonian bourgeois leaders in cooperation with the nazis. For six days the trial of these criminals went on. Thousands of Estonian citizens attended, along with 37 foreign correspondents and reporters of papers throughout the Soviet Union. The evi-

dence against the accused filled 18 volumes of testimony and documents. It was damning evidence—with the murderers' signatures on death orders and photographs of the victims taken by the killers. A majority of the photographs, some of which were enlarged and placed on exhibit, were of naked women being driven by the guards to their death.

MORE than two score witnesses testified for the prosecution—seven Czech women survivors, former guards and prison officials, people who lived close to the death-camp and to a nearby execution site called Kalevi-Liiva, a sandy hollow not far from the coast. This murder spot was one of many picked on orders of Adolf Eichmann for the extermination of transports of Jews, Gypsies, Poles, Czechs, Soviet war prisoners and partisans. As elsewhere in nazi-occupied Europe, huge pits were dug there, and thousands of men, women and children, stripped of their clothing and all valuables including gold-filled teeth, which were extracted from the living with pliers, were driven by clubs, bayonets and rifle butts to the edge, where they were shot and beaten to death. It is a desolate spot, exposed to the icy wind, and hidden from sight by small hills. For two years it echoed with the screams of women and the cries of children. Bullet holes still pock-mark the scrubby pines around the edge. A fence surrounds the area of the pits, and atop the hill where the Estonian "free patriots" manned their guns in a monument engraved with the words: "About 6,000 citizens of Czechoslovakia, Poland, Germany and the Soviet Union were killed here by the fascists in 1942-1943. People be vigilant!"

The six-day trial of Gerrets and Viik, and in absentia of Ain-Ervin Mere, chief of the Estonian bourgeois police whose extradition to Estonia was refused by Great Britain, turned into a recital of the crimes perpetrated by the agents of the Baltic barons in complicity with the Gestapo. About 125,000 people were murdered by such "heroes," including the famous Estonian scientist Peter Rubel, the painter Andrus Johani, the writer Johannes Ruven, and many other distinguished Estonians. The workers and peasants attending the court sessions relived the horrors of those years. Gerrets and Viik, after denials and equivocations at the beginning, blurted out one admission after another. A feeling of nausea convulsed the spectators as Viik recited how he had killed four- and five-year old children in the pit.

Outside in the street the Spring sun was shining and fresh scents filled the air. And the contrast served to remind Estonians—it inspired similar ideas even among the foreign corespondents—how the "Free Estonian"

governments had befouled and besmirched this lovely republic, and had brought shame and dishonor to its people. Mere, Gerrets, Viik—these were the foremost anti-Communists, the type which in every country is the real pillar and white hope of anti-Communism.

NONE of the Baltic peoples can forget this truth. Lithuania and Latvia, too, had their years of death and misery and shame at the hands of anti-Communism. The Lithuanian anti-Communists beat, tortured and shot to death more than 500,000 people, one-sixth of the republic's population. And now many of the murderers, many of these very executioners live in comfort in the United States, Canada, Britain, Australia, Sweden, Austria and other countries of the "free world," protected and pampered by the governments of these countries which refuse to extradite them for their crimes. More than that, these killers, sadists and degenerates, along with many honest emigres, are recruited and trained for intelligence and subversive activities in the Baltic republics. This is the kind of scum now undergoing special training in many U.S. military installations in the United States, West Germany and other places. A popular three-act play in Estonia today dramatizes this fact. Playwright Egon Rannet uses the universal theme of the wandering wastrel who penitently returns to the arms of his parents to depict this bit of the contemporary reality of Estonia. Rannet's prodigal of "The Prodigal Son" returns home as the agent of the enemies of Soviet Estonia and repents only after realizing that he has been duped. Ranner has him say: "I thought I would be serving a noble cause, would be working for the welfare of my people. . . . I considered myself an honest patriot. . . . Here nothing is what they taught me to expect. I had no conception of what life here was like. Where is the terror, the starvation, the people in rags? Where is my ravaged, impoverished Estonia? Where?"

With the lessons from their past thus sharply etched in the events of their daily life, the Estonians stand in the front ranks of peoples trying to prevent another world war. Premier Khrushchev's insistence on a peaceful termination of the state of war with Germany, and on the quarantining in good time of the nazi remnants and inveterate militarists who now direct the West German state, is whole-heartedly approved in this republic. Except for such people as Mere, Gerrets and Viik, Estonians angrily condemn such actions as former Vice President Richard Nixon's telegram to the bourgeois leaders of Baltic emigre groups, declaring: "I am with you in your bold struggle and highly moral resistance (sic!) to the Soviet Government." Such actions are viewed in Soviet Estonia

as shots fired in the cold war, which is regarded as a preparation for a hot war. Yet, the Estonians, like other peoples in the socialist world, draw a sharp distinction between the Nixons and the American people. For them there are two Americas, and it is clear which one they regard with warmth and admiration. They feel and express confidence in the democratic sympathies of the American people. They hope the American people will understand the necessity for fighting for peace, and will recognize the danger to their own national security from an alliance with German militarism and revanchism.

WHAT the Estonians feel about Americans, and an indication of their estimate of the lasting realities of American life, was shown recently in reference to John Reed, whose brief stay in Tallinn, June 5-7, 1920, remains a source of pride to this republic. Indeed, but for their pride, this episode in Reed's crowded but all too short life might never have been revealed. Thanks to caretakers of the Estonian State Archives and to the newspaper "Soviet Estonia," it is now known that the one-time managing editor of this journal* also experienced the duplicity of the bourgeois Estonian government. As related by E. Raidma in "Soviet Estonia" of February 7, 1960, the circumstances of this incident were as follows: In an attempt to return to the United States from Soviet Russia and stand beside members of the Communist Labor Party, Communist Party, Socialist Party and other indicted militants among the 10,000 people arrested in the period of the Palmer raids, Reed boarded a Finnish ship bound for Sweden, whence he hoped to make his way to New York. But in Abo (Turku), Finland, he was seized and taken to prison by the Mannerheim ploice. For a month he was held incommunicado on a technical charge of "smuggling," and only near the end of his third month in prison was he allowed to begin negotiating for a transit visa through Estonia so as to return to Soviet Russia. This decision he made reluctantly, under the conviction that the administration of Woodrow Wilson was unwilling to give him a passport to return home and was collaborating with the Mannerheim Finnish regime to keep him in prison.

Meanwhile. the Soviet government learned of Reed's arrest and offered to exchange two counter-revolutionary Finnish professors for Reed, and this offer seems to have caused the Mannerheim regime to decide to re-

* John Reed became a contributing editor of *Masses* in March 1913, and managing editor in October of the same year, and remained in that post until the following March when he went to Merico. Thereafter until his death on October 17, 1920 he contributed to *Masses* and its alter ego, the *Liberator*. In 1926, the publication took the name of *New Masses* and, united with *Mainstream* in 1948, subsequently adopted its present name.

lease him. The Estonian consul in Finland, without mentioning Reed's name, had obtained from the Estonian government a promise of a transit visa through Estonia to Soviet Russia. But on learning the identity of the prospective traveler, the Estonian bourgeois regime, evidently with the acquiescence of the U.S. government, revoked the permission and declared that the border with Soviet Russia was closed. It happened, however, that the letter communicating this last decision was delayed in transit, so that Reed left Finland on June 5, 1920 aboard the ship "Viola," provided only with an identity card issued by the Estonian consul in Helsinki. Arriving in Tallinn the same day, Reed showed the port officials his identity card, which bore nothing but his name, the number 1845, and the consul's stamp and signature. That was sufficient, and Reed was allowed to pass.

WHILE in Tallinn, Reed stayed at the Russian Mission's residence. A dispatch in the newspaper "Izvestia" reports that a banquet was held on the night of his arrival in the house. Two days later, Reed left Tallinn for Soviet Russia. But shortly after his departure, when the Estonian government learned what had happened, instructions were issued to all Estonian diplomatic representatives abroad to refuse visas to Americans desiring to go to Russia, unless obtaining approval of U.S. governmental authorities. The Estonian-Russian frontier was thenceforth closed, according to the article in "Soviet Estonia," to Americans whose travel the U.S. government did not approve.

There are no street signs in Tallinn directing the American tourist to the place where John Reed slept during his stay there. It may be that Reed, ever restless and obsessed with curiosity, ate in the very cafes, strolled through the same narrow streets, visited the quaint old shops of fine handicraft that give Tallinn today such a charming, old-world aspect. Perhaps he made a purchase at the ancient apothecary's shop which began dispensing medicines seventy years before Columbus sighted the Bahamas. But whether or not he did any of these things, Estonia is proud that her capital was host, if only for a few hours, to the author of "Ten Days That Shook the World," the friend of Lenin, and the representative of that America which most of the world's peoples regard with love and respect.

CULTURE AND WEST GERMAN YOUTH

ARNO REINFRANK

IT WAS Hitler youth and "Jungvolk" that guided education and cultural rearing of Germany's youth in the past. Today with the country split in two the governments accuse each other of misguiding youth again.

Let us turn to the present situation in the Federal Republic. Officials will mention school books and school broadcasts (both not clear of distortions when it comes to history), youth libraries and book and jazz clubs as open to every young member of society. But they will ponder for a minute before admitting that television productions generally, and especially those for children are of the same standard as in most English speaking countries. This is by no means flattering for our TV producers.

American cartoon films by such authors as Walt Disney, and some English TV films have been adapted into German. Children's books are re-written into TV scripts and after broadcasting published in TV versions, whereby they lose much of their original impact. Naturally, TV stimulates sales and parents, mostly of middle class background, hurry to buy these books for their children, regardless what the educational value may be.

The United States exports a large number of films designed for adult and adolescent audience alike. These films, which appear to be made by specialists of all methods of murdering, are to be seen in our chain-system playhouses. Advertising posters are of such design that they must corrupt the mind of children and adolescents. Much inspiration for West Germany's teddy boys, that is for youth left without better entertainment, stems from such posters, from film and television pictures.

In recent years, a number of good films have been made and shown, among them "The Bridge." This film was very much discussed among sixth formers and students. So were some others.

Well meaning people, the churches included, have constituted bodies which list films after their merits. They issue these lists as guidance but nobody cares very much and the effect is next to nil.

Since the Federal Republic has increased her re-arming efforts a special German brand of film has appeared on the market, the "Humorous Soldier's Comedy." More often than not, these pictures are taken for harmless. Needless to say that they are not, as they fake life in the war and army.

THERE are films—mostly free for children—of an outspoken, discriminating character against foreign peoples, mainly the peoples of Asia, against the Soviet Union and other non-NATO nations. Some few public protests could be registered. I asked a number of teachers and lecturers, youth welfare workers, trade unionists and vicars, and most of them were opposed to such films. But they did not show much confidence that their protest would change anything and were even afraid of protesting, though our 1949 Constitution makes free expression of opinion absolutely legal.

The Federal Republic has three or four institutes which supply schools with 16 mm. film material. It is very much in the spirit of our 1949 democratic Constitution that films were made and are in the making which depict Germany's Nazi past. Some of them show archive pictures of SS brutality. It may be a fair reason or irony to ban their showing, therefore, to youth under 16. Nevertheless teachers can show these films to their students at an age when they are apprentices in factories and offices. But the decision lies completely with the individual teacher who, if he was himself a Nazi, will sabotage their showing.

I overheard school children leaving a cinema where a Swedish production, "Mein Kampf," on the life of Hitler and his Germany was shown. They commented on the moving pictures which showed evidence of gassing, torture and starvation in concentration camps. The children said: "These pictures are fakes. The prisoners are puppets made of wax. Did you see them moving? Well, no man in such a state of starvation can still be alive. . . ."

In this attitude of doubt you can detect traces of a dangerous education by the older generation, which, in certain quarters including Government ranks, identifies itself still with Nazism, tries to blame Hitler or

Eichmann only for everything and questions or denies the fascist crimes.

Let us look at books.

Well produced books of stories of adventure, of realistic approach to life, etc., are rare and expensive. They cost from 2 to 4 dollars. A collection of very fine Russian short stories costs about the same. Parents, who won't spend much money on books for their offspring, and youth with little pocket money will turn automatically to cheap books.

The industry has realized this. More and more paper books for youth are produced. Not less than 410 publishers submit youth literature—a real misnomer—to a national committee that awards annual prizes, which, in return help to make a book title known and to sell it in consequence.

TO SATISFY this need for cheap books a sort of literature is published that goes by the name of "War Stories." At a time when political and psychological tensions are at their highest possible peak in Germany this literature is dangerous because it considers war as a natural settlement for outstanding problems.

In the introductory note of one of such books dealing with the German fascist intervention in Spain and the subsequent destruction of Guernica by the "Legion Condor" it says: "Our struggle in Spain was the first active action against Communist practices and world revolutionary tendencies. Today this is admitted not only in German quarters. . . ."

The text of all these books hails and whitewashes the evil deeds of the Nazi Wehrmacht on the soil of European countries, and praises intervention and aggression as something good and necessary.

AN IMPRESSIVE number of youth organizations protested in public against this brand of literature. They were the organizations of "Young Socialists," of "Red Falcons," the socialist society for culture, "Die Naturfreunde," trade union youth, Socialist students and "Deutsche Jugendgemeinschaft." The protest was backed by many university teachers, lawyers, writers and other personalities, and by clergymen. As a result a law was applied to some cases of the crudest distortions. Still, at this very hour you can buy all these books in the Federal Republic—and in West Berlin even at half the price. Nobody need tell me where the subsidies come from for the West Berlin price reduction.

West Germany's TUC arranges in the Ruhr district for an annual conference discussing questions of cultural education of youth. It is in trade union and other group meetings where the works by Bertolt Brecht

and Kurt Tucholsky, by Maxim Gorki and Mayakowski, by Langston Hughes and Wright are read, where records by Paul Robeson or Ives Montand are listened to. Here, too, you find a sincere interest in the problems of colonial emancipation.

Journals and magazines designed for youth are manifold. They are either published by youth organizations and the Churches, or independently. Lack of funds is the reason for most of the poorer efforts of youth journalism. Among the better periodicals you find a snobbish one as "Twen," which indulges in pornography, escapism and political conformism, and on the other side there is "Elan," conducting campaigns against neo-Fascism, anti-Semitism and nuclear armament.

I talked to a number of booksellers and their remarks help to clarify the situation. Books dealing with Germany's Nazi past, they said, are bought and read eagerly by young people, as long as they can afford to buy them. It is usually the parents who refuse to take these books. They would not give them to their children. Nevertheless, the "Diary of Anne Frank" and other books have proved best-sellers. This shows the natural interest of the young generation to learn about the past, and let us hope to be careful in the future.

A German edition of William Shirer's book, The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich, *was attacked by West German reviewers as full of "half-truths" and "distortions." The book, which Mr. Shirer says is being translated into more languages than he can keep count of, has been printed in an edition of* 30,000 *in Germany, but the German reviewers do not think "The Rise and Fall" will enjoy any popularity among West Germans.*