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NEW YORK'S NEWSPAPER STRIKE:
Arthur Simpson

•

INTERVIEW WITH YEVTUSHENKO

•

EDGAR SNOW'S BOOK ON CHINA
Phillip Bonosky

•

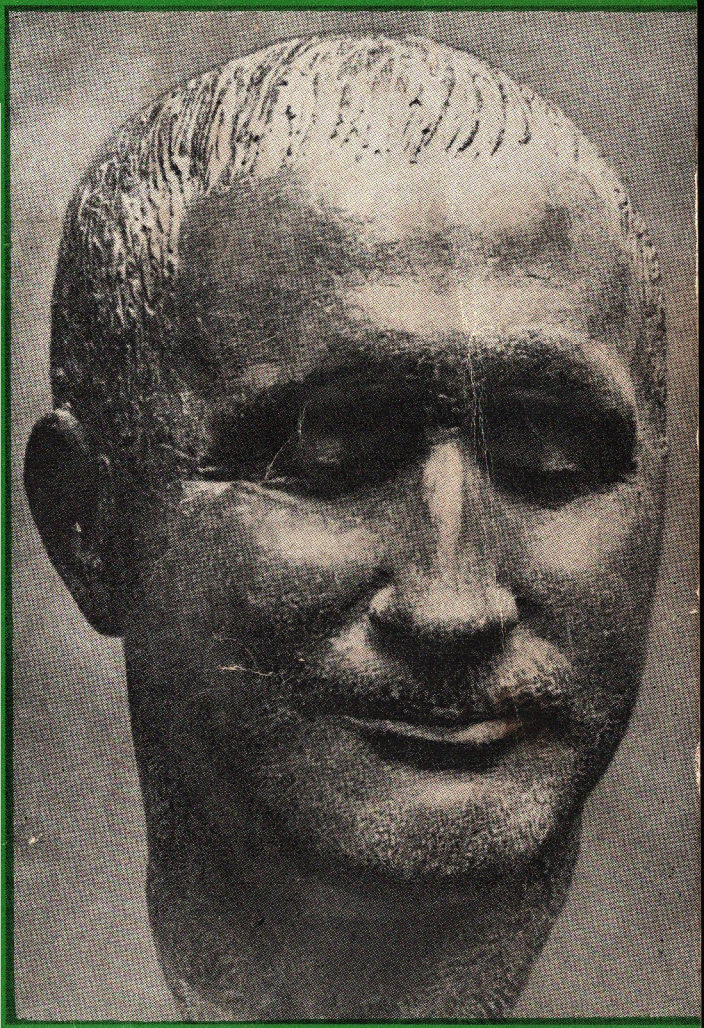
A STORY ABOUT THE PHILIPPINES
John Albright

•

TWO POEMS
Eli Shul

•

RECORD REVIEWS



BRONZE OF BRECHT by *Fritz Cremer*

BRECHT IN WORLD WAR II

Vol. 16, No. 4

Mainstream

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Among Our Contributors

Arthur Simpson appeared last month with an article on Sacco and Vanzetti. He writes from direct experience about the newspaper strike in this issue.

Eli Shul is in his mid twenties and was scheduled to appear last month with other younger poets. He lives in New York.

John Albright has lived in the Philippines, the locale of his story.

Josh Dunson writes reviews on folk music regularly for us, and with this issue we are happy to welcome him to our Board of Contributing Editors. He is in his mid twenties.

In Future Issues

We will conclude our Little Magazine symposium with a few last comments from writers and editors.

Oakley Johnson will be represented by an illuminating study of socialism in the United States, touching on little known facts about the early history of Marxism in America.

Irwin Silber, editor of *Sing Out* and *Lawrence Gellert* engage in a lively debate over the authenticity of material published by Mr. Gellert in February's *Mainstream.*

NEW YORK'S NEWSPAPER STRIKE

ARTHUR SIMPSON

The New York City newspaper strike ended last month in what is generally considered to be a victory for the striking New York Typographical Union No. 6. The issues involved in the strike were many but none loomed larger than the threat of automation. The strike shows the strength in the unity of working people. Despite pressure and opposition from various quarters, from the president of the United States, down to Macy's and even some so-called liberal journals and writers, the union and its members stood firm. The strike did not settle for good the issues involved in the strike. Automation for one will continue to pose a threat to workers' jobs. This is inevitable in our economy, where technological advances are turned by employers against working people. At the same time, the militancy and steadfastness of the strikers, supported by other unions, won a signal victory for labor. The following article gives a brief history of the strike as well as illuminating background material. (Ed.)

IT is little realized, but nevertheless a fact, that one of the busiest crossroads in New York City was named for a union president. And in a public square, in monumental effigy, there sits that self-same union president. The crossroads: Greeley Square; the president, Horace Greeley.

Yes, the first president of the New York Printers' Union, at its founding on January 19, 1850, was the famed editor of the *Tribune,* the foe of slavery, the author of the celebrated admonition: "Go West, young man."

One hundred and thirteen years later, Greely's union, now known as the New York Typographical Union No. 6, of the International Typographical Union, found itself on strike against four of New York's major newspapers—and locked out of the rest of them, including Greeley's *Tribune* (now hyphenated with the extinct *Herald*).

If the great antiquity of this union and its association with the legendary Greeley suggest an organization marked by conservatism, and even a modicum of stuffiness, the suggestion is warranted. In meetings of this classic craft union members are addressed not as "Brother" but as "Mister." The shop organization, wherever three members of the union or more are employed in a printing office, is known as the Chapel. The leader of the Chapel is not known as the Steward; he is the Chairman. He used to be known as the Father but this title became up-dated somewhere along the row of years that marks the history of the local. Things do change with time.

As a result of the great strike which started on December 8 of last

year, many more things have changed in the union. Of particular importance is the fact that, jarred by events out of its relatively peaceful role as a tradition-bound administrator of craft interests, it is pledged by its president, Bertram A. Powers, "to rejoin the labor movement" in New York City, a movement with which for decades it has had only formal and passive connection.

If virtue were indeed rewarded in this world, Local Six would merit great rewards. It possesses those cardinal virtues, extolled by editors and publishers throughout the land, of honesty and democracy. No union is superior to Big Six, as the union is called, in these qualities. The daily, weekly, monthly, not to mention quarterly, press has proclaimed that these specific qualities are lacking among unions generally. As guardians of public morals and conscience they have unceasingly inveighed against this lack. In sorrow, not untinged with anger, they have called for state and federal legislation to impose upon the erring unions that same high degree of fiscal cleanliness and dedication to democratic procedure of which they are themselves so uniformly possessed. If Local Six has not often come within the scope of their censure, it is because it is well and favorably known as exemplary in respect of honesty and democracy. When it is considered, too, that this union did not engage in a strike against a newspaper for the eighty years following 1883, it should be recognized that it is, to say the least, a respectable union, certainly not a reckless one.

This concatenation of the most treasured virtues should have made the New York printers union immune to all abuse. Surely when it finally resorted to use of the strike weapon on December 8, 1962 it must have been sorely tried. One might suppose that it would have been secure against calumny, having earned that security by behaving all its life much like the model union of an editorial writer's dreams.

It is unlikely, however, that Bertram Powers had any illusions that that this would be the case. The Nation's press is the property of the nation's publishers. With predictable unanimity they have chorused across the country, in the pages for which they pay their treasured cash, that Local Six acted irresponsibly, that it is murdering newspapers, that it is destroying freedom of the press, and that the strike is largely the dictatorial product of the personal ambition of Bertram Anthony Powers.

One searches one's memory in vain for another occasion on which an officer of a local union has been singled out for censure by a president of the United States. But this was done by J. F. Kennedy when he told a news conference that the New York printers' strike "has long since passed the point of public toleration." Said the president: "It is clear in the case of the New York newspaper strike that the local of the ITU and its president, Bertram Powers, insofar as anyone can understand his position, are attempting to impose a settlement which could shut down several newspapers in New York and throw thousands out of work."

In the twelfth week of the newspaper shutdown Powers achieved the honor of being man-of-the-week. That is to say, his picture made the front cover of *Time* (March 1). There he was, in a carefully drawn portrait by Boris Chaliapin, posed against a background of a carefully drawn monkey wrench. This is the wrench he is supposed to have thrown into the printing machinery. Inside *Time* there are some eleven columns of type dealing with monkey wrenches or, rather, strikes, and coming at last to the following conclusion: ". . . . as the New York newspaper battle demonstrates, the strike weapon should not be used as a monkey wrench. With public toleration at the breaking point, trade unionism is going to have to find and employ more intelligent weapons if it hopes to regain its own health and the favor of the people." One must wonder who is this abstract and classless "people" to which *Time* refers? And one tries, but fails, to recall when trade unionism had that favor of *Time* which it must now dedicate itself to regaining.

But let it not be thought that Mr. Powers is condemned only in the halls of the mighty, in the White House, and in the almost equally, powerful precincts of the Time and Life Building. Nothing that *Time* said about Powers on March 1 had not already been said even more vehemently by the temporate and respected liberal weekly *The Nation,* as early as January 19, in which an article by Arthur Mulligan spoke wrathfully of the "power play by Powers."

Certainly ignorance of the facts cannot explain the insistence by President Kennedy, *Time, The Nation* and all others who have made the charge that the newspaper blackout was the reckless product of one man's lust for power. Unfortunately the general public has been kept by the press and radio and television in an ignorance these media themselves certainly do not suffer from. This may explain why a kindly old lady was able to address one picket on the third day of the strike and say to him: "You fellows ought to insist that they give you a secret referendum so you can all go back to work." This was just a few days after the membership, in secret ballot, had voted 2,003 to 47 to authorize the strike.

* * *

THE craft exclusiveness of the printers union is obsolete and the union knows it. There was a time when the ITU embraced, in addition to composing room employees, the pressmen, stereotypers, bookbinders, photoengravers, typefounders, and even (until 1923!) the newswriters.

Separate needs eventually led to the establishement of separate unions of the several crarts, but the hard facts of modern industrial capitalism have driven home the need for industrial unionism in the graphic arts industry. The International Typographical Union and its president, Elmer Brown, are now in the forefront of the movement to amalgamate the printing trades unions into a single organization. Unity with the printing pressmen is now in the discussion stage.

The importance of the highest degree of unity is the lesson of the recent shutdown. What a rupture with conservative tradition there was in the calling of the strike! For eighty years thousands of men learned their trade, became printers in newspaper shops, lived out their lives there as good union men, and never knew the need of walking on a picket line. From 1883 Local Six never moved to call a strike until 2 A.M. on that frigid morning in December 1962.

This is not to say that none of the printers had ever before been affected by a strike. From time to time down through the years strikes by one or another craft against one or more of the city's papers had forced the printers into idleness, but not onto the picketline. Sometimes they respected the picketline, sometimes not. In the early 1920's when the pressmen struck the New York City papers, the printers went through their lines. (In 1948-49 when the printers struck the Chicago papers, the pressmen went through *their* lines. Both strikes failed of their objectives.)

But unity was in the air in 1962. A showdown was in the offing. All ten newspaper unions were shooting for contract improvements. Chances for success would be directly proportional to the degree of unity achieved.

Local Six was to carry the ball in the 1962 contest with the publishers It is not only the oldest of the newspaper unions but long had a reputation for being the strongest, though the Guild is the largest. The situation which forced Big Six to take drastic action had been six or eight years in the making. In 1957 the union negotiated for four months after the expiration of the contract and then signed on unsatisfactory terms. In 1959 negotiations dragged on seven months with the same result. In 1961 nine months of post-contract negotiations ended with the acceptance of the customary take-it-or-leave-it offer.

The warning signal was raised in 1961 when the proposed settlement was almost overthrown by an antagonized membership and the union was almost propelled into a strike for which it was not, at that time, prepared. It must have been known from that moment that 1962 would have to produce something better than take-it-or-leave-it if a strike was to be averted.

The publishers, members of The New York Publishers Association, had maneuvered themselves into a cozy situation wherein contracts with the Newspaper Guild expired on October 31 and contracts with most of the other key unions expired on December 7. The trick was to arrive at terms with the Guild, terms which in recent years constituted a very modest dollar package, and then offer the same number of dollars to the other unions. The cry of the printers was that this denied them the right of real collective bargaining for their own contract. They were presented with a settlement they had no part in formulating. Their own needs were not taken into account. Years ago they had fallen behind the Guild in a number of respects—wages, hours, severance pay, vacations, sick leave, for example. Now they were refused an opportunity to bargain for their own improvements. Worse, they were slipping backwards. (In 1959 the printers obtained employer-financed health insurance; in 1961 they were obliged to surrender it because the package—seven dollars—was too small to encompass it.)

In 1962 Local Six insisted on starting negotiations nearly six months before the contract was to expire. It was firmly held that agreement should be reached before expiration instead of the other way around. The publishers stalled. The contract was running out without any controversial proposal having been negotiated. The deadline was close when, on December 2, the union membership voted to authorize a strike. An 80-year truce was about to end.

But the months from July to December had not been spent in passive waiting and hoping. The need and desire for unity were registered in a mass meeting called by the ten newspaper unions, held at Manhattan Center on Sunday, October 14. The chairman of the meeting was President Powers of Local Six. The principal speaker was Harry Van Arsdale, president of the New York Central Labor Council, who came to the meeting with the prestige of having led his own electrical workers local in a successful fight for a 25-hour week. This meeting established the Officers Committee for Newspaper Unity and confronted the publishers on the eve of the critical developments with a solid front of ten unions committed to mutual support in whatever might ensue. The intransigence of the publishers had created what they had always sought to avoid—unity among the crafts.

* * *

THE publishers involved are worth noting. At their head should probably be mentioned the august and venerable *New York Times*. This is probably the most influential paper in the United States: the advisor of presidents and the opinion-former for hundreds of thousands of read-

ers who depend on it to tell them what plays to see, what books to read, what candidate to vote, for, and what to think about everything in general and particular. Next in power, and far ahead in circulation is the *News,* which is the *Times'* opposite number. A tabloid, neither august nor venerable, it has developed a form of condensed text supplemented by pictures which introduced a new format in American Journalism. It is frankly vulgar right down to its editorial page where its principal editorial writer, Rouben Maury, writes out of the corner of his mouth, unfailingly on the reactionary side of every question. Its multi-million circulation is the largest of any paper in the U.S. and is very profitable.

The other two papers struck were the *World-Telegram* and *Journal-American,* links in the Scripps-Howard and Hearst chains respectively, parts of giant newspaper empires. No others were struck, but four additional papers chose to lock out their workers and close down in class solidarity with the others. The papers involved in the lockout were precisely the weakest papers, financially speaking, and had been spared by the union for that reason and also in order to prevent a total news blackout in the city. These papers were the *Post,* the shaky property of Mrs. Dorothy Schiff; the *Herald-Tribune,* property of John Hay Whitney and classic organ of the Republican Party; the *Mirror,* another Hearst sheet, with a huge circulation but in unprofitable competition with the *News;* and the *Long Island Star-Journal,* part of the growing S. I. Newhouse chain. In a kind of limbo was Newhouse's *Long Island Press* which publishes editions for Queens, Nassau, and Suffolk counties. Responding to the frown of the New York Newspaper Publishers Association, it continued publishing—but eliminated its Queens (New York City) edition.

On November first an event occurred which was to have repercussions that lasted throughout the strike and lockout of the printers union. On that date the New York Newspaper Guild started a strike against the *News.* The contest lasted a little over a week and ended when the Guild obtained a package averaging benefits of about eight dollars a week spread over two years. Subsequently the other papers, with the exception of the *Post,* came to the same terms with the Guild. Big Six made it known that it would not accept the Guild package which it had no hand in negotiating and which fell short of the minimum needs of its own membership. A month later came the printers' strike.

Despite stresses and strains which may be considered inevitable when the disparate situations of ten different unions are involved, unity of the crafts held solid for the duration of the strike. The Guild, with the least to gain through prolongation of the strike, its contracts having already been signed, was the most restive or, at any rate, the most articulately so.

The Guild is thought of by many as the union of newswriters and other editorial workers. But it is a good deal more than that, for it includes as well the thousands of workers in the business offices and the proof boys in the composing room. Nevertheless, its editorial section dominates the union. Certainly no other union in the country contains a body of members so articulate, if only by virtue of their profession, as does the Guild.

One of the least productive of speculations is that indulged in from time to time by liberal and progressive-minded persons when they have an idle hour to beguile. The speculation takes the following form: "Do those guys who write for the papers really believe the stuff they put out?" Do not expect an answer to this question from the present writer, but here is evidence which may or may not be pertinent: Many of these same writers, freed by the shutdown (temporarily) from their bondage to their regular employers, went right on writing in the same vein as before, wherever they were provided with a forum. Polly Kline, of the rewrite desk of the *News,* was one of the first to take a swipe at Local Six, in the columns of the liberal weekly, *Village Voice.* Henry Luce's *Life,* which might be supposed to have sufficient home talent on its steady payroll to cover most requirements, had to use the words of two temporarily disemployed *Times* writers for a sad story (March 1) on how the public was suffering from the strike. (Not a word on the fact that a lockout by five papers was contributing to the alleged misery.) One Peter Hamill, a boy wonder on the staff of the *Post,* whose winning of the Meyer Berger Award at the age of 27 has perhaps made him feel superior to the common herd of scribblers and printers, broke into the far-off pages of the Boston *Herald* on March 2 to vent his impeccably grammatical spleen on his own Guild as well as the printers union, blaming them for the suspension of his job on the *Post.* None of his many well chosen words was directed against his boss, Dorothy Schiff, who had nothing to do with his loss of a job except that she had locked him out.

Meanwhile, Hamill's colleague, Murray Kempton, lent a historical note to the chorus of abuse when he likened the printers to the Luddites, the machine-wreckers of the early 19th Century. The comparison is irrelevant and irrational but reflects Mr. Kempton's state of mind as he moved over from the *Post* to his new job on the liberal *New Republic.*

Many writers found interim employment with the interim newspapers which popped up opportunistically during the blackout. One such writer was the aforementioned Arthur Mulligan (regularly of the *News*) who, blasting Bertram Powers and the Big Six in *The Nation* (January 19) grumbled: ". . . there is evidence that many of the printers are finding

it relatively easy to find part-time work in the metropolitan area. . . . Editorial workers, in contrast, find it less easy. . . ." This statement, in addition to being inaccurate, came with poor grace from Newsman Mulligan who, when he wrote it, was esconced on the staff of the New York *Standard,* an interim newspaper.

* * *

WHEN the blackout was almost one month old, the printers union became the target of one of those ingenious political stunts which are repeatedly dreamed up by certain specialists whose lack of success seems not to inhibit them from trying again and again. Governor Rockefeller, Mayor Wagner, and Secretary of Labor Wirtz came forth with a grandiloquently titled Board of Public Accountability consisting of three judges: David W. Peck, Joseph E. Grady, and the pompous veteran of Foley Square, Harold E. Medina. Under the latter's chairmanship the Board was to hold hearings to investigate the dispute. Somehow Secretary Wirtz was not ashamed to be a party to this maneuver despite the fact that he and his assistants had been in on all negotiations for a month and certainly knew more about the matter than any Board was likely to be able to discover in three days.

Mr. Powers declined to accept an invitation to appear before the Board (thereby calling down upon himself the wrath of Judge Medina who seemed to think his word was as good as his subpoena). Powers said he would first have to convene a meeting of his local membership to ask their will in the matter, since it is a 113-year old tradition of his union not to submit its negotiations to third-party intervention. The local meeting was scheduled for Sunday. The Three Judges would not grant a stay to the defendant, however, and proceeded to trial in absentia. Time was of the essence, apparently, and five days could not be wasted (although two months later the strike was still on). The Board met on January 7, 8, and 9. On January 11 the lofty, if impotent, tribunal brought in the expected guilty verdict against the printers. This rendered moot the meeting which Local Six held on January 13, which by this time had no other function than to boo the name of Medina, to endorse the action of its president, and to indicate that the membership was unready to invite the meddling of third parties when serious bargaining by the publishers was all the situation called for.

* * *

MONTHS were to pass before the publishers began to move from their fixed positions. Many bargaining sessions were held, at City Hall and elsewhere, but the publishers refused to depart essentially from

their original take-it-or-leave it. At first the economic cost of this intransigence was eased for most of them by the strike insurance they carried, but early in January this fount ran dry. They were now in the season of the publishing doldrums, the unprofitable months after Christmas when advertising revenue is low. The loss from the shutdown was thereby mitigated.

For Local Six and the ITU an economic crisis loomed. Both had been paying strike and lockout benefits to the affected members running around 60% of normal wages. These payments were no small factor in preserving morale and they help to explain in part why the picket lines were as strong after months of struggle as they were on the first day. But the fund had been exhausted by the long contest and by the concurrent strike on two Cleveland newspapers. A few months before the strike began, the membership of the ITU had voted down in a referendum a proposal to pay assessments toward the building of a bigger benefit fund. Now a referendum was again proposed, this time to impose a 3% assessment on the working membership for support of the striking and locked out members. It meant a tax averaging about five dollars per member. The publishers and Local Six both anxiously awaited the outcome of the referendum. When the votes were counted they showed the asessment had carried about three to one.

* * *

WHAT were the printers fighting for? One of the most detailed statements in answer to this question was made in a letter from Bertram Powers to the editors of the Washington *Post,* answering the paper's attack on the strike published as an editorial titled: "A Threat to Free Press." The following information is summarized from Powers' letter:

"We wish any new contract to expire on October 31, 1964, when the contract of the Newspaper Guild expires . . . so that we can have independent negotiations in behalf of the interests of our members. . . ."

"Teletypesetters for setting stock exchange tables. The publishers wish to introduce this much automation. The union is willing to permit it." (But the union wished to share the saving thus achieved.)

"In connection with printers hired by the day ('extras') we ask for some minor protection to prevent abuses. . . ."

"Pension . . . The New York pension fund . . . provides retired printers with payments of $9.25 per week."

"Hours. New York printers work a 36¼-hour week. We ask a 35-hour week. . . ."

"Welfare fund. . . . In December, 1961, the health and hospitalization

benefits had to be substantially reduced. . . . We ask only the restitution of the modest benefits existing in Decmber, 1961."

"Night shift differential . . . We are . . . asking . . . an increase of $2 and $4 a week for these night and lobster shifts."

"Sick leave . . . printers are granted only a single day's sick leave per year. . . . We are asking that this be increased to a single week."

In the matter of wages the printers were asking a weekly increase of $18 over a two-year period. However, this was never considered a firm figure. Powers frequently indicated it was subject to negotiation, which could only mean downward.

Probably the principal issue was that having to do with automation. *This is the spectre which is haunting the labor movement, and the printing industry is not immune to its effects.* It was present at the bargaining table principally under the heading of "outside tape." That is to say the publishers wanted to have the right to use tape furnished by press services, mainly for stock market tables. This tape automatically activates linecasting machines and can be a major job-killer. The union was agreeable to the admission of outside tape but wanted a *quid pro quo.* It insisted that the savings available through this device be shared with the printers so as to provide compensation for those displaced by its use. The publishers were inclined to hog it all.

* * *

THE strike was a long one, as had been predicted before it started. Probably all the many forms of intervention which were brought to bear by way of shortening it, only served to prolong it. The publishers seemed to live in hopes that they could win through intervention, or threat of adverse labor legislation, what they could not win through their own economic struggle. Until all the outside big artillery and all the supporting sniping had been employed, negotiations remained pretty near the starting point. But when the referendum had passed, when the blast by President Kenendy had met with rebuff rather than capitulation, when Rockefeller's threat of a board of inquiry had produced no panic, when the impact of Judge Medina and his Board had registered zero, and when Dorothy Schiff announced she was breaking the lockout at the *Post* and resumed publication (March 4), only then did the publishers begin serious give-and-take, instead of take-it-or-leave-it, bargaining.

All through the blackout the presence of a third-party behind the scenes was sensed. The presence became more evident after the *Post* resumed publication. This bashful third party, hiding in the wings, was none other than the big advertisers and their Madison Avenue brain trust. They were rooting for the publishers, fearing that victory for the

printers would mean higher advertising rates, not only in New York but elsewhere as the gains of the New Yorkers spread about the hinterland, as they have historically tended to do. The firm voice of Macy's department store made it known that it would not place any advertising in the renegade *Post.* Other stores, like Gimbel's did not declare themselves in the matter. Their actions spoke for them: none of the standard department stores placed a line with the *Post.*

* * *

The strike was finally won. But it did not end with the workers recognizing the significance of their victory. Instead, the strike ground to a halt in a series of anticlimaxes. (The actual conclusion was delayed until the photoengravers' union came to terms on March 31.)

Measured against the principal proclaimed objectives of the strike —common contract expiration date, a share in the savings of automation, and the thirty-five hour week—the victory was complete. Most of the specific economic demands were also achieved. The exceptions consisted of failure to get additional health benefits and a gain of only two days additional sick-leave rather than the four which had been sought. In wages the gain was eight dollars per week spread over two years. The full economic package was valued at $12.63 per week. In addition the workers were to receive full vacation credit for the period of the strike.

One might suppose that, since every strike settlement is essentially a compromise, these terms would have impressed the printers as a considerable victory. But not so.

At a stormy meeting held at Manhattan Center on March 17 the proposed settlement was rejected by a vote of 1,621 to 1,557, a margin of 64. To understand how this came about it may be helpful to consider the following:

The terms of settlement were proposed, at a point of stalemate in negotiations, by New York's Mayor Wagner, who had displayed unwonted energy in trying to bring the two sides together. The terms were first accepted by the ITU executive council and then presented to the local scale committee, which was caught off guard and off balance. The scale committee and President Powers did not react favorably at first but were persuaded by the other affected unions, and by Harry Van Arsdale, that the proposed terms represented gains which would make prolongation of the strike unwarranted.

The local scale committee accepted the terms but did not immediately proclaim the victory. Several days elapsed before a formal statement was issued affirming that the strike had been won. In the meantime many members were repelled by the size of the economic package. They

measured it against what had been offered at the outset of the strike, and found it wanting. They failed to appreciate the historic significance of the shorter work week and the unique provisions for sharing the savings effected by automation. They were further goaded into resentment by the active machinations of a faction in the union led by its secretary-treasurer, Thomas W. Kopeck, an ambitious young man who heads a conservative opposition within the Powers administration.

Beguiled by the elusive economic package which seemed to rest too small within their hands, many workers failed to appreciate the significance of the historic long-range factors they had gained. With factionalists stirring them up they voted against the settlement and it required another meeting (in Madison Square Garden, March 24) finally to win approval. At this meeting the vote of men in the job branch of the industry (as distinct from the newspapers) was probably decisive.

If many workers did not at once grasp the scope of their victory, the same cannot be said of the publishers in their defeat. Their organ, *Editor and Publisher,* recognized the advanced character of the settlement terms and declared they "will have an ultimate effect in every other newspaper plant in the country." And the *Christian Science Monitor* made this phophesy: ". . . of all the printers' gains those in the automation area are likely to become a national pattern of demands." The strike had indeed been won.

* * *

Will the printers now fulfill their president's promise to "rejoin the labor movement?" Probably, for the labor movement has already joined them. Throughout the long strike and lockout the other newspaper unions continued to respect their picket lines and of March 7, Stereotypers Union, Local One, joined the strike. During the bitter winter days the picket lines were regularly visited by canteen trucks of the Teamster union and the National Maritime Union, bringing welcome cheer in the form of coffee and doughnuts. On some nights the union of New York city's firemen came around with hot soup. (Picketing was 24-hours per day, seven days per week.) Successive meetings of the New York Central Labor Council affirmed support for the printers. Most dramatic of all was the mass picketing demonstration called by the Central Labor Council for January 15 in front of the *Times.* This resulted in nothing less than the largest mass picket line in New York labor history, with delegations from dozens of unions demonstrating for printers in unequalled solidarity.

Yes, the printers are willy-nilly in the labor movement and Horace Greeley's old Big Six is bigger, and probably better, than ever.

BRECHT IN WORLD WAR II

HANS BUNGE

Brecht is undoubtedly one of the great geniuses of the modern theater. He is celebrated in this country in books and articles, and the production of his plays, on and off-Broadway are testimony to his popularity. There is a tendency, however, to abstract the dramatist out of his historical and political context. Too often in this country Brecht's talent is praised but his politics are denigrated or ignored. This article serves the purpose of putting Brecht's anti-fascist, pro-Communist position on record. It shows that Brecht's art and his political beliefs were integral. (Ed.)

BRECHT was 35 years old when he had to flee from Germany in order to avoid arrest. And he was already over 50 before he finally arrived in a country whose police didn't consider him an enemy or a fugtive. In 15 years of exile, driven over half the globe and having had nowhere for a real home, Brecht lived in almost a dozen countries; and scarcely on any of the days during that period did he know whether the refuge he had found the evening before would still be a safe place the next morning.

Brecht was only one of many among the anti-fascists who were stubbornly pursued by the Nazis. But he was a well-known opponent of Hitler's. Workers sang Brecht's revolutionary songs when they demonstrated in the streets, and Brecht was on the theater program in many countries; Brecht's voice was heard throughout the world. The German fascists knew that they had a dangerous enemy in Brecht, and they had him on their list of wanted criminals. But Brecht, who had only escaped from Germany with luck, was on his guard. When the Nazis pressed into Austria, into Czechoslovakia, and into France, their agents couldn't find Brecht in Vienna or in Prague or even in Paris. The aggressions of the German *Wehrmacht* mapped out the escape route for a German writer. Brecht always left Denmark, Sweden, and Finland just at the right time. Ten days after he had left the Soviet Union, his countrymen fell upon that country too. And a little later the Japanese accomplices of Hitler were sitting in Manila harbor where the refugee ships had been landing. Even in 1947, when Brecht was boarding an airplane in New York to fly to Paris, he still could not afford to say: I am traveling to Europe. He was always involved in problems of security. The Congressional Committee for the investigation of un-American activities con-

Hans Bunge, "Brecht in World War II" *Newe Deustche Literatur* (March 1962), 36-50.

sidered Brecht's writings as evidence of un-American activities; these writings were the same that had been used by the Gestapo in 1933 to brand Brecht as *un-German.* Because of his connection with the Communists Brecht was interrogated, and on that particular day, meetings he had had years ago with Soviet and German friends were held up to him. Brecht saw how carefully he had been observed, and it became clear to him that he had remained too long in the "bastion of the Free World." The Nazi army had been destroyed 2½ years earlier, some of its top criminals had been brought to trial, and Hitler and his worst henchmen were dead. But their methods still prevailed.

When Brecht returned to Germany again in 1948 to spend the rest of his life where a socialist society is being built, he had spent almost one-third of his life in exile. For almost a third of his life he and those who thought the way he did had been compelled to work in exile for a common goal: so that relationships among men within a society could be created that would make a fate like his impossible in the future, and a battle like his unnecessary. He had always pointed out: "man's fate will be prepared by men."

It was no secret to Brecht that long before 1933 the control of large industry had changed hands and smoothed the way for the Nazi rise to power. He had observed distinctly how representatives of monopoly capital had tried to remove economic obstacles in the course of a war build-up —and like the inhabitants of those countries that were perplexed and taken aback, he had observed how with propaganda the preparation was being made long beforehand for a settlement that would be obviously and inevitably murderous. "The Longheads and the Roundheads," a piece begun in 1932, based itself on a political analysis of the social phenomena in the period before World War II. Nor was Brecht surprised when Hitler was named *Reichskanzler* (chancellor). He had also foreseen that the many small town, middle-class followers of Hitler would increase. But Brecht had not expected that the proletariat itself, in view of this extreme danger, would remain split apart, instead of binding itself together against the common enemy. Brecht had counted on anti-fascist action, and even in exile he still remained as long as possible, in the immediate vicinity of Germany in order to make his contribution, hoping that splintered and suppressed democratic forces might be assembled, so that as quickly as possible and on the broadest political basis, the battle against the Hitler regime could be taken up. Arnold Zweig remembered telling Brecht later: "Didn't you warn me not to emigrate too far, because in five years we would all be in Germany again?" Brecht had confidence in the victory of reason. Without this hope his work would never have been conceivable. Even when the weight of facts seemed

to speak against him and Brecht's places of refuge carried him farther and farther from Germany, he never doubted that Fascism would be conquered and that he himself would return to Germany, an alerted Germany, where he could be more useful than anywhere else in the world.

On 8 June 1935, when Brecht had temporarly unloaded his trunk in Denmark, his German citizenship was revoked and Danish fascists were incited by Hitler's embassy in Copenhagen to demand Brecht's deportation. Indeed, the proposal for strong measures had come too soon, for the Nazis were not yet sufficiently armed to be able to force their will on another government and to suppress an entire people. But they did succeed to the extent that the Danish police from now on observed Brecht as though he were their own enemy.

WHEN Hitler began to conclude non-aggression pacts. Brecht realized that war was imminent. He felt himself personally threatened by the non-aggression pact with Denmark. With the autumn maneuvers in 1938, which were unequivocally recognizable as the German *Wehrmacht's* practice run, the ground in Denmark finally became too hot for Brecht. He tried to go to Sweden. Danes didn't even need a passport for that, and a German could come to Sweden if he displayed a Nazi pass. But for those who had been driven out of Germany, the border was an almost insurmountable wall that could be overcome only through cunning. Brecht received the necessary aid from Stockholm students, who invited him to their university to deliver a lecture.

What is noteworthy is not that Brecht got into Sweden; more important is that fact that he stubbornly chose this particular course of action. For some time already, friends in America had urged that Brecht come to the United States, and the approval of his entry permit was to be expected in the near future. But Brecht did not accept the invitation. Germany was almost always as easy to reach from Sweden as from Denmark. And Brecht did not want to remove himself one step farther from Germany than was absolutely necessary. From here he could still forever warn about following Hitler. When Brecht arrived in Sweden in April 1939, twelve months time remained to him; for in April 1940. Denmark and Norway were occupied by Hitler's *Wehrmacht,* German soldiers suddenly stood directly at Sweden's border. Brecht began to pack again. He learned immediately how dangerously he was living. A friend reported that two German anti-fascists had been put onto the Stockholm-Berlin express so that they might be handed over to the Nazis. Shocked, Brecht saw that the Swedish police were making deals with Hitler's Gestapo. Perhaps he too was already on the list. But the

certainty that the life of his comrades would be threatened if help didn't come immediately, forced Brecht to relax the precautions that were necessary for his own safety. He decided to protest against the extraditions to the Swedish foreign minister. The minister would not permit anyone to speak to him. So Brecht drove after the train in his car in order to speak to the custody officers themselves at the next station. He didn't want them to place the arrested men on the ferry until he had intervened with the government. But Brecht couldn't catch the train. As long as the ship was still in Swedish territorial waters, however, Brecht never stopped trying to liberate those victims, men he did not even know personally. The battle was futile, and Brecht knew well enough then that Hitler's enemies were not safe any more in Sweden either. . . .

BRECHT was one of the last who came into Finland before the border was sealed off. Brecht arrived in Helsinki one week after Hitler's invasion. He was not out of danger; he was only in a new exile. It lasted 13 months. Angrily the poet saw how the Nazis had been able to spread their might over armies of dead people. Where could he go to fight them?

Brecht sought a place where he could employ his weapons—the weapons of a writer—in the most useful manner. . . . When he pondered the possibilities, Brecht felt it most sensible to be where capitalism ruled. Most of Brecht's earlier collaborators, even the one who had remained all these years only as working contacts, had emigrated to America ahead of him. They had long since prepared quarters for Brecht; now he accepted. His friends in the Soviet Union assisted in the plan.

On 15 May 1941, Brecht crossed over the Soviet border into Karelien, and on 13 June, he boarded the Swedish ship Anni Johnson, on which there were many men from Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia, who had been persecuted by the Nazis. On July 21, the ship docked in San Pedro, a harbor in Los Angeles, In the meantime Hitler had taken the last step toward plunging Germany and the world into a terrible catastrophe. Brecht knew that nobody would be able to escape.

You and you, sitting in the bow of the boat,
See the leak at the other end.
Better not turn your glance away,
For you are not out of the eye of death.

In the ninth year of his exile from Germany, the number of countries Brecht had sought refuge in had reached nine. He had been through two

continents and was now in a third. But he knew, now as before, that his fate was to be decided in Europe.

Driven Out With Good Reason

I grew up as the son
Of wealthy people. My parents
Dressed me in a collar and raised me
In the traditions of those who have servants
And taught me the art of command.
But when I grew up and looked around,
I didn't like the people of my class,
Nor did I like the commanding
And the having servants.
And I forsook my class and
Joined with the lesser people.

Thus
They have bred a traitor, taught him
Their arts, and he has
Betrayed them to the enemy.

Yes, I babble out their secrets. I stand
Among the people and explain
How they deceive, and I predict what will happen
Because I was initiated into their plans.
I translate word for word into everyday speech
The Latin of their corrupt clergy, and it
Reveals itself to be humbug. I take down
The weights of their justice and show them
To be false weights. And their informers
Report to them that I am sitting with thieves,
When they advise revolution.

They have warned me, and they have taken away
From me what I earned through my work.
And when I didn't better myself
They hunted me;
But they found in my house only papers,
Papers that disclosed their murderous designs
Against the people.
So they sent a subpoena after me

And they accused me of having
An oppressive attitude; that is,
The attitude of the oppressed.

Wherever I go I am branded
By all the Haves; but the Have-nots
Read the subpoena and
Guarantee me refuge.
You, I hear, they have driven out
With good reason.

Brecht did not regard his literary production after 1933 only as part of a political battle. But while he was in exile, this aspect became unconditionally, unyieldingly significant, because it frequently concerned the necessities of his livelihood. Like a professional politician, Brecht kept himself informed about the happenings in Germany and in the world. He read numerous newspapers from various countries, never forgot to listen on the radio to any news broadcast, oriented himself through letters, and gathered around him people with whom he could discuss the political situation. Every historical twist led to a basic analysis of his position. It then became a departure point for Brecht's works, which were permanently devoted to demonstrating acute lessons. To perform the possible from among the necessary, and from among the possible to select the most necessary—this Brecht's productions were determined to do, ever since Brecht had recognized "the causes of insecurity in the social lives of men," and had enlisted himself in the struggle for the removal of their causes. Now he made this dedication a question of existence in his activity as a writer.

IN Switzerland Brecht had tried, along with similar thinking writers, to found an archive for the study of Fascism. He felt it necessary to examine images and appearances at their ideological and economic roots. Later he inspired scholars to compile a book of slogans on Fascism. It seemed important to him that socially-minded investigations be utilized for agitation in daily politics. As the parliamentary trials began in Leipzig, Brecht drafted a manuscript in which he exposed the lack of principle in complaints against the Communists. He was convinced that writers had to provide an example so that even the greatest talent might not be ashamed to demonstrate directly against the criminal machinations of the Nazis. To periodicals who asked him for contributions, Brecht sent poems, essays, and scenes from plays whose political actuality had an immediate

reference. He didn't want to let any opportunity pass for him to make his voice heard. When such contributions were declined, as when the Dutch radio network Hilversum turned down a broadcast of choruses and songs from his play "The Mother," Brecht tried to have the important texts broadcast by Radio Moscow. When Brecht was asked for a song for working men, he wrote the "Einheitsfront lied," ("Song for a Unified Front") and Hanns Eisler set it to music so that it became known all over the world, just as the "Solidaritaetslied" ("Solidarity Song") had. The friendship between Brecht, Eisler, and Dessau became even stronger through many other works and was useful to the proletariat. For a radio station in the Saarland, Brecht let his "Sarrlied" be produced. Some critics put it in a class with Brecht's outstanding literary achievements, but Brecht himself answered: "there are ten thousand such examples all over the Saarland, they appear in all anti-Fascist newspapers, even in English, and they have more importance than half a dozen dramas." All the poems that Brecht wrote at that time are either aimed directly against the Nazis in Germany or they describe the heroic struggle of all anti-Fascists. In addition, Brecht employed forms that show distinctly he didn't consider these works to be simply daily political utterances that occupied only a temporary place in the total body of his work; rather he wanted them to be preserved for their permanent importance and even for their literary significance. "Choral Song Poems," produced by Brecht and Eisler in the Spring of 1934, contained poems that had been written between 1918 and 1933. Those that were chosen from this volume from the great reservoir of Brecht's work, were those that could be used by the proletariat in its struggle. The volume was billed as "the second great anti-fascist achievement since the appearance of Dimitroff." The "Svendborger Poems," written mainly between 1933 and 1937 and put out in 1939 by Ruth Berlau, are a political primer. The methods for suppressing Communists are described with actual examples, so that the reader can recognize them as such. The poem "The Invincible Inscription," is like a poem about the publication of the "Svendborger Poems" themselves, whose appearance the Nazis could not prevent even though they destroyed the printing presses in Prague's Malik Publishing house. For the German freedom network Brecht wrote his "German Satires" and scenes about conditions in Hitler Germany, which were later collected under the title of "The Fear and Misery of the Third Reich." For radio broadcast, Brecht worked up a series of satirically biting speeches by Nazi leaders like Goering and Hess. As long as he saw the slightest possibility of pointing out to his countrymen and to others the dangers of Fascism—so that they, once they had grasped them, could fight Fascism—Brecht held the

attention of his readers with works of this sort, which were primarily weapons against Fascism.

He wrote programmatically:

> Precisely because of the increasing disorder
> In our cities, filled with class struggle,
> Some of us have decided in these years
> Not to speak any more about ports, snow on the roofs,
> Women, the odor of ripe apples in the cellar,
> The feelings of the flesh—everything that makes man
> Whole and human. But instead we only speak
> More and more about the disorder, and therefore
> Become one-sided, narrow, constricted in the business
> Of politics and the dry, "undignified" vocabulary
> Of economic dialectics.
> But in order that this frightful, suffocating combination
> Of falling snow (it is not merely cold, we know that),
> Exploitation, alluring flesh, and class justice, does not
> Produce in us a cheapening of a world so many-sided,
> Let us be filled with desire when we
> Denounce such a bloody life.
> You understand.

Brecht didn't feel he was too distinguished to work as a propagandist himself. From Denmark, which had had ties with Germany for a long time, Brecht exhausted every possiblity for agitation. Through underground contacts, the pamphlets "Parliamentary Ballads" and "Ballads of a Poor Staff Chef" were smuggled into Germany. The classical essay "Five Difficulties in the writing of truth," was brought across the border printed like an advertising pamphlet and carrying the fake title of "Practical Guide for First Aid." Provisions were made for importing large sections of the "Choral Song Poems" and the "Svenborger Poems" into the fascist occupied Reich. . . .

BRECHT never withdrew into the ivory tower of famous writers; instead, he used his fame to do his part in assembling all opponents of Hitler, because he felt it was a great, an important, and a noble task to mold a community of people who would fight the German Fascist vanguard, and thereby achieve a solidarity of all anti-fascists. He pursued this task with intensity and organized his entire activity anew. He, who had been hunted by Hitler from country to country, now voluntarily

undertook great journeys and went to speak in England, France, America, and the Soviet Union. Brecht, who had earlier always refused to speak in public, felt that now it was important for him to make his contribution in person in Paris at the first International Writers Congress for the Defense of Culture. He, who until then had never taken on any official position in any organization, now collaborated in the management of the League of German Writers and the PEN-club. In July 1936, together with Lion Feuchtwanger and Willi Bredel, he edited the periodical "The Word," which was published in Moscow. Undiscouraged by the possibility of failure, he tried to found a theatrical periodical and a "Diderot Society," so that other anti-fascist artists might be won over for this urgent task. Brecht belonged also to the Founding Fathers of a Counsel for a Democratic Germany, which had been established in America. In 1937, when many anti-fascists in Germany, Italy, and Spain wanted to give up the battle because of the increasing pressure of Fascism, and there was a danger that they might split away, Brecht presented an open letter to a general gathering of the League of German Writers:

"I hear the last time great discussions took place, discussions which gave fuel to the ever increasing disunity among exiled writers. Some people seem to be of the opinion that the battle against fascism can be led only by us apart from the Communists. In opposition to those people, I would like to establish that the Communists among us have always made every sacrifice in order to make possible a common struggle for freedom and democracy in Germany. It seems to me that these things cannot be very much desired if one makes the demand of every anti-fascist that he must behave himself in a particular way. In this time of increasing confusion it is a primary task for anti-fascist writers to sharpen their sense of knowing how to separate the important from the unimportant. The sole important concern is the extensive, ceaseless battle against fascism, by all possible means, on the broadest foundation."

Brecht suggested to the secretary of the Federation for Proletarian Revolutionary Writers, that he convene an "authorized conference which would be primarily concerned with the goal and methods of our future work." He lined himself up distinctly against the disinterested point of view that many writers held, because he felt it would lead to a complete defenselessness. He did not share the opinion that one should "leave these writers in peace;" instead he called for "a realistic political education" for these men.

In 1937, at the Second International Writers Congress for the Defense of Culture, which met in Madrid and was threatened by the airplanes and cannons of Franco and Hitler, Brecht announced unmistakably to all the

world those portions of his opinion that would have to be followed in order to defend culture from barbarism: "culture—which for long, all too long, was defended only with intellectual weapons, but was assaulted with material weapons—is itself not only an intellectual entity, but also, above all, a material one, and must be defended with material weapons." At the same time, Brecht demonstrated the persistence of the complete material side of the struggle in a piece called "The Weapons of Mrs. Carrar," which he had written on the inspiration of an old collaborator of his, Slatan Dudow.

In his example of this Spanish fisherman's wife, Brecht points out the repressive attitude that keeps many men down during periods of suppression. "When they are hard hit they submerge themselves in their own concerns, become bitter and unhappy, and above all, passive. They think they can secure their own little private peace within their four walls." Only very late in the game does Mrs. Carrar realize that he who yields in the struggle is not spared either. The play, at whose end Mrs. Carrar herself takes up weapons in order to defend her own life and those of her children, clearly and defiantly demonstrates the identity of the poet Brecht with the politician Brecht. "How am I supposed to separate from my writing that which has influenced my life so much? And also my writing?" Brecht asks in a letter. "I try to show how difficult it is for the Andalusian fisherman's wife to commit herself to battle; how she only takes up weapons out of the utmost necessity. It is an appeal to the oppressed to rise up against their oppressors in the name of mankind. For mankind must become warlike in such times, in order not to be exterminated. And at the same time there is a letter to a fisherman's wife in Spain, which assures her that not everyone who speaks the German language speaks it to generals, and sends bombs and tanks into other countries. At the end of the letter Brecht writes: "wherever I look, I see men stricken with sorrows. But if mankind is destroyed, there will be no more art. To put together beautiful words is not art. How is art supposed to move men if it itself is not moved by the fates of men? If I harden myself against the sufferings of men, how will my heart be able to give itself to them in my writings? And if I show no concern for finding a way for them out of their suffering, how are they supposed to find the way to my writing?"

Perhaps Brecht was shouting into the wind. But he didn't permit himself to ask. Not many were shouting at all. "A man shouts in a particular direction," he wrote, and "the handiwork of an exile is hope." The history of "Brecht in World War II," is primarily the history of his concerns for making people aware of the danger of a war, and for doing everything in his power to prevent that war.

Brecht's hope for a victory of Reason was indestructible. In 1939 he wrote "Mother Courage and her Children." In the example of canteen hostess Anna Fierling, he wanted to show what is in store for those who don't comprehend "that the big businesses during a war are not conducted by little people." The play was supposed to demonstrate "that the war, which is another business venture with different methods, destroys human virtues, even those of the owners." Brecht wanted to summon forth opposition to the war, which he thought might possibly still be prevented. "I imagined while I was writing," Brecht reported later, "that some of the larger states would hear the warning of the playwrights from their stages, the warning that he who wants to breakfast with the devil must have a long spoon. I may have been naive in thinking that, but I don't consider it shameful to be naive. There weren't many performances. Writers can't write as quickly as rulers can make wars; writing demands imaginative thought. The stage was in the hands of the big gangsters much too early. 'Mother Courage and her Children' came, therefore, too late." The bitter lesson of the play, that Courage learns nothing from her misery, could not be portrayed. Unfortunately it proved itself to be correct. The followers of Courage had to experience this sad lesson with their own bodies.

IT was necessary for Brecht to write down his opinions in a manner that would endure, because, as he rightly feared, it would take a long time before they would be accepted. Brecht reckoned with the short memories of men. So he collected documents that would inevitably remind him of events that had threatened to lead to the destruction of mankind. He clipped pictures out of newspapers and magazines. Photos published in a daily,perhaps because of an impulse, were to be preserved for future generations, so they could prevent such photos from ever being made again. Underneath these pictures, Brecht often wrote a four-line verse. He employed a manner of writing from one of most fertile periods in literature in writing these verses: that of the classical Greek epigram. He wrote for those who had pursued him, exiled him, and made him homeless. He wrote the truth, as bitter as it was, with a friendliness, because of his love of mankind. The following verse appears under the faces of nine soldiers:

> I thought I knew you, and I think it still,
> And I'm not one of those who give out blind praise.
> You could have been much more than world conquerors
> Who served their masters with the yoke, or under it.

In the poem about the Dark Ages, directed to those who would be born in future years, these lines appear: "O we, who want to prepare the earth for friendship, cannot ourselves be friendly." But according to the Danish writer Ruth Berlau, even at the time these lines were written, Brecht was portraying "a remarkable and uncanny age in this journal. A great German writer," according to Miss Berlau, "is amazed and ashamed that his people have let themselves be led astray, and he pleads with them: 'Warm yourselves, you are cold.' "

Brecht's arguments were arguments of reason. He warned against impractical measures. He brought up for consideration the consequences of activities that had been thought out, and he condemned undertakings that were instituted senselessly for the sake of power. He hated displays. He was concerned with facts. He praised knowledge and utilized experiences. He advised against striving to do too much, and suggested instead, trying to lighten the burden of life. He recommended friendliness as a moral position. He solicited opinions and examined advice. He inspired independence. He built power from the wisdom of the people. He concentrated on the main contradictions, but didn't forget the others. He forged cohesion. He learned and taught with humor. He was unyielding in the face of stupidity, harsh against a lazy comfortableness, impatient with egotism, hostile towards exploiters, warlike against warmongers. He loved objectivity, clarity, and simplicity. He wanted not only to interpret the world, but to assist it, to change it. Brecht was a Marxist. He fought for Communism. One finds in Brecht three concepts, to whose growth he dedicated himself with complete understanding and a warm heart: dialectical materialism, friendliness, and productiveness.

BRECHT wrote a "Schweyk in World War II," and Brecht wrote "The History of Simone Marchard." Why didn't he write about a German Schweyk, and why not a German Simone? Why not at least a German Carrar? Why did Brecht in his play "The Arrested Rise of Arturo Ui," make those who represented the State, industry, the land owners, and the small business men so large; and why did he make the people in general so small? Brecht was criticizing the relationships in Germany realistically. The peoples outside of Germany had been subdued, where they once defended themselves with weapons. In Germany itself, however, a large part of the people had made dictatorship possible; they who were now completely under the yoke had brought it on themselves, this time too. Brecht had pointed it out in the scenario "Fear and Misery in the Third Reich:" the attitudes that encourage a dictator still remained;

the numbness, the looking over one's shoulder, the terror. He said: "Germany, our homeland, has changed itself into a people of two million pointers and eighty million pointed-ats. Its life exists only in terms of its being on trial. It is a nation of guilty men only. What the father tells the son, he tells him in order not to be arrested. The priest flips through his Bible in order to find phrases he can utter without being arrested. The teacher searches for any kind of a motive in Charlemagne which he can teach without being arrested. In signing the death certificate, the doctor chooses a cause for death which will not lead to his arrest. The poet wracks his brain for a rhyme that will prevent him from being arrested."

IN his essay "Five Difficulties in the Writing of Truth," one of the most important works of Brecht, worthy of being ranked with the most powerfully written polemics in the history of literature, Brecht wrote: "It takes courage to speak about the truth among themselves, among those who were conquered. But many who were persecuted lost the ability to recognize their own shortcomings. The persecution itself seems to them the greatest injustice. The persecutors, since they indeed did the persecuting, are the evil ones; they, the persecuted, were attacked because of their goodness. But this goodness was beaten, conquered, and muted, and was therefore a weak goodness, a bad, unenduring goodness; but there is no point in granting weakness to the good ones, just as there is none in granting wetness to the rain. To say that the good were not conquered because they were good, but because they were weak—that too requires courage." It is concerned with the victory that Hitler's Nazi Party achieved over the German people, who were too weak to turn back the terror, who let themselves to be drawn in, and finally became fellow-travelers and collaborators. And what does it say under a newspaper clipping in Brecht's "war primer"?

> Brothers, here in the distant Caucasians
> I lie buried now, a peasant's son from Swabia
> Felled by a Russian peasant's bullet.
> But I was conquered a year and a day ago in Swabia.

The only real aid, so far as Brecht was concerned, that could be brought to Germany as well as to the whole world, was this: the support of all forces that were hastening the destruction of Hitler and of Nazism, and the support of all qualified forces that were helping to construct a democratic and peace-loving Germany In Brecht's paper "On the position

of Germans in Exile," the following appears: "Germans in exile are of one voice in this war for the defeat of Germany. They regret each victory of German weapons, they welcome each setback. They know each setback costs thousands of German soldiers their lives, but they also know that each victory costs a thousand German soldiers their lives as well. The unavoidable final defeat of Hitler Germany will leave our country in a state of inconceivable misery. A victory would leave the entire inhabited world in such misery, Germany naturally included. This system of bloody suppression, unrestained profiteering, and complete lack of freedom would devour like a hideous tidal wave everything the people have achieved through hundreds of years of sacrifices. The ultimate defeat of Germany will not only free other peoples from this permanent threat, but it will also free the German people."

NAZI Germany was not Germany for Brecht. He saw his own position toward his countrymen not as a judge but as a fellow defender. Thus he challenged Thomas Mann and his thesis of the collective guilt and culpability of all Germans. Brecht felt that they, the exiles who had first uncovered the crimes of Hitler Germany and had remained thoughtless or indifferent for a long time and had not cried out to the rest of the world for resistance, should now bear a heavy responsibility, and that they unequivocally and publicly must push now for a sharp distinction between the Hitler regime and those bound to it on the one hand, and the German people on the other hand.

Brecht greeted the founding of the "National Committee for a Free Germany" in Moscow with sincere joy, and he joined it admiringly; the Soviet Union who of all countries had suffered the most from the conquests of the fascist Army, would, he hoped, be helped by these same conquerors to find the basis for a new life. But untrustful and full of concern, Brecht noted in contrast to this aim, that: "now already over 60,000 German war prisoners are supposed to be in the USA; they 'preserve discipline under their officers, and sing the Horst-Wessel Song, and so on.' They are preserved for the post-war era in the traditions of pure Nazism. There are scarcely any tales told; the few who report tell only of their thoughts about Hitler's victories." And Brecht continued at the same time: "One's heart stops beating when one reads about the air bombardments of Berlin."

On 22 October 1948, Brecht arrived at the Czech-German border. An auto was waiting there. The driver, hungry, in a thin jacket, with shrapnel fragments in his lungs, gave Brecht the first authentic report of what life had been like. Brecht awaited it.

When I came back
My hair wasn't gray yet,
And I was happy.

The troubles of the mountains lay behind us.
The troubles of the plains lay before us.

One of Brecht's first recorded utterances after his return read thusly: "I was happy, only a day after my return to Berlin, the city which had experienced a horrible war, to be able to be present at a demonstration for peace, given by some intellectuals. The view of the monstrous devastation filled me with only one wish: to make my contribution so that the world could live ultimately in peace. It is uninhabitable without peace."

Translated by
Paul Phillips

OFF-LIMITS

JOHN ALBRIGHT

WHEN the phone rang in the office of the base commander, the colonel was bent over a map of plane dispersal areas, in conference with his staff on the base's participation in coming regional aid maneuvers. His aide, Lieutenant Mueller, handed him the phone and he thrust it at his ear impatiently.

"This is the main gates, sir, Lieutenant Boland," said the voice. "There's a party of Filipinos here that wants to see you, sir."

"What's that?" said the colonel, finger still on the map. "Filipinos?"

"Yes, sir," said the voice. "The town major and a bunch of others. Looks like a delegation or something like that, sir."

"They'll have to wait," said the colonel. He began to push the phone away then quickly brought it back again. "Hold that." He brought fingertips down over his cheek wearily. "Send them in. Give them an escort. And, lieutenant, send them over the VIP route. It wouldn't do any harm if they got a look at some of the stuff on the runways."

"Yes, sir," said the voice.

The colonel flipped the map aside with his finger.

"We'll postpone this," he said to the assembled officers. He looked at his watch. "Until fourteen hundred hours. The defense of the West will be delayed while we consult our allies."

Grinning, they filed out.

"Call Public Affairs and tell Captain Rossiter to come over here fast fast," the colonel said to the aide, who was folding maps and charts. "Then fix me up a short one. I think I'm going to need it."

He was finishing the drink when the captain came in, his cap under his arm.

"You sent for me, sir?" he said, saluting.

"Our friends are here," said the colonel, putting down the glass. "It didn't take long, did it?"

"Our local friends?" said the captain.

"Our local friends. They should be up here any minute."

"You're right, sir," said the captain. "It didn't take long."

"Could we speed this up, captain?' said the colonel. "I've got all the details on this coming operation—"

"I'll do the best I can, sir," said the captain. "I don't think we'll have much trouble."

"This mayor" said the colonel. "You're sure you've got the right line on him?"

"Actually it doesn't take much to size these people up," said the captain. "As I think you will see for yourself, sir."

"Yes. Well, what about this other one? The problem boy? Is he likely to be in this bunch that are coming?"

The captain nodded. "I think he would be likely to horn in."

Damn it," said the colonel. He turned to the aide. "Stand by, lieutenant. I'll buzz you on the intercom about the hospitality. I want to size this thing up before we go pouring out any good liquor."

"Yes, sir," said the lieutenant. He handed the colonel a folder. "You'll want this, sir."

A sergeant came in from the outer office.

"Sir, there are some civilian visitors out here—" he began.

"I know," said the colonel, cutting him short. "How many are there?"

"A good half dozen, sir," said the sergeant.

"All right, let them in," said the colonel.

He sat down at the desk and opened the folder. The captain chose a chair at the end of the desk and seated himself. When the group of Filipinos came in they both stood up, the captain coming around the end of the desk with his hand outstretched.

There were six Filipinos in the group. They stopped just inside the office, in rather a tight cluster, and turned eyes right and left at the panelled walls, the blinds and drapes, the cushioned chairs in their semi-circle before the colonel's desk. One or two moved their shoulders at the feel of the air-conditioning. All were wearing *barong tagalog* and had perfectly creased trousers. In front was a man of middle age with lean pale features darkly puffed beneath the eyes. At his shoulder was a stout man with broad face, small eyes, and a short-clipped haircut. Of the others, two were sedate and wore glasses with black plastic rims, the third was evidently a Chinese mestizo, and the fourth, who was last to enter, was young, wore a frown and looked straight ahead at the two officers by the desk.

"Good morning, Mayor Veluz," said the captain warmly, grasping the hand of the lean man with his and by its pressure guiding him further into the room toward the desk.

"How do you do, captain," said the Mayor, bowing slightly as he

advanced, looking at the colonel over the captain's shoulder. "I'm sorry if our visit is so sudden. I —"

"I don't think you've had the pleasure of meeting the colonel, our new base commander," said the captain, interrupting.

The mayor and the colonel shook hands across the desk.

"I've always been in favor of a good neighbor policy, wherever I am," said the colonel heartily. "My door is always open to you and I've been intending to come knocking on yours whenever my duties let up on me."

"You will be very welcome, anytime, anytime," said the mayor, with a slight bow of the head.

"You and the colonel are both mayors in a way," said the captain. "This base is just a big township, you know."

"If I had some of the power you command that I saw on the way over here, I don't think I'd have much trouble being reelected," said the mayor.

They laughed. The colonel and the captain exchanged glances over the mayor's head.

"Please come in, everyone," said the captain, walking around to the remainder of the group, still by the door.

Murmuring greetings, they moved toward the colonel's desk to shake hands in their turn. The young man kept to the rear, traces of the frown still a shadow between his eyes.

The mayor introduced them all. The stout man was the chief of police, Mr. Bayona.

"Ah, yes. Security," said the colonel, taking the plump hand.

"These three gentlemen are from our business community," said the mayor, indicating the two men with glasses and the mestizio. "Mr. Retana, Mr. Dizon, Mr. Yap."

"You might say we're in the hardware business ourselves," said the captain with a laugh.

"In a larger sense, our business is the defense of this country," said the colonel, "including that town of yours, mayor."

"Thank you," said the mayor, who was attentive to every remark of the colonel. "And this is our youngest town official, Councillor Javier."

Unsmiling, the young man extended his hand. The captain caught the eye of the colonel, who touched the young man's hand briefly and without comment.

"Sit down, please," said the colonel, making the gesture of a man guiding a plane to a hardstand. "Make yourselves at home."

When they had seated themselves, the captain placed cigars and cigarettes on the smoking table before them. The mayor and the chief of police reached for cigars. The businessmen took cigarettes. The young man refrained from taking either. As the smoke lifted, there was a general settling in the comfortable chairs.

"Mayor," said the captain. "It may interest you to know that the colonel is no stranger to the Philippines, nor to your town, either. He was right here at this base, back in '35, wasn't it, sir?"

"Correct," said the colonel, sitting erect with hands flat on the desk. "And I've thought ever since then that the Philippines is the best station in the Air Force. As I was telling my wife when I brought her over here this time, you'll never see anything like Filipino hospitality." He lifted his brows and looked about the circle before him. "Did any of you gentlemen see service on Bataan?"

Mr. Dizon, one of the businessmen who wore glasses, cleared his throat.

"My son," he said.

"You must be proud of him," said the colonel.

"Oh yes," said the businessman, sitting straighter. "I am."

"The guerrilla," said Mr. Yap. "I helped the guerrilla."

The young councillor leaned forward in his chair, one elbow upthrust from its arm.

I think—" he began.

As if he had not heard him, the colonel, looking at the mayor, spoke again, causing the young man's words to trail off.

"It would be a great pleasure," said the colonel, "if I could escort you about this base personally as my guests, and I hope that opportunity will soon come. However, if I'm not mistaken you came here this morning with another purpose in mind. I suggest we go to the point, gentlemen."

"Well," said the mayor slowly, tapping his cigar at an ash tray, then glancing briefly at the businessmen. "It was suggested that we come to see you as a delegation to make an inquiry. I would say it's in the way of a complaint, if you will pardon the word. It's about the off-limits order."

Neither the colonel nor the captain said anything so the mayor continued.

"Are you not aware, colonel, that there was an order two days ago placing my town off-limits to American soldiers?"

"I am aware of it," said the colonel, "I made the order."

A silence followed while some the visitors shifted in their seats.

"But, colonel," said the mayor, "we don't understand. American soldiers have always been welcome in our town."

"More than that," said Mr. Retana, coming to the edge of his chair.

"More than that. I am sure you realize that the better part of the town's business depends on the patronage of your troops, it has for many years. Our stores, our restaurants, our entertainment—"

"Mr. Retana," said the captain to the colonel," is the proprietor of a number of cabarets in town. So too with Mr. Yap. Mr. Dizon has the biggest restaurant."

The colonel nodded.

"First class establishments," said Mr. Retana, taking out a handkerchief and patting his brow. Mr. Yap nodded vigorous agreement.

"Allow me to say," said the captain, "that we on this base are convinced of the basic and genuine hospitality of the great majority of the townspeople and their leading citizens. And there is no intention on our part to take any step that would disturb friendly relations between us. The off-limits order is a purely defensive move of ours to safeguard base personnel from what appear to be irresponsible acts of a minority."

The colonel held up his hand, halting the young man's bid to speak. He selected a document from the folder on the desk.

"I have here a report," he said. "It comes from our Air Police detachment stationed by agreement in the town. A report of incidents on the evening of July 16, last. I shall quote a pertinent paragraph:

> " 'Our Patrol on Del Carmen Street was summoned to a small riot that was in progress outside the Lone Star Bar. According to eye-witnesses, a number of Filipinos had come parading down the street carrying placards reading "Kano"—I presume that meant American—"Kano Go Home." A soldier from the base was in the street and failed to jump fast enough out of the path of the marchers. He was pushed. A scuffle broke out and other soldiers came out of the Bar to defend their companion. When our Air Patrol arrived they, too, were set upon. The rioters dispersed only on arrival of reinforcements.'

"Here is another. A complaint submitted to the AP detachment by Sergeant Andrew Burns. He was walking along the main street in town in the company of a Filipino girl on the afternoon of July 10, last. Two Filipino men in a jeepney drew up alongside of him and shouted abusive remarks. When he remonstrated, they jumped out and struck him in the stomach and face, knocking him to the ground.

"Mayor, if this is what you conceive to be welcome, I hardly think we agree on a definition of the word."

The Mayor moved uncomfortably in his chair.

"I assure you, colonel," he said, "such incidents are considered to be as deplorable by us as they are by you. Every effort has been made to apprehend the guilty parties. We have warrants for their arrest."

"That's right, sir," said the chief of police, lifting his head to the colonel and nodding vigorously.

"As I said," said the captain, "we have a high regard for the cooperative attitude of the town's responsible citizens. If the steps we have taken have injured any of your interests in any way we do not feel that we are to blame. The fact is, what happened were not isolated incidents. There was incitement."

"Absolutely," said the colonel, "Incitement."

No answer came from the circle of visitors. A deep frown came back to the face of the young councillor. The mayor studied the toe of his shoe beyond his knee.

"This," said the colonel, removing another paper from his folder, "is the transcript of a news story that appeared in the Manila newspapers on July 8, last, before these incidents occurred. It reports a mass meeting held in your town, mayor. I am going to read to you the quoted remarks of the principal speaker at that meeting:

> "There is only one way the Filipino people can really assert their sovereignty and independence and that is by abrogating the military bases agreement and getting rid of the foreign troops on its soil. It was bad enough to have foreign troops here to cow us when we were a colony, but it is intolerable when they make a mockery of the sovereignty we have supposedly acquired. Filipinos! Stand up for yourselves as free men! Demand the removal of American bases from our country!'

"That is not all. On July 18, last, after the incidents I have mentioned, another mass meeting occurred at which the same speaker said, among other things:

> " 'Do Not let foreign troops have their way in our streets and public places. I congratulate those citizens who have the courage to uphold their dignity as Filipinos.'

"I don't think I need to remind you that the man who spoke those words is in this room."

SILENCE followed. Covertly, the majority of the visitors, heads bowed toward their feet, bent sidelong glances toward their young companion.

"Thank you, colonel," said Councillor Javier ironically. "I have been trying to squeeze in a word here ever since I came in. Thank you for speaking my words for me." He stood up. His voice rose with him. "I want it known that I didn't come here to join in any plea for the lifting

of an off-limits order. As far as I'm concerned, our town can get along without the presence of your troops. There are more productive ways of making a living than catering to the appetites of an army." He flung forward an accusing finger. "You talk about attacks on American troops. You don't mention the abuses committed on our people, do you? The insults by drunks on the streets, the indecent approaches made to respectable citizens. You sound like the thief who makes his getaway by shouting, 'Stop, thief!' What about the rape of Juanita Galvez? What happened to the American who abused her, an American soldier from this base? When Juanita Galvez made her charges and named the man, he was promptly transferred back to the United States. Why? For the same reason that every American soldier who even gets into an automobile accident on our roads is promptly transferred back to the United States. Why? So the brown Filipino courts could not prosecute the white American soldier. How long do you think decent Filipinos will put up with such flouting of our sovereignty? You speak of incitement! There's your incitement! And I'll tell you something else—"

As the young man advanced toward the desk where the two American officers sat, the mayor and the chief of police arose and took their companion by the arms, persuading him to resume his seat.

"Please, Chico, take it easy," said the mayor.

"Don't tell me to take it easy," said the councillor.

"Please, gentlemen," said the captain. "Let us be calm and rational in this exchange of opinion."

"Rational," said the councillor, pulling away from the hand of the mayor that lay upon his arm. "To be rational in your view is to accept the facts that we have no rights in our own country." He shook his finger at the colonel. "Yes, I called those meetings. I spoke those words. When my constituents come to me with complaints, I answer them. And when the proper authorities do not act on complaints, they cannot blame the people for taking their own actions."

The colonel had turned to look out of the window, his jaw muscles working.

"According to the investigations of our base agencies," said the captain, "Juanita Galvez was employed in the Lone Star Bar as a table girl, or hostess. Her duties were to—entertain the customers. In other words, she was a prostitute."

"Please," said Mr. Retana, lifting a hand in protest. "I am the owner of the Lone Star Bar. My girls are hired to sit at tables."

"But they are supposed to go out to—appropriate places with those who want them to?" said the captain.

"Of course, that is up to them," said Mr. Retana, shrugging.

"I see," said the captain.

"You see what you want to see," said the councillor "As a matter of fact, Juanita Galvez refused to do any more than to sit at tables That is why she was attacked. Of course, these are facts that would be shown in a trial, the trial you wouldn't allow to take place."

"For your information, sir," said Mr. Retana to the colonel, "I have recently discharged Juanita Galvez from my establishment."

"Really?" said the captain, displaying a great interest.

The colonel bent forward, cocking an ear.

"She had a bad reputation," said Mr. Retana. Perspiration stood out upon his brow. "She gave a bad reputation to my place. In my opinion she is a bad girl."

"She is a Filipina," said the councillor, his fists clenched upon the arms of his chair. "Do you know what the talk will be in town? They will say you fired her because you didn't want your American customers to think your girls are anti-American."

"How ridiculous," said Mr. Retana with a little laugh.

"This Juanita Galvez," said the captain, addressing the chief of police. "How did she happen to make charges?"

"She came to me," said Javier. "She came to me a two o'clock in the morning, with her face bloody and her dress torn and covered with mud. She had been beaten and raped and thrown into a field from a jeep."

"Chief Bayona?" said the captain.

"She came to me," said the chief of police, "in the company of Mr. Javier. She named the name of an American soldier. I forwarded the charge to base authorities." He leaned forward to add, "Of course that is the procedure as you know, sir."

"Of course. I understand," said the captain. "Unfortunately, the soldier concerned was already included in a troop movement and is now beyond the jurisdiction of this base."

"Or of this country," said the councillor. "How coincidental."

"Sir," said the chief of police. "I suggested that Juanita Galvez ought to leave town. What with her reputation, and the trouble, and she has no family here, or job. I reminded her of the possible vagrancy charge—"

"You did that?" said Javier, turning to him in surprise. "May I ask when? I saw Juanita only yesterday, and she didn't mention it."

"Last night," said the chief of police, not looking at him.

"Well, she doesn't have to go," said the councillor. "I'll assume responsibility for her."

"She's gone," said the chief of police.

"A neat solution," said the councillor. "A neat solution all around. Everybody is satisfied. Everybody but the people. Are you satisfied, Mayor Veluz?"

"When I appointed the chief," said the mayor, "it was because I had confidence in him and in his ability to keep peace and order.' '

"I beg pardon," said Mr. Dizon. "But, the off-limits order. We came about the off-limits order."

"We are getting to that," said the captain.

The colonel had been staring out of the window and was strumming impatiently on the desk with his fingernails.

"All this talk," he said suddenly. "It's getting us nowhere. We're missing the whole damned point of the thing."

He leaped to his feet, scraping the chair back loudly. In one large stride he reached the panelled wall beside his desk and pulled a rolled map down across the wall. It was a map of Eastern Asia and the Western Pacific.

"Do you know what this is?" he said, rapping with his knuckles upon the map. He drew a forefinger down across the islanded stretch from Japan through the Philippines. "This is the front line of the Free World. Over here?" he swept his open hand over the land area to the left "—are the Chinese Reds, six hundred million of them, living under the worst tyranny and oppression in all history. Do you know what stands between that tyranny and the Filipino people? This base, gentlemen, this base. If it wasn't for this base, the Reds would be swarming across the China Sea and writing finish to democracy in your country. Now, I don't have much time to be refereeing squabbles on street corners. It is my job, gentlemen, to defend the Free World and that includes the partnership of Filipinos and Americans." Pausing, he looked sternly about the circle of visitors. "How in the name of God can that defense be carried on when there are those who undermine the partnership on which it is founded?"

"I obect!" said the councillor, coming to his feet. "The remarks of this officer are outright interference in Philippine affairs. What right has he to slander me or to tell me how to conduct myself in my own country? I am entitled to my own opinion about the partnership of which he speaks."

"Don't you think you've said enough?" said Mr. Dizon, shouting, gripping the arms of his chair and looking up at the young man furiously. "Do you know what it is costing us while you are rushing to the defense of this—this wretched woman?"

Slowly, in the silence, the councillor looked at one after another of his companions. They looked back at him without expression.

"I believe the proper steps have been taken to settle this problem," said the mayor.

"The proper steps?" said the councillor. "What do you mean, the economic squeeze-play called off-limits, the flouting of Philippine sovereignty, or the waving of the good old Red menace? Or do you mean your own choice of the pocketbook instead of pride?" He brushed aside his chair. "I won't be a party to this—sellout." He walked quickly to the door. "Don't look for me outside. I'll find my own way back to town. You will hear from the people. They might have different ideas about who they want for a mayor next time."

Jerking open the door, he stepped out, slamming it behind him.

In the strained wake of his departure, the captain leaned an elbow on the corner of the desk and ran fingers over his chin.

"A very outspoken young man," he said. "I can understand his viewpoint, but—"

"Mr. Javier is young yet," said the mayor, selecting a fresh cigar and fingering it. "He comes from a good family, you understand, but he doesn't yet know which side his bread is buttered on." He removed the wrapper from the cigar delicately. "I must admit, I have been somewhat lax. As it happens, permits for public meetings must be acquired through my office. I'm afraid I have been a bit lenient with Mr. Javier's use of them. Under the circumstances I can readily agree that such permits are hardly in order at present."

"I must say, I didn't like the sound of the threat he uttered when he left," said the captain.

"Talk is cheap," said the mayor. He lit his cigar. "The thing about young crusaders is that they can't give the people anything to chew upon but words. When the people want something more substantial they know where to come."

"Of course, that's your affair," said the captain hastily.

The mayor smoked for a moment, sending a bluish cloud about his face.

"Captain Rossiter," he said. "If you will recall, in one of our past conversations you mentioned that the officials of this base would always be ready to aid our town in its services to the people."

"That's right," said the captain. "That's part of an international policy of the American government."

"If," said the mayor, "materials could be placed at our disposal for a barrio school perhaps, let us say a quonset hut, even an old one, it would

not only be a credit to my administration, but a fine demonstration of Philippine-American friendship."

"I think that could be easily arranged," said the captain, looking at the colonel, "Don't you think so, sir?"

"Quonset hut?" said the colonel, looking at his watch. "A very simple matter."

"The off-limits order—" began Mr. Retana.

"The off-limits order," said the colonel, "has been rescinded as of—" he glanced at his watch again "—twelve hundred thirty hours, this date."

He snapped down a button on the intercom.

"Lieutenant Mueller? We are ready."

He turned to his visitors.

"Now, what is your pleasure, gentlemen?"

It is with great pleasure that the editors of Mainstream—and, with us, we know, tens of thousands throughout the world—extend birthday greetings to Mike Gold on his 70th birthday, To the youth he remains a guide and an inspiration. They should study his work and his life. To his contemporaries he remains young because, at 70, he shares with them, the ever-youthful task of freeing the hands of the American workers in their struggle for peace and a better world in which to live.

TWO POEMS

The Eviction

Hail, the transcendental landlord!
he is bored with the proceedings.
what rotten luck to have caught it
at its end. The parade of furniture
down the stair, over, and its tired
members squatting carelessly
on the sidewalk. The woman has
stopped screaming, her dog tied
to the leg of an old chair upon which
she sits, still queen of all
her effects. He got there too late
to watch her hold back the men
removing the bed. It is always
like that with the bed as if
their life was sleeping late in it.
nothing much to relate to his wife
after supper then—unless, would she
comprehend how at such times he feels
as groomed as a swan, hardened so that
even his hair goes unruffled in the wind
and numerous eyes fail to rifle
the crispness of his white boutonniere.

Caseworker

White men walk these streets
in the skins of bill collectors
or the emissaries of a thousand
police departments. Children
have grown bent
watching these feet for a sign.
Might I be the one to knock
on a door where a woman
has gagged her cranky infant
and locked herself
in the furthest room.
To whom can I explain:
"they've done nothing, and I
. . . I'm here to help!"
Who among these people
could ignore this awesome
briefcase always in my hand,
and not spy upon my face
the pallid badge of officialdom?

—ELI SHUL

INTERVIEW WITH YEVTUSHENKO

Last spring the Soviet Poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko was in England. While there he was interviewed by correspondents for the German weekly Der Spiegel *of Hamburg. The interview is an extremely interesting one. One final note:* Der Spiegel *is the same West German publication whose editor was arrested summarily by the Adenauer government for writing disparaging reports about West Germany's military machine. (This interview is translated from* La Nouvelle Critique, *Jan-Feb.,* 1963.) (Ed.)

Q. Mr. Yevtushenko, last fall you read some of your poems near the statue of Mayakovsky—that is, on a public square. 5,000 people came to hear you. That kind of thing doesn't happen in Germany. One of your critics has said that you could fill a stadium of 100,000 capacity. Can you explain this phenomenon?

A. It ought to be like that in every country.

Q. Is it an extraordinary phenomenon in Russia?

A. No, it's like that every day.

Q. Are there many poets who attract 5,000 people to the Mayakovsky Place?

A. Not only 5,000, but eight to ten thousand. Right now a public poetry event is being prepared to take place at the Sports Palace—they are counting on an audience of 15,000.

Q. And they will come?

A. Naturally.

Q. How are people in Moscow notified? Are there posters? Newspaper ads?

A. Actually, there is only one rather small notice posted in Mayakovsky Place — nothing else.

Q. Who pays the expenses?

A. Let me tell you something first about the tradition out of which these phenomena arise—their pre-history. In the first place, we have Pushkin; *Soirées* were given for him, complete with champaign and uniforms, in the salons of high society. Then there were the Futurists of the 20's who made spectacular public appearances. They wanted to attract public attention and so they created scandals. For example, Mayakovsky appeared with little hearts drawn on his cheeks. It was the Futurists who taught the public to frequent poetry *soirées.* Later there was no need of scandals; poetic evenings became familiar to everyone. . . . After that came the Stalin epoch, when the interest in poetry diminished.

Q. Why was that?

A. Interest diminished because poets were writing about machines and tractors—instead of the men who are behind the

machines and who drive the tractors.

Q. Were the poems worse? Are they better now?

A. One can hardly say that *all* the poets of that time wrote bad poetry. There were Tvardovsky, Pasternak. But there wasn't an opportunity for them to reach large audiences. Meeting places were reserved for other uses. Now that has changed.

Q. You said recently that reciting poems was very popular today in Russia, because "problems of burning importance" find privileged expression in them —beyond that of prose. Why? Is it because poems don't express thoughts directly but through metaphors?

A. It is quite simply because we are experiencing a veritable poetry explosion. It makes its point faster. It is like an advance messenger. To use a military comparison: The advance guard is poetry; the main body of the troops with heavy guns is prose.

Q. But where is this army going?

A. It's going in a good direction.

Q. We have learned, for example, that there is a loudspeaker installed on Mayakovsky Place. Someone must take responsibility for organizing this.

A. Several years ago a few poets launched the idea of a Poetry Day—as a sort of national holiday . . . for all the cities of the Union. We would begin with Moscow, and then extend the thing to all the cities. There were skeptics here and there at the beginning. Afterward, this became a true national holiday.

Q. Who was skeptical? Other writers? The authorities?

A. Some writers.

Q. But bureaucrats as well?

A. No, not the authorities. On this day, poets stand behind little stands of books, sell their poems, give readings. In Moscow, on the Mayakovsky Place, people stay two or three hours to listen, even in the snow. For Poets' Day, entrance to events is free. Last year I took part in 250 events of this kind.

Q. Yes, but who pays the expenses?

A. In the institutes and workshops, it often costs nothing. Sometimes when we make trips across the country, go to other cities and perform in the great concert halls, the expenses are paid by an institution called "Bureau of Propaganda for Literature." It is this bureau that organizes and finances these evenings.

Q. And the loudspeakers, the microphones?

A. Yes, it's the Bureau that takes care of all that.

Q. But this Bureau, isn't it an organ of the State?

A. It is an organization of writers.

Q. Our questions may seem a bit naïve, because one sees in the Russian press that there is a certain animosity on the part of the authorities toward the poetry meetings on Mayakovsky Place.

A. On Mayakovsky Place things happen like this often: People stop and talk about every possible subject—political, literary—and they recite poems, too. A crowd gathers. Particularly on Saturday. Naturally one hears nonsense now and then. As at Hyde Park in London. Anyone can hold forth with what he has a mind to.

Q. So the Mayakovsky Place is a kind of Hyde Park?

A. Not quite. At any rate, in the Stalin era, one could not have seen people gathering together like this and reciting what they pleased. Now, that's changed.

Q. In a poem by the Russian writer Kotov, the public that attends these readings by young poets is described as "the herd." What impression do you have of the audience?

A. We have in our country about 1500 poets. . . . Among these Kotov might be accorded the 1455th position.

Q. Certain articles in the Soviet press (for example, in Komsomol Pravda) express a kind of hostility toward intellectuals and poets. They downgrade them; characterized them as "beards," "strutting roosters," "damp chickens." They throw it up to them that they don't know what real work means.

Q. All the same I assure you that wearing a beard doesn't expose one to being hotly pursued.

A. That wasn't what I meant.

A. Well, it may happen that people who are so characterized do get up in public sometimes and recite completely aberrated poems. But then the crowd reacts quite naturally and doesn't listen.

Q. Can eight to ten thousand people have that kind of critical judgment?

A. Yes. Besides, in this question you mustn't base yourself on poetic meetings alone. There is also the climate of popular demand. In the Stalin epoch, this depended solely on the official position of the writer. Now it depends on the readers' response. Readers write to the newspapers and to the libraries when something pleases them. That helps to determine the demand. My last collection was in an edition of 100,000.

Q. Magnificent! So poetry takes its place in the world of liberal competition?

A. I might say there are some writers who don't look upon this too favorably.

Q. Wouldn't you say that this was a matter of a capitalist princi-

ple?

A. No, I think it's a socialist principle.

Q. The criticism of modern Russian poets in the Soviet press, to these poetic readings and their public, at one and the same time touches the interior of things and their surface. For example, on the exterior aspect; they may say: He wears pointed shoes; he wears a beard; he carries a megaphone; he is a "pygmy."

A. There are of course some critics who look only at the surface.

Q. But one must say that exterior signs—for example, Fidel Castro's beard—may have something to do with an interior meaning. . . . When one speaks of "erotomania," however, this is a reproach that touches on the writer's inner life. You, for example, are an "erotomaniac," because there is a nude woman in one of your poems.

A. In an interview with a Western journalist, Ilya Ehrenburg remarked: "Yevtushenko has revealed a state secret; you know —la petite difference that exists between men and women." . . . But in itself this is, after all, not such a state secret. Because it does not happen that women take their clothes off. . . . Well, hypocrisy exists everywhere—even among you.

(*Interviewer*) Yes.

A. I have never written pornographic poems. But the whole thing is nevertheless idiotic. . . . Why shouldn't one talk of naked women? Why shouldn't one represent them in painting?

Q. One of the reproaches leveled at you is erotomania; the other is skepticism.

A. All right. Do I look like an erotomaniac or a skeptic? As in all developing literature, there is a struggle going on among us, too. We have removed Stalin from the tomb, but we have not yet succeded in removing him from our way of thinking and from our emotions.

Q. You have said that the Western beatniks and the angry young men know what they're against but not what they're for, and this is what makes the difference between them and the Russians of their generation. Why do you think this is?

A. Lots of dirty hands have been placed on our movement, on our flag. We would certainly like them to relax their clutch on our flag mast. Because we believe in our standard . . . it merits faith. . . . In brief, the difference is we have a standard and we believe in it; while the beatnicks have no standard in which they can believe.

Q. What is inscribed on your standard?

A. Communism.

Q. But that was written there in the preceding generation. Where's the difference?

A. Let me say this. There is always a tension existing between generations. When one speaks of generations, however, it is the age of the spirit one must think about—not chronological age. Although Kotov isn't much older than I, I can't qualify him other than as a "grandfather." But there are people older than I to whom I am closely linked; I consider them true contemporaries; they have the same feelings about communism as I do.

Q. Putting aside the generation thing, what difference is there between you and those you call the "grandfathers?"

A. The latter are particularly constricted. Many of them believe sincerely in communism, but they think communism and the individual are mutually exclusive; that is to say, that communism doesn't permit individual life, therefore there can be nothing but a common level. I want the kind of communism in which every individual can expand and grow. I believe that communism ought to be such as to favor the development of many good men—who can at the same time differ greatly amongst themselves.

Q. Mr. Yevtushenko, in the West, society usually renders rebel writers harmless by taking them to its heart. Can one not ask if perhaps the Soviet Union isn't using this subtle method? Say—the permission granted you to travel alone in foreign lands?

A. No, I am persuaded that isn't the way of it. The situation has really changed. Recently there were elections for the Writers Union of Moscow. Several young writers, myself among them, were elected to the Presidium. There was absolutely no pressure from above; the writers acted on their own. My presence in the Presidium hasn't changed anything in me; I am the same as I was.

Q. Hmm. But now you are not only a poet; here you are—a bureaucrat.

A. Never. An English journalist asked me if my presence in the writers Union Presidium wouldn't influence my poems and the talks I give. I answered that I believed that my poems would influence the work of the other members.

Q. In one of your poems I find these lines: "Behind the word/ One plays a dirty game/We speak of things/Of which we didn't speak yesterday/We say nothing about the things/That we have done ourselves."

A. That's from my poem "The Zima Station," written in 1956. Maybe this poem contributed a bit to the fact that some of

the things we have done are not passed over in silence.

Q. When you say "we," whom are you criticizing? Yourself? Or others?

A. Merely this. At that time there weren't any great debates on what had happened, on the grave developments of the Stalin epoch. This poem was written in 1956—before the 20th Congress.

Q. But are you criticizing the Party, Yourself? Your generation? Your nation?

A. Naturally, it is always myself I am criticizing. At the same time I am issuing an invitation to people, saying: "One must talk about everything; one must remove the wraps from things." And actually, since then we have discussed many things together. That doesn't necessarily mean that this is due to my poems in themselves; there was an entire epoch that exercised an influence, and my poems were a part of that epoch. If we can speak now of our past with so much frankness, it's because we don't have to fear our present. No one is going to persecute me for my poems. I'm admitting that it was different in an earlier time. I would not be here discussing things with you if times hadn't changed.

Q. You are enthusiastic about Fidel Castro and the revolutionary atmosphere of Cuba. Was there something there that was missing in the USSR?

A. As a matter of fact, I am working on a poem that will have as its theme the rapport between diverse revolutions. All revolutions must learn from one another. That's a law. It is we who made the first experiment in putting a revolution into practice. We have been struggling against dogmatism for a long time, and here our experience is helping Cuba. When the first signs of dogmatism appear in Cuba, they understand how necessary it is to deal with them, to struggle against them.

Q. A specific question—you and Fidel Castro, too, appreciate Hemingway very much. What pleases you so much in his works or in his personality? His heroes are in fact avowed individualists, marginal people, adventurers: they have nothing to do with society.

A. For heavens' sake! His books are. . . . Take *Farewell to Arms* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls* they are the ones I like. Fidel told me that when he was in the Maquis, he always took *For Whom the Bell Tolls* with him. Devil take you! Hemingway was a true humanist, a great humanist.

Q. In that novel Hemingway criticizes Communists.

A. He criticizes dogmatists.

Q. Very handy to be able to distinguish always between dogmatists and true communists!

A. I can distinguish them. In my opinion a communist should never be dogmatic.

Q. You have visited several Western countries; seen a good part of the capitalist world. What's your impression: Is it in process of dissolution?

A. No. I don't think capitalism is on the verge of collapsing, or that it is disintegrating. If we thought capitalism was near its end, we would not be engaged in challenging it. We have invited America to enter into competition with us.

Q. Can we come back to the question of communism and the individual. For the Soviet artist, there was for a long time the doctrine of socialist realism to which he tried to conform.

A. That's a large enough formula for a number of artists to interpret in their own ways. I believe I am a poet of socialist realism; it's possible that Kotov thinks the same of himself. That's why there's so much discussion among us on this subject.

Q. Ilya Ehrenburg has just published his MEMOIRS, as you know, and he tells us what socialist realism meant 20 years ago. At that time he was attacked because he said: "It isn't essential that all the workers understand all the pictures in all the museums."

A. I don't think that art ought to talk down to the audience; to orient itself toward their taste. It seems to me art must be the advance guard for the audience.

Q. Some time ago Alexander Tvardovsky demanded that the Soviet writer today represent life in all its verity. How does this accord with the doctrine of socialist realism? With the principle of the esprit of the Party in literature?

A. No doctrine has ever told me what I should write. I have always written what I think. I also believe no one has dicttated to Tvardovsky what he should write.

Q. But, Mr. Yevtushenko, there still remains a contradiction between a man who writes about individual emotions and a man who popularizes big general ideas supplied by the Party. You describe yourself as an individualist?

A. I am for the individual. Why do you call that individualism?

Q. There is nonetheless a difference between depicting ones own love pangs, one's own toothaches, and describing the ideas of the Party. We have the impression that in your poetry, the accent is on individual sentiments. It is not that you avoid ideas, but that they take a second place; perhaps because

you are saying to yourself: As to that, we are in agreement; there is no difficulty. But actually the interest focuses on the other thing.

A. Yes, there are at times contradictions of this kind. That's obvious. If we take our state as one big undifferentiated whole.... Let me make you a proposal. Come to the Soviet Union.

Q. Thank you.

A. If you came you would find people more different from one another than you could have imagined. Yet you will hardly find one who doesn't believe in what we are in process of building—in spite of the difficulties and gruelling experiences we have surmounted.

Q. Mr. Yevtushenko, if art begins to interest itself more in the individual, and if problems such as death and the meaning of life appear, is there not also the danger of religious questions arising?

A. My own religion is the belief in Man.

Q. But in the recent past—in the Soviet Union as in Germany—men have been the great self-betrayers.

A. Should I therefore conclude one must not believe in Man?

Q. Yes.

A. I spoke of Man with a capital M.

Q. Not a belief in men taken separately, but a faith in an image of Man, in an ideal?

A. Yes. Mine is a totally realistic faith when one considers the cumulative good that exists in so many men now alive in the world.

Q. You don't "believe in God?" The question of God poses no problem for you?

A. I respect believers—be they Jews, Moslems or Christians.

Q. I hear that more than one young Soviet citizen carries a chain around his neck with a small crucifix as a talisman.

A. There are very few such. I go to the Finnish baths often and I've never seen even one.

Q. We have the impression that religious questions are beginning to interest communists. Notably in Poland. What do you think?

A. I can speak only of countries I know. I can speak of Cuba, for example. Fidel Castro said: Jesus Christ was the first Communist.

Q. Is this your opinion?

A. In a certain sense, yes.

Q. Ah, here you are, a partisan of Christ.

A. No, not at all, but I am pleased by his style: When one strikes him on the right cheek, he turns the left. As for me, I prefer to take my slaps on both cheeks at the same time.

Q. That makes you a Christian.

A. Oh, I don't know. . . .

Q. . . . Mr. Yevtushenko, we thank you for this interview.

EDGAR SNOW ON CHINA

The Other Side of the River by Edgar Snow. Random House. $10.00.

THIS monumental volume of over 800 pages is the immediate record and response to a six month trip through China in 1960 by the author of the well-remembered *Red Star Over China,* which so prophetically foreshadowed, in the Thirties, the Chinese revolution of 1949 and already indicated some of the political implications and historic consequences following the emergence on the world scene of the Asian giant.

Edgar Snow managed to go to China with the grudging approval of the State Department though, from the Chinese point of view, this approval was not necessary. He was one of the rare Americans to visit today's China, and it seems he will be the only one for some time to come if the Cold War continues. Negotiations for an exchange of reporters has broken down. Practically the whole world has the right to acknowledge the existence of the Chinese except the "free Americans."

This doesn't mean however that long, detailed, and generally lurid accounts of Chinese life do not appear in the American press. Nor does it mean that the late John Foster Dulles felt even slightly inhibited in summing up Chinese social life as an "ant-hill society." Nor does it mean that Joseph Alsop is in any way hampered by lack of first hand information in publishing sensational charges in the *New York Herald-Tribune* and *Saturday Evening Post* that the entire Chinese nation was rapidly dying of starvation, and that China itself was remorselessly set on a "descending spiral" toward collapse and doom.

Slanders

BOOKS on China by non-Americans are generally more judicious, however similiar their conclusions might turn out to be. They do, however, contribute aspects of Chinese life which, taken together, help to catch something of the changing image of real China. But however useful such books may be to serious students of China, their usefulness is erased, or grossly over-shadowed, by a single lurid article appearing in such mass circulation magazines as *Life.* From just such an article in *Life,* distorting pictures taken in China by Cartier-Bresson, the American people "learned" that China was indeed an ant-heap, that wives were kept separate from husbands in commune barracks, that the work day was 10 and 12 hours

at a stretch, that food rations were on a starvation level, that families were broken up, with children forcefully removed from their mothers, that the communal system had invaded every aspect of social and family life prescribing rigid, military responses on a robot-organized people, etc.

The purpose of such articles, it became plain, was not so much to disillusion Americans in the success of Chinese communism(American had no such illusions); the purpose in showing Chinese communism to be a complete human and social failure, even a monstrous failure, was of course to discredit *all* communism in general, and to cast suspicion on the achievements of the Soviet Union (which *were* believed by the American people).

As is always the case, however, in such attacks on the "enemy" the victim never turns out to be the "enemy" but one's own people. It is not China that is injured by distortions and fabrications about China but the American people. It is in the attempt to save the American people from the worst consequences of the purveyors of the more fantastic of the myths of the Cold War in the field that Edgar Snow's book is of such great value. For he can speak with an authority about China that few others can match. He had the unique advantage of having seen China some 30 years ago in an early stage of development; then he was able to return to it, after the revolution, and thus make comparisons in practical ways not open to many others.

Snow traveled widely through today's China, retracing many of his steps of thirty years ago. Knowing some Chinese, he was not altogether helpless; but he also had the help of friends, of experience, of research, of the mountain of "studies" of Chinese conditions made by numerous universities, out of special giants. In fact, "studying the Chinese" has become a rather stout pillar in the structure of today's academic world. Snow talked to hundreds of Chinese, ranging from the lowest peasant in the field up to Mao Tse-tung hlmself. His general attitude is always one of the skeptical inquirer who knows that he has to confront a hostile public back home with his proof. He is candid about what he considers to be mistakes, shortcomings and errors in Chinese thinking, and he suppresses, one feels a naturalness and warmth in much that he experienced because to express approval would open him to charges of bias—and even worse. In any case. Snow is handicapped in his presentation of Chinease reality because he has to stream-line and domesticate many vital and dangerous political ideas before they can be offered up to an American middle-class public which is notoriously backward in understanding political and social

questions, even when it is able to overcome a "natural" overweening and patronizing attitude toward the "colored' world. In spite of this fact, which forces him to pitch his line of argument sometimes to a rather elementary level, backing and filling as he goes, he manages to give us a panoramic view of contemporary China, not only as the traveler goes but also as the political theorist may go. He does this even though he has to anticipate his denigrators who, he must have guessed, would charge him with having been "brain-washed" by the Chinese; or as one paper was to put it brutally, the Chinese had done a "snow job on him." He says:

> Travel in China provides no magic bag of answers to all those questions. The chief value of an eyewitness report ought to be that it helps to eliminate some elements of fantasy and improbability about ordinary Chinese life and brings its problems onto levels more universally understandable. . . . Absence of an informed public opinion in the international area is perilous in a democracy; it is a necessary check on the behavior or policy makers who may otherwise succumb to military and other pressure groups operating at the administrative level. . . .

He sets out, therefore, to give us, detail by detail, fact by fact, statistic by statistic, conversation by conversation, almost every moment that he spent in China in 1960, with his reactions, thoughts, feelings, speculations all candidly stated with all sources for all opinions revealed, the roots of all conclusions exposed. This obligation to be completely honest is carried perhaps too far, so that we get more repetition, more scrupulous detail, than, at this point in our understanding of China, we really need.

Honest Book

BUT this is an *honest* book. It gives the reader all the evidence he needs to let fly at the author, if that's his aim. But it has all the virtues and positive values of the proud tradition of personal journalism that saw its best days in the American Thirties, and has all but vanished from the scene, certainly from the American scene, with just such notable exceptions as Edgar Snow himself. Naturally, Snow's general political and philosophic point of view must inevitably be what I would call, roughly, the New Deal point of view, a liberal, humanitarian, inescapably optimistic American point of view with an irrepressible belief in the possibility of the progress and development of humanity. For, despite all of Snow's *Realpolitik*

analysis of the realties between America and China and China and the USSR—attitudes toward politics which normally positivist Americans have had to learn the hard way—Snow winds up his study of China, which inevitably becomes also a study of the future of America, with a hopeful political program. This program is an extension of the New Deal thinking of the war years, aimed at establishing the political climate in the United States that must, eventually, be established if the world is to avoid war and survive to fulfill its logical destiny.

Snow reports China on several levels. There is the first and obvious level: a straight-forward description of his trip around China, visiting factories, mines, schools, hospitals, communes, etc., recording impressions, conversations, questions and answers, and conclusions, solid, tentative or speculative. Sometimes episodes are described in far too much detail, become repetitive, tend to read like the very minutes of a report—and yet for all that or because of that, convince the reader all the more.

He also serves the reader on a second level—as historian and recapitulator of the main forces which conspired (if one can use the word)—to produce the revolution which brought China to the approaches of communism. He shows that these forces were historically overwhelming, over-riding all efforts, including the American, to stem or divert them or suppress them. China, of course, was not "lost" by the fumbling of some New Deal bleeding hearts and egg heads in the State Department. It went socialist because irrepressible forces drove the people to that end.

He gives us also a recapitulation, with his own critical views, of the main ideas governing Chinese education, reform of criminals, elimination of crime, of slums, prostitution, the meaning of the communes, a bit about art and literature, etc.

The book also includes a passage giving the reader the salient, though not well-known, facts about the dirty war in Vietnam, where he had been a witness to the triumph of the Vietminh after 1945, and proves to the satisfaction of any reasonable person why the Americans will lose that attempt to cow and jail an entire nation, just as the French before them did, the Japanese, the Chiang-Kai-shek Chinese, and even before them the many emporers from imperial China down all the centuries.

He goes into some detail, with his own rather canny speculations included, into the reasons for friction and controversy between China and the Soviet Union, and gives hard evidence for his conclusion that, no matter how abrasive the differences at the moment, these two revolutionary giants will not bring matters to a split. What unites them is far greater than what disunites them; their mutual need over-rides all other considerations.

Snow concisely presents the Chinese point of view (including quoting at great length Chou En-lai's expression of it, on just about every crucial question at issue between China and the United States, ranging from China's attitude toward the occupation of Taiwan, down to China's attitude toward having American correspondents come to China in exchange for Chinese correspondents going to America. At the same time, it is his conviction that, though Americans know dangerously little about the actual state of affairs and thinking in China, the Chinese also know terribly little about the real America, most of which escapes what Snow considers to be their Marxist stereotyped vision. He does concede however that, as far as the Chinese are concerned, the only America they directly experience is the America of guns, bombs, and death.

But he is convinced that the Chinese looking at America through Marxist-distorted glasses see America as being too helplessly in the grip of "imperialism," whereas the truth, as he sees it, is more complicated than that. He believes that the real America of the people is loyal to democratic concepts, is instinctively anti-imperialist, at least in the old colonial sense, and given the truth will find the way to a just peace and friendly relationship with all nations, including the Chinese.

Pragmatic Optimism

IN fact, his hopes for the future of the world are based precisely on his belief in the intelligence and fair-mindedness of the majority of the American people—outside their congressmen and the "military-industrial complex" — who do not need war or colonies to realize their great democratic and industrial potential. Snow tends to belittle or overlook altogether objective social forces operating in history in general and certainly in America in particular. His pragmatic optimism, so typically American, does not function via mass struggles and class collisions toward its desirable goal. For Snow, the "military-industrial complex" is an abnormal growth upon the body politic, which can be excised or cauterized or modified in one way or another. He does not see it as the heart of the problem; nor does he seem to see American post-war expansion as integral to the economic and political system, but almost as though it were some aberration, not so much designed as discovered. For Snow the American workingclass does not exist as a potentially decisive lever in rearranging the American social scene.

It is in fact Snow's general skepticism toward social forces, and how they operate, that tends to weaken the fibre of his narrative, in my opinion. He refers in his look at Chinese-Soviet relations only in cold-turkey terms of naked self-interest, of only an old atavism reasserting itself, now in a "Marxist" context. But behind the phrases of Marx, Engels and Lenin he discerns the familiar old forces of Russian czarist chauvinism, and Chinese xenophobia, Great-Wall thinking, and latter day massively-awakened Chinese national consiousness coming into collision—or at least threatening to.

Little Truth

HE puts little faith in protestations from both sides that each holds "proletarian internationalism" as sacred, that Marxism-Leninism forbids nationalism in relations between socialist countries, that neither has given up the aim and hope of establishing—or at least encouraging—socialism the world over, though differing in the means. For him Khrushchev tends to *be* Russia, and Mao Tse-tung, China, though he is never so naive as to limit the collossal developments of our era to the whims, fancies or ambitions of this or that powerful personality. Still he seems not to give sufficient weight, in my opinion, to what is quite new in world affairs since the October revolution in 1917, which began it all, but which entered its contemporary complex period only with the triumph of socialism in the rest of the world.

Regardless of nationalist flare-ups in this or that country—long after perhaps one had believed the fires to have been extinguished—the entire flow and direction of events has been toward eliminating nationalism as a decisive factor in relations between socialist states. This is by no means a concluded development; it is a process with many wrinkles, crimps and knots to be smoothed out. But, in general, the uneven development of nations toward socialism tends to even out, and the mutual economic need of what were yesterday's backward nations, now socialist, is an irresistable force driving toward general unity, even though other differences are not altogeher eliminated, and some differences are even encouraged.

Also, one other factor ought to be noted: and that is the moral force of what might be called the conscious awareness of and commitment to socialist principles now held by millions of people in almost every country in the world. They too are a powerful moral and material force, tempered and matured in decades of remorseless struggle. Their allegiance to socialist principles represents a world socialist moral force that no Marxist can afford to ignore or slight. Free of traditional prejudices, superstitions, and bourgeois ideas, they possess scientific standards by which sorties into nationalism, chauvinism, dogmatism and its twin, revisionism, are estimated and judged. They represent an international world opinion which acts as a guarantee that no nation, no leader, no party will take a backward road, or place in jeopardy, for subjective reasons, the tremendous victories of world humanity at the cost of such colossal suffering and sacrifice.

Snow does not see things quite this way. But without this force, his enlightened public would remain helpless, no matter how well-informed as to the facts it might be. However, it is not necessary to agree with Snow's interpretations of political events or his particular ideas for the future to have a full appreciation of the service this book renders a public so starved for judicious information about the great unknown, still-undiscovered far Cathay whose impact upon our world, already sharp, will no doubt become even sharper with the passing of time, and not so much time at that.

Snow, like many other serious human beings, does not "take sides" or try to promote a particular view of the world through Chinese political ideas, no matter how sympathetic he may be to China's just aspirations, and certainly her right to grow and develop her full potentialities without outside interference. In fact, he seems to differ quite definitely with some of the ideas expressed by Chinese spokesmen, especially what seems to be the Chinese under-estimation of the danger that a world atomic holocaust would hold, not only for capitalism, but for socialism as well.

But he is chiefly concerned with China's meaning to America. America confronts China at many crucial points. Chinese have killed Americans in Korea and Americans have killed Chinese. American planes fly over the Chinese mainland almost daily. Any invasion of China would be launched on U.S. ships. At the Indian border, China meets America once again—and so on, including the U.S.'s adamant refusal to sanction China's entry into the UN.

It is therefore highly important to every American to understand China, and Edgar Snow's book goes a long way toward bringing any honest American closer to that understanding. This is a fine, honest book, almost encyclopedic in range, and should be read by all.

—Phillip Bonosky

COMMUNICATIONS

Dear Editors:

The following letters are in response to a review of The Collected Poems of Arturo Giovannitti *by Leslie Woolf Hedley in our December issue. The first letter implies that Mr. Hedley's review reflects the politics of our magazine. We asked Mr. Hedley to review the book because we think he is a trenchant critic but his opinions are his, not the magazine's. The letter we received from Mr. Lowenfels, one of our Contributing Editors, on the same review clearly shows that we, or our writers, do not adhere to some political policy which prevents us from looking honestly at Mr. Giovannitti's poetry. Our intentions, in reviewing the book, were of the best. But we do not dictate to our reviewers. We might point out, incidentally, that the "paltry two columns" which the first letter-writter complains about compare very favorably in length with the silent treatment that the volume had received in most of the bourgeois press.* (Ed.)

I never thought I would read such a callous and mechanical review as Leslie Woolf Hedley's review of "The Collected Poems of Arturo Giovannitti" in your December '62 issue. No one reading his review would have any desire to invest four dollars for as Hedley puts it, "those moments which are incontestably enough." Happily, I bought the book before reading *Mainstream* and the volume now stands beside my favorite poetry books. Giovannitti can offer a great deal to modern audiences. His book is not a short story or even a novel but a book of poems. It is the work of a lifetime of a man who loved people and loved the labor movement and hated war; a man who had the courage of his convictions. If *Mainstream* writers have different political views from those of Giovannitti they do not annul his artistic achievement. The poet deserves more space in *Mainstream* than the paltry two columns provided him.

Hedley titles his review "East Coast Joe Hill" thereby showing his own insensitivity and damaging the artist at the very beginning. Any examination will show that the only similarity in the work of the two artists is an emphasis on the subject of labor supported by a similar political outlook. Compared to Giovannitti, Hill was a writer of jingles. Giovannitti was armed with tools that a "folk" artist does not have, mainly a great command of the English language. Because of his careful choice of words his lines are very rich in imagery and extremely intense. I quote Anniversary IV one of the shortest poems and one which Hedley likes.

When dusk prolongs the agony of light
On bowed hills, and prostrate shadows creep
Up the pavillioned stairway of the night;

When nothing is awake or dares to sleep
For fear of death, save love that broods and stares,
And clouds hold back their rain, and you can't weep;

If I but catch your eyes and unawares
Your lips twitch with the sobs of our lost years.
Your smile then opens like the book of prayers
In which my mother kept her secret tears.

Is this a poem of limited ability? Is it embarrassing romanticism? Anarchistic idealism? And the rest of the stuff Hedley so generously fiings? Hedley is obsessed with labeling and catagorizing, but Giovannitti's poems can only be assessed by thorough analysis which consists of many things more than dumping them in "the unique historical era in which they were produced." If each era does not have its uniqueness then history must repeat itself.

In the above poem we have an example of classic form. With a juxtaposition of opposite images in the first six lines Giovannitti catches the underlying thread in the next two and brings them all to a climax, a psychological transformation in the last two. The extremes and violence of the first six lines contrast with the delicacy and tenderness of the last four. And each line is alive by itself. There is a dazzling color and searing heat in them.

The poem is a miniature gem and as such cannot show the full scope of Giovannitti's art. It does however, show much of his personal style.

There are too many poems of like quality and in grander forms to list here and others with weaknesses. But those who have not lost this ability to feel openly will find that they are carried aloft on the thundering wings of Giovannitti's thought. He is a friend and ally and we should spread the word.

It would be a good thing if Mr. Hedley were more careful with the labor of artists—especially working class artists.

Sincerely Yours,
Lawrence Lynton

* * *

Dear Leslie:

We differ about Giovannitti in this respect: I think he is a major poet who writes a lot of minor poems. What you are criticizing is his critical judgement for including so many secondary pieces in his Collected Poems.

The English critic, Arthur Symons, wrote that if a person wrote one piece that counts, then he counts, and his entire career is of interest: ". . . The critic concerns himself only with such as do exist . . . it may be for a single book out of many books, a single poem out of many volumes of verse. . . . No perfect thing is too small for eternal recollection."

You single out "The Walker." I would add "When the Cock Crows," and perhaps one or two other poems, and say these qualify Giovannitti as an important poet.

You say that with him, "it is inappropriate to apply literary standards." What is needed, I am suggesting, is the standard Symons has defined. On that scale you do not necessarily judge a writer by the average level of his entire work, but by his best.

In my eyes you contradict yourself when you say a minor poet can write one enduring poem. This is not a quibble over terminology. I am going to bat for Giovannitti because I think that at best he brings into American writing the passion, clarity and simplicity of Dante—a writer whom he knew from childhood, and almost every Italian school child does.

The critical problem we are both avoiding is what led a man who wrote several major poems to preserve so much second rate stuff. As far as readers go, their answer is to read only the best. And that will continue to make Giovannitti live for others, as for us.

Fraternally
Walter Lowenfels

off the record

Songs of Ewan MacColl

The new British songs teem with the dignity of work, and the dignity of the laboring man; they are full of contempt for ruling class politicians and full of scorn for blackleg labor leaders.

Gordon Friesen, Mainstream, Dec. 1962

Sometimes a song is a protest against the misuse of power and sometimes it is an affirmation of the singer's belief in humanity. It can be all of these things and it can be a cry out of the night, a savage cry compounded of hatred, bitterness, and dispair. Poverty and humiliation have made our people familiar with these emotions and if many of our songs are violent then that is because life can be violent too.

Ewan MacColl, Preface to Personal Choice

ALTHOUGH Gordon Friesen was writing of the "new" British topical songs and Ewan MacColl of traditional Scot ballads, the likeness of their thoughts point out both the dominant influence of traditional Scottish folk music and the new wave of British protest songs, and that these songs come largely from the working class and its experience. The heart of topical singing in England is with the Scot and Welsh workers. The leading personality of this "revival," Ewan MacColl, earned his living as a construction worker, garage hand and union organizer before becoming a professional singer and composer.

In *Personal Choice of Scottish Folksongs and Ballads* and *The Shuttle and the Cage* (available in the U.S. from Hargail Music Press, 130 West 56th, New York 19) Ewan MacColl has edited a masterful collection of Scot country and industrial ballads. The collections, in MacColl's own words, are made "for singers" with a simple melody line with easy guitar chords where applicable; many of the songs are arranged as is traditional, without accompaniment. Although these are excellent collections, their effectiveness is hampered by the absence of background notes for the songs, many of which have references and words that are unfamiliar to the U.S. audience.

Supplement

AN excellent supplement to these books is *Ewan MacColl Sings British Industrial Ballads* (Vanguard VRS-9090) and *The Best of Ewan MacColl* (Prestige/International 13004). Both records reveal the deep power of

the songs found in the collections and the amazing sensitivity and flexible power of Ewan MacColl's voice. Whether he sings an unaccompanied Child Ballad like "The Shepherd Lad" or a hardy whaling song like "The Bonny Ship the Diamond" with Alf Edwards' ocarena and Peggy Seeger's banjo, his voice and his feelings for the songs enable MacColl to bring their full beauty forward. "The Card Song" has all the exuberance of a drinker well down on his eighth pint of ale, and "Farewell to Tarwathie" has the softness and longing of a man for his love and home while hunting the whale in the dangerous Greenland waters.

British Industrial Ballads, accompanied in good taste by Peggy Seeger, covers a more limited range of British song, but the depth of material is still there as is MacColl's skilled interpretation. Many of the songs were written by MacColl and have traditional Irish and Scot melodies as "champion at Keepin 'em Rolling," and "Twenty-One Years." Some like "The Collier Laddie" and "The Calton Weaver" date back hundreds of years. Taken from the turmoil of the industrial revolution are the sharply class conscious "The Coal Owner and the Pitman's Wife," and "The Durham Strike."

Good Background

THIS Vanguard disc provides a good background for the outstanding work of both Peggy Seeger and Ewan MacColl as folk composers. Many of the tunes found in *Personal Choice* and *The Shuttle and the Cage,* and sung in *British Industrial Ballads* are the tunes used for the songs appearing in *Songs for the* '60's (edited by Seeger and MacColl, Hargail Press) as well as the important Folkways releases, *The New Briton Gazette, Volumes I and II* (FW 8732, FW 8734). The thirty-two songs on these two records, all composed by Ewan MacColl and/or Peggy Seeger, contain the blending of a firm knowledge of American spirituals and mountain ballads transmitted by Peggy Seeger and the Scot musical tradition inherited by Ewan MacColl.

The songs vary in quality but on the whole there is a rare poetry in most of them that ranges from the broad laughter of good will in "Come Fill Up Your Glasses" to the stark horror of a mine cave-in in "The Springhill Disaster," to the terror in the threat of fascism in "The Crooked Cross" to the Spirit of the Aldermaston marching song in "March With Us Today" to the sensitive love of first meeting in "The First Time I Ever Saw Your Face."

When people in U.S. folk music circles breathe strong sighs in hopes that people here could do the song writing that MacColl and Seeger alone produce in Britain, perhaps this is too extreme for we have our own sheaf of songs written by Bob Dylan, Pete Seeger, Gil Turner appearing in *Broadside.* No need to sigh but plenty of need to listen and sing the songs of *New Briton Gazette* for though they come from "New Briton" their power and presentation belong to just about everybody.

—JOSH DUNSON

Oak Publications has just published an exciting new song book— The Ewan MacColl-Peggy Seeger Songbook *at* $1.95.

letters to the editor

"OMAR KHAYYAM"

December 29, 1962

Dear Oakley Johnson:

Are you sure that Omar Khayyam was a force in Uzek literature, that is, in a Turkish literature? His language was Tadjik and Persian, and I understand that Tadjik and Iranian are akin. He came from Chorazan, which is now in Turkmenistan, Afghanistan and Persia. For so far as I know he had little to do with the Uzbeks. He wrote, of course, also in Arabic, which was the learned language of the whole Islamic world. I have an edition of Khayyam's philosohpical and mathematical writings published a few years ago in Stalinabad, which is in Tadjikistan, where they claim him.

Not that it matters very much, but I have written about old Omar, and have connected him with the Tadjiks. Did they tell you another story in Samarkand?

Your article in *Mainstream* is very instructive. You must have enjoyed your stay in that section of the world. Remember how Khrushchev, at the U.N., pointed to these parts of the USSR to show what the USSR means when it speaks of the liquidation of colonialism?

Sincerely, and best wishes for 1963,

DIRK STRUIK

Dear Dirk Struik:

Of course you are right about the linguistic family that Omar Khayyam belonged to. He was a Persian; and the Tadjiks, my dictionary says, were "a people of old Iranian blood," so would be close kin to the Persians. I wouldn't dispute the Tadjiks' claim to Omar as either a literary or linguistic ancestor. After all, both the Tadjik and Persian languages, along with Kurdish, belong to the Indo-European family of languages, while the Uzbek language belongs to an entirely different family, the Ural-Altaic, which includes Turkish, Finnish and Mongolian.

But a great creative writer *could* influence literature in other languages, too, couldn't he, if circumstances were favorable? And there were two opportunities: first, through the Persian, a language that Navoi apparently knew; and also through Arabic, as you say, the learned language of Islam. (And Arabic belongs to still *another* family of languages, the Semitic.)

The matter came up rather casually, while I was visiting the collective cotton-growing farm presided over by Tursunkulov, and listening to radio broadcasts of the sad, sweet songs written by the Uzbek poet, Navoi. My host translated the theme of one of them, and feeling a similarity in their tone with Omar Khayyam, I asked if

the latter (who lived some three centuries earlier) had influenced Navoi. I was assured that he had indeed, "very much," and that Navoi had written in the Persian language. I did not follow up this topic with further questions. And the Uzbeks did not *claim* Omar. Rather, they indicated that he had influenced just about all the national literatures of the Central Asian peoples. Your query, however, suggests many questions I wish—now—that I *had* asked.

But my main regret is that I didn't visit the Tadjiks too—there wasn't time!

Fraternally,
OAKLEY JOHNSON

Letters on Little Magazines

New York

Dear Editors:

I purchased the November, 1962 issue of *Mainstream* because the front cover's mentioning of Little Magazines was too tempting to pass by. I can honestly say I was enormously impressed with the entire issue. Having never read *Mainstream* before, I'm wondering how much I must have missed. The review on E. E. Cummings was really excellent. Comparing Cummings to Chaplin expressed what I was once ridiculed in college for: I'm happy somebody else agrees with me. Two days later I read in the New York Times that *Mainstream* is "subversive" and on someone's list in Washington. This "free" country must be reaching the apogee of its hysteria. Thanks again for a most enjoyable issue.

C. A. G.

San Francisco

Dear Editors:

From what I've read of your little Magazine Symposium in November and December, I must conclude that L. W. Hedley's precise and revealing comments (in the November issue) enter the class heart of the matter, while the other contributors seem either vague or self-centered; and Mike Newberry is defending a bohemianism that is unfruitful and boring.

A very interesting symposium.

A. H.

"THANKS"

New Jersey

Thank you for reminding me to renew my subscription to *Mainstream.* I would not like to lose this little magazine which I have read ever since it was the original *Masses.*

I enclose a nine dollar check for two years. I hope it helps.

With Best Wishes,
E. T.