JANUARY, 1963
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Mainstream

Phillip Bonosky
A LETTER TO MRS. ROOSEVELT

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Sidney Finkelstein
THE FORM AND CONTENT OF ART

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Review of Bernstein's
THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL

The Late Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt.
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Among Our Contributors

Phillip Bonosky was born in Duquesne, Pennsylvania in 1916. His father, a Lithuanian immigrant, worked in the steel mills. Phillip Bonosky graduated high school during the Great Depression. His article tells of the struggles and turmoil of those years.

Sidney Finkelstein holds degrees from the College of the City of New York and Columbia University. His writings on the arts have been published in England, Germany, Japan, Italy, Israel, and in socialist countries. His latest is *Composer and Nation* (International).

Louis Aragon is the distinguished French writer and, although he denies it in his article, critic. His novel, *The Holy Week,* has been translated into English. He is editor of *Les Lettres Francaises.*

Next Month

We will commemorate Negro History Week with an article on an aspect of the Negro liberation movement in the United States. We will also have reviews of new books, including Herbert Aptheker's *American Foreign Policy and the Cold War* and Hyman Lumer's *Is Full Employment Possible?*

A LETTER TO MRS. ROOSEVELT

PHILLIP BONOSKY

THERE was only good Lithuanian sour-dough bread covered with gamey-tasting margerine to eat with water, like a convict, after the main meals of chuck meat and potato soup, that year. Earlier that summer they had brought my older brother, who was then 22, seaman, wanderer, hobo, bouncer, home at last, one leg and one foot off. We carried him, another brother and I, hardly able to hoist his big square body, upstairs to the room from which he wouldn't come down again except on his hands and knees. He would clump up and down, and around the kitchen, with "shoes" fastened on his hands; he who had been so strong, so hearty he was already a legend through town. A Great Lakes seaman, he had hopped freights for Buffalo where he hoped to ship out—and in Altoona had fallen between the cars, and when he came to again one leg was missing below the knee, the other foot was cut across the instep. He scrabbled over to the rails to put his head on the track and finish the job with the next train. A watchman came by instead, his flashlight on his face. "Give me a butt," my brother said.

The year was 1934. It had been a grim year since I graduated from High School twelve months before, delivering the class poem—three sonnets titled "Kings"—with the praise of the High School Superintendant echoing in my ears: "Only once in a generation does one witness such an event. . . ." Two plays had been produced in school; one had so impressed my physics teacher that he had publicly stated, before the numbed class, that "even if this boy never answers another physics question or turns in a blank paper on his exam, I'll pass him anyhow!" Everybody was confident that — as the Commencement speaker would say — the horizons opened wide, the prospects in spite of everything were bright, the world lay ahead . . . *Ad astra per aspera,* said our class motto: To the stars, through the bars!

The mills had been down for two or three years. My father worked exactly 20 days at $3.86 a day that year in the mill—and hung on to his brass check no matter what. With that gone, even 20 days work was over too. President Hoover, before the election, assuring the country that prosperity was just around the corner, had advised the Vets to set up apple stands on those corners, and we saw them, even in our town, shiny red apples, 5 cents apiece, remembering Chateau-Thierry, Belleau Woods, the Marne . . Hinkey-dinkey, parlez-vous. . . .

The Company had informed the workers still on the pay-roll that year, with a certain backlog of service, that their families could come for boxes of groceries distributed at the local Carnegie Free Library. For the first time since good old Andy Carnegie donated a "free library" for the cultural benefit of the workingman, way back before World War I, my father, who used to work 12 hours a day and slept when he should have been reading those books, visited that library at last. Not for a book, but for a cardboard box, which contained a couple of pounds of fat-back, dry beans, potatoes and flour . . . with every item of this grocery list conscientiously entered into ledgers alongside the workers' proper names; and then for years afterwards, cent by cent (interest included) the toll was deducted from my father's wages until it was all paid, and that was one of the reasons why when he stood over my father's body in his coffin years later, the city treasurer could deliver what is the finest of all obituaries for a workingman: "He was an honest man; he paid everybody. . . ."

He paid everybody, he was an honest man, dying with the horrible pain of a disease brought on and aggravated by years of labor. . . . I, who had graduated high in my class, renowned as poet and playwright, took our kid's wagon down to the library, got our rations (and we were lucky), brought them home—then went back to the library and read papers and the magazines, *The Nation, Harpers, Atlantic Monthly, North American Review, Bookman, Survey Graphic, Christian Science Monitor, Forum, American Mercury*. . . .

THAT year my father had long sessions with the silver-haired real estate agent who owned the mortgage on our house (90 per cent of the workers in our town owned their own homes up till the Depression). I remember his coming into our living room where the plaster had begun to fall, the wall-paper hung in long strips, my father dusting a chair, sitting him down and offering him . . . what? A glass of water? The tall, elegant gentleman, with silver-topped cane, had come, not like some Simon Legree, but as a substantial and leading member of the

community. He was not the bank. He wanted to work out some agreements with my father, who always paid, for keeping up payments on the interest of the mortgage until and when work (which was bound to start up again) started up, and he could resume paying back the payments over-due on the principal. And in due time, work did start up; my father did pay up—all of it—and died an honest man with no debts; and the property for which he labored all his life in the end was worth exactly nothing.

That first year after graduation people's clothes began to change bit by bit—from clothes that had some color and style, bought in stores, now more and more often (the children first) people appeared dressed in "relief clothes"—cheap gray cotton pants, thin cotton coats, sweat shirts, badly-made knotty socks and stockings: they were dead give-aways that the family was on relief. . . . Why is it that all those years have for me the color gray, only gray?—though there was summer and white winter too.

Rumors began to rise and fly. We bagan to hear vague talk about "Communists," hunger marches, bonus army marches, and a Catholic priest from Pittsburgh was touring the steel towns with big, brave talk about social justice, echoing the silver voice of Father Coughlin who could be heard on every radio up and down the valleys. . . .

There were rumors of union organizing rising again. But in our town the same mayor who, in 1919 had thrown William Z. Foster into jail for trying to organize the workers, was still in office as he had been ever since the town had become a town decades before. He was a bachelor, rich, mansion-living, president of one of the two banks, brother to one of the richest men in the county, this mayor fought every attempt to organize the workers tooth and nail, police clubs and 30 days in the local hoosegow. . . . "I wouldn't give Jesus Christ himself a license"—and one had to get a license from him personally—"to speak for the AFL in Duquesne," he had told the world, back in 1919. In 1933 and on, he fought the tide, and lost. . . . I watched his police (graft-ridden, corrupt, small-town) arrest speakers who dared to lift their voices. Strange, frightening people (if they were people). "Reds," fresh from Russia with hot orders in their pockets to start a revolution with bomb and fire-brand, were heard of now more frequently; and they stood up in row-boats in the middle of the Monogahela River and harangued the people on the bank with loud-speakers and signs, momentarily out of reach of the cops; they chained themselves to telephone poles in downtown McKeesport. . . .

My brother had taken me from my books, and wearing my only pair

of torn and sewed-up pants, I followed him, half-dragged, down to the Steel Employment Office to register there in the hope that work might pick up one day. I, class poet, dramatist, fortune's fair-haired boy surely, confronted suddenly the class of '33 standing square-toed on the sidewalk outside the office, callow, raw and useless. It was too much to bear, too brutal an end to dreams, to hopes; too abrupt an introduction to the absolute squalid denial of poetry and literature, and instead to become just an ordinary mill worker for the rest of my life, like my unlettered hard-working done-to-death father, and even that not certain. I broke from my brother and ran. . . .

We took to the country that summer, my brother and I, riding the freights, hitch-hiking through the back roads of Maryland and Virginia, listening incredulously to the authentic Southern drawl for the first time outside the minstrel shows, and seeing everywhere, everywhere the Negro—there he was on the landscape, among the green-growing corn, bent over weeds, Southern in body and soul and unknown in his quiet uncommunicativeness to us who knew the northern Negro boys, fierce and bold. That summer I learned how to beg—or, the word for it was to panhandle.

Because I was younger than my brother, and therefore figuring that my childish face was more appealing and moving, my brother sent me up to the back doors of the farm houses, past barking dogs, to knock on the unpainted doors and say to the woman appearing indistinctly behind the screen: "'Have you any work to do for a meal?"

"Why, just you sit right down there—" I remember this woman saying. Yellow biscuits and bacon on a plate on the porch steps, with the dog sniffing there too, wondering how to slip something into my pockets to take back to my brother waiting out of sight down the road. Finally saying: "My brother is back there—" "Ask him to come—" He came jogging up and we ate biscuits (he hid a couple for the future) and curled bacon, with her nice Southern voice, and no work for us to do. . . .

It was dusty hot, and the freights bucked like mad broncos and coal grit from the engines got into your eyes. You couldn't sit, you couldn't stand. We saw brilliant and blinding Washington, Baltimore with its white stoops, and going to the employment office of Montgomery and Ward (where rumor had it they were hiring) finding not only the gates closed and padlocked, but grass growing up through the cracks of the sidewalk leading to the sealed, crusted-window office door!

Finally we know that the whole country was down and out, and we came back again, the thunderstorm over our heads crashing at last and dropping rain on our heads as we ran the last miles home.

That winter—nothing. Then I wrote a letter to Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt.

The papers had given accounts of her personal interest, especially in the youth of the nation, and said that she invited letters from anybody who had a problem, and she promised to answer. In my letter to her, composed in a self-conscious, deprecating style, I pointed out that here I was, a 17-year-old boy who had graduated from High School with rather signal honors, was class poet, wanted very badly to go to college, was willing to work to pay for my tuition, but my parents couldn't afford to keep me in clothes let alone send me to school. What could she do for me? Respectfully yours. . . .

I HAD journied to Pittsburgh one day to take a competitive scholarship exam that Carnegie University was giving, but the all-day exam (with no lunch, at least I had no lunch) was so heavily weighted with mathematical questions that all I got from it was a throbbing head. I had debated with my algebra teacher in High School the "use" of algebra to anybody, and he had said, it taught you to think. "Only in algebra," was my answer; and I had no ambition to think in algebra. Unhappily thinking in rhyme or free verse didn't help either.

Months passed. The letter had either not arrived, or been lost in the shuffle, or was of no interest to her, I decided. I took a night class in a McKeesport High School set up for unemployed teachers, and walked in the cold winter nights three or four miles over dark hills and across the big bridge to McKeesport to study German from a German woman who sighed and said: "I think Hitler is a good man, and he wants to do the best for Germany. . . ."

It wasn't the first time I'd heard the name of Hitler. It was, however, the first time I'd gotten a glimpse into the mind and soul of an unemployed German lower middle-class type who would see in Hitler a savior and nothing—nothing at all—would convince them that the smell that came on the air was the smell of burning bodies. Five miles from lovely Weimar (as I would myself see years later) was Buchenwald, and the smoke from Buchenwald surely reached the nostrils of the German burghers in that lovely town where Goethe and Schiller lay buried?

Ominous reports from Germany described book-burnings, Jew-baiting, and the great Reichstag Trial burst on us with the name of Dmitrov reaching even our ears, with the names of Goering and Goebbels and Van der Lubbe. . . . Hoover, who had been hit with rotten eggs when he showed up in McKeesport, was gone. The air was soon to be filled with "alphabet soup": NRA, CWA, WPA, CCC, AAA. The New Deal prom-

ised by the new president did come: soon men, "leaning on their shovels" would "boondoggle" hundreds of new schools, hospitals, thousands of miles of roads, post offices and public buildings, into being. For that they would be cursed and slandered daily and hourly by the national press, which in our part of the world, belonged to Hearst, Scripps-Howard and Block, and locally to the Steel Company. In the teeth of this slander and class hatred, the demoralized and desperate unemployed saw in "that man" Roosevelt, and therefore in his wife, also to be vituperatively and obscenely attacked when she was living by the same papers that praise her now she is dead, their hope and inspiration. Roosevelt's face would become familiar in every household. In some strange way, this scion of wealth had become a people's hero; and many years later, Mrs. Roosevelt, answering attacks on the New Deal as being "Communist," stated—what was enough of the truth—that it was her husband and his program that saved capitalism from Communism in those desperate days. The March coast-to-coast demonstration of unemployed called by the Communist Party in 1933 was more than a straw in the wind—it began to mark the beginning of a hurricane.

I've forgotten whether the worthy who delivered our commencement address had told us, as all preceding classes had solemnly been told, that "commencement" meant the beginning of education and not the end. But that was exactly what was happening that year: school for all America had begun in earnest. We were to start learning the realities of our country and our people, and our generation became one of those pivotal generations that come, in periods of crisis, and "teach" both the older generation as well as the younger. They taught their fathers and they taught their sons: for what they learned between 1929-1941 was the truth.

It was strange to see the ruling class on the defensive. That there was a "ruling class" we learned with bitter point; and those who deny the fact have never seen a bread-line, nor thousands of workers rioting to get a dozen jobs, or the cops raising fountains of blood out of ex-service men's heads (as on Anacostia Flats), or workers in Alliquippa, Republic Steel at Chicago, Gary, Braddock, the Ohio steel towns and coaltowns. They say this is all over now; one must forget it; and I say it is not; and one must not forget it—boys died in Korea and South Vietnam and will perhaps still die in Cuba: it's the same war, the same blood . . . to keep the same class in power. When all the gaudy covering is stripped from the package, that is the truth that is there now as before.

The economy which had been rigged to benefit one class did not benefit the other class: and when, as was inevitable, it came to a catastrophic halt, beyond control of those whose hands were presumably on the controls, whose mad whirl on the blood and bones of the slaughtered World War I had lit the American horizon like a garish Babylon during the Twenties—when it stopped, the "great engineer" in the White House, "the greatest secretary of the Treasury since Hamilton," Andrew Mellon (whose family owned Western Pennsylvania lock, stock and pork barrel) and all their advisors, and "park bench philosophers" didn't know what to do with the great instrument in their hands. They could only suggest to the working people that they "wait"; times would pick up; what work there was should be spread out and shared—a kind of socialism of misery. Workers should intensify their search for the non-existent job, save more, work harder, pray oftener, but they must never expect "hand-outs" from the government, they should stoutly refuse the whole concept of the dole as undermining their characters, and they should devote more time and energy to cultivating the qualities of frugality, industry . . . and patience until the great men at the top solved the thing for them. Then, as now, every crisis in the capitalist economy was "resolved" at the expense of the workers, who always carried the burden, paid for it with their skins, who postponed living until they were safely tucked away in their graves. Those who blundered so badly, whose greed was so enormous, whose cynicism was boundless, who fed off the dead and the hungry: these Liberty League 'economic royalists' (as Roosevelt was to dub them), so instinctively hated by the people, have since been gilded into golden images of philanthropy and patrons of the arts, so that a Rockefeller (these Ludlow Massacre experts who once used to keep discretely out of the public eye) and a Harriman (whose forebears stole the railroads) now brazenly move in to run the country openly as once they did by proxies.

ONE day the mailman dropped a letter into our mail-box whose return address was the White House. I opened it with burning cheeks—of shame and excitement; shame because I had sent what seemed to me now a begging letter, and excitement because of the possibility that what I had begged for had been granted.

It was a fairly long letter, signed by Mrs. Roosevelt herself. She told me how moved she had been by the story I told her, that I should not lose heart, I was young, the world was before me, many youth were in the same plight, the government would help, and although she could do nothing about getting me into college (I should try for scholarships), she did have a suggestion: why didn't I apply for the Civilian Conservation Corps, then known as the CCC?

I laughed—more at myself than at the advice. I had been desperate but also naive. I should have known that we children of steel-workers and coal-miners were not scheduled for the benefits of society. Our job was to give our lives to the children of others—we should work to send *them* to college (like the law student I was soon to meet with his pig-skin suitcase and empty-headed but loud-mouthed slogans). The two top students of my graduating class were sons of the small middle-class of our town. One was to receive $5,000 when he became 21—and property too. He went to college, then into the local bank—and then into the ministry. The other—a Jew—told me years later that his father had rented an empty store-room to the local committee trying to unionize the steeel-workers, but cancelled it when the Company put pressure on him. He went through college, and became an embittered "bright boy" who tried to destroy his entire past of school honors which he came to view as a cruel hoax played on him by society.

A stretch in the CCC lasted two years. You had to be 18 to get in; I would be 20 when I got out (I was only 17 at the moment). And then what? Most of the money that the CCC boys earned was sent home to parents who used it to pay for living. So when I got out of the CCC's, I'd be in the same—no, worse boat; for if I was to get to college it would have to be in the next year, and the longer that was put off the less chance there would be. It looked bad. Never did a talent for poetry and prose seem more hopeless; never did a backlog of independent reading (so dear to the hearts of college professors) nor the discovery of Whitman (about whom I wrote my school term paper) seem more useless; never had poring over the works of Kant, Schopenhauer, Neitszche, Descartes, Plato, Hegel (whoever came to hand as a philosopher) in the desperate search for answers, seemed more futile.

I had read the philosophers, who sat in dust-rimmed rows in the local library, in the notion that surely philosophers could supply the answer to poverty and injustice, and that if only people could be persuaded to agree to a rational life in which everyone would help everyone, the world would quickly right itself, life would become finer, more generous, less grim. No more poverty, no war. Since nobody wanted poverty or war, surely a way existed on which all—or the majority—could agree to abolish these two scourges? The sentimental, didactic tales I'd read as a child, the concepts I'd taken in from church and school, the general ideas of democracy which were in everybody's school kit all seemed to agree that the aim and desire of human beings was for a juster social arrangement. If that was so, if it was truly the unanimous wish of the people, why then didn't people go about *doing* it?

Like most people I believed that a man was a man for all that, including those in power, and endowed with human traits and souls which, in their very nature, recoiled from oppression, cruelty, murder. I knew that rich and poor existed, but, like Dickens, I believed, more or less, that appeals to the conscience of the rich would be enough to extract, like honey from the bee, justice. How could I then know that injustice to me and mine would be their definition of justice to themselves? It was the story of the wolf and the sheep: the "freedom" of the wolf was to eat the sheep! How kind the working-class is, and how forgiving, long-suffering and forebearing. They will endure everything long after their oppressors believe they will. Their patience and long endurance, however, it turns out, is not due to their God-given meekness—as I would discover again and knew in my bones. It was due to something else much simpler—the political organization, equipped with leaders and ideas aimed at victory and knowing how to go about getting it—was missing; and to keep it "missing" from the American working-class has been the dedication, obsession and monumental labor of an army of intellectual mystifiers, Judas goats and provacateurs all down the years since the first man labored to make another man rich from his labor.

Mrs. Roosevelt was certainly from their class, though not a typical member; and yet when I sent for bread I received after all no more than a stone. Where was poetry? In any case, her advice to join the CCC was premature. You had to be 18, and I wasn't yet. But there was no hope of any kind anywhere else. So one day I marched down to the Welfare Office determined to get into the CCC's by adding a year on my age. I'd say—I rehearsed myself—that I was already 18; that would do it. And, standing before the social worker, who, after getting my name and address, asked me the *year* I was born—all my rehearsed lines flew out of my head. I paid now for not learning how to think in—not algebra—but in simple arithmetic; for in my confusion I added the year to my birth year, which instead of making me older made me younger than I really was. The date I gave her made me 16, not 18. She shook her head.

More desperate than ever, I told her the real truth and begged her to forget the letter of the law, I had to get out of the trap I was in, what difference did a year make? No—she shook her head— for her the letter of the law was its spirit too. I should come back in a year—with by birth certificate.

THAT year, in whch I waited to become 18, was a grim year—but also exciting. The NRA Blue Eagles bloomed in every store window; new and dynamic personalities came on the national scene, like the

hard-drinking, swash-buckling General Johnson, who headed the NRA (National Recovery Act), tossing his dead cats at all and sundry. His aim was to organize the industries of the nation into a kind of corporate version so successful then in Italy under Mussolini; it was the uneasy forerunner of a tendency tagged then by the Left as fascist. However, the NRA contained Section 7-a, which stated that workers had the right to organize into unions of their own choosing (included then as a purely formal statement). This potentially explosive section was not at first fully understood by the workers. It was understood by the employers. One day my father came home with a printed booklet issued by the steel company. It was hard to believe my eyes. The booklet stated that, in accordance with the government-established right of workers to organize into unions of their own choosing, such a union indeed was to be organized, according to a plan called the Employees Representation Plan, and the corporation, always law-abiding, was cooperating fully with the NRA. The Plan outlined in detail just how the employees should go about getting represented. It was, of course, the early version of the company unions, which then were organized up and down the valleys and around the country, and later some of the officers and militants of the company union would become the core of SWOC—Steel Workers Organizing Committee—that broke the company unions and established the CIO in steel. The ERP confined itself to describing the function of a union very much as "unions" were already functioning in fascist Italy and later as they are supposed to function in Franco's Spain. It was all very neat; very higher-echelon thinking. Many workers were taken in by it. It is to the undying credit of the Communists of the time who saw through the pretenses to the deluding core of it and exposed it to the workers. They attacked the company unions not only from the outside, but from the inside as well, as I would learn.

One day, in that big red library that was my refuge and home, I came across an anthology by Eda Lou Walton. It was an anthology of social documents, considered as literature, ranging all the way (if I remember correctly) from Plato to Rousseau to Jefferson. But also included, as part of history, were the opening passages of the *Communist Manifesto* by those two often referred to, and invariably cursed, but never by me directly encountered writers: Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. Their names had been present everywhere in my reading; but never could I find the men themselves until this moment. I had chased them down all kinds of years through the sanctified philosophers who distilled the wisdom of the ages—I had plugged my way through three or four feet of Dr. Eliot's Five Foot Shelf of the world's masterpieces—and had only

callouses on my brain to show for it. Now here, as simple and vivid and passionate as truth always is, reading literally as I ran (for I'd opened the book walking home from the library and had started to read—then I ran to get home) my brain came into contact, with nothing between, no screen of interpretation or exegesis, with those immortal words: "The history of all hitherto ersting society is the history of class struggle. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed. . . ." It had opened with the cry: "A Spectre is haunting Europe—the Spectre of Communism. . . ."

At last I had found myself and my world listed in the annals of history endowed with a great, stupendous, thrilling destiny in which the freedom of our class was the condition for the freedom of all mankind—the lifting of the darkness of ages from the brains of the downtrodden, the injured and insulted, the "man with the hoe," the class that had nothing to lose but its chains, and a world to win.

That day ended my tortured reading of the philosophers who threatened to twist my teen-aged brain out of shape altogether. I had no natural interest or liking for abstract thought (all creative writers think concretely in images); I had a lamentable weakness in mathematics. I was interested in man and society: and neither algebra nor "history" nor philosophy nor religion shed very much light on man and society. But these two men did. When I consider the attempt by the U.S. government to jail these two men all over again (as was first tried in Imperial Germany, then fascist Germany, then Adenauer Germany) in our times —over a hundred years since they wrote these words—I marvel at the power of truth and the powerlessness of lies. Lies can jail, murder, kill, destroy—but they cannot create. In the end, it is the creators who always win out, for they are instinct with the desire of humanity to survive. As for the non-creators, however they perfume it, it is death and rot they are dealing with.

No job showed its head over the horizon all that year. March came and went—I was now eighteen. I went to the church where I had been baptized and got my baptismal certificate; took it with me once again to the Welfare Office.

But in the meantime, something ominous had been happening. When I was 10 years old I fell desperately ill with osteomylitis and, absolutely convinced that it was the end, my father took me to a hospital in Pittsburgh, 12 miles by taxi-cab (think of it); the trip cost $4—a whole day's wage. It cost him many hundreds of dollars in hospital bills, and later the cost of my illness was to become a threat to our home when the Depression broke. He forced the hospital then to accept

me as a charity patient (for the attacks kept coming year by year), even though hospitals refused charity cases unless and until all outstanding property or personal wealth had been first disposed of and the parent had applied for welfare relief. In any case, a "child" meant to be 14 or under, and I had gotten into the hospital at the illegal age of 16 by swearing that I was only 14 (fever burning me up as I swore), and the doctor, examining my advanced puberty, looking askance but saying nothing. I stole that hospital care and the operation that was part of it.

Now, two years later, osteomylitis of the hip and arm had returned, exactly at the wrong moment. The symptoms were unmistakable: pain in the hip, difficulty in walking, swelling, pain, more pain, fever, the abscess rising from the narrow of my bone and eating its way to the surface.

I couldn't have been more wretchedly unlucky, it seemed to me. I *had* to get into the CCC's: that was my last hope. Living at home was impossible. My older brother had taken to the road; another was a cripple; a younger brother had run away to sea. A sister was working in a hospital: two other brothers and a sister were too young to leave home. Only I hung around—big, able, an eater—always reading, getting nowhere, being nothing. At least in the CCC's I'd be taken care of for two years, out in the healthy woods, planting saplings, repairing soil erosion, protecting wild life. . .

I decided I'd bluff my way through. My baptismal certificate was in order. This time the social worker passed me. I left for Pittsburgh with my last ten cents. I didn't expect to need fare back. There, at Pittsburgh, along with dozens of other not-yet-cannon-fodder working-class boys, I was paraded before a battery of doctors around a big room, naked and chilled, with those sated eyes passing us by unless we were missing a foot or a hand. The abscess had grown in my inside hip; there was a distinct but as yet not quite definite swelling there. When I came to the doctor who inspected us for syphylis and gonorrhea, he looked at me casually and said: "What's that?" I began to stammer. "Blue balls?" I didn't know what "blue balls" was but it sounded unfatal to my chances and so I nodded, yes. He flipped me past. Much later I learned that "blue balls" (bubo) was an aspect of gonorrhea which he had diagnosed so inexpertly; he had given me a disease I really hadn't earned, but I was grateful to him in any case.

For I had passed—something I couldn't do in those exams for a scholarship that I'd wanted so much. Blue balls had done it for me! No wonder I was happy.

I piled into trains, that looked like troop trains, with hundreds of other boys my own age, and we set out for Fort Meade, Maryland, at the great army sorting-out station. We rode all night. By morning I was already half-dead. The fever had mounted; the abscess had risen, and I could hardly walk. The pain was relentless. But, at least I consoled myself, I was now in the CCC. Mrs. Roosevelt was right: that was where I belonged, and I was now the problem of the government who would have to take care of me. For my aim had shifted. It wasn't the woods I wanted; I was scheming for a hospital bed.

We dropped out of the train at bleak dawn. Sergeants from the army lined us up and we marched. I had not expected a two-three mile quick-trot through the countryside when I could scarcely stand. How did I ever make it in fever and pain? Desperation drove me on; nothing else. I was determined to last until I got to camp, until I was sure I was in, and then I'd go to the doctor and tell him what the real trouble was, and then I'd let it come down, I wouldn't care.

Four of us were billeted in an army tent together—young boys, full of talk, jokes, each one of us fresh out of a home full of misery. Next day we lined up, took the oath of allegiance, were issued mess tins, ate—and then were told that we were to stand physical inspection once again. This time my heart sank. This time there was no chance of faking it; the swelling was big and raw, I could scarcely walk, my fever was visibly in my face. I decided to throw myself on the mercy of the doctors. Technically I belonged to the CCC and they were now responsible for me, I would argue. I was certain that, seeing me, any doctor would immediately order me to bed and operate—as had been the case, at this stage, already three or four times in various hospitals. Osteomylitis—a disease of the marrow of the bone not normally associated with good living and good food. No cure for it then. Chronic.

I WAS sure, in the heightened clarity of fever, like the pathetic heroes of Dickens' novels (and illness returns one to childhood) my desperate plight would move any doctor's heart. So, almost happy that the problem was now solved, I undressed (my mind light) and the first doctor who looked at me cried, "What's that?"

"Osteomylitis."

I was yanked out of the line. Another doctor came and looked me over and said: "You shouldn't have come with that here. You'll have to go back home."

"Home?" It was a blow. "But I can't go home—I'm sick, I've got a fever—"

"You can't expect the government to assume any responsibility—"

"But I can't make that all-day, half-the-night ride sitting up on a train!"

He looked bureaucratically down at me, the non-seeing glaze coming over his eyes. He had caught me red-handed trying to steal from the government. There was no appeal from him.

"Can't you just put me into a hospital here," I argued with him, "operate—drain me—pack it up—(I was an expert by now)—and then send me home?"

No use. I was caught. Two weeks earlier and I could have got by; but it was two weeks too late. I returned to my tent, repacked my wordly belongings, a tooth-brush, a safety-razor, a pair of socks, a book....

The long ride up through Maryland, Delaware, across Pennsylvania to Pittsburgh was a long nightmare. But I remember a young man sitting down beside me and talking—he talked all the way across the state, confiding among other things that he was a law student, though the Depression had brought some difficulties; he was ambitious, opinionated, caressed a new pig-skin bag with his eyes, and told me how, among other victories of his witty life, he had crushed a "communist speaker" on a street corner with the withering demand: "Why don't you go back to Russia where you came from?"

All the while he talked I was wondering what I could do when I hit Pittsburgh, for I didn't have the ten cents for street-car fare to ride the 12 miles home. To start panhandling on the streets of Pittsburgh around midnight, which was when we were due, in my condition wasn't a cheerful prospect. Finally, more out of wanting to get even with the ego that kept pouring self-adoring words into my ears, just as he was leaving at his station clutching his bag to his chest like a lover, I told him I'd lost my car-fare home and could he, brother, spare a dime? The look of disillusioned shock—that he would have to pay the audience that should have been glad to listen to him for nothing—was unforgettable. But he was caught in the act of self-love; and so he gave me, not a dime, but a whole quarter.

I was confused when I landed at last in the big dark city. I couldn't orient myself. I dragged myself from street to street looking for the car-stop. It was cold; people hurried. Two hours later, the long climb up the hill home, past the red library, past the play-grounds, the dead mill deserted and mournfully silent behind me; my father glumly recording my arrival home. I fell into bed and slept a night of tossing exhaustion. Next day, I got a razor blade, sterilized it with a burning match—and sliced open the abscess. I fell back on my bed, sweat bursting over my body, my senses whirling...

It was years later now. As thousands had done and were still doing, I too had taken to the road to become one of the thousand "boys of the road." But my life on the boxcars was relatively brief. I wound up in Washington, D.C., and in due time became a leader of the Workers Alliance of that city—the union of the unemployed. And then I sent my second letter to Mrs. Roosevelt.

This time I knew more of the world. The cry I sent her for help was not for myself now but for the thousands of Washington—and national—unemployed: specifically for the hundreds of women who had been ruthlessly taken off WPA jobs because of a technicality in the new welfare law. They needed help desperately and at once.

I had appeared, in my capacity as spokesmen for the unemployed, before the Senate Committee on District Affairs, then headed by Senator Overton of Louisiana. When I finally got into the big caucus room I found nobody there but a bored secretary and a plump man seated at the end of a long table from whence all but he had fled, silver-haired and genial. "What have you got for us?" he asked with a kind of fatherly smile, looking at his watch.

Later, appearing before the House Committee headed then by Rep. Jennings Randolph (later to become Senator from West Virginia) I faced a whole battery of sleek, well-dressed congressmen, redolent of tonic and after-shave lotion, their well-nourished jowls reflected sumptuosly in the polished conference table, and listened while they remonstrated with Randolph for taking up their time with my presence, and Randolph pleading, apologetically, and finally scrounging a few democratic minutes for me in which to describe the unwelcome details of hunger and misery as they doodled on the pads before them...

WELL, misery is not to be denied. We had thrown picket-lines around the District Administration building, around the welfare offices, the WPA offices, the national headquarters of the GOP; but the hatchet had begun to cut more and more from the loaf for the needy. When Congress voted an amendment to the WPA which automatically forced off anyone who had been on WPA rolls for 18 consecutive months (they had already killed off the cultural projects), the panic and anguish and tragedy that the threat, and the fact of it, brought to thousands of victims is one of those episodes in American history around which the veil is drawn and about which the brassy apologists for the American Century prefer not to be reminded. The *Washington Post,* in an editorial hailing the decision, burned a phrase into my memory. The 18-month termination clause, it wrote, although it would "entail hardships in many indi-

vidual cases" was nevertheless a worthy action because dropping people off WPA after 18 months would have a "stimulative moral effect" upon their characters and spur them to find that job in private industry everybody knew didn't exist. After 120 days of being so "stimulated," the law allowed them to reapply for WPA work, but not, if "employable," for direct welfare relief. Four months without the $60-$70 average WPA salary a month was a brutal act of cruelty to the people; and when the four months parole period was over there was no guarantee of a WPA job either. They would starve for many more months.

The 12,000,000 unemployed were classified by most authorities as somewhere between criminals and parish pariahs. Reaction had recovered from its panic of the first days after the crash when armies of unemployed had taken over several state capitals; now and up until the war it was arrogant, as ever, and characteristically brutal.

> When the devil was sick, the Devil a monk would be,
> When the Devil was well, the devil a monk was he!

So I wrote to Mrs. Roosevelt; a telegram this time. It was 1940 now. Germany had risen and had crossed over the border into Belgium, ending the phoney war during which such frantic behind-the-scenes efforts had been made to turn Hitler East. Instead, he had turned West. The unemployed problem would be solved in a year—by war. At this moment, however, there were still some 10-12 million fully or partially unemployed, and Congress was cutting funds at every session. We were doing all we could to protest this.

One evening, when I came home to my $3 a week room in Southwest Washington, my landlady, to whom I owed back rent (my pay as Workers Alliance functionary was $15 a week, if and when) stuck her head out of the dividing doors behind which she and her unemployed husband lived and said, in a hoarse whisper: "Mrs. Roosevelt called. She said she would be glad to meet you in the White House." Did she believe it? She was hollow-voiced enough to seem to believe it. In any case, I nodded and said thank you.

We brought together about 50 of our women members, who were mostly Negro in that Jim Crow capital, and proceeded to the White House at the appointed hour. Our women had put on their best clothes for the event and were terribly excited. I cannot understand why I was so blase about it then, except that politically the atmosphere had changed and Mrs. Roosevelt was not my favorite person. In any case we ranged ourselves around the Blue Room where, the story in the newspaper

next day noted, Mrs. Roosevelt "has greeted visiting royalty." We were not royalty. In her column, *My Day,* Mrs. Roosevelt was to write:

> I have just met with as heart-rending a group of people as it has been my misfortune to see in a long time; largley a colored group, though some white women were among them. They came to tell me of their helpless situation and I can best describe it by telling you one woman's story. She was laid off WPA last August *{this was April, P.B.}* and has a bed-ridden mother, a sister and a nephew were living with her. She lived until January 4 by begging and borrowing and then was put back on WPA. The tears stood in her eyes when she told me she was laid off again and had an eviction notice and was to appear in court tomorrow morning. Two months' rent is due, and even by attempting to rent out some rooms she cannot meet the payments. In the District there is an understanding in the Public Assistance Division that no employable person may be given relief. . . . The cut has come in WPA and people have to be laid off, and what is going to happen to them? How would you meet this situation?

That last question was so typical of her. Coming almost as an anticlimax, it betrayed her approach to the problem of poverty and unemployment as a purely sociological one; it was still an appeal to the conscience of the rich.

So, some six years later, I had sent Mrs. Roosevelt a second message, and now here I was in the White House itself: surely that was a kind of success? However, I made no mention of the fact. Nor did I mention the fact that I, too, wasn't sure where my next meal was coming from, and that *my* rent was two or three months in arrears. Instead I read a statement to her. America was on the dole and millions of people weren't sure where their next meal was coming from.

THE news account that appeared in the newspaper the following morning described us this way: "Thirty-one neatly dressed and respectable-looking citizens, about half white and half Negro, stood in a silent row around the circular walls of the stately reception room, while President Phillip Bonosky of the District Workers Alliance read a prepared statement describing inadequate local relief." We had resounding titles to cover our poverty—"president" at least!

The statement, long lost by me, is partly resurrected in the press account, which quoted me as saying:

> The women for whom I am spokesman are all women who have recently been laid off WPA and find themselves stripped of all resources

and completely helpless to support themselves and their families. Not only do they find it impossible to get private employment, but they find also that they are not permitted to receive direct relief. There is no industry here into which they can be absorbed. The District Employment Center has informed them that there are already 40,000 people awaiting jobs on its list; and the Public Assistance Division informs them they are ineligible for direct relief because they are able-bodied.

An average of more than 300 people a month are turned away from District Public Assistance Division because they are 'employable,' although their need has been established and they have no resources whatsoever.

Such a restriction on eligibility for relief exists in only two other U.S. cities the size of Washington. Also, of 18 leading cities, Washington pays the lowest relief grant, in spite of the fact that rents are highest in the country and living costs among the highest.

I could have added that real estate taxes, on the contrary, were the lowest in the country, based upon the marvelously myopic view of real estate values by the public assessor, year after year. Our virulent enemy was the Board of Trade whose recommendations for social and unsocial services to the people of the District were invariably followed by the Senate and House Committee. We had learned too the awful meaning of the term "unemployable" which meant to be hopelessly crippled or aged or diseased and thus eligible for direct relief of something like $45 a month if single. But to be able-bodied, that is, "employable" was perhaps even worse. For with no jobs either in private industry or in WPA, one's only alternative was to get permantly crippled by a streetcar in order to qualify for the $45 a month direct public assistance. The hardly-hidden Southern racist virulence lay at the root of the fantastically low relief appropriations for the District. At one time Senator Bilbo of Mississippi was head of the Senate Committee, and he made it clear that in his opinion the money was wasted on the Negro population; also, the "high" relief grants encouraged Negroes to leave the South and go on relief in the Distrct of Columbia where they lived presumably in dazzling splendor on $45 a month.

We met with Mrs. Roosevelt shortly afterward in a more intimate session in her drawing room in the White House where we had tea. There we discussed what we wanted her to emphasize in the coming meeting which we were holding and at which she had agreed to speak. We wanted her to protest the massive cuts in WPA and other relief agencies being prepared for in Congress, which had already destroyed the cultural projects. The excuse for these cuts was the need for armament

production; billions for cannon and less and less for butter (or more accurately for margarine).

At the mass meeting later in the week, Mrs. Roosevelt, in effect, defended the proposals for appropriating funds for armaments, and described, with great eloquence and feeling, how dangerous to democracy and world peace the Germans were. Germany, she said, was a "disturber nation," and it was necessary not only to stop her but to reduce her to a pastoral land of farmers and shepherds, after what was later to be called the "Morgenthau Plan" for post-war Germany. She gave me a check of $50 as a contribution to the Workers Alliance and asked me to keep the contribution confidential, which I did.

I never saw her personally after that evening. But in the years that followed, after the war which was won by the "boondogglers," "leaf rakers," "leaners on shovels," many of whom remained on the beaches of Anzio and Salerno, in the Bulge, on the shores of Guadacanal or along the Corregidor route, I was often tempted to write her one more letter.

THIS letter would have reminded her of the speech she made to the hungry people of Washington so many years ago, telling them that they should prepare themselves to fight the "disturber nation," which was more important than the fight for food, and ask her whether she would make the same speech again today—years and mountains of corpses later as Germany, rising blood-soaked from the ashes once again, clicking its goosestep heels, sings *"Deutschland uber Alles"* (reinstated as Germany's national anthem by Adenauer), once again shouts about marching east (with Adenauer proclaiming that God had designated Germany as the "Christian barrier" to the godless socialist East), as once again anti-Semitism rears its head, concentration camp victims once again are sent back for their premature anti-fascist activities to the prisons Hitler had sent them to only yesterday?

Now, as before, Germany, the "disturber nation" needed and got aid and assistance from another great power (Britain then, the U.S. now) in the hope that it would not only be the main Bismarckian bulwark against socialism, both internal and external, but would in fact, with a resurrection of the old *Drang nach Ostern* obsession, one day march East, or to bring things up to date, send atomic warhead missiles to the heart of that future Lincoln Steffens had seen working so well, Heywood Broun had hailed as the hope of the world. Bertoldt Brecht had seen and found good, and Sean O'Casey had watched, through the evening star and sunset its red star rising...

In a few months we were at war. The unemployment problem disappeared over night. What all of American statemanship could not accomplish in ten years of trying was done by the Japanese with one planeload over Pearl Harbor. The generation that learned the meaning of hunger and the shame of unemployment and relief fought the war and helped win it. They believed in it—fascism had to be defeated. Hardly had they done that when victory was stolen out of their hands, their brains were encased in the paralyzing ice of the Cold War, a tremendous assault was launched on them and everything they believed in, and their 20 years of struggle, learning and sacrifices were to be called "twenty years of treason." They were to be suspect for having been alive in the Thirties. Some of their children on their knees would cross themselves and thank God they had been too young—or unborn then—and no compromising records could be cited against them in the proliferating dossiers of government and industry.

All this returns with the news of her death. A patrician, she "betrayed" her class, an ugly duckling, as she called herself once, with a social conscience. We will not see her like again. America has given up something final in her death; something old and good. It is poorer for it. On the other hand, the American "poor" are finished forever with the Christmas baskets of the nice people living up on the hill; so, too, are the "poor" of the ex-colonial world whose honor and national pride are the price for American "aid." They will make their own future, and in making it, eliminate forever those ugly words: charity, philanthropy—and poverty.

WRITERS AND CRITICS

LOUIS ARAGON

This talk was delivered by the noted French author, Louis Aragon, at Charles University in Prague, Czechoslovakia on the occasion of his 60th birthday. It is translated from the French cultural newspaper, LES LETTRES FRANCAISES.

YOUR describing me as a theoretician of literature does me too much honor; I am only one of its humble practitioners who, fearing he may not be making himself understood, or dreading the critical lightning, imparts a theoretical cast to his alibis for himself and his writings.

—Dialectics aside, I am now prodded by the imp of contradiction for what I have just said (and don't be misled by that one note of humility). The truth is that I mistrust theoreticians of literature and that's why I hesitate to take a place in their ranks.

I belong, as you know, to that category of men and women who, for more than a century now, have based their thoughts and actions on the principle of the unity, the non-separation, of theory and practice. And I don't know why it is that this principle up to now has not rooted itself as firmly in in literature as it has in other fields. . . .

In the domain of letters, people often permit themselves to think that a work of written art follows *after* a theory of literature—and this is believed by some who, in politics, are accustomed to taking facts into account even when facts have the insolence *not* to conform to their preconceptions. That is to say, men of science, who are not necessarily writers—I mean not novelists, poets, creative writers—first fix the theories for work and then the artist is expected follow them. As if literary work in itself were not a system of facts on which theoretcians ought to base their theories rather than subjecting the facts—the literary works themselves—to prefabricated theory! The outcome of this has been that critics confronted with the fact (the book) take the liberty of measuring it by a yardstick already manufactured by the theoreticians—as if the theory was a foot and the literary work a shoe.

Positive Hero

FOR example, it was at first decided that it was a good thing for novels to present positive heroes. Where were these positive heroes to be found? They were requisitioned precisely because there was not a ghost of one existing in reality. What started as a wishful thought was transformed by repetition into a theory. In judging a book, the critics asked themselves first: Does it involve a positive hero? Then they either decreed that

such and such a character *was* a positive hero, and the novel was given its graduation diploma; or, in spite of the critics' pains, none of the characters passed muster as being positive in their eyes, and the novel was thrown on the ash-heap.

The same mechanism operated in the demand for the "typical" in the novel. As if, let's say, Tartarin de Tarascon (or the brave soldier Schweik) had been typical *before* being created in literature! Should it not be clear that it is the novelist who creates types, heroes, etc.; that it is the power of his realism —his own creative discrimination —that makes them *become* typical and characteristic. (We are so critical of the novelists who turn out monsters; if they created opposite types, what reason would we have to be critical?) And this is not to mention the fact that in the search for a positive hero, the critic himself forgets that it may happen that the hero will turn out to be a collective character, a class, a people, a nation.

In any case, this dogmatic critical approach has been anything but helpful for the development of literature. On the contrary, among most creative people—creative people, not the wholesale puppet-markers—this formula has evoked a contradictory reaction (as it has in me), and has hampered the healthy growth of art to the degree that wishful thinking has been frozen into edict, into law.

Please understand I am not inveighing against theory, but against the dogmatic pretensions of certain theoreticians. Theory, scientifically regarded,starts out with a hypothesis—an interpretation of the facts. When a sufficient body of facts are adduced, the hypothesis may take the form of a law. But laws themselves are only a provisional stage in a process; if other facts emerge that are not accounted for by the law, it is not the facts but the law that must be changed. In reasonably governed countries, social legislation, for example, incorporates changing social facts, and constitutions are periodically revised. Why then is it essential that in art, and in art alone, laws—like theological canons—should have an immutable, absolute character — especially when the original hypothesis did not really take the true facts into consideration? It would be folly to elevate theory like this to the dignity of law; it is only a worthless hypothesis.

The provisional nature of hypothesis, its verification by facts, are precisely the distinctive, special characteristics of scientific procedure, which never separates theory from practice. The dogmatism that confronts real creativeness with abstract speculation, real invention with utopias and chimerical dreams, is in the end the very opposite of the scientific transformation of reality which is the basic program of those who make a principle of the unity of theory and practice.

Realism

TO be sure, all this presupposes that we are agreed on one point—that the writer should be a realist, that it is realism with which we are here concerned, just as the materialist philosopher is concerned with the primacy of matter. That's precisely what I should like to point out. The dogmatists, the utopians, who insist so often that they unreservedly defend materialism in philosophy and realism in art, are in fact acting like *idealists* rather than realists, since they demand that facts conform to their hypotheses, rather than evaluating a hypothesis by how well it accounts for the facts.

I protest against dogmatic criticism because in itself it is, and wants to remain, pure theory. . . . There is, of course, a utopia of the laboratory, a flight of the imagination which makes no demands, the kind of invention to which Thomas More, Owen or Fourier could—naturally, if not very scientifically—devote themselves. This is quite different from a dogmatic utopia that comes at a period of history when it could take the form, say, of militarizing society or the unions (the Trotskyist utopia); or of issuing decrees that from now on literature will be proletarian or it will not be at all. . . . This is the kind of dogmatism that asks me to confine myself to those prototypes that *they* had time to study, documents in hand.

Besides, dogmatism and utopianism, in the realm of literature often have consequences that reinforce the consequences of dogmatism and utopianism in other domains; and even if these consequences are not necessarily sanguinary, they kill something in a man as a man—his realist faculties, his talent. It's because of this that no matter how little a realistic writer is inclined to the discussion of theory, he arrives at a point when he can't leave the field clear to the dogmatists, when he must defend his art and the people who practice it, when he must make known what he is thinking and what is so closely bound to what he writes—as closely as are theory and practice in literature, that is, a scientific theory and the practice of literary talent (and not its caricature).

Please note in what I have said that I am not opposing the creative writer to the critic. The latter has a full right to exist, provided he doesn't make a business of hampering literature. Actually it is only the present conflict that I should like to see come to an end — the pitting of one against the other. Criticism has value, above all, in the understanding it can develop of written works—not in the cleverness with which it can give people reasons for not reading a book or with which it downgrades the author. There is an ambiguity

in the meaning of the word "critique." It is used both to designate negative evaluations and the men who think they shine more brightly by making them. It is a great temptation, an easy descent to where one can lose one's way—for it is much simpler to expose the faults of a book than to discover its virtue, its contribution, its talent. It seems that one takes on more luster in denigration than in approval. You are more easily listened to when you say: "don't read this," than when you say, "read this book." Besides whidh, if you want to impress people with your intelligence, you run less risk this way because the reader is less likely to check your opinions by reading the book.

Don't be too shocked at my severity towards—I admit it—the majority of western critics—as well as those of the east, the north and the south. They are stuck with a sorry trade; all I'm trying to do is to suggest a nobler, wider vista to them—that of knowing how to love—assuming that this is perhaps the highest talent and the highest happiness: to know how to love.

I repeat that all I am saying assumes in the critic, as it does in the writer, a firm confidence in the necessity for realism in art and, at this moment in history, a consciousness of what the exercise of one's metier and talent can do in the defense of realism. There must also be a consciousness of the difficulties that confront the writer, of the formidable forces that are arrayed against him.

Realism in Danger

REALISM itself is a boat in danger of destruction by collision from both larboard and starboard. The pirate ship on the right cries: Death to realism; the pirate on the left cries: Look here, I am the *true* realism. Of the former, it can be said that it is not realism so much that he has in mind but a social system that he abhors, a system of which realism seems to him the dangerous harbinger—but then what good is it to argue with *him?* More often it is a matter of people of good faith whom the pirate has carried along with him. Of these, I believe that actual events, rather than literary discussion, will cause them to change their minds. Some of these people are used to changing their minds, are susceptible to learning how to adore what they had previously wanted to wipe out. I see such people in my country in little groups around the "new novel" or some such thing. We must give them enough rope, even when they are at variance with us, so that they may learn for themselves that they are following a devitalized lead. Already we see, in contrast to other generations that made use of formal or mystical principles, neither one nor the other group have anything to oppose to the realism they despise but description for description's sake—in reality a modern form of naturalism. I know that they do pose naturalism and realism against each other, but these two are opposable only when they are the sole elements under discussion. Naturalism, at this period in the world's history, runs the risk of becoming the stepping stone to realism—a sort of rehearsal for a play not yet brought to the stage; in any case, the bifurcation point for a writer, when he separates himself voluntarily from un-realism.

I am, for my part, persuaded that, whatever its limitations, the naturalism of Zola prepared the way for modern realism, and that it can still play this role. Elsa Triolet recently told some students who were helping with the harvest near Cheb that when some producers wanted to put "Germinal" on the screen, they found that they were denied entre to all the coalmines in France. . . . Under the influence of the Algerian War, the tendency toward realism has seized a majority of the young writers in my country. This repeats what happened under the German occupation in the literature of the Resistance—which could hardly have been anything but realist—even in the hands of an Eluard or of a Desnos, who, like your humble servant, made their escape from the pirate ship of the surrealists.

Principal Danger

BUT, if you want my opinion, the principal danger to realism comes from the pirate on the left. Pardon my language; at my age one tosses ideas around in order to change them. Because if realism is to get anywhere, it must not be destroyed from within. Here, natuaralism—most often in its populist form—is also a stepping stone by which the enemy gets into the place. Along with him come a motley crew—men without principles, those who are always looking for the main chance, opportunists of every stripe, careerists, vulgarizers, demagogues. They willingly supply dogmatism with a facade that looks as if it were the real thing. If I may be permitted to cite an example from the art of painting, one could measure in square kilometers the surfaces of the canvases that could not be shown today; yet, under the banner of realism, they were painted by people in the Soviet Union for decades. Perhaps you will understand more clearly what I mean when I refer to those who cast discredit on us from the inside —notably in the eyes of youth—of whom it must be said that they become older every year, as do we. . . . So far as I am concerned I don't believe that the human race can be neatly divided into the young and the old—any more than it can be divided into blondes and brunettes. My white hair precludes my being indulgent with that species of genocide that consigns the older generation to the darkness of the crematory. But I also refuse to look upon youth as the

enemy; they possess characteristics similar to our own. It is not true that experience is not directly communicable; our forerunners handed down the fruits of their experience to us. Not that youth will take off from the precise point to which our lives have led us. My immediate demand is merely that realism must not de discredited in the eyes of youth.

The gravest discredit that realism risks is when flattery is bestowed on demagogic literature. So that you may know what I mean, consider one type of literary demagogy—the Tarzans and the Superman—as they thrive in the U.S. They have their dialectical equivalents when books are used as instruments to teach lessons—rather than to create characters. The confusion that assigns to literature this elementary pedagogical role—rather than permitting it to accomplish the real, indirect education that it is capable of—is not only dangerous for literature; it permits us to trade literature for a distortion of facts and the imposition of utopian thinking—again, it is the substitution of wishes for realities. If the novelist limits himself to creating dummies for store windows to illuminate life, it is a limitation of life, a *closed-in* representation of it. That's why dogmatism and demagogy find themselves closely allied and why demagogues and dogmatists so often are in opposition to an *open* image of art, to a literature in process of becoming, to a genuine literary experience.

Anti-Realism

NEVERTHELESS, one must not forget that in the long run the negation of reality — whatever power people may have to give it currency for a time—ends by being recognized for what it always was. It is not as if it were a sacred image—reality is subject to constant change. The fact that an anti-realist approach is labeled realist creates the danger, at least temporarily, of detouring writers from realism—particularly in their formative years. I am one of those who believes that such a detour is a misfortune for humanity. That's why I call for an open realism, a nonacademic realism, not fixed but susceptible of evolution—which will concern itself with new facts, which will not content itself with facts that have been smoothed, polished and digested. I call for people who are willing to change their direction so as to be capable of confronting the realities beyond the beaten paths, who are not content to reduce difficulties to a simple common denominator, who do not attempt to make the event fit into the pre-established order, but know how to understand it as it unfolds. In short, a realism that helps to change the world, realism not to reassure us but to awaken us and even at times to shake us up. Such a viable realism could not exist except by a perpetual confrontation of theory and practice; it is nourished by newness; it is the pioneer of reality and not its mechanical registrar after it has been well dusted. Such realism participates in new emotions as they are born out of new situations; is never separate from that which is being created; will not run the risk of being sent back to the attic by the new crew of workmen; is a force to create enthusiasm and not distaste among the young people.

I ask pardon for being so long-drawn-out about what can after all remain only an introduction to a theory of literature that is appropriate for this second half of the 20th century, when humanity has arrived at the stage of cosmic navigation and even envisages with equanimity the possible passage to communism in 18 years—that is, at a time when those unbearable youngsters of ours will have a bone to pick with their own still unborn sons and daughters.

A scientific theory of literature closely bound to the practice of writing, constantly revised in the unexpected light of new facts, thereby keeping pace with literature itself, with books themselves —that is what I want with all my heart for the days and the people to come after us. One can well understand now why I didn't want to pose as a theoretician; it was not only because of the cussedness of the word, or because it wouldn't be modest, but because of the real recognition of my limitations, and my awareness that the true theoreticians of the kind of literature which I believe still lies ahead—such theoreticians are still unborn and it would take naiveté to mistake myself for one of them.

Here, at Charles University, at the celebration of my 60th centenary, I am grateful for the honors given me, especially because of the emotions I have experienced during the past forty years since your country first made the decisive step of joining theory and practice forever in its national history. Knowing the difficulties and common problems of writers of all countries and also the specific problems of Czechoslovakia — this country that is the example par excellence of how impossible it will be to deny ever again the true traditions, the existence, the rights to a future for a nation—I did not want on the occasion of the unearned honor that has been accorded me to deliver the kind of academic discourse usual at Paris or at Oxford. I have taken advantage of the opportunity given me to speak out, or at least to open the discussion, on the things closest to my heart concerning the theory and practice of my double métier as writer and man. I hope that the great ghosts of your university's past will pardon me and that the living audience will understand me.

—Translated by
NAN APOTHEKER

THE FORM AND CONTENT OF ART

SIDNEY FINKELSTEIN

CAN a work of art be strong in content and weak in form? Or can it be strong in form and weak in content? The belief that either is possible springs from a misconception of both content and form. Content is made synonymous with subject-matter, or with a didactic expression of ideas or dogmas. Form is looked upon as an added surface elegance and polish, a special skill in handling the materials, tools and language of the craft. And so the belief grows that a well-intentioned person can pack a literary work with the most admirable ideas, give an allegorical painting a title indicating that it embodies the most noble precepts, write a symphony purporting to embrace all the secrets of birth, life, death and immortality, and at least be honored for its "good content," if inadequate form. The belief also grows that any untrue or reactionary and inhuman thought can become a great work of art, if it is given stylistic polish, or "good form." Of course, works of these kinds have been and are continually thrust upon the world and are even give high praise by eminent critics, but they quickly become the discards of art history and remain at best sociological curiosities. Content and form are organically related. A work of art is all content and all form. These come to life and operate only through one another. If content is weak, form is weak. If content is strong, form is strong. The unity of content and form is a product of truth to life, "inner" and "outer."

The form of a work of art is unique to art, and not like the forms taken by nature. In this sense, all art is an "artifice." It is not a means through which nature can be duplicated, but a means through which people think about life and exchange their thoughts. It is as much a product of human skills as it is inspired by real life. In fact, without the development of the skills there would not be the perceptive discovery of reality. We can almost say as a "universal law of art," that the more "natural," real and true to life a work of art appears to be, the more complicated and demanding were the artifices that created it. It is for this reason that a Rembrandt self-portrait haunts the mind with its reality as few other works have done among the innumerable portraits and self-portraits created with the passage of time. The very depth of reality tells us how great an artist or "artificer" Rembrandt was. Conversely, for all the wonderfully faithful fidelity of a camera to appearances, the most unimpressive and unrealistic of art works are the average

Hollywood films, and the addition of color helps not one bit. They have no imaginative artistry. A faded play like Dumas' *Camille* no longer holds the boards, but becomes a deeply moving human experience when as Verdi's *La Traviata,* there is the added "artifice" of having the characters on the stage stop the action to sing arias and duets. It is these "artifices" that add the human depth.

The general art forms, like the novel, drama, epic or lyric poem, short story, opera, symphony, sonata, song, mural painting, oil painting, woodcut, etching, lithograph, bas-relief, sculpture in the round, all have their artifices, "conventions," or pretenses. But these conventions are not mechanical infringements on the free play of an artist's imagination. These general art forms, each with its own technical demands, are not inventions of a single artist, let alone of any critic or theorist. They represent historically the socially created means of art production. Each in its origin represented a kind of channel through which the artist could develop his ideas before a public. And so long as that living relation holds true, so long as the artist can take up the form and find an audience receptive to his investigations of life, the "artifices" are no bar to originality but an open door to it. They are the "necessity," the recognition and mastery of which gives the artist freedom. They are the technical aspects of the institutions which society sets up so that people can come together for a common cultural experience. And so they become an integral part of the artist's thinking and his very conception of the form of the art work. Shakespeare plans his plays from the start in terms of the Elizabethan "open stage," without a front curtain and with little or no scenery. A Mozart or Verdi, in composing operas, thinks in terms of not only the capacities of the human voice but often in terms of special singers he has in mind.

NEITHER artist nor public is troubled by these artifices, so long as they are part of a living social institution. To Shakespeare's audiences it seemed perfectly natural for an actor to turn and address the audience. This seems artificial now, to an audience accustomed to the modern theatre, with its proscenium and curtain, its illusion, that the audience is looking through a transparent window upon a private scene. But the naturalistic drama has just as many artifices of its own, which the audience readily accepts. It knows that a drop and lift of a curtain can mean the passage of hours or years. To speak "naturally" and yet be heard by the people in the most distant seats is a carefully cultivated art. Actors must not only live a role, but create a common style, so that the most effectively "natural" scenes are a product of the most imag-

inative placement and movement. Similarly people are not bothered when they see a Michelangelo sculpture of David that is larger than life, or a Vermeer painting of people in a room who are contained in a canvas a few inches square. A black and white etching by a master seems as real as an oil painting with its array of colors. A sculpture seems perfectly real although flesh, hair and cothing are all the same color of marble, bronze or wood, and the onlookers are hardly aware of the artifices through which the sculptor has suggested various textures. It does not trouble the readers of a 19th century novel that the writer seems to have had the miraculous power of entering into the minds of a flock of characters and observing the most intimate, private scenes. Yet in the earlier period of the novel, as in 18th century England, writers like Defoe would never dream of such "pretense," and carefully worked out their novels so that they would seem to be a memoir of a single person, with nothing in them that this central character could not have seen. This "convention," having served its purpose, proved to be a hindrance to the further development of the social and realistic novel, and so it was set aside, but for special works in which it suits the writer to write a novel in the form of an autobiography. And what made the later novel "natural," with its many characters in conflict with each other, each with a revealed inner life, was the truth of what was said about life. The form raised complex technical problems, like the handling of time. If we analyze a novel like Balzac's *Eugenie Grandet,* which reads like a "slice of life," we find in it the most subtle and masterly variation of time, with some years covered in a few pages and then a scene of but a few minutes expanded to fill an entire chapter. Yet in reading, we find no abrupt stops and starts. The novel flows as smoothly as life itself. So with poetry, "free verse" is no more "free" or "natural" than rhymed and measured verse, and the problem of the poet is to choose the kind of "word-music," free or measured, rhymed or unrhymed, that does not clash with but rather enhances the play of thought and presentation of life in his work.

Artists welcome and move with ease through "conventions" or artifices that will seem to a later age impossibly strained and complicated, so long as these formal requirements carry with them the stimulating possibility of living contact with the mind of an audience. Thus Shakespeare, an accomplished sonneteer and writer of narrative poetry, welcomed the complications of writing for the stage, and developed a sweep of life that he could not have put in his sonnets or narrative poems. Even the necessity of portraying people from the most varied strata of life, from kings to clowns, inspired an equal variety in his

handling of language. And Mozart welcomed the writing of opera, apparently so much more demanding in its conventions and artifices than writing a symphony, because he found in this form the contact with an audience and the possibility of a kind of human and social portrayal in music that went beyond the scope of purely instrumental music. Similarly the American painters of the middle and late 1930's welcomed the opportunity to handle the demanding problems of mural painting, for this gave them both a wide audience and a public role.

Of course such artifices that appear very natural and stimulating at one time can be imposed at another time as constricting demands upon the artist. For the social institutions of art production are superstructural, and through them a ruling class brings the pressure of ideologies to bear upon the artist. Ideology always presents itself not as class prejudice but as an eternal rightness, proclaiming "This is not how we want things to be, it is only the way things ought to be." So the "models" and "rules" that a romanticist like Hugo attacked were to him the restrictions forced by a monarchic caste and court upon the investigation of life, all in the name of classic "rightness," or what "art should be." But Hugo's work, as he recognized, had its own conventions. When an artist declares war on "all conventions," as so many have done in recent times, it means really that they have no contact with audiences and want to remove themselves from society.

A second element of art form consists of the languages, idioms and means of expression of the arts. They may also be called "artifices." Giving art its uniquely sensuous qualities, they are a product of human skills and repository of the development of the human senses. They are extensions of the hand, body and mind, and as such, the very sensitive feeling for their special qualities, for words, harmonies, colors, line, rhythm, shape and space—seemingly objective qualities that the artist learns to handle with varying skill and genius—is also a way of reaching out to life, a way of seeing more vividly, hearing more sharply, touching more sensitively. Here, too, conventions rise that, however, meaningful in their origin, become stifling infringements upon the artist's freedom; rules of how to write well, of correct language, of "proper" harmonies, of academic drawing and coloring, or division of space. And it is life that demands a rebellion against such imposed conventions. For these "languages" are a social inheritance which changes with life. Nor is the social character of these "languages" any infringement upon style or individuality. They operate not merely as a means for the artist to capture life in all its sensuous quality but as a means through which life educates the artist. As such they become a pathway to the develop-

ment of an individual and personal style. For in reaching out to nature and people, in listening, observing, discovering with the broadest of interests, the artist becomes the more personally involved with what he finds. Like a skilled carpenter or machinist who keeps his tools sharp and clean, the artist on a higher level cherishes the special qualities of his medium that in turn make him so sensitive in his perceptions. And he uses them as part of himself. We have only to look at the work of a group of artists from the same period, like Hals, Velasquez, Rembrandt and Vermeer in the 17th century, to learn with what completely different means, style of drawing and brushstroke, color combinations and harmonies, representations of life are created that in each case seem true and faithful. The more real the picture appears, the more it seems also to bear the hallmark of each artist's particular style, for it is the artist himself who is involved with his perceptions. So it is with music. A Schubert and Brahms, a Tchaikowsky and Mussorgsky, will use similar folk material, but the result, in its unique sound, will be both "folk" and an evocation of the inner life of the artist. So the style of each composer is unmistakable, and the broader his interests in life, the wider is the field for the development of artistic personality. In literature, the racy popular language of a Dickens and Mark Twain shows what keen listeners they were. But to listen in this way is only possible to one who both cherishes the language itself, handling it with love, and to one with affection for those to whom he listens. And so he is involved with what he perceives, and the style of a Mark Twain and Dickens is as unmistakably their own as it also seems to have been given them by real life.

The creation of a work of art is a dialectical process, an inter-relation of opposites. The artist is engaged with society, directly or indirectly, on every level on which he works. There is first of all the level represented by the general art form. This discloses, as we have seen, the artist entering into or taking up a set of procedures which were socially created out of the avenues or institutions of art production. Each of these general forms embodies its own "necessity" or demands, decided by the way in which the work of art, the painting, musical composition, poem or printed book, drama or opera conceived for stage and theatre, will operate as a social possession and reach the mind of its audience. These "conventions," if we can call them this, establish the general outlines of his work, and at the same time the artist expands and alters them. The audience for certain kinds of art, alas, is very small in America today, as the poet, painter and composer of serious music knows well. Unfortunately, some of these bitterly complain at what they take

to be the insensitivity of the public, instead of seeing the problem as one of how the cultural institutions of our country are run. But the writer still writes to be read, the musician to be heard, and the painter wants his paintings to be seen. And some 20th century works of great stature can be pointed to, not as models for others to follow, of course, in their special makeup, but as examples of how a social approach has found a form which reached a considerable audience. They are Boardman Robinson's great political cartoons and drawings, Rockwell Kent's book illustrations like those for *Moby Dick,* Carl Sandburg's remarkable book-length poem *The People, Yes,* with its infusion of history, folk tale and popular saying, and Aaron Copland's ballets on American subjects like *Rodeo* and *Billy the Kid.*

A second level on which the work of art creation proceeds is that of the artist handling the materials of expression, the patterns of words, musical tones, drawing, color combinations, contour, shapes and volumes. These materials—"languages" or forms of imagery as we can call them—are not lifeless "objects" when the artist takes them up, but already exist as a social inheritance, embracing loose, plastic malleable forms that already have a content of life. Each of these means of expression has its own properties which the artist must respect, master and develop further; its own sensuous qualities which embody both body skills and the senses brought to bear on the real world. Through them the artist establishes his own style.

On a third level, as the work of art progresses, it takes on a unity of form—the consummation of what we mean by artistic form—binding together all the diverse elements within it. For the artist, within the outlines of his general art form, and with the creative use of the materials under his hand, produces images of life. They are projections, in terms of the special properties of his materials, of various states of human thought, emotion, action and response to the outer world. Within the limitations of his ideology—and often, as we have seen, despite ideological pressure—he puts these images together in relationships and connections that seem to him to be necessary, or true to life. Thus every step in the building of an art work is determined, in the final analysis, by the artist's thinking about life, as brought to bear upon the problem he raises. This creates the all-over form and structure of the work. We can say that the all-over unity of a work of art, achieved through its binding together of diverse and opposing elements, its developing movement, its stresses and strains, its conflicts and resolutions, its "inner dialectic," is a reflection and embodiment of the dialectical movement

of life itself, as the artist has lived it and grasped it and brought his insight to bear upon the problem at hand.

THE consummation of the process of art creation is a work that becomes separated from the artist, and now exists as a social possession, while bearing in every part of it the impress of the artist's skills, senses, thought about life, and memories awakened in him through the course of the labor. The materials under the artist's hand have become transformed, and he himself has become transformed. If in the simpler forms of artistic handicraft—and the shallow art produced for the marketplace—the creative process is one that can be repeated with little change, when it comes to the works that sink a deeper shaft into life, the artist at the end is a changed person. He has grown in the course of his work. It has become to him a problem raised and solved, a process through which he has discovered unsuspected qualities in himself and the world, a stage in his own education, that can now be put behind him. The new work he takes on must accordingly be different. This sometimes entails a considerable period of self-examination, and entering into fresh currents of life, or being aroused by new issues.

To illustrate these elements or processes that enter into artistic form, we can think of a variety of buildings, and ask ourselves how they came to be what they are. For the first element of form mentioned here, the general art form, we would ask, what kind of a building is it? What social use did it serve, or what institution did it embody? Is it a home, school, church, factory, library, museum, center of legislation, courthouse, jail, theatre? For the second element, we would look at the materials used, the stone, wood, brick, glass, metal, the imagination and elegance with which they are handled, or transformed by the artist; the feeling the builder has shown for their weight, substance and texture, his development of the ornamental and sensuous possibilities latent in them; the handling of windows, doorways and moldings, the rhythms created by projections and recesses. For the third, and crucial aspect, we would look at the all-over unity of shape, the varied and contrasting sections, the way in which they are locked together; the way in which the weight is distributed to ensure strength and permanence; the division of its internal space and the way in which this shows an imaginative understanding and appreciation of the needs as human beings of the people who will be working in and using the building; the way in which the building not only makes possible but enhances the varied activity that will be carried out around and within it.

It is obvious that all of these elements of form are closely and organically connected, but there are differences among them. For example there are buildings with elegant surfaces and inventive handling of the materials which permit only the most wasteful, awkward, inept and cramped internal use. There are gigantic monstrosities, piles of marble or granite, which are only an academic reshuffling of the forms of previous buildings, meant to impress the eye with their semblance to famous structures. There are buildings which admirably fit a single, limited function but in which it is impossible for a varied and many-sided activity to take place.

So it is with works of art, in which people find their own images living more or less comfortably. Just as we can call certain historic works of architecture "classic," and also find them to be "realistic," in the public life they embraced, made possible and enhanced, so certain supreme works of art are "classic" and at the same time "realistic," in their illumination of the rising potentialities of human life, and the way in which every element of their structure, or "architecture," is determined, in both its independent being and connections, by the basic thinking about what is new and true in life; the great works of ancient Greek sculpture and Italian Renaissance painting, the ancient Greek dramas, the plays of Shakespeare, the symphonies of Beethoven, the novels of Balzac and Tolstoi. And to turn to certain extreme forms taken by the arts in modern times, we can also find analogies. Much of the modern pseudo-objective art, boasting of its "concrete" handling of the materials themselves, like poetry explaining that it is made through the sheer manipulation of words, paintings done by artists concerned only with the "act of painting," music made up of the sheer manipulation of timbres, pitches, rhythms and dynamics, can be compared to a smartly and expertly constructed building, with a novel shape and startling use of building materials, which has neither doors nor windows, or any way in which people can live in it without making their bodies and life processes conform to its demanding shape. They are interesting to look at but to live in them makes one want to gasp for air. There are works which in their primitive simplication boast that they have gotten back "to nature," which may be compared to buildings shaped to look like a tree, a block of stone or piece of driftwood. There are works which boast that their strangeness comes from the advanced "science" they reflect, like Einstein's law of relativity or the splitting of the atom. They are like buildings shaped to resemble a scientist's model of the structure of the atom. One cannot live in them. And the works of extreme, unrelieved subjectivity, like the most harrowing of twelve-tone music, the most talented of abstract-expressionist painting, the sec-

tions of T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* in which the cry of despair is most poignant, may be compared to a building that is nothing more than a flexible sheath over the skin, responding to and amplifying every quiver of the muscles and nerves.

IN THE central and all-important sense of the word form, namely the all-over, unifying architecture of a work of art, each work is unique and a law to itself. Even in the different works produced by the same artist, like the various prophets painted by Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel murals, the various symphonies and sonatas of Beethoven, the different novels of Tolstoi, the form of each is different because the thinking each embodies is different. However there are three different kinds of form that art works take. They are not so much categories, or classifications, as directions, or tendencies, or different poles towards which art works gravitate, with the actual works occupying every way-station between one and another. And they result not from an arbitrary choice by the writer, painter or musician as to how to construct his work or put its parts together, not from any critical rules, but from the fundamental psychological relationship between the artist and world outside of him.

There is first what is here called "classic" form. The work is made up of distinct parts or sections, each of which is clearly defined and a unit in itself, carrying a significant freight of emotion and thought, while the unity is achieved through their contrast and dramatic opposition. Thus in a classic sculptured figure from ancient Greece, the head, neck, torso, arms, legs, are all clearly defined units that create an all-over form through their opposition to one another, thus reflecting the interplay of forces that make up a live and active body, and the interplay of "inner" and "outer," so that the work as a whole is both a body and a state of mind. Classic form is "closed" form, a completely self-contained piece of life, to which nothing can be added and from which nothing can be taken away without disaster.

Classic form comes about when the artist sees himself as an active member of society, plunges deep into life, is at its "center," so to speak, and grasps the relation between its outer movement and the inner or psychological life. It is an art of high rationality, which does not mean at all, an emotionless "logic." Engels, in his *Feuerbach* quotes a statement by Hegel: "All that is real is rational; and all that is rational is real." This did not mean, Engels says, what many took it to mean, namely that everything existing is rational. He goes on:

> In 1789 the French monarchy had become so unreal, that is to say, so robbed of all necessity, so irrational, that it had to be destroyed by the Great Revolution, of which Hegel always speaks with the greatest enthusiasm. In this case, therefore, the monarchy was unreal and the revolution the real. And so in the course of development, all that was previously real becomes unreal, loses its right to existence, its rationality. And in place of moribund reality comes a new, viable reality.

Thus to be rational means to be able to think in terms of the real laws and movement of life, so far as they are disclosed, and to see the relation of emotional life, of freedom itself, to the conflicts and resolutions of real life. And on the other hand, to turn the mind away from what is alive, moving and changing in the real world, to abandon what is going on in the real world as the basis for thinking and for a way of life, to seek to make decisions without any grasp of the real conflicts that arouse such questions, is to give the mind over to irrationality. The classical quality with which the ancient Greek artists recreated the human body is a reflection of the rationality which pervaded the intellectual life of the time, with its giant step in science, in politics, and in appreciating the powers of the human being, with his ability to change and reshape the world.

THEN there is what can be called "subjective" form. Here the various elements carry a heavy weight of emotion or feeling, but they are not clearly defined or rounded. They tend rather to merge with and flow into one another, and unity is achieved not so much through the dramatic opposition of equal forces as through the repetition and variation of these elements to build up an overwhelming emotional intensity and turbulence. It tends to be "open" form in contrast to the "closed" classic form. One can think of its turbulent movement as continuing and extending beyond the boundaries of the art work itself. It is the reflection of a view of life which finds the outer world chaotic, without understandable connection between the besetting inner conflicts and what actually in outer life engendered them.

Third is "decorative" form. Here objective order and clarity are primary. The various parts or elements are unified through repetition, alternation and variation, but individually they do not carry a significant freight of emotion or thought, and there is little or no drama. It seems to be "closed" form, in its orderliness and symmetry, but we can easily imagine elements added to it or taken away without destroying the whole. An oriental rug is as apt an example as any of decorative form.

Or to remain for the moment within the ancient Greek area, many god and goddess sculptures of the "archaic," or pre-democratic period, are in "decorative" form. There is a fully sculptured body, but the torso and limbs have no independent life or significance, and the esthetic qualities lie primarily in the symmetry and the fine, rhythmic textures of the surface. In "decorative" form, the artist carefully selects from life whatever aspects he can fit into a logical and orderly scheme.

The classic, subjective and decorative types of form are not matters of arbitrary choice by artists, as if they could turn at will from one to the other. Rather the predominance of one or another tendency in the work of an artist, or in the work of an entire period, is a product of the changes and upheavals in society, and the artist's place in them. The artist can move in one direction or another, and even against the current of his age, but this requires a struggle in terms of his life itself, and how he shapes it. Great values have been produced by every type of art. The decorative stands for an expansion of the skills and senses in handling the sheer materials of artistic expression; at best, a joy in what the human skills can do, an adornment of life. The subjective discloses and makes into a possession of both art and social consciousness ever more penetrating psychological frustrations, longings and poignancies, with a revelation of how tragic and seemingly insoluble are the conflicts with which life assaults people. Each reappearance of such forms is on a new level of technique and experience, and in the clothing of a new social situation.

Particularly in the last four hundred years, with their continual change, movement and upheaval, the variations between "classic," "subjective," and "decorative" have taken on deep psychological complications and individual artists will gravitate from one to another. Thus, in the pictorial arts, if a Rembrandt self-portrait is a move to the subjective, a great monumental portrait or a social Biblical scene, like the etching of Christ preaching to the poor, will absorb this inner discovery and resolve it in a classic embrace of real life. Or Goya will create harrowing subjective works, in some of the fantasies of the *Caprichos,* and the symbolic painting of Saturn devouring his children, but will also continually turn again to real life and create works of classic strength and real-life imagery. Mozart's early musical compositions, those of the "rococo" and "galant" style, tend to be "decorative," with their easy flow of melodies, their dancing rhythms, their crystalline clarity and order. But with the later works, the great piano concertos, symphonies and operas, he approaches the classic, facing up to and giving some order

and resolution to the tragic conflicts of life. The fact that the great operas are comedies does not prevent them from touching on, as in *Don Giovanni* and *The Magic Flute,* such deep and poignant feelings. Wagner moved from the subjective form and inwardness of *Tristan und Isolde* to the comparative classical quality of *Die Meistersinger,* with its feeling for typical people in real life. In contemporary art, the subjective will turn into the decorative, as in Mondrian's painted rectangles, where the subjective loneliness and withdrawal from social life ends by expressing itself in a work of almost mathematical orderliness, a work clear, concrete and logical which offers something to cling to as real in an inscrutable universe.

It is the classic form, reflecting the most profoundly realistic and rational approach to life, bringing together inner and outer worlds, in which the giant forward strides have taken place. And each time it reappears, it is different, for it embraces the realities and advances of its own time. It reproduces the old "truth" on "a new plane." It absorbs and makes its own the penetrating psychological expressions of subjective art and finds resolution in real life for what had seemed to be unresolvable.

TO ILLUSTRATE these three approaches to form, in the realm of poetry, three short poems will be cited, written quite close to each other in time, in the last years of the 16th century and the first decades of the 17th century. All three are sonnets (although the first has twelve-syllable lines instead of the customary ten-syllable lines). This will serve to indicate how different "internal structure" is from what is simply a general art form.

The first is a sonnet inserted by Shakespeare in the early play, *Love's Labor Lost.* It is a letter sent by the hero, Biron, to his lady-love, and is an example of courtly love poetry.

If love makes me forsworn, how shall I swear to love?
Ah, never faith could hold, if not to beauty vow'd!
Thou to myself forsworn, to thee I'll faithful prove;
Those thoughts to me were oaks, to thee like osiers bow'd.
Study his bias leaves, and makes his book thine eyes,
Where all those pleasures live that art would comprehend:
If knowledge be the mark, to know thee shall suffice;
Well learned is that tongue that well can thee commend;
All ignorant that soul that sees thee without wonder;
Which is to me some praise that I thy parts admire:
Thy eye Jove's lightning bears, thy voice his dreadful thunder,

Which not to anger bent, is music and sweet fire.
Celestial as thou art, O, pardon love this wrong,
That sings heaven's praise with such an earthly tongue.

To paraphrase the thought, the writer says that although he has forsworn love, he has broken his oath and fallen in love. That does not show he is unreliable, for the only faith that is really firm is that devoted to beauty. He, the scholar, is abandoning his books, to study his beloved's eyes instead. In her eyes are all the pleasures that art seeks. And if the purpose of study is knowledge, she is all that he needs to know. Anyone who commends her shows that he is, consequently, a learned person. Any person who can look on her without amazement must be ignorant. And so by admiring her, the writer is indirectly praising himself. Her look can strike like the lightning of Jupiter, her voice can sound like his thunder, but if only she be not angry, then her look is sweet fire and her voice is like music. Since she is a celestial goddess, it is sacrilege for him even to praise her in earthbound language, but he asks her to pardon this offense.

This paraphrase indicates how much the style and tone of this address of love are a kind of witty parody or imitation of medieval scholastic and hair-splitting logic. It is all pretense, an airy game, accepted as such with pleasure by both sides, not a deeply involved declaration of love but an ornamental addition to the ritual of love-making, the lover preening himself in his cleverness as he would in his fencing ability and handsome clothes, and taking a sensuous delight in words and images. And the all-over form is decorative (other names for this approach, that have accrued in the history of the arts, are "rococo," "galant," "neo-classic"). This may be seen in the sweetly repetitive word-music, the regularity with which the terminal point of each thought falls upon the rhyming words, the symmetrical repetition of phrases similar in length, the stringing together of images or "conceits" like pretty pictures or gems. The opposition created between the thought of heavenly beauty and of earthly grossness is not a dramatic conflict but rather a light, fanciful playfulness. And we can easily imagine the poem shortened, with some "conceits" removed, or lengthened, with other clever images added.

The second poem is also a Shakespeare sonnet.

When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes
I all alone beweep my outcast state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself and curse my fate,

Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,
Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Haply I think on thee, and then my state,
Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate;
For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

This is also a "love poem." But now a profoundly true and real psychological portrait emerges, a probing "inner life" which is at the same time linked, in its conflict, to the "outer life" and conflicts of a very real society. This realistic quality is found as well in the images. The figures of speech are fewer and more fully developed. When Shakespeare here speaks of the lark singing at dawn, it is not like the "oaks," "osiers," "lightning" and "thunder" of the previous poem. Now he wants the image to transport the reader to the countryside, to awaken memories of a bird singing at dawn, to bring to bear the rich emotional lift this engenders upon the present situation. And this realistic quality, this interplay of "inner" and outer," is felt as well in the "word music." The measure and rhyme are no longer the dominating element in the flow of thought. They become a kind of discipline and objective control against which there is thrown a more subtle, "inward" rhythm and beat, like the free flow of meditative thought, as in the lines, "Like to the lark at break of day arising/From sullen earth."

The all-over form, for all its small scope, is "classic." The sonnet is divided into four parts, each distinct, each a unit, each carrying its own burden of thought and emotion, each linked to the other through dramatic contrast and opposition, each at the same time being a development of the other, carrying the conflict to a higher level, and the whole unified in its conflict and resolution. Thus it can be compared to a classic Greek sculpture with its opposition and linking of head, torso, and legs; to classic Greek drama with its "Prologue," "Episodes" and "Exode"; to Beethoven's classic architecture, as in his handling of the first movement of a symphony, or of "sonata form," with its "exposition," "development," "recapitulation" and "coda," each a distinct unit, each linked to the others by dramatic contrast and opposition, the whole building and resolving a profound conflict.

In the sonnet, the first four lines present an affecting portrait of individual desolation. The "I" is an outcast, in disgrace, alone and weeping,

and not even prayers to heaven will help him. The next unit of four lines develops this misery, but offers at the same time a contrasting picture. As against the purely subjective desolation, we now have a real society briefly delineated. Shown is the conflict and rivalry of city and court life, with ambitious people "rich in hopes," people with handsome features, people with a flock of helpful friends, and because of this rivalry one is forced to envy, to desire this person's skills and that person's freedom of action. Then with the third unit of four lines, there is first a hint of reversion to the opening thought of subjective desolation, but at the same time an added inner conflict enters. The "I" not only weeps, but despises himself. And this is the transition to a release from conflict and misery. The "I" remembers his beloved, and in conveying this rapture, he also contrasts, to the rivalry of city life, the visionary peace and blessedness of the countryside. There is a subtle antithesis of the lark singing "hymns at heaven's gate," to the earlier despairing cry to "deaf heaven." The final couplet, like a "coda," sums up and rounds out the release or resolution, the peace that comes after travail is faced and fought through. And in summarizing the new state of life of the "I," it also subtly refers to the previous themes. The state of being "rich in hope" now is contrasted to the "wealth" of love. The public glory previously desired is now scorned, for the "I" would not even want to be a king.

The third poem is a sonnet by John Donne.

Batter my heart, three personed God, for you
As yet but knock, breathe, shine and seek to mend;
That I may rise and stand, o'er throw me and bend
Your force to break, blow, burn and make me new.
I like an usurped town, to another due,
Labor to admit you, but Oh, to no end;
Reason, your viceroy in me, me should defend,
But is captived, and proves weak or untrue.
Yet dearly I love you and would be loved fain,
But am betrothed unto your enemy:
Divorce me, untie or break that knot again,
Take me to you, imprison me, for I
Except you enthrall me, never shall be free.
Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me.

It comes only one generation after the period of Shakespeare's maturity, but a crisis has now developed in English life. The unification

of the nation under a monarchy, the breaking of the power of the independent feudal lords, the accompanying sense of a "brave new world" opening up, has now developed conflicts. The monarchy is now becoming an obstacle to further middle-class, mercantile capitalist progress. The conflict would erupt of course in the Puritan revolution of the 1640's. But now, about two decades before this, there is increasing unrest, a sense of progress having turned into its opposite, a subjective yearning to withdraw from a hateful and oppressive world, taking the form of a religious revival quite different from Shakespeare's "Renaissance" welcome to actual life.

DONNE'S poetry is of the kind called "metaphysical" (the term being coined by Dr. Johnson a century later). The imagery gets very complicated. The meaning of the poem rests not in the experience called up by the image (as in Shakespeare's "lark at heaven's gate") but in this experience hurled against its opposite, the world of God and eternity. The real world is unreal; the unreal is real. And so the data of reality becomes the symbol for the otherwise inexpressible, the opposite of reality. This is not a reversion to the religious poetry of the Middle Ages. There is no such fixed theology. The metaphysical poets do not want an answer to a social problem, nor even a morality governing the conflicts of the real world of mankind. It is their own individual release that they seek. Donne especially expresses not so much faith, as the desire for faith. And so the quality of his poetry lies in what is psychologically true and real in it; not the proclamation of faith but the depths of anguish, not the peace yearned for but the torment, not the world of heaven and eternity but the inner world of conflictful emotion and torment. What makes this poetry an expression of "subjectivism" is not its probing into inner or subjective life, but in that the writer has no grasp of the movement of outer reality, or the real social conflicts, that can link to and illuminate his inner world. And so the conflict seems to rise from within, a product of the "mind" or "heart." It is the mysterious evil in him that he must strive vainly to conquer, and life impinges on him in equally mysterious form, distorted by his own horror of it.

In the sonnet, the first eight lines take most of their images from battle and war, in cumulative generalizations, one piled on another, of violence. The closing six lines take their images from love and imprisonment, with equal violence. Every image brings up its opposite. The poet can attain the peace of belief only by being assaulted and battered by it, being captured like an invested citadel which has been betrayed

from within, being conquered by violence. He can love God only by being violently broken away from his betrothal to the evil of worldliness, he can marry faith only by being forcibly divorced, he can find freedom only by being imprisoned or enslaved, he can attain the chastity of true blessedness only by being raped by it. And so the psychological portrait that emerges from this sharp opposition of peace attained through violence is one of terrible, unresolved inner conflict. For the peace is unattainable, the violence of life is real, real chains are fastened on him, and he knows that this is the way it will be, despite the very urgency of his clamor against them.

The all-over form is what is here called "subjective," frequently associated, especially in the 19th century, with what is called "romantic," just as the "decorative" becomes the "neo-classic." Donne handles the conventions of the sonnet form as expertly as Shakespeare. But the sections of the poem, such as the three quatrains and the couplet, or any other divisions one might find, do not have the quality of being distinct units, in dramatic opposition to one another. Thus, since the analogy has been offered of the classic form to a Beethoven symphonic first movement, the form of the Donne poem can be compared to the first movement of a Berlioz symphony, where because of the overwhelming "inwardness" of the music, the "exposition," "development," "recapitulation" and "coda" no longer have the same distinct independence, and no longer play a significant role in the all-over musical thought. And so, in the Donne sonnet, the same theme is repeated over and over, rising and falling in intensity, but in no contrasts that when resolved bring the thought to a new level. Again and again the subject begs the master for violence against him, since this will be his liberation. There seems to be a break with the line, "Yet dearly I love you," but the thought is still the same and the violent images accumulate. The last two lines carry on this conflictful thread, in even more violent form. Nothing is resolved.

A parallel to Donne's subjectivism in the field of pictorial art can be found in the work of the great Greek-Spanish painter almost contemporary with him, El Greco. Here too in a country, Spain, the progress of nationhood and unity has run foul of new conflicts, marked for example in the absolutism of the king and the terror of the Inquisition. Here too there is an apparent reversion, on the part of a student of the great Renaissance painters, to a kind of medievalism, but with a particularly new intensity, an almost personal theology that is a violent search for a peace that is never found. And in El Greco's form, as in the View of Toledo in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the lines

and contours have a turbulence and violence not justified by the real subject matter, and so speaking for some inexplicable internal unrest. The real world becomes symbol, or unreal. And characteristic of the "subjective," or "open" form, the lines in their hectic movement seem to be bursting out of the frame of the picture, with their violence of feeling accentuated through the distorted and echoed shapes.

THE succession of crises, upheavals and transformations of society that marked the rise of the bourgeois world and development of capitalism, from the sixteenth to the twentieth century, was reflected in the constantly deepening probing of inner, subjective and psychological life in all the arts. In painting, this is seen for example in the greater vibrancy of line, the subtlety in the handling of spatial depth, and the increasing richness and refinement of color, with each step in what seemed to be "naturalism" or the investigation of the play of light, actually being a step in the power of color harmony to strike and evoke the most tenuous inner moods. In music, it is seen in the development of harmony, of modulations, chromaticisms, the growing interrelation of harmony and instrumental color, the increasing subtlety in the handling of shades of dissonance. In literature, it is seen in the increasing depth of psychological portrayal, and examination of the mental processes themselves.

But this should not be taken, as many theorists do, infected by the present-day crisis, to be a single line of development, a straight path leading to the future. On the contrary, each stage in the development of bourgeois competitive individualism, the war of "all against all," has been countered by movements where people cooperated for freedom. And similarly in the arts, at crucial times, society has brought forth creative figures who restored the classic qualities of art, bringing "inner" and "outer" worlds into union. This has often been a herculean struggle the marks of which are seen in the works themselves . It has been, as it is today, the most difficult task in the arts. It can be inspired by the past, but most always breaks new ground, for it has to make its own, and relate to the outer world, all the developments in inward and psychological sensitivity.

Balzac's novel *Eugenie Grandet* for example, can be cited as an example of "classic" form. The story is told with a minimum of characters, each with a special significance, a thoroughly seen individual who is also a "pattern," a type created by the society of the times. There is a miserly villager, Grandet, who through his financial acumen and lack of any scruple becomes one of the richest men in France, but continues

to live almost as a peasant; his beaten-down wife; his shy and sensitive daughter; a local judge who becomes Grandet's agent; a young fop from the city, with hope to rise in society through a wealthy marriage. In seven or eight scenes, each a dramatic unit in itself, each distinct from the next, each carrying the thought to a new level, Balzac creates a sweeping picture of the conflict between monetary and human values in bourgeois France of the early 19th century, and the distortion and wreckage this brings to the human being involved, some feeling this wreckage but hardly knowing what has done this to them, others accepting it as the only way of life. Balzac's grasp of the dialectic movement of social life gives his novelistic architecture a dialectical quality.

For an example in a short poem, John Keats' ode, *To Autumn,* will be examined. Here too, an insight into and grasp of the dialectic of life, in the relation of the individual to the outer world, gives the poem a dialectical movement, proceeding through a "clash of opposites" that is resolved on a new plane. The poem is especially illuminating in this respect because it here takes a "small" theme, almost one from private life, and also typifies the inwardness which, along with the struggle to reach back to life, is so characteristic of Keats' style. For the reader who is troubled by the fact that Balzac and Keats are here cited for examples of "classic" form, when they are so often described as "romantics," this can be said. Such terms as "romantic," "classic," "neo-classic," "baroque," "rococo," generally rise as labels for historical movements, and periods. But the problem arises whereby the artists of a period, while sharing a certain sensibility and even certain methods, show strongly opposing tendencies in both their social thinking and their internal forms of art creation. Thus the dilemma constantly rises as to whether these terms are historical or analytic. The terms suggested here, such as "classic," "decorative" or "neo-classic," "subjective," are advanced as purely analytic and the approaches to form they describe have to be seen as themselves developing historically, taking on a continually new clothing of life and thought, and exhibiting every form of variation between one and the other.

Keats ode, *To Autumn,* is in three stanzas.

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun:
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run;
To bend with apples the mossed cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;

To swell the gourd and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For Summer has o'er-brimmed their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reaped furrow sound asleep,
Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers:
And sometmes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozings hours by hours.

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay where are they?
Think not of them, hast thy music too,—
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river sallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

The language of the poem is simple and hardly different from the language Shakespeare used. There are no startlingly new figures of speech or symbols. The poem is on the face of it, the most unadorned description of sights and sounds in nature. Yet the sensibility is that of Keats' time, two centuries after Shakespeare. For all of the nature images in Shakespeare and other Elizabthan writers, we cannot find in them this special feeling of man being one with nature, so that he himself quivers to every ordinary sight and sound. And the poem creates a psychological picture of great subtlety and depth; that of the person withdrawing for a while from the bustle and turmoil of city life, dis-

covering himself in nature, rejoicing in the fertility of the land, aware of the constant activity of human beings, of farmers and farm laborers in turning nature to human use, revelling in the new miraculous sensitivity this appreciation of social labor creates, and discovering peace in this new-found intimacy. It is as if in the back of Keats' mind was the thought that Marx would put into *Capital* a half-century later, about the labor process, and how it both changes nature and develops the human being.

Each stanza is a different unit of thought. The first stanza describes Autumn as the time of crops becoming ripe, and stresses the abundance of the crops, with the sensuous feeling of growth almost bursting out of its confines, loaded vines, tree branches bending with the weight of apples on them, hives brimming over with honey. In the second stanza Keats—perhaps stimulated by the general form of the ode itself, which derives from the ancient Greek—raises in his imagination the ancient earth-goddess, like Demeter or Ceres. But through this fancy, and this is the new thought embraced in the stanza, Keats presents a succession of images of the human beings whose labor brings forth this fruitfulness; the threshers, reapers, gleaners balancing a basket of grain on their head while crossing a stream, watchers at a cider press. And the third stanza, another contrasting thought, seems to revert back to nature itself, but it is nature seen in a new light from the first stanza, nature "humanized" and the human being whose senses have grown in response to it, so that it is no longer simply the observation of the fruits and crops but an intimacy to everything about it, which now seems beautiful; the fields, the glow of light, the "chamber music" of its sounds.

PRIMITIVE SONG

JACK LINDSAY

Though there are many books or articles dealing with the songs of particular tribes or primitive groups, there is remarkably little of a general nature on primitive song (or music). Yet the importance of exploring the origins of song is very great. Origins do not explain everything that comes later; but unless we know thoroughly the origins of any field of human activity, our understanding of later phases cannot but be unsure and rickety. In the huge three volumes of the misnamed *Growth of Literature* the Chadwicks did a valuable job in directing attention to the poetry of Europe, Asia, Polynesia, and part of Africa in its pre-literate forms. They collected a mass of information, but found themselves to some extent lost between the tasks of compilation and of generalizing the material: which is perhaps the main reason for the comparative lack of impact made by their splendid work. They were mainly concerned however with the forms of oral literature lying behind the great cultures, and did not reach the expressions of people at what we may roughly call the paleolithic and neolithic levels—those who have not learned to practice agriculture, and those who were in the primary stages of practicing it, without an effective development of metallurgy. Under the first heading come the groups dealt with by Sir Maurice Bowra in his important pioneering book, *Primitive Song*: the African Pygmies and Bushmen, the Semang, Veddas and Andamanese of southern Asia; the Australian aboriginals; the Eskimos and the Selk'nam and Yamana of Tierra del Feugo. Under the second we could place the pre-Columbian Indians of North and South America; for though in such parts as Peru and Mexico considerable urbanization, together with a form of the State, was brought about, metallurgy never played a significant part in production.

Thorough and Cautious

BOWRA covers his field thoroughly. He discusses the extent to which we can correlate the historical paleolithic cultures which we know from the great cave-paintings of western Europe and from much more widely scattered carvings and the like, and the paleolithic cultures surviving into our

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***Primitive Song*, C. M. Bowra, The World Publishing House, $6.50.**

own day. He is, rightly enough, cautious of any simple affiliation, and remarks that the millenia which in some areas have seen the development into towns, class-society, and ultimately industrialism, seem to have led in the more stationary societies to inner elaboration of custom and social organization. He sums up well: "Though the religion of modern primitives may have a good deal in common with that of Paleolithic man, there is no reason to think that it has not undergone a notable movement of its own towards both a central simplification and peripheral complexities." I had myself set out similar conclusions in a recent work: "The complex systems of the Australians cannot be shifted back to the earlier scene; but that does not mean there is nothing we can learn from the Australians about certain essential characteristics of paleolithic life." I would only go further than Bowra by suggesting that a careful analysis of the ancient cave-art (such as that begun by Annette Laming on Lascaux) can help us towards a fairly precise understanding of the relation of the Aurignacian and Magdalenian outlooks and those of the Australians. Bowra does not explore this question, which is not essential for his book though it is of much general importance; for the "totemic survivals" in ancient historical cultures suggest very strongly that somewhere in the distant past there was a crystallization of ritual from which both the "survivals" and the elaborated totemism of the Australians were developed.

Bowra discusses the way of life of his paleolithic groups, the role of song in their social and personal expression, the forms of composition and performance, the technique, manner and method, the relation of song to practical needs and activities (above all, hunting), to the world of nature and the cycle of human experience. He then deals with the imaginative outlook of the primitive and his way of using myth and symbol. He thus shows how song, together with the dance and the music from which it is inseparable, is at all points integrated with the way of life, arises from it and returns into it. He finely comments: "Primitive man derives his poetry not from an isolated part of his nature but from the whole of it, and for this reason it gives an impression not only of immediacy and urgency but of a unified outlook, of experience so fully absorbed that it thrives in its own right and has its own unity." This is a key-point, which has to be borne in mind all the while in considering any form of truly primitive art. The quality of wholeness is what provides the fascination of such art for us in a divided world; and I myself would add that it has been the function of art throughout the centuries of class-division to struggle to carry on this tradition of wholeness—though in a divided world the struggle has two aspects, the aesthetic unity of the work of art and the realization of what it is that unites and divides man in the given situation. The aesthetic unity in a sense provides the criterion by which the artist makes his moral and social judgment—though it cannot in turn be separated from the social forces, above all the productive forces which in the given situation are historically moving towards a fuller and more stable humanity, a fuller and more stable rooting of man in the earth. Thus the artist's struggle for aesthetic unity becomes one with his struggle to realize and express the social forces which are driving forwards. In the working-out this involves a series of highly complex relationships and tensions; but we can still, I think, validly generalize as above. And this point underlines what I said earlier about the light which origins can throw on later phases of development. Art originates in a united society in which it directly expresses the whole man; thus it founds and works out its fundamental forms and methods, and creates a tradition which is carried on into a divided world. The tradition, the whole system of artforms, embodies a reservoir of social energy which raises the individual artist above his merely-personal level, however important his personal reactions and responses are in the total situation begetting the work of art. Thus we can understand why an artist can be so much wiser and comprehensive in his art than in his personal positions. When he writes or sings or paints, he enters a level of experience which is intensely personal and which yet fuses the personal emotions and ideas with the socializing and unifying element inherent in the art-image and its tradition.

Pure Sound

BUT to return to Bowra. He argues that the earliest form of song was a series of meaningless sounds such as still are to be found in some kinds of primitive song, and are indeed the only kind existing among the Yamana. These songs of pure modulated emotive sound do not show any signs of being borrowed from other languages or of representing ancient forms of which the meaning has been forgotten. The next phase of expression is then the single line charm or prayer, such as the Bushman hunting-charming sung when the blue crane (with its white head) runs away, "A splinter of stone which is white," or the Kurnai (Australian) charm used by a headman to stop the west wind from blowing, "Carry a bond for the west wind." Next there come extended statements composed of single lines, in which the movement of thought from line to line grows more complex and which evolve into a logical structure with the meaning capped by the conclusion of the paragraph. Out of this form comes the stanza of generally four to six lines, and the series of couplets used to develop a picture or idea. All these forms are linked with dance-movements. Thus the couplet or stanza can be coincident with a single movement of the dance, or we may get a repeated line in the middle of a stanza to represent a change in the movement, a pivotal point.

An important part is played indeed by repetitions, which enable the singer to keep continuity and to maintain form over an extended statement. Words may be repeated at the beginning or end of a line, or repetitions may be used in a much more complex way. Further, they lead into variations of theme and finally into the forms of parallel statements which we find so fundamental in the early poetries of Sumeria and Egypt, and later in Hebrew. The refrain is a kind of repetition which has been detached for the use of the choric group while the leader or solo singer carries on with the main song. The tension between refrain and solo stanza, which is also based in the dance movement, is of great importance in the development of stanzaic

forms, and carries right on into such historical genres as ballad or ballata.

Alliteration and all sorts of inner assonances play an essential part in the concentrations of poetic language; and rhyme too is often used, though it is never obligatory. Here is a Semang song about a coconut ape, which shows all these kinds of sound-enrichment:

o'tign tod'n ca tig'n leg'n
ilel kemo 'bateg'n

(He runs up and down looks on all sides, sees the fruit of the bateg'n.)

Finally there is a movement towards metrical form as a result of the increasing tension between precise dance-movement, tune, and words. "Sometimes the actual number of syllables in a line is fixed; sometimes there is a fixed number of accented, though not of unaccented, syllables. But some peoples, notably the Australian Aranda, have moved beyond this and construct their lines on recognizably metrical principles. They stress certain syllables, and this gives to the line something like the repetitive element which is the basis of meter. They tend to build a line in two halves, and though in singing they run them closely together, they keep them in action by balancing quick and slow beats."

Words and Dance

THOUGH the process in history may not have worked out as neatly as it sounds when thus reduced to a schematism, Bowra's analysis is generally convincing; for he keeps always in mind the close relation of tune and words to dance-movement, and we may assume that poetic form developed out of a long and involved relationship between the three components, as part of a struggle to express more clearly powerfully, and fully what the dance-singers had in mind. Dance made tune possible; tune become words enormously enriched the potence of the dance; the unified dance-tune-words in turn enriched life and intensified the energies; flowing back into the dance-rite.

Bowra insists on the immediacy and particularity of the moment of inspiration. The primitive man *"lacks general ideas and even generalized experience. His concern is to catch the unique air of a situation and to show precisely what it is. This is to be expected in peoples whose attention seldom reaches beyond the immediate moment or the thought of something just done or about to be done. Though this is forced upon them by having to live from hand to mouth, it brings compensation in their songs, which have the freshness of something newly and vividly apprehended. Though their range, if we view it abstractly, is necessarily very limited, this does not matter, since what counts is the particular presentation of particular sensations, and for this reason singers display their originality by their unexpected angles of approach or moments of vision. There is little demand for novelties in the sense of new main subjects, but there is a bold and original enterprise in the handling of old."*

All that is true, but there is much more to be said. The very closeness of the tradition in which the individual singer works, and which he shares with the audience, provides the generalized background from which the particular expression gains its meaning, its breadth, and against which its flash of variation, its tangential divergence, gains its force. Further, as Bowra abundantly shows in other sections of his book, each song, even when it seems to own no element of myth, involves a creative process with a mythical way of thinking and often has a concealed or oblique reference to myth. Through out, there is a deep symbolism which lifts the particular moment from its apparent isolation and sets it in the shared world view. The song in all its particularity is thus linked with a rich and stable set of general ideas and generalized experience. Bowra is mistaken in denying these latter. True, they do not exist in any definite body of philosophy or theology; but they do exist in the set of rites that embody the myths, in the pervasive conviction of man's unity with nature and of the cyclic renewals of life in which man, other animals, the earth and plantlife, alike are involved. Because the ideas are not yet detached as "ideas" they are none the less present, and they constitute one aspect of the wholeness that Bowra rightly noted as the essential of primitive life and expression. His formulations elsewhere in the book correct what is one-sided in the passage I have cited.

Weakness

THE book's weakness lies rather in an insufficient account of the social organization of the groups involved. There is not enough differentiation of the Australians from groups such as the Veddas and the Fuegans. He says of them all, "The fundamental unit is the family, but a few families may live and work together in a group." This loose account may serve for the Veddas, but it will not do for the extremely complicated totemic systems of the Australians, in which forms of dual or symmetrical organization are carried to their limit inside tribe or clan. As I have attempted to show elsewhere, this dual organization has profound effects on the ways of thought and has a deep and subtle link with the totem and its taboos as with the incest taboos. There is no space here to elaborate these points, but one aspect needs to be brought out.

Bowra, in developing his thesis of the particularity of the reaction embodied in the primitive song, stresses the "simplicity" of the impulse. "In such pieces a single, isolated notion does all the work, but just because the primitive mentality does not analyze a situation into various constituent elements but grasps a complete, unbroken impression, even a very short song may have considerable richness. A theme, which is rightly presented as a unity because that is how the singer sees it, may none the less contain recognizably different elements." There is much truth there, for the song's unity proceeds from the wholeness of response to which Bowra drew attention. But the unity is a dialectical one; it does not come from a simple outburst of undifferentiated emotion. Almost always the "different elements" can be recognized as bound together as opposites combining to form the song's unity, its spontaneous expression of the life-process.

To exemplify my point, I shall take some of the songs that Bowra discusses. Thus, a Bushman song describes a girl who has been suddenly taken ill.

Poor young Kharis got into a fright,
She is suffering from gripes,
And bites the ground like the hyena

which ate poison.
The people run to see the fun!
They are still all very much frightened, and still they say: "Oh, it is nothing!"

There in six lines a rapid alternation of emotions is defined. First, the girl's fear and paroxysm, contrasted with the excitement of the people running in to see the amusing display of hyneamovement. Their amusement turns into its opposite, a fear that unites them with the suffereing girl; and out of the conflict of amusement and fear comes the effort to pretend that nothing of significance is happening. Bowra notes the richness of reactions inside the small compass of the song, but does not go on to modify his definition of "simplicity" as necessarily consisting of a clash of emotions and ideas inside the unity of the image.

A Dama lament expresses the grief of a man for his dead wife:

You, full-breasted one, have died,
Arise and grasp your stick,
Let us go out together to dig out the field-mouse.
Your husband—when will he eat onions?
Are you truly dead? Do you live, and yet lie there?
Arise, cut a stick and let us look for field-food.
Unwearying one, digger clothed in a skin!
Rich in girls and boys, arise!
Rich in children, arise!
Mother of boys, arise!
Who will give them perfume?
Your companions wish to get perfume ready.
Arise and help in preparing perfume.
Short-armed one, arise.
Tie up your skin, and let us seek field-food.
While you lie there, the women have already dug up the onions.
Therefore arise, let us go together and work.
Let us arise and look for field-mice.
Who is left to your husband to give him field-food?
Arise and say your last words to me.
Without a word of farewell you die.

The almost intolerable poignancy of the poem comes from the fusion of life and death throughout. The memories of the shared life of marriage are so strong that they dominate the anguish of loss and impose their images on the void, and yet the void is inescapibly present. Because the sense of life and its infinite sweetness refuses to die with the death of the loved one, there is an extreme tension between the bereft state of the singer and the everyday activities which still go on and will continue to go on: "The women have already dug up the onions." Death is absolute, but so is life.

We may note also how much of the richness of the effect comes from the repetitions: both the direct ones, which break in as a sort of life-refrain; "Let us go out . . . let us arise . . ."—and the indirect ones which echo in and out, intensifying the sense of a bond as deep as life, something gone for ever and yet a pledge of eternal fecundity.

Unity of Opposites

TO show how variously yet comprehensively the deep sense of the clash and unity of opposites works creatively in the primitive, I shall cite a quite different type of poem. An old Eskimo shaman, Itasiaq, sings of four moments in his past in which disaster and triumph were merged:

It robbed me, the wind,
Of my covering the wind robbed me.

Thus much I have saved,
Of my covering the wind robbed me.

Only that I could not put my hand on;
I thought of it, but did not put my hand on it.

The singers they take from me,
They take from me my song.

That song I did not refrain from letting go.
The drum I held it up again.

It robbed me, the spirit,
It robbed me of speech.

Only at that one — I did not wish to look at him;
Away to one side I turned my eyes.

It robbed me, the wicked bearded seal,
Of the harpoon line it robbed me.

Since the sealers too could not catch anything,
I did not let my harpoon-line go.

Since the sealers too could not catch anything,
I waited and pulled hard at my harpoon-line.

The first three couplets tell of an ice-journey when the wind blew his caribou-skins away; the event was caused by malevolent foes who wanted to make him freeze to death, but though he could not reach them, he resisted and survived. The next two couplets tell how a song of his was stolen by others, he let them have their way, but persisted and composed another song. The next three stanzas tell how the spirit (his familiar, it seems) robbed him of speech at some crucial moment in a rite, but he managed to keep his eyes from the rival shaman who was triumphing to his defeat, and so averted the completion of his shame. The last three stanzas tell how a seal carried away his harpoon-line, but he persisted and at length had a catch. Thus, his four moments of supreme loss—the loss of life, song, speech (magical power), labor-power—are all turned into their opposites by his acceptance of the situation, his refusal to accept it. The song of defeat is the song of truimph.

It is then not enough to say with Bowra that such songs "show how easily their method could end in disorder if the singer did not fix his attention firmly on some central point from which his variations radiate." We must put the matter more precisely. The central point is the point of the clash of opposites. It is because that point always exists in the primitive's moment of inspiration that he gives such a compelling unity, such a clear order, to what at first glance may seem to us a rush of disconnected images or an outburst of simple spontaneity, emotionally directed but lacking any intellectual controls. The dialectical method that lies deep in his poetic faculty is itself a form of high generalization of experience. We cannot deny it this title because it does not attach itself as a

conscious or philosophical idea, but appears as one dynamic aspect of a total world-view which is socially expressed in the dual organization and in the totem with its taboos.

Identity with Nature

BOWRA shows how one important way in which the primitive achieves his deep sympathy for the life of nature, lies in his self-identification with the totemic bird, beast, plant. The totem itself is eternal; but because the objects in which it is incarnated are subject to all the chances of destruction, it also dies. Thus runs a song from Arnhem Land:

There at Dungulmu stands the stringybark tree.
"Ah," says the tree, "I shall keep standing here,
Where the little green birds are living."
Ah, far away stands the stringybark tree.
"I will cut down that tree," says the Wijar spirit.
"That tree that has for so long been standing there.
The home of the little green birds."
Crying he goes and cuts the stringybark down.
"Those flowers are mine, that stringybark is mine," says Wuda'l.
The tomahawk cuts the tree, the leaves come falling.
The tree falls into the water at Iurmiiurmi,
The water is swirling there where the stringybark falls . . .
Ah, daughter, grandmother, grandchild,
It was there you lost all — dead.
Ah, you lie there as if you were only sleeping.

The life of the group is bound up with the tree. But the undying tree, like the human beings, is caught up in the endless conflict of things. Its dream of an eternal pastoral, a reflection of the human dream of eternal life in blessed union with one's fellows, is abruptly ended by the attack of evil. The tree falls. The three loved ones die. And yet the tree survives in the unbroken life of nature; other trees grow; the totem is still at the center of things. The dead ones seem only sleeping; they are part of the ancestral dreamtime, part of the spirit-life of nature. The break in continuity, the reassertion of continuity: the song presents these opposites as equally part of the whole truth of things. Life goes on. Yet the grief is real; the tree with those particular little green birds has fallen.

Much more could be said of this valuable and rich book, which enables us at long last to enter effectively into the song-world of the groups at stone-age level and thus to gain a radical view of the origins of poetry. No one can read it without a deepened apprehension of the nature of poetry itself. I have suggested that further consideration of the primitive's worldview would lead Bowra to see a definite dialectical realization at the center of his creative system, his method of ordering his material; but I do not wish this comment to be taken as belittling in any way a book in which almost every page is marked with brilliant insights and intellectual breadth of vision.

COMMUNICATIONS

A Reply

(See Mr. Asch's communication in the December, 1962 Mainstream.—Ed.)

WHILE I admire Mr. Moses Asch's work at Folkways Records, I do wish he would read with less temper and more objectivity and care. He should be aware that criticism, if it's not abstract or metaphysical, often must employ comparisons in order to establish positive, specific standards. A writer shouldn't be denied a disciplined freedom to move around in order "to make a point"—and this includes freedom to enter into music or the plastic arts or politics, all being interconnected. I don't think we should waste paragraphs of space debating how a point is made, as long as the point made is logical, accurate and honest. It appears Mr. Asch strongly disagrees with one point I made: that Bach communicates more profundities using the smallest instrument than John Cage reveals with all his sensational disorders of sound—just as Beecher's precise, calm language conveys more ideas and substance than the noisy nihilism counterfeited as poetry by the current bourgeois bohemians. I hope Asch isn't attempting a rescue party for the pseudo-poets, although he is trying to defend Cage. It becomes obvious Asch doesn't really object to comparison in my criticism, as he alleges, only that I dared judge against Cage. Yet Asch contributes nothing to make Cage's "music" more palatable. Asch wants to sweep aside adverse criticism of Cage with sturdy language. Muscular words, however, don't alter one fact, one personal response or opinion.. I didn't idly choose Cage for comparative illustration. I consider Cage one vivid manifestation of deterioration, the epidemic of chaos and gibberish, intellectual paucity, the violent abandonment of reason so clearly visible in every level of modern capitalist culture. In my review I desired to compare one decadent artist to a writer like Beecher who represents an energetic tradition directly opposite. I'm con-

vinced my comparison was well-founded.

I CAN'T accept Mr. Asch's absurd addendum that *"any art form"* that *"breaks tradition is valid."* (My italics.) Which tradition is Asch attempting to break? The tradition inherited from Bach, Shakespeare, Fielding, Tolstoy, Twain, King Oliver, Eluard, Brecht and John Beecher? Or perhaps Asch wishes to smash the tradition of Huysmans, T. E. Hulme, Celine, T. S. Eliot, Henry Miller, Schoenberg, Nabokov, Beckett, Ezra Pound? Asch's irresponsible rejection of *all* tradition becomes a total rejection of history and human struggle. Perhaps Asch thinks the artist is created *ab ovo?* But every artist, Mr. Asch, has his historical relatives. I think Asch confuses tradition with orthodoxy, while his own dogmatism is injected by labeling as ignorant, malicious and biased any criticism unfavorable to John Cage.

MOST American publishers certainly merit harsh criticism for defrauding the reading public, but nowhere in my review did I have time to "belittle" Grove Press as Asch contends. My factual statement was this: No anthology today, Rodman's, Oscar Williams', etc., including the rigged one issued by Grove Press, contains a single poem by John Beecher.* Does Asch, who claims to have recorded Beecher (no such title is presently listed in the Folkways catalog), think an outrageous injustice should be treated with abject silence? But, according to Asch, we must not belittle Grove Press. . . .

I can't discern what Asch had in mind about Thoreau. I esteem Thoreau and presented in its entirety Beecher's poem "Homage To A Subversive (H. D. Thoreau)," calling it a classic. It isn't clear whether Asch objects to this or not. In such a case I must plead *nihil dicit* until I know what charge, if any, Asch contemplates.

Perhaps Moses Asch and I have no great clash of differences, but what opposite views we do hold were, I hope, clarified and maybe resolved in this exchange.

LESLIE WOOLF HEDLEY

* I'm pleased to note that The Monthly Review Press, *not* Random House, *not* New Directions, and certainly not Grove Press has since published Beecher's *Report to the Stockholders,* thus making it possible for readers to have a replica of the original hand-set edition for only $3.00.

books in review

***The First International in America*, by Samuel Bernstein. New York. Augustus M. Kelley, publisher. 1962. $10.**

THE *First International in America* is a very important and useful work. In the field of history, and espevially of labor history in this country, I would say it belongs with the best half-dozen writings of the twentieth century up to now. In discussing it I shall try to indicate why I rate it so high.

The author, Samuel Bernstein, is an editor of *Science and Society,* and a long-time researcher in the field of labor and socialist scholarship. Among his notable contributions are *The Beginnings of Marxian Socialism in France,* published in 1933, and *Essays in Political and Intellectual History,* 1955. Recently Dr. Bernstein edited *Papers of the General Council of the International Workingmen's Association in New York,* 1872-1876, brought out late last year by Giangiacomo Feltrinelli in Milan, Italy, (Bernstein's introduction and notes are in English; the *Papers* are in the languages in which they were originally written.)

Bernstein's *First International in America* bears the same title as Hermann Schlüter's *Die Internationale in Amerika,* published here in a series of pamphlets in 1918 by the German Federation of the Socialist Party of America, but unfortunately never translated into English. Schlüter's history is of great value because of his personal acquaintance with many of the First International leaders, but it is too condensed and sketchy to be adequate now for a full understanding of the conditions that existed ninety years ago. Bernstein's book is far more detailed and rounded out than Schlüter's.

So far as I know, Bernstein's is the only treatment in English which centers attention on the four-year period in which the International was located in the United States, 1872-1876. Other histories of the International (G. M. Stekloff, W. Z. Foster), which cover a broader subject-matter, say comparatively little of those last four years of the International's life. The same is true of Morris Hilliquit's *History of Socialism in the United States.*

Full Study

THE book under review does more, however, than narrate the events of this brief period. It goes into the

First International's rise in Europe, before its transfer to the United States. It traces ideological currents that found play there, and describes—quite objectively—the role of Bakuninism, of British pure-and-simple trade unionism, of Blanquism, and of Marxism. By quoting representatives of these currents, by analyzing briefly why the leaders thought these things, and by showing step by step what happened as a result, the author has freed the story from abstractions and made it credible and understandable.

The book also shows what preceded the 1872-76 period here in the United States. The organizing of the Communist Club, the treatment of Marx and of the European congresses of the International in the American press (and what surprising treasures Bernstein found in the old files of the New York *World, Sun, Tribune, Times, Herald,* the St. Louis *Daily Press!*), the affiliation of organizations here with the International, their correspondence, the many meetings—these *preparations,* historically considered, for the coming of the International to our shores are narrated more fully than this reviewer has ever read before.

Then, logically, comes the crucial four-year period itself, the work of the International in this country, and finally, when the end arrives, its legacy to American workers. For the International —though it continued to have ties with Europe's workers and, from New York, was officially the head of the workers' emancipation movement throughout the world—was most of all an American organization and a factor in the United States, insofar as its means and the times permitted.

There are certain qualities and aspects of this book that demand special mention.

First of all, there is the tremendous industry that is evident in the search for and discovery of historical sources. Bernstein has gone into not only the records of the International itself, the correspondence of its officers and members, the reports in the newspapers, and the stories in contemporary French and German publications here and abroad, but also the reports of French and Belgian diplomats to their home governments, and the police dossiers about members of the International (including Marx) still existing in the archives of the French and Belgian governments abroad, as well as dispatches from American diplomats in those countries during meetings of the International.

Second, there is the recovery (I say *recovery,* for even the names of participants in the workers' movement were beginning to be lost) of the personalities in the International. Sorge and Speyer and William West and scores of others, though many appear very briefly, move before us as real people who have skills and troubles, who argue and ponder social problems, who mean well and yet make mistakes. In a way —without intent or pretense, I feel sure—Berstein has produced a drama of the 1870's, where huge masses move about aimlessly on the stage and, over in the wings, a small group of high-minded men and women who see possible goals of progress try, and sometimes succeed, in moving the masses by inches in the direction of those goals. In this sense *The First International in America* is a work of art.

Third, the book is in brief a description of the condition of the working class in the United States during the hard times of 1873-77. The unemployment, the strikes, the demonstrations, the soup lines, the hunger, the desperation of the workers and the callousness of employers and politicians are given deftly and simply through reporting of newspapers and public figures and the demands of leaders of the workless and starving poor. Most of these leaders of the poor, naturally, were members of the International.

Fourth, there is the skillful and accurate presentation of opinion, theory and argument, and the obstacles to the success of even good ideas and good plans. Why did the "Americans" of Section 12 of the International fail to fit in with the plans of the organization? What distinguishes middle class approaches to economic problems from the working class approach? How did Lassalleanism differ from Marxism, and why did many early leaders lean toward it? Here, without polemizing or lecturing, Bernstein succeeds in giving objectively the points of view of differing and contradictory ideologies and interests. We see why such money schemes as Kelloggism appealed to farmers, why Proudhonism seemed ideal to some labor leaders, why status quo beneficiaries called for repressive measures against trade unions. In this analytical presentation of historic currents of thought and of the fate of various partial movements we can see parallels of our own time and from these learn lessons that help to illuminate our problems in the United States today. Not less can we learn lessons of world politics from those pupils of Marx, those old American Internationalists of the 1870's, who put their first stress on *class consciousness* and *internationalism.*

Fifth, there is shadowed forth in the book, gradually and slowly, usually in the background (because he was in Europe, not in New York), a titanic figure named Karl Marx. At the Hague Congress, where Bakunin was expelled, says Bernstein, "Marx was the object of attention and curiosity. His name was on every lip." When interviews appeared in the American press he had his eye on them. "A case in point," writes Bernstein, "was the interview with Karl Marx published by the New York *World* and the New York *Herald.* The version published by the first he considered worthy of confidence; that of the second threw him into a fit of anger." And on a point of protocol, as to what Americans to correspond with, Marx said — as reported in this book—"in a Yankee country, the General Council had to consider the Yankees first of all." Was there a dispute, or a criticism, or an obstacle, or a problem? Everyone turned to Marx. The great mind of Marx was always there, explaining, urging, guiding. This does not necessarily appear to have been Bernstein's *purpose*: it just worked out that way.

Importance of Book

AS a matter of fact the importance of this book derives partly from the story it tells and partly from the industry and objectivity exhibited by Bernstein in telling the story, rather than it seems to me—from the author's point of view. Indeed, in his *Preface* he declares that his motive in writing was chiefly to find out *why the First International failed* to get a following in the United States. And again, toward

the end of the book, he says that the International's principles "were not productive of an American socialist movement" comparable with that of Europe. The "failure" thus referred to, no one denies, and to analyze the causes thereof would have its uses. But to set apart and emphasize solely these failures, without an eye to accomplishments, might carry the implication that the International was a historical waste of time and effort, a notion that the book itself thoroughly refutes.

It is certainly true that the Marxist movement initiated by the International did not result—has not resulted up to this time— in the establishment of socialism in the United States. But does this justify a merely negative posture in entering upon a historical study of it? The Paris Commune was a failure, too, and Marx revealed its faults—but he regarded it as an augury of the future. The Easter Week rebellion in Ireland was a failure—but Lenin thought of it as a glorious effort.

In his *Epilogue* Bernstein in fact declares, "It can be claimed with confidence that American labor leaders who had passed through the school of the International were the best protagonists of the American trade union movement." In this respect, surely, and in the fact, as he says, "Its principles were its legacy to socialists in the United States," the International did not *fail.*

The somewhat negative approach in the *Preface* is a small matter when contrasted with the book as a whole. Bernstein has a humanist's love of history and a scholar's love of verification. He is reflective, not impassioned; he tells his story with judicial calm. This product of his learning is in my opinion a great service to the workers' movement of the United States, and to humanity at large.

I cannot conclude this review without referring to the publisher of *The International in America,* Augustus M. Kelley. He is a grandson of Florence Kelley, who translated Marx's lecture on *Free Trade* (delivered in Brussells in 1848) into English in 1888; she also translated Engels' *Condition of the Working Class in England in* 1844 into English and published it in the United States five years before the same work appeared in England itself. She corresponded with Engels; and she was a member of the Socialist Labor Party and later of the Socialist Party of America. Florence Kelley was the "mother" of the national Child Labor Act, one of the truly great pieces of reform legislation of this country, comparable in importance to the Wagner Labor Act and the Social Security Law.

Talking with Mr. Kelley in his office in an East 22nd Street loft, I asked him, casually, if he were publishing a fairly big edition of *The First International.* Why no, he said, he had gotten out only five hundred copies, bound by hand, and if those sold pretty well he would bind another five hundred.

— OAKLEY C. JOHNSON