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by Barbara Giles · BLUES FOR JIMMY, a poem by Thomas McGrath  
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JOSEPH SOLMAN is an artist who in the 1930's edited *Art Front*.

ALICK WEST, English Marxist critic, is the author of *Crisis in Criticism*.

COVER: *Bull-headed Sphinx*, an etching by Pablo Picasso. Courtesy Museum of Modern Art, New York.

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# PREFACE FOR TODAY

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WITH this issue we re-enter the arena in defiance of those who would outlaw dissent and chain the American people to a program of fascism and war. Our enemies rejoiced prematurely at the rumor of our exit from the literary scene. William Henry Chamberlin's "joyful obituary" in *The New Leader* was pronounced over a corpse of his own fancy, while James T. Farrell's public sighs of relief betrayed the anxiety of a mind that must conjure up the death of what it fears. But it is not a ghost that returns. Here, proudly, in purpose even if not in identical form, is a magazine that combines and carries forward the thirty-seven-year-old tradition of *New Masses* and the more recent literary achievement of *Mainstream*. We have regrouped our energies, not to retire from the battle but to wage it with fresh resolution and confidence.

We appear at a grave hour. The arsenal of democracy has become the arsenal of world reaction, servicing every scoundrel from Chiang Kai-shek and the Mufti to Tsaldaris and De Gaulle. An arrogant government of bankers and generals presses a bipartisan policy of world conquest. Preparations for war against the Soviet Union and the new people's democracies of Europe have passed the stage of hypocritical concealment. And the architects of this desperate strategy, the rulers of a decaying capitalism, are redesigning the land of the free as a land of witch-hunts where the F.B.I. inherits the functions of the Gestapo and the Un-American Committee checks our thoughts by the anti-Communist tests of *Mein Kampf*.

Faced with this war of Wall Street against the American people and the peaceful people of other lands, our magazine understands its responsibility. We mean to resist. We mean to fight back. Together with the millions who are rallying to the third party movement headed by Henry A. Wallace, we mean to play our part in winning peace and freedom for our country.

Our specific intention is to fight on the cultural front, in the battle of ideas. This is not a peripheral front. The American thought-controllers, no less than the German book-burners, want to beat into supine obedience the creative artist, the scientist, the educator. Honesty and

independence of intellectual judgment, already banned in the monopoly-controlled cultural media, are to be hounded out of American life. The attacks on the progressive film-workers in Hollywood, on Howard Fast, on Paul Robeson, on Hanns Eisler prepare a barbed-wire camp for American art.

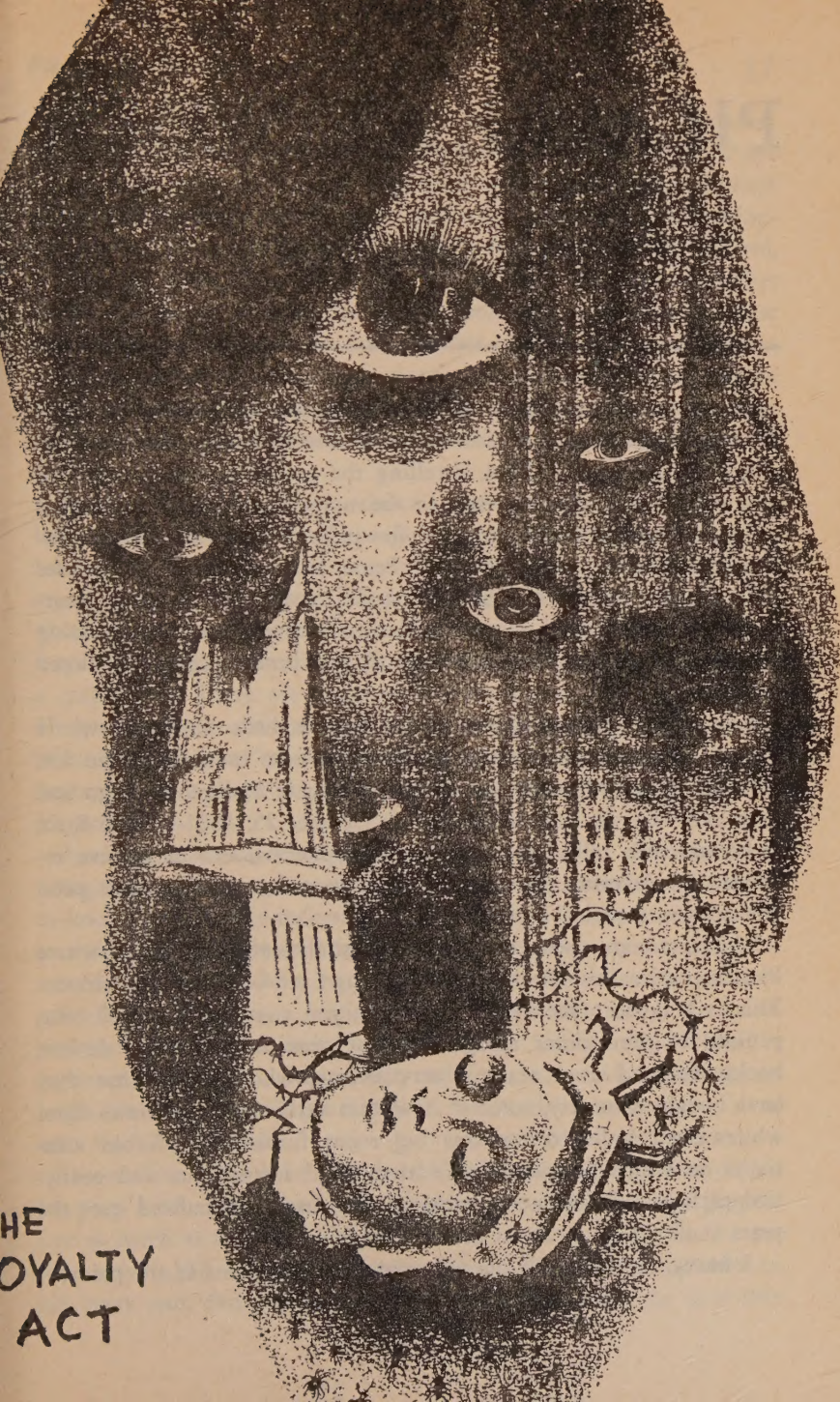
We do not view our position as merely defensive. For the people's resistance movement must also assert in a positive form the values of a progressive culture. We must sing our own songs and tell our own stories. An art rooted in American reality must oppose the banalities and false images of cash-register culture. The scientist must regain the laboratory from the militarist and manufacturer. To the cult of brutality and unreason we will counterpose a concern for people and for truth. Against the barbarisms of Jim Crow and anti-Semitism we will set our passion for justice.

Our editorial viewpoint—though not necessarily the viewpoint of every contributor—is Marxist. For we believe that only in a socialist society can the creative energies of man be truly liberated. Our criticism of capitalism and its culture is based on no illusion that reforms will end its wars, its economic crises, its antagonism toward the artist. These evils, inherent and basic, have reached a frightful climax in imperialism and fascism. And we believe that the artist of integrity, insofar as he truthfully reflects these evils, will confirm in his esthetic achievement the Marxist science that points to socialism.

The rule of monopoly capitalism is discussed in an article in this issue, and the relation of the greatest painter of our time, Pablo Picasso, to the fight for freedom is examined in another. The politics of our epoch and the art of our epoch interpenetrate; they cannot be separated. Our correspondent from Prague describes how intellectuals of the new Europe approach this reality, while Barbara Giles, in her recollections of childhood in Louisiana, shows the intertwined social and psychological roots that lie behind her novel, *The Gentle Bush*. It is in such articles, as well as through stories, poetry, art, and concrete analyses of personalities, problems and trends in specific cultural fields that we will strive for a culture based upon and identified with the working class and the progressive people's movement in the United States.

We are eager to hear from our readers. We want your suggestions and criticisms. Our work requires the closest liaison between the writers and their audience. **MASSES & MAINSTREAM** belongs to both and speaks for both.





THE  
LOYALTY  
ACT

# PICASSO AT WORK

by LOUIS PARROT

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PICASSO lives in Paris on the Rue des Grands-Augustins, in a historic house once occupied by the Dukes of Savoy. This princely, though somewhat run-down, dwelling the painter's friends now call Minotaur House, alluding thus to the numerous bull-fighting scenes and Greek themes which the artist has painted. The Rue des Grands-Augustins is a few steps from the Seine, in a section of old houses and deserted courtyards. Picasso's studio, made up of three enormous rooms, is located on the top floor, which you reach by climbing a narrow staircase past worn woodwork and broken geranium-colored tiles.

Four white pigeons flutter about in the little anteroom where Picasso has set up his winter garden—and woe to anyone who lets them fly away! When he was twelve, living at Malaga, Santiago and Barcelona—he was born at Malaga on October 25, 1881—Pablo Ruiz, as he was then called, painted lilacs and pigeons, and these have remained his favorites. In this anteroom you also see his other pets: turtle-doves, canaries, an owl.

The anteroom opens on a kind of studio-reception room where Picasso receives his friends every morning until one in the afternoon. This is a favorite meeting-place, where you can find boyhood companions of the painter along with his latest acquaintances, dealers, booksellers and even amateur art-collectors who, fearing that they have bought a forgery, come to have him verify their purchases. Bare whitewashed walls enclose this big room furnished with old arm-chairs on which lie guitars, African musical instruments and neatly-tied packages of documents, etchings, drawings accumulated over the years.

A heavy cabinet, rarely opened, contains a large part of the painter's



collection, notably the books he has illustrated from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* to volumes by Max Jacob and Reverdy. It also contains the painter's albums of drawings with over a hundred notebooks, kept since 1889. In these albums, where you may trace the artist's development, you find classic heads of people in nineteenth century Madrid, landscapes, clocks, sketches of his first *collages* and minute studies in the manner of Leonardo da Vinci's "botanical explorations." These notebooks also include the first sketches of Picasso's most famous canvases, from the Carnegie Prize portrait of his wife down to the most recent bull-fighting scenes. These are invaluable documents; yet Jaime Sabartes, Picasso's secretary, tells us that the painter never looks at them.

Picasso discloses in all his talents a virtuosity which has sometimes been compared with that of the Japanese painter, Hokusai. The story has it that the latter, asked to paint a river carrying off the leaves of a purple-colored maple tree, dipped the legs of a cock into a bucket of red paint and allowed the animal to run across the paper. The wayward tracks left by the fowl immediately suggested the leaves of a maple tree. There are many similar revelations in Picasso's work. He tosses on the canvas a spot which does not mean a thing. Soon, living lines radiate in all directions from this dark sun, a human landscape takes shape, then a whole picture whose origins are quickly forgotten.

Nothing interests Picasso more than the work of artisans, of lithographers and engravers; he is like the true musician who wants to know how the lute-makers work. Never does Picasso enter a studio as a "master," but always as a man eager to learn, eager to add some new formula to all those he willingly shares. His voice has an alert, good-humored quality, a kindness shot through with irony. His intentions are not immediately revealed in his conversation. Often he interrupts his words unexpectedly with a quick and slightly husky laugh. But there is only good will in the words he addresses to those who work by his side.

Picasso has never been troubled by technical problems. The dullest scraping knife or a match-end lying on the table suits his purpose just as much as the most highly perfected instruments. He finds a use for anything. He has made drawings on a lithographic stone with an old rusty nail. But what Picasso always lacks is time; he is a man

who never has the time to do what he would like. For he constantly retouches what he has done: engravings, paintings, sculptures. While he was working on his celebrated Guernica mural, a visitor asked him: "Well, when are you going to finish this picture?" Picasso replied: "When they come to get it." For him a work of art is never finished.

The master's second studio is a huge room that suggests the inside of a Castilian barn. On a table I notice, in the midst of a pile of papers and books, some back numbers of *Le Minotaure*, a magazine that appeared between the two world wars. Here Picasso published his poems. He also has written a play, a kind of farce, *Le Désir attrapé par la queue* (Desire Caught by the Tail), which was played in his studio during the Occupation in April, 1944. "Poems?" he said to me, "there are stacks of poems sleeping here. When I began to write them I wanted to prepare for myself a palette of words, as if I were dealing with colors. All these words were weighed, filtered and appraised. I don't put much stock in spontaneous expressions of the unconscious and it would be stupid to think that one can provoke them at will."

"The work of madmen," he told me, "is always based on a law that has ceased to operate. Madmen are men who have lost their imagination. Their manual memory belongs to a realm of rigid mechanism. It is an infernal machine that breaks down and not an intelligence that progresses and constantly creates in order to progress. One cannot compare poems resulting from automatic writing with those of the insane. The work of a madman is a dead work; the poetry it contains is like the ghost which refuses to give up its corpse."

PICASSO has set up his statues in the middle of his studio, that is, the first of his studios. Thus they form a permanent exhibition. Among them is a large statue in green bronze, *The Young Girl*, who is indeed the most curious personality in this mythology. This *Young Girl* is verdigris in color. Her bust has been cast in a tight corset of wavy cardboard, her collar formed by a cake-mold. Her arms are knotty branches. In one hand she carries an apple and in the other an object whose use is difficult to ascertain, a plow-share or an antique mirror.



Another statue that attracts a great deal of attention is that of Fate: it has been made by molding a dressmaker's mannequin on which Picasso has placed a blind head. There is also the famous black cock in bronze, which reminds you of a statue of dross, a bird petrified in smoke. Its tiny upturned wings are bramble leaves. "Bramble leaves fell by the side of my workbench," Picasso told me, "and I mixed them with my plaster. There isn't much difference between leaves and feathers. When the cock was finished, I applied the leaves to the still damp plaster. I was asked why I had done that. I replied: 'I don't know. Just because it seemed right.'"

"Sculpture," says Picasso, "above all official sculpture, has failed in its mission. It no longer says anything to the people." And Georges-Henri Adam, a young sculptor to whom Picasso has given his studio in which to work, has told me: "Picasso would willingly agree to give up one of his finest statues if he knew that it would be exhibited in a public park, on the quays of the Seine, or better still in one of the old sections of Paris." In Picasso's words: "Statues should be put back where they really belong. Go to the Louvre, for example, drag one of those Egyptian colossi out of its somnolence, and then set it up in the heart of a crowded neighborhood. I can well visualize this king of ancient Egypt with a smiling and funereal mask placed on the bank of the Saint-Denis Canal, his majestic black silhouette standing out against the yellow sky at the hour when the workmen leave the factories, facing the iridescent waters of the canal in which the factory-smoke is reflected. The whole landscape would be changed at a single stroke. . . ."

Picasso is not a theoretician but he is passionately fond of everything connected with his craft. Does the talk turn to sculpture? He shows us a panther's skull, then a horse's skull, and points out to us that the bony corner of the eye always has the same fissure. In this connection he tells us: "The entire skeleton has been not sculpted but modelled. There is not a bone where one cannot find the trace of a thumb and which has not been completely modelled. The same thing goes for all the bones except the orbit of the eye. The edges of the orbit in the part touching the sinus have not been polished; they have been 'broken.' The mud has been kneaded around this cavity, pressed between the thumb and index finger, then let go at the precise moment when the element hardened in a fissure, unique in

the skeleton; later its indentation permits the eye to be properly fixed.

"If the edges of the orbit had been smoothed and polished like the rest of the cranial case, the eye could not remain there. All the life in the work depends perhaps on this fusion of sculpture and modelling. It is at the precise moment when the creator, who holds the mud between thumb and index finger, is about to choose between the smooth perfection of the skeleton and the torn wrinkledness of the orbit, that the future life of what he has created is decided. Life is perhaps this hesitation, this point of equilibrium. Sculpture is the art of the intelligence."

Picasso is most careful about the casting of his statues and the patina he decides to give them. He takes all his plaster-casts to a little workshop on the Rue des Plantes, run by an artisan named Marcel Valsuani who comes of a long line of casters. Picasso brings him statues that are as light and white as meringue. A month or two later he gets them back all baked, changed into heavy objects over which neither time nor man has any power.

One day Picasso hit on the idea of making engravings on lithographic stone, so every morning at eight he went to one of the best-known workshops in Paris, that of the Morlot Brothers. He worked there for four months with a diligence that surprised everyone: he remained in a corner of the workshop hidden behind a labyrinth of green stones used for lithographic Bibles. In front of him, as in Chinese restaurants, there were black liquids in little covers of old shoe-polish cans. Picasso worked until evening bent over the lithographic stone, never satisfied with his results and continually beginning all over again. In four months' time he composed twenty-five large lithographs, of which eighty different "states" were made. At present the painter is working on two canvases, dividing his time between two compositions in which his manner has been completely renewed, and on a variation on a theme by Cranach. This one is a zinc engraving. So far there are ten versions of this remarkable work. The painter is likewise working on illustrations for several books, among them a Gongora. This volume will contain no less than forty engravings, with each sonnet of the Cordovan poet accompanied by graphic themes recalling those Picasso did for Buffon's *Natural History*, published several years before the war.

All of Picasso's friends have seen him at the end of a restaurant meal



tear up the paper napkin, twist each of the pieces of paper, crease them and place them in an empty bottle. Close your eyes and open them again: a bouquet of irises is on the table! When he wants to color certain drawings or quick-action statuettes, the painter uses whatever is in reach. There is a portrait of Nusch Eluard which, according to an English magazine, the painter made with lipstick, coffee and fruit juice. The truth is much simpler. Picasso simply made use of a geranium to get the red on the cheeks and lips of the portrait; the leaf of the geranium crushed by his thumb furnished the liquid green and faded yellow colors of the rest of the portrait.

Every time you visit Picasso's studio, there is always a new series of paintings or drawings, boxes full of water-colors you have never seen before. During the summer of 1946, while he was at Antibes, he painted only sea-urchins and owls. He went back there last year and finished some enormous paintings, huge murals he gave to the Antibes Museum and which now decorate the Grimaldi Chateau. But it would be wrong to think that Picasso paints his pictures "serial-wise" and easily shifts from one theme to another. In his studio are a great many canvases begun a long time ago. At times he returns unexpectedly to them, finishing them in ten minutes or dissatisfiedly turning them against the wall where they can hang for months without his touching them again.

Some have contrasted the turbulent and distorted images Picasso painted at the time of *Guernica*, or *The Man With the All-Day Sucker*, with those throughout his career that have been compared, for purity of line, with the works of Ingres. That is a childish contrast. There are not two hostile painters in Picasso. When his paintings seem to resemble one another (are not those of his boldest periods the ones that seem most alike?) it is always in the manner of ghosts. The more closely a face is made to resemble that of its model, the more it risks being ghost-like and coming to us from a very great distance. Often it is the reflection of another period projected onto his drawings or paintings, and it has the frozen purity of the Greek statues whose eyes are blind. Of course, Picasso's hand accurately remembers all those clowns in blue jerseys, whose features it once traced with such exactitude. But the painter carefully avoids allowing himself to be affected by the memory of these drawings and gouaches, which alone would suffice to establish a painter's fame. But why should he do over again something

he once succeeded admirably in doing? He quickly turns away and looks elsewhere.

Georges-Henri Adam, who sees Picasso often, has relayed to me some of the painter's comments on the problems facing young artists today: "A large number of young painters show me their pictures. Why do they want to retrace my path? Why do they adopt the old formulas of cubism, fauvism and impressionism? Almost all of them seem to me destined to become *painters of charm*. For the most part, they only popularize the techniques of those who preceded them: the dealers, who rejected the latter, today encourage their imitators. The eye of the public has grown used to them. The young painters ask themselves questions. They pose artistic problems to themselves even before waiting for these problems to be posed. It's a great tragedy for young painters to look for artistic problems in this way. They stop en route; all their vitality is paralyzed. They draw on memories and allusions, and try to find a way to solve this difficulty which they themselves have unwisely created with methods that have already proved their worth. Let them never stop en route! A growing tree does not pose to itself problems of tree-culture. A young artist must forget painting when he paints. That's the only way he will do original work. To blossom forth, a work of art must ignore, or rather forget all the rules.

"No doubt, it is useful for an artist to know all the forms of art which have preceded or which accompany his. That is a sign of strength if it is a question of looking for a stimulus or recognizing mistakes he must avoid. But he must be very careful not to look for models. As soon as one artist takes another as model, he is lost. There is no other model, or rather no other point of departure than reality. Why should I copy this owl, this sea-urchin? Why should I try to imitate nature? I might just as well try to trace a perfect circle. What I have to do is to utilize as best I can the ideas which objects suggest to me, connect, fuse and color in my way the shadows they cast within me, illumine them from the inside. And since of necessity my vision is quite different from that of the next man, my painting will interpret things in an entirely different manner even though it makes use of the same elements."

In an essay published in 1935 in the Madrid magazine, *Cruz y Raya*, Jaime Sabartès quotes Picasso as saying to a young painter: "If you want to draw a circle and claim to be original, don't try to give it a strange form which isn't exactly the form of a circle. Try to make the circle



as best you can. And since nobody before you has made a perfect circle, you can be sure that your circle will be completely your own. Only then will you have a chance to be original."

Picasso has declared on several occasions: "The true work of art is also a sum of refusals, and that is the lesson which young painters must understand. Are you satisfied with what you have just painted or sculpted? Then don't hesitate: no matter how painful it may seem to you at first, erase the work, forget it, look elsewhere. You must take the steepest path, with its thorns and jagged stones that hurt. Renounce everything that pleases you. *Successes destroyed are additions, not subtractions. They strengthen, not weaken the artist.* Two roads lead to what we incorrectly call perfection: that of tenderness and that of violence, that of love and that of hate. The first is so pleasant to follow that very few have the courage to follow it through to the end; sleep overtakes them on the way. To them, everything hardens and thickens. Everything on that road has been prepared for your pleasure; nothing is unknown to you; you move forward in a blaze of light as in a well-lighted museum where nothing harmful can happen to you. But the harm is that nothing happens to you. You begin once more what others have done before you and you will perhaps get ahead as people working in offices are promoted, but your art will thereby have gained nothing. If you have the boldness to take the violent road, you will advance gropingly, across a thousand pitfalls, you will be scorned and hated—but you will win out. Don't ever be discouraged. That last effort which you refuse to make may be the one that will reward you for all your pains. It will be your success, your spiritual success. And however much satisfaction it may give you, it can only be won at this price!"

ONE OF THE FEW friends who have watched Picasso work, told me that the painter remains seated for a long time in front of his work, looking at it the way a cat studies a mouse, in the hope that the work will reveal itself when it no longer feels itself being watched. At that moment, Picasso approaches with his brushes and in a few minutes fixes a detail over which he has long pondered. Picasso behaves toward reality like an animal toward its prey.

Before Picasso, artists painted strictly what they saw. Nature, copied so logically, explored in every direction down to the tiniest speck of luminous dust of the Impressionists, withheld no more secrets from them. And yet the best among them were disoriented. They were dis-

turbed, and rightly so, by the discoveries of which the poets spoke. The latter told them that objects held within themselves another reality than the one they had always expressed, that the presence of these objects hid this reality from them. The painters then came to grips with these objects that were blocking their way. Their despair changed to aggressiveness. Now they broke down the objects which had formerly baffled them, dividing them into shadows, into geometrical reflections across which one could distinguish quite another reality, like a landscape distorted through a prism of cold colors. A new path was opened to the boldest explorations.

Before Picasso, painters pretended to ignore the fact that the external object which they still took as a model, had nothing more to give them; but they hesitated to go any further. They maintained an in-



*Pablo Picasso*



curable inferiority complex toward the object. This anxiety is evident in all the great painters at the beginning of the twentieth century. Their desperate flights of boldness were always kept within limits which they could not transgress on penalty of blindness. Then came Picasso, who was as much concerned with the inside as with the outside of things. He renounced once and for all describing these objects, these old images to which new colors could not give life. He created another world, the world hidden within the object. But his mind, constantly searching for new forms, did not draw apart from the humble reality of our daily life. In his most abstract canvases, his thinking, which has never gone astray, bases itself on this reality. Many painters who have followed him have lost the path which might have led them back to this side of the mirror: today they are still wandering in a labyrinth of insoluble symbols. They no longer know how to recognize the reality which they have light-heartedly lost sight of.

As for Picasso, he always knows where he is going and he returns to reality at will. Sometimes he describes to us, with very traditional yet sophisticated methods, the most amazing forms which he has just discovered. He comes and goes with complete freedom from the interior to the exterior of objects, and under his brush-strokes these two terms cease to be contradictory.

A very large part of Picasso's work has been inspired by themes from Greek mythology, especially by the Minotaur myth. (It seems superfluous to remind the reader that Picasso's Minotaur always evokes the bull-fighting scenes so characteristic of the land of his birth.) The Minotaur, which has so often been transformed in his work and the first sketches of which are like the tortured drawings of the old Spanish masters, symbolizes this passionate desire for knowledge, the need to penetrate as far as it is humanly possible into this inner world where one never ventures with impunity. How many painters before him have been satisfied to describe merely the approaches to the Labyrinth! How many others, having risked taking several steps toward it, have hastily turned back! Picasso is a man who has always dared. The wisest words of caution have never made him retreat—quite the contrary! He brings us a profusion of new relationships. When he paints, objects become transparent; they reveal themselves to us like X-ray pictures in which we see much more than we could have suspected, a whole constellation of strange bodies.

The gate to the Labyrinth? Why, that might have been any object whatever. Who knows? Perhaps a coffee-pot painted in two smoke-black strokes; or a lamp, its flame painted like a green sun dotted with butterfly-spots; or a bunch of leeks, disconcertingly banal. And no one before him had seen that it was precisely through these inconsequential objects that one could reach the heart of reality.

AT THE BEGINNING of September, 1944, a few days after the liberation of Paris, the entire painting world of Paris paid tribute to Pablo Picasso. During the four years of German occupation, Picasso had insisted on staying in Paris. A few days before war broke out, he told Guillermo de Torre, noted critic of Spanish art now living in Buenos Aires: "I wouldn't think of moving from here. I shall be the last foreigner to leave Paris." And this loyalty to unhappy France was hailed in that unforgettable demonstration. If it were not childish to speak of a "reward" as applied to such a man, one might say that this city, in which he has lived for more than forty years, in which he has known poverty and fame, was brilliantly repaying him for his affection and confidence.

But Picasso's attitude in that period surprised no one. Picasso has always been on the side of justice. I was at Madrid, at a time when the first retrospective exhibition of his finest paintings was opened in the Spanish capital. Every evening shots rang out on the streets of Madrid. The reflection of burning buildings played over these famous canvases—among them the great sleeping woman, rose- and violet-colored—of 1935. The corrupt press insulted Picasso, accusing him of having attempted to debase Spanish taste and holding him responsible for "unbalancing people's minds." You can easily guess who were the painter's defenders in the few newspapers to which they still had access.

A few months later we met them again on the barricades of Madrid and read their names beside those of Unamuno, Alberti, Cernuda, and Machado in *Hora de España*. In those tragic hours Picasso anxiously followed the course of events. A few days after the assassination of the great poet, Garcia Lorca, in August, 1936, I had been given the honor by the Spanish Ambassador in Paris of announcing to the painter that the Spanish Republic had just named him Honorary Director of the Prado Museum. Picasso was then living on the Rue de la



Boétie, in an apartment cluttered with books and pictures. When I brought him the news, Picasso, who is always very composed, grew troubled for a moment, and I saw his eyes gleam with a sharper light. Of course, it did not mean that he would direct the Museum or take part in its administration. But he was moved by this confidence which men of the same origin as himself had thus placed in him. They were humble men who had certainly not penetrated all the secrets of his art, but who wished to honor in him the indefatigable worker, the artist whose works and whose example had contributed so much to honoring the name of their country in the world. And shortly thereafter he created the paintings inspired by events, the large *Guernica* mural and the *Dreams and Lies of Franco*. *Guernica*, painted from May to July, 1937, is a searing example of a man taking his stand, a man inspired by the sacred anger of which Lope de Vega has spoken. Picasso rose up in all his genius to lash at the deeds of those builders of ruins who sought to make real the black legend of church-ridden and despotic Old Spain. In his paintings and drawings, Picasso fought like a soldier against that world of injustice and stupidity. From the very first days of the Civil War, Picasso had chosen. His place was in the struggle which, for him, has never ended.

To those who saw him during the German occupation of France, the memory of a visit to Picasso's studio is always associated with the remembrance of a good day. By his presence alone, Picasso gave hope to those who had begun to doubt our chances of liberation. His confident attitude, both as man and as artist, won our warm regard. Those who shortly before the war had taken his canvases out of their museums and tried to sell them at low prices, received their due by that very act. They could prevent him from exhibiting in Paris, but they could not stop him from painting; and those four years of waiting were one of the most fertile periods of his life. His studio became one of those gathering-places where all the values we loved retained their heart-warming lustre. Over humiliated Paris he cast a brilliant light which no power in the world could alter.

The uprising in Paris re-awakened in him all the heroic and glorious images of Old Spain. Goya in 1808, Picasso in 1944. The shots on the deserted quays of the Seine, the grave and laughing faces of boys armed with rusty guns behind the barricades on the alert for passing tanks, the cars driving at break-neck speed, and—climaxing the scene

—the heavy golden clouds which did not lose their bright outlines until very far into the night. There was nothing missing in this scene in the French capital, not even the sense of horror which his great *Guernica* mural had evoked in us several years before. No doubt all people's movements resemble one another, and all men who fight for the same cause have the same light in their eyes. But if Pablo Picasso followed the course of the uprising with such passionate excitement, it was because the goal it sought to achieve was exactly the same goal he had always followed. This master of the School of Paris, who had remained so profoundly Spanish, was better qualified than any other artist to fuse the spiritual characteristics, so often contrasted, of his two countries, and to combine the strongest love of work and study with a fierce love of freedom.

During the days preceding Liberation his production was considerable, as if work to him was a way of taking part in the battle. There is a well-known color engraving based on the theme of a bacchanal by Poussin: the figures in it are those he saw in the street rushing to the barricades. In the collection of his friend Dora Maar there is a large and extremely severe still-life: a plant without blossoms on long, sharply colored stalks. Picasso finished that picture the same night the Paris Wine-Market was bombarded. Dense clouds of red smoke rose from the blaze and were reflected in the window-panes. The very evening the first units entered Paris, while shots were still interspersed with the roar of the liberated population, Picasso, as he later told me, saw "that the sky and clouds had really changed color." There was a more luminous reflection on the Seine, a spot of brightness that lingered longer than other evenings on the old stones of the city, a change, imperceptible to anyone but him, in the play of lights and shadows of the crowds on the streets—yes, the color of the sky had really changed. On the square in front of the City Hall, the first armored car that stopped in the midst of a crowd of weeping women bore in huge white letters the name of *Guernica*: its driver was a Spanish volunteer!

That day Picasso had painted the head of a young man; and it was quite easy to recognize the image of one of those street-fighters he had met on the barricades in the Saint-Michel district. The next day, Picasso said: "I was at my window watching the fight. There were sharpshooters on the roofs and young people fighting on the road. Then, I did not want to stay in the middle. I went down into the street."



THAT IS HOW Picasso explained his joining the Communist Party, an act that startled Paris. He became the target of the most violent attacks. He was called a traitor, or at least an opportunist. The reactionary papers denounced him as "the worst painter of the period." Critics whose behavior during the occupation had been far from exemplary, insulted him in the name of French good taste. But what joy among his friends! Several days later a large exhibition of eighty of his canvases was opened at the Salon of Modern Art. Marcel Cachin and Maurice Thorez were present at the opening, at which several incidents occurred. Some of his paintings were torn down. A large section of the conservative-minded, who had never seen Picasso's paintings, were dumbfounded by the boldness of this painter who, to them, represented "the negation of French art." As a matter of fact, all this furor was provoked by the painter's decision to become a Communist. He had already said that he could not remain indifferent to the struggle. Rather than continue as a neutral and enjoy all the advantages of his neutrality, he had preferred to join the ranks of those who fought with no other arms save those of courage. He had not wanted to remain above the battle; he had gone down into the street.

This decision, which was to excite so much comment and which the painter had made in complete agreement with his deepest convictions, did not surprise those of his friends who knew how much he was concerned with the emancipation of man and of the artist from all the constraints that our society imposes on them. All of Pablo Picasso's work is marked by a violent effort of liberation; and his example, which throughout his long career has so frightened the theoreticians of painting, is the most fertile of any that an artist has given for a long time. It is a crude error of vision which makes some say that his painting is "an art of decadence"; in truth, it has more cruelly than any other reflected the decadence of traditional painting and has arisen on the ruins of the latter. On the contrary, it marks the point of departure of a liberated art, the beginnings of that genuine Renaissance which we are witnessing and which is accompanied by so many painful upheavals. It was because he was profoundly convinced of this that Picasso, to whom politics is still a strange world, has found it natural to join with those who, on another level and with quite different means, are working to achieve the same end. And it would be an even cruder mistake to think that by acting thus, Picasso is running counter to his many-sided interests. "To paint pictures or large engravings that would

be sold on street-corners for 100 francs each," that is what Picasso dreams of, the sculptor Adam once told me. "It would be marvelous to bring the plastic arts right back to their original direction, to their anonymity, instead of forcing them to find haphazard refuge with the dealers." Despite all appearances, no one more than Picasso despises all the painting marts and all the constraints which present-day society forces on the artist. No other painter has maintained as great a freedom toward his art, and as biting an attitude toward those who live off it. To him, pictures are not made to *decorate* apartments. "Painting is an instrument of offensive and defensive war against the enemy." Those of his friends who have witnessed the violent fits of rage provoked in him by lack of understanding and meanness, know very well that his supreme passion is to paint, to create.

"Picasso was remarkably handsome when he was young," wrote Gertrude Stein, who knew him well. And she added: "He was illuminated as if he wore a halo." This halo has remained, and the legend which for half a century has surrounded this artist without equal, has made him subtler and more moving. Look at him: his strong face on which his smile cuts ever deeper wrinkles, his sly joviality, his air of seriousness that is not always impenetrable, and the lock of gray hair which falls over an eye that has seen everything, remembered everything, and which is always ready for fresh discovery. Look at him through the smoke of that *Gauloise* cigarette he has smoked since the early days of his first *collages*. His gestures, quick, cutting, like the flying-scissors of the black-and-white paintings of 1935 evoke this whole world of brilliant colors one glimpses when the door opens. Picasso does not paint with lace ruffles; his palette is an old newspaper thrown on the ground. As soon as his visitors have left, Picasso goes up to his studio, into his Minotaur-like solitude, and no one sees him until the next day. His vast body of work stretching across more than fifty years, with its endless procession of successes that the world applauds and its failures that no one suspects, ends here in front of this easel where the painter pursues his life-work. But who can read his thoughts when he remains there in the solitude of his studio, into which no one has penetrated when once he has shut the door on his last visitor? This artist who enjoys world fame, fabulous renown, has remained what he has always been: the most unfathomable of men.

(Translated from the French by Joseph Bernstein.)

# The Picnic

A Story by PHILLIP BONOSKY

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COMING UP THE cinder-paved alley, strewn now with the red spring "worms" from the big cottonwood poplar, he was amazed to see his four children rushing down to meet him, their knees flashing, their eyes rigid with joy, at eight o'clock in the May morning. They surrounded him, pulling on his arm and forgetting to look into his lunch bucket for the apple he might have left over from lunch.

"Hurry, hurry!" they cried. "Daddy, hurry!" And they began to pull him up the last little hill of the alley.

Swiftly he searched his mind, where the image in the warm bed, still warm from her body, lay curled; and thought: what's today? Then overwhelmingly he remembered. This was the great day, the end of school day—the school-picnic day!

They were pulling him up the steps, and he lifted his five-pound steel-toed shoes with a sigh. "Kids," he complained, "not so fast." But they were deaf.

The kitchen was filled with coffee and washing soap smell. The moment he entered it, "Rich," his wife told him, handing him the youngest, only one year old, "hold Louie for me." In the middle of the floor there was a mountain of clothes, and on the stove two huge kettles were boiling. That was why the kitchen smelled of washing day, too.

He went into the next room and after his eldest son, Francis, covered the couch with newspaper, sank down on it with a huge relaxing groan. The baby he saddled on his chest and picked up one of its bare toes and pressed it on his nose. He kissed its cold instep and the baby wriggled and shrilled.

The four steps, as he called his other children, were in the kitchen around the table on the middle of which rested a big basket. He could



see her through the doorway—her hair pulled back and then rolled in the hasty bun—the “two-minute bun” she’d say. She called to him as she worked.

“Now be sure they don’t get lost, Rich,” she said, “and make Francis take care of the kids and Johnny; he’s old enough now.”

Francis came into the room and sat down on a chair, detached from the others in the kitchen, and looked at him.

“You’ll be in high school now, is that it, Frankie?” he said.

“Yes, Dad,” the boy replied.

“Listen, lady,” he said wearily, chasing circles around the baby’s nose while it tried to bat the whirling fingers with its fat hand. “Why don’t you take them and have fun?”

“Fun?” she cried. “They’re going to be like madmen all week now school’s out. My last chance to get anything done,” she said. “I’ll get the clothes washed while you’re gone, and then I want to start the wood-work, and then the dress for her,” meaning Antoinette, “and besides, what about *him?*” meaning little Louie who looked cross-eyed at the twirling fingers.

“I’ll come in the afternoon and maybe you can go home and get some sleep before tonight.” She then turned to all the children and said sternly, “Kids, your father has to go to work tonight again, and he worked all night last night—so if you annoy him and get him tired out, I’ll smack all of you!” And to Johnny, she said, “First thing you do is find out where the toilet is and go *yourself*. Better go and dress,” she added to Rich.

“Already?” he said. “The picnic’ll last all day!”

“Oh, Daddy!” the children cried to him. “You *said!*”

He got up from the couch and gave the baby to his eldest boy and went upstairs to the bedroom. There the bed stood, the covers turned down, the departed shape of her lingeringly imprinted. He lay down upon it and smelled the faint aroma of her hair in the pillow where she had lain, and dug his closed eyes in it and nuzzled it, feeling the pillow sweet and welcome.

With a real groan this time he pulled himself up, a little dizzy, and took off his big shoes. They fell like rocks to the floor. Then he took off the stiff pants that collapsed, not in a heap like other clothes, but broken. The sweat of the night’s work which saturated his underwear, now released, filled the room. He took this underwear off and put on lighter ones; then shirt and trousers and Sunday shoes.

DOWNSTAIRS the basket was covered. The children were made almost formal by the starch still in their new clothes. His wife was standing at the stove plunging a stick into the boiling water where clothes ballooned out. "Everything's ready," she said. "And remember," she added anxiously as she caught his eyes drooping, "*watch* them—every year somebody gets hurt; watch them, Rich."

"With both eyes," he answered.

She looked at him, withdrew her arms from the kettle and crossed them over her bosom. "Rich, maybe you shouldn't go? Get your sleep, and then in the evening——"

"Wouldn't think of it. Why, the kids would scalp me alive," he replied. "Wouldn't you, kids?"

"Yes, Daddy," they cried.

"See?"

"But all night—and then tonight again? Why did you *promise*? You *kids*," she cried at them. "You don't know what it *means* to work!"

"Picnic comes but once a year," he intoned sing-song way.

"All right then. But I'll be out this afternoon—and maybe they'll be tired enough by that time so we can all come home. Do you think?"

"Maybe," he agreed. "Okay, kids, off we go—four little steps, all in a row." They started—first, Johnny who was eight, then Antoinette who was ten, William who was twelve, then Francis who was fourteen. And Louie, in the mountain of clothes where he'd been dropped, was one year old—a big, big step.

Down the alley they had to go, past the library, past the Irish church, past the playground, to the streetcar track, right beside the Mill which was spitting and hooting and banging bars together deep inside itself. There was a gang of children gathered, parents islanded among them, with harassment already patched on their strained faces.

The streetcar came and everybody pushed and Rich lost the kids for a minute but finally gathered them all together in the back of the car. The car rocked with noises and clanging bells. There, on the long seat, they arranged themselves. Francis, his eldest, sat beside him quietly.

"Dad," he said finally, as the car started with a jerk. "I'm a man now, Dad."

"Why do you say that?" he asked, startled.

"*You* know," the boy said to him with secret eyes, then turned away and stared remotely at the other children fantastic in their fun.

He stared at his eldest boy.





*Illustration by Al Blaustein*

“OH, BIG AS A WHALE!” they cried—the park that had been washed up on this everyday shore. They scrambled all over it with cries.

He gathered his brood together inside the gate and added up the tickets they'd bought at school at half-price. It was important that the two youngest be kept off the Racer and the Rabbit and shunted to something like the ferris wheel and the caterpillar.

"Frankie," he said, "you take Antoinette with you, and Will, you take Johnny."

"He can't go on the Racer!" Will cried.

"No, what I want you to do is take him on the caterpillar and the ferris wheel."

"And use up *my* tickets?"

He looked helplessly at his son.

"I'll give you half of my tickets," Frankie announced. They stared at him. Frankie looked at his father.

"We wouldn't ask you to do that, Frankie."

"That's all right, Dad," he replied. "I'll come and talk to you afterwards. We'll just sit."

"Well," he said. "Now, I'm going to stay with the basket here by the tree. You come to me every hour so I know where you are. Then we'll have lunch. Do you have enough money?"

They had two dollars among them.

He watched them race across the green grass to where the peaks of Babylon were shining in the May sunlight. Above the intricate white woodwork of the stand where the Racer was he saw the yellow car poise on the topmost terrace, hold in the sky, and then plunge downward. He fancied he could hear their shrieks even so far away.

He sat down on the grass, taking out a newspaper from his back pocket as he did so, and rubbed his back against the tree. Then he spread his paper and settled back to read it. . . .

He was ripped out of his sleep by a shriek, and he leaped to his feet to see his youngest son come trailing across the grass dripping blood from his nose. Tears had mingled with the blood on the boy's face and had formed a pale cherry blot on his white shirt.

"Willy did it!" he cried as he saw his father. "He hit me!"

They went to the fountain together and tears and blood were washed away; and in a moment he was gone again without leaving a clue.

He picked up his paper again and noted that contract time was coming due and his eyes ran down the new terms the union would be asking this year. "Time and a half for night work," he read aloud, and added dryly to himself, "I'll never see daylight again." He remembered the odor of the bed and sighed.

In an hour the children returned to him and reported. Willy con-

fessed that the reason he had punched his younger brother in the nose was because he ran too slow.

He wanted to say something special to his eldest son but could think of nothing that was not formal. He was surprised at this. Frankie was only fourteen years old—and in four more years? When he had been ten he had told them one day, "Daddy, when I go to work in the mill, I'll take your place—and you can sit and rock on the porch and talk to Mama all day. I'll bring my pay home to you."

"You take Johnny this time," was all he could think of now.

They took a banana each from the basket and flew off again. Now he got up and walked to the end of the bank, which slanted to the railroad and then leaped into the river. At that point in the river was a dam over which the whitened water flowed. Braddock, the British general, he remembered, had once crossed the river here; now there was a tube mill where he had worked once years ago. The union was first formed there.

His head felt stuffed and his eyes drooped. He returned to the tree and sat down. His head fell, and he slept.

WHAT woke him was the shocked cry of his wife in his dream. But when he opened his eyes, there she was standing, holding little Louie in her left arm. She was surrounded by the other children, all standing dismayed and pale, staring at the empty basket on the ground. The food was strewn about.

"What happened?" he cried, trying to pull himself up.

"Dogs," she announced. "While you slept: dogs!"

He stared at the wreck.

"But I just dozed off!"

"Four hours," she said.

"Four *hours*?"

"I'm here, ain't I?" she answered.

They fell silent. Sandwiches had been torn apart; the bread ignored but the meat ripped away. Pickles, apples, the pie, paper plates—they were lying everywhere.

He stood up. "Well, kids," he said. The youngest looked at him with brimming eyes and then, as he stood unable to perform the miracle they wanted of him, began to cry. He stood awkwardly before them, helpless to think of anything to say or of any way to reduce the catastrophe.



"Well, you all had a banana apiece," he said at last, but they didn't seem to hear. His eldest son was the only one who smiled. "The dogs didn't get *that*," he continued desperately. "You beat them out of that!"

"Rich," she said, "that'll never fill a basket. Come on, kids, let's start home."

Silently they trooped behind her on the way out, casting glances behind them at fairyland. At the streetcar station they waited in deep gloom. He looked at his watch. It was four o'clock.

His wife whispered, "Rich, I'm just as glad. Now, you can get a few hours sleep and the kids won't be so tired."

"I'm sorry I spoiled the picnic for you," he said to her.

"You didn't spoil anything for me," she said. "I have ironing."

His eldest son came to him and looked up at him. "Dad," he said. "Look." In his hands was a strip of tickets. "I didn't have to give them to Willy after all." He tore them up.

"Wasn't it a good picnic though as long as it lasted?" he asked his son, surprised at the almost humble tone in his voice.

His son nodded. "Yes, Dad," he said, to reassure him. "It ended just at the right time. *You* couldn't help it if you fell asleep. You're old now."

# THE FACE OF THE LESSER EVIL

by HERBERT APTHEKER

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IN FOLLOWING the "lesser-evil" argument of those liberals who support Truman, one is reminded of Macaulay's comment on Lord Brougham's encyclopedic mind. "He is a kind of semi-Solomon," said Macaulay, "he *half* knows everything."

It is the missing half in the protestations of these "fearful ones" that forms the key failing in their labored reasoning. They surpass mere ingenuity in attempting to show how Mr. Wallace's candidacy helps the Republicans, how it allegedly jeopardizes a healthy outcome in the Congressional campaigns. They descend to rank absurdity and slander in asserting that it dovetails with nefarious Communist plots for incitement of chaos, and that it proves the former Vice-President to be a "dupe of the Kremlin."

Here, however, we wish to concern ourselves specifically with the lost link vitiating the entire approach and concept of the lesser-evil liberals.

These individuals, like the New Jersey Democratic Senatorial aspirant, Frank Kingdon; the editor of *The Nation*, Freda Kirchwey; the editor of the New York newspaper *PM*, Max Lerner, hurl the most damning indictments against the separate elements comprising the domestic and especially the foreign policy of the Truman Administration and the Republican Party.

At times, it is true, one senses an affected naiveté in the dichotomy they pose between domestic and foreign affairs, with the most obvious demagoguery for home consumption lapped up as by mirage-stricken men swallowing sand for water. Nevertheless, their writings have at times attacked American policy with regard to Greece, China, Germany, Italy and Palestine, as well as the Administration's handling of domestic questions like loyalty tests, the high cost of living and the militarization of our nation.

Here are typical examples. *PM* editorializes: "We have allowed our foreign policy to become enmeshed with the cause of reaction in every part of the world." *The Nation* declares: "The Economic Report of the President indicates that we are moving inexorably from boom to bust; the report of his Air Policy Commission, that we are moving fatalistically toward war."

Yes, all these things and more are seen and presented. But they are presented in a vacuum; they are presented in the form of rootless, haphazard, basically causeless events. From all this it appears that nothing more is needed than piecemeal, patchwork reform to be performed by remote men of good will. Indeed, one frequently gets the impression that even such action is uncalled for; that nothing more than the journalistic exposé, the lament, the rebuke, is intended or required. One thinks of a physician who confines his treatment of gangrene to a graphic description of its manifestations.

The evils deplored by these people are the expressions of an historic reality, symptoms of a chronic disease. They have their "origin," as Henry Wallace declares, "in monopoly capitalism." This, Wallace correctly points out, is the enemy, and recognition of this is the foundation stone of the third party movement. And it is exactly at this nub of the movement that the eloquent "fearful ones" are silent.

They have not a word to say about the basic fact of the domination of American political and economic life today by monopoly capitalism. This is where their analysis turns away from liberalism's finest historic quality of independence and vitiates itself by becoming subservience. This capitulation may be explicit and outright as with those who, like William Henry Chamberlin, write columns for the social-democratic *New Leader* and the *Wall Street Journal*. Or it may be implicit; it may be the result of a grudging surrender, an acquiescence. That is a mere matter of style and form, not content.

The lesser-evil advocates preserve the *appearance* of independence by their persistent protestations, but the *fact* of dependence arises from their actual adherence to the Administration. Meanwhile the dynamics of American imperialism make their protestations less and less sharp, and their explicit support more and more clear. And so long as they cling to this position, they will continue to beat their breasts and plead for more subtle tactics; but at every point they will withdraw, renew the illusion, refurbish the rationalizations and prepare for the next retreat. This is their function.



Mr. Wallace, on the other hand, represents in his forthright opposition to monopoly a continuation of the best traditions of liberalism and an extension of those traditions into this era of crisis, into this era when American concentrated capital manifestly threatens a world disaster by its drive toward war and fascism.

This is the fundamental question in American political life today. And it is this fact, evaded by the pro-Truman liberals, that must be brought out into the center of the stage for all the people to see.

THE fact is unquestionable. Monopoly capitalism has been in effective control of the United States ever since 1890, and it has been making this control more and more stringent and complete—with only brief intermissions—during the ensuing decades. When this is understood, the social sores are seen for what they are. They are seen as classic manifestations of a monopoly capitalism which, in this postwar era of acute crisis, drives toward world domination.

In broadest outlines the story of monopoly is an old and oft-told one. It is so obvious that it has been enunciated by Presidents and their advisers and documented by Congressional investigating committees for fifty years.

Woodrow Wilson, in the halcyon "New Freedom" days of 1912, accurately asserted: "The masters of the government of the United States are the combined capitalists and manufacturers of the United States," while his chief economic adviser of that period, Louis D. Brandeis, warned a year later: "We must break the Money Trust or the Money Trust will break us." Twenty years later a Senate Committee found half of all non-banking corporate assets in the control of just 200 corporations, and reported the growth of these giants to have been two and a half times more rapid than all others. It warned that if this rate were continued eighty percent of all corporate wealth would be held by the 200 firms in 1953 and "practically all wealth" would be so concentrated by 1973!

President Roosevelt, in launching the Temporary National Economic Committee, remarked early in 1938 that American "private enterprise is ceasing to be free enterprise . . . it is in fact becoming a concealed cartel system after the European model." And the TNEC in its study of *Competition and Monopoly in American Industry* said, of monopoly:

"A more nearly perfect mechanism for making the poor poorer and the rich richer could scarcely be devised." The Committee's *Final Report* pointed out that as of 1940 six-tenths of one percent of the population owned fifty percent of all corporate stock.

The Second World War greatly accelerated this trend for, as other government committees have shown, out of 175 billions of dollars in war contracts from June, 1940, to September, 1944, almost seventy percent went to 100 top corporations while seventy percent of all plant sales and leases by the War Assets Administration went to the sixty largest firms in the nation.

At the apex of this system of concentration stands the financial oligarchy—"The Club" as it is informally called. This is the group of seventeen investment bankers—Morgan, Stanley & Co., Dillon, Read & Co., etc.—who, from 1940 to 1947 controlled the offering and prices of fourteen billions out of a total of seventeen billions of dollars worth of corporate stock sold, with 257 other investment banking firms handling the remaining three billions of crumbs.

This financial centralization is both a result and a precipitant of monopoly. Said Wendell Berge, who was assistant attorney-general in charge of the anti-trust section of the Department of Justice from 1943 to 1947:

"One of the greatest causes of the growth of monopoly is the increasing control which relatively small groups exercise over credit. . . . Not only has competition among dominant firms in investment banking ceased, but they have apportioned among themselves, according to their own rules, the business of providing the nation's industry with capital."

THIS concentration has accompanied the unprecedented gorging of American capital during and since the war, resulting in fantastic rates of profit, so that, for example, the *net reported* profits of American business from 1940 through 1947 totalled eighty-four billion dollars!

This capital accumulation and concentration not only is without precedent, but it occurs when three great competing imperialisms—German, Italian, Japanese—have been eliminated, and when the resources and colonial empires of the others—English, French, Dutch, Belgian—are at their lowest ebb. To further heighten an already ir-

resistible motivation for aggression there remain the stubborn facts, so inhibiting for imperialism, of socialist control over one-sixth of the earth, and of multi-millioned Communist parties, with one of these leading a national people's revolution against semi-feudalism and semi-colonialism, and with others engaged, within popular coalitions, in remaking the political and economic life of half of Europe.

We witness, then, an insatiable economic desire for capital investment abroad, an insistent political desire for the protection and enhancement of those investments—the Marshall Plan, the Truman Doctrine—and a ruthless building of a military and social order at home to guarantee the unimpeded realization of those economic and political desires.

The Treasury Department in a recently released monograph (*Census of American-Owned Assets in Foreign Countries*), shows that United States holdings abroad are steadily rising. These properties totaled thirteen and a half billion dollars in 1943, over seventeen billions in 1945 and over twenty-one billions in 1946.

The degree of concentration of these holdings may be surmised from the Treasury figures for 1943 showing that just 410 corporations owned forty-five percent of all overseas investments.

The bipartisan policy of the trusts and the national emergence of a third, *i.e.*, an anti-monopolist, party are to be viewed in the light of such socio-economic realities. And they are to be viewed in the light of the two great key changes in American life: the presence of fifteen million organized workers, and the degree of political maturity (reaching the point of leadership) of the fifteen million Negroes who now have a mass organization, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, with over 600,000 members.

These are the facts which give substance and form to the individual protestations of the Lerner and Kingdons. These are the facts which form the background for, the ultimate explanation of, the deliberately provoked anti-Communist hysteria, the atom-bomb diplomacy, the Hollywood trial mockeries, the soaring cost of living, the deportation proceedings, the attack upon trade unions, the heightened chauvinism, the unprecedented militarism, the naked usurpation of top governmental posts by not merely the agents but by the actual leaders of finance capital.

Many Americans affected an air of disdain for the "dull Teutons" who,



some fifteen years ago, could not see the handwriting on the wall.

How blinding proximity may be! Still, those with eyes willing to look may see.

**I**MMEDIATELY after President Truman requests thirteen billions for the military, Secretary of War Royall tells a Congressional committee: "Our interest lies in encouraging Germany and the other nations of Europe to have systems of free competitive enterprise." The President's Air Policy Commission blandly announces: "A nation in the position in which the United States finds itself today has no choice but to follow policies which may lead to friction with other nations."

The New York *Times* reports, as early as September, 1945, that Washington has reached the "tentative conclusion" that this country "must be geared legally, mentally and militarily to strike the first blow, without violating the Constitution, if that can be done, or by changing the Constitution if that is necessary." The next year (November, 1946) General Eaker of the Army Air Forces insists "that the next war would be a short war of unparalleled destruction . . . we must strike the enemy first." And in the *Air University Quarterly Review* (January, 1948) Colonel Coira, of the Air Force Operations Division, declares that the President "can start a preventive war" and points with approval to such precedents as the American invasions of Mexico in 1913 and Siberia in 1918.

Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, upon retiring in January, 1948, as Chief of Naval Operations, begins his valedictory by quoting with full approval the dictum of the Elizabethan buccaneer, Sir Walter Raleigh, that "whosoever commands the sea commands the trade; whosoever commands the trade of the world, commands the riches of the world and consequently the world itself." And in the course of reiterating the traditional rationalizations for a super-navy, the ex-chief adds an ominous new note: "Naval forces are able, *without resort to diplomatic channels* [my italics—H. A.] to establish offshore anywhere in the world air fields completely equipped with machine shops, ammunition dumps, tank farms, warehouses, together with quarters and all types of accommodations for personnel. Such task forces are virtually as complete as any air base ever established."

Nevertheless, "old-fashioned" naval and air bases are now maintained by the United States not only in its dependencies—Alaska, Guam,

Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Canal Zone—but also in Cuba, the Philippines, the Azores, the former Japanese Mandated Islands, Formosa, Libya, Greenland, Iceland, Jamaica, Trinidad, Antigua, Bermuda, St. Lucia, British Guiana, Newfoundland and Baffin Island, plus a military alliance with Canada, thirteen military missions throughout South America, and active participation and direction of wars in Greece and China! And when the Secretary of Defense is asked by a Senator if *additional* military bases are to be demanded in return for money expended under the Marshall Plan, he remarks that such a consideration does not have priority at the moment (January 17, 1948), but, "I am sure that the Secretary of State will have it in mind."

In consequence of all the foregoing facts the top administrative and policy-making personnel of the American government now represent, as never before in our history, a living coalition of military and financial interests. It is significant to note that this accomplishment is in accordance with long-announced desires.

Observe, for example, the remarks of Charles E. Wilson, president of General Electric, made in the course of an address delivered January

#### MILITARY AND FINANCIAL PERSONNEL IN TOP LEVELS OF AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

*President's Chief of Staff:* ADMIRAL W. D. LEAHY.

*Secretary of State:* GEN. GEORGE C. MARSHALL.

*Unofficial Co-Secretary of State:* J. F. DULLES (Director: International Nickel Co.; Trustee: Bank of New York; Partner: Sullivan & Cromwell, Wall St. law firm).

*Personal Asst. to Sec. of State:* BRIG. GEN. M. S. CARTER.

*Under Sec. of State:* R. A. LOVETT (Partner till 1940: Brown Bros. & Harriman, investment bankers).

*Asst. Sec. of State:* BRIG. GEN. C. SALTZMAN (Vice-Pres., N. Y. Stock Exchange).

*Asst. Sec. of State:* W. L. THORP (Director: Associated Electric Co., and three other public utility corporations).

*Deputy Director, Office of International Trade Policy, Department of State:* P. H. NITZE (Member: Dillon, Read & Co., investment bankers).

*Ambassador to Great Britain:* L. H. DOUGLAS (Pres., Mutual Life Insurance Corp.; Director: General Motors; Vice-Pres., American Cyanamid).

*Ambassador to Argentina:* J. BRUCE (Vice-Pres., National Dairy Products Corp.).

*Ambassador to U.S.S.R.:* LT. GEN. W. B. SMITH.

*Chief, American Mission to Greece:* D. P. GRISWOLD (Director: First National Bank, Gordon, Nebraska).

*Ambassador to Belgium:* ADMIRAL A. G. KIRK.

*Ambassador to South Africa:* MAJ. GEN. T. HOLCOMB.

19, 1944, before the Army Ordnance Association: "The tendency to war is inevitable, just as the human tendency to disease is inevitable . . . industry, co-operating with the Army and Navy, makes for a very effective combination, a combination that should be extended into the postwar period. . . . The burden is on all of us," he concluded, "to integrate our respective activities—political, military, industrial, because we are in world politics to stay, whether we like it or not."

How far Mr. Wilson's proposed "integration" has already gone will be apparent from a study of the table below.

THIS is the face and form of the "lesser evil" for which so-called liberals urge the common man and woman to vote. This lesser evil drives full speed ahead for war and fascism as the conscious instrument of American imperialism. The chauffeurs operate on twelve-hour shifts, divided between Republicans and Democrats. The passengers have no alternative, if they seek a different destination, but to unite upon a program of *peace and abundance* and to compel, by political action, the implementing of such a program.

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- Minister to Panama:* BRIG. GEN. F. T. HINES.  
*Secretary of the Treasury:* J. W. SNYDER (Vice-Pres., First National Bank, St. Louis).  
*Under Sec. of Treasury:* A. L. WIGGINS (Pres., Trust Co. of S. C.; Pres., American Bankers Assn., 1943-44).  
*Chairman, Federal Reserve Board:* T. B. MCCABE (Pres., Scott Paper Co.).  
*Chairman, Export-Import Bank:* W. H. MARTIN, JR. (Pres., N. Y. Stock Exchange, 1938-41).  
*Chief, World Bank:* J. J. MCCLOY (former member: Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft; Cravath, de Gersdorff, Swaine & Wood, Wall St. law firms).  
*Secretary of Commerce:* W. A. HARRIMAN (Partner: Brown Bros., Harriman; Chairman of Board, Union Pacific R.R.; Director, five other major railroads; Director of Western Union and Guaranty Trust Co.).  
*Secretary of Defense:* J. V. FORRESTAL (Pres., Dillon, Read & Co., 1937-40; Vice-Pres., General Aniline and Film Corp., a subsidiary of I. G. Farben, 1940-41).  
*Secretary of Air Force:* W. S. SYMINGTON (Pres., Emerson Electric Mfg. Co.).  
*Under Sec. of Air:* A. S. BARROWS (Pres., Sears, Roebuck; Director: Continental Illinois Bank & Trust Co.).  
*Asst. Sec. of Air:* C. V. WHITNEY (Chairman, Pan-American Airways).  
*Under Sec. of Army:* MAJ. GEN. W. H. DRAPER (Vice-Pres., Dillon, Read).  
*Chairman, National Security Resources Board:* A. M. HILL (Pres., Atlantic Greyhound Corp.).  
*Secretary, National Security Council:* S. W. SOEURS (Vice-Pres., General American Life Insurance Corp.).  
*Chairman, Munitions Board:* T. J. HARGRAVE (Pres., Eastman Kodak Corp.).



Such a movement, *and nothing else*, contains now within itself the potential of producing a meaningful campaign, one of decisive educational importance. It alone contains the possibility of arousing the devoted participation of those millions of independent mass voters without whom no forward-looking national political drive, Presidential or Congressional, has ever made any headway.

Such a spirited campaign can mark the start of a lasting break-away from the two-party front for capital that has characterized American history from Ulysses Grant to Harry Truman. This historic change has roots in the people's movements that produced Jefferson and Lincoln. It has roots in the deep popular distrust of and hatred for Big Business, revived during the Roosevelt decade; the experiences gained in the dozens of regional independent political movements that have emerged in the past fifteen years; and the lessons learned—incomplete though they may have been—from the struggle against Nazism. And today the essential basis for an historic turn exists in an organized labor movement fifteen million strong and an equal number of Negro people—many located in key political areas—whose militance and whose organization have reached new levels.

*This third-party movement is a permanent one.* And it is one that, starting at a moment of "boom," contains decisive significance in the struggle against war, and in providing a mass, organized base for political and economic resistance during the impending period of "bust."

Ten years ago, Max Lerner was moved to write a book whose subtitle was "The Need for a Militant Democracy." There he dwelt upon the monopoly control of the press, radio, university and movies. He saw, then, that the decisive task was the forging of an instrument or a movement which would be able to break this throttle-hold and get the message of "militant democracy" to the people in order, as he put it, "to transfer the control from the oligarchs to ourselves." He lambasted, then, the timid ones whose energies were devoted "to fighting dangers that might conceivably arise from positive action to meet the present dangers." He excoriated, then, the "swivel-chaired Liberal" to whom "a purpose is like a work of art carved in butter." These people, he then said, were "fear-obsessed" and had "become the Fifth Column in the besieged city of the progressive cause."

These apt words appeared in a work called *It Is Later Than You Think*. And now it is ten years later than that!



ur  
ambition

Ben-Bon

# Readin', Writin' & Tickertape

by JOSEPH GIBBONS



SEE by the *New York Times* there is a new cultural organization called The Executive Book Club, which "every thinking man owes it to himself and his business future to join." I regard this news as good. Executives are no longer going to leave literature to the people and book clubs to their wives. They are going to settle down in the evenings and risk eyestrain and scholarly wrinkles devouring entire books, not digests. If the club catches on I predict sweeping changes in the mental life of management. I'll bet the prospect worries Leo Cherne of the Research Institute of America, who has been furnishing executives with premasticated labor doctrine and painkiller for the bruises of government. No more will a quick look at Victor Riesel's column satisfy the well-read executive. Now the boys are going to assimilate the raw stuff of literature itself.

The Club's first selections are wisely made. The pedagogic theory of the selectors seems to be not to scare a man off his first book by making it too deep. So the initial free offering is *Economics in One Lesson*, by Henry Hazlitt. It is described as a "popular best-seller" so the member won't feel like a pansy bookworm curled up with a copy of *Horizon*. The book takes the literary initiate by the hand and inducts him into the mystery of economics without tears. Millionaires, to whom *Economics* I has been double-dome stuff, will discover that the "economic fallacies which have been harassing American business" are explained away in Hazlitt's one easy lesson.

The next choice is another humdinger, right up a business man's alley, *How to Develop Your Executive Ability*, by Daniel Starch. Our average club member, say a distinguished-looking chairman of the



board of a billion-dollar firm, has been secretly hankering for executive ability. Existing literature held out no hope for him. How could he learn executive ability from *Gone With the Wind* or *Other Voices, Other Rooms*, the only things he seemed to find lying around the house? Now the entire family can enjoy literature: Mother with the Book of the Month Club selection, Brother with Superman Comics, Sister with Truman Capote's book, and Daddums chuckling to himself over a worn copy of *How to Develop Your Executive Ability*. I tell you this is going to make for Better Homes at Grosse Point, in Westchester and Paoli.

The third book selection is harder. It is *Twelve Rules for Straight Thinking*, by William J. Reilly. Notice that our Club member has progressed from one lesson to twelve rules. That many rules are kind of hard to keep in your head, but Daddums has got this literature bug bad by now. "Why didn't they teach this kind of stuff at Princeton?" he exclaims. "Why this Reilly is no starry-eyed New Deal Crank Professor. He's got know-how! A fellow as keen as him could make a lot of money in business. I'll bet *he* could meet a payroll!" At this point Mother lowers her book and says, "Now, Daddums, don't get off on Henry Wallace. Remember your basal metabolism."

The fourth book selection is a thriller with a happy ending, *The Triumph of American Capitalism*, by Louis M. Hacker. Capitalism gets the girl in the end. And by now Father has learned literary cheating: he sneaks a look at the last chapter to see how it comes out. He is a confirmed bibliomaniac: the playroom is converted to a library. Daddums applies his literary knowledge so effectively at the plant that wages are cut fifteen percent and the grateful board of directors votes him a big block of stock as a literary prize.

THE CLUB is no blue sky proposition: its board of selection is composed of perhaps the most fiducially sound group of literary critics in the United States. Only six of the seventeen distinguished litterateurs on the board are less than president or chairman of some industrial colossus. Lewis H. Brown is the chief critic of the Executive Book Club. He is, of course, chairman of Johns-Manville, a name to conjure with in book circles. Assisting him in weighing the merits of hopeful authors is Fowler McCormick, Chairman of International Harvester; H. W. Prentis, Jr., President of Armstrong Cork; Edgar M. Queeny, President

of Monsanto Chemical; Stanley Resor, President of J. Walter Thompson; Alfred P. Sloan, Jr., Chairman of General Motors; and Dr. Henry C. Link, Vice-President of the Psychological Corp. (What's that?—Auth.)

Chairman Brown is a book writer himself, having produced his first slender sheaf last year on the subject of What to Do With Germany. Mr. Brown says the big Nazis should be released and restored to the management of German industry.

In addition to the distinguished literary industrialists, several members of the advisory board are the purest kind of corporate intellectuals. After all, Alfred P. Sloan, Jr., runs a pretty large business in General Motors, and you can't expect him to give all his time to picking books. Trustworthy fulltime authors, thinkers and educators add solid intellectual flavor to the board. Henry Hazlitt, financial editor of *Newsweek*; Dr. William A. Berridge, Economist for Metropolitan Life; Bradford B. Smith, Economist for U.S. Steel; Dr. Virgil Jordan, President of the National Industrial Conference Board; and Dr. H. M. Wriston, President of Brown University, constitute this bohemian aspect of the panel. I am disappointed that there is no clergyman: why not the Rev. Gerald L. K. Smith?

As much as I admire the literary attainments of the Advisory Board, I do feel they need a woman member. I have a name to suggest: that of a lady who, like the present critics on the panel, can "provide broad executive experience, judgment and perspective, which in a successful career are more vital than ever"—to quote the Club's advertisement in the *Times*.

Her name is Lana Turner. Recently Miss Turner was involved in an industrial dispute with her plant management and refused to take the part of Lady de Winter in *The Three Musketeers*. Then her vision and perspective came back to her and she went to see President Louis B. Mayer of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, and signed. When she came out of the conference Miss Turner gave the following statement to the press: "In consideration of world conditions and the economic effect upon the motion-picture industry, there could be no other decision."

Gents, if that isn't industrial statesmanship, I'll eat a copy of *Economics in One Lesson* in Macy's window.

# We were *NICE PEOPLE*

by BARBARA GILES

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THERE were not many books where I grew up, in the bayou country of Louisiana—not many, that is, outside of the Big House which was used occasionally by the California landlords of the plantation. There, it was reported, books could actually be found in the attic, stowed away to make room for newer ones. The report startled people only a little. They had already heard of the owners' racing stables out West, an alien and exotic measure of wealth that might understandably take in a luxury like adding to the supply of books one already happened to have. We were among the families who merely happened to have—schoolbooks, a small row of classics, some children's tales, a half-dozen highly moral "yellowbacks" from my mother's youth, and an encyclopedia.

Not that we were especially poor. We belonged, in fact, to a small category that could only be described indefinitely and negatively as "not poor." Like two or three other families, we could indicate the farthest limits of our own luxury with a player-piano and a car. But not with books. My father, who was a bookkeeper for the sugar refinery, had once read some of the landlords' volumes while he slept in the house as a sort of caretaker during the owners' absence, and for years afterward he recalled his amazed discovery of Victor Hugo and Balzac; yet it never occurred to him, even when he had acquired some land of his own, to acquire some Hugo and Balzac too. He loved them but he did not respect them that much.

Similarly, his children—like all the children we knew—saved pennies to buy dolls and toy guns from Sears, Roebuck while we borrowed and lent, read and read again, every book that could be obtained without purchase. We rarely talked about them, and never asked whether or not they were "real." I myself thought they were. Nobody,



it seemed to me, could make up such people, amusing, earnest, villainous, angelic or "ordinary," so brightly and soundly tinted in the colors of character—people, moreover, whose everyday life was a rich tangle of struggle and purpose but who lived in a world commanded by such orderly and absolute values that the wicked always took a beating from the angels, who were well rewarded for their exercise.

The contrast with my own world was striking enough to be felt though I couldn't articulate it. For our days were largely moved by the clock while it was the values that were as tangled as the moss that hung, decorative and depressing, above our heads. Partly because of a vague notion that the very business of writing led one into these vivid and unconfused worlds, I decided when I was ten or so that it was "about time" I wrote a novel myself.

The plot was easy. I simply took *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, reversing it to portray a little girl with a noble English father coming to live with her American grandmother. The general idea, of course, was that the haughty foreign child would ultimately be humbled and sweetened by her new playmates in a superior country. The opening scene was to be laid in America, and I wrote the first sentence confidently: "Rosemary stood picking the long-stemmed roses that twined themselves around the pillars of the veranda." As I read it over, admiring the lilt and worrying a little about the repetition of "Rosemary" and "rose," my heroine slowly dissolved into a foggy-pink composite of Elsie Dinsmore, the Little Colonel and every other vapid, Mammy-loved Southern child of purest fiction. The people in novels, I remembered, were supposed to be "true"—and so I had especially intended mine.

After some hard reflection I crossed the sentence out and started over. "Margaret," I wrote sternly, "was cutting some flowers in the yard because her mother told her to." Again the pause, the query: would Margaret, whom I did know and rather too well, be eager to humble and sweeten a little English aristocrat—Margaret, who reminded me weekly of her Virginia ancestry and her immaculate proof of heredity against the "French blood" that tainted the swamps? And if not Margaret, who? I knew other children with far less claim to hauteur; but claims they had, and where the claims were weak there was envy or aspiration. None of them, it seemed certain, would be

likely to look democratically down their noses at a child of the British nobility.

The second sentence remained unwritten. I had, without being able to name it, met the problem of caste in "real life" and literature, with no precedents to enlighten me. In my society there were three preoccupations: sex, food and caste. Novelists had treated the first discreetly, the second incidentally, and the third lightly if at all.

But caste, as I had experienced it, was a terrifying game, desperately played. The rules were not stated; only the scorekeepers knew them exactly, could tell from their complex and arrogant knowledge how much a patch of land in the past now "counted," how much more a patch in the present, the tally on a Dresden cup and saucer, a costly dress, thin skin and pale eyes, a so-refined gesture. And the unstated rules were obeyed—by children too. Mary might go to play with Yvonne but Yvonne was not received at Mary's home; Mary in turn could not visit Margaret though they swapped secrets at school. There were the "nice" and "not nice," the "very" and "not quite," with degrees between—among a ruling and white-collar class whose total population, counting in the neighboring town, would not have made up a village. (One of my first doubts that Negroes were as "unhuman" as our elders had led us to suppose was prompted by the discovery that they were not without some caste system of their own.)

EVERYONE played the game, everyone who was admitted. It kept us, more effectively than religion, from the sin of great happiness. We should have been happy. Life, on any white-collar income, included a good house, an automobile, decent clothes and a "cook" (who cleaned seven or more rooms daily, did the fine laundry, came at dawn to serve coffee in bed and departed well after supper—for three dollars a week). Fruit fell from backyard trees, vegetables were delivered every day by a gardener paid entirely with a share of his produce. The time spent thinking about food, talking about it and preparing it seems almost infantile in retrospect and a little repellent, but to a greedy child it was delightful. We had land—wooded fallow land, empty pastures, backyards running to the bayou—not our own but ours to play on. For pets we might adopt anything from pigeons to retired work horses.

Certainly we enjoyed this abundance. Yet I cannot remember a

time before I knew that it didn't "count," it was all petty and incidental to the bitter striving for appearance, manners and objects—objects and more objects—to enrich our favor with the scorekeepers. Even the basic moralities became chips: illicit love was sinful, but much worse, it was *common*. The Methodist-Episcopalians went to church because nice people were church-goers (and the M-E Church was the "real nice one"). A few words bounded the entire territory of character (*mean* or *sweet*, *honest* or *sly*, *good* or *bad*) though we had learned others—without learning their uses.

At least the game should have simplified our lives. It should have furnished just one goal, one way of play to engage our whole activity. Surely it should have kept our attention upon ourselves, away from the majority of people excluded from the game. To a point it did, and a pretty high point. We had learned at school that all people were created equal and we believed it—it was a virtue of "our" country—but we also believed that Negroes were not quite people. As for the poor, they didn't *have* to be poor—did they? Indeed, if they had been created equal to us they should have been equally able to make money. Yes, it should have been simple. And yet—

ONE summer day my mother sent me to ask a Cajun woman whether she could help make some mattresses. To this day I don't know her husband's occupation but I heard my mother remark that he had been ill and the wife should be glad of a chance to earn a dollar or two. Margaret had been playing in our yard and she came along with me. The house wasn't far; we had time to get there and back before our noon dinner, but when we arrived at the Cajun home the family was already at the table and we held our scant conversation through the unscreened kitchen window, which provided a complete view of the repast: a dish of bare boiled rice. The flies wanted it too, and the father wearily shooed them off with one hand. It was the only motion he or the two children made; as far as I could see the whole family was sick, the mother too, though she said yes to my query—said it immediately but not smiling, not at all glad-of-the-chance. I felt that she might hate me.

When we had got a few yards from the house Margaret made a gagging sound and said "Pooh! Cajuns." I didn't answer. There were quivers in my stomach too but they came from fear. Never before



had I seen the interior of poverty. Only the surface had appeared, the faded clothes and whitewashed little houses, and the sallow skins of people who "didn't eat properly." I had been assured that they were happy and they had seemed happy enough to me. No one had ever suggested, nor had I dreamed, that an "improper diet" might mean worse than coarse food and little variety. That it might amount to no food at all or next to none—how was that possible?

At home I reported my findings over the chicken gumbo: ". . . There was nothing on the rice."

My mother gave a little murmur of pity and my father gravely shook his head twice.

"No butter, even," I elaborated. "I mean, not anything at all. Just nothing—just rice."

After a moment my mother spoke. "Some people," she said in the bright tone she used to invalids and babies, "*like* their rice without butter."

The fear that had been in me burned off in secret anger. Did she think *I* was a baby? I had seen those people, I had *seen* . . .

No, I did not, like some wise and sensitive children of fiction, promptly call to mind all the falsehoods ever told and demolish them. But it was not the first time that Authority had been caught without an evasion good enough, and each blunder shook the structure a little. It was tightly built, from thousands of evasions carefully laid, with a euphemism in every chink, but the material was makeshift.

For many things were not simple, not even in our enclosed little world. Our family score was precarious but beginning to rise with my father's fortunes. This in itself was odd, for the one explicitly stated prerequisite for the Game was "blood" and his was anything but celebrated. My mother, on the other hand, came of a family whose tally had once been remarkable but who no longer counted except in the little French town of her girlhood where people still remembered "who" her grandparents had been. Before I was born their glory had perished—"like a starving eagle," said my great-uncle—with the loss of their land.

But if blood counted for so much, and one was born with it, why shouldn't the glory still be apparent? Because, ran the evasion in this case, it was French blood and the Cajuns were French too; and French people drank wine, played cards and had babies every year

("like the cows"). The explanation, coming from the Scotch-Irish scorekeepers of the plantation and neighboring town to the right of us, should have been adequate. But why, then, should the French be acceptable in the town to the left, where people remembered the lost land? And why, for that matter, should the Scotch-Irish, also, find it acceptable in some people—a New Orleans banker, for example?

To add to the paradox, my father, who was bearing our caste upward, had less concern for it than anyone else I knew. The son of a rural doctor with a large family, he had grown up in a backwoods section of Mississippi that was, apparently, as wild as the wildest West. No doubt there was caste but food came first. Later he had prospected and mined in Colorado and was, so far as I know, the only man in our community who had ever held a union card. His ambition was not directed toward appearances—my mother complained that he could have lived happily in a mud hut—but toward security and, as a special aim, the best possible education for his children.

The fact that all his children but one were girls made no difference. In a community where a backward daughter could be explained by the cheerful remark that "Mary never cared for school," he was relatively without male prejudice. It did not seem to him either outlandish or "cute" for a little girl to sit among the men after dinner listening to their talk of politics—listening to the safely distant thunder of a battle in which personalities and principles fought almost as excitingly as in the novels. From him I derived a sense that ideas were important and amusing and that character might mean something outside of novels.

**B**UT it was he, also, who helped mislead me on the basic complication of our culture, our relationship to the hundreds of human beings we called "they"—the Negroes. We had crueller words for them but none so cruel, it seems to me, as the generalities built around that anonymous third-person plural. *They* were "the missing link" in evolution—though we didn't believe in evolution. They had been liberated by us (through slavery) from equal existence with the gorillas. They were, as I've mentioned before, "unhuman." My father varied the argument slightly: they were "like children." His theory impressed me happily because it allowed room for kindness as well as discipline, especially as it came from a person devoid of malice in his personal

life. But then, I was eager to be impressed. Actually, as it is easy to see now, our effort to explain "them" was an attempt to explain ourselves, to find the virtue of reason in a meanness whose mildest expression was indifference to misery.

Even so our credulity seems amazing. How could we have not seen that a man who loved children enough to enjoy them—an attitude then frowned upon as "spoiling"—had no such love for "these people entrusted to our care"? Or that the most rebellious child on earth is not disciplined by hanging? How?—On no other subject in the world is a Southern white child "educated" so meticulously, with such devoted attention to instruction and example, as in this one—and in no other is he more pliable. Else we could not have borne ourselves. As it was, I ran out into the pasture when my mother's lectures to the cook reached the shaky pitch of fury struggling with dignity. Now and then wonder pierced the shielding phrase: if they were children, if they were helpless . . . why were they dangerous? . . . dogs were helpless and could be dangerous . . . only horrible people cursed at dogs or let them starve. But I would no more have put my queries than I would have asked how babies were born. At the center of both topics lay the menacing shadow of a tree of knowledge for grown-ups only—children were frightened away.

About lesser confusions I was not so shrinking. By his attitude my father had thrown a small revealing light of comedy and irony on contradictions at the surface of our society. And with the childish demand for order and "sense," there was a normal relish for puzzles, oddities, comparisons and contrasts, though the latter might become painfully bewildering. In these areas we were free to wonder, even to ask. But when it came to "the colored problem," conscious wonder had to force its way.

Yet in this particular area the myths not only denied the obvious, they contradicted each other. "They" had nursed us at the breast but if we touched their hands we would wither of disgrace. "They" knew who their friends were (us—naturally) but were the sneaky foes of every white man, woman and child in the country including their "so-called friends, the nigger-lovers up North" who were common trash that any colored person would scorn since "they," being totally devoid of any standards of taste and breeding, had been endowed with a peculiar extra sense, rather like a dog's special sense of smell, which





THE STANDARD BEARER

enabled them to distinguish quality and prevented them from having any use for poor whites or those who demeaned themselves by befriending black people *en masse*. (*We* befriended them individually: "You can take this hat, Victoria, I'm through with it, but don't tell anyone; I can't have every darky in the Quarters come begging for old clothes, and if you give to one of them . . ."). Sometimes the old clothes piled up, an irritating burden. Burn them, throw them in the bayou—anything but admit the fact of a want that waste could not wholly cover. For if any nakedness were left it might resemble the truth, and God help us if that ever happened.

The books were no help. They merely presented one set of myths, the loving-devoted-smiling-comical-faithful one, without the others. I had never known a Negro woman called Mammy and I was rather relieved as all the little girls put in her charge seemed doomed to read the Bible constantly or die of romantic consumption; it sounded beautiful in literature but, even with golden curls thrown in, it was not my plan for life. Besides, I had doubts about the smiling-devoted-faithful view—it was all too easy to believe my mother's theory that they had been happier in slavery. I might have learned something from a song, "The Battle-Hymn of the Republic," which was taught us in high school as one of the "national lyrics"; except that there may have been no greater tribute to our guardians' talent for snubbing an historical truth to death than the fact that I could sing with ringing exaltation "Let us *die to make* men free!" without ever guessing that the men to be liberated were my forefathers' slaves.

LOOKING back I can realize that we must have observed and thought more on this subject than we admitted to awareness. While "they" were supposed to be marginal to our existence and it was "better just to forget them," they were all around us and our elders never forgot. They never forgot, and their vigilance paid off. It was a long time after I myself was grown before I learned that this greatest contradiction of all, which had been posed for me literally in black and white, was the source of all the contradictions, confusions and evasions of our culture. Upon it had been based the dreary, ridiculous game of caste—the thousand idiocies and corruptions. And the contradiction itself?—such an obvious, elementary thing, so naked under the mound of rags and frills we had piled over it: simply the

contradiction that exists wherever a few men live by exploiting the many and then build a whole universe of fantasy to give oppression the face of beauty and truth.

But before I learned that, I had to learn Marxism. Until then the South that I knew and was going to "write about some day" became clearer to me in its physical details, its psychology and social disparities, but never clear enough. Nor was a basic clarity sufficient. A novelist dealing with the South faces two temptations. One is to select the more obvious "literary" fruits—irony, romance, sentimentality, degeneration—which preceding novelists have examined. The other is to focus on the hidden roots and mud to such a degree that whatever fruits appear in the novel seem to have sprung, already ripe, from the tree-stump. To the Marxist novelist the latter temptation is especially strong; after all the roots are his discovery, his special contribution to truth. It tempted me, I remember. The difficulty was that my subject was a collection of fruits that had ripened to the point of "decadence" (a rather over-used word of the 1930's which I did not interpret too clearly). What was the point of examining the roots of a dying stump?

It took a lot more study before I could see that the most decadent society in the world is not without its human potential or devoid of the universal historical element of struggle. It is the Marxist's business to understand the whole growth, from soil to the farthest leaf, in its most intricate manifestations and sources. This is a large aim—it requires, first of all, a ruthless perception of social forces and an equally ruthless perception of people, which is the only perception from which a genuine love of people can come. That must be our starting place.



# Blues for Jimmy

by THOMAS MCGRATH

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*For Jimmy McGrath, killed June, 1945*

1.

(If it were evening on a dead man's watch,  
Flowerfall, sundown, the light furled on the pane;  
And the shutters going up on the windows of the twentieth century,  
6 Post Mortem in the world of the dead—)

The train was late. We waited among the others,  
All of us waiting for friends on the late train.  
Meanwhile the usual darkness, the usual stars,  
Allies of the light trust and homeless lovers.  
And then the train with its clanking mechanical fury.  
"Our will could neither turn it around nor stop it."  
Abrupt as history it violates the station—  
The knife, the dream, the contemporary terror.

(Midnight awakens on a dead man's watch:  
The two exact figures in the million beds  
Embrace like skeletons chained in other dreams,  
In the world of the dead where love has no dominion.)

"And then we took him to the funeral parlor,  
Half-way house, after the train came in."  
We found he had put on another face,  
The indifferent face of death, its brutality and pallor.  
"And now at last, everyone is home?"  
All but you, brother. We left you there alone.

(The dead man's watch unlocks the naked morning,  
 And the day, already bandaging victories and wounds,  
 Assumes like Time the absolute stance of indifference,  
 On yesterday's sorrow setting its actual seal.)

Among the absorbing tenants of god's half-acre  
 We gave you back into the mundane chemistry.  
 The banker dug the grave, but the grave and gentle  
 Were part of the common plot. The priestly succor,  
 Scattering platitudes like wreaths of wilted flowers,  
 Drove in the coffin nails with god's own little hammer—  
 You are stapled still; and we are freed of onus.  
 Brother, *te laudamus*, hallowed be our shame.

(The shadow of noon—upon a dead man's watch—  
 Falls on the hours and mysteries; April, October  
 Darkening, and the forward and following centuries. The blind flyer  
 Locates himself on the map by that cone of silence.)

## 2.

Locates himself by that cone of silence,  
 But does not establish his private valence:  
 When the long grey hearse goes down the street  
 The driver is masked and his eyes are shut—  
 While confessing the dead man is his brother.  
 Only in dreams will admit the murder,  
 Accepting then what is always felt:  
 The massive implacable personal guilt.

Who refuses to be his brother's keeper  
 Must carry a knife and never sleep,  
 Defending himself at whatever cost  
 Against that blind importunate ghost.  
 Priest, banker, teacher or publican,  
 The mask of the irresponsible man  
 May hide from the masker his crimes of passion  
 But not the sin of his class position.

And what of the simple sensual man  
Who only wants to be let alone.  
With his horse and his hound and his house so fine,  
A car and a girl and a voting machine?  
Innocent Mr. and Mrs. Onan  
Are dead before they have time to lie down.  
The doorbell rings but they are away.  
It is better to murder than deny.

The desperate laws of human motion  
Deny innocence but permit salvation  
If we accept sentence before we are tried  
We discover the crime our guilt had hid.  
But the bourgeois, the saint, the two-gun man  
Who are the eyelids of their dream  
Refuse to discover that of salvation  
There is no private accumulation.

3.

The wind dies in the evening. Dust in the chill air  
Settles in thin strata, taking the light with it,  
Dusk before dusk' in the river hollows.  
And westward light glamors the wide Missouri,  
The foothills, the Rockies, the arc of the harping coast.  
And then the brooding continental night.

When I was a child the long evenings of midsummer  
Died slow and splendid on my bedroom windowpane,  
And I went into sleep's magnetic landscape  
With no fear of awakening in a country of nightmares.

It was easy then. You could let the light go—  
Tomorrow was another day and days were all the same:  
Pictures in a book you'd read, segments of sealed and certain time,  
Easy to go back to the day before yesterday, the year before last.

But now it is impossible. The leaf is there, and the light,  
Fixed in the photograph, but the happiness is lost in the album,



And your words are lost in the mind, and your voice in the years,  
And your letters' improbable tongues trouble the attic darkness.

And this is the true nature of grief and the human condition:  
That you are nowhere; that you are nowhere, nowhere.  
Nowhere on the round earth, and nowhere in time,  
And the days like doors close between us, lock us forever apart.

## 4.

Not where spring with its discontinued annuities  
Fills birds' nests with watches, dyes the winds yellow,  
Scatters on the night its little flowers of disenchantment  
And a drunken alphabet like the memory of clocks.

Not where summer, at the mercury's Feast of Ascension,  
Deploys in fields the scarecrows of remembrance;  
Summer with the wheat, oil, bread, birth, honey and barley,  
And a hypnotized regiment of weeping butterflies.

Not when fall reopens private wounds  
To stain the leaves and split the stones in walls;  
Opening the doors on the furniture of false enigmas  
And mechanical patterns of crazy magicians.

Not when winter on the buried leaf  
Erects its barricades of coal stoves and forgetfulness;  
With the warmth indoors, talk, love and togetherness,  
And outside a blizzard of years and corpses.

The calendar dies upon a dead man's watch. He is nowhere,  
Nowhere in time. And yet must be in Time.  
And when the Fifth Season with its mass and personal ascensions,  
Fire-birds rising from the burning downs of Negation  
Gyring toward freedom—  
Until then, brother, I will keep your watch.

5.

I will not deny you through grief,  
Nor in the masks and horrors of the voodoo man  
Nor sell you in a mass for the dead  
Nor seven out and forget you  
Nor evict your spirit with a charming rune.  
Nor wear my guilt for a badge like a saint or a bourgeois poet.

I forgive myself of your death: Blind shadow of my necessity—  
*Per mea culpa*—cast by a son of freedom  
I climb the hill of your absolute rebellion.  
I do not exorcise you: you walk through the dark wood before me.

Though I give your loves to the hours,  
Your bones to the first four seasons  
Your hope to the ironies  
Your eyes to the hawks of heaven

Your blood is made part of the general-strike fund  
Your courage is coined into the Revolution  
Your spirit informs the winds of the Fifth Season.  
Only the tick of a watch divides us.  
The crime is to deny the union of opposites.  
I make your death my watch, a coin of love and anger,  
With your death on one side and mine on the other,  
Locked on my wrist to remember us by.

# FEMME FATALE

*A Story by* SANORA BABB

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AFTER the usual quibble, they made the compromise and took seats midway. Their opposing eye defects caused him to want to sit near the screen, her to sit far back. That was not all. Having a fear of being surrounded and penned in, she wanted to sit on the aisle but he insisted on going to the center of the row in spite of his restless habit of visiting the lobby several times an evening. Considering by some whimsical reasoning of her own that she had won on the distance, she gave in.

Leslie Dunham and Louise Byrd had been seeing each other for seven years. They were much alone, having cultivated few friends. They were a tall, quietly attractive, intelligent looking couple in their middle thirties, with a youthful twentyish appearance. Louise wore tailored clothes and high-necked bright cashmere sweaters. She sometimes criticized Leslie for his careless dressing and gradually assumed the selection of his sparse wardrobe, to which he put up a mildly humorous resistance by arriving for an evening out in his old duck tennis pants.

They had never meant to fall into any dull habits with each other, but a number of small domestic rituals inevitably fastened themselves upon their lives. To most people the unconventional is as unwelcome and trying as is conformity and a certain hollow competition to others. Louise and Leslie had drifted into a kind of no-man's-land as midway between the customary and the unusual as their compromise in the theatre. The unexpectedness of it all kept them securely interested in each other, but the fear of being bogged down in habitual responsibility and custom held them back from legal marriage. They sometimes discussed it still, but more as a hypothetical question than a real and personal issue between them. They considered themselves free.

Domestic inroads had irked their way into this dubious freedom. Tonight, for instance, Louise felt irritated, as she had many nights of the seven years, that Leslie must always have a full hot dinner, even when they planned to go out. Rushing put her in a bad state, the dinner never came off well, and she was forced to go out having taken too little time with her appearance. They ate so often together in her apartment that he shared the expense of the food. Louise meticulously accounted for the individual meals so as not to overcharge Leslie for general purchases. If, in a hurry, he forgot to settle his part, she unwillingly brought herself to mention it later, since the least variance in her expenses upset her budget and bit into her savings.

The small savings account at the bank was her one important concealment from Leslie. A sense of insecurity, a fear of growing old alone, with illness perhaps, made her clandestine in this. From the very first she had considered that they would eventually separate, but neither felt any such inclination. Leslie sometimes said dryly, "If you keep planting that seed, Louie, it will finally come up." This jest strengthened her ordinary foreboding of doom and added to it a sadly pleasurable resentment against him for not urging her to marry. She became acutely aware of time, and they sometimes caught themselves speaking as if their lives had passed them by. Time races, she would say to Leslie, as one grows more intimately and desperately aware of its destination.

They were beginning vaguely to want children. Each secretly asked himself about the long future together. They spoke of a boy and a girl named David and Cathy. Could they afford two extra lives? Each longed for urgent sureness. Where was it to be found?

**I**N THE few minutes of travelogue and cartoon before the feature, Leslie flung himself loosely and boyishly about until his long body fitted transiently into the cushions. If he raised up too far the automatic seat snapped at his thin buttocks and forced him to repeat the whole process of sitting down. People stared belligerently from the safety of their numbers. Louise smiled indulgently and felt her affection making a warm trail through her belly. Why had people always spoken so exclusively of the heart? The same vitals that ached and were comforted in everyday living quivered with the poetry of her finest emotions. All the heart did was beat faster, but awareness



traced through the nerves in every part of her. No such whole thrill had happened for some years, but she remembered wistfully that it was possible.

Leslie turned and looked down, and in the public intimate dark she thought he too was more conscious of her.

"Brooding?" he teased her.

"No!"

We ought to live in a theatre for a while, she thought, maybe we'd *want* to get married. Why do I care about that nettling little ceremony? I don't want it, but if he doesn't insist upon it, I'm never content. I want proof—to the last ounce. It's absurd.

An obviously disenchanted couple sat down in front of them.

"Aren't you glad we aren't stuffy like that?" Leslie whispered against her ear.

"From where I sit 'stuffy' is a mean and envious word." She spoke so candidly that Leslie usually mistook it for satire.

He felt for her hand and held it tenderly. They were very close for a moment.

"That was a lovely dinner tonight, Louie, even if you didn't think so."

Food, food! She thought, and withdrew her hand. They had quarreled once lately, and the word was since an irritant. He reminded her that she read less than she used to and she reminded him that she cooked more instead. She had added, "—while you lie on the couch and read before dinner." He was rather astonished, and said gently, "But I've just come from work." "Of course, I haven't," she said. She watched him for a sign of thoughtful comparison but he went back unreflectively to his book. Now he turned naively, or wisely, to the screen.

As is not uncommon, both having found no expression of their best abilities in the work by which they earned their livings, they sought creative pleasures. One of their habits was attending foreign movies. They depended on the grubby English titles, both having forgotten whatever languages they had studied in college.

With the war so recently over, they were still seeing old films, and tonight's was especially old, and someone going out had mumbled "a stinker." It began in such a frayed and old-fashioned way that they whispered together about leaving. Leslie started up, watching

the screen, then he suddenly sank back in the seat as if he had come for a full and rewarding evening.

"It might be good," he said carelessly.

Louise heard two Frenchmen speaking quickly and affectionately from the screen, as she settled herself again. When she looked up, she saw the French girl. First, she was curious about her unbecoming dated clothes, then she decided she was acting quite well. She thought she seemed coarse and not very pretty, and there was a sinister quality about her sloppy laziness which covered base, energetic passions. That was exactly what the film intended to reveal so Louise sat back with good grace and prepared to watch the two Frenchmen wreck their friendship and an hour of their lives over her.

Leslie stood up, removed his coat, removed his sweater, slipped into his coat again and sat down. He had a shifty temperature. There were whispered grumbles. Louise pulled his sweater onto her lap knowing that he would absentmindedly leave the theatre without it, unless he rose to put it on again at a crucial moment in the film. Such action was not without precedent.

THE French girl had already been taken in to live with the two friends. One of them was in love with her; the other, who had a perfectly good sweetheart of his own, scorned her for what she was.

Leslie stirred nervously and Louise was afraid that he was about to climb long-leggedly past the half row of people to go outside and smoke. This time it was more likely that he wanted to leave; the film could be hardly more than a curiosity. The French girl was looking sullen and frustrated.

"Don't look now, *m'selle*," Louise whispered, "but your lust is showing."

"Sh-h-h-h," Leslie whispered sharply. "It's so bad it's funny."

Louise watched the heroine and wondered what she knew, if anything, and what she did for a living. It was pretty obvious, of course, although she wasn't a professional. Tramp was the word. The two young Frenchmen hadn't discovered this yet. True, there were all kinds in life, some very nice on the surface. With a leap of pulse she saw *who* this French girl was. She was Isabel, without the fine surface, Leslie's ex-wife—and every other woman of her type to whom she imagined him particularly attracted and forever bound over. She

glanced at him, and he was absolutely absorbed. Even a man like Leslie with so much intelligence and understanding! So much shyness. And so little gusto and vitality. His pockets always sagging with books and his conversation so seldom meaningless. She hated his mother darkly and soundly.

She hated that woman on the screen whose only possession was her primal lusciousness. She was now enticing the other man and he was still scornful, but she had wisely put on a whole dress with a round white collar and was getting a meal for him.

"Not stupid at all!" she whispered archly to Leslie, but Leslie did not hear her.

She began to compare herself with the French girl. Although she was much prettier than the heroine, she could certainly never get around in such a lively fashion; she would have to admit that. She, Louie, was slow-moving. The French girl had inviting eyes that were at once bold and innocuous. Her own were unmysterious, without pretense. Leslie thought them lovely. The French girl had grace and assurance; she was still plagued with her adolescent uncertainty and restraint. The French girl's speech was allusive and ambiguous; her own ingenuous and clear. The heroine's mentality was of no consequence; in this Louie came out far ahead. But the other appeared to possess a kind of sly wisdom, the ability of maneuver, of which Louise had none, or (she remembered the savings account), only a little. Her femininity she thought unfair to use, wanting equality between them. The test, lacking relativity, was as brutally unimaginative as a true-and-false, and it was very depressing. However much she would rather be herself than the heroine, it was apparent that the other had it all over her for attractiveness. She thought with some intensity on the backwardness of the male.

Suddenly she noticed the French girl's large awkward feet, and she moved her own small graceful feet on the floor and knew them to be unequivocally beautiful. This gave her a moment's delicious respite, in which she observed that the French girl had done away with the modest dress and the cooking and was running away with the man who had so recently abhorred her. Louise felt grimly disillusioned in principles. The friend and the sweetheart were left behind in sad-looking sorrow. In an American film they would have fallen in love, but in the French film they only grieved.

"Samuel Butler did it better," she mumbled, and this brought her back to the sight of Leslie's fascination for the French girl. He was just as stupid as Jean and André, and here *he* had witnessed the whole thing from an objective advantage to which they had no access! It would be very pleasant to kick him and arouse him from his trance but he would be startled at such a display.

LESLIE was quiet and detached on the bus going home (and he had forgotten to put on his sweater), but in the short walk along the dim residence street, he kissed her. This was not unusual but his fervor was. She saw his caressing eyes, and she let herself enjoy his emotion for a moment before she drew away. He looked bewildered.

"You're imagining I'm that French girl!" She walked on feeling for the key in her purse. He caught up with her at the door and followed her in.

"Dearest, you're wrong," he lied. "Seeing a woman like that makes me value you all the more."

"I don't care a hoot about being *valued*," she said a little desperately. "Of course, I do, but I want to be—oh, what an old tale this is!—I want to be desired too!"

"You are," he laughed, and tried to put his arms around her.

"Acceptable is a more exact word."

"For such a bright girl you are awfully romantic," he said.

"The two aren't mutually exclusive!"

"Louie! You're jealous! Jealous of a shadow on the screen!"

"What wonderful sophistry! You know very well that *she's* no shadow any place. Wherever you meet her, she appeals to your inhibitions." Immediately she was sorry, but the way he smiled at her now, as if the whole thing were her own invention, made her furious.

He loosened his tie.

"Anyway," she said, "that female must be older than I am by now." She felt humiliated and ashamed at her words and decided to be silent.

"You look very pretty when you're angry, Louie."

"*Merci*," she said sarcastically, and felt like a fool.

He began to laugh and say "oh" and "no." He took his coat off once more and pulled the sweater on over his head and this time he left his coat on a chair.



"Go home," she said, and went to the little closet where he kept his things. She tossed his tennis racket onto the couch.

He was still laughing.

His tennis shoes landed on the carpet near him with a warning final thud.

"And don't come back!"

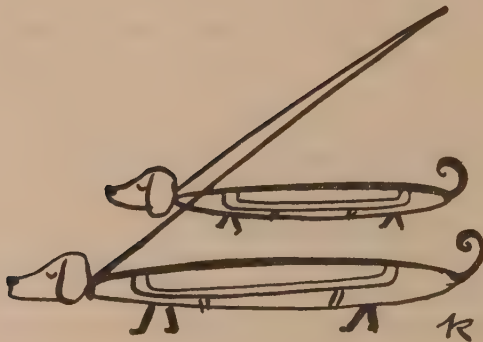
His laughter hesitated, stopped and began again, but now he looked to her like Don Quixote, or a lanky Irish setter, absurd and lovable, and a little unsure. His laughter came to an end.

"Why?"

She walked to the middle of the room with as much assurance as the French girl, and then she began to cry. She still felt wounded by his infidelity, but the anger now was with her tears.

"Because—" She would tell him now, everything she resented, and he would not forgive her or understand, and it would be an end to this long and indefinite love. Perhaps it was just as well. She looked at his sober, sensitive, hurt face. "—because," she wept, smiling, "because I have a date with Spencer Tracy at the Egyptian."

"It's about time," he said tenderly and relieved. He gave her a possessive little shake, and went to the frigidaire looking for something to eat.



# RIGHT FACE

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## GENTLEWOMAN'S AGREEMENT

"To Christianity we owe the very concept of 'gentleman,' and may our country and what is left of the West never see what it means to be ruled by those who have in them no trace of a gentlemanly 'prejudice'."—Dorothy Thompson in LOOK.

## BEG PARDON?

Decrying the "foul rumor spread around, often by well-intentioned people" that Truman's loyalty probe is a witch-hunt, attorney Morris L. Ernst says that "people who shot off their mouths with prophecies as to what the FBI will do, will now desire to write dignified and fulsome apologies to the FBI."

(FULSOME, *adj.*—Offensive; disgusting; esp., offensively excessive or insincere.—*Webster's Collegiate Dictionary.*)

## GUILDING THE LILY

"Frieda was obsessed with one burning desire—MONEY! Money could buy love, could buy anything she wanted, and she was determined to get it at any price! How easy it was to discover that a new dress, and a corset, could transform a gawky and unattractive adolescent into a seductive beauty! What a few precious yards of silks and satins could do for a figure in the first blush of womanhood. How tawny tresses could look when brushed to fiery richness. How eyes could beckon . . . how lips could promise! WHAT FOOLS MEN WERE! You could lie to them—cheat them—marry and betray them . . . and if you were smart, they gave you everything!

"You may not admire Frieda, may even be shocked by her conduct—but you will remember this stirring story of a woman who sacrificed decency, honesty, love and FOUR HUSBANDS to win the independence she wanted in life!"—From an advertisement of the Literary Guild of America, Inc., for *Woman of Property* by Mabel Seeley.

## FOR ADULTS ONLY

Richard T. G. Miles, British political adviser, has proposed the adoption by the UN Atomic Energy Commission of "A convention enjoining world scientists not to engage in the manufacture of toy atomic sets, which might prove very dangerous in the hands of our young."

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WE INVITE READERS' CONTRIBUTIONS TO THIS DEPARTMENT.  
ORIGINAL CLIPPINGS ARE REQUESTED WITH EACH ITEM.



DANCE STUDIES BY CLAIRE MAHL

# Prague

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THE cultural life of this capital, stricken during the long years of Nazi occupation, steadily gathers strength as the work of rebuilding the nation moves ahead. Reconstruction—economic, political, cultural—still absorbs the energies of many of our leading writers. A number of them hold central administrative posts. The nationalized film industry, for example, is supervised by V. Nezval, who in the Twenties launched an influential movement in Czech poetry called "Poetism," a surrealist form tempered by folklore and popular ballad tradition. Another poet, F. Halas, heads the book publishing department of the Ministry of Information, while Ivan Olbracht, our outstanding novelist of the older generation, directs the state-owned radio (which happily bars private advertising programs).

Egon Hostovsky, whose novels have appeared in the U.S., has returned after nearly ten years of exile to work in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; V. Clementis, who founded the literary review *Dav* (Masses), is Under Secretary in the same ministry; A. Hoffmeister, who during the war directed the Czech radio programs of the OWI in New York, is now in charge of the cultural relations division of the Ministry of Information.

A few of these writers have managed to publish books while engaged in government work. Olbracht has written a life of Cortez, based on Prescott's classic, and Halas continues to publish new poems. But the absence of so many writers from the literary field has caused serious gaps in artistic production. Plans for "creative leaves" for a number of writers in government office are being discussed but will probably not go into effect before the Two-Year Plan is completed at the end of this year.

Nevertheless, the yearly output of books is above the pre-war level. A large part consists of non-fiction titles: memoirs, reportage, docu-



mentary works. Many translations are appearing (remember that small nations have to translate much more than big ones). Indeed, the hunger of the public for foreign books forbidden during the occupation seems insatiable. American, Russian, Polish, French, Yugoslav authors have a large audience in Czechoslovakia. Novels by Caldwell, Steinbeck, Upton Sinclair lead the American list. But there is also an enthusiastic though very different audience for *Gone With the Wind*, *The Valley of Decision* and a couple of Louis Bromfield's novels, which satisfy an appetite for slick magazine tales.

Among the documentary and reportage books, accounts of the fight against the Nazis continue to interest a considerable section of the reading public. Julius Fuchik's *Notes from the Gallows* is printed in ever new editions, and his earlier book on the Soviet Union, *The Country Where Tomorrow Is Already Yesterday*, has been reissued together with two of his studies of Czech poetry. The first volume of President Benes' *Memoirs* has recently had a big sale. Also in demand is a new edition of *Pictures from Czech History*, by V. Vancura, one of our most prominent novelists, shot by the Nazis in 1942.

Poetry has always been the most important branch of Czechoslovak letters. In 1918, with the birth of the Czechoslovak Republic, a phalanx of new poets emerged. First there was the "Proletarian Poetry" of J. Wolker, J. Seifert and others; then came the "Poetism" of Nezval and Halas. Similarly, after the liberation, a new generation of poets has made its appearance, many of them influenced by an anthology of American poetry in translation as well as by Rilke and by Polish poets such as Tuvim. There is as yet no definite trend, no "school" of new poetry. Surrealist elements are still present, but there is a trend toward simplicity, popular motifs, expressions of our new life.

The novelists have not yet turned to postwar themes. Partly this is because they feel they do not have enough "epical distance" (to quote one of the younger novelists, M. Fabera, author of an historical novel about medieval Mongolia) and partly because postwar developments move so swiftly and lend themselves more to a reportorial than a novelistic approach. Among the promising new novelists is V. Rezac, whose *A Mirror for Jindrich* will soon be published in America.

This is still a period of transition, but we shall no doubt soon have new novels about life in the Third Republic. In discussing new themes for the novelist, the young writers attending forums of the

Association of Czech Youth have mentioned the former Sudeten territory with its dramatic new settlement story, the voluntary reconstruction effort of the youth brigades at Most, the changed situation in the nationalized mining fields, the problem of readjustment to peaceful life after homecoming from concentration camps or exile.

INTEREST in the theatre, which was extraordinarily great during the occupation when the classics became a source of consolation and confidence to an oppressed people, has partly slackened now with the revival of so many other cultural, political and social activities. Voskovec and Werich, the two famous comedians who returned from their American exile to take over again their theater in Vodickova Street, play before capacity audiences, but the character of the audience has changed. As one critic put it: "Voskovec and Werich are still going against the wind according to their best-known song, but the wind has turned 180 degrees." They appeal now to the same kind of people who, before the war, were the target of their political satire: paunchy conservatives, heroes of the black market, disgruntled remnants of the upper crust of the old days, American correspondents, etc.—a sampling of the opposition to the new people's democracy.

Voskovec and Werich have maneuvered themselves into an unhappy position which drains their creative energies. Unable to produce a new original play, they have so far merely remodelled an old show from 1938 and put on *The Man Who Came to Dinner*.

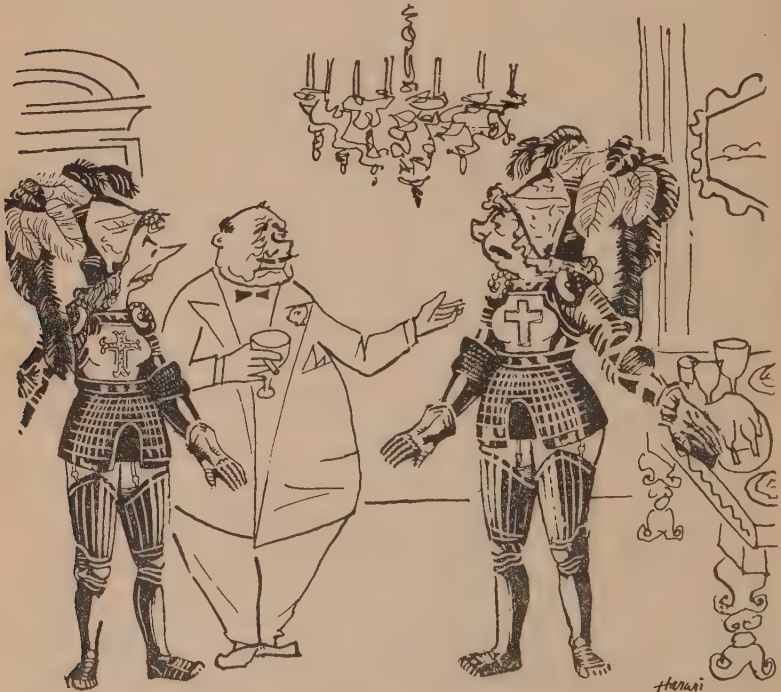
Their old rival, E. F. Burian, who introduced a new vitality to the modern Czech theatre, has unfortunately entangled himself in formalistic experiments; he plays before a half-empty theatre. But a young group of actors in the experimental theatre Disk with an adaptation of Aristophanes, another young group on the stage of the Satirical Theatre with a rather crude anti-war comedy, *The King Does Not Eat Beef*; and the Realistic Theatre with Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* and Simonov's *The Russian Question* attract large audiences.

An entirely new feature is the "Village Theatre" created by the Ministry of Agriculture under the energetic leadership of Juló Duris, the Communist minister, who is also pressing his program of "Cultural Houses" with state subsidies, in rural settlements. These homes of culture have a regular stage, a motion-picture apparatus, a library, a meeting hall, a medical room, etc.

A letter about the literary life in Czechoslovakia today would be incomplete without mention of the Union of Czech Writers and its Slovak equivalent. These unions, whose aim it is to provide material and technical help to their members (about 1,800), to bring literature to the people, to provide cheap books and to make culture available to everyone, have managed to improve vastly the condition of writers. Aided by the new people's democracy, which regards the author as occupying a very responsible position in society entitling him to specific privileges, the union has concluded a collective agreement with the Federation of Publishers providing for minimum royalties, quick reprints, etc.

Czech and Slovak writers also have their castles! Putmerice near Bratislava and Dobris near Prague, once seats of feudal families but now state owned, serve as recreation and discussion centers for the country's men of letters.

—RUDOLF HRUBY



"Clare, have you met Miss Thompson?"

# books in review

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## The Sources of Poetry

ILLUSION AND REALITY, by Christopher Caudwell. International. \$4.50.

“ILLUSION AND REALITY” is not only for those with a particular interest in poetry and literature; its significance is not only that it suggests a solution to problems in esthetics. Its basic theme is a matter of vital importance to the whole people. For the condition of Caudwell’s new understanding of poetry is his vision of change, of the advance to communism. That vision enables him to see poetry as a means to winning the freedom, as being itself a form of the freedom, which communism will enlarge and extend. The bourgeoisie cannot reach this understanding of poetry, because for them progress stopped when they reached the height of their power. They cannot see the content of history which is the content of poetry: man’s advance to “conditions that are truly human.” The consciousness and conviction of this advance is the basis of *Illusion and Reality*; the main lesson to be learned from it is to gain the same quality of vision.

“Poetry is something economic.” That is the foundation of the argument of the book. But if we are to understand it aright, we must always be conscious of the forward movement of man’s advance to freedom. Otherwise we shall think of economic activity, not as man’s economic activity, but as something static, and we shall think of its relation to poetry as something mechanical and dead. Such a conception would falsify the whole book.

Caudwell always emphasizes that economic activity is activity through which man makes himself. And he has to make himself; for there is no creator. By his own activity, through work, through the use of tools, and cooperation in labor, he has raised himself from the level of animals who blindly use nature to the level of man who masters nature; and through this activity he has developed his powers of thought, speech and expression.

There is a passage in *Capital* (Vol. I, Ch. VII) which is very relevant to Caudwell’s argument:

“We are not now dealing with those primitive instinctive forms of labor that remind us of the mere animal. . . . We presuppose labor in a form that stamps it as exclusively human. A spider con-



ducts operations that resemble those of a weaver, and a bee puts to shame many an architect in the construction of her cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality. At the end of every labor-process, we get a result that already existed in the imagination of the laborer at its commencement. . . ."

When Caudwell says that poetry is something economic, we must always remember that there can be no economic activity without work, and that work is a process by which man changes the world into what he wants it to be, making it a human world, and thereby changes himself. That poetry is something economic means, first, that without the attainment through work of the power to conceive purposes and realize them in work, poetry would be unthinkable.

But there is also a more immediate relation. Caudwell stresses that economic activity is conscious activity, not instinctive. The instincts provide energy for work only through a long process of change in man, in the course of which instincts are transformed into emotions, and emotions are associated with thought and the aims of consciousness. This transformation of man's energy from the instinctive into the conscious is an inseparable part of eco-

nomie activity; it is accomplished through economic activity and is at the same time its indispensable condition.

Poetry is something economic in the sense that it actually is this transformation of instinctive energy into conscious energy.

To illustrate this idea, Caudwell discusses the function of the harvest song in a primitive society, before the division into classes. The ground must be prepared for sowing. This demands the service of man's instinctive energy, but no instinct tells him to give it. "It is necessary to harness man's instincts to the mill of labor, to collect his emotions and direct them into the useful, the economic channel." That is the function of the harvest song. It portrays in fantasy the sowing and the growing of the corn, the granaries bursting with grain, the pleasures and delights of the harvest. The aim for which the instinctive energy has to be mobilized is represented as already achieved.

Since men now feel what their work is for, their energy is freed to do it. "The poem adapts the heart to a new purpose."

The poetry not only spurs men on by portraying in fantasy the real harvest which has not yet been gathered. Through the collective emotion which it arouses and which it actually is, the poetry heightens that human solidarity, the power to work together for a common aim, which is achieved

through economic activity. "Just because poetry is what it is [*i.e.*, the arousing and directing of collective emotion—A.W.], it exhibits a reality beyond the reality it brings to birth and nominally portrays." It exhibits not only the harvest, but the new collective human life which the harvest will sustain. "For poetry describes and expresses not so much the grain in its concreteness, the harvest in its factual essence . . . but the emotional, social and collective complex which is that tribe's relation to the harvest." The poem not only helps to gather in the harvest; it also helps to make society.

That poetry is something economic means that poetry is economic activity become articulate: it expresses the real content of the work that often seems so laborious—that it is work that changes the world and changes ourselves. Poetry and economic activity are inseparable from one another, part of the same process. Through both together, through neither alone, man makes himself human and the world a human world. That is the basic human activity, and thereby man advances to freedom.

He becomes free to the extent that he recognizes objective necessity in the world of nature—the ground must be prepared and plowed for the sowing, the growing crops must be tended; and through recognizing necessity in the forces of nature, he is able

to make these forces serve him. He becomes free to the extent that he recognizes necessity in himself, the necessity of transforming instinctive energy into conscious energy, available for the aims he consciously sets. Poetry, says Caudwell, is the recognition of the necessity of the instincts, and is itself the transformation of the instincts. It is a means to freedom, and a form of freedom. "Art is one of the conditions of man's realization of himself, and in its turn is one of the realities of man."

THE discussion hitherto has been concerned with poetry in classless society. Of the function of poetry in class society (represented by England under capitalism) Caudwell appears to me to give two different interpretations.

According to the first and the more prominent, poetry is still a means to freedom, but the freedom is illusory. It is the illusion of Rousseau: Man is born free and is everywhere in chains. In reality, man is born unfree and only wins freedom through living struggle. Their illusion about freedom springs from the historical role of the bourgeoisie. The bourgeois class abolishes all the restrictions of feudalism, and creates the free market and free competition; but free competition leads to trusts. The bourgeois class abolishes feudal rule—and creates the strongly centralized bourgeois state. Bourgeois free-

dom turns out to be the negation of freedom, an illusion.

This contradiction is expressed in bourgeois poetry. Just as the bourgeois sees himself as the individualist battling against all the social relations which fetter the natural man, so "the bourgeois poet sees himself as an individualist striving to realize what is most essentially himself by an expansive outward movement of the energy of his heart, by a release of internal forces which outward forms are crippling." And the bourgeois poet also finds that his freedom is an illusion. "He finds the loneliness which is the condition of his freedom unendurable and coercive. . . . He ejects everything social from his soul, and finds that it deflates, leaving him petty, empty and insecure."

But there is no escape from the contradictions of bourgeois freedom except new socialist freedom; and so long as poets are bourgeois, they can only fly from reality, as Keats did, upon "the viewless wings of poesy" to a shadowy, enchanted world which is "defiantly counterposed to the real world":

*"Beauty is truth, truth beauty"  
—that is all*

*Ye know on earth, and all ye  
need to know.*

Pay no heed to the world and its happenings, Keats is saying; be content to contemplate such timeless beauty as that of the Grecian Urn, knowing that beauty

is the only truth that matters.

According to this interpretation, then, bourgeois poetry is the expression of the false illusion of the bourgeoisie and of the reaction of the bourgeoisie to its falsity. The bourgeois poet "speaks for the bourgeoisie," as Caudwell says of Shelley, whose Prometheus he calls "fit symbol of the machine-wielding capitalist."

But in another passage Caudwell says that the illusion in bourgeois poetry is "begotten of the tension between productive forces and productive relations," the tension which drives on not merely the bourgeoisie, but the whole of bourgeois society to future reality. He also says that the individualism of bourgeois poetry does not express merely the individualism of the particular poet; "it expresses the collective emotion of its era." Bourgeois poetry "focuses all the emotional life of society in one giant 'I' which is common to all."

According to this interpretation, bourgeois poetry is not bourgeois in the sense that it speaks only for the bourgeoisie; Shelley's Prometheus is not only "fit symbol of the machine-wielding capitalist." Bourgeois poetry is bourgeois in the sense that it is the expression of bourgeois society; not of one class only, but of the community made up of warring classes, the capitalists and the workers.

The first interpretation implies that bourgeois poetry can never

transcend the bourgeoisie's false illusion. The second interpretation implies that it can foresee what bourgeois society is creating against the will of the bourgeoisie; in *The Tempest* Shakespeare had, says Caudwell, a prophetic glimpse of communism. The illusion of bourgeois poetry is then not the false illusion of bourgeois freedom only, but, as in primitive poetry, it is a foreshadowing of what society is going to create through economic activity—a new, a real and a higher freedom.

Of these two interpretations the second seems to me the truer, according better with the fundamental ideas of the book. We must now read and study bourgeois poetry with the question in our minds: In what way does bourgeois poetry arouse and direct collective emotion toward the necessarily impossible realization of the bourgeoisie's illusion of freedom? In what way does it at the same time arouse and direct collective emotion toward the real freedom of the future? Clearly these questions must be approached historically, since the bourgeois illusion of freedom changes its significance and loses its value as the bourgeoisie ceases to be revolutionary. But I believe that at all periods the significance and value of our bourgeois poetry comes from the fact that it is an expression not only of the bourgeoisie, but of bourgeois society, of the nation as a unity of oppo-

sites. In order to know our cultural and national tradition as a living force and to lead the people in its defense, it is imperative that we should think these questions out.

The key lies in the fundamental ideas of Caudwell's book—the interpretation of poetry as something economic, as part of man's activity of changing the world and changing himself. We must apply to poetry that Marxist understanding which makes *Illusion and Reality* an important work not only for the study of poetry, but also for the immediate political struggle.

Caudwell's work heightens class consciousness. When we see work reflected in poetry and find in the poetry the real purpose of work—to make ourselves and the world human—then we know better how to hate and fight capitalism, which frustrates the purpose of work and exploits the workers for its own inhumanity. For we understand that the workers are robbed not only of the surplus value they produce, but of the world their work should make, and of themselves. The beauty of poetry is the measure of that horror.

I believe our politics will be wrong unless we understand and make actively our own the spirit of poetry as Caudwell has revealed it. Our politics will be wrong because we shall underestimate our forces; we shall think too low of humanity and the peo-



ple. The content of the people's work—the activity by which they change the world and themselves—is so high and great that only in great poetry does it become articulate; only great poetry can reveal the people's creative energy.

ALICK WEST

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## What Price Movie?

THE BOILING POINT, by Richard Brooks. Harper. \$2.75.

NOT until such books as *The Grapes of Wrath* and *Tobacco Road* became best sellers were the businessmen of art convinced that the social conscience of the American people could be exploited like any foreign market. Their conviction produced the pocket edition, the play version and the scenario. Willy nilly, and with varying results, the serious writer was able to reach out to those in whose name he spoke.

And already such a writer must face an inevitable and critical choice. His relations with monopoly have acquired an ambiguous character. Whereas he could once sell his product outright, to be delighted or distressed by the treatment it received on stage or screen, he is now being tempted to suggest the future handling of his theme in his own work. As the contract lures the author, the book leans lovingly toward the script. Richard Brooks, the author of *The*

*Brick Foxhole* and now of *The Boiling Point* is an example of what happens when the romance leads to an engagement.

*The Brick Foxhole*, dehydrated of its self pity and its somewhat punch-drunk style, was converted into the excellent film; *Crossfire*. This was accomplished by moving the incidental theme of anti-Semitism into center focus. Movie executive Dore Schary, asked whether he would make so "controversial" a film in these troubled times, stated, "I certainly would make it. Even if I had no convictions in the matter, I would make it as a business venture because it is apparent that such subjects are of interest to audiences."

"Even if I had no convictions . . ." Mr. Schary has let slip a hint of the price the novelist will henceforth pay for citizenship in Little Golden America. Does he want his book to become a movie? He must retain his theme, alas—"such subjects are of interest to audiences"—but he has to sweeten it with cheesecake; he can keep his old characters, though he should falsify their relationships; he may describe class struggle if it is allayed by magic or abstracted from normal class interests; he may raise issues as long as his hero sees no way to resolve them; and he may even introduce Communists, provided he baits them. In other words he may, like Mr. Brooks, write a pseudo-social novel.

*The Boiling Point* purports to be, and is in small part, the story of the conflict between liberal and fascist forces in a small South-western town.

It has what at first seems an acceptable cast: on one side the slavish newspaper publisher, the rotten Congressman, the cynical politician, who represents the interests of "the owner of the state," the uniform-loving fascist tool; on the other, the enlightened young opponent of the Congressman, the organizer sent down from New York to help in his campaign, the attractive but emotionally insecure heiress who identifies herself with the cause of the exploited and confused sharecroppers, the timid old Socialist who tries to redeem himself by a terrorist act against the Congressman, the sharecropper's son who is murdered in reprisal for the attempted assassination, and finally, the protagonist, a healthy animal whose selfish ambition is tamed in the arms of the heiress. He spurns her money but her beauty leads him toward a kind of social-democratic understanding of society. Over all these broods the figure of the stainless sheriff who philosophizes in a language half colloquial, half formal, reminiscent of Cooper's Natty Bumppo.

So far so fair. Now what of the roles assigned to these characters? The negative ones, with the exception of the fascist, are clichés of corruption familiar to

moviegoers who have been taught to prefer an honest thief like old banker Throttlefist to an enemy of the people like the heroin salesman from Detroit. Brooks' version of the fascist is more interesting. He is a veteran and an organizer of veterans. However, his outfit is not a Legion post, as it might well be. His taking over of the town seems intended to recall the spontaneous rising of the veterans in Athens, Tennessee, last year; but the way in which that incident has been appropriated is both opportunist and perverse. An act aimed to restore democratic procedure is equated with one aimed to crush it. The purpose is clear: to instil a distrust of political action or a sense of its futility.

The treatment of the so-called positive characters exemplifies this most sharply. Let us look at only two of them.

The organizer from New York: let him open his mouth, and the reader hits the jackpot in platitudes. His wife taunts him with being too fat in the pocketbook, too worried about income taxes and his paid-up home at the beach. (What beach, Coney Island?)

This furriner from New York naturally hates the state and its people and turns eagerly from its problems to discuss Picasso, Matisse and Braque with his fellow revolutionists. "America has no cultural background," he avers, thereby setting in motion a brilliant debate: "Were a people

based on culture? Or a culture on people?" Mr. Brooks modestly omits the discussion.

But the organizer is also two other kinds of a rat. He tries to win The Hero's girl, even to the extent of unbuttoning his pants in vain on a lonely country road. After *The Outlaw*, why not try again? But this tasteless scene is evidently still not enough to finish him off for the audience. When The Hero is framed on a charge of murdering his best friend, the organizer proposes that the progressives, whose cause The Hero has been supporting, should disown him. He even wants to phone "the central committee" in New York to back his proposal. Lastly, it turns out that our foe in friend's clothing is a coward who would sooner give up a man to be killed than fight to defend him.

And who is our Hero, what is he? Well, he is a kind of existentialist philosopher in the rough. "Suckers, thought Roy. The world was full of suckers . . . the world was full of saps" and so on. Two hundred thirty-four pages later Roy is still developing his interesting idea. "Every little man was going to have his one big fling. He'd live off the fat of the land. That's what everybody was trying to do."

Roy believes in people, in individuals, but not in the movements that they organize, nor in

any leader they may choose. He resists every move to dramatize the plight of the croppers who have been evicted for supporting the progressive candidate. He objects to photos being taken of their emergency camp. "How's it going to [not 'gonna' this time] help to make fun of folks who haven't got a place to live?" If the farmers want to fight, it is only because they are being used by dark outside forces, to whom political expediency always means a few broken heads.

Roy is no more a character than the other stereotypes, whom it was superfluous to name. He is the fake innocent hero of a myth concocted in the slicks and studios: the know-nothing whose very ignorance leads him to the deepest insights. That these insights resemble the thinking of Wall Street on all important matters merely confirms God's mysterious way in human affairs. And now we know who Roy, our Hero, really is. He is Gary Cooper.

If Mr. Brooks protests that his literary merits have been ignored here, let him account for an elegant passage like this: "He kissed her throat and arms. If only he could hold God in his arms like this. Was it possible that God was People?"

This is what the Big Money has done to one young artist.

## Two American Poets

TO WALK A CROOKED MILE, by Thomas McGrath. *The Swallow Press and William Morrow.* \$2.00.  
THE GREEN WAVE, by Muriel Rukeyser. *Doubleday.* \$2.50.

THOMAS MCGRATH and Muriel Rukeyser have presented us with two outstanding groups of poetry. McGrath's collection of his work is rich and provocative and reveals him as one of the first-rate poets working in English. Rukeyser's volume testifies to her continuous growth and vitality in this difficult season when so many of the leading poets fall, with loud creaking, into old age.

*To Walk A Crooked Mile* is the work of a poet who has staked his vision on the proposition that capitalism is dying and that socialism is being born. This is McGrath's orientation throughout the volume and the route of the human journey he charts in his poetry. Yet, since the life which the poet reflects is not simple and the roads in it not nearly so smooth nor so direct as Fifth Avenue, McGrath cautions us in his first poem, "The Seekers," that:

*Every direction has its attendant  
devil,  
And their safaris weren't con-  
ducted on the bosses' time,  
For what they were hunting is  
certainly never tame  
And, for the poor, is usually  
illegal.*

*Maybe with maps made going  
would be faster,  
But the maps made for the tour-  
ists in their private cars  
Have no names for brotherhood  
or justice, and in any case  
We'll have to walk because  
we're going farther.*

In his work McGrath is an explorer who knows where his journey will end but who must fill in "the naked maps" with the roads and the crooked miles which he will put behind him. In poems like "Epithalamion: Little Rock Getaway," "Legend," "Like The Watchman In Agamemnon," he connects tributary roads to the main arteries of his map. These pieces are tightly written in vivid imagery and employ surrealist techniques, though the subjects and themes are quite real (elsewhere in the book McGrath deals with similar subjects and themes more directly and in those he attains, I feel, a greater quality of sensuousness and a profounder emotional effect). In the group of poems just named, and in some others, varied symbols are offered too rapidly and in too small a frame to be either fully comprehended or fully effective. For example:

*The survivors, arriving, did not  
know each other  
Except as heroes. But all held  
the keys  
To unlock the compass of the  
fifth season. Departing,*



*They kissed in an avalanche of  
A B C's.*

(From "Legend")

Some of the ideas, images and symbols which the poet renders in this manner are carried along into other poems where they become more integrated, meaningful and gain in force. Thus in "Blues For Warren," a stirring and powerful poem, we find

*The Angel of the Fifth Season  
with his red flag . . .*

In "Blues for Jimmy" (which appears in this issue of *Masses & Mainstream* but is not included in the volume) McGrath's idea of the "fifth season" (socialism) is found in a broader framework in which it is more readily understood and in which it loses abstractness and achieves a rounded beauty in which idea, symbol, and passion become united.

It is important to mention McGrath's wit, which tempers his poems with both laughter and fine irony:

*Lovers in ladies' magazines  
(Tragedies hinted on the cover)  
Avoid Time's nets and part no  
more  
Than from one slick page to  
another.*

(From "Song")

McGrath's fine feeling for the American language and its psychological nuances, his broad lit-

erary and technical knowledge, and finally, the width, depth and partisanship of his thoughts, make him a poet of rare value.

*The Green Wave* is also a splendid volume, warm and rich in its belief in man and his future. In this, Muriel Rukeyser's latest book, the poet engages in a stern struggle against those pressures which are destructive of people and art. Her songs, for Rukeyser is certainly one of the very important lyricists, are pitched sharply in opposition to the modish death-cultists, the cynics, the non-materialists:

*My questions are my body. And  
among the glowing, this sure,  
this fact, this mooncolored  
breast, I make memorial. . . .*

*My body is set against disorder.  
Risen among enigmas,  
time and the question carry a  
rose of form,  
sing a life-song.*

(From "Private Life  
Of The Sphinx")

In reading this poem one may recall Stephen Spender's "Spiritual Explorations" (in his recent *Poems Of Dedication*). Spender and Rukeyser set out in these poems to examine the reasons which motivate their lives and works. Spender, who has retrogressed so much in the last decade, swims in the seas of mysticism and has become imbued with the idea of death:

*Each circular life gnaws round  
its little leaf  
Of here and now. Each is tied  
within its kind.  
Mortals . . . have only bodies  
and graves.*

Such ideas have reduced Spender to the role of an *onlooker* to whom life becomes increasingly mechanical and mysterious. Rukeyser, on the other hand, is aware that nobody can be merely an *onlooker* and write poems of importance.

Rukeyser's "Nine Poems (for the unborn child)" makes a wonderful group to read. Here the poet celebrates her womanhood with the intelligence and joy of a person who has discovered her self and has established a relationship with the continuously expanding community of people moving toward freedom.

Thomas McGrath in "Blues For Warren":

*. . . we have given hostages to  
the shadowing future  
(You Warren, and my brother,  
and the comrades in a hun-  
dred countries—  
In the casualty lists all names  
are manifestoes)*

and Muriel Rukeyser in "His Head Full Of Faces":

*He saw the enemy. His head  
full of faces—  
the living, the brave, a pure  
blazing alone*

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MILTON BLAU

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ward the activities of the four  
workers to whom we were intro-  
duced in *The Dark Philosophers*.  
The philosophers are Ben, Walter,  
Arthur and the unnamed narrator  
of both stories, unemployed coal  
miners of the great Rhondda Val-  
ley of Wales during the depres-  
sion between the two world wars.  
In the first novel the four sat  
evenings in a confectionery shop  
refreshing themselves with talk  
about everything under sun and  
moon. In *Venus and the Voters*  
they resume their places on the  
brick wall in the yard and con-  
tinue their wry commentary on

the world. Their talk is weighted and purposeful, for these dry, dark thinkers have political passions and a concern for people, and so when another crisis hits their mining town they hop off the wall and swing into action.

The crisis of the novel revolves around the girl Eurona Morris, ragged, neglected and beautiful, although if you look close enough you see a white patch on her jaw which comes from underfeeding. The four philosophers try to save Eurona from an unworthy passion. Their efforts to help her are complicated by their peculiar attitude toward love, which is to them only a means of keeping the voters warm; they are too old, plain or politically preoccupied to be in the running for any love that might be knocking about.

Walter is a "very cold subject except about the brain." Ben is married. Arthur has stomach trouble. There is nothing wrong with the narrator; his stomach is in order, he is single, but "women to him never seemed to be much more than just him all over again a bit quicker to become mothers. . . ." And so though they cannot understand why men and women should go to such "pain and endure so much bother over a little issue like deciding the destination of their genitals," the four dark philosophers turn the town upside down to keep Eurona from the claws of Rollo Watts, the pretty boy bus conductor, whose

stormtrooper social philosophy they hate.

*Venus and the Voters* runs over with talk which hits you with the flat of the blade and then pierces

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deep, and you double up with more than laughter. It is eloquent talk, full of the imagery and conceits of traditional English poetry,

ironic, digging hard as in the use of the label "voter" for the men and women who have the right to vote and the right to starve. It is talk which comes from wells of deep compassion and understanding, reflecting sharply and beautifully the world around them, rich with the innermost salts of these advanced workers.

The free rein which the author allows his humor and imagination helps unhorse all within reach of the dark philosophers, and in the process they themselves are somewhat shaken. What a job is done on the pompous bureaucrats in charge of relief, the fat-rumped charity ladies, the sanctimonious church, the lard-hearted mine owners. One of the most hilarious chapters is the conversation the four philosophers engage in with the parents of Rollo, former servitors of the rich, who have the "bends" from which all the pressure chambers of the world cannot save them.

*Venus and the Voters* has sharper character delineation, broader and more spontaneous humor, and a richer plot than *The Dark Philosophers*. The earlier book should also be read because it has an abundance of Gwyn Thomas' gifts and starts us with the history of its fantastic, yet down-to-earth philosophers who carry on the noble tradition of Wat Tyler, William Cobbett and William Morris.

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BEN FIELD

films

## *The Hitchcock Case*

by JOSEPH FOSTER

---

WITHIN THE PAST DECADE every new Hitchcock film has brought cries that the master of melodrama was losing his touch. Now, with *The Paradine Case*, he is being consigned to the bone yard of the once-great to keep company with Lang, Rene Clair, Ford, Lubitsch. But if "touch" means the tight control of materials, the ingenious application of the gimmick, then Hitchcock displays as much talent as he ever did.

To my mind it is not so much that he is losing his grip as that his peculiar skill, unsupported by adult story material or realistic character portrayal, becomes less impressive with each demonstration. Hitchcock still uses with incomparable flair all the tricks and techniques that earned him his brilliant reputation, but today, confronted by a Hitchcock-wise audience, they become tricks with no purpose beyond satisfying his device-hungry appetite.

There was a time when Hitchcock regarded a realistic approach to character as an important ele-

ment in picture making. Because of this he was able to elevate the melodrama, the most abused of all film forms, to its proper dramatic level. He was able to create genuine terror, shock and suspense out of the ordinary aspects of human behavior. In order to build persuasive contrasts between apparently everyday behavior and its concomitants of violence, it was necessary to create believable human beings, people with whom the audience could at once identify itself.

Hitchcock once stated that the average film lacked genuine character development. Therefore, he always concerned himself with the character's background, his home life, what he did for a living, how he felt about his neighbors and his country's leaders, in short, the mass of detail that defines common living.

His early British films reflected this side of his film making. It was present in *Woman Alone*, *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, *The Girl Was Young*. It was even apparent in the spy story, *39 Steps*.

The argument has been advanced that character alone has not been responsible for the Hitchcock method; that the technique of the chase-within-the-chase, directorial devices and plot manipulation were even more important. Of course other elements of the film art are necessary, but the above, as argument, can be easily refuted. I need select only one example. In *Woman Alone*, the climax depends upon a closeup of the leading woman character's hands as she plays nervously with a bread knife. In this treatment, the full horrifying relationship between the man and woman is sharply revealed, the terror and suspense of the action evoked.

In the current *Paradine Case* Hitchcock stages his final fadeout by focusing on the woman's hands as she caresses her husband's chin. It is true that such a finale is superior to the average ending wherein the director concentrates on the heroine's face, her eyes slowly closing from the insupportable weight of her passion-clogged lids. But once Hitchcock's superior imagination is granted, the trick, in this instance, is nothing more than a cute and empty gesture as devoid of feeling as the relationship it symbolizes. For in the *Paradine Case*, the carefully stencilled speeches and canned facial expressions, so dear to Hollywood picture making, have replaced the

honest character relationships of his first films, and the difference is obvious.

Hitchcock's early Hollywood products, such as *Suspicion*, *Rebecca* and *Shadow of a Doubt* still contained some of the virtues that made his British films outstanding. In these he showed a basic interest in people, their surroundings and actions. In *Shadow of a Doubt* he emphasized the evil quality of the main character by contrasting it with the morality of a small American town and its naive acceptance of appearances. In these films the tensions and antagonisms of the characters carried the action in convincing fashion. But the films exhibited increasingly what Hitchcock himself calls commercialism, the slick device, the pat situation.

It may seem like a paradox, but in his subsequent films Hitchcock has gone Hollywood more rapidly and completely than many a man with lesser talent. To begin with, he was always the lover of the gimmick, a taste that Hollywood indulges as no other place can, because here the trick and the gag are the chief props to any successful career. Again, even in his heyday, Hitchcock films were never distinguished for mature ideas. Once his interest in people as people wanes, the thinness of his material becomes apparent. To the charge that he lacks seriousness, he has answered, "No one is critical of Dreiser for not

writing in the vein of Edgar Allan Poe."

This is a feeble defense. No one is asking him to give up his "vein." What is wanted is a little more valuable ore out of it. *Crossfire* is just as much melodrama as any Hitchcock film and yet it has something important to say. *The Informer*, as melodrama, is infinitely more memorable than anything Hitchcock has ever made, or ever will make unless he reconsiders his values. As a matter of fact the allusion to Dreiser sounds suspiciously similar to the arguments used by his less gifted confreres who talk about films as "entertainment only."

Like these gentry Hitchcock is also given to using an idea toward reactionary ends, innocently or deliberately. I have in mind *Spellbound* in which he contributes to the impression that psychoanalysis is used only in connection with murder, insanity and general forms of violence; *Lifeboat*, which spreads the notion that Nazi discipline produces a superior moral fibre and intelligence; *Foreign Correspondent*, which nurtures the idea that matters like war and peace are determined by crackpots and newspaper men.

Each of these productions was made not to add to the public understanding of the questions involved, but to exploit already existing interest for the sake of

box office—an objective not unknown to Hollywood.

If the advance notices of his next film are to be believed, his preoccupations with mechanics over content seem to be growing even more disproportionate. This film, *Rope*, will be made in ten days, ostensibly to cut a considerable amount from the production costs.

But I don't think Hitchcock is worried by the cost problem. What he wants is to establish some kind of record for other directors to shoot at. How will he manage it? By the aid of mechanical contrivances. He plans to eliminate the closeup which requires the resetting of lights, cameras, and scenery. He will shoot in continuous action, eschewing the cut except where absolutely necessary. How can this be done, how can he shoot around walls to follow the characters? He has figured out a way, of course. The walls will be so constructed as to provide automatic and continuous backgrounds needed for the action. Very ingenious.

Hitchcock will be Hollywood's man more than ever after this. But aside from establishing a new method for saving time in scenery moving, what will all this contribute to the person out front? It will result in another familiar Hitchcock thriller, containing less magic because more familiar, to be forgotten twenty-four hours after being seen.



# TOTEM and TATTOO

by JOSEPH SOLMAN

THE FLIGHT from reality, reversion to primitivism and bitter subjectivism which characterize so much of contemporary thinking are nowhere more vividly spotlighted than in the realm of painting. Many talented individuals, as well as brash opportunists, have gone over to the new mysticism, encouraged by the commercial art galleries, the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum and the Chicago Art Institute.

The new cult may be broken down into several categories. First, there is the concern with tribal art, making pictorial use of a whole stock of totemic, ritualistic symbols. A closely allied group deals in botanical imagery and seeks to evoke strange overtones of animal life. The bird, most often used, may be the perfect vehicle for their non-stop flight.

Secondly, there is the "intuitive," "subjectivist" school which believes that the inner urge is the only valuable asset in art and sets out to prove it by an orgy of texture, a wraith of lines or a few slashes of brilliant color, all apparently indicating an atomic burst of "pure" emotion. Along with this grouping may be listed an

abstracted form of surrealism, wherein, the corpse having been removed, the putrescence alone remains, as in the sickly little explosions of Enrico Donati.

The few tenets underlying these groups may easily be summed up. In setting irrationality over reason, urge over concept, symbol over representation, and in making intuition the sole guiding principle of design, they feel they are "freeing" man's latent, primitive instincts, hitherto inhibited and negated by civilization. Tradition becomes a drawback, our developed ideas of design serve only as a block to our deepest emotions. They adopt a "world I never made" attitude—a world they regard as being without meaning.

Their standards for judging art operate on the same mystic level as their creating. The painting must evoke some kind of subconscious response, which may be akin to Gertrude Stein's "hearing bells" whenever she met a man of genius. B. B. Newman, one of the spokesmen for "the modern counterpart of the primitive art impulse" sums up the artist's problem: "The basis of an esthetic act is the pure idea. But the pure idea

is, of necessity, an esthetic act. Here then is the epistemological paradox that is the artist's problem."

Newman goes on to reject every category of painting but the "ideograph" picture, "the idea-complex that makes contact with mystery—of life. . . ."

The totem worshippers, painters like Adolph Gottlieb and Norman Daly, believe in an art by incantation. They want, by a kind of imitative magic, to feel they can induce a work of art by using symbols and design motives that had meaning for an ancient art epoch.

Gottlieb claims that the painting of nature and man has been thoroughly exhausted in art. New forms must be invented to give art a second life. Twenty centuries' recorded evidence of the visual world renewing art is curtly dismissed. But if the painter has exhausted every possibility of nature (could the scientist only boast of this!) why, one asks, must he turn back to an ancient culture for new nourishment?

The totem painter's answer is that certain primitive fears and inhibitions have remained constant in a changing world. Rather than face the conflicts and emotional crises of our time in order to acquire an understanding of the disorder underlying *this* society, these men prefer to adopt a fatalism with just a touch of the occult in it to make it interesting. In so doing they have erected a new taboo—Man himself. Their

emotional anxieties are projected on the superstitious plane of an "escape from evil" (Gottlieb).

Jackson Pollock is one of the leaders of the abstract-expressionist group, and along with Hans Hofmann has been called the only important signal post among American painters by Clement Greenberg, art critic of *The Nation*. Pollock is the misanthrope of the group. He scatters gobs of pink and yellow paste over vast areas of canvas diffusely and with tremendous fury, or, as in his last show, winds continuous whirlpools of black lines, interspersed with an occasional tiny color spot. The emotion, being jet-propelled, cannot be allowed to catch itself in the stranglehold of design. Pollock prefers death by suffocation.

Pollock's "intuitive freedom" becomes a curious inhibition—the inability of man to confront himself or the face of nature. This work can only be termed an abortive expressionism since it never passes through the crucible of an idea or experience.

Hans Hofmann's work brings to mind the painter waiting for The Great Revelation in front of his tall white canvas. The Message is always too great for a small surface. Finally the moment of contact arrives, the painter runs to the palette and a liberal swab of magenta dolls up the face of the canvas. A few subtle afterthoughts of bright vermilion and sharp emerald green follow. The unfinished shapes clearly indicate the

"primal force." Here is "pure" emotion, no longer sullied by subject, motif, line, design or visible concept. Magenta is usually the trumpeting herald. Perhaps Whistler's definition of that color might be an ideal comment on the painter: "Magenta? Magenta is just pink trying to be purple."

Stanley Hayter practices automatism in art. An effect of gracefully entwined colored inks is the result. His subconscious revelations come perilously close at times to the old-fashioned construction drawings of George Bridgeman (a teacher most artists will recall). No matter how hard he rides his psychic Pegasus he reaches the same safe spot.

Most often in the painting of these intuitive fantasists we find soft blurred forms floating about nostalgically in a filmy void, becoming more attenuated with each attempt to contact the spirit world. Here we have an art peddling fads, fears and phrenology.

A wide gulf separates such work from the paintings of Paul Klee, who also worked in the realm of fantasy. The gem-like clarity of Klee's symbols, the sharp

linear diagram circumscribing his motifs, the variety of his subject matter, all surround his work with visual excitement. Klee has certainly made fruitful study of Egyptian, Coptic and primitive art as well as of the drawings of children. But he has invented a cast of characters, sprites, demons and troubled children who invest the older myths with a new life.

Finally, we must make reference to a statement in *Possibilities* (Winter issue, 1947-48), a magazine devoted to the school of art we have been discussing. The editors, Robert Motherwell and Harold Rosenberg, set this sentence down in a prefaced credo: "Political commitment in our times means logically—no art, no literature." The final sentence in this noble credo is an interesting admission: "In his extremism he [the artist] shows that he has recognized how drastic the political presence is." Indeed, the works of men like Pollock, Hofmann and Rothko reveal inversely the dire impact of social forces and depict, in effect, an hysterical flight from reality, a wounded psyche seeking some vague retreat or revenge. The art of incantation, tattooed confessionals and the divine right of the irrational can only lead to a rotting despair or a pandering to those forces in our society which would rather bind the artist and intellectual to obscurantism than help him promote an age of enlightenment.

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## Notes on Aaron Copland

by SIDNEY FINKELSTEIN

---

IN THE COMPETITION among American composers for performances of their work, Aaron Copland has emerged a good length ahead of anybody else. This is not a nice way to put the situation, but the fact is that the American composer is not regarded as a source of repertory in the concert field. He is heard at special recitals devoted to contemporary music. Otherwise he gets only an occasional nod from a concert artist willing to try a "novelty." Because performances are so few, they have to be striven for. The composer has to be his own herald and agent. His main reward is not financial, but the satisfaction of knowing that somebody is hearing his work. Sometimes there is the satisfaction of knowing that he is understood, but that is more infrequent, for an obvious reason. To be understood, a composer must be heard frequently enough for his style to become familiar. And no American, not even Copland, has achieved the distinction of becoming "repertory." This is due not so much to the weakness

of the composers as to the combination of addle-headed private patronage and uncultured, safe-playing concert management that rules the performance field.

Copland has cajoled and fought for performances. It is to his credit that his music justifies them. I have heard works of his that seemed thin or uninspired, but none that showed compromise with sincerity and craftsmanship. He is not as warmly human and inventive a composer as Charles Ives, nor as thoughtful and strong a master of structure as Roger Sessions. But of his generation, those born in the first decade of the century, he has best combined originality of language and clarity of form.

His works heard this season include the *Piano Variations*, dating from the Twenties, performed by Lucy Brown; the *Piano Sonata* of 1941, performed by Robert Goldsand in a series of three recitals devoted to contemporary piano music; the *Violin Sonata* of 1941, performed both by Miriam Solovieff and by the team of Angel



Reyes and Jacques de Menasce at a League of Composers concert; and the *Third Symphony*, composed in 1946, performed by George Szell and the New York Philharmonic.

Copland's music is unmistakably American. He has used popular idioms in many of his works, such as the jazz of the *Piano Concerto*, *Music for the Theatre*, and *El Salon Mexico*, or the cowboy and mountain tunes of the ballets *Billy the Kid*, *Rodeo* and *Appalachian Spring*. He disdains, however, being classified as a "folklore" composer. This attitude does not make much sense, for a composer has to draw his idioms from somewhere. Even Schoenberg drew upon Wagner, and Stravinsky on Russian folk song. Perhaps Copland wants to draw a line between his practice and the superficial use of folk songs in a borrowed, romantic and academic setting. Actually, the melodies of the two slow movements of his symphony, and the piano sonata, have the same nostalgic feeling and gentle curve as the folk melodies of *Appalachian Spring* or the *Lincoln Portrait*. The fast movements have a jazz-like abandon of bar lines, a free rhythmic counterpoint.

But if there is an American flavor to his work, he has not used folk or popular idiom as a key to discover or describe the full breadth of American life and the American people. He speaks for himself, as a lone thinker, rather

than for a nation or a part of one. There is always an unbroken thread of genuine feeling in his work. It is never formalistic. But, to use a familiar phrase of critics in the Soviet Union, there are few "human images" in it.

Copland's orchestration is always masterful, and yet his music is not always successfully clothed in sound. This contradiction is due to the fact that he is a late romantic, an introspective mind using an objective, neo-classic style. He avoids the lushness, the seemingly disembodied mass of sound, of the romantic composer. But he does not have the extrovert character of a Bartok or Prokofieff, a quality drawn from folk music, in which the instrument itself suggests the musical line as if it were an extension of the human hand and voice. His economy of timbre and design is a discipline which he forces upon himself and handles well out of long practice. His piano sonata, though a finely worked piece of music and always interesting in its development of themes, suffers because the music fights against the instrument. His violin sonata is more successful in this respect, employing fine contrasts of timbres with an enchanting freshness. His symphony has some awkward instrumental transitions, but also some sections which sound magnificently, like the poignant slow movement with its thin-drawn lines of strings and woodwinds.

Of all American composers, Copland is most respected and followed by other composers, and for good reason. He has helped others. He has organized hearings for American music, and fought, if unsuccessfully, for a composer's living wage. He has brought to our attention many of the advances made in composition abroad, appraising new findings in European harmony and instrumentation for their value to American music. His standards of absolute economy in expressing a musical thought have been a worthwhile discipline for young composers.

But Copland's influence has not been wholly positive. His modernism has been weighted too much on the Stravinsky and Boulanger schools. It could have profited from the addition of the richer emotions of Schoenberg and Webern, and from the more expansive human imagery of Bartok and Prokofieff. His faults have been made into virtues, so that his narrow range of emotion, a personal limitation, has become in his disciples a restriction to an academic studio music, composed as if its dominating emotion were the fear of being thought vulgar.

The *Third Symphony* should become a permanent part of or-

chestral repertory and be put on records, for it is one of the best American symphonic works. But Copland should be relieved of the burden, unsought by him, of being considered "the" American composer. It is time that others of his generation, and earlier, were extensively performed and recorded: Ives, Sessions, Ruggles, Riegger, Cowell. Not to know these men is like pretending to know American painting while ignoring Ryder, Bellows, Homer, Hartley and Marin, or American literature and ignoring Stephen Crane, Hart Crane, Dreiser and Sandburg. We are not the most musical of countries, but we have a music. The failure of this music to be better known is due to the fact that of all the arts today music is most ridden by snobbery and cultural ignorance, least available to the American people. Here one sees the disastrous results when culture is allowed to be run like a profit-making and monopoly industry, combined with a feudal-aping patronage system. These are hard times for composers, and there is but one solution to their problem. If they will take part in the struggle to restore and expand American democracy, they will be able as well to restore some democracy in our musical culture.



# THE TWO GALILEOS

by HARRY GRANICK

---

WITH the prevailing timidity of the commercial theatre, it is not surprising that two of the most notable plays of the season should have to be presented off Broadway. The Experimental Theatre produced the first, Charles Laughton's adaptation of Bertolt Brecht's *Galileo*; New Stages presented the second, Barrie Stavis' *Lamp at Midnight*, also about Galileo.

Both plays focused on the historic conflict between Galileo and the Catholic Church over the admissibility of the Copernican theory to the level of fact. But while the material was the same, even to particular scenes, and while the writers were, in one case, a world renowned artist of solid accomplishment, and in the other, a younger man, a true craftsman and a brilliant writer, the plays were utterly disparate in depth and dramatic power. In my opinion, this was due to the different approaches. For to the conflict stated above and common to both plays, Stavis added another: the conflict in personality; the conflict not only outside Galileo but inside



him, and in much the same terms, for Galileo was both a scientist and a devout Catholic; and the conflict outside the Pope as well as within him, for the Pope was also torn between respect for objective truth and his responsibility to uphold Catholic-Aristotelian dogma. Brecht's decision to present the material in epic theatre form robbed it of the possibility of extension in depth through personality and forced it to move on the horizontal plane of chronological action.

What is epic theatre? In the words of Piscator and Brecht, who invented the form, it is "teaching theatre." Arising in the years of

intensifying warfare between the Nazis and the working class of Germany, the form was frankly political: a people's weapon. Through it, Brecht and Piscator sought to explain the issues of the day with open didacticism while employing every theatrical art to enliven the proceeding. But while the form is eminently suited to the depiction of conflict between forces, the protagonists of the conflict can have only the barest internal movement, for their function is to represent the warring sides.

Thus, in spite of Hanns Eisler's music, particularly his brilliant streetsingers' ballad, and in spite of all the other interesting elements of production—the chorus of three boys, the picture stills projected on the back wall, the use of dance and pageantry—*Galileo* achieved no emotional intensity or curve. Though uniformly charming and entertaining, it remained an over-simplified intellectualization of a titanic conflict.

Indeed, Brecht's choice of style with its limitation of purpose caused him to avoid the dramatic peaks of the story and present Galileo both humorously as a bit of a foxy grandpa and as a man whose intellectual drive is so single as to deprive him of a feeling of common humanity even toward his daughter.

Brecht's style caused him to present the meeting between Galileo and the Pope in terms of a

passage at witticism; it forced him to explain Galileo's recantation on the bare ground of fear of physical torture. In one point only did Brecht's loose epic form give him advantage over the tightness of dramatic structure demanded by realistic theatre. It permitted him to include the wonderful ballade singers and the market-place fete, presenting the levering force of Galileo's concepts on the Catholic discipline of the common people. This Stavis was able only to describe but not to portray.

Also constructed fluidly, and in many scenes, Stavis' play not only pits force against force, but man against man; and above that and inside man, opposing those ferocious considerations of necessity between which he must choose for final glory or defeat. In contrast to the epic form, Stavis seeks out the most decisive and intensely moving moments of the real drama and meets its challenge with the utmost intellectual and emotional force at his command. Step by step, we follow Galileo along his anguished Calvary, watching the Church scourge him from Station to Station even as its founder was scourged in another time.

We are with him at that terribly dazzling moment when, first of all mankind, he beholds the Copernican heavens; we are with him when the schoolmen, in the name of the Church and philosophical idealism, refuse to look through his telescope at the facts



of the universe; we are with him in Rome while the Churchmen toy with his magical glass and he gets the first warning of ecclesiastical opposition from Cardinal Barberini, himself a scientist; and we are with him when Cardinal Inquisitor Bellarmin commands Galileo as a loyal Catholic to abandon a concept that might well destroy the Church, and Galileo, horrified at having to choose between two sides of his being which had heretofore been an entity, cries out, "Oh, my Lord, you have just started a civil war inside me which will end in my destruction!"

Bellarmin argues that the common people are not ready for the truth; they must be deceived for the protection of the Church. "When will they be ready for it?" asks Galileo. Bellarmin equivocates. "Sometime in the future." "But the future can be now!" cries Galileo—and it rings in the heart of the audience, "The future can be now!"

Nevertheless, Galileo promises to obey the dictum of the power that stands between his soul and God and is then granted the right to project his scientific discovery as a hypothesis, since, in this form, few will mark it except as an esoteric theory. It is a galling defeat for Galileo and all the forces of reason.

Then the scientist-cardinal becomes Pope, and again hopeful and with revived confidence in his

Church, Galileo hurries to Rome to beg Pope Barberini to help him establish the truth about the nature of the universe. But the Pope orders Galileo's books confiscated and unleashes Father Firenzuola of the Inquisition to proceed against the rebellious son. Later the Pope's tormented conscience forces him to seek out the aging Galileo in order to justify his behavior in defense of dogma rather than of the living truth which he fears may destroy the Church: "Galileo," he cries, "you have placed my soul in jeopardy of eternal damnation." When he departs, with an irony that finds the heart, Galileo kneels and prays for the sick soul of the Vicar of Christ.

But in the Inquisition chamber, a false document, the double-talk, the physical terrorization confuse and frighten Galileo until he curses his years of study. Alone with the psychological torturer, Firenzuola, he hears himself denounced as anti-Christ, as one prepared to hurl all mankind into chaos because of pride in a "few words." When Firenzuola compels him to recite the dread prayer of the dead, Galileo, already stricken by the priest's injection into him of "the shadow of the shadow of a doubt" regarding his facts in the face of God's awful wrath, cries for mercy and signs the abjuration.

Now the Pope assembles the College of Cardinals to approve

the Inquisitorial decree for a public recantation. Three refuse—and this is history. Challenged as to why he himself dares not be one of the signatories, the Pope angrily declares that papal infallibility must be safeguarded against the day when Galileo's concepts may become accepted truth. And indeed, the Pope's refusal to sign is today the apologia of the Church.

And now we witness the recantation: the man on the cross. With

the great Galileo bowed to his knees, reciting the abjuration, we feel we have lived through the passion play of our time, an intellectual, scientific as well as a spiritual passion. And when, in the last scene, Galileo, searching his long-tortured faith, cries out, "I swear by my Lord and Savior, the earth does move!" it is like the resurrection: the affirmation of the indestructibility of truth and a promise that, properly defended, it will save us all.

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## dance

### Anna Sokolow

SINCE 1935-36, when the group dances "Strange American Funeral" and "War Is Beautiful" received their first performances, Anna Sokolow has been consistent in her approach to her medium. At that time she brought the full pressure of her artistry to bear on the influential left-wing dance movement. She refused to accept the facile patterns of literal symbolism and choreographic "slogans" which some people accepted as the sole means of reaching worker audiences. She had a large share in shaping and broadening the artistic horizons for a whole generation of young dancers whose coming-of-age coin-

cided with the social ferment of the late Thirties. In the present ebbside of experimentation and exploration along the lines of social content in dancing, Anna Sokolow has continued her fruitful, deeply thought out work in this field. This was particularly evidenced in her recital, February 1, at the Teresa Kaufmann Auditorium in New York.

At Bennington, where Miss Sokolow had a fellowship in 1937, she produced "Facade," an anti-fascist dance. In "Sing For Your Supper" (1938), her "Last Waltz" dealt with the entry of Hitler into Vienna. Her solo "Slaughter of the Innocents" ranks as one of the

most beautiful and moving dances on Spain. The persecution of the Jews in Europe inspired a whole series of dances, including another masterpiece, "The Exile."

During a stay in Mexico (1939-1941) Sokolow, working with native artists, created seven ballets. Visits since then have resulted in the moving dances, "Mexican Retablo" and the splendid "Lament for the Death of a Bullfighter."

Sokolow's power of dramatic evocation is astonishing despite the economy of means, the limited dance movement, used to achieve it. Physically a small person, she moves with great dignity and intensity on the stage. She can shift from the passionate and large dimensioned "Lament" to the brittle fragility of "Our Lady" or "The Bride" with no loss of emotional depth. She can be brutal and yet sympathetic in "Case History" or

sardonically comic in "Life Is a Fandango," yet never over-embroider the emotional textures to lapse into histrionics or cuteness.

Where her new dances do not quite hit it off, as in "Ballad in a Popular Style No. 2" and "Deborah," one feels that she will either rediscover her theme and build it to its proper proportions next time, or discard it altogether without regrets. Her artistic courage, combined with a disciplined and purposeful mind, make her one of the most serious artists in the modern dance.

It is to be regretted that, excepting her work in "Street Scene," Sokolow has not yet been given the opportunity to make her full contribution as a choreographer for the American stage for she is a rounded artist who can greatly enrich the medium of group choreography.

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AMENDED BY THE ACTS OF MARCH 3, 1933, AND JULY 2, 1946, OF  
MAINSTREAM, published Quarterly at New York, N. Y., for October 1, 1947.

State of New York }  
County of New York } ss.

Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Joseph Felshin, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Business Manager of the MAINSTREAM, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management (and if a daily, weekly, semiweekly or triweekly newspaper, the circulation), etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the act of August 24, 1912, as amended by the acts of March 3, 1933, and July 2, 1946 (section 537, Postal Laws and Regulations), printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

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