

# Noted Writers at Hollywood Forum

By SIDNEY BURKE, Los Angeles Editor, Daily People's World

LOS ANGELES, April 12.—Fifteen hundred persons filled the Embassy Auditorium last Tuesday evening to hear four outstanding artists discuss Art—Weapon for the People, presented by the Hollywood Forum under the auspices of The Daily People's World.

Speakers were John Howard Lawson, chairman; Albert Maltz, Dalton Trumbo—all noted screen

writers—and Samuel Sillen, literary editor of the New York Daily Worker.

Sillen called the atom bomb spy scare the "killer - diller - chiller production of 1946."



Then turning to the main question, he said the issue is "art is a weapon—for whom?"

It is not a left-wing slogan that art is a weapon, he said—"it is an historical fact—like the class struggle," and "was not invented by Marxists."

In one way or another, the work of any artist reflects his society and his work is a weapon for progress or for reaction—"very explicit or semi-explicit, but it is there."

"If the term weapon seems crude, remember the struggle is grim."

As for the so-called pure entertainment in movies, he said it was based more often than not on anti-labor, anti-Negro concepts and generally on the theory of a false world that nowhere exists.

He brought applause with his statement not to consider Lawson, Maltz and Trumbo typical of the artist today, but rather as "the advance consciousness of the artist."

Trumbo, novelist and author of numerous hit screen plays, said "the fight for a free use of the screen as a weapon for human advancement rest fundamentally on an organizational basis."

This does not do away with the "primary battle of the individual writer to defend his individual stories and their development," he said.

But history has shown that "great improvement" in the screen and the "actual decline in the use of reactionary themes" came in "the

Samuel Sillen, Literary Editor, of the Daily Worker, and Joseph North, Editor of New Masses, will be the co-chairmen of the Art As a Weapon Symposium at Manhattan Center, Eighth Ave. and 34 St., this Thursday, April 18, at 8:00 p.m. Speakers include Elizabeth Cattlett, painter and sculptor, Arnaud D'Usseau, co-author of "Deep Are the Roots," Howard Fast, author of "Freedom Road," William Z. Foster, president of the Communist Party of the U. S., and Dalton Trumbo, screen author of "Our Vines Have Tender Grapes."

great upsurge of the CIO and the general organizational advance of workers all over the country."

Lawson, in impassioned words, called for an end to the fear of the word "Marx," especially in America, where newspaper columnists and radio commentators "with but the merest smattering of knowledge" are publicized everywhere daily, but where the contributions of such outstanding men of science as Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin are virtually banned in America.

Maltz pointed to the failure to try Ezra Pound as a traitor as a return to the old "doctrine of the irresponsibility of the artist."

In a land where all leaders—politicians, big businessmen, editors, generals and admirals—assert publicly at least they are "servants of the people," there are "many artists who consider themselves responsible to no one but themselves."

Some—"the worst of them, the cynics—announce blandly they are responsible only to their pocket-books or to their personal advancement."

This is especially a contradiction for the novelist, Maltz continued, "who writes about people and the way they live—he has nothing to write about if not this."

The great writers of the past, he said, "to a certain degree, at least, cared about people; they had compassion for human frustration and suffering; they had dreams of a humanity that would be free."