

MASSSES & MAINSTREAM

THE NEGRO ARTIST LOOKS AHEAD

By Paul Robeson

CULTURE FOR EXPORT

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The Case of O. John Rogge

By ALBERT E. KAHN

PHILLIP BONOSKY • BARBARA GILES • EGON KISCH • JOSEPH NORTH

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Our Time

By SAMUEL SILLEN

CULTURE for EXPORT

[IN AN editorial headed "Export of Culture," the New York *Times* of December 4 lamented the failure of Truman's battle-of-ideas program. The *Times*, always the good bourgeois, finds that the key to intellectual influence is spending more dollars. About the quality of the work to be exported in its new "cultural offensive" the newspaper has no misgivings. "We can be proud," boasts the *Times*, "of a vibrant and flourishing culture."

But the same paper, only two days earlier, had published a gloomy article headed "Things Are Not Good" by its theatre critic, Brooks Atkinson. The critic, unlike the editorial writer, has the assignment of visiting all the Broadway productions. It is not so easy for him to rejoice in a "vibrant and flourishing culture."

Mr. Atkinson finds the current season oppressively empty and banal. He complains that "none of the new dramatic work [his vision is limited

to the commercial stage] has suggested that the authors are creative writers with original points of view or vivid ideas." Nor is this merely a crisis of the present season, for the *Times* critic is reminded of "the calamitous history of the theatre over a long time."

Here is his report on the culture which is to invigorate such benighted American provinces as Paris, London, Rome:

"If there were any real intellectual or spiritual drive at the core of the contemporary theatre, the wild economics would not be the decisive factor. Nothing materialistic or practical can destroy an art that is vital. But something elusive and intangible seems to have drained the vitality out of the theatre and perhaps out of the other American arts as well. No one knows the reason exactly. But could it be that the spiritual climate in which we are now living smothered art that is really creative, and that the emphasis on public expression of all kinds is toward meekness and conformity?"

"People are playing safe. They hesitate to say what they think. The intellectual and artistic life of the country has been flattened out. The ignorant heresy-hunting and the bigoted character assassination that have acquired the generic title of McCarthyism are succeeding."

Before examining Mr. Atkinson's statement, I will add some evidence that the "other American arts," at least in their officially recognized form, are indeed in no better shape

than the theatre. "Fiction Rides the Toboggan" is the title of an article in the usually cheerful *Saturday Review of Literature* which, like the *Times*, is constantly drumming up the cultural export trade. The article (December 8) is by Amy Loveman, an associate editor of the *Saturday Review*, and her testimony is possibly even less comforting than Mr. Atkinson's. Miss Loveman writes:

"That American fiction is at present in the doldrums is borne out anew by the announcement that Harper's \$10,000 Prize Novel Contest, the largest prize in American publishing, is for the first time since it was initiated not to be awarded this year. . . . Just what it is that accounts for the sterility of current literature it is hard to say. . . . It is a dismal literature that the fiction writers of the present are producing, a jaundiced literature, indeed, for their world has no perspective. . . . Sex and sex perversions, the brutalities of the battlefield and the barracks, the crude and reckless craving for the titillation of the senses obsess many of the more serious novelists. It is a narrow world they mirror, an intensely ingrown and chaotic one, often an exhibitionist and sensational world."

These images of the dominant culture in the United States today do not seem to square with the *Times'* thesis that "more examples of America's impressive cultural life could be brought to Europe if more funds were available." A more prudent plan might be a fund to keep such books and plays—let alone comic

books, Hollywood films, *Collier's*—hidden from international scrutiny.

BUT the money-bag rulers of American culture are of course not embarrassed by a jaundiced literature and a flattened out theatre. They are not competing for artistic superiority, even though, like Mussolini, they whip a dead horse and call it Pegasus. Their real aim is a way to dominate the world and a fascist tyranny at home. And for this purpose the only culture that is indeed vibrant is the mindless, regimented, debauched, and indescribably brutal culture now being dumped on the people of our country and of other countries with the aid of dollars sweated out of the people themselves—and, at that, dollars which bring back more dollars. To succeed in their murderous purpose, the rulers of American capitalism, who rule and seek unchallenged rule of American culture, must destroy intelligence and morality, must annihilate the national democratic heritage, must gag or kill progressive artists.

Hence the "ignorant heresy-hunting and the bigoted character assassination" which Brooks Atkinson deplores. I welcome his statements against McCarthyism. I hope he will fight it. Up to now he has mainly fought those progressives, and particularly the Communists, who led the warning the country against McCarthyism and were its first victims. When Atkinson suggests that people are hesitating to say what they think he is apparently unaware that many

playwrights hesitate because of what *he* may think, in the miraculous event that they should get a play produced on Broadway that speaks unequivocally for peace, for Negro liberation, for any truly progressive cause.

McCarthyism is unfortunately not the property of McCarthy. It is not the Senator from Wisconsin but the U.S. State Department which decrees that America's greatest artist is not for "cultural export." But the denial of a passport to Paul Robeson, who has lent distinction to the American theatre, has not visibly moved the most influential figures in the theatre world.

There is nothing "elusive" or "intangible" about the exclusion of Paul Robeson from the stage which the newspaper critics visit. And it is not McCarthy but Truman who forbids the *import* of culture by denying entrance to the eminent biochemist, Dr. Ernest B. Chain, "for security reasons." The German-born scientist who helped develop penicillin has succinctly observed that the State Department "would appear to discourage the two-way traffic in the exchange of information in the medical world."

And it was not Senator McCarthy but vibrant playwright Robert E. Sherwood, speech-writer for presidents, who led the cultural battalions of *Collier's* into a war to replace the stage of Chekhov, Gorky and Pogodin with *Guys and Dolls*.

That is what "cultural export" boils down to.

I HAVE mentioned above that the war-bent rulers of U.S. culture aim to kill progressive artists. They are succeeding. We have in the past two months seen two murders in the theatre world. The distinguished actress Mady Christians was the first victim. That brilliant actor and fighter for freedom J. Edward Bromberg was the second.

There is public testimony in the letter columns of the New York *Times* itself that Mady Christians died as the result of political hounding and smearing by those well-heeled, semi-official agencies that are conducting a systematic terror campaign in all branches of culture. According to Elmer Rice:

"No one who knew her or who saw her during the last tortured months of her life can doubt that her death was hastened, if not actually caused, by the small-souled witch-hunters who make a fine art of character assassination. She stood for what is best in American art and in American life; and as a reward, she was slandered, falsely accused, hounded by investigators, deprived of employment, faced with destitution. There is no use appealing to the conscience of the McCarthyites: obviously they have none. But perhaps the martyrdom of Mady Christians will set freedom-loving citizens thinking about what is happening to art and democracy in America."

This testimony is supported by John Van Druten and Margaret Webster. Such was the fate of an artist who, in a better period of our national

life, had been welcomed to our country.

And Bromberg. Was not his murder at 47, in the prime of his career, even more brutally committed? The Un-American Committee hounded him and scores of other Hollywood artists. When he was subpoenaed, he requested a postponement because of his serious heart condition. The Congressional custodians of the American Dream pooh-pooed. And then he was blacklisted by the motion picture industry, exporters of *The Desert Fox*. And then he was blacklisted in the Broadway theatre, exporters of *Darkness at Noon*. So he had to pack up his talents, and still not at all well, had to go to London for work.

But there was still another wrinkle in this new type of "cultural export." Bromberg was starring in a play by Dalton Trumbo which the New York critics had mercilessly panned in true McCarthy style because Trumbo was one of the Hollywood Nine. Trumbo came out of jail to find his play a smash hit in London, and it was in London that Bromberg died a day after his wife and young son had set out on an ocean voyage to make whole the family which the Inquisition had forcibly severed.

Thus is culture exported.

Exiled is the word which we used when it was German artists who were forced out of their professions and their lands. I remember when they came here. We had an Exiled Writers Committee to welcome Anna Seghers (though the U.S. government would not let her and her two small

children stay here), and Ludwig Renn, and Alfred Kantorowicz and so many others. They taught us—their very lives taught us—a great many lessons which nourish us today. They taught us that an infallible measure of the government that drives to a disastrous war of conquest is its treatment of those artists who remain faithful to truth and to the interests of their people. They taught us that no late hour is too late to unite against war and fascism.

They helped us to see more clearly than ever before that a nation divided into classes has two cultures: the culture of the oppressor and the culture of the oppressed. And who could not see that only the latter was genuine, while the former became more and more degenerate as the class it represented became more and more openly rapacious and corrupt? And who could not see which would prevail?

WHEN Mr. Atkinson and Miss Loveman tell us that "our" theatre is sterile and "our" novels are jaundiced, we may with good reason take exception. For since when has Mr. Atkinson permitted himself the privilege of seeing those plays which truly belong to us, to the workers and to the Negro people? And since when have the *New York Times* and the *Saturday Review* noted the existence of, let alone read and reviewed, a work like *Iron City*, which might make them more humble in their approach to the all-inclusive pronoun?

There is another kind of broad

noose which we decline to fit our heads into. Mr. Atkinson tries to take the edge off his criticism of the "hoodlums" now threatening culture by talking in the McCarthy-certified way about the Soviet Union. But some things he surely knows quite well. He knows that the phenomenon of *King Lear* flopping on Broadway, to which he refers, is unthinkable in a country whose theatres in one year produce more Shakespeare than he has been able to see in his entire career as a critic. And he knows that while several American plays have been showing in Moscow, a Broadway producer of a Soviet play would very likely be hauled up before the McCarran Board, the Un-American Committee, the F.B.I., and that he would risk persecution under the Smith Act, the Foreign Agent Registration Act, and that the bulk of the New York press would howl for his blood.

Atkinson knows from personal observation that the "wild economics" he finds on Broadway does not exist in the Soviet theatre, which is flourishing not only in the capital but throughout the land and among all the nationalities. And surely he knows that, far from breeding the war-incitement, contempt for human beings, coarseness and vulgarity of Broadway, the socialist theatre is dedicated to peace, human respect, concern for the men and women of the profession who do not, as here, have to wait in season and out, most cases in vain, for a producer's nod.

In any case, there is a fight to be

waged here for the survival of even the most elementary standards; and it is a fight which more and more people in the cultural fields are beginning to see as a life-and-death question.

The tragic fate of Mady Christians and J. Edward Bromberg; the acute crisis in the publishing world symbolized in the Little-Brown dismissal of Angus Cameron; the dramatic protest of Josephine Baker against the Stork Club-Walter Winchell discrimination followed by a rousing conference in New York on Equal Rights for the Negro in the Arts, held under the auspices of the National Council of Arts, Sciences and Professions; the historic fight for a free culture put up by Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois and Paul Robeson; the growing activity in behalf of the Smith Act victims—these are spurring new ideas and independent productions in the cultural field.

As compared with the situation a year ago, there is much greater possibility for breadth in the movement to resist and throw off thought control. New alignments will take shape as more and more people come to understand that the democratic cultural heritage of our land can be preserved only as we struggle for peace, for Negro liberation, for the security of the working people.

The world would welcome, and eagerly awaits, our sending out a culture with such roots. For that "vibrant and flourishing culture" which the New York *Times* seeks to export, the market is rapidly shrinking.

Dear Reader: We Need Your Help

MORE than a year has passed since we last turned to our readers for financial support. Our 1952 budget requires us to appeal again for your help. We do so with full confidence that you will enable *M & M*, now entering its fifth year, to continue its vital role in the struggle against war and fascism.

During the past year we made a drastic retrenchment in order to survive. But the magazine has made big gains. It has become more and more widely recognized as a key rallying point of the fight for freedom on the cultural front. It has brought forward not only established but new writers and artists whose talents would otherwise have been denied full expression. It has helped the people of other countries hear the voice of that other America—the America of the plain people—which the thought-controllers of Wall Street and Washington are trying to silence.

In the face of the war-makers' terror campaign, *M & M* has successfully launched a book publishing program. Nearly 8,000 copies of Lloyd Brown's *Iron City* have been sold and we are ready for a third printing. We are shortly to publish V. J. Jerome's outstanding novel, *A Lantern for Jeremy*. Also scheduled for early publication are three other works: a novel by Philip Bonosky, a book by Joseph North, a volume of poetry by Nazim Hikmet to go with the Pablo Neruda volume which we have already published.

We are determined to see to it that these and other books will not only be published but will reach a broad audience.

We are proud too of the central role of our contributing editors in the battle for peace, workers' rights, Negro liberation, and a people's culture—Dr. Du Bois, Paul Robeson, Frederick V. Field (whose release from a Federal prison must still be won), V. J. Jerome, John Howard Lawson, Shirley Graham, Howard Fast, and the others.

Shall the magazine—at a moment like this!—be stifled for lack of funds? We urgently need \$7,500 to carry us through 1952. We ask you to give generously to the magazine that speaks and fights for you.

We have no "angels." We have only the rank-and-file reader who knows that every dollar counts.

Please send us your contribution now.

—THE EDITORS

THE NEGRO ARTIST LOOKS AHEAD

by PAUL ROBESON

We present here Mr. Robeson's address to the opening session of the Conference for Equal Rights for Negroes in the Arts, Sciences and Professions, recently held in New York City under the auspices of the New York Council of the A.S.P. The original text has been slightly abridged.

WE ARE here today to work out ways and means of finding jobs for colored actors and colored musicians, to see that the pictures and statues made by colored painters and sculptors are sold, to see that the creations of Negro writers are made available to the vast American public. We are here to see that colored scientists and professionals are placed in leading schools and universities, to open up opportunities for Negro technicians, to see that the way is open for colored lawyers to advance to judgeships—yes, to the Supreme Court of these United States, if you please.

It is not just a question of jobs, of positions, of commercial sales. No—the questions at hand cannot be resolved without the resolution of deep-

er problems involved here. We are dealing with the position in this society of a great people—of fifteen million closely-bound human beings, of whom ten millions in the cotton and agricultural belt of the South form a kind of nation based upon common oppression, upon a magnificent common heritage, upon unified aspiration for full freedom and full equality in the larger democratic society.

The Negro people today are saying all up and down this nation (when you get on the streets, into the churches, into the bars to talk to them): "We will not suffer the genocide that might be visited upon us. We are prepared to fight to the death for our rights."

Yes, we are dealing with a great people. Their mere survival testifies to that. One hundred millions sacrificed and wasted in the slave ships, on the cotton plantations, in order that there might be built the basic wealth of this great land. It must have been a tremendously strong people, a people of tremendous stamina, of the finest character, merely to

have survived. Not only have the Negro people survived in this America, they have given to these United States almost a new language, given it ways of speech, given it perhaps the only indigenous music.

One great creation, modern popular music, whether it be in theatre, film, radio, records—wherever it may be—is almost completely based upon the Negro idiom. There is no leading American singer, performer of popular songs, whether it be a Crosby, a Sinatra, a Shore, a Judy Garland, an Ella Logan, who has not listened (and learned) by the hour to Holliday, Waters, Florence Mills, to Bert Williams, to Fitzgerald, and to the greatest of all, Bessie Smith. Without these models, who would ever have heard of a Tucker, a Jolson, a Cantor?

Go into the field of the dance. Where could there have come an Astaire, an Eleanor Powell and a James Barton without a Bill Robinson, a Bert Williams, an Eddie Rector, a Florence Mills? How could Artie Shaw and Bennie Goodman have appeared but for a Teddy Wilson, Turner Latan, Johnny Dunn, Hall Johnson, Will Marion Cook? Whence stems even Gershwin? From the music of Negro America joined with the ancient Hebrew idiom. Go and listen to some of the great melodies. Here again is a great American composer, deeply rooted, whether he knew it or not, in an African tradition, a tradition very close to his own heritage.

I speak very particularly of this

popular form. This is very important to the Negro artists, because billions, literally billions of dollars, have been earned and are being earned from their creation, and the Negro people have received almost nothing.

AT ANOTHER stage of the art there is no question, as one goes about the world, of the contribution of the Negro folk songs, of the music that sprang from my forefathers—their struggle for freedom—not songs of contentment—but songs like "Come Down, Moses" that inspired Harriet Tubman, John Brown, and Sojourner Truth to the fight for emancipation.

I think of Larry Brown who went abroad, heard Moussorgsky, heard the great folk music of other lands and dedicated himself, as did Harry Belafonte before him, to showing that there was a great music, not just "plantation songs."

One perhaps forgets my own career, and that for five years I was singing nothing but the music of my people. Later, when it was established as a fine folk music, I began to learn the folk music of other peoples. There has been one of the bonds that has drawn me so close to the peoples of the world, bonds through this likeness in music that made me understand the political growth of many peoples, the struggles of many peoples, and brought me back to you to fight here in this land, as I shall continue to do.

I remember in England in the early days (incidentally, I just heard from Kingsley Martin, of the *New Statesman*

man and Nation, who is concerned about my inability to travel and to function as an artist in this land, and who is beginning a campaign in England on this basis)—I remember writing several articles for the *New Statesman and Nation*, going to the whole root of this matter. I think back now—the deep pride that I had and still have in the creations of my people and in seeing the links here with Africa, and with the other peoples of Asia, and taking issue with the view that Western music was the only great music in the world and that everything else was so backward.

I remember writing: "Mr. Beethoven, yes, he is a great composer, but he deals with themes. He has to develop them a bit, but he starts with a very simple theme. . . ." And I was interested in reading a book the other day on the thematic process which takes the whole Ninth Symphony and proves that in every movement it begins and stems from a kernel that really in the end is a few bars. In those days I didn't quite know it technically, but had a feeling, and I listened to all the music and I still am looking to find anywhere greater themes to start with than "Deep River" or "Go Down, Moses," or "I'm A Poor Wayfaring Stranger."

So we are dealing with a people who come from great roots. There is no need to quote the names of an Anderson or a Hayes and many more; or of the great scientists—of a Julian, of a Carver. No need today for the Negro people to prove any more that they have a right to full equality.

They have proven it again and again.

The roots of this great outpouring we are talking about today in the cultural expression of my people, is a great culture from a vast continent. If these origins are somewhat blurred in this America of ours, they are clear in Brazil where Villa-Lobos joins Bach with African rhythms and melodies; in Cuba and Haiti a whole culture, musical and poetic, is very deep in the Africa of its origins—an African culture quite comparable to the ancient culture of the Chinese—similar in religious concepts, in language, in poetry, in its sculpture, in its whole esthetic—a culture which has deeply influenced the great artists of our time—a Picasso, a Modigliani, a Brancusi, an Epstein, a deFalla, a Milhaud. So we are today discussing the problems of a proud people, rich in tradition, a people torn from its ancient homeland but who in 300 years have built anew, have enriched this new Continent with its physical power, with its intellect, with its deep, inexhaustible spirit and courage.

As I have said, in spite of all these contributions to our culture, the fruits have been taken from us. Think of Handy, one of the creators of the Blues; think of Count Basie, playing to half-filled houses at the Apollo; colored arrangers receiving a pittance while white bands reap harvests. What heartbreak for every Negro composer! Publishing houses taking his songs for nothing and making fortunes. Theatres in the heart of the Negro communities dictating to Negro performers what they shall act

. . . arrogantly telling Negro audiences what they shall see.

I WENT to a whole group of my Negro friends. I wanted them to put down some of the things in which they were interested this morning. What did they want you to know? Here are some things that I will read:

"Negroes have carried on an important struggle in the United States throughout the history of this country, even before there was any significant progressive movement in the U.S.: this is a lesson progressives must learn—and accept it as a privilege and duty to join in the struggle. The progressive movement must understand with crystal clarity that the Negro people of the United States have never retreated or compromised in their aspirations, and progressives must follow a dynamic path with them. For if they do otherwise, they will find themselves conscious or unconscious allies of reactionaries and pseudo-liberals. Progressives must re-orient themselves to the qualitative change that has come about in the unalienable and rightful demand of the United States Negro. The Negro men and women of the United States want equality for everybody, in everything, everywhere, now."

This is awfully good, I must say.

"Whites must come forward and put up a struggle, no matter what the repercussions; struggle must be constant in unions, housing organizations and not only where Negroes are involved—whites must take action every day and not wait for Negroes to raise issues in order to come in on the struggle. . . . Peace is crucial in this question. Its maintenance depends on whether or not democracy is extended to the Negro. Support must be twofold. In order to show support politically, there must be an understanding and appreciation of Negro culture. There must

be a willingness to learn. If present U.S. cultural patterns do not permit the utilization of Negro talent, then independent means must be found."

Another comment:

"The U.S. theatre must show the totality of Negro life, thereby eliminating stereotypes in either extreme. To offset the so-called objective reporting in the white press, all positive accomplishments by Negro cultural workers should be designated as such. Every Negro artist needs and must now demand free and equal opportunity to develop in fields of his or her endeavor. White progressives must recognize that in joining the Negro struggle, they join on the Negro people's terms."

Mr. Hood, in Cincinnati, put it very sharply: We must work together. We are a unit—certainly we are, but to the trade union leader (we say) we seek your co-operation; we no longer ask your permission.

LET us touch for a moment on radio and television. We all know the difficulties—no major hours with Negro talent, an occasional guest appearance eagerly awaited by the Negro audience. Why this discrimination? Well, these mass media are based on advertising, commercialism, at its worst, and the final answer is very simple. It goes to the root of all that has been said. The final answer is: "The South won't take it."

Now, I had a program myself in the '40's, all set up by one of the biggest advertising agencies, a very fine program, a dignified program in which I would have been doing Othello and many other things. One

morning they said, "We made some inquiries and the South just won't have it. You can come on once in a while and sing with Mr. Voorhees, and so forth, but no possibility of a Negro artist having his own program." Not *that* dignity. And so we have allowed the South with its patterns to determine for all America now, when and where the Negro will be denied an opportunity.

I think that public opinion could be aroused on this issue. This is a matter of national protest, of national pressure. These media happen to be under the control of Federal Communications. We are dealing here with matters as serious as the passage of an Anti-Lynch Bill, Anti-Poll Tax and Free Voting Legislation, of F.E.P.C., of the whole issue of Federal and States rights. We can demand a change in the public interest in the pursuance of democratic procedures. Added to this, of course, can be pressure on the advertisers who wax fat today from the purchases of Negro customers. These latter, plus their allies, could have very decisive influence.

The films today are of vast significance and influence. Here, too, the South determines the attempts to camouflage, to pass off so-called progressive films, to find new approaches to the treatment of the Negro. They have been very thoroughly analyzed and exposed for what they are by W. J. Jerome in his exhaustive pamphlet on "The Negro in Hollywood Films." Here, too, the mounting of the right kind of campaign

could shake Hollywood to its foundations, and help would be forthcoming from all over the world. Their markets everywhere in the world could be seriously affected, if the lead came from here.

The struggle on this front could have been waged with some real measure of success at any time, but today conditions insure the careful heeding of the collective wrath of the Negro people and their allies. For today, in the struggle extending all over the world, all pronouncements of our wonderful democracy ring hollow and clearly false as soon as one points the finger at the oppression of fifteen million second- and third-class citizens of this land.

There is no way to cover that up. One day, Willie McGee; the next, Martinsville; the next, Cicero; the next, Groveland, Florida. Behind these horrors is the mounting anger of a long-suffering people, of a people that has its Denmark Vesey's, its Frederick Douglasses, its Sojourner Truths, its Harriet Tubmans, its DuBois's, its Benjamin Davis's — a people that fought for its freedom in the great Civil War and buried the hated Confederate flags in the dust.

Behind these people and their allies here in the U.S. are the tens and tens of millions of advanced workers through the world, west and east, bulwarked by the overwhelming millions of a fast-emerging colonial world hastening to final and complete control of their destinies, inspired by the events of a November 7th, thirty-four years ago, by the victories of many

new People's Democracies, by the world-shattering creation of the new People's Republic of China. This world in change makes possible here new levels of action, insures victories hitherto unsuspected. The millions of India watch and Mr. Bowles will have his hands and his mouth full to convince these people that the civilization extolled by Byrnes of South Carolina, Smith of Georgia, Connally of Texas, is just the thing to bring new vistas of freedom and individual liberty to that ancient continent. I often get letters from India. They seem to be somewhat doubtful.

THE Government can be pressured in this time and it certainly can be pressured on this issue. Most important for us here is the recognition of the Negro's rights to all kinds of jobs in the arts, not only the rights of the artists, but technical jobs for engineers, all sorts of opportunities in production, in scenic design, at all levels. I am very much interested in that: I've got a son, Paul, who studied engineering at Cornell, majored in Communications. I'd like to see him get a good job in television.

And so in the case of Actors Equity—we who are members of Equity must fight not only for the rights of Negro actors, we must see that the stage-hands are there. We must fight within the AFL, Equity's parent organization, for the right of Negroes to work in *every* field. And so in the American Guild of Musical Artists and in the American Federation of Radio Artists—they are shouting an

awful lot these days about how democratic and American they are: Let them show it!

THE final problem concerns new ways, new opportunities based upon a deep sense of responsibility in approaching the problem of the Negro people in its totality. There are despoilers abroad in our land, akin to those who attempted to throttle our Republic at its birth. Despoilers who would have kept my beloved people in unending serfdom, a powerful force who blessed Hitler as he destroyed a large segment of a great people. Today they would recreate the image of Hitler, stifle millions of the hitherto oppressed as they struggle forth for their emancipation, destroy the People's Republics where life has been created anew, where the forces of nature have been turned to mass prosperity and good.

All these millions of the world stand aghast at the sight and the very name of *that* America—but they look to *us*; they look to *us* to help create a world where we can all live in peace and friendship, where we can change the excellences of our various arts and crafts, the manifold wonders of our mutual scientific creations, a world where we can rejoice at the unleashed powers of our innermost selves, of the potential of great masses of people. To them *we* are the America. Let us remember that.

And let us learn how to bring the great masses of the American people *our* culture and *our* art. For in the end, what are we talking about w

... talk about American culture to-day? We are talking about a culture that is restricted to the very, very few. How many workers ever get to the theatre? I was in concerts for 20 years, subscription concerts, the two thousands seats gone before any Negro in the community, any worker, could even hear about a seat. Even men, the price was \$12.00 for six concerts. How could working people ever hear these concerts? Only by my going into the trade unions and singing on the streets and on the picket lines and in the struggles for the freedom of our people—only in this way could the workers of this land hear me.

We are talking about a culture which as yet has no relationship to the great masses of the American people. I remember an experience in England. I sang not only in Albert Hall, the concert halls, but also in the picture theatres, and one night I came out and a young woman was standing there with her mother, an aged lady. "My grandmother wants to thank you very much. She always wanted to hear you in person. She heard you tonight and she's going home. She just had sixpence above her bus fare." So she was able to hear me. Later, that was so in the Unity Theatre in London—now a theatre which has stretched all over England. Here in America, in 1948 in the Deep South, I remember standing singing to white workers in Memphis, workers who had come out on strike that Negro workers might get equal wages.

In the theatre I felt this years ago and it would interest you to know that the opening night of *Othello* in New York, in Chicago, in San Francisco (I never told this to the Guild), I told Langner he could have just one-third of the house for the elite. I played the opening night of *Othello* to the workers from Fur, from Maritime, from Local 65.

Just the other night I sang at the Rockland Palace in the Bronx, to this people's audience. We speak to them every night. To thousands. Somewhere, with the impetus coming from the arts, sciences and professions, there are literally millions of people in America who would come to hear us, the Negro artists. This can be very important. Marion Anderson, Roland Hayes, all of us started in the Baptist Churches. I'm going right back there very soon. If you want to talk about audiences, I defy any opera singer to take those ball parks like Sister Tharpe or Mahalia Jackson. It is so in the Hungarian communities (I was singing to the Hungarian-Americans yesterday), the Russian-Americans, the Czech-Americans . . . all of them have their audiences stretching throughout this land.

The progressive core of these audiences could provide a tremendous base for the future, a tremendous base for our common activity and a necessary base in the struggle for peace. These people must be won. We can win them through our cultural contributions. We could involve millions of people in the struggle for peace and for a decent world.

BUT the final point. This cannot be done unless we as artists have the deepest respect for these people. When we say that we are people's artists, we must mean that. I mean it very deeply. Because, you know, the people created our art in the first place.

Haydn with his folk songs—the people made it up in the first place. The language of Shakespeare—this was the creation of the English-speaking people; the language of Pushkin, the creation of the Russian people, of the Russian peasants. That is where it came from—a little dressed up with some big words now and

then which can be broken down into very simple images.

So, in the end, the culture with which we deal comes from the people. We have an obligation to take it back to the people, to make them understand that in fighting for their cultural heritage they fight for peace. They fight for their own rights, for the rights of the Negro people, for the rights of all in this great land. All of this is dependent so much upon our understanding the power of this people, the power of the Negro people, the power of the masses of America, of a world where we can all walk in complete dignity.

AN ANNOUNCEMENT

AS IN PAST YEARS, our February issue will be a special number in observance of Negro History Week. We ask our readers to help achieve a wide circulation of the issue. Last year's special issue was sold out a few days after publication. Please order your extra copies in advance.

—THE EDITORS

The Case of O. John Rogge

By **ALBERT E. KAHN**

WHEN I heard O. John Rogge testify as the star Government witness at the recent trial of the Peace Information Center, I was reminded of a remarkable admission he made to me more than a year ago in Stockholm, Sweden. We were both attending the Stockholm Peace Conference at the time, and as its sessions were drawing to a close, Rogge had announced in a surprise newspaper interview that he intended to visit Yugoslavia directly after he left the Swedish capital.

I asked Rogge his purpose in going on to Yugoslavia. At first, he spoke of an intense interest in conditions in that country. Then finally, seeing I was not at all convinced, he told me: "Look, I tried to get some business from the Russians and the Poles, but I couldn't. So I had to work out something with the Yugoslavs."

There was, according to Rogge, nothing really reprehensible about the fact that he had offered his "professional services" to the Soviet and Polish Governments and that failing to have these offers accepted he had secretly come to terms with the Tito regime. Other American attorneys,

he pointed out, acted as counsel for various governments. Of course, some persons might accuse him of selling himself to the avowed enemies of the World Peace Congress, of which he was a vice-president. But, after all, a man had to look out for his own interests. And the ten thousand dollar initial retainer he had received from Tito was no trifling consideration. . . .

A good many progressives were profoundly shocked when Rogge recently turned Government informer against Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois and four associates in the Peace Information Center. Only a comparatively short time before, Rogge had still been widely regarded as an outstanding liberal and staunch advocate of peace. How then account for the drastic transformation in the man?

Being a confirmed devotee of Sigmund Freud, Rogge would no doubt explain his metamorphosis as the product of intricate subconscious compulsions. There is a less complicated explanation. Turncoats and traitors are not unfamiliar phenomena in our time. Nations have had their Quislings and Laval, revolu-

tionary parties their Trotskys and Rajks, literature its Hamsuns and Gides. It was perhaps to be expected the peace movement would have its Rogge.

The case of Rogge may be of interest as a study in character degeneration. But its chief significance is not a matter of personality but of politics. Rogge demonstrates the development of a renegade.

In the postwar period when Roosevelt's policies were being methodically gutted by the Truman Administration, Rogge was one of the numerous New Dealers to be removed from government office. An Assistant U. S. Attorney General with a fairly liberal record, he was discharged from his post in October, 1946, when he sought to make public certain secret connections that American politicians and big businessmen had maintained with Nazi Germany. Due to the sensational nature of the episode, the news of Rogge's dismissal was featured from coast to coast by the press and radio. Overnight, the forty-three-year-old lawyer became something of a national figure.

"At the time of my dismissal," Rogge later wrote in his book, *Our Vanishing Civil Liberties*, "I was planning to go into law practice in New York with another trial man and several other experts." He had once enjoyed a successful practice as a corporation lawyer and intended to return to this field. "We were going to have the best little law shop there was, catering to blue-chip

clients. We were going to handle labor matters, too, but for employers."

Such sentiments were not exactly those of a man irrevocably dedicated to social progress. But ensuing events were to give an unexpected twist to Rogge's career. Because of his dramatic feud with the Justice Department, he was besieged with requests for public appearances. Before long his massive figure, incongruously boyish face and sonorous orations were a familiar feature of rallies held by liberal and anti-fascist organizations in every part of the country. The acclaim he received was a new and highly gratifying experience to him. Increasingly, he saw himself as a champion of democracy.

EARLY IN 1947 Rogge was asked by members of the Executive Board of the Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee to represent them as counsel in a contempt action brought against them by the Un-American Activities Committee. "I had difficulty in deciding the issue," Rogge subsequently recorded. "Indeed, it took me two weeks to make up my mind." The men and women under citation were, he knew, the victims of political persecution; but by representing them he felt he might jeopardize a "very desirable law association."

In the end, however, he agreed to take the case. His legal services were then retained by other organizations and individuals facing Government prosecution because of their liberal

convictions or progressive activities. Within less than a year, Rogge acquired the reputation of being one of the nation's foremost civil rights attorneys.

At the same time, Rogge was becoming prominently associated in other ways with the progressive movement in the United States. He was elected vice-chairman of the National Council of the Arts, Sciences and Professions; vice-president of the National Lawyers Guild; and a member of the New York State executive committee of the American Labor Party. When the Progressive Party was formed in the summer of 1948, Rogge was named to its National Committee. Soon after, he announced his candidacy on the American Labor Party ticket for Surrogate of New York County.

A favorite topic of Rogge's in those days was that he had made very considerable sacrifices in joining the progressive camp. He had, he would relate, relinquished the chance of practicing law in "as plush an office as any in Manhattan" and representing "highly profitable accounts." He told a friend, "When I go into the Bankers' Club, I'd like to feel I was one of them."

Still, the role Rogge had now assumed was not without its practical compensations. He was well paid for many of his lectures and speeches, and his newly established law firm had more business than it could handle. Of greater importance was the fact that for the first time in his life he was a prominent figure in a mass

movement. Rogge entertained high political ambitions.

In the autobiographical section of *Our Vanishing Civil Liberties*, which he wrote in 1948, Rogge records that he spent his boyhood on a farm near Springfield, Illinois, where Abraham Lincoln first practiced law. Not too casually, he remarks, "If law was good enough for Lincoln, it was good enough for me."

On one occasion, the well-known artist and author Rockwell Kent said facetiously to Rogge, "If you should land in the White House, John, promise me you'll set up a Department of Culture. And, if it's not asking too much, I'd like to be the first secretary of the department."

Completely serious, Rogge replied, "Rockwell, you shall be." After a pause he added, "Unless, of course, political expediency dictates otherwise." . . .

ROGGE'S first contact with the world peace movement occurred in August, 1948, when he accepted an invitation to attend the Congress of Intellectuals for Peace at Wroclaw, Poland. The speech Rogge delivered at the congress was unique, if nothing else. International tensions, he opined, could be effectively resolved only when the neuroses of mankind had been cured through psychoanalysis. "I think," said Rogge, "that we may have to put the world on a couch." While not exactly practical, Rogge's proposal was received with good-natured tolerance by the assemblage of illustrious writers, artists

and scientists, if with some embarrassment by the other members of the U.S. delegation.

It has since become Rogge's contention that the various international peace congresses he attended were "instruments of Soviet foreign policy." But on September 3, 1948, in answer to charges in the American press that the Wroclaw Congress was "Moscow-controlled," Rogge issued a public statement which read in part: "As chairman of the American delegation, I want to say that in my opinion the Congress was controlled by no country, that the views there expressed reflected accurately the opinions of writers, artists and scientists from all over the world, and that the Congress was conducted in a democratic manner."

In April, 1949, Rogge was present at the historic international peace conference in Paris at which the World Congress of the Defenders of Peace was founded. His speech at this conference reflected a distinct modification of some of his previous political opinions.

Only a few months before, in *Our Vanishing Civil Liberties*, Rogge had written about U.S. foreign policy:

"With our military in over 400 outposts and foreign bases surrounding the Soviet Union, the State Department talks of 'defense.' Have you ever asked yourself how we, as Americans, would feel if the Soviet Union maintained military outposts in the western hemisphere, and then formed an alliance, with standardization of weapons and equipment involving all the countries of South America. Yet the Soviet Union is in just such a position with respect to American arms."

But in his speech at Paris, Rogge said: "The Russians are not menaced by us any more than we are menaced by them."

In his book Rogge had stated:

"The Administration's foreign and domestic policy is the policy of the monopolists . . . Wall Street today is Washington, Washington is Wall Street . . . The men who staff this underground government have made fabulous profits out of the last war, are making fabulous profits out of the present uneasy conflict, and hope to make fabulous profits out of the coming conflict . . . If there is any threat to America, they are that threat."

But at Paris, Rogge declared: "It would be wrong to believe that the leaders in America want war."

From the contrast between the words Rogge had written in his book and those he uttered at the Paris Peace Congress, one might suppose that in the interim there had been a profound change in American foreign policy. The change, however, was not in Washington but in John Rogge.

When Rogge was writing *Our Vanishing Civil Liberties*, estimate of Henry Wallace's vote in the November, 1948, elections had ranged from five to ten million. The actual tally of barely one million votes for the Progressive Party ticket, and the fact that Rogge himself received only a fraction of the votes he expected as a candidate for surrogate, came as a bitter blow to his personal ambitions. He decided to chart a new political course for himself. Rogge's speech at Paris indicated the direction in which he had veered.

THE considerations affecting Rogge were not solely political. "I went to school to equip myself to make money," he had once written. "Only after years of inner conflict have I come to ask myself whether one finds his essential security in money, or in his basic relationships with his fellow men." And now, as repressive measures mounted in the land and his civil rights clients had increasing difficulty in meeting his fees, Rogge was greatly disturbed by his old "inner conflict." Why, he demanded with growing indignation, did not affluent liberal businessmen consider it their duty to subsidize him in a befitting manner?

Indeed, Rogge felt that his financial well-being should be a matter of some international concern. Surely certain foreign countries ought to recognize an obligation to an American of his prominence in the peace movement. Reasoning thus, Rogge began to explore the possibilities of selling his legal talents to the Soviet, Polish and Chinese Governments. Unsuccessful in these quarters, he entered into clandestine negotiations with Tito's regime. In January, 1950, Rogge and the Yugoslavs signed a contract designating him as their American counsel, with a down-payment of ten thousand dollars.

A few weeks later, Rogge visited the Soviet Union as a member of an international peace delegation. In a speech in Moscow he grandiloquently championed "greater freedom of expression." He himself, however, did not yet feel free to express publicly the

fact that he was on Tito's payroll; he preferred to have his sympathetic comments on Yugoslavia viewed as the impartial opinions of one deeply concerned about the "rights and independence of the smaller nations."

It was following his visit to Moscow that Rogge went to the Stockholm Peace Conference. There he vigorously protested the use of such rude words as "war-mongering" to describe U.S. foreign policy. Displaying his own delicate sense of tact, he refrained from mentioning that before coming to Europe as the guest of the World Peace Congress he had surreptitiously obtained State Department authorization to visit Yugoslavia while abroad.

Not until Rogge returned to the United States did he announce he was a paid agent of the Tito Government, an action then motivated perhaps by the fact that newsmen had already discovered his registration as a foreign agent with the State Department.

There were those at the time who thought that, since Rogge's new employers had been vehemently assailing the World Peace Congress as a "Cominform apparatus," he would resign from his post as one of the organization's vice-presidents. However, not only did Rogge appear at the next meeting of the Congress executive committee in London but he made a speech recommending that Tito representatives be invited to join in the committee's deliberations. Following this speech, Paul Robeson denounced Rogge to the Congress as

a paid agent of Tito.

At the Second World Peace Congress at Warsaw in August, 1950, Rogge projected himself as the potential grand arbitrator of international disputes. If he and Mrs. Rogge could only sit down with the leaders of the Chinese Peoples Republic, he assured the Congress, he had not the slightest doubt that all friction between China and the United States would be swiftly resolved. The other members of the U.S. delegation failed to share Rogge's vision of his messianic role in world affairs. They did not renominate him for vice-presidency in the world peace organization. . . .

MEANWHILE, Rogge's desertion of the progressive movement at home was becoming increasingly clear. He no longer chose to represent such clients as the Trenton Six. Although still nominally counsel for the labor leader Harold Christoffel, who had been sentenced to jail on trumped-up charges, Rogge was handling the defense in so flagrant a manner that the U.S. Court of Appeals would later accuse him of "inexcusable negligence" in the case.

Among Rogge's new clients were the "atom bomb spies," David and Ruth Greenglass, as a result of whose weird stories—obtained by Rogge after behind-the-scenes conferences with Government officials—Ethel and Julius Rosenberg today face death in one of the most appalling judicial frame-ups of our time.

On January 29, 1951, the virulent Red-baiting journal, *The New Leader*,

featured an article by Rogge entitled "My New Plan for Peace." Rogge's plan called for a "new peace organization" which, under the leadership of "moderates such as Henry Wallace and I," would combat "Russian expansionism," or, in other words, support the foreign policy Rogge had formerly denounced as a war-seeking "policy of the monopolists."

If Rogge's article formulated the theory of his "new plan for peace," its practical application occurred in services he was currently performing for the Justice Department. Exactly eleven days after the publication of the *New Leader* article, Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois and four of his associates in the Peace Information Center were indicted on the charge of failure to register as foreign agents. The indictment had been secured by the Government largely on the basis of information provided by Rogge.

The Rogge who took the witness stand on November 13, 1951, as the chief Government witness against his former co-workers of the Peace Information Center, bore small resemblance to the pompous robust Rogge of old. His once rotund face was haggard and gaunt with great dark pouches under his nervously shifting eyes. His clothes hung loosely on his shrunken frame. Perhaps, as someone suggested, he had been dieting. But he had the look of a man corroded by anxiety and guilt.

His testimony was no more impressive than his appearance. When he painstakingly sought to prove the Government's case by characterizing

the World Peace Congress as a "Soviet-controlled" apparatus, the judge ruled his personal opinions inadmissible as evidence. His eager efforts to drag into his testimony extraneous names were also frustrated by the judge's ruling. His claim that the Stockholm Appeal was a device to divert attention from "Soviet aggression" was hardly convincing, especially since he had been one of the original signers of the Appeal. Equally inept were his efforts to brand the Peace Information Center, which he himself had helped form, as an "agency of a foreign principal."

Under cross-examination by former Congressman Vito Marcantonio, chief counsel for the defense, Rogge haltingly admitted he had previously declared under oath that he did not regard as a "foreign principal" the peace movement he was now trying to label as "an agent of Soviet foreign policy." Marcantonio produced a copy of Rogge's formal registration with the State Department as an agent of Yugoslavia. In answer to the question whether he had any other connections with foreign principals, Rogge had written on his registration paper: "I do not think I have any other . . . I did attend peace conferences in Paris, Prague and Wroc-

law, but I do not regard these organizations as a foreign government, political party or principal."

AT ONE point in his testimony, Rogge was asked by the prosecuting attorney to identify Dr. Du Bois and the other defendants. Although Dr. Du Bois was sitting directly in front of the witness chair, Rogge stared around the courtroom without being able to locate him. Then, quietly and with great dignity, the renowned eighty-three-year-old scholar rose to his feet and stood facing his accuser. Dr. Du Bois is a man of small physical stature, and Rogge is more than six feet tall. But when they confronted one another, Rogge was a dwarf and Dr. Du Bois a giant.

Dr. Du Bois and his colleagues won a momentous victory for peace when they were completely exonerated of all the charges against them. The only effect of Rogge's testimony was to establish irrefutably his own guilt.

A Negro woman in the courtroom said when Rogge left the witness stand, "There walks a Judas, and a Judas walks alone."

And such is the verdict of the peace-loving people of the world.

“Regards from Comrade Lenin”

By **EGON ERWIN KISCH**

ONCE—Modracek began—once, many years before the World War, a Polish comrade living in Prague came to see me. “Comrade Modracek, I have regards for you from Comrade Lenin.”

“From whom?” I asked in astonishment.

“From Comrade Lenin. Don’t you know who he is?”

“Of course I know who he is. He’s in the left wing of the Russian party. But I don’t know him personally.”

Now it was the Pole’s turn to be astonished: “You don’t know him! I’ve just come from Cracow (or he may have said ‘Warsaw,’ I don’t remember exactly which), and there Lenin said to me: ‘When you’re back in Prague, you must go to Comrade Modracek and give him my regards.’ He expressly asked me to do that.”

What else could I do but thank my visitor for bringing the regards? But I couldn’t understand what it was all about, because I had never seen Lenin. And I felt certain he had never heard of me, for I had never been active outside the Czech party.

At least a year later Comrade Nemecek returned from the International Socialist Congress in Brussels and told me: “Say, Modracek, Comrade Lenin asked me to give you his warmest regards.”

Now the affair grew even more mysterious. For in that same year, 1902—in other words, between the first regards and the second—the Russian Bolsheviks had held their national party conference at our party headquarters; and I knew that Lenin was present. (I believe he stayed at the Hotel Myshka, in the Zizkov section on the outskirts of town, without suspecting that the hotel was under close police surveillance because of alleged immorality.) So, if Lenin again sent me his regards, why hadn’t he visited me during his stay in Prague? I could find no answer whatsoever to that question.

Then came the Russian Revolution of 1905, in which Lenin played such an outstanding role. With the best will in the world I could not recall ever knowing him—though I have a very good memory! Yet twice he had sent me regards.

Then one day I saw Lenin’s picture

called out to my wife: "Sakra, you know who this Lenin is? Why, it's our Mayer!"

To make sure, I rummaged through all my old papers. Even though I had burned all suspicious material during the war, I wanted to see if I couldn't find some remains of my correspondence with Mayer.

NO WHILE old Modracek looks through his old papers for evidence that Mayer was really Lenin, we must tell you that on a March day in 1900 all the political exiles in the Siberian villages of Minusinsk came to the provincial capital to say goodbye to their young leader. His five years of Siberian exile were over; he had come to Minusinsk to shake hands with his comrades and partners-in-suffering and then to journey onward. He was going home—"home" to him meant (and they all knew it) working in the Socialist movement. They all embraced him, for they placed high hopes in Vladimir Ilyich.

He began his journey. A freezing wind blew as the sleigh drove along the Yenisei River; for 300 *versts* the sleigh followed the river bank. Whole days and nights he traveled; the frost burned wounds into his flesh. But Lenin was fired with zeal, for every step of the horses brought him nearer his goal. Soon he would put into effect the plans he had worked out in Shushenskoye. Above all, he wanted to found a central organ for the Russian Socialist movement: *Iskra* (The Spark), destined to set aflame the rotting tinder of Tsarism.

The sleigh came to the Ufa. There Lenin had to take leave of his tenderest, truest comrade: Krupskaya. Her term of banishment had not yet ended. Next he stopped off at Pskov—for the famous Pskov conference, where he sought to win over the legal Marxists to the newspapers *Iskra* and *Zarya* (Dawn). Then he meant to go abroad and join the veteran Socialists Plekhanov, Axelrod, and Vera Zasulich.

But the Okhrana was on his trail and arrested him in St. Petersburg. On his person were 2,000 rubles collected for the founding of *Iskra*, and a slip of paper with names of contacts abroad. The information was written in milk and covered over by an innocent-looking letter written in ordinary ink. The police chief pounced greedily on the letter found on this dangerous suspect. He discovered nothing; but since he thought it might be written in some secret code, he placed it in the files, hoping to crack the code.

For a week and a half Lenin sat in his cell: Would they hit on the idea of heating up the paper?

They did not hit on the idea. On the tenth day the prisoner Ulyanov was summoned to the prison office. They gave him back his confiscated

EGON BRWIN KISCH, who died in 1948, was a distinguished Czechoslovakian journalist and author. We are happy to present, on this Lenin anniversary, a characteristic example of his world-renowned reportage. Translated by Joseph M. Bernstein, it is here published in English for the first time.

possessions, including the 2,000 rubles and the private letter; they warned him to refrain from all revolutionary activity, to make no attempt to go abroad, and they let him go.

LENIN went abroad. Within a year his wife Krupskaya followed him, for her term of exile was also over.

In her *Memories of Lenin*, Krupskaya relates how she traveled to Prague, assuming that Lenin was staying there under the name of Modracek. That was the name under which he had had his letters forwarded to her. But the last letter which Lenin had sent her, concealed in the binding of a non-political book, and which contained his Munich address, had never reached Krupskaya. So she wired Prague the time of her arrival and was dumbfounded not to see Vladimir Ilyich at the station when she arrived.

She waited a while and then, beset with all kinds of doubts, hired a carriage, had the coachman pile her luggage in it, gave him an address, and got in. The carriage came to a halt in a narrow alley in the working-class section, in front of a tenement house from the windows of which hung a varied assortment of bedclothes. Krupskaya ran up to the fourth floor and knocked. A blonde Czech woman answered the door.

"Modracek, Herr Modracek," Krupskaya gasped.

A worker appeared in the doorway and said: "I'm Modracek."

"No," Krupskaya murmured in be-

wilderment, "Modracek is my husband."

Modracek knew whom the lady was looking for: the Russian whose letters he had been forwarding to Munich. The telegram he had received that day had also been forwarded by mail to Munich.

Krupskaya wrote: "Modracek devoted a whole day to me. I told him about the Russian movement, and he told me about the Austrian movement. His wife showed me her crocheted lacework and fed me with Czech dumplings."

But the dumplings were not the main dish of that meal in Prague. Comrade Krupskaya would have paid more attention to the main dish than to the dumplings if she had realized what it was: a goulash made of horse meat, served with dumplings, as almost every meat-dish in Bohemia.

But why mention this detail about a meal eaten such a long time ago if the guest herself knew nothing about it? Well, the host and hostess remembered it; and they still remember it vividly. Immediately after *Memories of Lenin* was published we visited the veteran pioneer of the Czech co-operative movement, Frantisek Modracek; we were sure that it was the Modracek mentioned in Krupskaya's memoirs. He freely volunteered information about his relations with the mysterious Russian and his wife.

"**T**HE editors of the party paper *Pravo Lidu*," Modracek called, "which at that time had

fices on Palacky Square, sent a Russian comrade to me in the summer of 1900. He wanted to discuss something with me and spent the evening at our house. I was then living in the suburban district of Vrsovice at the corner of Kollarova and Nerudova streets; our apartment fronted on the courtyard and was so small that I could not offer our visitor a place to sleep (we didn't even have an extra mattress). So he did not sleep in my apartment.

"From him I learned that he had secretly left Russia after having lived in Siberia as a political exile. He did not look at all like a wild-eyed nihilist; in fact, he impressed me rather as a slightly foreign-looking commercial traveler. He was of medium height, neither stout nor thin, but somewhat broad-shouldered. I can't remember his beard. His manner was calm enough although I sensed that he was in a hurry. He spoke German well.

"He wanted me to get him a passport in the name of a man who looked something like him. I promised him to do my best, but I did not succeed.

"The next day he left, after we had agreed that I was to receive letters and money from Russia and would forward everything to an address he gave me. My expenses would be reimbursed whenever I submitted an itemized bill.

"The Russian did not tell me his name but asked me to call him 'Comrade Mayer' in all correspondence.

"After his departure, a great many

parcels and letters began to arrive from Russia, usually at two-weeks' intervals, and I forwarded them to the designated address in Munich. Then bundles of Russian papers and pamphlets began to arrive almost every week from Germany and Switzerland. In the headquarters of the Social-Democratic printers' co-operative, where I was an active member, I unpacked them and put them in boxes, which I then forwarded to an address in Cracow.

"A few months after the Russian had left, early one morning a carriage stopped in front of my house: from it emerged a frail-looking, simply dressed woman of around thirty, with kindly features—Mayer's wife. Before entering the house, she protested about the high fare the coachman asked of her. Somewhat more talkative than her husband, and speaking a rather good German, she told me that she had been banished with her husband to Siberia, and then had been employed as a teacher in the home of a wealthy Russian merchant. Now she wanted to live abroad with her husband.

"At that time I happened to be very badly off. My wife could offer our guest only a cup of coffee and a goulash made of horse-meat. A few days before, a woman neighbor had persuaded us to try horse-meat goulash instead of subsisting on meatless meals; and just that day was the first time my wife had summoned up enough courage to follow our neighbor's advice. We trembled lest our visitor notice it and turn away from

the horse-meat goulash in disgust. But apparently she was very hungry, for she liked everything she ate. And so did we.

"Our visitor, who had made the trip from Russia without any stopovers, was quite exhausted. So my wife made our bed for her to enable her to get a few hours' sleep.

"That evening—just as the workers were leaving the factories—I accompanied our visitor to the main railway station, from which she left for Munich.

"**O**NE day the police confiscated a package of Russian books addressed to me. They opened it up and closely checked on the origins and destination of its contents. Immediately I notified Comrade Mayer in Munich of what had happened; after that, I received no more letters from him.

"At Christmas-time in 1901 my little daughter received from Mrs. Mayer in Munich a box containing toy stars, silver balls, and other Christmas-tree decorations. My daughter still has in her possession one of the things sent in that gift box: a golden star, now quite tarnished, with an angel in the center.

"In the spring or summer of 1902 (at least I think it was in 1902), a young Russian visited me with a letter of recommendation from 'Mr. Mayer.' He was about to travel illegally to Russia. He told me that his assignment was to get several crates of books into Russia. He spent two days with us and then went on to

Cracow. Three days later the newspapers carried an item to the effect that on the Russian-Galician border a nihilist had been shot while attempting to smuggle into Russia a wagon-load of revolutionary books and newspapers. I can't say whether it was the young Russian who had stopped over with us, but I imagine that it was he.

"From that time on I lost all traces of the 'Mayers.' Undoubtedly I would have forgotten all about my interesting visitors if from time to time I did not receive Russian printed matter from Switzerland, including copies of *Zarya*, without any clue as to the sender. But I did not think the material came from 'Mayer.'

"But I never put two and two together and connected Mayer with the warm regards sent me by Lenin, whom I did not know. That is, until I saw his picture. Then, as I've said, I went through all my papers to see if there were any traces of my correspondence with Mayer.

"And I really did find something: receipts from the Vrsovice Post Office for registered letters, parcels, and money orders. They bore various addresses: 'Herr Mayer, care of Dr. Karl Lehmann, M.D., Gabelsbergerstrasse 20a, Munich II'; 'Karl Lehmann, Munich'; and 'Georg Rittmayer, Munich'—all letter-drops from which letters were forwarded to Mayer. The oldest postal receipt is dated March 13, 1901, and concerns the sending of a parcel weighing 3 kilograms and 200 grams and another parcel weighing 3 kilograms and 700 grams.

"All this was no proof that Lenin had actually been my guest. But finally I found the following notice at the Vrsovice Post Office, stamped May 3, 1901: it stated that on that date I had registered a letter addressed to 'Frau Ulyanov, Moscow.' Now I had official confirmation that the letter was really Lenin. So Krupchaya's memoirs told me nothing new. I don't recall that she was served dumplings that day. And she doesn't recall that she was served horse-meat."

FRANTISEK MODRACEK, the old socialist, knows something else. He knows that the first numbers of *Iskra* (The Spark) passed through his hands on the way to tsarist Russia, where four years later they kindled the first blaze and twelve years after that the big fire.

But what Frantisek Modracek, the old socialist, does not say is this: that he performed an invaluable service for the cause of the international working class, as a favor for a modest-looking foreign visitor named Mayer.



NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION: by Maurice Becker.

"WESTERN CULTURE" GOES SOUTH

By ELLIOT CLAY

A SEARS ROEBUCK bargain sale, New York Stock Market quotations and Lions Club announcements make the reader of Mexico City's *Excelsior* feel as though he were in a Spanish-speaking suburb of a city in the United States, and a spin through the modern sections of the capital does nothing to dissipate the illusion. Along the Paseo de la Reforma, Juarez and Madero, Mexico City's equivalents of Fifth Avenue or Wilshire Boulevard, anyone speaking Spanish is likely to be stared at. In the elegant shops, restaurants and "Ladies' Bars" the local luxury trade mingles with U.S. tourists in an atmosphere discreetly scented with Mexican picturesqueness.

From one of these chic establish-

ments, labelled "Beauty Shop," a well-groomed woman emerges into the broiling noonday sun, wearing a silver-fox cape and feeling very fit after her Du Barry "Rockabye Lady Treatment." She is the wife of a successful Mexican businessman whose income ranges from 50 to 100 times that of the worker from whose labor it is derived; it will be revealing to follow her family's activities through a typical day:

After a breakfast of *jot queques* (hot cakes) with imported *miel maple*, the children are driven in a Detroit made bus to a private school in which many of the classes are taught in English. In the cafeteria they eat hot-dogs or *hamburguesas* and drink Cokes. Meanwhile mother accompanies one of the maids (who puts in 12 hours a day for her \$10 a month) to the *Super-Mercado* and then joins her friends for a game of canasta or luncheon at Sanborn. Father cultivates his U.S. business contacts at the *Club de Golf* before returning to his "California colonial" home (an imitation of a Hollywood imitation of Spanish colonial). He is highly pleased that his son, attending Columbia, has sent him a carton of Chesterfields; (he prefers a strong Mexican cigarette but would be humiliated to offer one to a friend). After a *coctel* or *jaibol* he piles the family into the chartreuse Packard and takes them to a movie (spoken in English with Spanish subtitles) at the drive-in theater.

In all its purchases and purchases the family is guided by the principal

at the adjective "*americano*" signifies quality, while products "*del país*" (domestic) are an inferior second choice.

This cosmopolitan world is of course an unattainable wonderland to the worker who, with an average wage of less than 50 cents a day, seldom gets more than a distant glimpse of the feasting gentry. The poor, however, are not entirely neglected by the purveyors of Yankee tastes and ideas. The most ubiquitous form of mural painting, Mexican artists ruefully admit, is the American soft-drink sign, and millions of gallons of gaudy oil paint have covered the traditional pastel facades of humble *Ciudades* throughout the Republic by courtesy of the Coca-Cola and Pepsi-Cola companies, who are locked in deadly combat for the painfully earned *centavos* of laborer and peon.

The wood and lacquer workers of Michoacan and the potters of Tlaquepaque, who from time immemorial have fashioned objects of beauty and utility, are now appendages of the gift-shop business. Donald Duck and Mickey Mouse have intruded among the authentic designs, and Sherwin-Williams paints are crowding out native lacquers. Tarascan Indians who have never seen a Negro are reproducing the stereotyped Aunt Jemimas and Cream-of-Wheat waiters of U.S. advertising on trinkets whose use and destination are a mystery to them.

Indeed the Mexican is being forced to accept a similarly offensive picture of himself. Gift merchants and

advertising agencies have successfully introduced the patronizing symbol of the man in the *sarape* and *sombrero*, dozing on a donkey or slouched under a cactus; such dreary cuteness is repeated on the covers of Mexican magazines and even in official propaganda.

U.S. jingoism promotes the sale of warlike playthings to Mexican children: last Christmas surplus Army gas-masks were a best seller in the toy-shops and the word "*atomico*" is applied extensively to novel or ingenious gadgets. The imported war spirit was dramatically apparent in the September fiesta of San Miguel Allende, where the patron saint was honored by a mock battle in fireworks. Battleships belched fire, parachutists in American uniform descended with terrifying flame-throwers, and when dive-bombers plunged down among the massed spectators with spurting machine-guns the result was near panic.

The clever fireworks-maker who so frightened the townsfolk of San Miguel is probably no warmonger; few Mexicans are, because they understand that our wars bring suffering and death to Mexicans, even though their soldiers have not yet been sent to bleed on foreign battlefields. The disastrous inflation, greatly aggravated by our war economy, has raised prices over 400 per cent while real wages in lower brackets have declined one third.

Diego Rivera compares the Mexican ruling class with its counterparts in Vichy France and Kuomintang



THROUGH THE FOG

A comment on the U.S.-dominated newspapers of Mexico City. Woodcut by Francisco Dosamantes.

China, who feared their own workers more than they distrusted foreign imperialists. Rivera even denies that the bourgeoisie of Mexico is really Mexican, and it is true that contempt for the authentic Mexico is nowhere more conspicuous than in the "cultured" upper-class Mexican, who as a tourist north of the border frequently denies his nationality by calling himself "Spanish."

Imperialism's agents in Mexico are again using their power to sell their country to the foreigner in the Porfirio Diaz tradition. Since the war the highest bidder is the U.S., which now buys ninety percent of Mexico's exports and provides an equal percentage of her imports, rendering the Mexican economy completely dependent. Following the axiom that the bread givers are the law givers, the few who fatten on this state of affairs become more and more "American" in their living and thinking; and since they control business, the media of communication and dominate the government, their newly-acquired cultural standards are making rapid inroads.

It should be emphasized that our purpose here is not to evaluate, much less to belittle the genuine culture of the Mexican people which is deep-rooted and enduring. We are concerned with the process by which that culture is being degraded under U.S. economic domination.

MOTION PICTURES are the most effective means of introducing American capitalist tastes and values

to the Mexican masses. The usual wallow of opulence, crime and emotional bellywash is probably less destructive than propaganda films like *Steel Helmet* and *I Was a Communist For the F.B.I.* Hollywood's so-called "racial tolerance" pictures raise the question of racial inferiority where it had not existed before.

Mexico produces over 100 films a year and the domestic product with Spanish dialogue has a certain advantage over foreign-language imports. But faced with so successful a competitor, with vastly greater technical resources, capital and markets, Mexican producers have imitated and even tried to outdo Hollywood's sensationalism.

Low production costs have attracted several Hollywood companies, which already control some of the Mexican studios. An American named Jenkins, notorious for his quasi-legal accumulation of large land holdings and ruthless exploitation of Mexican labor, has taken over a majority of the better theaters throughout the country and is trying to use his political influence to monopolize film distribution.

An attempt was made recently to protect the Mexican industry by legislation empowering a film board to regulate the percentage of U.S. films exhibited, as well as to censor offensive content; but the American tycoons retaliated by threatening not only to withdraw their films from Mexican exhibitors but to ban Mexican pictures from the 400 Spanish-language houses in the U.S. They

have already obtained an injunction against enforcement of the new law, which will probably be rescinded.

Television, still a novelty in Mexico, was established by American "experts" and four stations are now in operation, the newest one, in Matamoros, being affiliated with CBS and ABC. Wrestling matches, *beisbol*, old U.S. westerns, comedies and animations, plus the inevitable night club scenes with music and time-killing dialogue, constitute the bulk of the entertainment. Television receivers are owned only by the economic elite, but there is a considerable mass audience of working people, children, and awestruck country folk who, unable to afford other entertainment, stand for hours before show windows or at the doorways of bars where video is operating. In some places a cover charge has been established to keep out the eager but impecunious crowds.

Radio, too, has followed the U.S. pattern and a spate of singing commercials, probably stemming from the bloody battle of the Colas, poisons the air. Broadcasts of foreign news are based upon U.S. sources; singers bleat plaintively in English; American brand-names are prominent. In the main, the quality of Mexican radio and television is set by American advertising agencies and their branches in Mexico.

THE Mexican reader's knowledge of the outside world comes largely through the major U.S. news services and interpretations by such

columnists as George Sokolsky, Dorothy Thompson, David Lawrence and Walter Winchell. Mexican children are prepared to face the stern realities by reading Dick Tracy, the Captain and the Kids, Maggie and Jiggs, Mutt and Jeff, and Buck Rogers. *Selecciones* (the Spanish-language edition of *Reader's Digest*), has been aptly called "the comic book of the middle-class" and sells nearly a quarter of a million copies in Mexico, over three times the circulation of its nearest competitor.

The news-weekly *Vision*, which in the words of a critic is "thought in English and written in Spanish," is flown down from New York so that the State Department line will be delivered to the Latin American reader in its pristine radiance. An issue featuring Spain, for example, bore a color-portrait of Franco on the cover and attempted to soften up the Spanish-speaking peoples toward the subsequent Washington rapprochement with the Falange. A more recent issue pays tribute to the Chilean traitor, Gonzalez Videla.

News about Mexican strikes, workers' demonstrations, arrests of students and peace advocates cannot compete for lineage in the papers with our "spy scares," the Oatis case or the matrimonial imbroglios of Sinatra and Barbara Hutton. The Foreign Correspondents' Association of Mexico is dominated by William Carney of the *New York Times*, a former propagandist for Franco who, working with a pro-Fascist clique, has used every subterfuge to keep progressive

journalists from working in Mexico.

Last year's strike against the American Smelting and Refining Co., Mexico's most important mining interest, involved the basic rights of labor and was the most significant clash in years; yet the news was entirely kept out of the U.S. commercial press for several months until thousands of miners from Nueva Rosita made their historic 800-mile hunger march to the capital. But even then the wall of silence was broken only to tell the company's side of the story.

AFTER centuries of foreign exploitation the average per capita income is only \$40 per year, a record which has naturally failed to inspire great admiration for imperialism. And the present economic and cultural invasion of Mexico by U.S. capitalists, ever more ruthless and arrogant, is provoking an intensified resistance. Anti-imperialist sentiment is common ground for Marxists, moderates of the *Partido-Popular*, non-political persons, and even some sectors of the Right.

The insolence, extravagance and undisguised contempt displayed by so many U.S. citizens in Mexico arouse universal ire. The manner in which Americans flout the Mexican law is another sore point. The reputed presence of 1,500 F.B.I. agents in Mexico was a source of resentment long before the police kidnapping of Gus Hall, which was carried out in violation of no less than eight articles of the Mexican Constitution.



THE TROUBADOR

On the heroic march of the Mexican miners: *by Alberto Beltran.*

The belief widely held by Mexicans that their laws apply to Americans only at the discretion of the U.S. Embassy is being confirmed by events.

U.S. racism is a source of resentment and incomprehension to Mexicans of all classes. On several occasions Southerners have complained of the presence of Negroes in hotels and restaurants, but they are usually told that they are free to go elsewhere. And when Katherine Dunham and her dance group were denied advance reservations in Mexico City's swank Reforma Hotel (whose most valued clientele are Texans) even reactionary papers asked indignantly whether American tourists were to be allowed to force their racism on democratic Mexico.

There are frequent mass meetings at which prominent Mexicans protest U.S. meddling in Latin American countries, the persecution of our labor leaders and progressive writers, the drive toward war and our preparation for atomic genocide.

The Hall outrage, for example, united various factions of the Left in a protest meeting sponsored by the outstanding figures in education, literature, journalism, labor, medicine, law and the arts, initiating an extensive campaign to preserve Mexican sovereignty. Joining in the protest were such diverse elements as General Heriberto Jara, ex-Navy Minister and recipient of the Stalin Peace Prize, and the conservative writers Armando Camacho and Eduardo Palares who voiced their misgivings in reactionary papers which usually

(but not always) follow the State Department line.

MEXICAN literature is traditionally anti-imperialist. Independent liberal authors such as Luis Cabrera, a former cabinet minister, and the distinguished poet Enrique Gonzalez Martinez, stand shoulder to shoulder with their progressive colleagues Jose Mancisor, Efrain Hierta, Andres Henestrosa and Jose Revueltas on the subject of U.S. reaction and warmongering. Writers who are refugees from Spain and Latin America are especially active in the struggle against Washington's support of the fascist dictators.

A group of young progressive writers, working collectively under the direction of Sadot Fabila, have completed a book about the Nueva Rosita miners' strike which was such a flagrant example of the influence of imperialist finance in Mexico.

Salvador Novo's new satirical play *La Culta Dama*, although non-political, deals relentlessly with the "perfumed barbarity" of the new aristocracy which is so hospitable to the American incursion. The targets of this prominent playwright's pen are to quote a reviewer, the upper-class ladies "who simulate culture, charity and Christianity in the midst of games of Uruguyan Canasta, *mambo* and whiskey, preferably of American brand. Ladies who put Coca Cola into their *bourgogne* wine . . . and whose greatest social ambition is to receive a distant smile from Sloane Simpson O'Dwyer. . . ."

One daily newspaper, Lombardo Toledano's *El Popular*, devotes a great deal of space to peace activities and is consistently anti-imperialist. The Communist paper, *La Voz de Mexico*, which appears irregularly, carries on the struggle despite a limited circulation and repeated arrests of its editors, writers and volunteer distributors.

The bi-weekly *España y La Paz*, published by Spanish Republican refugees, is an excellent example of militant journalism and the monthly *Paz*, edited by the Chilean Enrique Delano, recently scored a beat by publishing an interview with ex-President Cardenas, Mexico's most influential political figure, who broke his customary silence to speak out for peace and international accord.

WALL STREETS policies toward Mexico and the world have provoked a strong counter-offensive among artists, too. The Revolutionary Painters' Front, including Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros, Jose Chavez Morado, Francisco Dosamantes, Garcia Bustos, and other painters both famous and obscure, sponsored two recent exhibitions on the themes of peace, national independence, and labor struggles.

Both shows were in working-class neighborhoods and attracted tens of thousands of laborers and farmers whose enthusiasm was extraordinary

and whose written and oral comments should be invaluable in developing a people's art. Predominant among the paintings in the last exhibit were those commemorating the epic miners' strike. Other paintings depicted Truman variously as the dictator of Mexican labor policy (hiding behind a picture of President Aleman), as a cynical dove of peace hatching out a brood of tanks and troops, and as the gleeful captor of a manacled Indian.

Members of the Taller de Grafica Popular—Leopoldo Mendez, Francisco Mora, Angel Bracho, Ignacio Aguirre, Fanny Rabel, Alberto Beltran and others—produce valuable posters, handbills, and decorations for mass meetings which frequently express opposition to the foreign and domestic policies of U.S. capitalism.

Do these critics of U.S. policy hate Americans as such? By no means. They direct their fire at political meddling, monopolistic practices and business activities contrary to law. They resist the subjugation of their economy to the "Atlantic" war machine and the reckless sword-rattling which threatens to drag Latin America into a world conflagration. They oppose chauvinism, special privileges for U.S. citizens, and especially the introduction of harmful doctrines and degenerate cultural values. They do not want Mexico's national destiny to bear the trade mark "Made in U.S.A."

Right Face

As Thousands Cheer

"As a bulwark of U.S. defense in Western Europe, Minister Perle Mesta {Mesta Machine Corp.} is one of the best things that has happened in the way of American propaganda. She is the Lady Bountiful of Luxembourg. When her two Cadillacs, driven by faithful retainer Frank Toomey, chauffeur and bodyguard, and Garner the butler, roll over the winding Luxembourg streets and roads, American flags flying from the fenders, rosy-cheeked Luxembourgers line the roads to wave and cheer!"—From Peter Edson's eye-witness report in the Pittsburgh Press.

Fast and Loose

"The Russians cannot take heart from our minuet of the minks. Our system has none of their rigidity, and therefore none of their inhumanity. It is loose at the joints. There lies its cost, but also its saving grace."—Max Lerner (New York Post) discusses the wholesale corruption in the Federal government.

Keep Your Cadillac

"'Capitalism is an eternal law of God and it was upheld by Hebrew prophets, Jesus and His Apostles,' declared Bible Scholar George M. Lamsa. . . . Dr. Lamsa said that his studies convinced him there was only one instance in which Jesus' support of Communism might be construed. This was His advice to a rich man to sell everything and give the proceeds to the poor. 'The wealth of this rich man consisted of cattle and sheep,' the scholar pointed out. 'He had to sell these in order to follow Jesus.'"—From the Los Angeles Times.

Consider the Cranberry

"To a good degree, the cranberry expresses the national temperament. . . . We could absorb with profit today some of his fierce sense of personal honor. He is the spirit of the first winter in Plymouth, the winter of Valley Forge, the icy blasts of any heartbreak ridge in Korea."—From an editorial in the New York Times.

WILDCAT

A STORY BY PHILLIP BONOSKY

THE men in Furnace 2 had been driving on a schedule that had gradually and imperceptibly increased its tempo like a malignant disease. It was hard to say how it began: only suddenly they knew they were feeling as though rocks were loaded in their legs and their loins were sinking like dough. Nerves were frying over some insane, nagging fire. The barbed wire strung over the eyes seemed to press down with its naked points on the delicate flesh.

The men had begun to grumble and curse to themselves; their eyes had started to burst the tiny blood-vessels; accidents happened like the stupid words a man blurts out when he's dog-tired.

Mr. Donaldson, the turn foreman, had decided not to start lopping men off the furnace on *this* turn. It had a particularly militant grievance committee, with Mike Drago at the head of it. Donaldson liked to work through his foremen and push-

ers, keeping a military distance from the men. He had a man taken off the night shift; and when Ed Forski came to work this morning, on the seven-to-three, he could feel it in the air. It was as though they had been talking about him and stopped when he entered: that feeling.

He went as usual to the shanty to change into working-clothes—a procedure he hated because it was too much like changing into uniform. Now it was very bitter and achingly sweet to recall last night, and Helen. The cold air from the concrete floor and the tin lockers hit his bare summer-tan-fading body cruelly, and he hurried to get the change over with. Then he went into the yard, picked up a rod and started chipping out the gutters around the furnace where the previous cast had cooled. He was called "monkey-boss" because he was supposed to "boss" the "monkey" on the furnace: only it was a joke, too.

Although he was already on the

job a year, and was twenty years old, he was still new; some of the men had been in the Mill for half a century. More than that, he was still callow enough to believe that his \$1.34 an hour was the natural response of the corporation to his honest labor. He'd never had a machine-gun pointed at him as he walked a picket-line. But lately doubts were gnawing at him.

He was clabbering into the runners with those heavy wooden soles over his shoes when Kelly, oddly transformed inside the Mill, but anybody's drinking-buddy outside, came up to him and whispered: "Forski, I have to make a change with you."

"What do you mean?" he asked, startled, lifting his goggles up to look at him.

Kelly stared nervously at his book, and finally declared: "I got to send you over to Furnace 3."

"So, all right!" Forski laughed. "You act like I was married to this heap!"

Kelly let a laugh climb into his face that didn't disturb his eyes. Those eyes were evasive. "The only thing is, Forski," he went on, "you're going over as labor."

Forski stopped taking his gloves off. He stared at Kelly and now his suspicions thickened like a muscle.

"Spell that out, Kelly!" he demanded.

"They want you laboring on Furnace 3," Kelly said with a snap. His eyes got mad, and he reached for authority with his next words.

"Now, stop beefing and get the hell over there!" He clicked his book shut as though this disposed of the matter, and marched off.

FORSKI stared after him, then let his bar fall. A terrible gust of humiliation that swung up from his stomach charged through him. Worse than being put back to the labor gang was the way it was done, the fact that he had no say about it.

He stood for a moment turning Kelly's words over in his mind. Without knowing why, he felt guilty of something, ashamed of himself: he kept standing alone in the gutter as though he was afraid to attract attention to himself. Then, with a sour grunt, he broke free of the strange feeling that had roped him there. Too late he felt a purifying burst of anger, but Kelly was already on the other side of the yard.

He hunted for Mike, asking for him all around, and learned finally that he was down in the shanty changing clothes. Raw and independent as he was, he still felt he ought to get Mike's opinion. Later, he would deal with Kelly the way he deserved, he promised himself.

"Listen, Mike," he said, when he found Mike in the shanty struggling into his work pants. Forski noted Mike's hard paunch, and admired the blue-veined muscles that were like rock. "Listen, Mike," and he couldn't keep the worried sound out of his voice, "what's going on? I was just put in the labor gang on Furnace 3!"

Mike danced around on one thick leg trying to get his pants on, and Forski gave him his shoulder to steady himself. Then Mike blew out his face and waited till the red from his struggle died out.

"Yeah, I heard," he said.

"You already heard?" Forski cried, surprised.

"Yeah," Mike said. He wrinkled his brow and lit a cigarette. Forski somehow didn't want to interrupt him while he was doing this.

"Well, what's going on?" he finally demanded.

Mike grunted, snapping his suspenders over his shirt and backing his lips off the cigarette. Forski burned with impatience. The smoke curled up around Mike's big-boned, fleshy face like a hand.

"What Kelly tell you?" he asked at last.

"He told me to go over to Furnace 3!" Forski said, indignantly, his remembered humiliation and loneliness coming out on him again.

"You asked him who's taking your place?"

"No."

"You know who is?"

"No."

"Nobody is, that's who is." Then he added: "They're going to put you on the labor gang and keep you there, and leave this furnace short-handed. Then if we get along, they'll do the same with the other furnaces."

Forski looked incredulously over to Mike. "Jesus Christ!" he exploded.

"Can they do that?"

Mike laughed. "They've been try-

ing to do it for ten years," he said dryly. He bent down to tie his heavy brogans.

"What do you think?" Forski said unhappily. "He told me I had to go over—"

Mike lifted his other foot on the bench. "Well," he said poker-faced, "I ain't giving you no advice, see? I didn't even hear you talk to me, I'm deaf." He pounded his ear with the heel of his hand, as though to get water out.

Forski stared at his undisturbed face, and then suddenly laughed.

"Okay," he said. He turned to go. "I'll get deaf, too. Didn't hear a word Kelly told me."

HE WENT back to the yard, chuckling and feeling immensely relieved. He snapped his goggles over his eyes, picked up a rod, and started chipping out the gutter. The whistle blew just then; and the other men came walking over and the crane overhead rang its bell and started grinding across the yard.

"Hey!" he heard Kelly bawl, and his shoulder muscles twitched; but he kept his head down.

Kelly came over and tapped him pointedly on his shoulder.

"Didn't you hear me tell you to go to Furnace 3?" he yelled, putting his mouth down to Forski's ear.

Forski pulled his goggles off, and turned to him, his face a little bit white: "I like it here."

Kelly's face bunched.

"Look here, Forski," he said warningly, "you get the hell over there,

or I'll give you a pink!"

With a show of coolness, Forski turned his back on Kelly and signalled the crane over. The crane came with a big rush and screech, swinging the flat electric plate half a foot above Kelly's head. If he had stooped the men in the yard would have laughed at him forever. He just looked up at it, swinging low enough to cut his hair.

Then the fury that had been stacking up in him burst out: "God-damn it!" he roared. "Get the hell over there! Them's orders from the main office!"

"Look, Kelly," Forski said, turning on him. His lips were wet, and then went dry, so that they stung. "You know damned well nobody's going to stand for knocking a man off the furnace!"

"Sonofabitch!" Kelly yelled. "Your own union agreed to it!"

Forski didn't know what to say; he didn't know if what Kelly said was true. But he knew that Mike hadn't acted as though that were true.

"Well," he said, "I didn't agree to it!"

He looked over the yard and saw Mike talking to three or four other fellows. Then he said coolly to Kelly: "Go paddle your wagon somewhere else, Kelly!"

Kelly flipped his book shut; and to Forski's surprise shrugged his shoulders. "Well, I got to report this."

"Go ahead."

Kelly leaned over to him and added in a low voice:

"Tell Mike it ain't my idea."

Forski was so surprised he lifted his hand in a friendly way. He felt powerful for a second, as though he was sending Kelly off. Something broke loose in him at the same moment; his heart choked up and felt huge in his chest. He looked over to where Mike had been but Mike was gone now. Then, just as suddenly, a wave of doubt rolled back. What was Kelly going to tell them in the office? Maybe he'd been too cocky? Maybe he *was* just shifting him from one furnace to another.—nothing to kick about?

He frowned and felt very lonely in the yard; he looked around it and was surprised to see everything going on just as natural as ever.

The men were getting ready for a cast. The runnels had been clayed up and dammed. Nick Bogich, the blower, was going around the furnace squinting into the peep-holes through his blue glasses to see if it was ready. Dave Zeleznak was up in his cab in the crane going back and forth, munching on an apple. When he was half-done, he threw it at Calvin Flowers, the first helper, hitting him on the head. Calvin looked around suspiciously for a moment, put his hand to his head, stared at the men laughing and then suddenly remembered Dave. He picked up a hunk of clay as big as a grapefruit to throw at him. Dave jangled his warning-bell for the men to get out of the way, and the men laughed till they had to sit down.

The labor gang was wheeling it

round balls for the "gun." He was clay, and Calvin was shaping it in a Negro who'd been in the mill for twenty-five years and knew the furnace inside out. A tuyere that had burnt out had to be replaced, and Forski was busy for a while helping the six men put in a new one.

NOTHING stops a cast, not even Mr. Donaldson. When he came into the yard, he waited till the men had finished; then he started over toward Forski. Forski had seen him enter, and couldn't stop the ripples that had chased up his back.

But just before he reached him, Forski saw Mike head him off. Andy and Calvin followed behind. A sweat of relief flooded over him.

"Oh, Mr. Donaldson," he heard Mike say casually. "Can I have a word with you?"

Donaldson hesitated. He was the kind of man who boasted that he could, and often did, take off his coat and tie and pitch in to install a tuyere, for instance. He was in a white shirt, and wore a vest, in which he carried his yellow pencil, note-book and blue glass. He waited till Mike got near him. Then he said: "Well, Mike?"

Mike looked behind him, then when Calvin and Andy got nearer—though they still seemed to have arrived accidentally—said: "Mr. Donaldson, I'll come to the point."

"Go ahead," Donaldson said crisply. "By all means—give it to me straight."

"There's been a rumor around that

you're knocking one of the guys off the furnace."

Donaldson looked at him and said, trying not to snap: "Is this a grievance? You making grievances out of rumors?"

"No," Mike drawled, a little dangerous tilt coming into his eyes. "We don't see a grievance yet, Mr. Donaldson. Nothing's happened."

"If you've a grievance, bring it up in the regular fashion, not with me," Donaldson said. "Now, how about getting back to work?"

Forski nervously edged closer to the group and listened.

"But that's just it, Mr. Donaldson," Mike persisted. "We don't want no grievance. That's why we're talking to you right now. We don't want no grievance."

"Look, boys," Donaldson said tolerantly, "that man's going off—there's no reason for him on the furnace—and if you don't like it, you just take it up in the regular machinery and—we'll handle it then. Till then, this is none of your damned business, Mike—this is a matter for me and me alone!"

Mike's expression of reasonableness hadn't changed an inch. Forski, whose blood blew up and floated down like a balloon, couldn't understand it.

"The grievance machinery takes too long, once it gets out of my hands," Mike remarked quietly.

"It's your machinery," Mr. Donaldson pointed out.

Yes, that was true, or partly true: there was the First Step, then the

Second Step, Third Step and Fourth Step; then there was Drasula, Regional Director, who had a committee; and as the men said, if you didn't break your leg climbing all those steps, Drasula would break it for you! Then if you got past *him*, Phil Murray's Pittsburgh lawyers beat you over the head with the contract.

"We have a different idea about that," Mike said. "We don't like trouble any more than you do, Mr. Donaldson. We don't like to have a grievance going on for months and even years. We'd like to get them settled even before they happen—on the spot."

"You know as well as I do, according to your contract," Donaldson pointed out again, "that these things are to be taken up with your foreman first of all. That's Step One."

"We took it up," Mike said dryly.

"I haven't heard anything about it," Donaldson replied.

"You're hearing about it now!"

Donaldson stared at Mike: they were poised at each other, strange as it seemed, very much like equals: and Donaldson didn't want to take the wrong move and knock the balance over. But he had an ace in the hole and he knew it. He shrugged and smiled: "Look—my hands are tied—the man goes off, and you men are acting illegally here. There's no provision in your contract for this. Speak to your union officials; they agreed to this. Read your contract. We have every right to make adjustments in operation whenever conditions warrant." He smiled. "You

know, Mike," he said in a friendly way, "neither Drasula nor the national office will back you on this."

"Well," Mike said—with the same, easy casual drawl—"if that's the way you feel about it." Nobody could have guessed how this remark had stung him!

"Look here"—Mr. Donaldson lifted his chin, which had a deep wedge-shaped dimple in it. "I know your job's to look out for the interests of your men, and I respect any man who does a good job of that. But—there's the work itself to be done! We got to make production—that order comes right out of Washington! Man, you got another war on! Come on down to the office with me some day and I'll show you what they expect to come out of these furnaces. You know as well as I do that four men can handle it!"

Only then, Forski noticed, did Mike's face tense.

"I know as well as you do four men *can't* handle it!" he snapped.

Donaldson laughed.

"Aah, Mike, we know you're a Communist!" he said significantly, as though nothing that they had mentioned before had any meaning to it—it had all been shadow-boxing—and he brushed past him, on his way over to Forski.

FORSKI saw him coming, with Kelly on his heels. He took a deep breath and bent over his gutter. "Come over here—you!" Kelly called.

Forski blinked hard, then dropped

e bar and came over.

"You mean me?" he said, feeling dumb look come over his face.

"Yeah — you!" Kelly bawled. "Didn't I order you off the furnace?"

"I don't know," he said with the me look on his face.

"You know goddamned well I did!" the infuriated Kelly yelled at him. "And you know you refused to do!"

"Are you refusing to obey an order from your foreman?" Mr. Donaldson said in a crisp authoritative voice, bringing his piercing look to bear on him.

"No, sir," Forski replied. "I didn't refuse anything."

"Well, then, man, get the hell over here!" Donaldson barked. Forski's ears were burning; he could feel them glow. His throat had gone dry. He took his goggles off his head and let them swing from his fingers. He licked his lips, and only with an effort of will could he raise his face to look at them.

"You're putting me in a labor gang," he said. "I'm not a laborer!"

"You trying to run this mill, too?" Donaldson roared, the blood suddenly staining his face.

"No, sir," Forski jerked out as though he expected Mr. Donaldson to come for him.

His eyes caught Donaldson's fiery ones and he knew the man would never forget him now! His stomach bubbled, and he felt nothing behind him but the vague murmur of the furnace; the men had washed away into blurs; a long endless silence

grew around and around him like a cocoon. All the courage he could dig up, he lifted with his heart and muscles, and then like a man staggering under a load—collapsed under it.

"All right," he mumbled, dropping his eyes. "I'll go."

He turned blindly to the passageway out to the next furnace, stumbling as though someone had pushed him suddenly; and he felt a gust of tears burn his cheeks and jaws, and spit filled his mouth with a bitter taste. "I'll quit!" he cried underneath his gripped teeth. But the fight in him suddenly loosened and flowed away like water.

Halfway there, he felt Mike's hand on him.

"Get the hell off me!" he yelled. "You sonofabitch, look the trouble you got me into! They'll kick my ass out of here yet!"

"Take it easy, boy," Mike said; and put his arm all around his shoulder. "Where you going in such a hurry?"

"Where the hell you *think* I'm going?"

"Take a walk—come on," he said, turning Forski's shoulder. "Come on, we're going to take a walk."

Forski shrugged the arm off. "Take your damned walk yourself!" he cried. "Leave me alone!"

HE STALKED out of the yard: clattered over the stone bridge, seeing in a hot glance the long ridges of ore dust, with the traveling crane taking deep bites out of it. He stopped to let a skip car, loaded with ore, coke and limestone, climb up along

the hoist over his head to the top of the furnace. But just before he entered the big No. 3 yard, he stopped behind a tin shanty and closed his eyes, and stood there with his mouth opening and shutting and his chest heaving painfully. For a moment it was quiet and deserted here: he felt the cool day tough his head, and he took his hat off and rubbed the raw air through his hair. This restored him for a moment, and he tried to put the events back in the yard together. They were wedged in hot clots of emotion. He'd lashed out at Mike—he felt glad at that! At the same time the bitter taste of cowardice was on his lips and he couldn't lick it off.

"That Mike—" he cried to himself, remembering Donaldson. "He's a Commie, and trying to make something out of me! To hell with him—" and then he saw Donaldson again—"and to hell with Donaldson, too, and to hell with the goddamned works! I'll get my pay and tail it out of here!"

With this, he started stubbornly up the yard, but avoided the men's faces. He knew Gray, the foreman, and swaggered over to him, and said hoarsely: "They sent me up here to work for you!"

"All right! All right!" the other one said impatiently without glancing at him. "Stick around somewhere out of sight till I find something for you. We got a cast!"

Again that humiliation washed over his face. "You bastard," he said under his breath.

He felt useless standing on the side, watching the men dig open the clay, then the blinding flash of molten iron as it spurted out of the hole, then that livid streak of seeking fire as it poured down the gutters, separating at a dam and going right and left into the waiting hot-metal cars on the tracks below. The men, goggles and protected by heavy clothes, poked with 20-foot poles at the jam in the gutters.

"What you doing, standing there?" a man in a white shirt and vest yelled at him. "You got nothing to do?"

"Gray told me to wait!" Forster bawled out. "Goddamned plant swarming with bosses," he cursed himself. He looked resentfully over the yard. For the first time it occurred to him to wonder about the furnace. The men were working frantically, only taking time out to walk away from the heat, bend over and catch their breath as though it had been knocked out of them. The heat dripped up the skin on their faces; scorched it crisp and hard.

"How they going to work that furnace!" he cried indignantly, and stared at the men with bitter eyes about to say: "You dumb slob!"

He shrugged his shoulders instead and advised himself: "Keep your nose clean. Just worry about yourself. Don't be a hero!"

It didn't seem strange to him that he had just accused himself of wanting to be a hero, because back in the yard, facing Donaldson and Keegan he had felt a strange emotion—a feeling that had lifted him up on

gh peak from which he was about to jump feet-first on them below. Only it hadn't happened.

Gray was running around trying to keep everything going. He bumped into Forski and snarled: "What the hell you standing here for? Get the hell on the job!"

Forski glared at him, but Gray brushed by him on the run to the feeder.

"You sonofabitch!" Forski cried, taking a step after him, his fist bubbling up. He whirled about with bloodshot eyes for something to stick his hate into. He wanted to start talking for the shanty, and keep on going. . . . At the same time, he felt the Mill blacklist like a hawk over his head. Suddenly he was yelling to himself: "Where the hell's Mike, he's my grievance man! Why can't you never find him when you want him!"

Somehow it felt good to curse out Mike. "Aah, he's just a goldbricker," he said, his eyes dying down moodily, wondering what he could do to escape attention. He saw a wheelbarrow nearby and posted himself behind it as though he was about to pick it up and go somewhere. He began to itch all over with discomfort. There were eyes on him he was sure: the place was crawling with bosses today. How silly he looked standing with a goddamned empty wheelbarrow for protection! The feeling of jail came over him, all the more as he glanced out of the door to the brick wall, trimmed on top with barbed wire, and beyond the muddy river, and be-

yond that the steep cliffs only a goat could climb. The glimpse of hills, covered with autumn red-and-yellow, and the still fresh early-morning blue sky, made him feel very wistful.

HE SAW Gray coming toward him again. He moved away from the wheelbarrow to save any remarks about it. Gray was a lean, stringy fellow; a burn had left a raw patch coming up from his jaw and twisting one of his eyes out of focus. He was nervous and worried, and when he reached Forski, he started in without preliminary: "Look, Forski, we ain't going to have anything on this furnace like No. 2! You go on the job I send you and no bitching!"

He couldn't stand that tone any longer! His toes strained in his shoes and he lifted himself an inch higher as he spoke. "I'm not going to work on no labor gang," he cried fiercely. "I'm a furnace man and there's where I'm going to work!"

"They sent you over here for labor!" Gray snapped. "That's all I know!"

"Then stick the goddamned job..." Forski began, and broke into a helpless stammer, a passion like a tight fist gripping his chest and throat. He wheeled from Gray and almost ran down the yard through the passageway he had come before. The air was wet on his face, cool like water, as he swam through it. He burst into his own furnace yard, giving it an intense search, and caught sight of Mike speaking to three or four other men.

Forski broke through them and

grabbed Mike. "You lousy bastard!" he cried. "What kind of grievance man you call yourself? How come you let them take me off the furnace and shove me in the labor gang?"

Mike broke into a laugh at him, his big face caving in.

"Simmer down, Forski," he said, and brought him into the circle of his arms. "Didn't know that bothered you," he said dryly, laughing Forski's game-cock anger down, and hitting him a couple of times on the shoulder. Forski's eyes still raged, but his blood stopped boiling.

"What you going to do?" he asked, a little sulkily.

"Look, kid," Mike said. "We've just been discussing it—Andy and Calvin and me. You're just in time." He signalled with his hand, and suddenly the crane up above them crashed over to the ladder, jangled its bell somehow like a fire alarm, and the crane-boy started down the long ladder. The men in the yard laid their tools to one side, upped their goggles and started walking slowly toward the little group. Mike waited until the coming became thicker, and then turned himself, and still holding Forski around the shoulders, started as

though they were casually talking and walking.

Donaldson met them at the exit with a dry smile on his face and said to Mike, as he came near: "We hold you responsible for this, Mike. This is a wildcat! You know it's legal!"

"We're just sick, Mr. Donaldson!" Mike replied, and the other men stifled laughter. They pretended to groan, some patting their stomachs playfully, some starting to limp.

With Mike's big hand over him Forski suddenly felt as though missing parts of his brain and body had jumped back into place. For the first time since he'd been in the mill he felt—he felt—he didn't know what. He looked back at Donaldson, staring helplessly behind them, all his orders useless in his mouth, and he wanted suddenly to laugh—to jump out of the crowd and yell at him. "Come on, now, Donaldson! Come on now!" His hands gripped and he tried to take a step backward. For a moment he strained against the coming drive of the men—and then suddenly he surrendered to it with a kind of ecstasy, letting it carry him along.

THE STOOLPIGEON AS

Author

By **BARBARA GILES**

NOT long ago in America the stool-pigeon, the police spy, the sneak, the snoop, and the betrayer were regarded, even by those who used them, as a species hard to define in human terms—occupying among other shady characters roughly the same peculiar position that a blackmailer holds among ordinary thieves. The contempt they evoked was summed up in the movie *The Informer*, when a British police officer pays the betrayer of Irish comrades his Judas money by shoving it across the desk at the point of a stick.

In this country today such a gesture would not be permitted. The man who made it would find himself explaining to J. Edgar Hoover, the McCarran Committee, and Westbrook Pegler why he had not grasped the betrayer's hand and led him to the nearest publisher. (And heaven help the publisher that fails to see the "pluck and patriotism" of men and women who will name names—any name that's wanted.)

Of course, the sophisticated informer of 1951 does not go to a mere police station; nor does he ac-

cept thirty little old pieces of silver. For him the congressional hearing or big trial, the camera flashes, the headlines, the royalties, and the power. Especially the power. To deny him a favor, even in non-political circles, is dangerous.

Recently the *Ladies' Home Journal*, a matronly slick, got the whip from Westbrook Pegler because its photo editor refused Angela Calomiris an assignment. Miss Calomiris, who spent seven years supplying the F.B.I. with names, descriptions and photographs of people she called "Comrade," complained to Pegler that the editor had said he didn't think it a good idea to have a spy working in the magazine office. A *spy!* Why, Angela had been given a Book and Authors Club Luncheon when her *Red Masquerade* was published. She had helped sentence eleven working-class leaders to prison. Didn't everyone know by now that she was an "intrepid little patriot"? . . . An apology to the lady was obtained from the editor, but Pegler, unsoothed, wrote another column to expose the *LHJ* further, threaten its advertisers

with a boycott, and call for an investigation of advertising agencies in general.

No, it isn't a case of "just Pegler" or "the lunatic fringe." The society for the adulation and protection of stoolpigeons is founded on a conspiracy that extends from monopoly strategists to White House to congressional committees to courts to press and radio. It had a definite origin and calculated purpose. By the standards of cold-war morality it isn't lunatic to make a hero of an informer, it's sensible; it isn't evil to exalt liars into gospel-makers, it's just inevitable.

There's the origin, and it had better be remembered. For a great many people who helped write the first chapter of the conspiracy, and are proud of it, are now being fearfully outraged by the second: the point where the plot "got out of hand" and ran into McCarthy melodrama. On their part, only a *little* conspiracy was intended—not one that would force Henry Luce to spat with the Senator from Wisconsin, or would find Mrs. Roosevelt, who had been quick to praise Miss Calomiris, attacked as one of the sinister influences on the *Ladies' Home Journal* working against a proper perception of Miss Calomiris' fine qualities. Only a "little" evil, a "limited" falsehood—something to jail all realistic workers for peace, not enough to "smear honest citizens as Communists"—that was to be the idea.

So a lot of the original authors want Chapter II erased or revised—

but not Chapter I. How are they going to do that? Throw out their collaborators, plot, atmosphere, their weird lot of heroes, and out goes the whole book. Keep them, and there's Chapter II again.

HOW to use the same heroes is perhaps the toughest problem. Consider the case of Louis Budenz, a hack informer but, until McCarthy, a hack with a halo. It has become plain, despite the McCarran Committee's efforts to cover him, that Mr. Budenz is a liar. He was, in fact, a liar long before he charged Henry Wallace and John Vincent Carter with following Communist wishes in regard to China; but that fact cannot be granted by writers and admirers of Chapter I.

When in 1945 Mr. Budenz departed from the *Daily Worker*, announcing that his conscience could no longer support his politics and he was returning to the Catholic Church (with a nice job as a "professor"), there was solemn celebration in the temples of columnists and editorial writers. True, the manner of his departure had been a little odd. One would expect, for example, that a man so inspired by religious principles would pay his financial debt to the paper before leaving—or at least say farewell instead of slipping off in the night.

However, it was easy to disregard such things as trifles, especially as they were pointed out by Mr. Budenz's former fellow-workers, who were presumed to be beside them

ves at having lost such a fine chap the Jesuits. The new hero continued to shine as an example of Christian Man rescuing himself from the Swamp of Materialism.

Inevitably he produced a book, titled, somewhat pompously, *This My Story*, it was published with fanfare and reviewed with respect, though one or two critics confessed a slight disappointment. It didn't seem to them that Mr. Budenz's description of the way he had timed the announcement of his conversion to get the best publicity effects and had written *Daily Worker* editorials while "fingering a rosary in my pocket" was exactly in the tradition of great, soul-wrestling conversions of the past.

No doubts were voiced, however, as to his sincerity and truthfulness when it came to his "shocking revelations" of life in the Communist Party. Nor did his admirers show visible surprise when the man with the rosary turned out to be one of the most zealous fingermen that ever deserted a cause. Some may have wished that he would do his job more privately. Still, so long as "aliens" and "known Communists" were involved, Mr. Budenz's public reputation was far removed from the time when his sexual morals would be attacked on the floor of Congress and it would be strongly hinted even in sections of the cold-war press that he didn't know his halo from his horns.

That happened when the holy informer "smeared" Owen Lattimore.

At that time a suspicion came rather suddenly to a good many people that an informer's memory can be as elastic as a two-way stretch and may finally girdle everyone but the owner.

But if Mr. Budenz's saintliness was tarnished, his power was not. He was too well protected by the original conspiracy. In this there were two leading groups, the "McCarthyites," who had known about Mr. Budenz's character all along and had appreciated him all the more for it, and the Truman strategists, who had known about it too and had appreciated him up to the point where he began to service McCarthy's campaign against the State Department.

The latter group was too indebted to Mr. Budenz's vices by then to denounce him as a liar (assuming it had wished to). So he appeared again and swore, for McCarthy, Chiang Kai-shek, and the China Lobby, that Wallace and Carter had acted for the Communists in Wallace's 1944 mission to China. Only, this time the written record plus Stewart Alsop's testimony proved he was lying, and much of the proof got into the press at large.

LET'S not assume too quickly, though, that Mr. Budenz as a witness is a broken reed. The society for the adulation and protection of stoolpigeons may quietly pension him off. But he cannot be cast out as so much trash. He, Bentley, Calomiris, etc., have a much bigger role than lying about names: *to lie about the Communist Party*. And when Bu-

denz testified for the government in the trial of the eleven Communist leaders at Foley Square, he made a unique contribution in this respect.

Documentary proof of the charge, that the defendants had "conspired to teach and advocate" ideas leading to the violent overthrow of the government was lacking; on the other hand, the defense had documents and witnesses (most of them not admitted by the Court) to prove the opposite. But Mr. Budenz, now, had a little document in his fancy, titled "Aesopian language," solemnly explained by the witness to mean that anything a Communist said or wrote should be taken to mean something else (something sinister, of course).

With *that* kind of proof, one could convict every Communist, and every person merely called a Communist, of any kind of conspiracy on earth. As testimony it was horrible and absurd—just as absurd as when the same witness testified for McCarthy that the *Daily Worker's* negative criticism of a Lattimore book on the Far East meant only that the author stood in such high favor with the paper that it was "protecting" him by disassociation!

However, by no means all the outraged friends of Mr. Lattimore would be willing even now to consider throwing out Budenz's testimony at Foley Square. One can see why Truman couldn't call him a liar when he Red-baited the State Department: if he was lying about that, hadn't he lied about the Communist Party too—helped to deport, imprison, and

terrorize scores of progressives and peace workers on the basis of false testimony given under oath? Such questions cannot be opened by the Administration which, in order to further the evil purposes of its "cold war," must endow evil men with power, their word with sanctity.

So the conspiracy went on—and goes on still. We haven't seen the end of Mr. Budenz's influence yet. When a Wallace and a Philip Jessup "defend" themselves by trying to prove in turn that they *were* friends of Chiang, the China Lobby and McCarthy are just that much abetted—and so, in their own way, are the Truman strategists, whose war against peace is advanced.

BESIDES, Mr. Budenz is not only hero. There is, for example, Miss Calomiris. There is Herbert Philbrick, in whose honor Governor Dever of Massachusetts proclaimed November 27 "Herbert A. Philbrick Day." Mr. Philbrick spent nine years in Miss Calomiris' "highly dangerous occupation of jotting down names and descriptions at Communist Party meetings, and he too presented fantasies in lieu of documents at Foley Square. Adulation and protection being handsomely extended. The New York *Herald Tribune* has announced that it plans to serialize a book, *I Led Three Lives* (what authors these stoolies are!) before publication by McGraw-Hill.

Without having seen it, one can guess at the general contents from preceding models. Besides Budenz

here are several: Calomiris's, Elizabeth Bentleys, Hede Massings, Jacob polanskys, and Matt Cveric's long tory in the *Saturday Evening Post*, from which the movie, *I Spied on the Communists for the FBI*, was made. I've read them all (out of reportorial duty, not morbidity), and can easily understand why some of the reviewers obedient to the conspiracy nevertheless gagged delicately between the lines by the time they did their respectful job on the last-published, Miss Bentley's.

In fact the New York *Post* reviewer, William Dufty, was unappreciative enough to list instances of last-minute editing on Miss Bentley's *Out of Bondage* in order to avert libel suits — although the libelous material had already been used elsewhere to throw suspicion on the persons who might bring the suits.

According to an article by William V. Shannon in the *New Republic* of October 22, there have been "earlier indications" in Washington that "the recollections and reminiscences of persons such as Budenz and Elizabeth Bentley were overvalued and needed a touch of deflation." A touch! William Remington, for one, should get a bitter laugh out of that; he was tried and convicted through Miss Bentley's "reminiscences" of him as part of a "spy ring."

And where, one may ask, were the indications of deflation in Washington when the "Red Spy Queen" was babbling to the Un-American Committee, the F.B.I., and the newspapers about her love life and alleged adven-

tures in a secret "Soviet apparatus" in the Communist Party? Where was the skepticism even when it was brought out at the Remington trial that one of the jurors was helping Miss Bentley to prepare her book for publication?

Like Hede Massing (*This Deception*), Miss Bentley specializes in the spy-scare department of cold war. (There is, as we shall see, a certain division of labor among the various tale-bearers.) Like Mrs. Massing, also, she is given to intense self-dramatization though her hysteria is more uncontrolled. Both their books offer the type of information which is impossible to check, lacking in important specific details and strictly out of "reminiscence."

In Mrs. Massing's case the vagueness is so pervading that Morris L. Ernst, in his admiring preface, asks us to forgive it. There are times when the author herself seems uncertain as to whether she was really "spying" or not, though she was quite prepared to swear on a witness stand that she was.

As for Miss Bentley, how many believers in her veracity will remain unskeptical after reading her strained, tortuous accounts of how she tried to save her ex-friends "from the Russians" by delivering them, stamped as "spies," to the gentle mercies of the F.B.I. Yet, the word of characters like these—now found to have been "overvalued"—has been used in building a nation-wide, government-supported structure of terrorism and corruption.

TO WRITE about Angela Calomiris at all is difficult. What can one say of a person who *boasts* that during the last war she took pictures of the wives of G.I.'s "to send their husbands overseas" and then turned the prints over to the F.B.I.? This sort of thing, she assures us, was not duplicity: duplicity means being "two-faced," and she was never that, as she was kidding the Communists but not herself. It's a point of ethics that might be argued, but who wants to argue ethics with a sneak—even with the one who received the most effusive praise for "courageous and patriotic" qualities.

Miss Calomiris also claims that she accepted her F.B.I. assignment on the high grounds of foreign-policy research. Even if the Soviet Union was an ally of ours, the F.B.I. boys told her, its policy might "change" and it was her patriotic duty to find out about it in advance. So she couldn't refuse.

It is not explained later why she chose to investigate the foreign policy of the Soviet Union by furnishing descriptions of American Communist Party members in accordance with F.B.I. specifications, which she details: "They wanted descriptions like those of criminals I had seen in 'wanted' notices at the post office: height, weight, age, color of eyes and hair, distinguishing characteristics like scars." (It seems never to have occurred to her that the Communist Party was legal, its members had no relation to criminals, and that spying on the political beliefs of one's fel-

low-citizens is subversive of democracy.)

Whatever her bosses' directives, she cheerfully carried them out; for, despite all her complaining in *Red Masquerade* about the "dullness" and "danger" of her work, the fact cannot be hidden from the reader that Angela was a born snoop. She delighted in her tricks, her cleverness, and her little revenges on Party members who hurt her feelings by daring to question the quality of her Communism.

Besides fingering Party members, Miss Calomiris' special department was spying on militant trade unionists and progressive organizations. Budenz works that side of the street also, but his real specialty is plugging the central falsehood of the war-makers—the myth that our country is threatened by the Soviet Union. In his second "confession" (*Memoirs Without Faces*), he strews the pages with sinister plots for "Red domination."

With what evidence? Why, Mr. Budenz's understanding of Aesopian language, of course. One example may suffice: on page 169 the author quotes from a resolution of the 1948 Communist National Convention, as follows:

"Let the American working class guard against a course that would bring upon it the judgment pronounced upon the German working class for deserting its vanguard party—and for sharing the guilt of the Third Reich against humanity."

How does Budenz translate this? As a simple, clear warning to Ameri-

can workers not to follow a course that had helped to promote Hitlerism and war in another country? Oh, no. "In effect," he says, "the American workers were told that they would be exterminated or beaten into slavery by the victorious Red Army (who else could mete out this punishment?) unless they were willing to betray their native land."

This "interpretation" is on the face of it a bare-faced fraud. But there is even more to the fakery than meets the eye. The fact is that here, as is typical of this glamorized author, the original quotation has been doctored by omission. The sentence in the resolution actually reads:

"Let the American working class guard against a course that would bring upon it the judgment pronounced upon the German working class for deserting its vanguard Party and its own class interests, for failing to take its stand at the head of the people against Nazism, and for sharing the guilt of the Third Reich against humanity!" (*Political Affairs*, June, 1948, page 498.)

MATT CVETIC and Jacob Spolansky, like Miss Calomiris, boast that they were stoolpigeons from the beginning, as distinguished—if it is a distinction—from deserter betrayers. Their literary creations are viciously candid accounts of spying, raiding, union-busting and general thuggery for big business as well as the police. Spolansky is still proud of the part he played in the Palmer raids ("In the Chicago area which I

supervised some 650 arrests were made—the national total exceeding 3,000 prisoners on that night of January 2") as well as of his subsequent long career, which included testifying for the Un-American Committee.

He didn't become an Author until 1951, but publishers weren't so receptive to the New Literature as they are now. While progressive books go begging for a publishing house, the Macmillan Company has no qualms about putting out a volume in which an avowed labor and police spy quotes proudly from his own reports, one of them beginning: "There is a definite, organized, subversive movement in Detroit dedicated to the extermination of the white race." That's the type of man whose testimony on what's un-American is taken by the authorities as Biblical.

In the cultural world, Matt Cvetic has climbed somewhat higher than his confreres, having served as the model for the hero of a Hollywood movie. It was rather coolly received by the public and could hardly be called a *succès d'estime* either as several of the critics didn't care for its obvious message that people who join labor unions or get together to demand more milk for the kiddies are tools of a foreign power. That was getting a little *too candid*.

However, Mr. Cvetic, whose testimony along with Judge Musmanno's was the big thing in the "sedition" trial of leading Pittsburgh Communists, can probably shrug the critics off. After all he's come a long way, considering that his career started

only a short while after he was arrested on charges of assaulting his sister-in-law so violently that she was under medical care for a month.

THERE are the witnesses, gentlemen. They're the only kind to be had when it comes to indicting Communism in the courts or before Congress. Honest people do not present their kind of testimony because they know it doesn't exist in fact.

Bentleys and Budenzes have to be the "experts" and "authorities," relied upon to establish that Communism is a "threat to America." Once that's assumed, the rest follows: the witnesses can also lie their heads off about every personality or group whose progressivism (past or present) gets in the way of the war-

makers—or merely interferes with the personal ambitions of a politician. Next the victims become the subjects of a controversy around their "guilt" or "innocence." This simply serves to perpetuate the central falsehood, without which all the accusations would be meaningless. The intimidation spreads—threats of more arrests, imprisonment, blacklists, "exposure"—until the very people who are likely to be the next victims of the lie may be most afraid to combat it.

Yes, there *are* honest witnesses, if they will but be heard. There *are* Americans who won't be frightened by lies or seduced by evil. And there are peacemakers, more than the spies can count. It is at these that the lie is especially aimed—because they are the ones who will destroy it.

books in review

Mass Murder

CHARGE GENOCIDE. Edited by William L. Patterson. Staff: Richard O. Boyer, Howard Fast, Yvonne Gregory, F. Oakley Johnson, John Hudson Jones, Leon Josephson, Stetson Kennedy and Elizabeth Lawson. *Civil Rights Congress*, 23 West 26th Street, New York. 1.50.

THE policeman who fired a bullet into the body of a Negro insisting on his right to vote is as guilty of the crime of genocide as Hermann Goering who was condemned to die for that crime. The President of the United States, who slyly sanctions violence against America's 15 million Negroes for their insistence on equality rises, as a blood-brother to the murdering Goering and to Goering.

Harry Truman's failure to assert executive power to promote their constitutional rights is an enabling factor for racist violence. Every governmental agency is guilty of genocide. The Supreme Court and Department of Justice, Governors of sovereign states and law enforcement officers, East, West, North, as well as South, when Negroes are tortured and lynched, when they are imprisoned or executed after a synthetic trial, or when

they are denied equal opportunity in employment, education, housing, the franchise or in the armed services.

Guilty of genocide, and centrally so, are the mammoth corporations which manipulate the nation's politics and its legal code. They created the barbaric pattern of institutionalized violence against the Negro people to exact four billion dollars annually from them in the form of super-profits.

Authority for these conclusions derives from the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide that was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations. Proof, overwhelming and irrefutable, appears in this 240-page book. In it William L. Patterson, head of the Civil Rights Congress introduces a petition to the United Nations signed by 90 prominent Americans, the majority of whom are Negroes.

They charge, for the first time in history, that the Government of the United States is guilty of genocide against the Negro people. I believe that a world will find this petition as irrefutable as the fact that Willie McGee is dead in Mississippi. And I believe the book is destined to fire

the conscience of mankind and move humanity to action of enduring consequence.

The petitioners are confident that a world will realize its fateful stake in this mass American tragedy. For mankind learned during Hitler's time that genocide cannot be contained within a nation's borders but must, inevitably, cross them to afflict other nations and other peoples with aggressive war. The judges of Nuremberg, the petitioners point out, so believed when they found the Nazi leaders guilty as charged. Supreme Court Justice Robert Jackson, then chief prosecutor, said: "The wrongs which we seek to condemn and punish have been so calculated, so malignant and so devastating, that civilization cannot tolerate their being ignored because it cannot survive their being repeated." True in 1945, it is equally true in 1952.

Because mankind, at the end of history's bloodiest war, realized these dreadful truths its representatives to the United Nations adopted the convention on genocide. The crime was defined, its specific characteristics charted, and the Assembly was invested with power to act. It has already moved on charges of genocide brought by the Government of India against the racist Government of South Africa that has maltreated East Indians (not to speak of the African population).

We Charge Genocide calls upon the Assembly to force the U.S. Government to cease its practices that can, if unchecked decimate the

American Negro people.

William L. Patterson addresses himself in the introduction to those who believe that genocide refers solely to the total destruction of a race or people. The crime, as defined, encompasses many other facets of terror open or concealed, instant or protracted. The convention adopted by the General Assembly defines genocide as any killings on the basis of race, or, in its specific language, "killing members of the group." Specifically, Article II, declares:

"In the present convention genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: (a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part. . . ."

Article III declared that "The following acts shall be punishable: (a) Genocide; (b) Conspiracy to commit genocide; (c) Direct and public incitement to commit genocide; (d) Attempt to commit genocide; (e) Complicity in genocide." The petitioners have assembled hundreds of instances to document each category of the punishable acts.

National legislators as well as big woods Klansmen are equally guilty under the clauses of the genocide law. A Kliegle wielding the whip over the back of a Negro who dares death to vote (and there are thousands of such instances, many

recorded in this book) is partner in crime with James E. Byrnes, governor of South Carolina, former Secretary of State, who declared his state would abolish the school system rather than abolish segregation. Byrnes invited genocide against any Negro citizen who tried to avail himself of his legal right to vote in South Carolina.

It is not federal law alone—the 14th and 15th Amendments that are being violated—the binding Convention against Genocide is defied. For the petitioners claim, and their proofs are unassailable, that the Convention transcends national and local law and is the law of the land. Its clauses cannot be nullified by existing statute: our ratification of the Charter of the United Nations requires compliance.

Hence much more is involved than the Klansman: guilty of genocide is the state authority which grants him a charter to roam the country with pistol and burning cross. Guilty too of genocide is the police official who

allows him to incite violence and to commit it, and who is, as the record in this book shows, often enough party himself to the act of terror.

Guilty, too, under the language of the convention is the judiciary that perverts the law to accommodate the racist crime; and guiltiest of all, doubtless, is the Supreme Court that has, by its casuistic interpretations of the 14th and 15th Amendments transformed them into their opposite, all the while parading as the staunchest champions of our democratic rights. Guilty is the Attorney General's office and its affiliate, the F.B.I., which can spend a million to persecute a noble Negro savant like Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois but cannot find the means to apprehend the lynchers of innumerable Negro citizens.

Even the Negro soldier who may die tomorrow on the battlefield lives today in an atmosphere of genocidal oppression. Guilty of the awful crime



Gershgoren

are the Pentagon generals who impose segregation and discrimination in the armed forces, and their Commander-in-Chief, the President, who could end it by his executive power if he would. The petitioners cite the inquiry in Korea by Thurgood Marshall, special counsel for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People whose findings shocked millions, but have not, to this time, altered a single fact.

The genocidal policies of the Government are so evident that the authorities themselves are forced to acknowledge them. The President's Committee on Civil Rights issued a report in 1947 that was, the petitioners emphasize, "a plea of guilty and an admission of crime." The Report admits the charges in this indictment, that lynching is genocidal, is "intended to repress an entire people." Consider the Report's confession:

"The almost complete immunity from punishment enjoyed by lynchers is merely a striking form of the broad and general immunity from punishment enjoyed by whites in many communities for less extreme offenses against Negroes. Moreover, lynching is the ultimate threat by which his inferior status is driven home to the Negro."

All that is discussed above is but a fraction of the multiple aspects of genocide practiced in our country. A world of quiet, day-to-day tragedy lies beneath section (c) of Article II, which also defines genocide as the practice of "deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life cal-

culated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part."

We come to a consideration of the so-called "normal" conditions of Negro life. The petitioners bring to the Assembly's attention the fact that the Negro people are robbed of more than eight years of life on the average, according to actuarial figures compiled by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. Three Negro children die to each two white children during their first year. In the next 24 years of life, non-whites have a death rate that is two to three times higher than that of whites. And between the ages of 25 to 29, the non-white rate is four times higher.

These are the results of a deliberate program "expressed in law, economic policy and court decisions, of forcing Negroes to live in filthy ghettos, of preventing their access to available medical treatment, and of holding down their income through discrimination in employment to the lowest paid jobs in the country, more than 30,000 Negroes die each year in the United States who would not have died if they had been white." *Thus, in the five years under consideration in this book, the figures reveal that genocidal policies have killed 150,000 Negroes.*

What causes this mammoth horror? The petitioners trace it to its root—the all-pervasive greed of the monopoly interests for super-profit. They quote a former government economist, Victor Perlo, author of *American Imperialism*, who writes that monopoly capital "today drain

its from all parts of the capitalist world. But the original base of Wall Street super-profits, and still a larger base than any single foreign country, is the oppression of the Negro people within the United States." And the core of this oppression is in the plantation economy of the Black Belt. The entire system of terror spirals down to this central fact: there is a 100 per cent difference between the median Negro wage annually and the median white wage. Consider that differential as money in the pocket of the employer, as profit. Multiply the difference by the 3,500,000 Negro workers in agriculture and industry, and you arrive at the figure of \$350 billion in super-profits obtained by oppressing the Negro people. This, says the book, is the "substantial motive for the conspiracy to commit genocide against the Negro people."

The editors of *We Charge Genocide* are to be commended for their enormous work in compiling the documentation and wide range of authoritative studies to support the position. However, it was an error to include the so-called "psychological studies" made by Dr. Abram Kardiner whose work, as was shown recently in this magazine, is unscientific and unconvincing (ist) along with the unquestionable mass of evidence.

One fact must stand out for all Americans: the charge of genocide is proved against the Government of the United States. And from that it comes the inescapable conclusion: it is the responsibility and duty of the citizens of our country—and in

the first place of the white majority, especially the workers—to call a halt to this murderous official policy.

We Charge Genocide should reach millions, and millions should demand that its facts and arguments be heard—and acted upon at once—by the U.N. Assembly. The principles of humanity demand it; the survival of all of us requires it. For if genocide is not defeated here, the life and liberty of all Americans is threatened. And more: all mankind is imperilled by the explosion of domestic genocide into universal genocide—global atomic war. These are the stakes at issue in the petition of the 90 pioneering Americans.

JOSEPH NORTH

Purgative

ON BEING NEGRO IN AMERICA, by J. Saunders Redding. *Bobbs-Merrill*. \$3.00.

UNDER Mussolini's regime the castor oil treatment was given by force: under Truman's loyalty terror the purgative is self-administered. The process is made a public function, with the volunteers—ex-Vice-Presidents, playwrights, crooners, movie tough guys, union picards, etc.—spilling their guts in the press, on radio and TV, and in books like this latest by J. Saunders Redding.

In the opening pages Mr. Redding says: "I seek a purge, a catharsis. . . ." From what? Ostensibly from "the obligations imposed by race on the average educated or talented Negro. . . ."

I am tired of giving up my creative initiative to these demands."

At the end of this short work the author announces his failure: "I am not purged: I am not cured of my sickness. . . . If only I were not a Negro!—that, of course, was the impossible dream-wish on which the illusion was founded."

Of course. So why bother sending it to the publisher?

Because the writer had quite a different purge in mind for himself. Not stated but obvious from the first page is Redding's effort, desperate in spirit and indecent in method, to go on record as having no ties with the Negro liberation movement and the political Left.

Sometimes this effort is pursued obliquely (as in the first-page disavowal of Paul Robeson, without naming him); but for the most part Redding's essay is as unsubtle as a supporting affidavit to a loyalty questionnaire.

There was the Kitchenette Plot, for example: ". . . sometime after midnight, without quite realizing what we were in for, my wife and I accepted an invitation . . . and found ourselves in an apartment on West 56th Street, surrounded by a motley crowd" of you know who. "Toward dawn," Redding testifies, "what seemed to be a committee of three cornered me in the kitchenette and asked me to sign a card." But oh no!

Then there was the time "*New Masses* first published an excerpt from my book (*No Day of Triumph*), without, as I remember, get-

ting either my permission or that of the publisher."

Here I would only take to task Bobbs-Merrill, the publishers of Redding's present work: a trip by the office boy to the library would have disclosed the simple fact that page 19 of *New Masses*, October 20, 1942, were the fateful words "reprinted by arrangement with publishers, Harper & Bros."

Now, of course, neither the forgetful Mr. Redding nor Harper's *New Masses* was guilty of anything in this case: it was a routine editorial matter. But here is an example of how publishers today make the slightest effort to check on anything that anybody says against "Reds."

Not only must Redding clear up such details for whoever might be checking on him, but he must generally slander everything and everybody of the Left. Knowing of the capitalist publishers' dictum "to get sex," I cannot believe that it was Redding's idea to tell his sharer that the first "Communist" he met tried to "recruit" him with scene photographs—and that campaign was pursued with models.

But if the author's memory fails him on verifiable matters, he forgets who is who and what is what and where he'd better stand. (with Dr. Du Bois under indictment as a "foreign agent") Redding writes "Du Bois, I think, was right way back in his young, good days said . . ." And telling an anecdote

ing Paul Robeson: "whose reputation was international and then un-
ched."

h yes, there is a "then" and there
"now"—when a man must be
ully careful!

William L. Patterson is called a
ck s.o.b." by a Dixiecrat congress-
and indicted for contempt of the
American Committee—and so our
or too must spit at Mr. Patter-
And a crack must also be taken
James D. Ford" (who cares even
ut getting the name right?).

Redding would call his acute sensi-
y to reactionary pressures "a re-
t for reality." At least that was
term he used in his recent novel
Anger and Alone, subtitled "The
y of a Man Who Betrayed His
People," which might be re-
ed here. The protagonist of that
k (Shelton Howden) was, like
author, a teacher at a Negro col-
Howden, an ambitious career-
was schooled in treachery by the
-villain of the novel, P. T. Wim-
a, president of the college and

conscious tool of the white rulers.
Said Wimbush:

"Shel, if there's one thing that's right,
it's respect for reality. That's the only
item in our moral code. There's things
you have to take and things you have to
do, and even if they don't square with
what some people think is right, they
square with the way the things are that
nobody can change. . . . It's not always
easy—I've never said it was—and it's
never as simple as some goddamned fools
think; but it's what you're bound to do
if your personal living's not to be plain
hell."

In my review of that work (*M & M*,
April, 1950) I noted that "Wimbush
is by far the most compelling char-
acter." Now I know why: it was a
revealing self-portrait.

Anyone interested can make from
the novel and the present work a
parallel table showing a remarkable
resemblance between the views of
the Howden-Wimbush betrayers and
those of Redding in his *On Being
Negro in America*. Here I will give
but one example.

In the novel Howden is keenly

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annoyed by the preoccupation of his fellow teachers with the "race" problem. "When his colleagues talked about race, it was like being surrounded by squawking parrots pretending to be screaming eagles. And Howden told himself besides that it was as futile as it was passionate."

Speaking for himself in his new book, Redding exhibits the same feelings of alienation from his people and their problems. He recalls how, as a young instructor at Atlanta, he was caught up in campus defense activity against lynch attacks: "Every few days for a month Negroes held meetings, but after a time I did not go to them any more. They came to seem like public displays of very private emotions, in the same unbecoming taste of those obscene religious services in which worshippers handle snakes."

Here is an irony for you! When his people unite to protect their very lives it's an "unbecoming" display of very private emotions—but J. Saun-

ders Redding may begin his book with the words, "This is personal and go on to bare his private silliness."

"The dilemma of a man who wants a decent way of life and can find only indecent ways of achieving it—that was the jacket blurb on Redding's novel. It would be just as appropriate on the jacket of this book."

LLOYD L. BROWNE

Force of Evil

A HERO OF OUR TIME, by Vasco Pratolini
Prentice-Hall. \$3.00.

THE title of Pratolini's book is ironic. Its protagonist is Sandrino, sixteen years old, a fascist whom his father has taught nothing and whose obsession with thoughts of political revenge is buttressed by a pitifully destructive drive in his personal relations. As in his previously translated novel, *A Tale of Poor Love*, with its portrait of the Signora, Pratolini is fascinated by the attraction which thoroughly corrupt individuals sometimes exert upon others. He sees this attraction as not only overcoming the weak, but even, momentarily, paralyzing the will and judgment of strong, clear thinking people. In his story is like a sweet and sour taste. One cannot be sure which taste is left uppermost: the writer's reverence for his central character or his character's charm for those he intends to injure.

Sandrino's only real victim is

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inia, widow of a civil engineer killed in street fighting in defense of the short-lived fascist "republic." She becomes his mistress, allows herself to be abused and robbed by him, and is finally murdered because she stands in the way of a new affair which he believes will "save him from himself."

Opposing him are the working-class couple, Bruna and Faliero, Communists and former partisans. Knowing Sandrino's past and his vicious opportunism, they urge Virginia to give him up and warn him that he will be punished if he does not renounce his predatory life. But Virginia's capacity for self-sacrifice is an unstable virtue since, being devoid of principle, she becomes completely irresponsible except to the lover to whom she surrenders her loyalty. So the couple's friendship and offer of protection frighten or repel her.

Sandrino, on the other hand, responds to their effort to help him change by trying to blackmail Bruna, while alternately planning to kill Faliero and pleading with him to rescue him when he is in trouble with the police. His power over Bruna comes, so he thinks, from her having experienced a flash of sexual desire when, as a partisan, she wanted to get some vital information from him and he tried, unsuccessfully, to seduce her. Sandrino is aware that shame has kept Bruna from telling her husband of this detail of an incident otherwise familiar to him, and he hopes to use his knowledge for whatever satisfaction of spite or material need it will give him.

But Bruna's confessing to Virginia in a futile attempt to reveal Sandrino's true nature to the latter enables her at last to speak to Faliero. In an effective scene he relieves her of the fear that his love for her would diminish in this test of it.

Sandrino's mother, Lucia, for whom he does have a degree of positive love, is too simple and forgiving to tell him anything that "could open my brain." At least that is how he puts it to Elena, a young girl who appears out of the snow as it were just as he is in despair from a series of defeats which have put him in a ridiculous light. The spontaneity of their meeting and her absolute frankness impel him to come clear for once, though his facing and doubting himself are still a struggle conducted for his own sake rather than for others. And, as we see, this struggle for self-preservation in so perverted a creature as Sandrino is to have a terrible consequence. Wanting Elena, he kills Virginia.

Pratolini intends that the conversations between Elena and Sandrino should be of crucial importance. After she has told him that her father was imprisoned and killed by the Germans for having worked with Communists in the underground, he admits to being a fascist. He tries to justify his "ideals" to her while she demands that he see those ideals in terms of the crimes committed in their name, that he realize for once that there is a difference between truth and falsehood.

And though her words are ad-

dressed to Sandrino, she means them to be more than a personal plea. They insist that he—and we—understand how appeals to expediency and blind faith are used today as cloaks for every kind of atrocity perpetrated against the freedom and peace loving peoples of the world. Yet all along Elena allows Sandrino to slip away from the truth which threatens his way of life, just as she permits her own insight to be diverted by some tenderness or joke she shares with him. Before she can resolve this contradiction. Sandrino has disposed of his former mistress, Virginia, and their unborn child.

I say contradiction, not conflict, advisedly, because I believe that this points to the failure and disturbing character of the book. Actually, no one is deeply involved in the struggle for Sandrino's mind and heart, neither he himself nor Elena, nor Bruna and Faliero who simply fade out of the action with the entrance of Elena. The opposites do not grapple; they merely rest side by side. Elena, arriving on the scene like the princess in a fairy tale, does not suffer from her contact with Sandrino. Their talks, despite their apparent seriousness, are too clever and in the end commit them to nothing, like great moral issues discussed by dilettantes.

A little more than halfway through the book, Faliero is convinced of the futility of trying to change Sandrino,

and so our "hero" interests us as much but no more than the chief suspect of a psychological thriller. The dimension of the book lends support to the analogy. It is too short for its tasks; one is uncomfortably aware of the discrepancy between the subject matter and the tenuous dramatic means employed to unfold it.

For example, what one remembers best of Faliero's contest with Sandrino is his curious preoccupation with the advisability of getting him into a reformatory.

Pratolini's ambivalent attitude toward corruption confuses his estimate of Sandrino. Sometimes he pictures him as contemptible, but just as often—the scene with Bruna is an example—as a force of nature which one can almost not resist. The damage done by this romantic overemphasis is very great. It loosens not only Sandrino, but all the other characters to a degree, from their social moorings. At the same time it subordinates their convictions to his ruthless strength, their principles to his presence. Despite their superior moral status, they tend to shrink and lose energy beside him. And because of the artificial power given him to infect others, his portrayal makes one aware of certain decadent elements in Pratolini's work which obscure and may even negate the writer's grasp of social realities.

CHARLES HUMBOLDT

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