MASSES & MAINSTREAM

Soviet Writers Take Stock

REPORT ON WRITERS' CONGRESS

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Karl Marx • TV and Negro Artists

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EDITORIALS

THE men who own and control the country's television networks have come smack up against a panicky "problem." It is the problem of the hiring of the Negro artist, the Negro actor, musician, news commentator. This is the economic side. It is of course a desperate necessity for the jim-crowed entertainer seeking work and wages.

It does not fully explain the panic of the top executives in the television industry. The panic arises from the fact that television now speaks to the vastest audiences any form of communication has ever addressed at a single moment. It penetrates the home with an immediacy never seen in history. This vast audience of tens of millions is a commercial necessity.

The Negro artist, musician, actor, writer who comes knocking on this door is knocking in fact on the doors of American society in a way not possible before. The Negro artists are demanding entrance into the homes of millions of Americans on a new level, where the white American families, shut out of any cooperative contact with the Negro people from birth to death, will find themselves discovering the riches of Negro life and culture, and finding that the Big Lie of white supremacy is indeed a lie.

What will happen if fifteen million white Americans see on the CBS, NBC and Dumont networks let us say a drama of a Negro family presented with the dignity and truth, with the pathos and nobility of true art? The mere thought of this chills the air in the higher echelons. Yet such TV and radio presentations must become a regular part of American life and American culture if this nation is to find democratic solutions for its problems.

Mr. Alvin Webb of the New York *Amsterdam News* found some astounding facts simply by reporting the television-radio situation in the New York area. He found early this year "No Negro artists are regularly featured on TV network shows; No Negroes have been hired as staff or commercial announcers in either radio or TV; No Negroes appear as regular members of a radio or television panel show; No Negroes are employed on policy-making level by either radio or TV." Out of 8,000 employees of 12 TV and radio stations in the greater New York area only 400 are Negroes, and of these only 40 are performing personnel—but none regularly featured.

This situation aroused anger at the mass meeting of Negro artists held in Harlem in January. A subsequent meeting proposed a "blackout"—that is, a two-hour boycott of broadcasts—carried out on a given day. The fight is a vital one. This publication endorses it wholeheartedly. For the appearance of the Negro artist, the Negro family, the Negro community on the

television sets of America, in their full dignity and truth, will make America better for every other family in it.

FEAR OF IDEAS

A visitor who could penetrate the Post Office vaults in New York, San Francisco, Boston and other cities would be able to observe a strange sight. He would see large piles of books, newspapers and magazines in foreign languages, Russian and French, mostly, and close by he would see solemn-looking gents studying these writings for forbidden thoughts or "foreign propaganda."

This is the growing machinery of the absurd and stifling activity of the Postal officials, customs men and Department of Justice agents busily setting up their Iron Curtain against the literature, sciences, newspapers of the Soviet Union and other lands.

The latest achievement of this thought-control officialdom, which thinks to ride high on the wave of illiteracy bred by McCarthyism, is to forbid the reading, through subscription, of *Pravda,* and *Izvestia,* Soviet newspapers, to all Americans except "authorized persons."

Thus, *Pravda* and *Izvestia* are added to Longfellow's Hiawatha who made a speech for peace, and Mark Twain's Connecticut Yankee whose monarchy-hating views have made him suspect in the ranks of certain educators.

The dread of the exchange of ideas is the hallmark of the Cold Warriors and the "we-will-save-you-from communism" racketeers. The country of Jefferson, Lincoln and Douglass has reached the point where the President can only stammer at his press conference when he is asked why Iowa farmers cannot invite Russian farmers to come and take a look-see at our corn fields. The Russians have said they would be glad to exchange visits with their fellow farmers of our Midwest.

The announcement of the Justice Department's selected reading list for "authorized persons" has rather startled public opinion. The New York *Times* cannot understand this crudity. But does not this entire business flow from the same basic source—the vicious nonsense that ideas are a "conspiracy," that the American people must be insulated, through the use of long prison terms for Communists, gained through trials of books and with the aid of FBI professional perjurers, from the "forbidden ideas" of opponents of the Cold War? That our people cannot be trusted to make their own choices in the market place of social and political thought?

It is time for public opinion to insist strongly on the right to East-West cultural interchange, on our right to send our great artists, musicians, orchestras for the people of the Socialist lands to see and hear, and for them to do the same. There is nothing that the die-hard enemies of peace fear more than just such brotherly and human meeting of different peoples.

Report on the Writers Congress

Soviet Writers Take Stock

By JACK LINDSAY

We are pleased to present below a first-hand report on the recent Con-ess of Soviet Writers by the widely known British novelist, poet and critic, ck Lindsay. This article is accompanied by the greetings sent to the Con-ess by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet nion, a fundamental statement of principle which we believe American aders will find helpful in following the intense literary debates in the S.S.R. which are studied by millions of interested readers. We intend to blish some of the essential texts of the Congress proceedings as soon as ey are available.—The Editors.

THE Second All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers began on Wednes- day, December 15, in the Hall of the Supreme Soviet in the Kremlin, 4 o'clock in the afternoon. The sun was going down in gold over the lls and towers as we went in, and the windows of the noble hall of eam and white were flushed with rose and blue as the novelist Konstantin din rose to open the proceedings. The hall was packed with some 700 iter delegates from all over the U.S.S.R., with a large number of guests io included Louis Aragon, Pablo Neruda, Jorge Amado, Nazim Hikmet.

The main item that day was the general report by the poet Alexei rkov, which as fully as possible in some three hours sketched out the nifold developments of Soviet literature since the first Congress in 1934, ld under the aegis of Gorky. Surkov's main emphasis was on the positive ievements, the way in which the literature of the 1930's managed along ying lines to tackle the main issues of a socialist literature, which had en brilliantly stated by Gorky: the problems of defining the new place the labor process in a society where men shaped their own destinies and re breaking down the barriers between manual and intellectual work; problems of showing the positive hero, the man who gives a lead in this ation and helps his fellows to break through into new levels of living; problems of creating a joyous and stirring art, the art of what Gorky

called revolutionary romanticism, in which the restless aspiring spirit of liberated man could lyrically express its vision of the future.

All these problems, which concentrate the new creative possibilities opened up by socialist construction, were tackled with courage and insight—in terms of the actual level of development in people, with the complex mixture of new and old that makes up the fullness of the historical reality. Then came the war, and Soviet literature managed generally to give vital expression to the deepening of the moral unity of the people in the face of the fascist attack.

So far so good. Naturally, weak works and mediocre works as well as good works were written in the periods in question. But, taken as a whole, literature was keeping pace with the movement of the people, helping to consolidate the gains and to light the way forward. Certain works, such as Ostrovsky's *How the Steel Was Tempered,* made tremendous contributions to the spiritual growth of the people.

But the post-war works—what of them? Here Surkov's report became rather a series of questions, of criticisms and complaints. The positive hero had too often become thin and idealized, or, worse, had thought that to beat the bumptious drum of his personality was to give leadership. Surkov went on to list various bad tendencies, formalism or over-subjectivism, Leftist attitudes in criticism and "bourgeois nationalism" which tried to pass off bloody conquerers of the past as people's heroes.

Critics had too often taken a bad hectoring tone and a one-sided approach. Writers had too often made no effort to find the new form which expressed the new content. Back-scratching and lack of principle led to Stalin Prize for poor works. The theory of "no conflict" had sadly weakened literature wherever it seeped in—the theory that socialist society had no fundamental conflicts, that at most it witnessed a harmless debate between the good and the better, not a clash of good and evil.

Where had the theory come from? Nobody seemed to know; but writers, critics and readers alike, at one time, had been to blame. The critics, so far from noticing how false and destructive the theory was, how it contradicted the law of development in society and individual, had been the chief propagators of it. And when the falsity of the theory was uncovered, many swung to the other extreme and wanted everything painted in the darkest colors. Ordinary life was too often left out of books. Young writers were not sufficiently coming forward. There were fewer members under the age of thirty in the Writers Union than ever before.

And so the speech ended with a number of indictments, though without uch particularization and without making clear how far exactly the criti- sms were to be taken as applying to the total field of post-war Soviet erature.

In fact, although it raised a number of sharp questions, the speech gave tle idea of how very volcanic the rest of the Congress was to be.

SO MANY themes were raised in the course of the discussions over the next nine days, in the Hall of Columns, that one cannot even list them a short account. Nothing in the life of the Union or the practice of So- et literature was left untouched. Here, then, I can merely select what seem me the most characteristic and striking of the large number of points ade, grouping them under certain main headings.

Indeed, so explosive and so varied were the contributions that I should ve had some difficulty in getting them at all in a clear focus if I had t spent the previous ten weeks in the U.S.S.R., doing all I could to get side the most pressing literary issues and to participate in the preparations r the Congress. I was thus able to attend several meetings of writers and aders, in farm or factory, and to discuss things with all sorts of people well as read the main pre-Congress articles and letters from readers. Even , I was not altogether prepared for the extreme sharpness and frankness th which the problems were posed and debated.

Throughout the Congress there was agreement on the fact that there d been a serious weakening of literature in post-war years. "For the first ne there was a retreat from Socialist realism," the poet Yashin put it. ie novelist Sholokhov, who has the highest reputation of any writer in the S.S.R., went further and provocatively talked of a "disaster"—a universal luge of greyness and dullness and bad writing. Fadeyev rightly countered is exaggeration by pointing out that, despite the weakening, there had en no year without its quota of good books, books which truly expressed e life of the people, books which had a finely individual artistic quality.

No one, however, denied that in these years literature had lagged behind e as in no other phase of Soviet development. Allowing for the inevitable erstress that men always make in grappling with a problem (so that the moment it tends to swamp the whole of reality), the greyness, dull- ss, falsification of things had undoubtedly become more than a passing enomenon. And in saying that literature had lagged behind life, one ant more than that the writers had failed to compass the richness and the

splendor of life as they saw it. For in that sense no writer can ever compass the richness and the splendor. To feel defeated by these is the first requisite of success in grasping them.

No, real defeat occurs only when the writer is unaware that the richness and the splendor are there at all. To lag behind life is, then, to miss life—to put in place of the many-faceted thing an outworn pattern which may have had a certain validity once, but which now distorts and obstructs reality.

And life has been moving very fast and heaping up much wealth in the spirits of men in the post-war U.S.S.R. At last the village, with its stubborn roots in the patriarchal past, has been thoroughly shaken—though there is still much of that past to shake out of it. Industry has made great strides. Science has shot ahead, securely based in the ever-widening numbers of technically-equipped youngsters. Above all, the great movement of recent years is to be seen in two things—the amalgamation of many smaller collective farms into large units, and the adventurous expansion of agriculture in the colonization of virgin soil.

Here is the life that literature has lagged behind. Instead of grappling with the deep-going conflicts, the wrenching away from old habits and fetters of thought, the clashes inside the family, inside the collective farm, the factory—the writer had tended to do what the speakers at the Congress referred to as "lacquering reality" or "painting rosy pictures."

THE main issues, then, raised by the Congress were all connected with the problems of the writer in keeping close and active contact with life in this new situation and the problems of defining the hero, the new man, who was born from that situation. In their essence these problems are nothing new, of course, for Soviet literature. One way or another they have been coming up ever since 1917, and a decisive step forward, in theory and practice, was registered by the First Congress.

But such problems are never solved once and for all. Every advance of life precipitates them afresh. Every large-scale advance presents them as if for the first time.

The difficulties of readjustment were well brought out in an exchange between Boris Polevoy, author of *The Story of a Real Man,* and the workers of the metallurgical works of Kosogorsky, in the pre-Congress discussions. The workers called for a bolder and richer literature, one which thoroughly faced the problems of women and young people, which tackled

with lyrical courage the theme of love, and was barbed with satirical force in dealing with backward aspects of Soviet life. (These demands are found again and again in the messages and comments from groups of readers all over the Union.) The metal workers asked further that writers should renew their concentration on the labor process and all that it means in a socialist society.

Polevoy answered with some of the difficulties of the writer who strives to keep abreast of developments in the industrial field. Things have moved so fast that what was adequate in knowledge some ten years ago may be hopelessly out of date now. He cited the case of an engineer who, during his war years in the army, was longing to get back to the works, where he had been a champion of technique. On his return the man found himself so far behind that he had to start all over again as a mere assistant to some young worker who had grown into the new technical methods. Only a big struggle made it possible for him to catch up.

In the same way, Polevoy said, he himself before the war was well up-to-date in his grasp of the technical and personal problems in the industrial world; but now he needed to make many deep-going readjustments and participations before he could grasp the world of the industrial worker afresh in all its implications. He described visiting a construction site where excavations were going on. Nobody at all was visible, only the arm of a giant excavator. And in the cabin of the machine, he found a young man seated, in a silk shirt, who was carrying on the delicate operations of the excavator with the knitted brow of an intellectual.

Only a close relation to life can enable the writer to grasp the problems coming up in continually changed forms in such a forward drive. Once his close and active contact weakens or fails, he will begin to use formulas, hoping to galvanize them into life by incidental observations and a generalized sense of character.

For some time before the Congress there was a discussion about the positive hero, which ended by becoming very scholastic and abstract and which was then pushed back into a focus of common sense, with the pressure of the readers doing much to bring the whole thing down to earth. It hovered round the question: Can a positive hero have negative traits? And if so, how many? At its worst the argument tended to ask: If 12½ percent of negative traits are permissible in his makeup, does he fail his role if the percentage rises to 21⅞?

The method underlying this sort of approach was for the writer to draw

a quite schematic character of angelic qualities, then to try to provide some human ballast by adding a few spiritual warts and wens, with the *sotto-voce* aside, "You see that the wonderful creature is really human like the rest of us." Such a method can create no heroes that come home to the people's business and bosoms.

The contribution of the people to this debate was to point out that there was no statistical solution of the problem of the hero, no way of drawing up schemes and formulas beforehand. The hero existed in life, in the day-to-day, concrete struggles of men and women changing the face of the Soviet Union and when the writer had a secure participation himself in that process, his heroes would emerge as real people, with all the complex fullness and contradictions of real people. And when that happened, neither he nor anyone else would raise abstract questions about the equation of positive and negative in their make-up. Nothing convinces like life.

Other writers, in their zeal to deal with industry, wrote excellent treatises on the techniques of labor, but left the men and women dwarfed by the machine—thus inverting the principles of Socialist realism, which seeks always to show how men are themselves transformed by the struggle to transform nature.

OR, BY a diametrically opposed but equal error, they tried to show heroes who never entered into the labor-process at all, into the real struggles of people which are at every point involved with the problems of work. Here came the divagation into the cult of personality, of Napoleonic characters who turned up like a mighty wind and blew everybody forward into success without any genuine confrontation of difficulties and resistances.

Babayevsky's *Cavalier of the Gold Star* was an outstanding example of the Napoleonic approach—a book which was vastly boosted by the critics at the time of its appearance, not for its virtues but for its vices. As Simonov pointed out, the very title is ominous. For it is the Decoration not the Man, the lordly hero who thinks that Socialist positions can be won by demagogic leadership of the overawed people, who dominates the scene. Many of Panferov's novels have been of this bombastic kind.

Other novelists merely used easy formulas for setting up obstacles and then knocking them down, trusting in a rosy mist to blur the edges of things into optimistic confusion.

Yet others, reacting sharply against the lacquer and the rose-water, turned to another sort of dimness, that of shadows and glooms. What the

Soviet critics call "objectivism" was the result of this turn—not the full-blooded acceptance of life which can afford to see all things truthfully and objectively, but the detachment of the writer from life which gives him some sort of god's-eye-view, with the motto "to understand all is to forgive all." Traits of this appear in the books of Panova, Ehrenburg (*The Thaw*) and Victor Nekrasov (a fine and important writer), though their work cannot in any sense be reduced to the formula. A plainer example is Kazakevich's *Two in the Steppe,* which dealt with a young soldier who fails to convey an order to a division—with the result of the division's destruction. He is condemned to death, and Kazakevich uses all his considerable skill to build up the feeling that the lad isn't a bad chap at all and has a loving mother. So we end by sympathizing with him and not with the destroyed division.

Both the Napoleonic approach and the objectivist method, though apparently quite opposed to one another, ended in opposing the detached personality to Soviet society. They thus met in a common fallacy, an attitude which denied the real forces making and shaping people in a Socialist world.

These failures to hold to the path of Socialist realism (in which a balanced picture of the interrelation of individual and society is central) were analyzed at length and with great subtlety by Konstantin Simonov in his report on Prose Writing—the highest intellectual achievement of the Congress. What I have said is the merest inadequate sketch of the various weakening tendencies which he and others carefully dissected. But it may serve to give some idea of the sort of problems that the Congress tackled, and the searching thoroughness with which the discussion was carried out.

ALL the weaknesses in post-war writing which the Congress discussed had their roots in a withdrawal from active participation in life. The theoretical positions, however, after building themselves up on this failure, tended to perpetuate and even worsen the state of things; and that was why the destruction of these positions took up so much time of the Congress.

When creative practice falls away, everything connected with it deteriorates; and therefore it was not unexpected that there should be many and detailed complaints about the working of the Union. The inevitable counterpart of the No Conflict theory, and the resulting formulas for hero and action in the writing of books, was a bureaucratic isolation of the Union.

As usual in such a situation, it is hard to allocate the blame. Because

things become bureaucratic, the democratic life of collective discussion and responsibility withers; and because the democratic life withers, the bureaucracy carries on unquestioned. Dissatisfaction with the Union had reached such a pitch that just before the Congress several leading writers (men of the caliber of Pogodin the dramatist, Marshak, Shchipachov and Lukonin the poets) suggested a drastic reform that amounted to liquidation of the whole thing.

Another consequence of the situation was that a large number of writers, particularly young writers, have failed to develop. They produce one good book (drawn truly from their own experiences), and then become "literary" in the bad sense, writing more and more according to formula. Simonov analyzed this phenomenon in considerable detail, with many examples. And in contrast he pointed to the older writers, who grew up before 1917 and who had steadily and powerfully developed—men like Fedin and Leonov, Fadeyev and Tikhonov. These writers still to a large extent carry Soviet literature on their shoulders, setting the standards and continually intensifying their artistic powers.

KORNEICHUK made the chief report on drama, and he drew much the same picture as Simonov did of the novel, and with the same acuteness of analysis. The stage had sadly failed to rise to the level of the people, and for the same reasons that novels and poems failed. (I myself in the foyer of a theatre, at the performance of a contemporary play, have heard people discussing why such plays were so inferior to the pre-war plays.)

Korneichuk asked why such a brilliant playwright as Pogodin had been silent for years. Then he said that he would answer obliquely. Instead of Pogodin he would talk of the dramatist Mr. X. Now, Mr. X had heard the Ukrainian farmers discussing miserable harvests and the way that scientific methods were being misapplied in their fields by the planning experts; and he knew too that the Ukrainian C.C. of the Communist Party agreed with them. He saw it all and he knew it all, but he wrote nothing about it.

Instead, he wrote a harmless play which was based on the No Conflict theory, showing the "struggle" of the good and the better, as if that was the important thing. At this point it became clear that he was criticizing himself, and the audience, as was made clear by later speakers, drew the implied contrast with the Korneichuk of the war years who wrote the fiercely polemical play, *The Front,* which showed the conflict of old and new

ideas in the higher command of the Soviet Army. Why, he asked, the fear of grappling with the real issues of the day? Why the fear of open polemical *pathos?* Why the clinging to illusions and a smug life?

At the Theatre of Satire in Moscow I saw a play *Where's That Street? Where's That House?*—a witty satire on lots of things, including the housing situation and the bumptiousness of labor champions who start giving so many lectures, etc., that they cease to do any labor. In one scene it delighted its large (mainly young) audience by depicting two playwrights desperately trying to think up a theme for a play. "A young agronomist in a kolkhoz falls in love with a brigade leader, but she underestimates the value of fertilizers, and so they quarrel. Now there's a real life conflict for you."

They go on devising such themes, in which bare technical issues are phonily dressed up as real conflicts and problems. Into their meditations blunders a young man, a car driver with an important record to his credit. Ah, a real champion of toil—they will pick his brains and put him in a play! So they ask him for a real life conflict from his own experience. He scratches his head and starts telling about an argument he had yesterday with his trade union secretary. They at once interrupt. No, that isn't right, things don't happen like that in life, a good worker doesn't quarrel with his trade union secretary, it isn't typical, it isn't correct. No, he is quite wrong. And so they begin twisting his account of what in fact happened into the shallow and preconceived patterns with which they were fumbling before his entry.

THERE was much talk of the weakening of poetry and the failing interest in it. But I found that it was impossible to buy any book of poetry in Moscow if it had been out a month or so, even when the issue was 50,000 or more; and at the poetry readings which I attended, the audience practically refused to go after three hours or more of the poets, and only protested, "Why don't we see more of you? Why aren't there more meetings of the kind? Do we have to wait twenty more years for another Congress before we'll see you again?"

Still, much that is being written, especially by the younger poets, is flat and cliché-ridden; and some of the elder poets, such as the magnificent poet Tvardovsky, seem uncertain where the next step lies. Perhaps I can best give an idea of the discussion about poetry by summarizing some points made in an essay by Lukonin—one of the younger poets who can never be accused of lacking originality and force.

Lukonin began by attacking philistine smugness, the small town philosophy, "We have all we want because we have all we want." He said that there had always been complaints, as far as he could remember, that poetry was backward and weak—without the critics making any effort to explain how or why. All the same there was a special problem today. It was untrue that poetry lacked a relation to life, but there was a bad discrepancy in scale. Poetry was seldom deep enough, and failed to define the historical and philosophical significance of Soviet life. And poets too often failed to notice the rapid increase of the artistic sense among the masses.

He then analyzed several poems for a bald and slogan type of diction, for vague poeticalities and lack of concrete image, for skimmed-milk phrases and failure to penetrate the core of the matter. Everyone, he noted, had recently started discussing the need for love-poems. And such poems were indeed needed. But take Shchipachov's love-poems (which are elegiac and didactic rather than lyrical, and which are very popular): they give "educational advice" rather than attempt lyrical concreteness. Nowhere in them is the image of a woman. They are all about the man who loves, egotistic, one-sided, like acquaintance by phone or post.

Too many love-poems are like this, ironed-out, really afraid of love, afraid of the warm and clear image of the beloved. And often "social significance" is added, in a separate block. What is needed is a fusion of the image of beauty and social meaning, the beloved seen as a full human being. Till then we get only album-pieces.

After treating many other aspects of poetry in this vein, Lukonin attacked an Armenian critic who wanted poets to be less adventurous. No, poets must be brave and go deep down into life, they must be ready to destroy old forms in the quest of the new—unlike so many poems that the critics lauded as typical, poems that were faceless, characterless, comfortable and quite flat (like a smooth road over which we slide without a jar).

Poets must struggle against the critics who frown on personal initiative. For instance, a recent critic who claimed that Mayakovsky had nothing new in his work and that innovation was impossible. Lukonin then cited some praises of one of his own weaker poems—and added: poets should fear such praise, but not be afraid of experiment and innovation.

At the Congress many of the best speeches were made by poets—Lugovskoi, Olga Bergolts, Isakovsky, Kirsanov, Marshak, Yashin, Aligher. In the hands of these writers and their fellows the future of Soviet poetry is assured. They take a much more original and personally felt attitude to

literary problems than many of the novelists, and they can be relied on to set the pace, to lead the way in satisfying the demand for imaginative and deeply experienced writing.

WITH scarcely a single note of dissidence, the speakers in the discussions before and in the Congress wholeheartedly condemned the critics. The critics had not only failed to question the development of the No Conflict theory. They had seized hold of it avidly and clung to it with all their might. They were still using it in diluted or disguised forms to hold back the development of a true and vital literature.

Their tone had too often been very bad, using a violent and abusive method, indicting work they did not like (often for its good qualities) as if they were conducting a criminal prosecution. The appearance of anything fresh or alive was liable to be greeted with their shouts "it isn't typical," or "there's no need to write about such things in a society such as ours." They encouraged the conventional and the dull. They were generally so cowardly and scared that they long hesitated to write anything about a new book or play, and waited till someone plunged into print or they got wind of an important person's attitude, and then they all howled in chorus. (Detailed examples were given of such practices.)

The charge was heavy, and a good deal of it was made out beyond rebuttal. But it did not cover the whole picture. Almost all the articles I read—a large number—and almost all the discussions I heard, were of a quite high order, full of penetrating comments and insights; and I began to wonder where the detested critics were.

I expressed my doubts to one of the writers, and he laughed. "Yes, there are many good critics, but often they are in the institutes and so on, or they are practicing writers who don't normally carry on criticism. Indeed, part of the trouble has arisen through the failure of writers to do more than grumble among themselves. They could have done much long ago to change the current of criticism. And some, of course, have been doing their best all along."

All that was said of the critics was said of editors and controllers of publishing houses, who were accused of blocking good works which they feared for their originality, or censoring and cutting other works till they trimmed them to the conventional pattern. Shchipachov in his speech at the Congress, gave many examples of this procedure. For instance, Kashin, a splendid and vivid poet of early Soviet days, has not been reprinted for

twenty years because the publishers dislike his vitality.

At the same time it is also clear that the writers are to blame. Too often when they are on the board of a magazine or a publishing house they never take any active part in running the thing, so that the control falls into the hands of one of the mediocrities who play for cliché-safety. The case of one writer-editor was cited who did not even know how to find the offices of his magazine.

But I cannot leave the matter of criticism without stressing the paradox that much of the pre-Congress and Congress discussion was criticism of a very fine character, and many of the critics who write on long-distance themes are excellent Marxists who are tackling the problem of showing in concrete fact how the unity of form and content works out, and who are always stressing the problem of artistic definition against the remnants of vulgar sociologism (still considerable, though deviously disguised).

I HAVE been able to give only a sketchy impression of the deeply serious and sustained argument of the Congress. (Among other matters I have not touched at all on the very important matter of the new literatures of the many Republics and national groups, which have been badly neglected by the Union and which are clearly going to play an increasingly vital part in Soviet culture.) But even these few words will, I think, evoke something of the far-reaching significance of the Congress. However, in concentrating on the analysis of negative and backward features (as did the Congress), I trust that I have not failed at the same time to convey the enormous energy and creative richness of the scene.

Take the picture of Soviet literature as a whole, and, despite the undeniable weakness of the No Conflict period, the total effect is of simply inexhaustible resources. Soviet literature is a great literature and a literature of a new kind; and a setback in a Socialist scene, as new problems heap up and the people move vividly ahead into new dimensions of living, is something very different from a cultural crisis in a capitalist country. If you equate them in the least degree, you have lost all sense of what constitutes Soviet reality. The force and scope of the criticism and self-criticism in and round the Congress was a measure of strength and health, not the reverse.

All sorts of developments will stem from the Congress, all sorts of reorganizations in the Union and all sorts of new creative departures among the writers. As Fadeyev said, even the grey No Conflict years had a number of bright spots. Books like *Far from Moscow* or *Harvest* have weaknesses, but remain important and good books. Many young writers have been for

some time creating works that powerfully and truly deal with the life of the people—Ovechkin in his sketches, Granin in his novel *The Researchers.* Older writers like Leonov and Fadeyev are doing work of the highest quality. Poets like Lukonin, Yashin and Kirsanov have the spirit of life heady in them.

What the Congress means is that Soviet writing in general will advance to the levels already conquered by these vanguard forces, and then go further. A great new expansion and enrichment is about to happen in Soviet culture, in fact is happening.

The motto of the Congress might well be a poem that Yashin wrote just before it and which I heard him read to an audience of some 2,000 people, mostly young. It begins:

"What is a Forest when there's nothing terrible in it,
not a wolf, not a bear, in its lairs?"

and goes on to contrast the poetic landscape of the No Conflicters, a nice suburban lawn with everything safe and neat in its weekend place. But

"It's not in parks we poets must live and sing,
more than shadowy nooks we need to know.
Honestly we must go venturing:
into the real Forest we must go."

Message to Soviet Writers

This text of greetings sent by the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R. to the Writers Congress provides background material for the literary discussion reported by Jack Lindsay in the preceding article.

The Communist Party sets a high value on the role of Soviet literature in the upbringing of the new man, in the consolidation of the moral and political unity of Soviet society, in the efforts to build communism.

In the years that have passed since the First Writers' Congress Soviet literature has made considerable progress.

Literary works have been created that truthfully reflect the enthusiasm of building socialism, the unprecedented exploits of Soviet patriots in the difficult years of the Great Patriotic War, the labor heroism of our people in restoring the economy after the war. And never before has any literature had such a broad circle of sympathetic and responsive readers as our Soviet literature.

The rapid economic, political and cultural development of the Soviet republics has led to the flourishing of the literatures of the peoples of the U.S.S.R. The development and mutual enrichment of the national literatures are taking place with close co-operation of the writers of all the fraternal republics. A multi-national literature of historic significance, embodying the progressive ideas of our times, has been created in the Soviet Union.

During these years the international prestige of Soviet literature has grown and the number of its readers beyond the frontiers of the U.S.S.R. has immeasurably increased, particularly in the people's democracies. Soviet literature has won recognition among millions of foreign readers because it always comes out in defense of the working people's interests, counters the man-hating imperialist ideology with the ideas of humanism and the struggle for peace and friendship among the peoples, and is permeated with an optimistic faith in the bright future of mankind.

In their creative activity Soviet writers are inspired by the great ideas of the struggle for communism, for the genuine freedom and happiness of the masses of the people, against every kind of oppression and exploitation of man by man.

To the false and hypocritical bourgeois slogan of the "independence" of literature from society, and the

false concept of "art for art's sake" our writers proudly oppose their lofty ideological stand of serving the interests of the working people, the interests of the nation.

The Second U.S.S.R. Writers' Congress is called upon to discuss the most important problems of creative work and to map out ways for the further advance of our literature to new heights.

Our country and the entire Soviet people are at present faced with magnificent tasks. On the basis of the successes achieved in socialist industry and agriculture important measures are being carried out, aimed at the further development of all aspects of the socialist economy and culture, which is essential for the strengthening of the socialist society and for the gradual transition from socialism to communism. The competition between socialism and capitalism, whose aggressive and reactionary circles are ready to use force in order to hinder the growth of the forces of socialism and the aspirations of the peoples for emancipation from the capitalist yoke and colonial oppression, is unfolding and going over to a new and still higher stage on an ever-increasing scale in the international arena. In these conditions the role of Soviet literature in transforming society and its active educational role are increasing immeasurably.

Literature like all other forms of art is called upon to inspire the Soviet people in their creative labor and in overcoming all difficulties and shortcomings on this road, in the great cause of building communism.

The Soviet people expect their writers to create truthful and vivid pictures of our glorious contemporaries who are carrying out the colossal tasks involved in the constant development of our heavy industry, which is the basis for the further progress of the entire national economy and a guarantee of the impregnability of our frontiers; our contemporaries who are building gigantic power stations, perfecting the methods of construction, bringing millions of acres of virgin land under the plough, working for the advance of our entire agriculture and still greater satisfaction of the growing requirements of the people as regards foodstuffs and consumer goods.

THE Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. urges writers to make a profound study of reality on the basis of creative mastery of Marxism-Leninism, which teaches us how to see the genuine truth of life, in all its complexity and fullness, as it arises in present-day international conditions when the struggle is unfolding between the camp of imperialism and the camp of socialism and democracy, to understand the processes of development that are taking place in our country and which are directed by the Communist Party, to understand the laws and prospects of the development of our society, and to reveal the contradictions and conflicts of life.

In their writers the Soviet people

want to see ardent fighters who actively intervene in life and help the people to build a new society in which all the resources of the social wealth will give of themselves to the full, in which a new man will grow up whose psychology will be free from the survivals of capitalism. Our writers are called upon to educate the Soviet people in the spirit of communism and communist morality, to further the all-sided and harmonious development of the individual, the full blossoming of all the creative inclinations and talents of the working people.

The duty of Soviet writers is to create a truthful art, an art of great thoughts and feelings, profoundly revealing the rich inner world of the Soviet people; to embody in the portraits of their heroes all the many-sided character of their work and social and personal life in their intrinsic unity. Our literature is called upon, not only to reflect the new, but also to facilitate its victory in every way.

An important and honorable task of our literature is the upbringing of the youth, the young workers, collective farmers, members of the intelligentsia and servicemen of the Soviet Army in the spirit of love for labor, cheerfulness, fearlessness, confidence in the victory of our cause, and in the spirit of selfless loyalty to the socialist motherland and constant readiness to deal a crushing blow to imperialist aggressors if they attempt to interfere with the peaceful labor of our peoples. At a time when the aggressive imperialist circles are once again rallying and reviving the forces of defeated German fascism, Soviet literature cannot remain aloof from the struggle against the reactionary forces of the old world.

Soviet literature is called upon to foster with all its revolutionary ardor, and to strengthen the patriotic sentiments of the Soviet people; to fortify the friendship among the peoples; to promote the further cohesion of the mighty camp of peace, democracy and socialism; to foster the sentiments of proletarian internationalism and fraternal solidarity of the working people. The duty of Soviet writers is to raise still higher the banner of struggle for the unity of all peaceloving forces in the interests of the security of the nations, and to expose and brand the criminal plans of the imperialists who are threatening to unleash a new world war.

Continuing the finest traditions of the classical literature of Russia and the world, Soviet writers are creatively developing the method of socialist realism which was founded by the great proletarian writer Maxim Gorky, and are following the traditions of the militant poetry of Vladimir Mayakovsky. Socialist realism demands of the writer a truthful, historically concrete picture of life in its revolutionary development.

To be able fully to live up to the tasks of socialist realism means to possess a profound knowledge of the real life of the people, their senti

ents and thoughts, to display genu-ne sensitiveness to their feelings nd an ability to depict all this in an nteresting and comprehensible ar-stic form, worthy of the true stand-rds of realist literature—presenting l this with proper understanding f the great struggle that is being aged by the working class and all ne Soviet people for the further onsolidation of the socialist society hich has been created in our coun-y, and for the victory of com-unism. Under present-day condi-ons the method of socialist realism emands of the writer an understand-f the tasks involved in the com-letion of the building of socialism our country and in our country's radual transition from socialism to ommunism. Socialist realism gives ast opportunities for the manifesta-on of creative initiative and the hoice of different forms and styles accordance with the individual clinations and tastes of the writer.

DEVIATIONS from the principles of socialist realism are detri-ental to the development of Soviet erature. In many respects our erature still lags behind life, which rapidly developing, behind the quirements of the reader, who has own politically and culturally. me writers do not show the exact-g attitude to their work which is cessary, and release for publication ediocre and weak productions hich make Soviet reality look sipid.

There have been few striking and artistically impressive portraits created recently which could serve as an inspiring example for millions of readers. There are as yet no monumental literary works about the heroism of the Russian proletariat and the Party of Lenin in the first Russian revolution and in the Great October Socialist Revolution, and we have few books about our Soviet Army—the reliable sentinel of the peaceful labor of the Soviet people. Literary criticism and the history of literature, which should develop the rich heritage of our classics, draw general conclusions from the experience of Soviet literature, and promote the ideological and artistic progress of our literature, are still lagging behind.

The tendency in a number of works to embellish our reality and to pass over in silence the contradictions of development and the difficulties of growth has had an unfavorable effect on the development of our literature. The survivals of capitalism in the minds of the people do not find ample reflection in our literature. On the other hand, certain writers who have become divorced from life, in looking for far-fetched conflicts have written pot-boilers giving a distorted and at times libellous picture of Soviet society, blaming the Soviet people without any reason.

Actively supporting everything new and progressive which is promoting the advance of our society, Soviet writers, with all their energy and ardor, must castigate survivals

in people's minds of the old world of proprietors, castigate those who are indifferent and inert, help to uproot from our life all that is anti-social and decrepit and hampers the rapid growth of the socialist economy and culture.

The Party calls on writers to engage in bold creative endeavors, to enrich and further develop all forms and genres of literature, to raise the level of their artistic skill in order fully to satisfy the ever-growing intellectual requirements of the Soviet reader.

SOVIET writers have most favorable conditions for creative work.

They have millions of friendly readers—friends of whom the writers of the past could only dream—exacting, conscious and mature readers who love their literature.

Soviet literature, which is an inspiring example for foreign writers and a source of experience in the struggle for a new, advanced and progressive art, at the same time becomes enriched by utilizing the best achievements of progressive foreign writers in the course of developing and perfecting itself. Our writers can and must continue to utilize to a still greater extent the valuable experience of our foreign friends in the endeavor to achieve high standards of artistic mastery.

Of great importance for the accomplishent of the honorable and responsible tasks facing Soviet literature is the work of the Union of Soviet Writers, which during the last two decades has grown into a mighty public organization built on the principles of collective leadership and uniting all the creative forces of the writers, both those who are members of the Party and those who are not.

Soviet literature and Soviet writers have grown ideologically and have been steeled in battles against various alien influences, against manifestations of bourgeois ideology and survivals of capitalism. In the future, as in the past, the Union of Soviet Writers must concentrate its main attention on the ideological direction of Soviet literature, on ideological education and enhancement of the writers' artistic skill; it must fight resolutely against departures from the principles of socialist realism, against attempts to divert our literature from the life of the Soviet people, from the urgent problems of the policy pursued by the Communist Party and the Soviet government, and fight against relapses into nationalism, cosmopolitanism and other manifestations of bourgeois ideology, against attempts to push our literature into the swamp of philistinism, art without a message, and decadence. Soviet literature is called upon to serve the cause of the working people as the most advanced literature of the world, and to be at the summit of world artistic endeavors.

The Union should constantly see to it that writers live the life of the people, understand their interests and aspirations, are active partici

pants in the building of communist society, know our contemporaries, the real heroes—builders of communism.

One of the main tasks of the Union of Soviet Writers is to give constant aid to young writers in their creative development, and to secure the enrichment of Soviet literature by young talent.

The greater ideological unity of all the active forces of the writers, the bold unfolding among the writers of criticism and self-criticism based on principle, and comradely discussion of creative problems will be a guarantee of fresh successes in Soviet literature.

The Central Committee of the Communist Party wishes the Second Congress of Soviet Writers success and expresses firm confidence that our writers will give all their energies to selfless service of the Soviet people and will create works worthy of the great epoch of the building of communism.

LET'S ALL PITCH IN

We are anxious to wind up our fund drive this month.

We know there are many readers of M&M who plan to send us contributions, but who have not yet done so. To postpone is human—*but we do need that money!*

So we appeal especially to such readers to act now. Your contribution, however small, is essential for the functioning of this magazine.

And is not our magazine making a vital contribution to the country? We think our readers will agree with us that never did our country need our message more! It is a fact, also, that the times for peace, democracy, and a revival of the Great Tradition in our culture are more favorable than ever.

So let us all pitch in. With warm thanks to all of you who have cooperated so generously, we renew our plea to the rest of our M&M family. We must have your help—now.

SAMUEL SILLEN, MILTON HOWARD

THE LAST SUPPER

A Story

By HOWARD FAST

ONE of the advantages of living in a tower apartment in the Elmsford on Fifth Avenue was that your place was the only stop on the floor for the elevator. It gave one the maximum amount of privacy that one could expect living in New York, and Harvey Crane enjoyed privacy when he wanted privacy. He felt that he had earned the privilege of privacy. He was forty-six years old, tall, broad-shouldered and distinguished in appearance except that he bulged a little over his belt, and he felt that at forty-six, with a career that stretched back over a quarter of an century, one deserved a little privacy.

Therefore, when he was handed a subpoena, this sense of violated privacy—a violation of all that a tower apartment in the Elmsford meant—well nigh overcame his mixed response of fear and surprise. Instead of reacting in terms of a sense of terror and expectancy that had been building up in him these five years past, he thought,

"Well, God damn it, if this is all you can expect when you pay seven thousand dollars a year rent, then the hell with it! They can take their God damn lease and put it you know where!"

Then he read the subpoena, mixed himself a drink, even though it was only noon, and called his lawyer, Jack Henderson, of *Henderson, Hoke, Baily and Cohen,* thinking to himself that it was a break for him that he had never been represented by Mike Cohen, of the same firm, not because he had anything against Jews—most of his best friends were Jews, when you came right down to it—and if there was one thing he despised, it was a racist; but because you had to think of everything once you were in this lousy spot, and say what you would, they felt differently down there about a Jew lawyer than they did about someone like Henderson.

"Jack," he said, when he got through to Henderson,—"Jack, just listen to this. Just Listen. Of all the stinking, lousy breaks—what do you suppose happened not five minutes ago?"

Henderson couldn't imagine, but he felt that whatever it was, Harvey should take it easy and not get excited.

"I love lawyers," Crane said. "The

whole world could collapse, but don't get excited. Not at all. I'm as calm as a cucumber, exactly. I've just been handed a subpoena—right at my front door, can you imagine, and God help the little rat that's on the elevator—a subpoena to appear before the House Committee on Un-American Activities tomorrow, no less, but you don't want me to get excited!"

Now Henderson agreed that it was a very worrisome thing, but also that it was just such worrisome things that one had to resist worrying about. The thing to do, he explained in his calm, balanced and warmly comforting voice, was to come out of such an experience positively. Like a good friend or physician, rather than simply as a lawyer, Henderson told Harvey Crane to eat lunch, have a few drinks, and drop into his office at about three o'clock, and such was his ability to reassure, even over the telephone, that Crane felt considerably relieved after speaking to him.

Nevertheless, he obeyed an impulse that had begun to form the moment the subpoena was handed to him; and as soon as he was through speaking to Henderson, he broke his date with Madaline Briggs, the lead in his current show, called his former wife, and begged her to have lunch with him. When she pointed out that she already had a luncheon date, he told her that he had broken his own date, that he needed her desperately, that something, perhaps the most awful and consequential thing in his whole life, had just happened, and that he had to have lunch with her, and that he would not take no for an answer.

HE KNEW this kind of pleading would be effective, because it always had been; and that was something you could say about Jane, his second wife, that she had a heart; and as he had often told his analyst, the deepest trouble with his second marriage was that he felt more like Jane's son than her husband, not because she wasn't sufficiently young and attractive, but precisely because she was so responsive to his woes, particularly his deepest conflicts. His first wife, Anita Bruce, the actress, whom he had met on his first distant assignment to Hollywood, had been much too concerned with herself, her body, her face and her admirers to allow him to use her as a mother, and as Crane often put it, he had simply leaped from one extreme to the other.

"Look, Harvey," Jane said, "when I divorced you, I divorced you—I didn't simply step out of a professional status to take on an amateur rating." And then more gently, "You can't keep calling me every time anything goes wrong. At least, you have to try to get out of the habit—" He could sense that underneath her irritation, she was flattered, and thereby felt that he had won; and he wondered why he felt her so much more attractive and needed her so much more than when they were married, but at the same time had a pleasant sense of power in his being

able to demand her and have the demand answered, even though some people—those who didn't know the whole story—felt that he had acted rather shamefully when he broke up the marriage. "I'm not your analyst after all," she said lamely. "What is this awful crisis?"

He assured her that it was something that could hardly be discussed on the telephone, and arranged to meet her at twelve forty-five at the Plaza. Once he had finished with the luncheon arrangements, his sense of power went away, as did his anger with the elevator operator who had allowed the process server to come to the door of his apartment.

For the first time since the thing had happened, the true icy tentacles of fear began to creep down around his neck, along his spine, and like blood circulating into his body and into his heart. He was caught in a sudden paralysis that did not even allow him the privilege of reflection upon the fear itself. His thoughts slowed down and caught themselves in a circle; the circle said, "This is the end. It's over. There's no way out—no way out. Over. Over. Over." Then his thoughts broke out of the circle and raced back through his past, and he found himself suddenly full of rage at something he had been, at himself in the long gone past. The anger helped him. It was an anger that involved no danger, and so he dressed and left the house in a fierce, pugnacious mood.

Some of the mood still remained when he met Jane at the Plaza. Somehow, it made him feel a little bit like a hero, a little bit like a martyr, true, but more like a martyred hero as he strode past the fountain and into the hotel. Jane was there ahead of him, and as she smiled and greeted him, she seemed genuinely glad to see him. She was a tall, dark-haired woman with a good figure, now dressed neatly in a gray flannel suit, but attractive to him and kindling in him a sudden wave of desire. The desire and the remnants of his rage at his own past combined to give him a new sense of being both romantic and desirable, and he felt an excitement he had never experienced before, not even in the wave of a successful opening night.

"YOU look different, Harvey," his ex-wife acknowledged. "I hope it's nothing really bad."

He ordered lunch before he would discuss it. Then he told her what had happened.

"But is it really so dreadful, Harvey?" Jane asked. "I mean, I never did agree with your ideas in that direction. I mean, I guess, when you come right down to it, I'm just an old fashioned conservative and you were always such a fire-breather, a real radical, I mean, and I never could feel that nothing was right and everything had to be changed, but you never belonged to anything, did you, and isn't there this Fifth Amendment thing that you read about in the papers and everybody talks about?"

"Oh yes—yes, indeed," he nodded, gobbling nervously at his Hudson River shad roe, "yes, indeed, there is such a thing as the Fifth Amendment. You take the Fifth and don't answer their questions and then all that happens is that you don't work again and never have another show produced and that's the end of the three hundred thousand dollars we've raised already for the new musical and that's the end of Hollywood and TV and everything else. That's all that happens. Nothing happens."

"Please don't eat so fast," she reminded him, in the tone one would take with a small boy. "You know that when you eat and talk at the same time and eat too fast it gives you a nervous stomach and starts your ulcers up. Anyway, I don't think you should be eating shad roe with bacon."

"Never mind how I eat," he retorted. "This isn't me alone. Don't you see that I have a larger responsibility than myself? I pay you two hundred dollars a week, don't I? The truth is that I need a gross income of eighty thousand a year just to exist. Not to pamper myself, but just for hand to mouth existence!"

"Of course, I know that," she said more sympathetically. "The fact is that I always defend you, Harvey. I know how hard it is. I know what it means to be a creative artist. That's why I could always understand and make allowances for everything that happened. It wasn't I who wanted the divorce, Harvey."

"Look, baby, let's not rehash our marriage. Right now I'm in a devil of a spot."

"And I want to help you, Harvey. Couldn't that word be the key to it —*help?* Perhaps they are calling you to have you help them. You know, there are witnesses that help, Harvey—people who help to keep us free from tyranny. Perhaps you won't have to take the Fifth at all. After all, you've written nothing for fifteen years to make them think you're subversive."

"God knows what's subversive today!"

"And you could tell them that those old plays you wrote so many years ago were just done by a foolish young man. And a very poor one. You know, you did always say that when you wrote *Let the Sun Shine,* you lived for three weeks on crackers and cheese and water. What would they expect under such circumstances?"

"And betray what I wrote? Renounce it? Condemn it?— No—God damn it, no! There's talent in that stuff! Yes, it's off base, it's not in the stream of the American way of life—hell, it may even be subversive, for all I know. But it's good, and a damn sight better dialogue than anything being written today!"

"Harvey, you're shouting. The point is, you wouldn't write it today, would you?"

"No, I don't suppose I would."

"And you can't be held responsible all your life for what you did as a child."

"I wasn't a child at twenty-two."

"Of course you were. You didn't have a penny to your name."

"That's true enough. Jane, I wish I could make you understand how rough it was then. But that's the trouble with people who are born with a silver spoon in their mouths. They never can understand real poverty. I don't suppose it would do any good to try to make you understand——"

"Harvey," she said patiently, "we've been through all that, and there's no need to go through it again. You talk as if being poor were something to be proud of, and you always made me feel like an outsider because I had a decent bringing up. But you can see what being poor has gotten you into, writing all those plays about terrible people who hated everything and actually did want to overthrow the government with force and violence."

"No—no, they were poor people. They didn't want to overthrow the government. They just wanted to have things better. That's perfectly natural, Jane. After all, it was in the worst part of the depression. Isn't it the American way of life to want to have a better standard of living?"

"That's just what I've been saying. And just consider your last four productions—they're about people who are content with the American way of life, and they've been very successful. As a matter of fact, Harvey, they prove that you are helping to strengthen the American way of life. Don't you suppose some of the congressmen on the committee have seen some of your plays during the past six years?"

"It's possible."

"Well, there you are. Why should they be angry with you? All you have to do is explain that you were poor and misguided and were taken in by the lies and machinations of all those terrible people. You know whom I mean, the kind of people you used to have at the house who would always talk about how wonderful the Group Theatre was and how decadent the theatre is today, and after all, it's not as if you were Jewish."

"What has that got to do with it?"

"Harvey, please, you know I'm not anti-Semitic, and Sarah Wolf is practically my best friend, but the truth is that they don't seem to like Jews. You can tell them that one of your ancestors came over here in 1794. You remember how Martin Leland went before the committee and he was so deeply moved when he told them how the Communists had tricked him and lied to him and used him as a dupe that he actually began to cry right there in front of the television cameras——"

"God damn it, you don't want me to cry, do you? That's a contemptible thing——"

"I didn't say you should cry. But the point is that Martin was so unquestionably sincere that they just couldn't doubt him. And then when he told them his grandfather had been police commissioner in Cleveland or Toledo or some place, they really

saw that he was a true American and not a subversive, and then when he took an oath that he would never sign anything or join anything again as long as he lived because he had no business in politics anyway—well, they understood how deeply American he felt." Crane was silent, and she looked at him anxiously. "You do see what I mean?"

"There's still a question of dignity," he said slowly.

"I don't see how it can be undignified to be patriotic."

"It also depends upon the way you look at it."

"You know, Harvey," she said to him, so kindly that for a moment he regretted the whole business of separation and divorce, as necessary as it had been, "that's just the trouble with you. You're probably the most principled person I've ever known, and that's what makes you such a child in this world. Principles are fine things, but how are you to know whether your principles are the right ones? I think you have to respect the principles of men who really have the good of the country at heart. You can't deny that America is the most principled nation in the world. Look at the way we are practically giving away our whole lives to all those foreign nations that couldn't exist for one week, if we didn't support them. It's fine to have principles, but sometimes they can be wrong. And I know you're big enough to have humility."

"It's damned hard," Crane said.

"But you have to be big enough. Of course it's hard. But people honor you more for having humility than for anything else. . . ."

AFTER he had left her and was in a taxicab on his way down to his lawyer's office, Harvey Crane reflected on the fact that of all the women he had known—not a few—there was no one like Jane. She was a jewel. She was something that happened only to a very lucky man, and he—he was such a miserable neurotic fool that he had not been able to rest until he broke up the marriage. Now he could face the truth. It was his doing, and entirely his doing, and he wasn't man enough to come face to face with happiness. How deeply profound were Jane's remarks about humility! And how few people possessed real humility! When he went through his friends, it was almost impossible to find one who was a truly humble man, and for some reason, that brought into his mind a line from the Bible—"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." He said the line over and over, and found it truly comforting. A new mood had come upon him, a benign, deeply-reflective, and philosophically satisfying mood. For a moment, anger and fear departed and he felt uplifted and ennobled.

He began to feel that there was something providential in what had happened to him. He had been too satisfied with himself, in spite of his inner conflicts, and even his daily

sessions with his analyst had not wholly dispelled his arrogance and self-justification. Now, in his present glow of beneficence, he began to wonder whether he was not having what his analyst referred to as a *true passage of insight.* If he were a Catholic—and it was strange how often this possibility had occurred to him recently—he would have been certain that what moved him was a high form of religious experience, and even though he was not a Catholic, he played with the thought.

When his cab turned into lower Broadway, with its high buildings and narrow side streets and throngs of hurrying people, his feeling of assurance increased and he was filled with pity for all these hurrying, faceless, nameless people who lived out their lives in these high offices, wondering whether this wasn't material for a new play—but then thrusting the thought aside as he recalled the difficulties and reprisals inherent in such material. He had paid a full and sufficient price, and who was to say that this was the role of an artist? He must remember what Jane had said concerning humility.

He maintained that feeling as he passed into the sumptuous waiting room of *Henderson, Hoke, Baily and Cohen,* and he greeted the girl at the reception desk with a smile as gentle as it was pure. And when Jack Henderson came bustling out, Crane greeted him with the same benign smile.

"WELL, thank God you don't seem as worried as you sounded this morning," Henderson said. Henderson was a stout, broad-shouldered man, with a fine thatch of prematurely white hair, and given to wearing gray tweeds and dark bow-ties. He had that thing as necessary to a succesful attorney as a bedside manner is to a successful physician, an air of self-possession and calm assurance which never deserted him. Just looking at him reassured a client; but such was Crane's mood that he even felt superior to a need for reassurance, and was a little amused at what Henderson's reaction would be when he discovered that he, Crane, had already worked out the problem.

Henderson led Crane into his private office, a commodious and well-furnished room, the windows of which overlooked the mouth of the Hudson River and the Bay. Then he asked Crane to let him see the subpoena, which he read carefully while Crane made himself comfortable in the leather chair facing Henderson's desk.

"I guess you've given some thought to this, Harvey," the lawyer said finally. "I'm glad you're less worried. I don't say this isn't a serious business, but I would call it more of a serious nuisance."

"I was nervous for a while," Crane admitted. "Then I got to thinking. Had lunch with a friend of mine, and we discussed it rather thoroughly." He told Henderson the substance of

the discussion at lunch. "And the fact is," he finished, "that I think I'm man enough to confess that what I wrote in those years was wrong—yes, even subversive, the way we look at things today. I'm man enough to say that I'm sorry for what I wrote then—sorry and ready to disown it. In other words, I've found the humility that a creative artist must find at a certain point in his career, or stagnate. Humility. I'm not afraid of the word, Jack."

"Harvey."

"Yes?"

The lawyer shook his head and said, "Harvey," again.

"You don't believe me?"

"Oh, hell, I believe you. Of course, I believe you. Only—Oh, Christ, Harvey, the truth of the matter is that they don't give a damn what you've written. They don't read books. They don't go to the theatre. This is a lot simpler and a lot more complicated. Yes, it's the sins of your youth, but not the way you think. The fact is that someone has tipped them off to your past—either that you were a member of the Communist Party at one time or you associated with people who were, or maybe they think you still are. What this subpoena says is, come down to Washington and be prepared to talk or we'll ruin you. That's all it says, Harvey, no more, no less."

"You mean, they think I'm a member of the party?" Crane said slowly. "That's fantastic."

"I think it's fantastic, yes."

"But how can you be so certain——"

"Because our firm has handled half a dozen of these cases. They run to form. We also are not without our own lines to Washington."

"Then can't you fix it?" Crane demanded, his state of beatification beginning to dissolve. "If you have lines to Washington, can't you put a fix in? God damn it, Jack, I pay you a retainer of five thousand dollars a year. That ain't hay. If they think I'm a commie, that ought to be easy enough to disabuse them of. You know those politicians are crooked as hell. For a thousand dollars, you can buy a senator——"

"I know, I know, Harvey. Don't think I haven't thought of that. But the subpoena is already served, and it's no lead pipe cinch to fix it now. The point is, you have to be prepared to go down there and clear yourself, and, as I said this morning, to come out of this thing positively with your career unimpaired."

"And isn't that what I was saying, Jack?"

"Not quite. It may help to tell them that you're sorry for what you wrote and that you were misled and misguided and even used as a tool. You can tell them how disillusioned you became with that whole commie crowd, and that will also help a little. But that's background material, if you follow me. They are going to want to know if and when you were a member of the party and who else is or was. In other words, Harvey, they want cooperation. They

want names. That's how you wipe the slate clean. You name names."

"You mean I become—an informer?"

Henderson shook his head reprovingly. "I don't even like the word, Harvey. We'll think of *cooperation,* from here on."

"AND if I refuse?" Crane asked, stiffening, head up, thinking to himself, God damn it, that's the trouble with men like Henderson: Nothing but expediency! Everything gives way to expediency! They can't understand that there's such a thing as human dignity.

"Well, if you refused—and I think we have to talk a good deal about this, Harvey—one of two things would happen. You could take a position on the Fifth Amendment and refuse to answer any questions, and then you're through, finished, your career over. No play of yours could ever be produced again. Your name would never be mentioned on a dramatic page again. But—let me put it bluntly, Harvey—you would have to find other attorneys. We don't represent Fifth Amendment Communists. Either we serve a client or we don't, and you can't serve a Fifth Amendment Communist. The second alternative would be to lie, and then you take your chances with a five-year perjury rap—again with other lawyers. We don't advise our clients to commit perjury."

Suddenly, his voice changed; it became soft and warm and ingratiating. "Now isn't that a hell of a note, for me to talk to you like that, Harvey. The thing for us to do is to get down to cases and work our way out of this—and come out clean and proper. I'm your attorney, you understand? We're in a crisis now, and we have no secrets from each other. Suppose we get down to cases. Were you ever a member of the Communist Party?"

"Can he understand?" Crane asked himself. "Can anyone understand? There's no use getting sore at Jack Henderson. I should be proud and pleased that I have someone like Jack Henderson to stand by me. But how can he understand? Did he ever feel a knot of hunger in his belly? Did he ever know what it means to go for a week with never more than ten cents in your pocket? Did he ever stand on a soup line?" Such thoughts filled him with self-pity, which restored some of the pleasant state of ennoblement he had felt after talking to Jane. Once again, he felt a part of a certain elect, a man of unique sensitivity and experience, apart from other men.

He sensed that he was being seared now by deep and angry flames, and out of the chaotic flow of his thoughts, there emerged vague currents of creativity, a sense of wonderful things he would write in the future, the drama of hurt and inner suffering, not the bald, vulgar pain of people who were poor, hungry and cold, but the deeper travail of those who struggled with their own souls and emerged in a victory composed of meekness and humility. And

so he said to the lawyer, his voice low and compassionate.

"Jack, I'm not here only as a client, but also as a friend. If I seem headstrong, it's due to a lack of knowledge. Then it's up to you to put me straight."

"I'm glad to hear you say that, Harvey. I'm damn glad to hear you say that. Now suppose we talk."

Crane talked. He told how he had joined the Communist Party in 1934, of his poverty, his heartsickness and despair—of how suddenly he found friends, comrades, warmth, of how he became a part of a little group of actors and writers who were working for and dreaming of a new kind of theatre——

"In other words they used you as a dupe for their ends," Henderson said understandingly. "How long did you remain a member?"

"Until September of 1935. That was when my first play was produced on Broadway—the first bit of success I ever had. It brought me to my senses, I suppose."

"All right—now the thing is this, Harvey. When you were a member of the party, you met with a group. We have to have a list of the people in that group, and when the time comes, you have to be prepared to name them."

"Name them?"

"That's right, Harvey."

Crane's face fell. "The truth is, Jack—and you've got to believe me—the truth is I don't remember but one of them. There were only seven or eight in that group, and it is almost twenty years—and I can't for the life of me recall their names——"

Henderson's face hardened. "You said you were leveling with me, Harvey. Do you mean to tell me that you met with a group of people for over a year, and you don't remember their names?"

"Jack, look, I told you I'm talking to you as a friend, and I am. These people were Communists—and none of them except the one I remember are important people today. They were just names, and they faded away. Of course, there were others in the theatre group who are people of some reputation today, but of the Communists, I only remember the name of one of them."

"And what was his name?"

"Grant Summerson."

Henderson raised his brows. "You mean the Hollywood star?"

"That's right."

"Well, I'll be damned! Grant Summerson a commie! You never know, do you, Harvey. Well, that doesn't help us one bit. You can't name Summerson. It's out of the question."

"Why?"

"Isn't it obvious why? There's maybe six million dollars invested in Summerson. He's Joe Lunck's biggest property, and two of his pictures are on Broadway right this minute. As a matter of fact, Lunck is represented by *Stillman, Levy and Smith,* and this is just something you don't do. It's not playing the game, Harvey. We're not wreckers. We may face some rough situations, but we're

still Americans, and we have to behave like Americans, don't we?"

"Of course we do," Crane agreed, secretly relieved. "I have no desire to ruin Summerson."

"None of us do. Nevertheless, they're going to want names and you're going to have to produce names. How about the others in the theatre group?"

"But they weren't Communists, Jack."

"What difference does that make? A subversive is a subversive. It's just a technicality as to whether he's a commie and pays dues. Anyway, how can you be sure they weren't commies? How can you be sure they didn't join after you had left? Isn't it a little arrogant to set yourself up as a judge in these cases, Harvey? You were talking about humility yourself just a moment ago."

"That's true, I was," Crane admitted.

"Then you have to be consistent. You're still friendly with Joseph Freidman, aren't you. Wasn't he with that group?"

"He was," Crane nodded.

"Then suppose we use him as a starting point."

IT OCCURRED to Crane that it was Freidman who had first read something he had written, Friedman who had gotten him to join the group, and Freidman who had encouraged him constantly while he was writing *Let the Sun Shine.* As a matter of fact, if not for Freidman, he would never have been in the spot he was in now, and Freidman was a television director now, well-paid, without a care in the world, while he, Harvey Crane, faced the "inquisition." Well, the mills of the Gods did grind, no matter how you looked at it. "Yes, Freidman," he said, Freidman and Pat MacIntosh, both of them feeding him that same line about a man who wrote for the people and of the people. "Start with Freidman and add Pat MacIntosh."

"MacIntosh? The old character actor?"

"That's right. They did it to me—now I do it to them!" He felt firm and righteous in his anger. They did it to him when he was just a kid, too green and innocent to know what the score was—taking him, twisting him, using him. Now he was returning the favor. . . .

When they had eighteen names on the list, four of them deceased, six more already named several times over, and eight bright fresh ones, never spoken before in the august halls of Congress, Jack Henderson felt that they were sufficiently armed. He called in his secretary to make copies of the list, and then he lit a fresh cigar and smiled at Crane with the satisfaction of a job well done. "And don't think," he told Crane, "that it's a small thing to come down there with eight fresh, clean names. God damn it, at this point there just aren't enough pinkos working to satisfy those wolves in Washington. Now it's up to you, Harvey, to know these names backwards and forward. Don't worry about calling a spade a

spade. You saw them at commie meetings. What the hell—if you talk about anything but the weather these days, it's a commie meeting. The point is—and this must always be in your mind—that you're doing a service for your country. You're exposing a group of subversives, and the sooner they put their hands on all of them, the better you and I will be able to sleep nights. Now I want you to put your own past out of your mind. Let me worry about it. Today you're a firm, true part of the American way of life, the way of life that means so much to all of us—yes, to the whole free world."

"But for God's sake, Jack, I can't just go down there and testify off the cuff. I hardly know some of those people."

"Let me worry about that. We'll have four and a half hours on the train tomorrow morning. I'll get a compartment, and by the time we hit Washington, there won't be any loose ends. I'll have a dossier on every one of them before I leave here tonight. But that's what I'm paid for, Harvey. You just memorize those names and forget about everything else for the moment. And above all, don't worry. Tomorrow night, you'll have the respect and admiration of everyone in this city."

THERE was no resisting Jack Henderson when he put on this warm and hearty manner, and Crane could not help absorbing some of that warm, glowing confidence. All day, he had been in a process of fighting through this, the deepest and most terrifying crisis of his life. Now, as he left the offices of *Henderson, Hoke, Baily and Cohen,* he felt a new lightness of heart, an added sense of benignity. It remained with him all the way home, and such was his mood of compassion that he withheld the tirade he had planned to launch against the manager of the building for allowing a process server to come to the door of his apartment. "After all," he said to himself, "we all serve in our own way. Like me, he simply had the best interests of his country at heart. For all he knows, I might be a Bolshevik with a bomb in each hand."

He also felt a twinge of conscience at the way he had treated Madaline Briggs, breaking a luncheon date without a word of explanation. It wasn't only that she was the lead in his show; she was one of the most beautiful women he had ever known, and he had gone so far that she had every right to expect a certain sense of responsibility from him. He had always been proud of a decent and forthright manner toward women. With these thoughts in mind, he telephoned Miss Briggs, and asked her to dine with him before the show.

"No, I'm not angry," she said, "not at all, not even annoyed, Harvey. I knew something important had come up. Is it all straightened out now?"

"Just about."

"But, darling, I already have a dinner date. Now, don't be jealous. As a matter of fact, I'd love it if

you joined us. Please do. It will be just perfect, and I'm sure he'll want to meet you again. He said he knew you many years ago, and it would make your face burn, the nice things he said about you."

"Who said about me?"

"Pat MacIntosh."

"The old man?"

"Yes—he's so sweet, Harvey. You know, he gave me my first job. So we're having dinner at Sardi's, and you will come, won't you?"

He hesitated at first, because his immediate instinct was to say no. But he wanted to see Madaline now as much as he had wanted to see Jane at noontime, and he thought to himself, "Why not? It's probably the last time I'll see the old man socially. Why shouldn't I show him that I have nothing against him personally —that this is bigger than both of us?" So he told Madaline, "Sure, sure—and you'll both be my guests, At Seven."

"And you'll tell me all about whatever disturbed you?"

"After the show," he said gently, "when there are just the two of us. God, Madaline, do you know what you mean to me, honey?"

"Not now—later," she whispered.

Harvey Crane was smiling compassionately as he put down the telephone. He felt a pervading warmth, and he reflected that nothing made a man more conscious of a woman he cared for than the trials of sorrow and danger. Perhaps not everyone would understand his role and actions—but not everyone had the same opportunity offered to him to serve in humility and meekness. A little self-consciously, he thought of himself as *Harvey Crane, American.*

MODERN POETRY: *For or Against?*

By MARTHA MILLET

We present this article by Martha Millet, author of Dangerous Jack *and* Thine Alabaster Cities, *with the hope that it will stimulate a discussion in our pages on problems of contemporary poetry. We know that there are many different trends today among progressive poets, and that many issues and problems, both of form and content, have to be debated and resolved in a public clash of ideas, between poet and poet, as well as between the poet and the audience.*

We are also publishing a selection of writing by poets who are trying to voice the moods, realities, and aspirations of our country. Our plan is to publish such group selections periodically.

We urge our readers to send us their opinions on the discussion article below, and on the problems raised therein. We will try to present as many of these opinions as we can in M&M.—The Editors.

RECENTLY, in a poetry workshop session, discussion arose on "modern" poetry. Some students, fiercely hostile to it, contended that the techniques of modern poetry cannot be used for progressive content; that these techniques are beyond question decadent, incomprehensible, deliberately non-communicative. Out of the controversy came talk which went far beyond the original question, into matters which turned out to be related; indeed, inseparable from it.

Although more questions came to be asked than answered—as is often the case—all felt a more valuable level of understanding for future thinking and work, as a result of this Jefferson School discussion.

The following, based on my notes used that evening, is my attempt to deal with the question of "modern" poetry, a type of cultural product which arouses strongly antithetical feelings.

The few verse and prose quotations given to illustrate certain points, have been omitted for reasons of space.

WHEN we say we are for or against the so-called modern techniques; when we say that for the writer of socially conscious (progressive, or people's) poetry, only cer-

tain styles are suitable, even permissible, some elementary questions arise which ought to be considered.

Do we mean that it is proper to make traditional, accustomed poetry techniques synonymous with progressive poetry?

Or that it is proper to make "modern" poetry in the lump synonymous with all that is reactionary or nihilist?

If these propositions are correct, isn't it a curious fact that among contemporary poets, who—no one doubts—use perfectly "modern" forms—are the undeniably progressive poets Neruda, Hikmet and Brecht?

In music, the Russians, Prokofief and Shostakovich (creating under Socialism, greatly strengthened Socialism since 1917) inevitably come to mind. Who will accuse them of composing for an elite or esthetes?

Let us consider, also, whether they compose in the manner of Tchaikovsky, or Moussorgsky, or Borodin.

Cezanne, Picasso, Joyce, Gertrude Stein, revolting against accepted styles, were of course doing much more than that, although without being aware of the whys. This breaking up of old forms, seizing upon and creating new ones, is nothing but the outward show of a radically different approach to the world—content—to ways of seeing and interacting with the world, people, what happens. This comes out of real happenings, of which the first World War was one. As the seismograph always traces the record of a real earthquake (today, sometimes of a real atom bomb test explosion), so the "outrageous new" in culture. The astonishing thing would be if neither of these should take place, given earthquake, human beings, and recording medium.

That such revolts often slough away into repellent dead ends—themselves become revolting—and their former bright spirits end as dead souls, should not take anyone by surprise. But this is like seeing forever the blacked-out side of the moon, the six-month night of the Arctic.

For each problem solved, two new ones spring up to perplex and challenge, says Engels, studying the world of Nature, and society. One should not go from this formulation too swiftly. Something to pause for is the knowledge that *one* solution does come, definitely, into existence, and bears on future developments with its reality and vitality.

Moreover, the two new problems are nothing more or less than two new *paths,* each possible (as well as a variety of unforeseen digressions) and that *dead* ends exist no more tangibly or potentially than *live* ones. Such "live" ends being, again, only means to two *new* problems and possibilities. Along the way there is always turbulence; also, always, life in germ. Reaching certain levels of awareness and action brings the germ Life into bloom. Method, technique, style, always come out of modes of seeing, relating to, and acting upon reality—style bears the unmistakable stamp of the quality of perception

content. This in turn is always child of the era, the relationship of forces, the level of struggles going on in the particular society. In our day and world it becomes increasingly, sometimes frighteningly complex, but with sufficient time and patience, and good grounding in the Marxist view (the only one which proves true, taking in all Life), it is possible to trace these interactions in culture, the causes and effects, and seeming contradictory currents.

In art, exactly as in other areas of life, the same lessons apply, the same dynamics operate. Content and form; theory and practice; dream and deed: these apply to groups or movements, actions of individuals, and to the process of "art."

The happenings before, in the course of, and closely following the Civil War in the United States, marked certain massive turning points. The "new" Colossus, imperial America, was being formed out of travails, democratic at the core, in their urgency and push, and the surrounding issues of vastly expanded and consolidated industry and capital. It was to have a profound effect on the lives and futures of generations, and other nations, and the world.

Naivete and unselfconsciousness, and the robustness of a fresh, strong young democracy were fleeing—the frontiers were pushing out in more ways than one. Becoming visible was the towering oncoming boot of a new kind of narrow-eyed, super-profit demanding calculating machine, able (so it seemed), and eventually needing (so it also seemed) to swallow a world for a meal. Neither everyday living, nor men's relations, nor men within themselves, nor art in this country would be the same again.

WHITTIER sounded the last thunders of self-righteous pristine judgment on injustice; almost the last echoes of the drumhead upon which Paine had hammered out in content and form the new world of the rights of man, less than a hundred years earlier. Whittier's impassioned rhetoric, his pulpit-cry condemnations of slavery, oaths of Divine wrath, trumpet tones of conscience, can never be imitated again in quite that way to express the sense of American Revolution in the bones, which Whittier had, and which culminated in him.

Through Lowell's *Biglow Papers* a new type American, an oddly different national character, begins to be seen. Practical, laconic, skeptical, shrewd, nasal—dry and wry—spacing out a phrase, with a jab where a flowing period used to be. This different American knows and is able to appraise the workings of government, the phenomenon "politician," sly doings in the nation's capital. He has summed up the Southern "soul" in the Civil War; fought for Union; seen and eventually pressed for the liberation of a people from chattel slavery; had a partial look at the motives of the "liberating" war against Mexico. He has entered his era of ironic comment, his disbelief in what developing bourgeois democracy floats

to the top, and at the same time has not the more direct, simpler power of the Men of '76. These are the men wary of 4th of July orators. They are getting close-lipped.

At about the same time, Whitman, bigger, because more sweeping in his backward and forward reaching at the American "dream" of supreme human freedom, and the reality, discovers still, exults, explores, becomes often sober in awe, uncertain in prophecy, and remains boundlessly self-confident in the people.

His long poems, long lines, chantings and outpourings are even inadequate to "contain" either himself or the nation that is passing through him to a continuous wave of consciousness. He sees nothing static, gives warnings while making paeans ("the President is there in the White House for you—not you for him," etc.); and knows that the people, defying, pushing away from the crowned tyrannies of Europe, mean to have no uncrowned tyrannies in America.

Large, eccentric, calm, Bunyanesque, distant-eyed, ecstatic, Whitman becomes the stereotype of "Bohemian" poet dear to the frothings of the intellect-haters.

Already the American Whitman had his feet planted in what was shifting out of sight. As the Civil War ended—had to end—chattel slavery, it was tightening up all the enlarged productive sinews of an industrial Proteus becoming mammoth. The gentle giant was again a dream. Land expansion, population expansion, new sources of labor and strength from the pits of old Europe, gathered together into the process of making gross monopoly, highly-concentrated, aggression-slanted. American world power was on the march, even as the echoes of "His truth is marching on" were growing faint.

HAMLIN GARLAND'S "middle border," Sarah Orne Jewett's New England village life, were soon to go, like the world in which Whitman moved. Increasingly uniform and drab Main Streets, with the smokestacks of factories taking up acres, of steamships, of bellowing stockyards, and steel town nights lit with flame from the furnaces, were sweeping all that away like a dissolving view.

Only the poet's prophetic pronouncements, which still lived in the need and knowledge of men, continued to demand robust possibilities Americans have the obligation and power to work out.

No one has since written like Whitman, any more than like the poets mentioned earlier. One moment their America was in sharp focus, then was drifted into the past.

Sandburg, coming with his line long as a paragraph, or short as a human breath, is at once more bitter, more disillusioned, and more nostalgic and romantic. The great industrial empire of his day, the brawling cities, give rise to both a largeness of scope and a fragmentation which proceeds with increasing intensity in the human being, as the gulf between

the productive apparatus and the worker-producer widens.

In such poems as "To a Contemporary Bunkshooter," and "Muckers," large sections of *The People, Yes,* and "The Man With the Broken Fingers," Sandburg (once a worker and a kind of Socialist) speaks fully and clearly. All of his vision has been at work. This kind of poem is the closest thing to a good definition of the much-abused term "Socialist realism" (which many learned journals have for some reason taken to calling 'social realism'). For what is "Socialist realism" but the portrayal of life as it is, *and* life as it should be. The latter may certainly be by implication, as well as overtly.

To see and portray what is dying, and at the same time what is coming to birth, with the unmistakable stamp of a humanly livable future upon it—that is the nature of "Socialist realism"—and every individual of great vision, courageous and true vision and conduct of life, bears it out.

In "The Man With the Broken Fingers," the Man, with his joints and all his fingers broken forever, a cripple, as far incomplete for the smallest business of living as a man can be, looms up before one as the awesome power the "modern" fascist forces of the abyss cannot conquer. He is to rise up and smash them, for all that they make a carcass of his body, and raise Man higher a degree. This we feel, in the poem, and life proves continually.

Yet there are scores of Sandburg poems like snatches of nostalgia, pictures endowed with the after-glow of recollection; and even in the Chicago Poems, Cornhuskers, Sandburg is so often wistful. His rough real scenes come out with a curious impartiality, as if fearful of passing judgment, till they become both abstracted and romantic. Rereading Sandburg now brings out most clearly how sentimental, how "old-fashioned" he can be, despite his modern technique—brings out too the warring within the poet of the first half of the twentieth century, who knows a great deal of "Even in Life We Are in Death," and much less of "Even in Death We Are in Life."

WHAT can we say, then, taking such fairly recent examples, of Form and Content, Content and Form, except that they change, sometimes circling back part way, sometimes shooting ahead into uncharted places. No ukase can change that change. Change is the heart and opportunity of life. All change going on in society communicates early or late to people and art.

We no longer write in the manner of *Beowulf,* or *Piers Plowman,* great and strong as those epics are, and much as we may treasure them. We do not copy the Greek sculptures. The enormously complex verse forms of the French before *Piers Plowman* and beyond Villon, are curiosities, so far as form itself goes. No one any longer succeeds in writing like Balzac, full-scale and heapingly detailed records of a whole society in a certain epoch, free of self. Or even

like Proust, full of self, who from his cotton-wool bedroom managed to give the macabre charade of a class now irretrievably dead. They said more than they knew. But we do not say these things today in their way. We do not have, likewise, a Whitman, a Dreiser today.

(I speak of culture under present-day capitalism, exclusively.)

It is not that we discard any of these. We claim all that is to us still relevant, that teaches, that grips because part of us still needs what is in these works.

Dance, painting, architecture, have not continued to repeat the past. American churches and synagogues, built during the last few years, often startle with their "modern" design; not to speak of private dwellings for certain income-brackets, furniture, clothing, approved diet.

Change is the very identity of life. Mastery of change, for human ends, masters life and enriches it.

At a certain stage revision of form happens. A moment after (comparatively speaking) a new wave of reality pushes over the revision and something else takes its place. Old forms that have become a dead weight are thrown off. The world is seemingly turned upside down.

What Mayakovsky was in Russia immediately after the Revolution, others, writing nowhere like Mayakovsky, are to the Soviet peoples today.

A generation, or thereabouts ago, many of the modern poets, in the pages of the new little magazine *Poetry,* and in others, were reacting sensitively to social evils (war, child labor, slums, lynching) in their daring new forms. (Lola Ridge, Langston Hughes, Sandburg, Lindsay, to mention a few.)

Today, how many of the new poets on the scene have had the courage, if they had the instinct (this known only to themselves) to speak out on current wars, cold or shooting, the murder of the Rosenbergs, the A and H bombs?

Poetry and the spate of university-sponsored literary magazines show to a monotonous degree, the dead-enders of the revolt of the expatriates and others a generation ago. Between the poles of these two periods we have seen Eliot put on a strangling respectability along with the ecclesiastical flannels of his old, more motivated "Wasteland" (Eliot, who was once capable of writing "The Hippopotamus"); Pound, adjudged mad, after his period in the public glare, broadcasting for Mussolini; Cummings, still flaring in flights of lower case lyricism, but ever more mocking of men and himself; Jeffers in his stony tower, looking to noble beasts, not to men, for what is noble; and a crowd of others, who, when they are not being thinly witty and self-consciously smart-alecky about the subject Man, fear to see with the real nerves and muscles and jelly and lenses of real eyes.

Afraid to get lost in the jungle of current capitalism, hedged in by rewards for accommodations to the prevailing culture and mores, they

help create their own desert. Disappointed, truncated, full of death preoccupations, man-inconsequence and the inaccessibility of genuine friendship between man and man, man and woman, they write their verses, either rhymed, or in the most eclectic modern manner.

Reading these is too much like wandering through an obstacle course in perpetual fog, without radar.

At the same time, there are the more amateur publications with occasional sparks of protest. Then there are those which are pretentiously incomprehensible in the poetry end, whereas their prose pieces, significant or not, yield some sort of meaning—as though the editors, more suspicious of the potential of a poem, had to enforce a double standard: prose may still have the use of some of its organs of locomotion; but all of poetry's bones (not to speak of wings) must be broken to some formula in advance.

These are some of the artistic channels of communication.

IN THE past, cynicism, bitterness, and despair of all hope of justice, were to be found in poetry, as in plays and other prose: Raleigh's "The Lie," portions of Shakespeare's dramas and some sonnets; either outspokenly, or uncomprehendingly disquieted. There were gleams of dangerous awareness of the shifting social ground beneath the seeming arrested and enduring solidity. Others dealt elegantly and enervatingly with trifles. The barbed shafts of satire were flung. But these were still ages when optimism could legitimately exist—there was still lusty, pushing, fresh strength in the society.

No more than it is an environment for youth to flourish in, is current capitalism a breeding ground of a whole man or a wholesome man; but in its contradictions, breeding ground for an inevitable fighting man, who must fight in order to be all man.

At the same time, and for the same reasons, the last 50 years have seen an acceleration of a process that has been going on for at least two centuries: the gulf between poet and audience has become unbelievably immense. Cut away from audience in any vital sense, devoid of meaningful status in a society where mass tastes are calculatedly debased, the poet—unless he sees himself as pioneer—must be content with the limited and transient comfort of coteries. He is in the position of a D.P., wandering in insecure shoes through a morass.

The leaders of the "cultural" wing of today's capitalist-approved culture (and it is important to make the distinction as to leaders and more-or-less led), as Rossell H. Robbins has made it so surgically clear (in *The T. S. Eliot Myth*), are by and large the reactionary Southern Agrarians, Tate, Ransom, Warren and their *Partisan Review* allies who have eased into control of criticism, the most important literary reviews, college instruction; write the literature texts, decide the prizes, fellowships, and

who goes to Yaddo, and succeed pretty well in imposing a twisted-eye's view of both history and literature. By them the Trotskyite, semi-Trotskyite and renegade-edited publications are always treated with high respect as "representing" something in culture.

They have all managed to team up both with monied people and faddists, quite naturally, and, though this is not so well known, enjoy readerships in the more decisive publishing houses. The principles of prior censorship and imposed formulas (stemming always from content, coming eventually to form) could hardly be better illustrated.

The Southerner John Crowe Ransom writes elegantly and in rhyme, of charming, and (I get the impression) freshly-dead women, with a light smile on his lips. His form could not be considered anything but traditional. Yet the total ring is completely different. Ransom is one of the high priests of the cult that one branch of modern poetry has reeled into. In a poet like Ransom one seems to feel the breath of a fantastically outmoded South, that never existed in the way portrayed or recollected except in the bored leisure-time imaginings of the underdone sons of slaveowners, who knew how to turn a phrase and how to handle a whip or gun. And this is what has such suggestible kinship with the H-bomb phase of American capitalism. As though two pasts, one all dead, one part dead, were trying for reanimation by sucking on one another's played-out veins.

Of course, the picture is not all as hard and fast as one must put it, in order to state anything at all; but these seem to be the general outlines.

From the current scene, as from those past, we are forced to admit that it is possible to be thoroughly decadent in familiar meter and rhyme, as well as in the "modern" manner.

Many of the "modern" crowd choose rhyme and eminently scannable meter, as though safety lay there, no matter what they had to say. But their poems are not one whit more vital than the others. In fact, they sound more anachronistic—neither like the good old rhymed and patterned verse we once knew, nor like the verse that has flung all that off, in its sole act of defiance.

All in rhyme, meter; truncated phrases, gasps, or motley, seem to visualize only a world of menace. There is no sense of man's control over his fate, of reason, or heart, of renewal. Through the eyes of despond, who can see? With the tongue of despair, who can sing?

FORMS, old or unaccustomed, press on one their kinship when filled with a sense of the blazing power of life, as well as its anguish, of continuity, of man's heroism and man's future. New days, new ways, is an incontrovertible adage. Poets who can, in a sense, make themselves "new" are for such days, and beat out such ways.

The few publications of the peo-

ple's movement in this country prove this (not in every instance, or at all levels, of course)—little as poetry has in recent years been truly seized upon as the weapon we say all culture must be. It must be acknowledged that while healthy poetry continues to be written by poets who feel alliance with the future—who are of, and will one day be more fully identified as "of the people"—the people's movement has not yet seen poetry as a living part of action, issues, or modes of education. The poet in the people's movement has had a hard row to hoe.

He must speak well and clearly, interestingly and movingly, on matters of all magnitudes that concern people, without knowing where or how or in what lapse of time he is going to be able to reach any portion of the people. Moreover, from certain quarters, he will be made to feel an ugly philistinism sucked in at the paps of bourgeois conditioning, that poetry is not *de rigeur;* is effete; the poet is somewhat of an eccentric who can only be dealt with wholeheartedly—until the next time—after tests with leaflet and petition and delegation; and must win a certain measure of sanction in this way and this alone.

On the other hand, although there is a good-sized audience for the poet in the people's movement (recent publication efforts having proved this), channels of communication are not at his disposal unless organizations interest themselves in that purpose and take steps. By and large, the poet in the people's movement in this country has had to hack his own way, both to audience, and from the point of view of getting guidance.

Shelley's "unacknowledged legislators of mankind" goes beyond the phrase. Institutions and publications and gatherings of the people's movement may well ponder this; cease to regard poetry as "another" of their many problems, and help see that poetry becomes the vital force for understanding, action and *kinship* (morale) within that movement it potentially is. Poetry is there to be a catalyst, to bring forth energies and emotions still locked away; still not released, for positive motion.

In the general sense, the dilemma of modern poetry will be resolved as the people resolve the dilemma of the split atom: shall it be for Life or Death?

As sanity, wholesomeness and wholeness grow, the poet, whose pulses have always continued to throb in the pulse of the emerging, healthy forces of the future, will be able to draw more amply on this source of power, even as he will be able to give more to it. He can no more tread the mined fields of capitalist culture alone, than he can, as a worker, the economic jungle. With new power, he will achieve really satisfying form in the give and take of comradeship.

It is curious to reflect that poetry is under no circumstances given priority of attention (as art, or science, or just a function of man) by those who grow most voluble and heated on questions of form and content.

When the poet, in fruitful alli-

ance with his audience, his people, finds more fully what to say, and inevitably, how to say, these debating societies will become more fruitful centers of discussion.

TO SUM up with a few dogmatic-sounding statements:

There can no more be *one* form for all time than one human being exactly like another. In one department of one factory there is as much variety among individuals as there is in Nature.

What is easy to understand may be gripping. What is less easy to grasp on the spot, in all its implications, may have an equal strength by gradual "absorption" by the reader or hearer. Either or both may have the same ultimate effect.

King Lear, and "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," *Prometheus Unbound* and Brecht's tense bitter poems of our age; Bach, and a South African protest song; Goya, Van Gogh and Picasso, may be ours, equally, all of them.

Why not?

Man is nothing if not many-sided. He has *made* himself Man, in a large sense, and continues to make himself *more* Man. He plans—or dreams—first, what he later builds. His domain is truly all the world, and his raw materials everything in it. He creates and is at once his most marvelous creation.

He insists on the full harvest of his hands—and makes yet fuller harvest come to be, through his demands on himself.

He dreams and proceeds to make, and dreams again, the greater works and sharings and freedoms.

Into this stream of present into future, races, peoples, nationalities, widely-differing cultures, discover both their uniqueness and kinship.

In the United States, these remain for us to be more deeply, more beautifully discovered.

This is a task for poetry, too. Our culture is no more straight Anglo-Saxon than our face. Here is still truth to be told and sung. This is one instance.

Five Poets

WHITMAN SPEAKS

("The American Embassy in London has given an exhibition of Whitman material to mark the Centenary of the publication of *Leaves of Grass*, 1855-1955."—*News Item*)

And shall a thousand generations show
the idiocy of poisoning the sun?
Or conquer the world forever without a gun
in singing battles where my trumpets blow?

Even in their deadly ash, my Leaves glow.
"Whitman in the service of the H-bomb. . . .
"Whitman under the wing of the Pentagon. . . ."
The electric song itself sings out: *"Hello!"*

This is America you hear singing!
"divine average . . . lithe majestic faces . . .
"continuous hands" giving you in their grip

not a book but ever-returning spring—
to you, pioneers in all countries, races,
who hold me in your living comradeship.

WALTER LOWENFELS

LANDMARK: U.S.A.

1.

Twain-Harte:
Snoozing softly in the high Sierra crags,
a town
where history
treads imperceptibly

across the sun-baked peaks of memory;
Whence Bret Harte
came down
from the rough terrain,
from the roaring camps
to get his start
from the poker flats to fame;
And Mark Twain
nuggeted
the rugged truths
and mined the hills to immortality.

Twain-Harte:
the town where met
Mark and Bret
who together wrote,
told tall tales and cracked jokes
of prospectors and cowpokes
of the old West
(now tame)
and which today bears their name:

Twain-Harte.

2.

Twain-Harte:

Snoozing still in the time-marked hills
of the California sun
rudely awakened from history
to the stark
staccato shadow of a gun—

Not the old six-shooter of the outlaw West
but a legal bark,
the triggered command
of a modern posse:
the F B I on a top-secret mission
nailing their man
and hauling him to jail.

(Distinguished Service Cross
Bites the Dust) . . .

A modern Western tale
thrust
against Sierra crag and sun
of distinguished service done
getting Robert Thompson.

3.

Twain-Harte:
History—
with a price on its head . . .

(In the excitement of closing in,
of priming lead,
did not some Fed overlook
to book
Huckleberry Finn
for conspiring to save
and spiriting Jim—
fugitive slave
hunted refugee—
across the border
to Liberty?

(And what about forgetting
WANTED Tom Sawyer—
also an accomplice—?
or setting a lawyer
and rigging traps
for the vaunted Outcasts
of Poker Flats? . . .

(Will the lapse
of jurisdiction,
the omission,
be forgiven perhaps
if you spread a further dragnet
and issue a warrant for Mark and Bret
for "aiding and abetting
conspiracy"?
(Or better yet—
why not
bring down
the whole town
to jail

for keeping up
the *memory?*)

4.

Twain-Harte:

How does the name sit
in the snoozing sun?
Do Mark and Bret
sleep yet
when Thompson
sleeps in jail?

You may stain Harte,
defile Twain,
and desecrate a heritage,
but Twain and Harte
and Liberty
are in this soil;
Chain
Thompson—but you'll never still
the gathering rage
or split in twain
from crag, from sun, from soil,
a hero
from our high Sierra heart!

ROBERT ROLFE

PROMETHEUS

Slowly the statues are pulled down
Slowly the gilt flakes from the crown
Slowly the images abase
At the new, strong hands.

Cronus: King, Tsar, abases Uranus,
His father.—Zeus usurps his, Cronus' throne.
His father.—But Prometheus, nailed in space,
Thief of the holy fire,
Unpurchasable, keeps his secret close.
(The days run out, Zeus, though the Titans failed,
Fighting. . . .)

"Prometheus!

He against the gods
Dared to conspire!"—
(So the indictment reads)—
"Giving to man the fire,
The wonder thing, the power
Of metals, meats and clays.
Prometheus greatly cheats and vilely treats
The gods on high!
Accursed! who stands with this accursed race,
Giving abundant magic pried from fists
Of ours.—
Shall men, then, rival gods . . .?"

This must not be.

"Hang high, Prometheus,
Hang high and ponder
While the gods shatter earth,
While the gods gather and fling
The shattering elements.
Your Man, your own career in arrogance,
Go crawling, crisping, under our hurtling Power."

Thunderer, trident-shaker,
Show me your eyes that doom.
Shake me a storm from your bed of waves, your
ocean peak!
I see your fleshless shanks twitch
Your eyes of rheum.

Show me your ancient godly stride,
The arm that strikes, like antheaps, men!

I see your fleshless shanks twitch
On the mountainside.
Olympus
And Valhalla.
Live gods, and dead.
All in the mountain tombs of mist
And still
Prometheus to his borrowed race
Holds out the wonder flame that is his face.

MARTHA MILLET

SONNET IN THE ANCIENT MANNER

From Paris to Nancy—two hundred miles;
the road's not bad, and when the weather's clear
I love the trip. Even before they appear
I know the landmarks my speedometer dials:

First comes Brie—its fields and roof tiles
are old friends I know well and hold dear—
their light lasts long after they're in my rear
mirror and Champagne Pouilleuse gleams and smiles:

The calm horizon with its fields and crops
gives way now to the winding river bed
along the banks of the Meuse toward Lorraine:

Suddenly the song I am humming stops;
I see the dollar Army camping ahead
and I am torn with anger, France, and shame.

GUILLEVIC

Translated from the French by Walter Lowenfels

"THE NATION IS VICTORIOUS"

The wind races across Dasht-I-Kavir
The sky is the color of innocence
The trees dance like gleeful children
Green as emeralds on black velvet
But the nation is not victorious.

A mother labors at a brick oven
A druggist's son leaves for Abadan
A worker whistles as he walks to work
Some song that all Persia is singing
But the nation is not victorious.

Under a gold canopy sits the Shah
Who never held wheat seed in his hand
Or dreamt of an oasis on earth
He smugly listens to the counsel of blood
The nation is not victorious.

This land that struggled to breathe
Is now swathed in rifles

The sabers are free and cry out
'Hold your tongue, or lose it'
The nation is not victorious.

Today ten courageous men died
Their lives pushed through their flesh
As silently as a hand pushes aside netting
Today Mt. Demavend has ten brothers
But the nation is not victorious.

That their eyes might be left open
That they might sing one song
And speak of friendship unguarded
Was the last wish of these heroes
The nation is not victorious.

Their bodies will be hidden without markers
Their deeds eulogized by forbidden leaflets
Liberty's death must not be remembered
They were freed from this free world
But the nation is not victorious.

Tomorrow other men will die
Their blood filling all the cups
Their clear faces smashed with oil
Their hope hidden by a flurry of bullets
The nation is not victorious.

There will be red days of streets
For the ten soldiers of Persia
There will be silver nights of knives
For the ten soldiers of Persia
There will not be enough flowers
There will not be enough songs
There will not be enough happiness
For the ten soldiers of Persia
The nation is not victorious.

BRUCE P. HOOTON

Days on Perry Street

By ROCKWELL KENT

We take pleasure in presenting a chapter from the forthcoming autobiography, It's Me O Lord, *by the distinguished artist Rockwell Kent. The book will be published in April by Dodd, Mead.*

NO. 4, PERRY STREET, in New York's Greenwich Village; once a private residence of some distinction and now (i.e. in 1911), without any noticeable modifications of its aristocratic character, a flat house, our own first floor quarters extended the full depth of the house and comprised a great living room, a bedroom, and Glory be!, a *bath room.* It symbolized at once our growing family and affluence. Tied up with our rental of the parlor floor was the basement, equal to the upper floor in area. It provided not only ample quarters for our devoted friend and helper, Lily, and her fireman husband, but a kitchen with a range and washtubs for us all. And for her rental Lily helped out Kathleen with her household work. It was a good arrangement for us all, and proved a happy one.

With such an establishment we might, indeed, have extended our social life—if, recalling Twenty-third Street, I had not better say *begun* it—but that the family, keeping pace with my greater earnings, continuously demanded careful husbandry even within the narrow spending limits that our vegetarian diet permitted. Yet neither Kathleen nor I were socially inclined: we had made few friends, and these few friends were happily enough for us. Rather than broaden our circle of acquaintances we inclined to deepen our friendship with a few; and to this end our house and means—and house and means can help—were adequate.

My acquaintance with Kenneth Hayes Miller, begun as a master-pupil relationship during my student days at the New York School of Art and made significant to me by his authoritative support of certain reservations I had felt as to Henri's teaching, had grown into a close friendship founded, curiously, less on our common profession than on our very common, thoroughly plebeian love of baseball. In fact, as Miller's work inclined toward mysticism my interest in it waned; and when in addition to this tendency he began to ferret out what he alleged to be erotic symbolism in the work of the greater masters of the past and, among those of the present, in the paintings and drawings of Cézanne, and, influenced no doubt by Freud, to

ach basic significance to it, I felt not only disagreement but disgust. But seball was another matter; and, with a number of our younger confreres d such of the architectural draughtsmen as I could corral, we played a lot sand-lot baseball in the early spring.

Marsden Hartley, whom I had come to know in the course of the Beaux ts Gallery show, became a constant visitor, dining with us as an accepted ember of our little family several times a week. Hardly if at all familiar th his work before that show, I had promptly recognized him as a painter rare distinction, if not of genius. I must identify his work at that period the now well known Maine series. Objective without being realistic, it eceded his unfortunate Berlin residence and the lasting influence upon n of the morals, pageantry, and art of a decadent imperial capital. Hartley's s one of the most sensitive minds I have ever encountered, but a mind subtly, even preciously discriminating as to defeat the very thought of ion as a desecration of man's higher sensibilities. The normalcy of our usehold, two parents and their children, the normalcy of our outlook on life, of our beliefs, our hopes, our interests, appeared to hold for him, whom such living was denied, a perverse fascination; almost at times, seemed to torture him, so unutterably sad would his mood be. Writing me, he said: "I have risen to great and beautiful spiritual heights with ı and love all that it means to me—the loveliness of your own spirit and exquisite beauty of those spirits around you which complete you. thleen and the sweet babies: I have read no lovelier poem, I have heard lovelier song, I have seen no lovelier picture than that which you have ered me so generously with open heart."

Hartley, in his strange way, adopted us. He made our house his home; l it was somehow consistent with his adoption, and with himself as we l come to know and care for him, that when he'd complacently direct thleen as to what, because he liked it, we should all have for dinner and v it should be seasoned, we could only be amused.

NOTHER frequent caller was a very young man, Robert Pearmain. Robert, the son, I believe, of a Boston banker, had met and loved and ped and married Nancy, one of the many children of George de Forest sh. Living on the Brush farm at the time of our sojourn in Richmond, re of our being there and of the thorough disfavor into which, because both by radicalism and behavior, I had fallen, Robert, in deliberate ance of Dublin opinion, had walked the many miles to Richmond just ause he wanted to meet me and come to know me. He was a nice-looking ng fellow, physically far from robust, but, it proved, with a strength individuality of conviction that was extraordinary in one of such

privileged upbringing. When I first met him, he was, as we say, thinking things out for himself; that is, considerably aware of the topsy-turvy world in which he found himself, and to some degree distressed by its inequities, he was attempting to chart a course of life for himself that might at last empower him to be service to mankind. Power. I've used his term. Power to be of service. And power, in this world, meant wealth. He meant, he told me, to be rich, immeasurably rich. Richer than any man on earth. And then, with wealth, do good—or, if it had to be, to change the world.

Although impressed with the young man's earnestness and genuinely touched by the independence of judgment and action that had brought him to see me, I nevertheless recall having tried to point out what were to me the fairly obvious fallacies in his plan. That one suddenly possessed of great wealth, could at the prompting of his heart, and a good mind, do good with it, was clear. But the ability to acquire such wealth, implying, under our competitive system, a disregard or even ruthlessness toward competitors, and a willingness to exploit labor to the utmost, was of itself a contradiction of benevolent intent; and although one might allow the ambitious one to be of good heart, such goodness could hardly be expected to withstand the reconditioning that getting rich and, later, being rich, would subject him to. I talked what I thought common sense to the young man; and that, in part, it took the form of Socialism, I have no doubt.

It was during the course of the following winter, our winter on Perry Street of which I am writing, that I next saw Robert. He had learned of our address and come to call. But what changes had taken place in his way of thought! A reader of the *Call* (the New York Socialist paper of the day) and of the *Masses,* he had come not only to accept the social revolution as the only cure for the evils of our society, but, seemingly encouraged by extremists he had met, inclined toward anarchism. He was not one for halfway action, nor one to tolerate in his own life any contradiction of his principles. Condemning Capitalism, he held all wealth to be of evil origin. Ergo, his father's wealth was ill-begotten; and to acept of it was sin. He confided to me that his proposed renunciation of that share of it upon which he and Nancy and their babe were living was causing Nancy—I put it mildly—some dismay and himself a bit of domestic trouble; but to young Robert right was right and wrong was wrong, and never the twain should meet. Although I have little doubt that he acted upon his resolve, I have less that between Nancy and her father and her father-in-law some happy way was found to circumvent young Robert's virtue.

But neither family and friends nor the insidiously corruptive lures and overt pressure of society could change or modify young Robert's conscience nor weaken its authority. With conscience and its moral values as his law

t became his immediate personal concern to identify himself with the unlerprivileged and then—feet planted, as it were, upon the ground—to work, f need be fight, for universal brotherhood and justice. "The only way to be iseful in a great revolution," Robert wrote to me, much in the spirit of a Turgenieff character, "is to identify yourself with the people and live the vay they do until you yourself become a revolutionist." The I.W.W. repreenting the revolutionary Left, and being, at this period, the most militant orce in the labor movement, young Robert joined it and became acquainted vith that dynamic man, Bill Haywood. As adviser to the youth, Haywood ook over.

Working conditions in the Pittsburgh steel industry were notoriously bad. Disastrously defeated in 1910, Labor was at the Corporation's mercy. Men vorked a six-day week, the weekly working hours of the majority being eventy-two and, of some, even in excess of that. So Robert, looking for he worst, picked steel. It was believed to be an opportune time for his nrollment in the industry for, as Haywood confided to him, a new and secret ttempt was to be made to organize it. Robert could help. This was in June of 1912, and I had left New York. Informed by letter of his intention, noved by the nobility of his purpose, and yet aware of his physical limitaions, I tried, as I had formerly done, to dissuade him, reminding him that ie would meet with little gratitude from those he aimed to serve. Such a onsideration was, I should have known, just meaningless to him. He walked o Pittsburgh, and he got a job. It was of necessity an unskilled job, and herefore a particularly hard one. It was wheeling trucks of pig-iron.

He held the job perhaps six weeks; then, utterly exhausted, sick, he started ut afoot for home. Somewhere along the way he just collapsed. From Framingham, Massachusetts, Nancy, on September 29th, wrote us:

> Dear friends:
>
> Robert Pearmain passed from his life yesterday noon at his father's home. His sickness was leukemia. Everything was done to save him—but he is gone. Peace on his face and no suffering at the end. I am left to learn a new life.
>
> He was your friend to the last.

AT COLUMBIA University at this period there flourished a students' *Verein* under the aegis of two members of the English faculty, my friend Bayard Boyesen and John Erskine, whose responsibility it was to provide uch guest speakers as might impart an intellectual flavor to the beer and retzels, and provoke discussion. So Boyesen invited me. That I accepted vas due to no eagerness to become a public speaker, but rather to the chal-

lenge that my fear presented, and my realization of the shamefulness of being scared. A grown-up man, aged almost thirty-two, and scared! Let not the youthful reader think who wouldn't be? who isn't? The shame is that most people are. And attributing this fact to the natural reticence of man, and reflecting that it should be the concern of our elders at home, of our teachers in school, and, later, of the society of which we are a part to properly condition us to freely speak our minds when need occurs, I must conclude that education doesn't fit us for democracy. The gems of "purest ray serene" may well be the gems of thought, of speech; and their "dark, unfathomed caves" no more remote than our own bosoms. Well, scared I was; nor did the rather professorial conversation of the Erskine dinner table provide me with any assurance that I should have anything of consequence to say.

I have already noted that a speaker—and I was subsequently to become one of a sort—and, in particular, myself, is not apt to be at the same time one of his own audience. That evening at Columbia and, I may add, ever after—I made it a matter of principle, of honor, to neither secretly prepare myself in advance to be my hearers' momentary superior in wisdom, nor more openly to offend them by appearing as a reader when a speaker had been introduced. And so it happened—then, as it has happened many times since—that, standing up and confronted by what appeared to be a sea of expectant faces, I just talked as fervently as might be about such things as were of most concern to me and, I assumed, to all of us. But *what* I said I didn't hear; I therefore may not say I have forgotten it. The proof of the pudding is, however, in the eating. So judged, I may claim that speech to have been one of the very best and most momentous of my whole life: it yielded me a life-long friend. Among the students had been one—just one, so far as I have ever learned—to whom the speech, my pudding, tasted good; so good that he remembered it, and took the trouble to find out where I lived, and the further trouble to travel way down to Perry Street to see me. And so it was that Carl Zigrosser and I became friends.

It is the silly, playful way of elders who have known us in our childhood to tell us—to compensate us, so they say, for how we look today—that we were in truth lovely babies. Just so, and with the somewhat elderly, most scholarly and distinguished, bearded Curator of Prints at the Philadelphia Museum of Art in mind, I may remark that, aged about twenty, beardless, blue-eyed and crowned with a true glory of blond hair, young Carl was as angelically beautiful a youth as ever trod our earth, his beauty being eloquent of such unearthy purity of soul as shamed a sinner such as I. I virtually told him so, and warned him against knowing me. "There is nothing that you can ever do," the young man answered me, "that can affect my friendship." And nothing has.

A WIFE, two children, and four friends; a full-time job, and more and more jobs overtime: the measure of my days was full, but not, I must dmit, of happiness. "What's the matter with you, Kent?" asked one of my ellows in the draughting room. "What are you forever grousing about? 'ou've got a good job, haven't you?" "Yes," I answered him, "the same s you. But when five o'clock comes round you're just one day ahead in vhat you want to do. And I have lost another day from life." Increasingly, nd with occasional poignancy, I was aware of the swift passage of the days, he weeks, the months to the all but complete enforced neglect of the avoca- ion to which I had become unalterably dedicated. If I could only get ahead bit, if I could only save; to spend the savings on a summer off, to paint! couldn't. Not for some years to come were we to have a bank account! And yet we lived so sparingly! No dinners out, no shows. Kathleen would nake her clothes; *my* best clothes—suits, shirts, ties—were hand-me-downs. But what swell togs they were! A fellow draughtsman, Douglas Williams shaving soap) Glazier wore good clothes over a good heart. We spent o little and things cost so much! As a "renderer"—that is, one who by a it of pretty water-color work makes any kind of an architectural design ook like a million dollars—I had won sufficient reputation to presently ustify an article about my work in an important architectural periodical, nough I appear to have had too little busines acumen to properly cash in n it. It was a field in which there was no established rate of pay. Too often d neglect to make a price agreement in advance; and when, on delivering ny entrancing picture together with my bill for, say, twenty-five dollars, nost would pay it gladly, some would grumble and protest, and one, Aymar mbury, would insist that I had charged too little and would try to double . I didn't, and I don't like business. One architect from up-state New York rought me the plans and elevations of a high school for which he was com- eting. "Make it look good," he said, "and if you feel that anything should e changed, just change it." And, having learned my fee, he added: "If I in the competition, I'll double it." It was months later when, having elivered the drawing and been paid for it, I heard from him again. He ad won; his check to double what he'd paid me was enclosed. Judging by is design I could well believe what I have since been told: that he had won by the most crass political finagling. Judging by him I don't know what, egarding people, to believe.

Maybe it was a good thing that I had so little time to paint. Weakened nd made liable to infection by Wagnerian romanticism, I proved further, though mildly, susceptible to the "revolutionary" virus of the day and place, o that the little that I was enabled to accomplish was of so mystical a char- cter as to attract the serious attention of the Freudian psychiatrists—they

visited the gallery where I showed and did a job on me—and to cause me, viewing what I did in retrospect, just unadulterated shame. Let's hope that nothing has survived. Yet, it appeared, I was one to be taken seriously. "Rockwell Kent," wrote one of the New York critics of the picture that the Freudians liked, "has done a truly astounding thing in 'A Mother and her Sons,' symbolic with a symbolism that each visitor may work out separately. The mother, a seated nude, is seen from the side, with children, crying or sportive or meditative or shrouded in mystery about her—and her head is bowed. The base is rounded like the heart, and is spotted with stars, while a rugged landscape lies beyond. It may be a presentation of twentieth-century life, the symbol of individuality standing out in loneliness."

How moving to the young painter we may believe that analysis to have been!—particularly since he had himself had no idea of what his work portended. What profundity of the unconscious is suggested by the invitation to each visitor to plumb those depths of symbolism for himself! And in the blessed light of common sense and human decency what sheer irresponsible effrontery it was, and is, to foist upon a friendly and respectful public a form of art, of utterance, not only on its face incomprehensible, but in its thereby sheltered depths a hollow mockery. To some such stuff there is the saving grace that, designed in the spirit of pure fraud, the artist charlatan is to his own unprincipled self true. Let critics, public, everyone be fooled: he isn't. But of this enlightened category I was, unhappily, not one. In glaring, clamoring contradiction of my own sound mind and of the materialism, the recognition of the *oneness* of the universe, to which it had conducted me, I had embraced—temporarily, to be sure, and as one who with passionate obsession plunges into an "affair," but nevertheless taken to the casting couch of my art—a two-faced siren, "Mystic Symbolism."

Somewhere—in his "Candles of Vision," I believe—the Irish poet, A. E., has written to this effect: See in the clouds of evening, castles and turrets, etc., etc. What unmitigated nonsense! See, artist, poets, human beings generally, nothing in the clouds of evening, or in the dazzling noon or vaporous dawn, in the heavens or on the earth, in all our universe, in man, in life, in death, see nothing but what your good senses enlightened by the accumulated knowledge and wisdom of mankind can apprehend. Imagine?—nothing: see. But I imagined: I imagined the phenomena of life that I observed to be the symbols of a mystic inner cosmic consciousness or pantheistic god. As human gesture may denote a thought, as the expressions of the human countenance denote man's moods, so I imagined the material universe to be, if not a direct expression of an underlying divinity, at least proper material for symbolizing my own presumably god-like concept of

immanent, essential truth. Truth is not found that way. And truth—and only truth—is our eternal need. But now an end to this: of the mortification of our hero's mind and soul, enough.

ALL work? No play? We never were that dull. The students of the Henri School promoted a great costume ball with "acts" as entertainment. So, as our contribution toward a good time being had by all—and, incidentally, ourselves—Kathleen and I, with the enthusiastic co-operation of young Gerry Brush, a brother of Nancy, began elaborate preparations to stage the scene from *Through the Looking Glass* in which Alice meets that endearing character, the White Knight; our proposed cast of characters being Kathleen, as Alice—and a lovely Alive she became—myself as the silly old knight; and a pony-sized wooden horse on wheels that, built by me, could wag his head and wink his eye. How thrilled they'll be to see these beloved characters in the flesh! thought we.

Do we all recall the long, long song with which the old knight concludes his interview with Alice? and that the tune of the song was claimed by the old fellow as his own invention? But no sooner had he begun to sing than Alice cried to herself: "But the tune isn't his own invention. It's 'I Give Thee All, I Can No More.'" So off to Schirmer's music store I went and asked for it. And, believe it or not, they had it. And what a sad, Victorian wail of love it was! How lucky, reader, there's no sound track to the printed page! That melody, the White Knight's mournful words: how I would like to sing it to you now exactly as I sang it forty years ago! Oh, if you could only have seen me then, moustached, long-nosed, my shining armor hired for the act, the horse so life-like with his winking eye! And how I'd fall—just as the old knight did, time and again go crashing to the ground! And Alice: you'd have loved her. Oh, how you, reader, would have loved the act! *You* would, dear educated, cultured reader; but our audience that night? They didn't. Not of the old White Knight, of Alice, of *Through the Looking Glass,* no, not of Lewis Carroll, had even one in twenty ever heard. Our great act was a flop.

Maybe, as actors, our talents were better adapted to the entertainment of small audiences, so small in fact as to enhance none but ourselves. Certainly the dinner party that we staged in honor of Kathleen's music teacher, Mrs. Seymour, and her lovely daughter Louise was from our own viewpoint as successfully entertaining as any such affair could be. The Seymours having accepted our invitation to dine with us, it so happened that returning from work one bitterly cold winter's evening I was accosted by a poor half-frozen fellow, coatless and dressed in waiter's uniform. He was in need; and his most immediate need appearing to be warmth, I took off my overcoat and put it on him. And in return for that I had a waiter at my service. "Let us,"

I said to Kathleen, "entertain the Seymours in real style. We have a butler; let's build the whole affair around him." And so we did. It may be recalled that the house in which we had our flat had all the appearances of still serving as the rather elegant private residence which it had originally been. And of this house we had the basement and first floor. Our plans having been made, it was but little trouble on the afternoon of the dinner day to move, with Lily's glad consent, our beds and babies' cribs and all that bore the stamp of intimate domesticity into the basement, and borrowing from our friends, to furnish the entire first floor in semblance of inherited affluence. As to the hall, a mirror, a framed print or two, a rug, a little table with a salver on it, did the trick. As dinner time drew near we were all set—even to having made good no less a disappointment than the complete disappearance of our "butler" by the cheerful willingness of my friend Glazier to serve in his stead. Yes, Glazier was on hand all dressed as gentlemen and butlers should be. And Kathleen was dressed to kill; and I; and Gerry Brush; and one more man—I have forgotten who.

I believe that finger-bowls were in those days regarded as an all but indispensable accessory to gentle dining. Anyhow, the last minute discovery that we had overlooked them, sent me tearing out, and along Eighth Street to where little shops abounded, and down the steps of a basement place that displayed brass finger-bowls in the window, and into the shop. "Hi!" I shouted, seeing no one in attendance and "Hi!" again. Since no one came I couldn't wait. Counting out six finger-bowls from the window display, I hot-footed it out of the shop and home. In time!—the honored guests had not yet come.

The door bell rang; our butler answered it. After a moment's delay necessitated by the removal of the ladies' cloaks the door of our living room was opened and the two ladies entered. "Mrs. Seymour," announced our butler: "Miss Seymour." How happy were they to have come, to see our lovely house, to meet our charming friends! "Dinner is served, Madame," announced the butler.

It was a happy party, a truly festive occasion. The food was good, the service perfect; and the conversation rippled on—we had so much to talk about! Music, and art of course; for Gerry and Louise the drama; and, for all of us, the glamor of the past as it appeared enshrined in this old family residence of ours. How gracious living must have been in those now vanished days! How fortunate were we to have preserved its spirit in our house and how we lived. "Excuse me, Sir," our butler interrupted me, and in a low but clearly audible voice informed me that Lord Dungarrow had called and asked the favor of a moment's interview. Directing that his Lordship be shown up to my study there to await my leisure, the conversation again be-

came general. What fun that dinner party was! What fun to us, the hosts, and our confederates! That fun we never told. And we like to believe that when, presently, the lovely Louise bestowed her heart and hand upon young Gerry Brush it was for more and better cause than his pseudo-aristocratic friends, the Kents of Perry Street.

There was a little aftermath to the party. Next day—I being an honorable man—I wrapped up the six finger-bowls and marched around with them to the little shop from which they had been lifted. This time the proprietor, a crusty-looking old fellow, was at home. Holding the package significantly in my hand, I told him, smiling pleasantly, what I had done. "So here they are," I concluded. "I will either buy them or return them to you, as you please." He wasn't pleased; he raged at me as though he'd have an apoplectic stroke. He did at last calm down enough to let me purchase them.

Four Perry Street, New York; the Kents, their friends, their way of life, their work, their play: we've had it all. That chapter of our life draws to a close. It is March, and spring is in the air. I am sent for by the firm of Lord, Hewlett and Tallent: they have a propositon for me. It is that I move out to Winona, Minnesota—a small city near the south-eastern corner of the state—and put in a year as the firm's superintendent on the construction of two large residences. I accept the job. Hurrah! we are to leave New York.

And so it is that after a few weeks of service with the architects to familiarize myself with the projected buildings we pack our household goods and leave for the wide open spaces of our great Middlewest. At last and finally, we fondly hope, we're free.

Interview With Karl Marx

By JOHN SWINTON

The following interview with Karl Marx, which appeared in the New York Sun, *Sept.* 6, 1880, *was written by John Swinton, printer, journalist and editor, when he visited Europe as correspondent of the* Sun, *then under the editorship of Charles A. Dana. Swinton worked under Dana as assistant editor for a number of years, at a time when his interest in the labor movement was growing, and he projected a paper of his own for social reform. Swinton's enthusiastic appreciation of Marx gives us a vivid picture of Marx and his family, and expresses the admiration of an American journalist who could not but feel the genius of the leader of the working class. Some of Swinton's ideas, of course, are inaccurate, as for example, his reference to the "stormy Bakunin" and to Lassalle as "pupils of Marx." Bakunin was in inveterate enemy of Marx, and Lassalle never represented Marxism, but on the contrary, distorted and falsified it. Nevertheless, for the American reader today it is interesting to read what the New York* Sun *on Sept.* 6, 1880 *printed about Karl Marx on its front page. Swinton died in* 1901 *at the age of* 70. *For further information on this notable American figure in journalism we urge the reader to see Sender Garlin's article on him,* Masses & Mainstream, *Dec.* 1951.

ONE of the most remarkable men of the day, who has played an inscrutable but puissant part in the revolutionary politics of the past 40 years, is Karl Marx. A man without desire for show or fame, caring nothing for the fanfaronade of life or the pretense of power, without haste and without rest, a man of strong, broad, elevated mind, full of far-reaching projects, logical methods and practical aims, he has stood and yet stands behind more of the earthquakes which have convulsed nations and destroyed thrones, and do now menace and appall crowned heads and established frauds, than any other man in Europe, not excepting Joseph Mazzini himself.

The student of Berlin, the critic of Hegelianism, the editor of papers and the old-time correspondent of the *New York Tribune,* he showed his qualities and his spirit; the founder and master spirit of the once dreaded International, and the author of *Capital,* he has been expelled from half

e countries of Europe, proscribed nearly all of them, and for 30 ars past has found refuge in Lon-on.

He was at Ramsgate, the great sea-ore resort of the Londoners, while was in London, and there I found m in his cottage, with his family two generations. The saintly-faced, eet-voiced, graceful woman of suav-, who welcomed me at the door, as evidently the mistress of the use and the wife of Karl Marx. nd is this massive-headed, generous atured, courtly, kindly man of 60, th the bushy masses of long re-lling gray hair, Karl Marx?

His dialogue reminded me of that Socrates—so free, so sweeping, so eative, so incisive, so genuine—th its sardonic touches, its gleams humor, and its sportive merri-ent. He spoke of the political ces and popular movements of the ious countries of Europe—the vast rent of the spirit of Russia, the tions of the German mind, the ac-n of France, the immobility of gland. He spoke hopefully of Rus-, philosophically of Germany, erfully of France, and sombrely England—referring contemptuous-to the "atomistic reforms" over ich the Liberals of the British Par-ment spend their time. Surveying European world, country after ntry, indicating the features and developments and the person-s of the surface and under the sur-e, he showed that things were king toward ends which will as-edly be realized.

I was often surprised as he spoke. It was evident that this man, of whom so little is seen or heard, is deep in the times, and that, from the Neva to the Seine, from the Urals to the Pyrenees, his hand is at work preparing the way for the new advent. Nor is his work wasted now any more than it has been in the past, during which so many desirable changes have been brought about, so many heroic struggles have been seen, and the French Republic has been set up on the heights.

As he spoke, the question I had put, "Why are you doing nothing now?" was seen to be a question of the unlearned, and one to which he could not make direct answer. Inquiring why his great work, *Capital,* the seed field of so many crops, had not been put into English, as it has been put into Russian and French from the original German, he seemed unable to tell, but said that a proposition for an English translation had come to him from New York. He said that that book was but a fragment, a single part of a work in three parts, two of the parts being yet unpublished, the full trilogy being *Land, Capital, Credit,* the last part, he said, being largely illustrated from the U.S., where credit has had such an amazing development.

Mr. Marx is an observer of American action, and his remarks upon some of the formative and substantive forces of American life were full of suggestiveness. By the way, in referring to his *Capital,* he said that anyone who might want to read it would

find the French translation superior in many ways to the German original. Mr. Marx referred to Henri Rochefort the Frenchman, and in his talk of some of his dead disciples, the stormy Bakunin, the brilliant Lassalle and others, I could see how deeply his thoughts had taken hold of men who, under the circumstances, might have directed the course of history.

The afternoon is waning toward the long twilight of an English summer evening as Mr. Marx discourses, and he proposes a walk through the seaside town and along the shore to the beach, upon which we see many thousand people, largely children disporting themselves. Here we find on the sands his family party—the wife, who had already welcomed me, his two daughters with their children, and his two sons-in-law, one of whom is professor in Kings College, London, and the other, I believe, a man of letters. It was a delightful party—about ten in all—the father of the two young wives, who were happy with their children, and the grandmother of the children, rich in the joysomeness and serenity of her wifely nature. Not less finely than Victor Hugo himself does Karl Marx understand the art of being a grandfather but more fortunate than Hugo, the married children of Marx live to make jocund his years.

Toward nightfall, he and his sons-in-law part from their families to pass an hour with their American guest. And the talk was of the world, and of man, and of time, and of ideas as our glasses tinkled over the sea.

The railway train waits for no man, and night is at hand. Over the thought of the babblement and rack of the age and the ages, over the talk of the day and the scenes of the evening, arose in my mind one question touching upon the final law of being, for which I would seek answer from this sage. Going down to the depths of language and rising to the height of emphasis, during an interspace of silence, I interrupted the revolutionist and philosopher in these fateful words:

"What is?"

And it seemed as though his mind were inverted for a moment while he looked upon the roaring sea in front and the restless multitude upon the beach. "What is?" I had inquired, to which in deep and solemn tone, he replied:

"Struggle!"

At first it seemed as though I had heard the echo of despair; but peradventure it was the law of life.

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