Mainstream

THE TRENCH

Arthur H. Landis

John Condell LIKENESS IN THE THEATRE

Thomas McGrath FIVE POEMS

Meridel Le Sueur "FAREWELL MY WIFE AND CHILD AND ALL MY FRIENDS"

Henri Salem-Alleg THE MONSTERS OF ALGIERS

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F. A. I. 1938

ARTHUR H. LANDIS

THE time was long ago and I walked on a road together with a diminutive Spanish soldier of a forgotten Anarchist Brigade. I carried a haversack stuffed with food to last for a number of days; he drove a mule burdened with two boxes of small-arms, ammunition and a supply of frozen bread.

We had halted at the entrance to a barranca which extended upward to the crests of a line of hills and I remember pausing to look back at the broad, slightly indented plateau, where the tiny stones on the near gutted town of Argente appeared like a heap of fallen stones on the near horizon.

Snow had been falling all day and the preceding night, and though it had lifted now, the clouds continued, black, heavy, and ominous. To the west, beyond the town, where the road broke the skyline, the fast-setting winter sun had managed a breach in the snow-laden clouds and both the town and the bleak, ice-frozen terrain were bathed with an eerie splendor.

As I looked down upon the glistening panorama of white snow, and frozen rocks and silence, I thought of a steel-point etching I had once seen of a forlorn Scottish moor, and I thought of winter in Maine and Vermont, and I thought of the story of Ethan Frome.

The plateau was desolate, the town long deserted. Its true life had left it, and the incessant roar of massed guns to the south were slowly encroaching to include its barren wastes in the listed number of captured square kilometers. And there was alien life in the town now, too. . . . In the early hours of morning the trucks had arrived and some

six hundred men of the Mackenzie-Papineau, Canadian Battalion of the 15th International Brigade were spread through its ruins and out over the snow, creating black patches that denoted the placement of gear and guns.

I was one of them and I, too, was alien . . . not in the accepted interpretation of the word, however. Indeed, though we came from a far land, and though we spoke with the tongue of the foreigner, still, there was on area of timeless empathy and oneness between us and those who had fled this wasteland, that the others, the ones behind the guns and the creeping avalanche of steel, could never fathom, or understand.

A slow, persistent wind came now bringing the feather touch of snow, and even as I watched the scene below became vague and lost. The pink became an amorphous gray and the clouds closed in again, speeding the coming of darkness. The road became a shadowy line; the men disappeared, and the town was a promontory of rocks lifted haphazardly against the smooth horizon.

"It will be dark soon, Comisario," the soldier said, "and I must care for this animal. so we should go quickly."

I nodded and turned away, silently adjusting my haversack and carbine while he thumped the mule on the rump with a calloused palm, shouting: "Anda! Mula, Anda!"

Then we entered the barranca and the path became steep and ice-rock slick and there was little time for the contemplation of the terrain around me. It was an effort actually to maintain our balance as we plodded laboriously ahead, and the distance, I found, could hardly have been a quarter of a mile from the road itself, but when we arrived at our destination the fleeting interval of twilight was almost gone.

The shapes of men stood out before us, silhouetted against the background of snow and what could have been a fortress, a rambling country home, or a barn . . . which it was, and we went on until we were suddenly among them and I was listening to low voiced comments in Andaluz and Valenciano.

At the barn's entrance we stopped and the little soldier spoke to a group of five men who had casually watched us approach and just as casually barred our way.

"This is an International," he said briefly. "He is one of those from below. He is to see Colls."

The twilight had changed to a gray-black darkness and a cigarette lighter flared so that I could see that the man who held it had the stripes of a lieutenant on his felt cap. The folds of a red and black handkerchief protruded from the poncho wrapped around his neck.

He pocketed the lighter and said: "Salud!" At the same time the light from a torch fell directly upon me, held steadily by one of the others. I could hear the lieutenant laugh then, warm and friendly, but I could see none of them. For a moment it was as if I were doing a monologue in a nightclub, or was a suspect in a police line-up. The light was on me and everything else was darkness, a strange and almost formidable darkness, enhanced by the persistent wind and the icy flurries of snow——. "I should have said 'Salud, Comisario,' the voice of the lieutenant continued, and I knew that the light had clearly shown the red star and circle on my cap.

I said "Salud, Camaradas," in return, and my voice was stiffly formal because I was suddenly conscious of my twenty-one years, and acutely aware of what my red star and circle could mean to them. I had seen Anarchist troops before. They had held the lines before Quinto, Belchite, Codo, and Fuentes Del Ebro in the Aragon when we had moved into positions for attack—but I had seen them then as a mass of men. To me they had been merely line troops in the act of being relieved. There had been no chance for the individual exchange of ideas, no chance for a personal knowledge of one another—we watched each other in passing, nothing else, and that was our only contact. And other than our similarity in appearance, the strained and silent look of the combat soldier, the natural camouflage of worn uniforms colored with the dirt of trenches and the countless other stains of the earth of which we were so much a part, in life, too, as in death, I think that my only impression had been one of affinitive curiosity.

I knew little of the Anarchist troops then, and less perhaps of the Spanish Anarchist movement: rumors, stories told and exaggerated in a thousand ways, most losing merit and meaning. To the good—that was how I thought at the time—were Durutti and his Catalan volunteers fighting alongside their socialist and communist comrades before Madrid; to the bad was the abortive uprising in Barcelona which I judged ill-conceived and harmful.

These things, I thought of, and I knew that the thoughts of those others who were moving all around me with the sibilant, almost silent whisper of steps on snow, would be just as alert, and equally inquisitive.

"I have been sent by my Estado Mayor to speak with your Captain Colls," I began abruptly. Then I added in deference: "Con su permiso."

The flashlight was turned off suddenly and I noticed that a dull light came from the opened doors of the barn. The light became quickly brighter, the effect of additional oil lamps or candles, and the men around me stood out in relief——. The lieutenant said "Vamonos"

though we were already moving towards the barn's protection as if by mutual consent.

Once inside we turned to the left and walked by a long row of blanketed reclining men, some sleeping, some smoking and talking. Those who talked became curiously silent as we passed by. We stopped at a small cleared area next to a row of stalls which still held straw and, oddly enough, had not been dismantled. There were a number of bed rolls against the wall here; each with its accompanying collection of personal objects. One of the barn's doors served as a table top, mounted on stones. For the moment it held a number of mess-kits, glasses, a telephone, a small battery-powered radio, and a dismantled machine gun. Three candles in cognac bottles were the source of light.

My escort was now revealed to be the lieutenant, three sergeants, and a corporal. Squatting by the low table was another lieutenant and two soldiers with no visible rank.

"Over there," one of the sergeants said, nodding toward an empty space. "You can put your things there."

I moved quickly to rid myself of the haversack, my bedroll and my carbine, plus the map case, binoculars, and the other tools of the cartographer, thinking wryly that if the amount of personal military gear were indicative of authority, then I would assume the proportions of the war office itself. I was wondering where Colls was. My one desire was to see him, make the necessary arrangements for the job, and then to sleep. I was tired to the point of exhaustion, because the pattern of arrival at Argente had included a forced march from the town of Mas de Las Matas and a twelve hour ride in open trucks through the snows of the Singra heights.

When I turned to raise the question of Colls again, they were waiting, grouped around the table, watching me pensively, almost as if I were a stranger from another planet, or someone from a world of which they were no longer a part.

The picture remains so clear to me: the background of soft scattered candle light, the vague shapes and shadows of men, the thousand sounds of movement, and above it all the thin whisper of the rising wind outside. The lieutenant was young with the hard slimness of youth. There was almost an air of friendly arrogance in the closeness of his scrutiny. The three sergeants were typical of the middle aged Catalan worker, short, heavy, and with an amiable, easily bridged reserve. The corporal was a tall red-head with heavily lined features and a somewhat petulent expression. The other lieutenant, the one who had been supervising the cleaning of the gun, was thin to the point of emacia-

tion and he had the dark ascetic features of the Jesuit neophyte. He motioned for me to sit down and I did, and the others followed suit around the table.

"He is here to see Colls," the first lieutenant informed him.

"Eh, bien!" the man said softly. "Have some wine, Señor."

The first lieutenant began filling glasses from a large, untanned goat skin, and he passed a cup to me while the second lieutenant made reference to Colls.

"Our captain is not here, Señor," he continued in the same soft voice. "He will come later. For the moment there is nothing but to wait."

"He is not a 'señor.' He is a comisar," the first lieutenant said.

"Verdad, so I see," the second lieutenant said. "But in most things we are all comisars. We have a purpose."

The others laughed and I grinned, too, and took a deep drink of the wine. "I've come prepared to wait," I said. I nodded toward the bedroll and the haversack.

"No need to wait that long, Comisario," one of the older sergeants said drolly. "Colls is mas allá, on the mountain." He shrugged in the general direction of the hills beyond the barn.

I was watching them closely and I saw that the second lieutenant, either by appointment or by personality, was the one in command here in the absence of Colls. I could sense it in the deference of the others and in his direct manner of assuming authority.

"What is your nationality?" he asked politely.

"American," I said. "But my battalion is Canadian."

"Then perhaps you are an American Canadian," the first lieutenant said.

"No," I said. "I am still an American."

"North or South American," the second lieutenant queried. There was a sudden, humorous, challenging tone to his voice and I could see over the top of my raised glass that the others were smiling at the developing play of words.

"The United States of America," I said bluntly.

"Eh, Señor Comisario," one of the sergeants put in quickly. "That seems to be the point. There is also a United States of Mexico and a United States of Brazil."

I was momentarily silent, listening to the sounds of men leaving the warmth of their blankets to form a double ring around us, almost pathetically anxious, I thought, to participate in the general talk that would begin now. We would drink the wine, the mellifluous words

would flow and the hours would go by, and despite my desire to sleep, I, too, would almost hypnotically participate. It was a strange and almost necessary phenomenon, a form of escape, I knew, and before the night was through we would, in all seriousness, belabor the most devious point and transcend in erudition the most brilliant of orations—because to the combat soldier the talk was a trench and a fortification against the realities of the true trench, and the shell pocked ground on the hills beyond, and the uncertainty of the morrow, and the death of his friends.

I raised my cup again, drank, reached for cigarettes, started the pack on the rounds and said: "Bien! But as you know, I am an International, so perhaps though I said the United States of America, still, I have the right to include both North and South America, and even the Channel islands."

The first lieutenant was filling the cups again and he kept his eye on the flow of wine from the goatskin so that not a drop would be wasted.

"And where are they, Comisario?" he asked softly, conscious of the press of men around him, and speaking now for their benefit as well as his own.

"They are off the west coast of the United States of America," I said, grinning. "I was born there."

"Ah, si, Señor, that sounds like a very interesting place," said a little soldier with the thick accent of the Andaluz, which in some cases was almost unintelligible to the others of different dialects such as the Catalan and the Valenciano. He had forced his way to the front of the ring and he was addressing the others. "It should be clear," he said emphatically, "that this International is truly an Americano. In the south, as you know, they speak only Spanish and Portuguese—and this Comrade International's Spanish is so abominable that I for one can hardly understand a word he says."

There was a roar of laughter and "Ole's" and a shout of "Viva, Amadio" from a small man who had come through the circle and now stood just beyond the flickering candle light, so that though I could see his face, which was thin and drawn below a mass of iron-gray hair, the rest of him was lost in the dark and shadow. I could tell by the intentness of his gaze that he had been watching me for some time.

"Say it again, Amadio," someone called from the rear. "We didn't understand you."

"Otra vez, Amadio." They set up a chorus of voices. "Explain it to us again in the Andaluz, in the tongue that all the world understands."

The little Andaluz hooted back at them and stamped away from

the crowd in pseudo anger, and after the laughter had run its course and we had talked of other things, the cold of the weather, the lack of cigarettes and where I had learned my abominable Spanish and the price of the hand-made boots I wore, I was suddenly aware that the small man with the iron-gray hair had circled the table finally to stand at my side. The others were rising to their feet, so I got up, too.

The second lieutenant saluted briefly, the others not at all. Then the lieutenant spoke casually as if my being there was an event to be taken in stride.

"We have one here from below, Capitán, one of the Internationals. He has asked to speak with you"—and then aside to me: "This, Comisario, is our Captain Colls."

Colls extended his hand and I made a mental note that he was the first one to do this. His eyes held the same intense gaze and his voice, when he spoke, had the soft inflection of the teacher, the priest, or that of a man who of necessity, and at all times, must maintain control of the others around him by a complete and essentially ruthless control of himself.

"We have heard much of the Internationals, Comisario," he said. "And I have long waited to meet one of yours. Must that which you wish to tell me be of a private nature?"

"No," I said. "Not at all."

"Have you met these comrades, then?" he asked.

"I would say yes," I laughed, "but not formally."

Colls smiled and the others grinned, and because of his smile and the warmth of his greeting I suddenly felt that the abyss had been bridged so that now I would be accepted. The others waited and I said: "Well, if it is your desire, you may either call me Arturo, which is my name, or Comisario, as you have been doing, though I am only an elected Comisar of our Battalion staff without commission. My Battalion is the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion of the 15th International Brigade—we are Canadian."

Colls nodded, saying softly, "It is sometimes good to be elected." Then he moved to each man in turn and introduced them and I found that the first and second lieutenants were Alberto Saenz and Rigoberto Samper. The sergeants proved to be Catalan as I had thought, and they possessed the names that seem so strangely a mixture of Arabic and Spanish. Then we sat down again and the cups were refilled and once more I set the pack of Luckies on the rounds, glad that there were no effusive thanks.

I explained my mission briefly to Colls, that I had been sent to check

his positions against our maps, as well as the positions of the fascist forces opposite. I would make sketches of all this, and because of that which was going on down below in the holocaust of Teruel, we would like also a constant report on the transport, the tanks, the troops, and the general material that passed down the road opposite his lines—the road that was such a vital artery of supply to the Carlists, the Italians, the Falange cohorts, and the Tercio, the Spanish Foreign Legion, so well salted now with Moorish troops to replenish its dwindling personnel.

He listened silently, nodding his head and punctuating my requests with each nod. "It is not a difficult thing," he said. "We shall see to it tomorrow." Then he drew hard on his cigarette, his expression one of calm meditation. We were silent, too, and finally he asked softly: "How does it go down there, Comisario? Here we have no news but the 'Parte de guerra' and that is not dependable."

"I do not know," I said. "The news that we get is mostly rumor. It is said that they have retaken Celades and Concud."

"That is hardly rumor," Saenz said briefly.

Colls was silent again, his black eyes calm and pensive. The others seemed subdued, taking their cue from him, and because of the moments of strained silence, I became doubly aware of the others around us. They had not returned to their blankets. The burning coals of their cigarettes still speared the darkness, and I thought that there must be at least a hundred men here, waiting—they were waiting for something, a thing that Colls would eventually ask me—and an answer that I might give.

"Do you think we can hold out?" Colls finally asked, and as I looked at the faces of the others, I knew that this was not the question.

I shrugged and pushed the thought of their question from my mind. I was suddenly grateful for the attention that Colls was giving me. Conscious, too, of the accompanying feeling of importance. And because of that and because of the quantity of wine I had taken, I became quite eloquent in my description of how I thought the situation was shaping up. I recall that I even resorted to the time-worn method of shifting companies and battalions in the form of glasses and mess-kits around the table to punctuate a point, and to clarify my conception of the lines of defense and attack, and to show them, too, that the Internationals were well versed in the art of military science.

They listened stoically and their silence was only broken by an occasional soft exclamation, or a brief comment. In the main, they deferred graciously to the arrogance of my twenty-one years and my

attitude of smug tolerance which hinted that though we of the Brigades possessed the discipline, the organization, the will, and the true political awareness of how and why a situation should be dealt with in just such a manner, in order to produce the exact, equated results—perhaps they, too, if they were willing to apply themselves and learn from our experience, could achieve our level of understanding and accomplishment.

There were a number of times, I think, during the course of the night when Saenz or Lieutenant Samper with the support of the sergeants would have certainly liked to take issue with me, but Colls prevented them from doing this, and I sensed that he was aware of my youth and of my intensity, and he perhaps felt that at that time and at that moment, the bridge of dogma on both our sides would be too difficult, if not impossible to resolve.

In fact he injected an almost personal responsibility for me into his handling of the conversation. He began by directing his comments and questions to me in an almost intimate manner—and he stopped calling me "Comisario"—instead he called me "hijo," "son." And he did this in such a way that I took no offense. In fact I accepted it. It was as if he had the right to call me that. His years, the gray of his hair, and the tragic lines of his face together with the odd contrast of humility and strength that shown from his eyes and the muted tones of his voice were such that I instinctively accepted the role that he offered.

And then finally, long after we had dragged our bedrolls to positions around the table and had stretched out with our heads pillowed against them, the true question came, though I did not know its meaning at the time.

We were lighting cigarettes from a fresh pack and Lieutenant Samper, the one with the thin, emaciated body and the dark, almost tortured features, asked the question.

"Comisario," he asked quietly, spacing his words so that I could not fail to understand. "It is true that you will do your sketches tomorrow. You have asked our help to define their gun positions and their fields of fire—but may I ask if it is the intention of your Estado Mayor to attack through here? Is this what you are with us for?"

The glow of the cigarettes around me became faint and dull and the constant, rustling shift of movement throughout the far reaches of the barn, had stopped. It was a breathless, eerie sort of thing, as if time itself had suddenly ceased, and only the thin cry of the wind against the rough hewn eaves and slated stone above us remained to remind me that I was not alone, and that I was with a contingent of Anarchist troops.

"I cannot answer that," I said finally. "I do not know. The maps

and the coordinates is a thing that we prepare always when we are in reserve positions. But I do not think that an attack will come here. The Lincolns, the American Battalion, has gone on before us. They have been sent down there, to Teruel, and I think, perhaps, that very soon we will join them."

Lieutenant Saenz was siting stiffly now, his gaze directly upon me, and when he spoke his voice was hard and emphatic, and gone was the affable tone and the touch of covert humor. "We would join with you in the attack, you know," he offered. "We are two hundred and fifty men, Comisario, and together, perhaps, we can take that little town across the valley that you will see tomorrow, the one that sits astride the road down which the trucks and troops must go."

"I do not know," I said again, and in the act of saying it, and seeing the undefinable expressions upon their faces, I felt an odd sick feeling of total depression—*as if I had let them down,* as if there was something here, all around us, and outside in the snow and the wind and on the hills and the valley beyond, of which I was not aware—something which waited for them—ominous, immediate, and certain.

Colls had bowed his head, saying nothing, and his body was tense with a spring steel tautness, and whatever it was, I knew that he knew. But I knew also that even he could not help them.

The silence broke like the release from hypnotic trance and the glow of cigarettes came back again like so many red stars against the blackness and Colls looked up and said to all of them: "Let us sleep now, Comrades. We cannot hope for that which will not come."

He arose and the others followed and I got up with them. Then we went outside for the brief space of minutes in the clear air and the icy wind to find that the clouds were gone. Above us now was a thick, black canopy, studded with brilliant stars, and the snow and the hills were aglow from the wan light of a ghostly moon.

"It will be much worse for them down there tomorrow," Colls said, scanning the stars. "There will be much aviation."

"Ah, sí," one of the sergeants said. "It will be a big thing tomorrow, much aviation."

Men were lining up beside the blackness of the barn, preparing to relieve the others on the hills and Colls addressed them shortly and we returned to our bedrolls and went to sleep.

I AWOKE to the smell of wood smoke and the clatter of pans and the shouts and movement of men outside. The cold was everywhere, bone piercing and deadly. The glasses had been swept from the table

and the machine-gun, too, was gone. The bedrolls were once again against the wall and I saw that I was alone.

I found them outside. Colls, the three sergeants and Saenz. Only Lieutenant Samper was missing. I went to the big tureen and filled my aluminum cup with the hot burnt barley water that served as coffee, then I returned to them, clutching the loaf of frozen bread that was issued to me.

"Olá, Comisario," Saenz said cheerfully, in contrast to his mood of the night before. "Did you sleep well?"

"Como no?" I said seriously and Saenz laughed.

Colls had been talking to a squad of men when I first left the barn, but now he had sunk to his heels by the door. He had placed his cup of coffee in the snow and he was rolling a cigarette and peering up at me.

"Well, hijo," he said. "When do you wish to begin your tour? Saenz and I will accompany you, with perhaps Segalls, here." He indicated one of the Catalan sergeants.

"A su servicio," I said. "Whenever it is convenient."

Colls nodded and we drank our coffee in great gulps and gnawed noisily at the frozen bread. All around us was the little world of the tiny valley and the huge, rambling barn. It was hardly a valley, actually, but more a sharp cleft, or a fold in the earth. The missing owner of the barn and these barren wastes, I was sure, had chosen it for just that reason, for it undoubtedly offered sufficient shelter to the cattle or goats that at one time had wintered here.

My guide of the night before came up to us, driving his mule before him. This time he had a companion, and I noticed that though they wore blanket ponchos of the thin, patched uniforms, supplemented with the added thicknesses of two or three shirts—they had no shoes. They wore rope-soled alpargatas, nothing else, and their feet were bare to the calves and blue with cold. I turned then to the hundred or more men surrounding the barn in small groups, some cleaning their rifles, some writing laboriously, many just sitting and smoking and talking. This was my first clear look at them, and they, too, were like the little soldier. Their uniforms were patched and old, and with few exceptions their feet were bare. One thing they had in common other than the weathered faces and the communal look of weariness: somewhere about their person were the black and red colors of the F.A.I., the Federacion Anarchista Iberica. It was displayed defiantly, and almost pathetically, I thought, in the form of scarves and handkerchiefs and medallions and the tassles on their caps.

Colls spoke to my guide in Catalan while he stood stiffly at atten-

tion, then, when Colls had finished, the man turned to me, saying: "Qué tal, Comisario? Qué quintas?" What's new?

I said, "Bien, como siempre," and he flashed his companion a satisfied smile as if, on his part, the greeting had been an act of audacity; then Colls and Saenz laughed and we watched them disappear down the barranca.

AFTER awhile we, too, left the valley, Colls and I and the lieutenant and the sergeant. There were three paths leading from the barn to the three hills that Colls occupied. We took the center path where I found that the snow was hard packed and ice-slick. It caused me to wonder as we toiled up the slope, how the squads of men below would ever be able to reach their positions to repel an attack, if it came.

Once at the summit, it seemed as if all the world lay below me, like a revelation, an icy shock, forcing me to the realities of the area of guns and planes and death, and away from the snug haven of refuge which the barn had represented. To the rear I could see the tortuous windings of the barranca where it wended its way down to the road. And I could see the flat plateau that lay beyond the fold of hill that held the barn. On the horizon again was Argente, and beyond was the wispy nothingness of sky and cloud which denoted a steady drop in the altitude of the terrain, until it finally leveled off many miles below to the fields and roads and towns of Montalban and Alfambra.

I could see that the hill to the north was slightly higher and some three hundred meters distant across a slight saddle of sparkling snow. A small group of men were upon its crest. They had a fire going and there was no visible sign of fortification—to the south there was a similar hill, though, as it lay slightly to the front of us, I could see that a small section of trench existed. It could contain, I thought wryly, about twenty men at best. There was a fire going there, too, and the trench was unoccupied. Directly in front of us was another fire and we continued on until we reached it and joined the group of soldiers with the red-headed corporal of the night before.

There was a flurry of clenched fist salutes when we arrived and the presence of Colls created an effect of jocular good humor.

"Well, what are they up to today, boys?" he asked in matter of fact tones. He had taken out his binoculars and went ahead, walking between a series of rifle pits which seemed to be the only sign of fortification on this hill, too.

Saenz went with him, and the sergeant and I followed with the rest of the men trailing after. We must have presented a beautiful sight

to the machine-gunners of the Carlist Brigade who held the Fascist positions some five hundred meters away.

"Eh, Commandante, están fortificando, siempre fortificando," a soldier with a full beard and a ragged blanket informed us. He was shaking his head in consternation as if he thought those on the other side were crazy, or, at least, not responsible. "If El Caudillo paid them hourly rates," he continued thoughtfully, "they would earn as much as a carabinero."

The others laughed, but I found nothing to laugh about and I took my binoculars to have a look at the situation. They held two hills across the deep valley that separated us, but one was long and faced the full area of the three hills that we held. It sloped down to the Argente road, and across that road they were fortifying their second hill. I followed the road west with my binoculars to where it ended in a town which was the twin of Argente, except that it was unharmed, giving a picture of prosaic quietude. Through the town a second road passed at right angles, and that I knew, was the road from Catalyud and Zaragoza to Teruel.

The soldier with the ragged blanket had been right. *They were fortifying.* There were a series of strong points facing us, each with its heavy canopy of logs and earth and connecting trenches. I thought then of the question that Lieutenant Saenz had asked the night before regarding the possibility of an attack by us, and I wondered ironically if he knew what the cost in lives of such an attack would be.

I said nothing. I think I was both angry and bitter at the so obvious contrast between the excellent positions across the way and the few miserable rifle pits that Colls had managed. The stories told of the Anarchists came back to me again, the lack of discipline, the irresponsibility, the unwillingness to accept any criticism from a source other than their own. I drew out my sketch pad and my pencil and began to outline the scene before me. As I did so, the sound of a low pitched drumming arose from the south, mounting to the awful crescendo of a steady, incessant crash of thunder.

The men around me became silent. The laughter stopped and all eyes turned in that direction, as if they would penetrate the distance of thirty kilometers to the raging hell of massed guns and tanks, and the inferno of a hundred thousand men locked in combat before the periphery of Teruel. A part of Spain would be dying there today, some of our best, and perhaps they would not be replaced in our time. Those of my own were dying, too—the Thaelmann Brigade, the Poles of the 14th Dombrowski. I sensed that they knew this, and their silence contained the eloquence of their sympathy and their grief—and watching them I pre-

sumptiously and smugly forgave them their lack of fortifications.

Saenz kept repeating over and over: "Aye qué malo, qué malo." And once he looked at me and said again: "Es muy malo allá, Comisario." His voice was soft, monotone, and there was a look almost of personal pain upon his face.

Then Colls became engrossed in the panoramic sketch I was making and he and the sergeant, together with Saenz offered suggestions as to the significance of certain areas, with their estimates of the guns that the areas contained. Their knowledge of the displacement of the enemy fire power revealed an awareness of how and why those guns should be placed there, and I wondered as they talked, *how they could know so much and yet do so little in regard to their own.*

After we had crossed the saddle of brilliant snow to the north hill and after I had drawn some additional sketches from that new vantage point, I asked Colls and the others to trace in their own fields of fire. It was then, I think, that I came close to an awareness of their actual positions.

We were crouched on our heels around the fire, tossing a canteen of wine from hand to hand. Colls looked at me sharply, saying: "The field of fire that you speak of, hijo, is almost non-existent. Of rifles, yes, we have one for each man, but of machine-guns, that is something else. We have two of the Hotchkiss, the English; one Breda which we took at Codo, and one Maxim. This Maxim is below on the other hill. The two English together with the Breda are in the barn. We keep them there. The Ingleses, as you know, are undependable, and though the Breda is a fine gun, it is also quite complicated and not easily field stripped in case of trouble. The Maxim is our best. It covers the road through which they would come."

He spoke the truth and I knew it and when Samper wryly offered to lay out the field of fire on the presumption that they would have something to fire with, I agreed, and my attitude mirrored theirs. It embodied the touch of irony and cynicism and the fatalistic acceptance of a situation undefined and nebulous.

Throughout the day and the afternoon the distant roar of the guns continued, and the muted throb of countless squadrons of planes was ever present. Some we could see. If they were Italian, they would come in their lines of twenties and thirties, the Capronis and the Fiats. And they would be piled in echelons and "V's" if they were Junkers and Messerschmidts of the Nazi Condor Legion. And between the distant guns and the planes the very air around us seemed to vibrate with the effect of rythmic shock. The air continued sharp, cold, and alive, in-

tensely alive, lending emphasis to the alien qualities of this area of white desolation with its focal point of the two serrated lines of hills that faced each other across the grim valley of barren rock.

Even our moods were in conflict. We would laugh and we would be serious; we drank and we talked and we moved away from the pitiful gun positions of the north hill to the somewhat less pitiful positions of the south hill which overlooked the Argente road. Here was the one existing section of trench, and here, too, the men were occupied with their fires and their low voiced conversations and their ill-concealed efforts to hide their fear and their loneliness.

Again, Colls knew each man by name. And it was evident that to them he was more than just their commanding officer. He was their friend, and he was their father, and he, not the barn in the valley below, was their final haven of refuge. I moved away from them and they left me alone while I did my sketches of the road and the terrain below.

Then the mortars started, ten long minutes of sporadic shelling from the Carlist positions. The men around the fire retired hurriedly to the trench and the rifle pits. Only Colls and Saenz and the sergeants stayed. They stood together a short distance from me while Colls checked the direction of fire through his binoculars. I, too, stayed. I continued sketching and after a few minutes they strolled casually over to stand behind me while I worked and the shells continued to fall. We said nothing. They were observing me and I knew it, and when the precipitate whirr of the mortars ceased, our silence mingled with the continued white silence around us.

After that Colls left, taking Lieutenant Saenz with him. Segalls, one of the Catalan sergeants, remained with me, and once again we went to the north hill and to the center hill and I checked my sketches from different positions, adding detail and creating as comprehensive a picture of the terrain as I was capable of doing. Colls had placed a man on each hill to check off the transportation going down the road toward Teruel, and my last act was to collect their notes for comparison and evaluation. Then we went back down the ice trail, from the south hill in the direction of the barn.

We had gone but halfway down the hill when I noticed another path extending toward the Argente road, itself. I could follow this path with my eye and I could see where it terminated in what appeared to be a section of trench. I looked at Segalls and saw that he in turn was watching me with a face that was blank and completely devoid of expression. Then I turned and went down this new path to the trench below.

I spent some fifteen minutes there, ignoring the twilight and the gathering darkness. I walked up and down its length of some three hundred feet, seeing that it was well built, deep, and with an evenly spaced series of rifle points for the men who would occupy it. I noted, too, with wonder, that there were also three small bunkers for the placement of machine-guns and one large bunker for the Company headquarters. It could hold, I thought, the entire complement of Colls' two hundred and fifty men. *But it faced in the wrong direction.*

"Why?" I thought. "Why here?"

I lighted a cigarette and viewed the area in front of the trench through the firing slit of the Company Command bunker. The trench was completely hidden from the fascist positions on the other side of the hill, but it had been placed so that it still commanded the road and the entire plain of Argente. It was even sheltered from the hill above by a small series of overhanging bluffs. *And then I knew.*

With that knowledge the veneer of smugness, and in some cases, presumptious arrogance which I had felt for them, left me completely. In its place was remorse and humility, a deep understanding, and a new concept of Colls and the men around him.

If an attack should come, they with their pitiful weapons would be swept from the hills by the first barrage of artillery and the planes and the surge of tanks. They were without any form of transport, with no means to get away, and they would be slaughtered and there could be no retreat. And if they streamed out onto the flat plateau between the hills and the town of Argente, they would be cut down by the tanks and the cavalry. So this, Colls must have thought, was the only way. Here they would retreat and here they would make their stand, and they would die here, but they would die together. To a man they were volunteers of the Anarchist movement and capture, too, meant certain death.

As I stood there the question that Samper had put to me the night before came back with all its clarity—"Is it your intention to attack through here?" And now I knew its meaning, because if we did, then some of them might live, and if we didn't they would die, and it was as simple as that.

THERE is not much left to tell, except for the many small things, the solemnity, the laughter, the fear, and the courage, the scraps of personal conversation, and the feeling of closeness, of a camaraderie, and a shared, fixed fate which so bound them all together, and which now, *because I knew,* made me a part of them.

Night fell again and once more we retired to the barn where we smoked and drank and were served a hot meal of mutton and garabanzos. I used the field phone to call my Battalion Staff in the little town on the plain below. I briefly outlined the situation, telling of the enemy and his positions, and of the constant stream of transport on the road for Teruel. I said nothing of the trench below the hill. It would have made no difference, and without a personal knowledge of the men and Colls, and their lives and their thoughts, it would not have been understood.

Then I worked out a master contour map of the entire area using the sketches and the notes and the coordinates I had made. I worked while the soft voices and the muted laughter and the thousand sounds of men preparing to sleep continued around me. I even remember the words of Colls and the others beyond the candle light of the table. Colls was conducting an impromptu lesson in Esperanto which eventually led to a discussion of the meanings of words—we call it semantics now.

When I had finished I threw the map to Colls and poured myself a cup of wine. *I had placed the trench section on the map.*

He studied it in silence and Samper and Saenz and the others drew close and studied it, too. Then he returned it to me.

"Bien," he said. "It is a good map, hijo. You have done your work well."

"Perhaps," I said. "Now tell me something that I wish very much to know. Is it a certain thing in your mind, Commandante, that they will attack through here?"

"Yes, hijo," Colls said briefly while the others watched me with their pride and their sad awareness that they had failed to protect me from a knowledge of their fate.

"But why here?" I asked. "And when? if it comes."

"Because we dominate the road," he said. "And because for them it is a necessary thing—and they will come soon."

"And that is the reason for the trench, then, because you cannot hold?"

"Perhaps we will, hijo, we do not know. But you are right about the trench below. It is a surprise for them if they come, una sorpresa——" He laughed then, lightly, almost cheerfully. "It is a good trench, hijo, as you have seen, and we should be able to hold them for quite some time."

We talked some more about important things and about inconsequential things, and then we slept.

At three in the morning I was awakened by Lieutenant Samper and

he motioned me to the phone. The message was brief. The Battalion was pulling out and a staff car would meet me on the road below in half an hour—and that was that. I got my gear together, the bedroll, my carbine, my binoculars, the mapping equipment, and my now useless maps. The haversack with the food and the cigarettes I left for them.

It was almost as if in a dream that I moved from bed roll to bed roll saying goodbye and "salud" to Saenz and Samper and the sergeants who were awake to view my departure and to give me the abrazo and the handclasp. Last of all I said goodbye to Colls.

He walked to the door with me, saying: "You will be going down there, hijo, but do not fear. It will go well. I know this, and perhaps sometime in the future we shall meet again, and I shall show you my town and my home and a Spain that is not at war."

These things he said to give me confidence and courage, because "down there" was Teruel, and he knew that beneath my veneer of bravado I, too, like all men, was afraid. And I think now that it was like saying goodbye to someone already dead, the weariness in every line of his body, the pallor of his face and the gray of his hair. Only his eyes seemed aware of me. They were so alive, and so intensely aware of life.

"I thank you," I said, "for many things. And I hope you are right in that we will meet again. But now, I wish you to accept something from me, because you do not have one, and I do not need it."

I took the Mauser automatic which I had carried since Fuentes Del Ebro, holster and all, and I pressed it into his hands.

"Gracias," he said simply. He took the gun, accepting the gesture as he did the weapon, with the dignity and sensitive understanding of my feelings, my youth, and my frustration.

I turned away from him to the guide who waited for me by the door, and as I went into the cold and the darkness his voice followed me, saying: "Adios, hijo, suerte!" The hot tears were in my eyes then, and they were tears of anger and frustration and a deep feeling of sorrow. The pathetic gesture—I had given him a thirty-eight automatic to take the place of the machine-guns and the mortars and the grenades and the anti-tank weapons he would never have.

SO WE went down to join the Lincoln Battalion where they had met head-on the probing fingers of the advancing legions of the Tercio in the snows of Altas de Celades—and from there to Teruel, itself, where the full brigade of the Americans and the English and the Canadians held for three weeks against the lines of artillery massed hub to hub

and the waves of attacking planes and men on the flat plains of Concud and the valley of the Turio before Teruel. We held and that is history. And it was expected that we would do that, because we were the International Brigades and in the main we were Communists. But, like the others who had gone before us, the 11th Thaelmann Brigade, the Spanish soldiers of the People's Army, we, too, were decimated.

And later, after a short time, I read from a hospital bed the news of the "Parte de guerra" concerning a fascist breakthrough at Argente. It said simply that "forces at the service of the foreigner, with the aid of great quantities of guns and aviation, have penetrated to the outskirts of Alfambra."

They had moved fast, two days perhaps, no more. Argente had been overrun. Argente the pathetic mound of stones, and with it Colls —Colls and Samper and Saenz and Segalls and two hundred and fifty men.

They had known they would die there in the icy winds of the death-cold hills. To a man they knew it. And, in the freezing nights, some of them had wept because of it. They wept and they cried, but in the end they had accepted it—and Colls and the others had taken them to the long trench below the hill.

LIKENESS IN THE THEATRE

JOHN CONDELL

The following observations have been sent us by a contemporary writer for the theatre. They are excerpted from a larger body of notes, which accounts for their informal and suggestive quality. Since they challenge well-established opinions of what plays and dramatic presentation ought to be like, we present them to our readers for discussion.—*The Editors.*

"In imitation there should be a tinge of the 'unlike.' For if imitation be pressed too far it impinges on reality and ceases to give an impression of likeness."—Seami Motokiyo (Waley's translation).*

1

AND this remark was of such importance to you because of its possible relationship to that repeated experience which you have been trying to illuminate, most recently at the night game at Ebbets Field—a doubleheader. The first game, in daylight, was baseball and that was that,—theatrical elements, yes, but still primarily an athletic contest (and Robin Roberts in very bad form). But the second game, as the daylight washed out and as the night lights came on, was transformed for you into something profoundly theatrical. The experience was very specific—it had to do with the look of the whole field and, of course, of the players. It was a chalky look—as if all the colors had taken on a tangible quality —a granular, powdery, "rub-off" immediacy—and as a direct result of that powdery immediacy of the colors, a distance actually was effected in the total scene.

It doesn't matter that this can be explained, that you were simply reacting to the very nature of night lighting on a baseball park. The effect remains and it has haunted you ever since—and you know it has something to do with the effect you wish to create in the theatre. Did this sense of a chalky color, a powdery surface, have to do with clowning, the circus, the mask? And these associations came into your mind at that time—not just now in cerebration. It is certainly true that the

* Arthur Waley in the introduction to *The No Plays of Japan*: "The NO owes its present form chiefly to the genius of two men: Kwanami Kiyotsugu (1333-1384) and his son Seami Motokiyo (1363-1444)."

second game became less real (as baseball)—you became more enchanted with it as a kind of dramatic spectacle as you became less involved in it as an athletic contest. Actually, it would be more exact to say that you became more enchanted with it as a dramatic spectacle as you became more involved in it as a new and somehow strange athletic contest. The athletic contest had become the *enactment* of a game. (Compare this phrase, *the enactment of a game* with Aristotle's "the imitation of an action.")

To pursue Seami: the logic of his statement presupposes the acceptance of an already given postulate, which would be: "Theatrical imitation to be effective must give an impression of likeness." And the rest of his statement then follows with the word "therefore" implied: "(Therefore) in imitation there should be a tinge of the 'unlike,'—for if imitation be pressed too far it impinges on reality and ceases to give an impression of likeness."

In another form, the assumed statement, upstream, is as follows: "In the theatre an impression of likeness is essential to entertainment, i.e., is pleasurable."

2

POETRY in the theatre achieves two effects: first—the poetry of the structural concept as a whole together with the poetry in the actual lines achieves that sense of compressed necessity—of truth taken by surprise—of unexpected illumination—lightning on the darkened landscape—all of these being really the same thing—and one of the two essential "faces" of the theatre experience. Second—and because of the first point—or rather *by means* of the first point, poetry in the theatre achieves by its very nature (which is point one) that effect of the chalky surface—of the imitation which is neither attenuated from the real to the point of abstraction, nor faithful to the real to the point of naturalism. And naturalism is *not* theatrical except in the most mechanical terms: theatrical only to the extent that sheer theatre equipment is theatrical—a stage, lights, actors, make-up, a beginning and end to the material—but the essential nature of the theatre is not present.

There is a dialectical relationship between points one and two—they are not separate, additive things—they are inseparable—for it is by means of the first that the second is achieved. By means of a pursuit of necessity in the conceptual structure and the lines—by means of this very intensification of speech and action—the audience is not only given the excitement of truth taken by surprise, but also the excitement

of objectivity, of looking in upon life, upon the chalky surface of make-up (masks), upon actors at play and obviously unreal (point two),—but *very seriously at play for the highest and most terribly real stakes* (point one).

And it is surely obvious how "two" happens because of "one": the attempt to catch truth by surprise, the essential need of the poet to pursue necessity, this creates a conceptual structure and dialogue sufficiently intensified (reduced, heavily-freighted, clarified, simplified, abstracted, etc.) to set this structure and dialogue apart from the structure and dialogue of daily life, thereby enabling the audience to enjoy the experience of objectivity—of looking in upon life—while at the same time, because of the very nature of poetry in the theatre, it is also enjoying a deep involvement in the truth of the play, in the effects of illumination.

And this enjoyment in a deep involvement does not necessarily mean "identification," that shibboleth of theatre talk today—the constant cry being "but I couldn't identify!" As if *total* identification were the sought-for and ultimate theatre experience. Not that identification is not an inevitable element of both the experience of involvement and objectivity described above. After all, these are human actors in a situation representative of human society and therefore, even at the very base, there is identification. ("Good" people can even recognize the truth in the action of "bad" people. And this recognition is not *pure*. It is based on the deep, subjective evil in everybody and is therefore a kind of identification.) But the excitement of experiencing the illumination of truth caught by surprise, and the excitement of the objectivity upon witnessing a look at life (not at all in the sense of a look as "a slice of life"—but in the sense of a look at "the enactment of a game"), certainly do not require a great deal of self-identification (although some plays may require it—or, at any rate, receive it.)

Actually, to go about demanding a great deal of self- identification in the theatre experience, as many people seem to do, is excessively inindividualistic and is no doubt a reflection of bourgeois psychology in decadence. (The *ethos* of Athens, 450 B.C., as against the Hellenistic *pathos* in Ernest Pfuhl—*Masterpieces of Greek Drawing and Painting*.)

On the other hand, despite this uninformed, benighted cry for "identification—identification," the true nature of the theatre experience is usually present in most productions even if to a very small degree, so that audiences are always getting some of the real thing along with all their cultivation of bad taste. Not that, in the long run, the theatre couldn't be entirely done in by the continued dominance and increase of prosaic representationalism or utterly fanciful escape.

3

IN CONFIRMATION of these notes, look at your experience yesterday at the American Museum of Natural History: the miraculously exact re-creations of animals in their environments (those two wolves across the snow at midnight!), so perfectly exemplifying Seami's statement: ". . . If imitation is pressed too far it impinges on reality and ceases to give the impression of likeness." All that miraculous stuff behind glass—so exhaustively lifelike and thereby so precisely dead! Also true, of course, of all the small-scale models of early peoples at their daily tasks, although not to the same refined degree, the small models simply being less minutely mimetic in all the infinite details. (The life-size re-creation of the Pygmy family was again almost completely illusionary.)

And then, suddenly, in a room apart and coming forward against all this death, was the artistic, theatrical, dramatic nature of the Kwakiutl masks. And from a reading of the labels—even from such a superficial activation as that!—the dramatized generalization was re-created in that musty, museum air—*and the taxidermy of naturalism was surmounted by the lyrical mask!* Most of this dramatic activity of the Kwakiutls was without doubt purely ritualistic. On the other hand, in certain situations, the artistic achievement seems to have been sufficiently appreciated to stimulate a contest of dramas—and this implies the fully developed concept of "audience," sitting in judgment—as against the totally involved, uncritical attendance of people at a ritualistic ceremony. (It is interesting to think of the subtle difference between the total, uncritical involvement of attendants at ritualistic ceremony and the self-identification of an audience with an elaborately naturalistic portrayal.)

The dramatized generalization—the mask—is the theatrical means for the expression of the invisible flow of the social factors which have gradually transformed man the animal into man the man. We must return to the mask—and that doesn't mean to the actual mask (make-up, at any rate, *is* a mask). It means a return, on much higher ground, to the dramatized generalization. And we *are* returning. The return is already much more visible, of course, socially than artistically—but we *are* returning on the spiral to the kind of social grouping which will give currency again to the dramatized generalization.

4

AND all the above led to some consideration of the Elizabethan hero in relationship to the mask. There is more of individualistic detail

and less of dramatized generalization in these heroes than, e.g., in the heroes of the Greek theatre (before Menander—and excepting some plays of Euripides.) Nevertheless, Hamlet, Lear, Macbeth, Othello, Coriolanus, Prospero, Doctor Faustus, the Jew of Malta, Tamburlaine, Volpone, the Alchemist—these characters could all be played with actual masks and it would be interesting to attempt it. The point being that despite the reckless, eclectic piracy of the renaissance mind, these heroes of English drama did succeed in being dramatized generalizations of great potency. (It is obvious that Marlowe's and Jonson's heroes would be restricted much less than Shakespeare's in such an experiment with masks.)

And it then led to the further consideration of the emergent social grouping (the socialist grouping) in relationship to the concept of the mask. The rise of the bourgeoisie and its period of dominance has resulted in a fragmentation of even that amount of dramatic generalization that the Elizabethans were capable of. The Elizabethan playwrights were profoundly affected by the increasing individualism of the bourgeois, but, even so, they continued to write out of the large, lyrical, social excitement of the human revival. Actually, much of the tension of their plays (particularly Shakespeare's) derives from the fact that the individualization of the hero is carried to such a threatening point within the framework of a dramatized generalization. Already, here in these plays, that day can be foreseen when this framework will collapse into something not at all representative and poetic but merely particular and prosaic.

The mask of the social group looking together upon its universe (upon the renaissance of Antiquity, upon the new worlds of the West and East, upon the new commodities from the qualitative change in the methods of production)—this mask was already being fragmented by the self-assertion of the successful bourgeois and his careful separating of himself from his former friend and relative, the expropriated peasant. The dramatics came down off the Parnassus of the great period and settled either into the cynical, sophisticated despair of the "private theatres," writing mainly for the ear of the doomed, aristocratic gentlemen (e.g., the plays of Marston)—or tried to write in sympathetic detail of the emerging middle class man (Dekker's *The Shoemaker's Holiday*)—or, and mainly, went off into the puff of romantic tragicomedy (Beaumont and Fletcher).

And that was the turning point—after which the proscenium stage and its ultimate naturalism are to be considered as a reflection of the predatory individualism required of the bourgeois by his economic sys-

tem. The masks of dramatic generalization survive mainly in the various religious services that the bourgeois attends. Wherever the bourgeois is still in the saddle, he attends a religious service at specified intervals where he puts on the mask of social responsibility in payment for the sins that he has committed since his last attendance and which he must again commit before his next attendance if he is to go on surviving as a man of his class. (Philanthropic gestures are merely the ostentations expression by the bourgeois of his sense of guilt.) In this way, the religions everywhere have been corrupted by the hypocritical use of the social mask by the ruling class.

These corrupt religions are used by the ruling class not only as a means for their own absolution and for the creation of an illusion of an integrated society, but also (and thereby) as a means of deterring the working class from acting out its complete significance (the achievement of socialism). Class-consciousness must take place only in the scriptures and the bourgeois hopes that when his employees witness the downfall and subsequent elevation of the lowly in church ritual that they will experience sufficient catharsis to keep them quiet during the week. The bourgeois who has underpaid, overcharged swindled and cheated (all within the law) kneels in prayer beside his victim, the workingman who has been led to feel guilty of God knows what so that he will not observe how innocent he is.

Theme for a play: the attempt of the bourgeoisie to suppress the emerging mask.

A man and woman are alone. They are "self-made," *nouveau riche* people. As they climbed up to their present eminence of commodity consumption, they had cast away one mask of integrity after another—until now they have nothing left but their competitive individuality. They are about to have a social engagement with people very much like themselves. The evening ahead looks dreary as all hell to both of them. There is a violent quarrel. The social engagement is called off and the couple stay at home to look at their life. They discover (they knew it all the time) that the people they would like to see this evening are among those people whom they stopped seeing "on their way up" —the people who were consciously striving to assume the mask of social responsibility every day—not just on Sunday. These discarded masks, i.e., these castoff people, are then brought into the play. *Who are these people?*

FIVE POEMS

THOMAS MCGRATH

THE LAST WAR POEM OF THE WAR

Now is the first day of autumn, all politics and pose:
The generals talk war in parable, the poets in prose,
The living walk round in circles, the upright dead lie in rows.

Half upright in a chair in the body in which I die,
But not contained in the prolonged circle of your day,
How easy to write poems of your Other Way!

How easy to proclaim your perfect sacrifice:
Pro patria mori, the Hanged God dies;
The orators walk widdershins across your eyes.

And easy enough for me, with my questionable needs
To enhymn you in the fencing of my personal creeds
Or feel you've gone wilder than the blown autumn seeds.

All easy variants of the need to forget—
To shove you under for good: and in any case what net
Could take you now? But I will solve you yet

Though nineteenth century poets in contemporary poses
(Or generals) rime our bad blood into grass and roses
Or wash it out of their paper towers with hoses.

MOTTOES FOR A SAMPLER ON HISTORICAL SUBJECTS

The Puritans at Plymouth stayed
Drunk all year in the tropic weather.
They set their phallic may-poles up
And danced all night with Increase Mather.
The national history thus is one
Of democratic action,
Says Sylvan S. Historian.

Through Uncas and Geronimo
The War of the Elect was won,
And wage and chattel slaves were freed
Following Shays' Rebellion.
So we unite all principles,
With profane Greek and Talmud skills,
Says the sweet singer of General Mills.

Haywood, the Peoples' Commissar,
After the Diet of Wounded Knee,
Adopted the theses of Joe Hill
The Delegate for Poetry.
So history proves what we all know:
We're revolutionary too,
Croons the Stock Exchange Review.

Then why does each mad house, every jail
Fill up while through the indifferent sky
(Where glow the heavens with last steps of day)
The bombers and the generals fly?
Bemused across the campus grass,
Seeing darkly, as through a glass,
The earnest history students pass.

A SIXTH HERESY OF PARSON CHANCE

To strong men flat upon their backs,
Any dwarf looks bunyanesque;
The idiot with *love* to parse

Seems wiser than an odalisque
To eunuchs, and the verb *to find*
Is lost in the countries of the blind.

The issue of the bloodless men
Is a whinnying and war-like clangor;
Faster than compound interest
Awakens General Doppelganger—
The Pope of Oil, the Editor's Whore
Trumpet the masters' man to war.

The crooked and concupiscent,
And the man-with-the-bull-ring-in-his-nose
Praise a roman circus where
Only the poor must pay. The rose
Is thornless, fire chills, man is free.
And the fish are harping in the sea.

THE PAPER MAN

Often and often, seeing the Paper Man
With his bones of options and the dry buzz in his head
As of rusty prayer-wheels, where the ticker thinks
In a plague of numbers like Arabic flies—

Often I wonder if he dreams in red—
The color of bankruptcy and revolution—
As he slumbers past the seasons in the slow precession
Of the equinoxes through the Dow Jones average.

O sleeping monster! Does he ever wake
In that flat land of profit and loss—
Where the moon is red, and the sun black—
Paper thin, dimensionless, without a back?

Bad fey of numbers with the world in fee!
His dreams are lighted by widows and orphans.
But the dreams are fitful, and a marginal devil
Walks through his sleep in the shape of a match.

NIGHT SONG

Midnight, and day's end;
But who can say amen?

He who would prey or slay
has prospered all the day.

She who would only love
Now whores on the cold grave,

Grieving. I sing alone.
The absolution of song

Falls on the inner ear—
But they do not hear or care.

(Still, I cannot blame—
Would bless if I could,

Who know how the world drives
Past all that soul can bear.)

I sing them a cold theme
(Made from the faithless moon)

Of indifference and joy,
Joy and indifference,

Made as I make this poem
From the eternal and time,

From midnight and day's end.
Made to say Amen

To the lovers and murderers
In life's holy orders,

Wantons who curse or bless
The stations of their dust—

As I write or make love:
To keep the night alive.

RiGhT FaCe

A Blow to Beauty

For nearly ninety years, the building in which Abel had his studio has provided working quarters for many serious artists. Now, several are said to fear that the charges brought against Abel may have tainted the building's reputation.—The *New York Times.*

Pie in the Sky

Fortune Confiscated by Soviet Is Left
To Two Women Here by Russian Emigre.
—Headline in the *New York Times.*

". . . 'twere well
It were done quickly."

There has been recent talk of an "American" plot to overthrow the leftist regime. One can only hope if we ever lend our efforts to so dangerous an endeavor that we may be both anonymous and successful. —C. L. Sulzberger in the *New York Times.*

Free World Bulletin

The present election was a fair and democratic one, and the people really expressed their will in returning the Jaganites to power. . . . If it should prove necessary to save the people of British Guiana from committing the folly of handing themselves over to a leftist totalitarianism, the lid will be clamped down again.—*New York Times* editorial.

"FAREWELL MY WIFE AND CHILD AND ALL MY FRIENDS"*

MERIDEL LE SUEUR

IT WAS Monday, August 22, 1927. The morning came up out of the dark, hot and still as August mornings often are. Ruth woke and the sunlight seemed dark and spectral. Outside, leaning over the ramshackle balcony, the cherry tree was heavy under the dark sharp leaves, the cherries hanging together. How did it happen that the cherry tree survived, coming out of the rotten ground, amongst the tenements?

She reached over and touched lightly, with her finger tips, the warm breast of Tony beside her. He clenched his fist in his sleep and she saw the way his breast looked like a shield, divided by the black curls, setting sharp into the taut belly and the lean ribbons of thigh. His dark face on the pillow was like a dirk.

She heard Mrs. Clark moving in the next room. Why was she up so early? Surely they had kept it from her, she didn't guess that this was the day they would murder Sacco and Vanzetti. Hal, the organizer from the Sacramento Valley, was asleep on the couch but she could see only the rickety balcony and the cherry trees. She lay back softly on the pillow. If she lay on her side maybe the deep foreboding in her would ease. She looked at her body and counted on her fingers two months more for her. She couldn't stand the deep pain in her breast.

She got up and tiptoed to the kitchen and stacked up the dishes from the refreshments at the Sacco and Vanzetti meeting the night before. If there was no reprieve before nightfall, this would be the

* Sacco's last words. Throughout the story the italics represent the exact words of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, labor organizers executed on framed charges of murder just thirty years ago. We are indebted to International Publishers for permission to reprint from Meridel Le Sueur's 1940 volume of short stories, *Salute to Spring*.

last meeting. She made sure there were six eggs for breakfast and then a fear came into her that the comrades had eaten all the bread last night, there were so many people to feed. No, there was that loaf she had hidden in the laundry bag.

She stood on the porch looking down into the dirty yard and the back stairs of a dozen tenements. She leaned over and picked a cherry. Without knowing it she began to cry.

O the blissing green of the wilderness and of the open land, O the blue vastness of the oceans, the fragrances of the flowers, and the sweetness of the fruits. The sky reflecting lakes, the singing torrents, the telling brooks. O the valleys, the hills, the awful Alps. O the mystic down, the roses of the aurora, the glory of the moon. O the sunset, the twilight, O the supreme ecstasies and mystery of the starry night, heavenly creature of the eternity.

Yes, yes, yes all this is real, actual but not to us, not to us who are chained. . . .

She went back to bed and lay down, the cherries dropped on the balcony. She didn't want to wake Tony, he needn't know it was the day until later. All the noises seemed so tiny, the horse's hoofs on the street, the feet walking on the walk, two feet walking by sounded so lonely. She and Tony seemed tiny for a moment.

I remember when we youst live in in South Stroughton, Mass. in our littel sweet home and frequently in evening Rosina, Dante and I, we youst go see a friend about fifteen minute walk from my house and by way going to my friend house he always surpis me by aske me such hard question. So we ust remain there a few hour and when was about nine ocklock we youst going back home and Dante in that time of hour was always sleeping, so I youst bring him always in my arm away to home; sometime Rosina she yust halp me to carry him and in that same time she youst get Dante in her arm both us we youst give him warm kisses on is rosy face. . . .

She got up and opened the drawer in her dresser. She took out a letter which wanted Tony to go to the Imperial Valley to help organize the lettuce workers. She looked around the room, then like a sleepwalker she got back into bed, watching Tony, eased herself down, put the letter slowly under the mattress.

She lay still listening. Mrs. Clark must have gone to sleep again. When she thought of Sacco and Vanzetti and how they would kill them, the bright sunlight seemed to turn inside out, to darken as in an eclipse. She didn't want Tony to get out of her sight. If she could hold him till the baby was born. She thought of all their times together, the way he told her about the old country, the way he first bought her a new dress,

a white one with a colored sash, and the way she had never been lonely since she knew him.

Sacco had a wife and a boy and a girl. His wife, too, had to wake up this morning. . . .

I remember a year ago on our love day when I bought the first a lovely blue suit for my dear Rosina and the dear remembrance it still rimane in my heart. That was the first May nineteen twelve, the celebration day of the five martyrs of Chicago. So in morning I dress up with my new blue suit on and I went over to see my dear Rosina and when I was there I asked her father if he won't let Rosina come with me in city town to buy something and he said yes. So in about one ocklock we both went in city town and we went in big stor and bought a broun hat a white underdress a blue suit one pair broun stocking one pair broun shoes and after she was all dress up I wish you could see Rosina how nise she was look. . . .

She propped her head on her elbow and looked at Tony's fine face, made for sun, made for vineyards, for the prairie. . . .

Sixteen years since I left my fathers vineyard. Most of night I used rimaine near vineyard to sleep to watch the animal not to let coming near our vineyard. The little town of Torremaggiore it is not very far and I used go back and forth morning and night and bring my dear an poor mother two big basket full of vegetables and fruit and big bounch of flowers. Every morning before the sun shining used comes up and at night, I used put one quart of water on every plant of flowers and vegetables and the small fruit trees. While I was finishing my work the sun shining was just coming up and I used always jump upon well wall and look at the beauty sun shining ane I do not know how long I used rimane there look at the enchanted scene of beautiful. If I was a poet probably I could describe the red rays of the loving sun shining and the bright blue sky and the perfume of my garden and flowers, she singing of the birds. So after all this enjoyment I used come back to my work singing I used full the basket of fruit and vegetables and bounch of flowers that I make a lovely bouquet and in the middle of the longest flowers I used always put one of lovely red rose and I used walk one mile away from our place to get one of them good red rose that I always hunting and love to find, the good red rose. . . .

Tony flailed his arms, she put out her hand so he wouldn't strike her. He woke and looked at her. With a cry she turned to him.

"But if it's morning in Boston, then what is it here?"

"Well, it will be between nine and ten in Oakland then."

"It won't happen, shut up. They won't dare do it."

"Tony, what will happen?" She held the egg in her hand.

"How do I know," he said dowsing his face in water. "How does anybody know. God damn it, where's the towel?"

She was holding it for him. "Can they, will they like before, postpone it?"

"I don't know," he said, "Nobody knows. I better wake up Hal. We got to be at the square in San Francisco by noon."

"Listen Tony, please . . ."

"No, I told you you can't go, honey. It's too near your time."

She wanted to be near him, she didn't even want him to go in the other room to wake up Hal. She wished they had some bacon with the eggs. They wouldn't have had the eggs only some comrade from Sacramento brought them up and said they were for the new baby.

Mrs. Clark came in, "Honey, I can't remember very well if the sun was shining, or if it was a gray day at Ludlow . . ."

"At Ludlow," Ruth said, not looking at her. "How many eggs can you eat, Mrs. Clark?" Everyone had to call her Mrs. Clark because she wanted to remember her husband who was killed at Ludlow. Now you had to be careful, sometimes great crevasses opened in her mind and then she saw the tents, the dead children, the women running at Ludlow. Sometimes this went away and she was a good worker, a splendid street speaker. She was a powerful stocky woman with red hair and a powerful chest, a regular bellows for lungs she had developed speaking outdoors. She could be heard a block in a pure strong voice. She had a broad strong Irish face and now she kept pushing her hair back from her face, and brushing her face as if cobwebs were in front of her. This was always a sign she was remembering again.

Ruth tried to be busy. Could she know what today was? They had tried to keep it from her. They were afraid for her strong fine mind.

"What time is it?" she said and Ruth thought she meant the execution.

"What time is it? It's eight o'clock, Mrs. Clark." And for a moment they heard the clock tick.

"What is it today?" she said then sitting down by the table, her large white arms in front of her. "There's going to be something today, that meeting last night, for the life of me I can't think of it."

"Oh we are not going anywhere, not us. I think there's a meeting in S. F., the boys are going but you have to take care of me."

Mrs. Clark laughed, "Oh you, not you. You're strong as an ox. Why, before my first child was born I traveled all over Colorado speaking in mining towns, company thugs as thick as flies. What was that I asked you a while ago?"

"What time it was."

"Not that, something else, funny thing my mind . . ."

Hal and Tony came in. Hal washed. He was a strong blond Irishman full of laughter, a good organizer, and between the two men, so different, there was some strong bond that made Ruth jealous. She watched them as she put the toast on the table, everything seemed to be known between them as between lovers. . . .

So in one lovely morning in September when the rays of sunshine are still warm in the soul of oppressed humanity, I was looking for a job around the city of Boston and away I was going towards South Boston, I met one of my most dear comrades, and just as soon as we saw each other we ran into the embrace of the other and we kissed each other on both sides of the cheeks. And yet it was not a very long time since we had seen each other, but this spontaneous affection it shows at all times in the heart of one who has reciprocal love and sublime faith and such a remembrance it will never disappear in the heart of the proletarian. . . .

She listened to every word. She wouldn't leave the room for fear he would say something, perhaps he knew about Imperial Valley. She stood close behind Tony looking at Hal across the table, looking down at the lean head of her husband. They wolfed their food. They seemed to be always hungry. She always felt there was never enough to fill them. She was always fearful there wouldn't be enough.

Mrs. Clark looked at the two of them as if trying to remember something. They did not talk of Sacco and Vanzetti because of her, they talked about organizing the asparagus workers in the Sacramento Valley. But from the anxiety and sorrow in their eyes, the way they passed the toast to each other, she knew they tenderly salved each other's sore hearts.

Mrs. Clark looked out the window at the cherry tree, at the yard worn smooth by the bare feet of children.

"Listen, honey," Tony said reaching back and grasping her hands, "have I got a clean shirt, maybe a white shirt would be cooler."

She held his hand. She felt shy with Hal looking at her. "Come with me," she said pulling him. He looked at Hal as if he would have to humor her, you know why. She held his hand in the other room, "Listen, Tony, please . . ."

"No, for god's sake, you know yourself . . ."

"But what will we do? Mrs. Clark is going to have one of her days, what will we do waiting and waiting? We won't know anything, but what the papers say, we won't know a thing . . ."

"I'll send somebody back, honey. Listen," he said nosing into her neck softly, "Darling, don't worry, everything will be all right with me.

I'll take care of myself, I'll send somebody back here, I'll send Murphy back, I promise, to tell what happens. I don't think the police will do anything, if the demonstration is large enough. . . ."

"You be sure. You promise . . . cross your heart . . ."

"Yeah, sure, for god's sake, honey, I know how you feel but you can't act like this . . ."

She felt ashamed and dropped his hand and stood still.

"Ready," Hal said from the balcony. "Some style having cherries hanging right into your mouth here." He had hung a cluster on his lapel. Ruth laughed, the three of them stood close together laughing. Tony had his arm around her shoulder and Hal put his arm around her other shoulder and they stood in the morning sun of August laughing and he popped a cherry into her mouth. "Don't worry," he said tenderly, and they looked awkward and backed into the other room and got their caps. She ran after them. "Oh Tony," she thought about the letter. He turned back looking up the steps at her, laughing like such a boy and yet so strong like a weapon and Hal turning and saluting her from the walk, she felt all her fear gone and a strong pride came in her and she watched the two walk down the street without looking back.

At noon she left Mrs. Clark and went out on the hot street and looked at the headlines. THAYER REFUSES PARDON, JUDGE REFUSES. The streets looked unnatural, unreal. She felt a little sick so she went back to the hot flat. Mrs. Clark was lying on the bed. "Is that you, Ruth?" "Yes," she said and sat down in a chair as if in a tomb.

She thought of getting a ferry and going to San Francisco anyway but she sat on in the chair. She didn't know what to do. The clock from the kitchen ticked. Mrs. Clark came to the door her hair wild, looking strange as if she had been crying. "What is it?" she said, "I don't feel good," she passed her hands in front of her broad white face. These things leave a mark, Ruth thought, on every face, on every heart. . . .

She had difficulty in breathing, the child, the heat, the terrible event seemed to press into her flesh on every side. "Look, we'll have some lunch," she said. She looked in the icebox and saw an old meat ball sitting on a saucer. "There's some old lettuce Murphy got eysterday the market had thrown away, it's pretty good on the inside." Mrs. Clark said, "We can have a salad."

"A salad would be good all right."

She started fixing a salad. Mrs. Clark kept looking at her. Margo, a young prostitute from above, came downstairs and asked if she could pick some cherries from their porch. "Ain't it awful, kid?" she said.

"Shhh . . ." Ruth said, rolling her eyes toward Mrs. Clark. They

went out on the porch and whispered, pretending to pick cherries. "Today will they do anything?"

"I don't know, nobody knows what will happen."

"O the bastards . . . the law, the lousy bastards." And she said some more in a low even whisper, dropping cherries into the basket.

"Shhh," Ruth said, "let me know if you hear anything, I can't get out very good."

"O.K. I sure will. I certainly will. The bastards, that's the law for you, that's it, a shoemaker and a fish peddler, for christ's sake. I seen it too. I know it. God knows, the lousy bastards. . . ."

"Is it men she's swearing at?" Mrs. Clark said. "Does she think it's just men? Lie down, honey, take a rest. I'll wash the dishes. I'll clean up a bit. Lie down, take it easy, take a sleep, dream a good dream." Mrs. Clark put her arm around the girl. "You're sweet and the things you'll see, and the grand things the child will be seeing. Don't fret. Take a sleep, darling."

"That's it," Ruth said, "that's it, maybe we shouldn't be having a child. Maybe Tony will go away. Maybe no one should be having children nowadays what with everything happening like it's happening."

"Nonsense, stuff and nonsense," Mrs. Clark half shouted. She filled her great lungs with air, "Nonsense." She stood a moment, many things passing over her strong and lovely face. "It's the very time to be having children, knowing how it is to fight. . . ." She began to pace the floor talking in a rich flow of Irish memories with the great and wonderful histrionic power in her. Ruth listened to the legend of her life and the power and great fight in her and dozed off in the heat.

When she woke she was wringing wet and the clock had stopped and Mrs. Clark had stopped talking. Everything was very quiet. She washed her face and she didn't see Mrs. Clark anywhere. So she went down the steps into the street that seemed full of slow moving people. There were fragments of talk along the street. . . . "It looks like they're gonna do it." The papers had big headlines, another extra, no reprieve. She went back quickly, past the old mansions now made into dirty tenements. She sat on the porch waiting for Murphy. Everyone who passed her stopped, leaning their packages on the railing and spoke of Sacco and Vanzetti in low moaning tones. She saw Murphy, a little bandy legged Irishman, walking fast up the walk. He waved to her and grinned. "What a day," he said wiping his face on a bandanna.

"Murphy, what happened?"

"God almighty," he said. "There was a good meeting in front of the library, the pigeons walking around and mothers sitting by the fountains with their kids, we had some singing, everything was fair as you please

when god almighty, I never saw such a black sight, down from all the civil buildings, down the fine stone steps, from behind every pillar, god help us, vomited the black puke of the cops. They arrested some of our speakers, drove everyone out, even the pigeons god save us. Tony was safe so breathe easy and then the parade got going, fair to middlin' parade, and then the cunning cops with their fine wormlike brains managed to convoy the parade straight into the city jail and clapped shut the doors neat as a pin and there were our people, walked big as life into a trap and there they were in jail with the reporters looking for beards and not a beard amongst 'em, not a whisker, not a bolshevik hair. Hal was caught in the mess. Tony is supposed to speak over here tonight so he won't be home for supper. There's a heap to do and I got in touch with a lawyer. . . ."

"Oh Murphy, thanks a lot."

He turned and hurried off on his bandy legs that covered the country twice yearly.

Ruth went upstairs and Mrs. Clark was sitting quite still in the kitchen. "We're going to a show," she said.

A breeze came up on the dirty hot streets, children sat on the curbs, women fanned on door steps. She kept looking for Tony. Every lean neck, grey cap . . . she kept looking for him. Mrs. Clark walked beside her with a big man's stride, her hands locked behind her back. She was silent.

Ruth went down side streets where there would be no papers. She was fearful an extra boy would cry out. The streets were dark and sad, men and women sitting silent on the stoops. "I'm looking for Tony," she said. "He might be speaking on the street." Mrs. Clark walked beside her saying nothing. But it was early yet. The two women walked on down the street. Ruth looked at every clock. Five thirty . . . six. . . . They went to a little show down near the wharf. They had only thirty cents. The show was hot and full of men. A big clock shone in the darkness by the screen. Six twenty.* She could never remember what the picture was. Then the clock said seven. Mrs. Clark reached over and patted her shoulder and put her strong hand on her knee but kept looking at the picture.

Everyone seemed uneasy. Men kept looking back out the door. She got up and went t othe door and looked out into the street. She could hear or see nothing. She went back. There was a contsant stir in the stinking darkness. The clock now said eight o'clock. At eight-thirty she said, "I'm going, Mrs. Clark. You can stay."

"What time is it?" Mrs. Clark said, "Is it time yet?"

"For what?"

"Is it time they are going to kill Sacco and Vanzetti? Have they done it yet?"

The two women looked at each other. "You knew all the time?" Ruth said.

"Come on," Mrs. Clark said, "come on, darling," and she tenderly walked with the girl out of the hot darkness filled with restless men, out into the street. It was much cooler. Men walked up and down. The young prostitutes came down the black hot hallways and stood on the streets. They walked down to the corner where Tony usually spoke. Sure enough, there was a crowd that poured into the square, and Tony, his lean face lifted up, his body like a jack knife, leaning toward the men. . . .

If it had not been for these things, I might have live out my life talking at street corners to scorning men. I might have die unmarked, unknown, a failure. Now we are not a failure. This is our career and our triumph. Never in our full life could we hope to do such work for tolerance, for joostice, for man's understanding of man as now we do by accident. Our words . . . our lives . . . our pains . . . nothing! The taking of our lives—lives of a good shoemaker and a poor fish peddler —all! That last moment belong to us . . . that agony is our triumph. . . .

Tony was saying in a clear voice, "They can kill the bodies of Sacco and Vanzetti but they can't kill what they stand for—the working class. It is bound to live. As certainly as this system of things, this exploitation of man by man will remain there will always be this fight, today and always until . . ."

Children played around the black clot of listening men, who looked like men perpetually in mourning, looking up at Tony in his white shirt which she had ironed.

She edged up closer, skimming the edge of the pool of men. Mrs. Clark came with her. Tony saw her and raised his hand and she raised her hand and he smiled down on her. The chairman took out his watch. There was a silence as he held the tiny timepiece up. She couldn't think anything was happening now, were they killing two men in Massachusetts? She stood with her hand over the kicking child.

The man put down the watch, there was silence. Tony jumped down as another man began to speak and took her elbow and they left the crowd, turned the corner into a drug store. "You can have a soda," Tony said, "I got a dime."

"Oh but . . ."

"Go on have a soda," he said.

"It's over," she said. "They've done it."

"All right," she said and looked down at the table. The girl brought

"Yes," he said. "Let's don't talk about it now.'

the soda. She looked at Tony and took his hand under the table. She turned one of the straws toward him and he took a drink. He gripped her hand. She was going to tell him now about the letter.

"Ruth," he said before she could begin, "I'm going to take Hal's place in the Sacrament Valley, until he gets out of the can, maybe longer."

"All right," she said, "I wanted to tell you there was a letter about going to the Imperial Valley."

"Yes, I know," he said. "The comrade from that district talked to me about it today but now I am going to the Sacramento Valley."

"I didn't give you the letter," she said.

"I know," he said, "that was bad, never mind. You'll be all right," he said in a low voice, leaning to her. "There'll be enough comrades stay at the flat to pay the rent and the food, if you and Mrs. Clark do the cooking. Maybe I can even send you something." She knew he wouldn't be able to, probably not get enough to eat himself. She would send him boxes of food, maybe a chicken if she could get hold of one.

The extras were out on the street now. They heard the boys like locust humming through the streets. "Extra . . . Extra . . ." They sat there holding hands.

"I've got to leave in twenty minutes," he said, "some comrades will be on the corner in a car. . . ."

"Twenty minutes," she said. It was so bright in there.

He paid and they went out and down a block to a little dark park, full of fragrance of bush and flower. They stood back under a bush and he put his hands on her, made the lovely joke she knew about the child. There were men lying on the grass very silent, alone, and men sitting on the benches as if waiting.

"I won't go back to the corner with you," she said. "I'll be fine. I'll be all right."

"Don't hold out any letters on me again," he said. She put her arms around his neck and her hands on his smooth black head, "I'll be all right," she said.

When one loves another even in the torturous struggles as in poverty, the love remains forever, here the love goes further, that is why we are still living and we will live in spite of the inquisitors and all that have sentence us to death because the world workers want us to be free and to come back into life, in the struggle for the love and the joy of liberty for all. . . .

"I've got to beat it," he said and they stood close together for a minute and then he left her and she stood in the bush listening to his rapid steps down the walk.

I AM NOT ALONE

HENRI SALEM-ALLEG

Communication

The following undated communication has reached us indirectly. It was written by Henry Salem-Alleg, editor-in-chief of the Algier-Republicain, *the only local left-wing newspaper in Algiers. Following the suppression of his paper and the arrest of his co-editors last year, Mr. Alleg went into hiding, but he was captured and tortured by members of a punitive detachment of the French Army. His only "crime" was opposition to the colonial policy of France and to the universal military terror which has become inseparable from it. His whereabouts are unknown at present, though he was last said to be in a French concentration camp. Readers are urged to write to the President of the French Republic on behalf of this brave man.*—The Editors.

I WAS ARRESTED in Algiers on Wednesday, June 12, by the "parachutists" of the 10th Division (blue berets). It was about 6:30 p.m. when I was taken by one Lieutenant Charbonnier, which faces the Cinema Rex, on the road to Chateaument (El Biar). I was immediately taken into an office on the 3rd or 4th floor. Another officer, who in the following I shall call "the second lieutenant" (I forget his name), was there already. Lieutenant Charbonnier asked me to give him the names and addresses of those people who had sheltered me, with whom I had had contact and finally what I had done from the time I left my own home. I indicated that as director of *Algier Republicain* I had continued to do what I could to defend my newspaper, which had been illegally banned since September 1955, that all my efforts had been directed to enlightening public opinion on the necessity of a free press in Algeria and in particular of the reappearance of *Algier Republicain,* an indispensable precondition in my opinion for the attainment of a peaceful solution of the situation. As proof I pointed to my letters and appeals to the President of the Council and to the Ministry of Information at the time, to MM. Guy Mollet and Gérard Jaquet. As for denouncing those who had given me shelter or those wtih whom I had had contact, this I absolutely refused to do.

"I give you one chance," said Lieutenant Charbonnier: "here is a pencil and paper. Write down all you were doing and give the names of those people you met." As I continued to stand by my refusal, he turned to the "second lieutenant" and said, "There's no point in wasting our time, is there?" The other agreed, lifted the telephone and asked someone to prepare "a detachment for a big fish."

A few minutes later a "para" took me down to a lower floor. I learned later that this "para" was really an Algerian policeman attached to the 10th Parachute division. He is called Lorca and is originally from Pérregaux. On this lower floor I was taken into a room that is to serve as a kitchen when the building is completed. I was ordered to undress and to lie down on a plank, specially fitted at each end with leather thongs. My wrists were then tied above my head and my ankles fastened down by these thongs. About half and hour later Lieutenant Charbonnier appeared and asked me whether I had changed my mind. As I replied that I had not and that I protested against such odious behaviour, I received a broadside of insults and obscenities and the "session" began.

First of all I was carried (attached to the plank) into a larger room. "You recognize this apparatus?" said Lieutenant Charbonnier, showing me a magneto. Immediately a "para" seated on my chest fixed an electrode to the lobe of my right ear and the other to my finger, and electric charges followed. To prevent me from shouting, the "para" seated on my chest shoved my shirt rolled into a ball like a gag into my mouth. Meanwhile, two others tightened the thongs round my wrists and ankles, and Lieutenant Charbonnier, the "second lieutenant" and a Captain Devis, seated on packing cases and waiting for me to talk, had some bottles of beer brought and the session went on. After having sprinkled me with water several times so that it would "work better," then fixed electric pincers to my fingers, my belly, my throat and genitals, they untied me and made me get up by slapping me on the face and feet. I was made to get half dressed (vest and trousers). The "second lieutenant" made me get down on my knees and tied a tie round my throat like a cord for shaking me with and for strangling me, while he beat me in the face as hard as he could. Absolutely mad with rage he bellowed into my face: "You're going to talk, you swine, you've had it anyway, you're a dead man on reprieve. You have written articles about extortions and tortures, and now it's you that the 10th Division are working on! And what is being done here now, will soon be happening in France. What is being done to you will also be done to your Mitterand and your Duclos!" Continuing to beat me, he shouted: "Here, this is the Gestapo. . . . Do you know what the Gestapo is? You will disappear. No one knows that you have been arrested, you will die, and the wretched Republic will go up in smoke also." Then once again, with blows on the face and feet, they forced me back on to the plank. Once more undressed, I was subjected to torture by electricity, the pincers being attached to the genitals, the throat, the chest. "You don't know how to swim," said Lorca, "we'll teach you." Tying my head with a rag, they put a block of wood between my jaws, then putting the plank by the kitchen sink they held my head under the tap to which was attacher a ruber piece of piping. Three times they almost asphyxiated me completely, retrieving me at the last moment to get some breath. Each time the captain, the lieutenants and the "paras" then hammered me on the chest as hard as they could in order to evict the water which I had absorbed. The fourth time I passed out and did not regain consciousness until lying flat out on the floor. "It would have been better for you to have passed out altogether," said Lieutenant Charbonnier, "but don't believe that you can pass out every time. There are medicines for that sort of thing, too. Well then, now will you talk?"

As I remained silent, they tied up my ankles and several "paras" lifted me up, fixing my feet to a bar of iron from the "kitchen." Then I heard my tormentors saying with a laugh "Now we'll roast him!" With tapers made of rolled newspaper, Lorca burnt my genitals and my legs. Then with a cigarette he began to singe my nipples. Then the beating began, the "paras" taking it in turns.

About 4:30 on Thursday morning I was taken down; I could no longer stand up alone. Kicking me with their boots they rolled me down the stairs, they then tied my wrists high behind my back with cords and until about 8 o'clock in the morning I was thrown into a cell. Then I changed cells. It was more like a large cupboard without day-light, situated near the mess (between the "sessions" that followed I often used to hear the gramophone that they played there).

The sessions continued, with interruptions for "recuperation" until Friday. I was too exhausted to cry out or defend myself and no doubt that was the reason it was not considered necessary to tie me with bonds any more. I was no longer tied to the plank. I could not say exactly how many new torture sessions I endured, but the longest took place on Thursday afternoon, with a short interruption towards the evening, then it went on till late at night. I was always stretched out on the floor. My wrists were cut into by the thongs, and I was constantly being "shocked," even between the "sessions." Lieutenant Charbonnier, the "second lieutenant," Captain Davis, another lieutenant named Jaquet and three "paras," including Lorca, took it in turns to manipulate the lever of the magneto, which the tormentors in their jargon named "Gégene." "We must blow up his mouth," said the "second lieutenant." And opening my mouth by force they shoved a bare wire right down my throat. Under the electric charges my jaws twitched and seemed to be soldered together. My head seemed to be bursting with sparks and I seemed to see fire; I thought that my eyes wre jumping out of their sockets. In my pain, I beat my head against the earth with all the force I could muster. "Don't try to stun yourself," said the "second lieutenant," "you'll not manage that." Between two jolts, Lieutenant Charbonnier said to me: "Why take all this upon yourself? We'll take your wife, do you think that she will stand up to it in the way you do? I'm warning you, this will go on to the bitter end. No one will know that you are dead." Then the "second lieutenant" threatened to take my children (who live in France). "You know that people have been abducted from France. You know it?Your kids are arriving by plane this evening. Speak up, or they will meet with an accident." Between two electric shock sessions, the "second lieutenant" seated himself on my legs, began to burn my nipples with matches which he lit one by one, while a "para" (a new one) burnt the soles of my feet. By Friday I was not able to remain seated or even to lean up against the wall. My lips, tongue and throat were parched as wood. Those tormentors knew very well that electric shocks dry the body terribly and give one a terrible thirst. The "second lieutenant" spoke to me: "You haven't had a drink for two days, you won't drink for four. Do you know what thirst means? By this evening you'll be licking up your urine." And they poured water from one pot to another, then poured it in front of my eyes, close to my ears and even brought the pot close to my mouth and then took it away again. Then suddenly, as though he had become human again, he said: "But we're not really as bad as all that, we'll give

you a drink all the same." He went out and came back with a large zinc jug. While one "para" pinched my nose so as to force me to open my mouth, he made me absorb the contents of the receptacle, which consisted of terribly salty water.

The final session of electric shock treatment was directed by Captain Davis and was a mock preparation for execution. "It's your last chance," he said, and while he again fixed on the electrodes, one of the "paras" took out his revolver and placed it on his knees as though awaiting an order.

Finally on Friday I received a visit from an officer who in a courteous tone added: "Listen to me; I am the aide-de-camp of General Massu, answer the questions which I pose you and you will be immediately taken to hospital. In eight days, on my word of honor, you will be in France with your wife. If not, you will disappear. You are 36 years old. It's very young to die." All I could say was "So much the worse." "There's nothing left for you to do but to commit suicide. Perhaps I shall see your children one day. Do you want me to tell them that I knew their father? It pains me to see you in this condition, but you realize that if you let me go, then the others will come back."

A little later two "paras" carried me (I was no longer able to stand up alone) to another cell where there was a mattress and at last they let me rest. The next day in the afternoon, on Saturday, the whole areopagus of my tormentors gathered again in my cell. They were joined by the Commandant and two plainclothes inspectors. For half an hour they repeated all the threats which I had listened to so often: "It can last a month, two months, three months, there is all the time in the world, in the end you'll talk." "All you want is to be a 'hero,' so as to have a little plaque erected in the square in two hundred years' time." On the Monday they began to do something about my wounds. I had three large infected burns on my groin, of which I bear the scars to this day, there were burns on the nipples of my breast, on the fingers (the index and little finger) of both hands, also visible to this day, scorches on my belly, chest, genitals, and on my palate and tongue, induced by the bare electric wire plunged down my throat. For fifteen days my left hand remained paralyzed and insensible. And at night, for more than three weeks my whole body was shivering with nervous twitchings, as though I was still getting electric shocks. Right until now I still have trouble with my sight every now and again. And in addition the wounds resulting from the rubbing of the thongs that bound my wrists have left visible scars.

For one month I was detained illegally in a cell, in conditions that were materially and morally degrading. Deep into the night I would hear through the partition the shouts of men who were being tortured without interruption throughout the night. The first night I thought I heard the voice of my wife who, under the same sort of blackmail as I had undergone, was being promised the same sort of torture. I was interrogated again twice more, but with no new tortures. I was only threatened periodically with summary execution.

On Wednesday, June 26, a plainclothes officer came to me and told me that I could easily commit suicide. For in fact there were more than two meters of electric wire in the cell. On July 11, I was subjected to a final inetrrogation by Captain Faulk, who knocked me down yith a blow "so as to teach me not to answer insolently." On Friday July 12 I was interned in the camp at Lodi.

books in review

Changing World

RUSSIA IN TRANSITION, and other essays, by Isaac Deutscher. Coward-McCann, Inc., $4.50.

RUSSIA SINCE 1917, by Frederick L. Schuman. Alfred A. Knopf. $6.50.

IT IS difficult to discuss Isaac Deutscher's latest book satisfactorily in a few words. For one thing, it is a collection of essays touching upon political, economic, historical and psychological questions in connection with a variety of topics ranging from recent events in the Soviet Union to the mentality of ex-Communists. For another thing, it is the product of a keen and scholarly mind whose treatment of these subjects would require reflection even if it did not bear so closely upon current controversies in the American Left. Without appearing presumptuous, my desire to comment extensively may perhaps be taken as a measure of the substance of Mr. Deutscher's book.

Mr. Deutscher has long been known as a bitter critic of "Stalinism." Indeed, as these essays once again show, the historian and analyst in him constantly battle against an almost overpowering antipathy toward the whole course of political events during the "Stalin era." Deutscher's early condemnation of Stalin's arbitrary methods has been recently cited with approval by at least one Communist writer in this country. I shall not yield to the temptation to compare his analysis of the problem with those offered by some American progressives since the "Khrushchev revelations" (to use the convenient, but dangerous, shorthand expression which has become so popular among English-speaking progressives, without consideration of its wholly one-sided connotation of only the negative features of Stalin's rule). However, read in the context of the continuing debate in the United States over Soviet policies, the most striking thing about Mr. Deutscher's essays is perhaps his ability frequently to overcome his aversion against Stalin, relate Soviet governmental institutions and methods to Soviet social and economic developments, and pay tribute to Soviet achievements.

This ability is due to Mr. Deutscher's dynamic approach to the Soviet Union as "a world in the making, rumbling with the tremor of inner dislocation and searching for balance and shape." As a basic factor making for change, he notes that there are today in the Soviet Union four to five times as many industrial workers as there were before the revolution or even in the late 1920's, and that it has moreover become a working class of high skill and gen-

eral knowledge. He believes that the rise of bureaucracy is traceable to the original weakness of the working class. Strong enough to accomplish the revolution, he contends that it "was not strong enough to exercise actual proletarian dictatorship, to control those whom it had lifted to power," particularly as its small size was further reduced by civil war and famine. The society based on the growth and maturation of the new working class, largely composed of former peasants, was again thrown out of balance in the turmoil of the Second World War. "It is only in this decade, in the 1950's, that the vastly expanded working class has been taking shape and consolidating as a modern social force, acquiring an urban industrial tradition, becoming aware of itself, and gaining confidence."

Again, Mr. Deutscher observes that prerequisite to the establishment of an egalitarian society is the development of a nation's economic resources. The Soviet economic achievements of the 1930's, he reminds us, were largely destroyed in the war. The demobilized soldiers and wartime evacuees returning to their homes in western Russia and the Ukraine "found their native towns and villages razed to the ground. They found that the coal mines, the steel mills, and the engineering plants they had built, amid blood and tears, under the prewar Five-Year Plans, were flooded, demolished or dismantled and carried away. . . . Twenty-five million people lived in mud huts and dugouts. And, in 1946, as if to fill the cup of bitterness which victorious Russia was draining, a calamitous drought, the worst within living memory, scorched the fields and blighted the crops."

Yet by 1950-52, Soviet steel output had reached a level three to four times that at the end of the war and more than twice that of 1940. From the fourth or fifth industrial power of the world, the Soviet Union had advanced to second place behind the United States. As the capstone to this prodigious achievement—reached, incidentally, without the benefit of Washington's largesse—the Soviet Union had broken the American monopoly on atomic energy. "The tempo of postwar industrialization," Mr. Deutscher sums up, "represented a triumph of Soviet planning . . . the most momentous feat in social technology achieved in this generation." And in this context, Mr. Deutscher arrives at an historical estimate of Stalin: "As a builder of a new economy and a pioneer of new social techniques, Stalin, for all his limitations and vices—the limitations of an empiricist and the vices of a despot—is likely to leave deeper marks on history than any single French revolutionary leader."

Much as Mr. Deutscher detests it—and all thinking people abhor its excesses—he recognizes that a severe and comprehensive discipline was an essential ingredient of this accomplishment. The planners, Mr. Deutscher realistically observes, "would have been suspended in a vacuum without the sustained daily labor of the many millions of workers, skilled and unskilled, and of the technicians and managers. Many did their work willingly and even enthusiastically, bringing into it something of that spirit of devotion and sacrifice which had enabled Russia to win the war. Few blamed Stalin's government for the ruins and for the miseries which attended Russia's victory . . . . But there was also in the

Soviet people much despondency and plain demoralization. . . ."

It seems to me that no amount of words can enable Americans, who must go back to the Civil War for any comparable experience of domestic devastation, to realize more than dimly the problems that confronted the Soviet Union at the end of World War II. Add to the internal upheaval the immediate resumption of external pressures on the Soviet state, and we have some measure of the factors that not only favored the continuation of Stalin's dictatorial traits until they threatened to negate his life's work, but also the spread of an infection of chauvinism, isolationism and rigidity to large parts of the Soviet system. From the beginning, the Soviet Union has had to pioneer along a narrow road between the rocks of bureaucracy and the swamps of anarchism. Its machinery has had to be sufficiently tough to overcome the obstacles of economic, technological and cultural backwardness, cope with foreign aggression and unrivalled destruction, yet flexible and refined enough to adjust itself to every change and respond to every opportunity. How close it has come to building this self-regulating mechanism is indicated by Mr. Deutscher's observation that the changes which have occurred in recent years were not brought about by outside intervention but by "the Stalinists themselves" and as a result of developments within Soviet society.

Written over a period of nine years, the eleven essays on Soviet affairs which Mr. Deutscher has put into this volume in substantially the form in which they originally appeared, show him to be a far more perspicacious analyst than most of his Western colleagues. They also show, however, a number of what seem to me very serious weaknesses.

In the first place, there is, with one exception, a complete failure to assess the impact on Soviet society of foreign events and of the external threat, particularly in its aggravated, atomic form following World War II. In the preface to the French edition of his biography of Stalin in 1950, Mr. Deutscher emphasized his belief that "Stalinism was . . . primarily the product of the isolation of Russian Bolshevism in a capitalist world and of the mutual assimilation of the isolated revolution with the Russian tradition. The victory of Chinese communism marks the end of that isolation; and it does so much more decisively than did the spread of Stalinism in Eastern Europe. Thus, one major precondition for the emergence of Stalinism now belongs to the past."* In the face of this perceptive analysis, it is impossible to believe that Mr. Deutscher did not also consider the opposite effect that the Cold War must have had on Soviet attitudes. But only in an entirely different connection, in his essay on George Orwell's 1984, does he allude to the danger of a nuclear holocaust initiated by the West. We do not know precisely to what degree the domestic situation in the Soviet Union was conditioned by Washington's belligerent gestures, but it is safe to say that they were not conducive to a flowering of socialist

*This quotation, as well as any, illustrates the imprecision resulting from the use of the term "Stalinism" to describe alternatively communism in all its aspects in the Soviet Union, communism there and elsewhere, or merely the negative features of Stalin's rule.

democracy and culture. To touch upon another side of this interrelationship: if today the threat of atomic war has lessened and the talk of preventive war has given way in this country to a recognition that "there is no longer an alternative to peace," as President Eisenhower has said, this is in large measure due to the technological progress of the Soviet Union which produced a balance of military capabilities. The resulting relaxation of international tension in turn facilitated a re-examination of Soviet internal policies.

At times, also, Mr. Deutscher loses his detachment and historianship. Then he writes a polemical commentary on Khrushchev's famous speech at the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party in which he excoriates Khrushchev one moment for not rehabilitating everyone who was purged in the 1930's and the next for not expressing appreciation of Stalin's positive contributions. Both judgments are questionable. I think it hazaardous for outsiders to make blanket pronouncements on the Soviet trials. And, without detracting from the weight and horror of Khrushchev's revelations, it seems to me necessary to point out that they bear all the marks of having been made in the heat of advocacy. Perhaps his speech should not have been limited to the exposure of the negative features of Stalin's rule. All the more reason to take into account the subsequent, more rounded statements published in the Soviet Union, China and elsewhere. But Mr. Deutscher does not do so, although his original article is reprinted in this volume in expanded form. Leaning entirely on the Krushchev speech, he makes assertions here that not only go far beyond what Khrushchev said, but contradict much of what Mr. Deutscher said elsewhere. Thus here he attributes Stalin's arbitrariness not to conditions of the world and Soviet society nor even Stalin's personal characteristics, but describes it as arising "inexorably" from the suppression by the "Stalinist faction" of all other factions inside the Soviet Communist Party, which in turn arose just as inevitably out of the suppression of all other parties by the Bolsheviks. Mr. Deutscher does not explicitly advocate that this neat metaphysical pyramid be taken down stone by stone to its foundation, although he reads the Khrushchev speech as signaling a "reversal of the trend" and as exploding "the idea of the monolithic party." Here nostalgia for the past (which, incidentally, postdates into the Stalin period some of the basic concepts developed by Lenin before the revolution) is father to the thought. Khrushchev's presentation was, of course, "much more than a tactical maneuver, and much more than the move of a dictator anxious to elevate himself at his predecessor's expense." But it does not warrant Mr. Deutscher's exegesis. As a matter of fact, Mr. Deutscher himself indicates doubt. For in the same article he impatiently attacks Khrushchev as the representative of the "Stalinist faction," which despite all changes in itself and its surroundings, "is still the Stalinist faction, trying to grind its old ax and caught up in the tangle of its own experiences and of its traditional but now untenable viewpoints." Yet, whatever the deficiencies of Khrushchev's speech, this quite unjustifiably belittles the Soviet attempts to formulate new positions, as subsequent events amply demonstrate. Above all, this essay illustrates the danger to the historian of dealing with this complex subject in

terms of a single issue and by the use of such labels as "the Stalinist faction."

Nor can I agree with Mr. Deutscher when he assumes the position of a Marxian Fundamentalist and cites Scripture to accuse Stalin of economic heresies. The premise of his comments on Stalin's *Economic Problems of Socialism in the U.S.S.R.*, for example, is the contention that the claim of the achievement of socialism in the Soviet Union is "utterly unreal." The principal ground he advances for this contention is that the collective farm segment of the economy engages in non-socialist commodity production, i.e., exchange through purchase and sale. But since the predominant industrial sector is fully socialist and Mr. Deutscher is willing to concede that collective farming is "semisocialist," I am at a loss to understand how this ground can support a denial of the existence of socialism in the Soviet Union. Marx and Engels did not foresee that the first socialist revolution would take place in a backward country, rather than in an advanced capitalist state of Western Europe. Certainly they did not draw any blueprints, as Mr. Deutscher notes in another connection. To some extent Mr. Deutscher's discussion of Stalin here is subject to the same criticism which he levels against E. H. Carr's picture of Lenin, namely, that his Stalin "is a Russian super-Bismarck achieving the Titanic work of rebuilding the Russian State from ruin," which at once "misses the broader perspective within which [Stalin's] achievement places itself."

I have other disagreements with Mr. Deutscher's interpretations, such as his tendency to raise differences to the level of contradictions, and contradictions to antagonisms,* and his estimate of the consequences of Stalin's arbitrary rule in the political life of the Soviet working class. Rather than discuss these, however, I should like to end in praise of two of Mr. Deutscher's other essays. One is a review of *The God That Failed* in which he draws a parallel between the denunciation of communism and the Soviet Union by the ex-Communist authors represented in that book and the denunciation of the French Revolution by such ex-Jacobins as Wordsworth and Coleridge. "The ex-Jacobin became the prompter of the anti-Jacobin reaction in England. Directly or indirectly, his influence was behind the Bills Against Seditious Wrtiings and Traitorous Correspondence, the Treasonable Practices Bill, and Seditious Meetings Bill (1792-1794), the defeats of parliamentary reform, the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, and the postponement of the emancipation of England's religious minorities for the lifetime of a generation. . . . In quite the same way our ex-Communist, for the best of reasons,** does the most vicious things. He advances bravely in the front rank of every witch hunt. His blind hatred of his former ideal is leaven to contemporary conservatism. Not rarely he denounces even the mildest brand of the 'welfare State' as 'legislative Bolshevism'." The ex-Jacobins

*Cf. Stalin's *Economic Problems of Socialism in the U.S.S.R.* and the recent elaboration of this question by Mao Tse-tung.

**This review does not of course take into account the army of ex-Communist informers and professional testifiers which has disfigured American administration of justice. Many of its members are actuated by no higher motive than earning $37 a day in witness fees and expense allowances.

aided the temporary revival of feudal reaction. But the message of the French Revolution survived. And presently, the ex-Jacobin and his anti-Jacobin cause "looked like vicious, ridiculous anachronisms. . . . If our ex-Communist had any historical sense, he would ponder this lesson."

The other essay that I found particularly stimulating deals with Orwell's 1984. Mr. Deutscher points out the close resemblance of this book to the work of a Russian emigre writer, Evgenii Zamyatin, called *We*. More important, he analyzes the "mysticism of cruelty" which inspires it and which obtained for it such popularity at the height of the Cold War. Its sadism and cheap science fiction plot, the product of a dying man, are the literary epitome of that period. *1984* is "a document of dark disillusionment not only with Stalinism but with every form and shade of socialism." But what was overlooked at the climax of anti-Soviet hysteria is the fact that *1984* contains many more elements of contemporary England, not to mention the United States, than of the Soviet Union. Soviet society bears indeed little resemblance to that of *1984*. This paradox is matched by the paradox which constitutes Orwell's personal tragedy. The former English Socialist and veteran of the Spanish Civil War is remembered not for his realistic descriptions of English poverty, but for his final, irrational shriek of doom. As Mr. Deutscher puts it: "Poor Orwell, could he ever imagine that his own book would become so prominent an item in the program of Hate Week?"

IN RUSSIA since 1917. Professor Frederick L. Schuman has set himself the task of transcending the specialized studies to provide not only a general account but also "a new synthesis" and "an illuminating reinterpretation" of forty years of Soviet domestic and foreign affairs. Together, these purposes are too great a burden for one volume, even if its author had gained new insights from personal interviews with Soviet policy makers, had obtained access to their private papers and Soviet as well as Western governmental archives, and were able to bring to the task a greater understanding of Marxist thought. In fact, Dr. Schuman appears here less as a theorist than as an encyclopedist enumerating the milestones of Soviet history. Read in the context of American politics in which I have discussed Mr. Deutscher's book, Dr. Schuman's survey has nevertheless several useful things to offer.

By setting forth once again what actually happened, Dr. Schuman in the first place punctures a few foundation myths of American anti-communism. After all the *Schrecklichkeit* with which the October Revolution has been glossed by émigrés, informers and renegades to justify an anti-subversive witch hunt in the United States (to cite but one recent and sustained source of falsification), it is good to be reminded that the Bolshevik seizure of power, upon the collapse of the Kerensky government because of an almost total lack of support, was singularly free of bloodshed, arson and terror, and that the Soviet government in the first months "established itself and pursued its program with less violence and with far fewer victims than any other social revolutionary regime in human annals." Violence and arbitrary acts came only when the new Soviet state was blockaded, invaded from every

point of the compass, and assaulted by White Armies subsidized and supplied by the Western powers. Few Westerners recall the war waged by their countries against the Soviet Union from 1918 to 1920, Dr. Schuman observes, but the Soviet people do.

Searching for security in the face of hostile encirclement, Soviet leaders enunciated the principle of co-existence as early as 1920 and implemented it in a series of non-aggression and neutrality pacts in the 1920's and early 1930's. With the rise of fascism, the Soviet Union began the quest for collective security, which, had it succeeded, would have prevented World War II. But the Soviet approaches were rebuffed at every turn by Western policy makers who hoped that fascist aggression could be channeled against Russia. Dr. Schuman sums up the shameful record of Western diplomacy in the crises of Ethiopia, Spain, China, and Czechoslovakia: "No comparable instance of folly and perfidy on the part of the responsible leaders of self-governing peoples is available in all the past records of human weakness, stupidity, and crime."

Repulsed by the West, the Soviet Union concluded its famous non-aggression pact with Germany in August, 1939. While Dr. Schuman doubts the wisdom of this treaty, he labels as a myth the assertion that the Soviet Union thereby gave the green light to the Nazi invasion of Poland. As for the tears shed then and since in the West over the lost independence of the Baltic states, Dr. Schuman points out that from 1917 to 1922, the State Department itself had considered them properly part of Russia.

When the anti-fascist coalition was finally forged in the heat of the German attack on the Soviet Union, the Russian people got little help from the West and had to defend themselves out of their own resources for the first two most crucial years. In contrast, the recurrence of the anti-Soviet madness following World War II, paralleling in a strange way the course of history after the first World War, was both rapid and fierce. Thus it came about that during the first forty years of its existence, the Soviet state was "at war" with Western powers for all or part of fifteen years, including seven years of intensive cold war.

Dr. Schuman has somewhat sought to accommodate his recital to current prejudices by equally blaming both sides for the cold war. But he does not explain why, if Western statesmen appreciated the fact that the Soviet Union did not contemplate aggression, their policy was predicated on the opposite assumption. Those were the days when, in the West, General Eisenhower, then president of Columbia University, applauded a statement that war was not only inevitable, but imperative. This is something no Soviet leader has to live down.

Like Mr. Deutscher, Dr. Schuman views Soviet progress in positive and optimistic terms, recognizing that for the great mass of Soviet citizens all the sufferings and errors of the past "are of small moment in everyday experience as compared with the central fact of Soviet life: the metamorphosis of the rural, miserable, illiterate, filthy, incompetent, and impoverished Russia of the NEP into the urban, hopeful, educated, clean, efficient, and prosperous Russia of the Sixth Five Year Plan." Internally, the Soviet people have created the basis for the unfolding of Socialist democracy. Internationally, Soviet advances, by establishing an

equipoise of forces, have compelled a return to diplomacy and negotiated settlements founded on the principle of co-existence.

CHARLES WISLEY

The Hot and the Cool

THE STORY OF JAZZ, by Marshall W. Stearns. Oxford University Press. $5.75.

JAZZ: ITS EVOLUTION AND ESSENCE, by André Hodeir. Translated by David Noakes. Grove Press. $3.50.

A STUDY of the history of jazz in the fullness of its ramifications has yet to reveal the significance of its real sources, namely the phenomena in everyday life out of which it has been complexly woven and from which its values derive. Rooted in the history of the Negro people, jazz music was founded on a folk-derived vocal music and its phrasing and intonation were modeled on the conventions of blues singing. It introduced emotional values into the dance music which assimilated it and thus created the idiom and communicable way of feeling now known as the New Orleans Style, the prototype of what has since been identified as "Negro" jazz. Even so, in the very heyday of its genius, jazz foreshadowed its own decline. It was inevitable that its virtuosi, in exploring the resources of their instruments, would conceal the music's vocal source. When the vocal artists, in their turn, aimed for the tonal effects of the reigning instrumentalists, their music assumed the formalistic night club nature of "modern" blues. From then on, a mere paradigm of the original song which had been born of tribulation became a sophisticated café society constant, abstract and metallic. It was not the expression in music of the complex life and outlook of the Negro urban population.

Oddly, a quarter-century of critical writing about jazz music has produced no satisfactory explanation of how it appeared on the historical scene and why it developed as it did. Critics have been sensitively appreciative, but by adhering to a few conventionalized notions of the music's meaning have frozen off any fresh access to an understanding of the realities which have given jazz its moments of flowering. In this respect, the two recent books reviewed below are not exceptional. But in their different ways they are perceptive and useful and often enlightening.

The Story of Jazz, a cheerful and informative account of the development of jazz from its pre-beginnings to the present time, is based on the author's thesis that jazz is the result of a "blending" of West African and European musical elements and traditions. To buttress his thesis, Stearns gives an elaborate description of the ethnic and cultural backgrounds as well as the original musical ingredients of American Negro music. This is the clearest statement until now published about the remote roots of jazz and it is the most valuable part of the book.

However, "blending" as a continuous historical process is not inherent in the given background material. The mere recognition of the elements that "blend" does not describe the uniqueness of jazz. Such elements—complicated rhythms, blues tonality, call-and-response patterns, ring-shouts, slurs, falsetto shouts, glissandi—are externals and may be found in combination elsewhere in remarkably non-jazz contexts.

Whether or not jazz evolved when European instruments and tunes served as a departure for improvisation (African influence), Stearns theorizes too loosely to make a case even for its decisive importance. His speculations are not developed with necessary thoroughness, while the evidence in itself is sparse. Hence, Stearns must over-rely on that anecdotal method common to most jazz books: the narration of local color stories of accumulated legend, reminiscences of old-time musicians, reports of contemporary travellers and quotations from fellow-writers.

Notwithstanding, the book makes a number of excellent contributions in addition to the principal contribution already mentioned.

The weakness lies in Stearns' excursions into the larger field of classical music. He theorizes sketchily on the nature of classical music, contending that it was the adoption of the tempered scale that determined its evolution and its limitations. The tempered scale, he says, made possible the harmonic basis of classical music which in turn has led to the imperfect development of melody. This last he demonstrates by referring to other musics, especially Hindu, which have merely more elaborate melodies. He quotes J. P. Rameau (1683-1764) out of context ("Melody stems from harmony") to support his own built-in notion that "chord progressions come first and the tune later." But the Rameau who wrote that "the main object is feeling," understood harmony more deeply: "(It) is the one source from which melody directly emanates, and draws its power. Contrasts between high and low, etc., make only superficial modifications in a melody; they add almost nothing. . . ." Here the contrast is not between melody and harmony but between empty elaboration and music rooted in expressiveness.

Stearns' critique of the harmonic system as he sees it ("The chord was all-important") further asserts that the purity of the harmony was maintained by attaching crucial importance to correct pitch. The sense of diatonic pitch is considered a limitation which mysteriously makes the perception of quarter-tones, for instance, to those who are habituated to them, also represent correct pitch. He adds that the purity of the harmony is further maintained in classical music by restricting or eliminating what are generally known as the embellishments. In singing, the goal is largely to imitate the "perfection," as Stearns puts it, of instruments. "In a word," he says, "many of the natural qualities of the human voice—a rich source of expressiveness —were eliminated." These strictures of Stearns can only be based upon his implicit identification of classical music with its merely analyzable elements and its system of notation. An artistic and moving performance, whether vocal or instrumental, is unthinkable except in terms of the traditional *bel canto* embellishments that are never notated. A violinist, for example, may use different lengths of his bow and apply it to the strings in different ways (*portato*, etc.), and he may finger the same note on a string differently for a variety of expressive purposes. As for singing, there is ample evidence for its primary importance in musical history, while its principles underlie the line of music from Monteverdi through Scarlatti, Handel, Mozart, Rossini, and Verdi. Finally, Stearns finds the verification of his theorizing in the "scientific" researches of Dr. Milton Metfessel. Metfessel is the well-known founder of a system of notation of exact

musical sounds by means of complicated phonophotographic charts and analysis. His study of the voices of singers ranging from Nellie Melba to Bessie Smith lists impartially, according to Stearns, every device of the singers and especially, every "expressive" gasp, grunt and naturalistic noise of the singers untrained in the classical school. This material may be interesting, but it is rash to infer from it, as Stearns attributes to Metfessel, the conclusion that, unlike classical singing which aims to imitate an instrument, blues singing aims to make free use of the voice. Unfortunately, this kind of inference has a vogue today for it reflects a prevailing criticism in the field of art singing itself. Nowadays, a singer who possesses a respectable technique is suspected of "coldness," while a poorly equipped singer with a baggage of extra-musical noises is generally admired for his warmth and expressiveness. In other words, a reliable technique is equated with coldness which is equated, in turn, with the imitation of an instrument.

Throughout the book, there is an air of unsureness about technical elucidations, usage of terms and references, and consequently there are bound to be blunders. A thirty-second note is called the smallest rhythmic unit in our notation. For the sake of a truism (the fact that improvisation has to be judged by standards of its own), not only is the authority of the nineteenth century critic, Hanslick, invoked, but he is credited with being a composer too. Even occasional allusions to musical forms can be entangling, as when Stearns says that jazz forms are now being treated as points of departure for "extemporaneous passacaglias and even sonatas" (sic).

However, to its considerable credit, the book gives the most comprehensive and intelligent picture so far of the commercial aspects of jazz music; the milieu of Paul Whiteman; Duke Ellington and the social mores of the New York Cotton Club; the cross-currents in jazz history; the itinerant guitar players on the fringe of city life; Huddie Ledbetter; and the interesting jazz developments in regions and cities other than New Orleans, Chicago and New York. It also has first-rate general descriptions of the bebop and cool styles and their social environments.

ABOUT *Jazz: Its Evolution and Essence*, André Hodeir states at the outset that it "is not a history of jazz, and still less a popularization." It is to a great extent a technical book, and in that area the author stands on firm ground. Besides having been a practicing jazz musician, Hodeir is a one-time winner of first prizes in harmony, fugue and musical history at the Paris Conservatory of Music.

The purpose of the book is to inquire into the esthetic evolution or "progress" of jazz. All art progresses, Hodeir says, and progress depends on a continuing refinement of taste and an "increase of values." But value, as it turns out, is for Hodeir narrowly esthetic—perfection of form, unity, variety of rhythm, subtlety of harmony, complexity of melody, contrast and symmetry. The idea that jazz evolves to higher and superior forms is regarded as necessary. This makes for a narrowly schematic and analytic approach to the subject.

Thus, jazz that was played previous to 1935 is "outdated," because it was not "durable" or it was progressing to-

ward a higher goal. In any case, it lacked the "equilibrium" (and durability) that characterized true "classicism." This latter is equated with the "swing era" (1935-45). Swing is the development into mature expression of all previous progressive-moving elements. It is not dated: it has high quality and is "timeless." Since 1945, jazz has become diversified, losing unity and breaking down into different trends, and it no longer progresses in a straight line. The difficulties with this the following argument regarding Louis kind of schematization are apparent in Armstrong: in 1927, Armstrong was ten years ahead of his contemporaries. Only after his prime could he find a group of musicians capable of understanding and supporting him. If he had come ten years later (that is to say, in the "classical" period) his work would have been even worthier, but the evolution of jazz would have been delayed, since only he could have ushered in the classical age.

The fetish of progress makes this reduction to absurdity inevitable. It also commits Hodeir, regardless of his personal taste, to such specious argument as the following: *"Le Sacre du Printemps* is our music much more than the *Ninth Symphony*. Isn't it true that those who prefer the Beethoven work confess implicitly their inability to understand Stravinsky's masterpiece?"

At one point, Hodeir admits that analysis does not determine the worth of a work and that schematization is arbitrary, but the bulk of his work is concerned with the technical and esthetic contributions of jazz styles and their performers. His analysis of the records of Louis Armstrong, Dickie Wells, Cootie Williams, Charlie Parker, Miles Davis and others is painstakingly detailed. But like all musical analysis, it occupies itself with formal matters, with that which can be set down on paper. Here is its fatal weakness, for in the long run, it is unmeasurable or unanalyzable virtues of a performance which have the power to move an audience.

Hodeir's work must not be underestimated. Exactly because it is so thorough, cohesive and consistent, the categorical outcomes of its method are valuable as a critique of the method itself. These are judgments that follow from Hodeir's chain of reasoning: (1) Only blues harmony in jazz is not inferior or derived. As such, it is incapable of development, and what does not develop, dies. (That is to say, jazz develops only at the cost of renunciation of its sources. But on the other hand, its development is unthinkable except in terms of an inferior or derived harmony.) (2) Modern solos, though not necessarily superior to the older ones, are obeying an inexorable law of evolution. (A parallel interpretation would be that modern solos reduce jazz to an abstract, pseudo-art music, with a loss of its original emotional implication and suggestion.) (3) As the tendency grows to more complexity, the melody resembles the original theme less and less. (As the solo grows increasingly complex, does it continue *ad infinitum* to lie within the definition of "melody"?) (4) Modern jazz, based on modern harmony, is irreconcilable with the melodic language of the blues. The highest contribution of jazz is its complexity, distinct from blues inflection and melodic language. Modern jazz features "purity" of melody, and is difficult to play with emotion and feeling. (The conclusion follows that the original inspiration of the

music's historical context has been outlived. But Hodeir interprets this as a hopeful sign.)

The key to Hodeir's book is his faith in the future of jazz as an art of composition. He rejects the old-fashioned conception of jazz as a performers' art with a traditional musical content, and views improvisation as an "imitation" outside the area of composition. His slogan is "originality." According to him, jazz will tend to become like music composed "purely," to be "truly contrapuntal," and so attain a higher level of expression. But elsewhere he sets up a complementary relationship between classical music and jazz: whereas the one involves the intellect, reflection and loftiness, the other involves the senses, non-reflection and heightened sensuality. It is to this notion, then—the ultimate attainment of a composed "pure" music that is not only light, but difficult to play with emotion and feeling—to which Hodeir is reduced in his expectation of jazz progress based on an "increase of value."

MAX MARCH

The Romantic Rebellion

THE POETRY OF EXPERIENCE, by Robert Langbaum. Random House. $4.50.

MR. LANGBAUM'S publishers predict that his study may prove to be "one of those rare critical works that cause a shifting and resettling of literary values." Their optimism may well be justified—I for one find it one of the most stimulating works of its sort since the publication twenty-odd years ago of Edmund Wilson's *Axel's Castle.*

However, the "of its sort" is a very necessary qualification. For Mr. Langbaum employs his dialectic strictly within the idealist categories of academic literary criticism and within a philosophical world-view that—while liberal and humane—leans at times heavily upon subjectivism.

These two major limitations are, sadly enough, as much a reflection on the parochial and sterile academic atmosphere of the past dozen years as they are upon Mr. Langbaum's own world-view, for it is my feeling that his arguments would have gained immensely had they been set within the larger framework of the social history of the period he discusses.

His study is a vigorous defense of the Romantic traditon in English letters, a tradition which is certainly far from fashionable in university circles today.

Romanticism he sees as the rebellion of the poet against the alienation of human value from the world. What he discusses here is essentially the concept which Marx developed in detail, although, as might be expected, Langbaum, in the fashion of the historical idealist, makes Newtonian mechanics and the 18th Century Enlightenment the villains of the piece.

The hallmarks of this rebellion are the poet's commitment to life, a sense of choice in that commitment, and his efforts to infuse the world once again with human value. These traits, he argues, have given rise to the "poetry of experience" which is the characteristic form of all modern poetry. From this it follows that the poetry of the 20th century, far from being in rebellion against that of the 19th century (the view of most of the "modernists")

is a continuation of that tradition under conditions of greater disintegration.

All this is very ably argued with the assistance of detailed discussions of Browning and Tennyson designed to reestablish their link with the modern world and a brilliant chapter on the permutations that Shakespeare criticism has undergone at the hands of both romantic and traditionalist critics.

Much of the material in the book may be of abiding interest only to the professional student of poetry and the work as a whole suffers from taking at their face value many of the worn-out categories of academic literary writing, but it is full of fascinating insights and fresh perceptions.

Above all, it is the work of a man not afraid of independent synthesis. And in our current waste land of timid academic pragmatism, this in itself is as refreshing as a sea breeze.

GEORGE HITCHCOCK

A Stroke for Liberty

THE LAMONT CASE. History of A Congressional Investigation. Edited with commentary by Philip Wittenberg. With an introduction by Horace M. Kallen. Horizon. $5.00.

WITH THE ink hardly dry on the Supreme Court's decision in the Watkins case, it is particularly appropriate to review a struggle which was a lineal predecessor of *Watkins*. The fight put up by Corliss Lamont against the congressional inquisition during the heyday of the McCarthyian Moloch clearly helped form the decisions of June 17, 1957. The careful delineation of this battle in *The Lamont Case* is quite properly part of the history of our times.

The Lamont Case is the clinical record of a politico-legal struggle. Lawyer Philip Wittenberg begins his account with the service of a subpoena upon Corliss Lamont and the subsequent apearance of the noted educator and philosopher before McCarthy himself. He concludes with the final happy chapter of the judicial victory and the public pronouncements on the battle.

The record is complete: the Lamont hearing, the exchange of telegrams, the Senate debate prior to voting the contempt citation, the various legal briefs, the scholarly opinion of Federal Judge Edward Weinfeld, the affirmance by the Court of Appeals, the delighted crowing of Senator William Langer (R-S.D.) at Lamont's vindication and the various editorials published on the issue.

Indispensable to law libraries and attorneys, *The Lamont Case* will prove an invaluable case history to serious students of civil liberties. Lamont, it will be recalled, invoked the First Amendment and challenged the McCarthy's committee right to pry into his political beliefs and associations. He further charged that the committee was not legally empowered to examine into so-called subversive activities and was seeking to exercise power never in fact granted it by the U.S. Senate. In the struggle Lamont came up against every coarse trick in the Joe McCarthy-Roy Cohn armory.

That he defeated them is now history; and due credit must go to Lamont for his staunchness and conviction, to his thoughtful and resourceful attorneys

and to Senators like Langer and Herbert Lehman (D-NY) who fought in what then appeared to be a hopeless minority against McCarthyism.

Finally, *The Lamont Case* pays tribute to the "great judicial stamina" shown by Judge Weinfeld, whose opinion of July 27, 1955 "brought the first break in the struggle in the courts against McCarthyism."

But with all that, Mr. Wittenberg is careful to assign weight, even if only in passing, to the profound social forces that went into "the first break." "Courts, like other social institutions," writes Mr. Wittenberg, "are responsive to the stimulae which make public opinion."

Those "stimulae" were indeed there —in the elections of 1954 that saw the defeat of leading McCarthyites, the Senate censure of McCarthy, the summit conference at Geneva in the summer of 1955 and the everlasting struggle of the victims themselves. All these went to make the social climate in which the courageous Weinfeld decision was written.

Horace M. Kallen's introduction summarizes well the character of the *The Lamont Case*:

"So far as I know, there is not another such book whose subject is the defense of his rights by a citizen on his own, against the Goliath-like power of agents of government, and whose method is the reproduction of documents as disclosure of the nature of the force engaged." It is, adds Dr. Kallen, a "unique book" that "will illumine the struggle for our civil liberties." Dr. Kallen is right in that respect and a Chief Justice named Earl Warren proved his point in *Watkins*.

SIMON W. GERSON

The Surface of India

INDIA, the Awakening Giant, by W. S. Woytinsky. Harper & Bros., New York.

MR. WOYTINSKY visited India as an invited lecturer on his specialty, economics. Since he took his camera with him, he was also able to contribute 16 plates of photos that add much to the interest of the book that came out of his trip.

In traveling throughout the subcontinent, Mr. Woytinsky was appalled by the desperate poverty of the great masses of the Indian people. As an economist he finds in this poverty, with its concomitant illiteracy and technical ignorance, the principal barrier to India's industrial advance. Consequently he would recommend that education and health, instead of being only a part of India's economic plans, be given priority and that all other aspects of India's economic development be made to serve these two ends.

Indeed, against this background of poverty, India's emphasis on heavy industry further troubles Mr. Woytinsky. Basing himself on the longest period of continuous prosperity that the capitalist world has ever known, he points to ". . . prosperous countries—such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Denmark, Norway, Finland and Switzerland—[that] import steel and machinery." But he finds the overall production increase of 25 percent scheduled to be accomplished during India's second five year plan ". . . by no means unrealistic."

It is necessary to read 190 of the 193 pages of Mr. Woytinsky's text before one comes upon even a hint

of the reasons that underlie India's poverty and industrial backwardness. Here Mr. Woytinsky points out that in Russia ". . . the Communists came into an economic inheritance far greater than that left to India at the end of colonial rule."

The poverty, the dirt, the ignorance, the industrial backwardness are the terrible heritage of that rule which endured for more than a century. Small wonder then that Indian leaders seek to build in their country the steel mills and other heavy industrial projects that are the guarantee of independence.

British colonial rule shut the Indian peoples out of the nineteenth century, when the basis for modern industry was laid in the imperialist nations. Before the British conquest, India's textile production was far in advance of anything in Europe or the young United States. So, to erase this lead and simultaneously create a market for British textiles at one stroke, the British cut off the thumbs of 90,000 expert weavers in the Deccan; five years later this southeastern area, which had been the most prosperous in all India, was almost a desert, inhabited only by starving families.

Mr. Woytinsky may object that this is history, and that is not the subject of this book. But nevertheless he does touch on history, remarking on the final violence that Britons provoked in tortured India, when "Half a million Hindus and Moslems were slaughtered." The ingenuous, questioning attitude he takes toward this slaughter ill becomes a man of his learning and perspicacity. "Is gentleness only a superficial varnish and cruelty the true nature of these people?" Mr. Woytinsky naively wonders. To give this assumed naivete the sharp answer it deserves:

No, Mr. Woytinsky, the Indian gentleness is as innate as elsewhere. The cruelty was sown, fomented and nurtured by the departing aliens. To start it, to spread it and to keep it going they used their toadies, their compradores among the Indian peoples. One such toady is the present prime minister of Pakistan.

The same cruelty, the same misery, the same poverty are to be found today among the peoples of South Korea nad Algeria. They are the hallmark of imperial rule.

Other sections of Mr. Woytinsky's book suffer from the same naivete or tender-minded disinclination to dig beneath the surface of his subject. This is the case with the section devoted to land reform. Here he says that "Historically much of the land in India was held by landlords who rented it to the farmers. This system was inherited from feudal times and consolidated under British rule."

Not so, Mr. Woytinsky, simply not so. Under the Moghuls and earlier there was no such thing as land rent in India; the land was parcelled out in each village before the sowing season according to need. The "landlords" you refer to were tax collectors: tehsildars and zemindars; the British made them landlords.

But current developments have already dated Mr. Woytinsky's section on land reform. An official Indian delegation of agricultural experts recently inspected the functioning and results of land program undertaken by India's great friend and good neighbor, the People's Republic of China. On returning they recommended that India seek a solution to her agrarian problems through collective farming.

Mr. Woytinsky's book would have

been improved by prior study of two other books on India—*Karl Marx on the Indian Question*, and *India Today*, by R. Palme Dutt. Indeed, these two books are far more important for all Americans who want to understand the recent electoral successes of the Communist Party of India, and India's problems in general, than almost anything Mr. Woytinsky has to say in the book examined here.

RALPH IZARD

Crusader's Story

MY NATIVE GROUNDS, by Royal W. France. Cameron Associates. $3.75.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY of Royal W. France was published shortly before the recent Supreme Court decisions whose effect, in the words of the *National Guardian*, was "to reaffirm the basic constitutional rights of individuals, to suggest definite limits on the power of Congressional investigating committees, and to warn the government against abuse of its powers." The first thing, therefore, that occurs to a reader of France's life is to see it in the context of these crucial rulings. Then he will go still further and come to the realization that France —and with him a relatively small number of courageous progressive lawyers —helped greatly to bring about the changes of mind and heart which led to the making of the judgments. In matters of civil liberty, for ever so many who know what it is all about in the dark time, there is one who is willing to do something about it. Royal France was such a one.

On January 13, 1952, the *New York Times* published an article by Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas entitled "The Black Silence of Fear." One sentence in that article—"Those accused of illegal Communist activity —all presumed innocent, of course, until found guilty—have difficulty getting reputable lawyers to defend them"—was to France "like the sound of the alarm bell to the old fire horse." Already toward the end of 1951, he had felt himself "too much at ease in Zion"; now he knew there was to be no rest for him so long as the witch hunters were riding high in Congress and injustice held sway throughout the country. He resigned from Rollins College where he had been teaching for years and from then on became involved, directly or indirectly, with almost every major civil liberties case to be fought in the country within the last five years beginning with the disbarment proceedings against Harry Sachers to the great Rosenberg and Sobell cases. In 1952, France also participated in the defense in Athens of nineteen members of the Greek Maritime Union, condemned to death or life imprisonment for union activity.

From the accounts of his participation in these struggles and the inevitable accompanying activities, there emerges the picture of a man who need only be assured of the rightness of a cause or individual to be simultaneously convinced that he must join the fight in their behalf. Such choices, quite lacking in self-dramatization or moral righteousness, have characterized both his public career and his private life, determining, for example, his giving up a pleasant country home for an East Side New York tenement, or renouncing a successful business law practice to teach in a small college in

the South and to defy, at some personal risk, the racial prejudices of the community. It must be said that he had precedents in his family for such unorthodox conduct. His mother's father, a wealthy resident of Richmond, was forced to leave Virginia because he dared to fly the Stars and Stripes in the face of the first contingent of Confederate troops. His father, an assistant United States attorney in Missouri, suddenly threw up his profession to become a Presbyterian minister, and later an opponent of the Fundamentalists in his church. An older brother, Joseph Irwin France, United States Senator from Maryland, protested the banning in 1920 of five socialist candidates to the New York State Legislature from the seats to which they had been elected, and was the first in the Senate to propose recognition of the Soviet Union (in 1921). An even more sustaining presence was that of France's wife, Ethel, whose support and pride in his constancy to the cause of freedom never flagged up to the moment of her death on December 11, 1956.

The reader of *My Native Grounds* may miss the narrative richness of great autobiograprical writing. France's subordination of psychological interest to men's direct responses to the issues confronting them deprives his book of a degree of "texture." Yet he compensates for this by the unwavering clarity of his judgment of their actions. For all his willigness to find some good in the worst of men, he will not excuse in others such compromises as have always been unthinkable to him. This attitude determined his estimate of Supreme Court Justice Holmes, whom he cites in his discussion of the "clear and present danger" controversy. "Despite Holmes' reputation as the great dissenter I have never felt that he was. . . . I have met and defended bigger men than Holmes. They were before the bench, not behind it. Holmes would do for a polite tea, but if I were in a tight spot and needed a man beside me of clear vision and dauntless courage I would choose Hugo Black." More bitter, as it deserved to be, was his verdict on hearing of the death of Ambassador John Peurifoy, who was in Greece at the time of the seamen's trial and who refused to intercede for them: "Rest in peace, oh successful opportunist and betrayer of the ideals for which your country has stood and will sometime stand again before the world!" Such indignation may come easy to many of us; few have earned the right to it as has Royal W. France.

RALPH ERSKINE

Letters

Editors, *Mainstream*:

We find areas of agreement, partial agreement and mostly points of profound difference with Mr. Finkelstein's reply in the September issue to our article of August 1957. The agreement should be manifest to the reader. Where we have disagreements of basic approach, the separation is often so wide that an exposition would require more than an article, let alone a reply. Therefore, we attempt to answer serially only those points within Mr. Finkelstein's reply which we feel are erroneous interpretations or misreadings of our original article or which, from lack of amplification or deducation, change our written or intended meanings.

I. In the first place, Finkelstein seems to demand a pledge, of political accord, prior to an examination of the issue in debate. Since we did not say our catechism, signing our article "progressive painters" may be disconcerting, if not heretical, to someone who needs the assurance that we are "one of the boys" before discussing the item at hand. Be that as it may, we never said (as Finkelstein's first paragraph implies we did) that worthy themes do harm to a painter. What we did say was that for one reason or another, the artists of today have rarely been able to master the themes that critics (such as Finkelstein) have recommended to them, and so have become wary of the critic's good intentions and, sometimes, false appraisals.

II. Finkelstein somehow manages to identify the sociologists and the formalists, trying to prove, we suppose, a unity of opposites. They are indeed opposites but rarely meet in agreement. Major exponents of esthetic formalism such as Clive Bell and Roger Fry shudder at the sociological thesis, although they seem to be fully aware of its tenets. Likewise, sociological theoreticians object to formalist notions. Finkelstein makes most formalist critics appear as if they were blind to the human condition and most sociologists unmoved by and unaware of the beauty of line and color. At their extreme, one group would throw out subject matter, the other, form. We would agree with Finkelstein that these positions (stated at their extremes) offer no fullness of approach. That they can be reduced to one and the same position is a different matter: and is false.

III. We disagree with Finkelstein's estimate of the role of form. In regard to Rembrandt's discovering the humanity of the Amsterdam poor: "It is the discoveries that give richness to the form" why couldn't one just as well say "It is the form that gives richness to the discoveries?" Otherwise, how is it that the way Rembrandt paints a pearl can move us to tears whereas someone else painting the same beggar upon whom Rembrandt has hung his jewels moves us not at all? How does Finkelstein justify his statement that "color and space relations" . . . cannot constitute art form?" We refuse to accept any contradiction between an artist's learning about his craft and learning about the world. Involvement in painterly means which will express emotions and ideas about life is involvement in a part of life. It is through form as well as content that the painter finds his linkage with history. This language of form is the

eritage of the painter as Arnold lauser states in *The Social History of lrt* (Volume II, p. 957):

"Film directors throughout the orld, irrespective of national and deological divergencies, have adopted ne stock forms of the Russian film nd thereby confirmed that as soon as ne content has been translated into orm, forms can be taken over and sed as a purely technical expedient, ithout the ideological background om which it has emerged. The aradox of historicity and timelessness n art, to which Marx refers in his In-oduction To A Critique of Political conomy, is rooted in this capacity of orm to become autonomous. "Is Achil-es conceivable in an era of powder and ead? Or for that matter The Iliad at ll in these days of printing press and ress jacks? Do not song and legend nd the muses lose their mean-ng in the age of the Press?" But the ifficulty is not that Greek art and epic re connected with certain forms of so-al development, but rather that they ill give us aesthetic satisfaction to-ay."

Mr. Finkelstein's first book, *Art and ociety* contains a pertinent comment :: James Joyce on p. 209.

"And on the positive side, there is uch that Joyce has contributed to a ew, profoundly social English and ish literature. There is his 'cleaning language,' making it a clearcut, ex-ressive instrument. . . . It is impos-ble to study Ulysses without emerging better writer, more sensitive to words."

We have seen how the Christ story s been painted for more than one ousand years and has been a vehicle r expressing changing philosophical nceptions and views of history. But ny does a Da Vinci *Last Supper* move more than the same theme done by ndrea Del Sarto? It is at least argu-able that form has something to do with it.

Finkelstein feels that Norman Rockwell's figures are alien to us. Perhaps to Finkelstein but certainly not to the majority of the population (who also perhaps will not be moved by the Rembrandt pearls). Is it possible that Rockwell is not a realist due to formal reasons?

IV. As far as Finkelstein's pigeonholing of Expressionism is concerned, we take strong exception to his thesis of the "inner and outer" relationship. We do not disagree that the real world is what it is regardless of what people or artists think it is, but that does not say anything about art. A kind of truth that is measurable is a scientific one, one that is demonstrable and predictable. But the truths involved in art are non-demonstrable, non-predictable.

Unless the artist's view includes his subjective "vision," one painter would have established the single, "true" vision long ago. But the world as we experience it is diversified and precisely for that reason we look for different subjective views of it. Meaningful distortion has always been used by artists throughout history for revealing new or newly felt emotions and ideas. This dramatization of experience has given us great art as we know it. The method for dramatization expresses the artist's subjective emotional response to his subject. This particularized vision can reflect very great intensity even when it is limited in scope. But how would Finkelstein measure this intensity against a "fullness of experience" delivered with all the force of a limp rag? For example, Van Gogh's "Pair of Shoes" delivers far more intensity (and is perhaps therefore a fuller experience)

than Meissonier's "Campaign of France.' It is precisely the intensity of a subjective vision that makes the difference here. We have only to look at the art of drama to see how the mime, the pantomimist and the actor select and distort nature to give intensity. Drama is not simply a mirror to nature, but a selection from it to achieve emotional expression conveying the sense of truth. The same is true of painting and sculpture, although its terms are different.

Finkelstein gives us the impression that all vision is wholly subjective unless it measures up to the notion of "realism" he alone has access to, as if he carried it around as a private possession in his back pockers, a small collapsible Procrustean bed on which the given painting may be stretched to fit his theory of what it ought to be. One of his measures is the "fullnes of life," another "the public figure," a third "the social mind." At this moment we don't seem to have a fullness of life which meshes with Finkelstein's Ideal. We have instead, Van Gogh's "Shoes." We feel that it might be wise to examine this partial experience and estimate how it expand itself to a totality of emotional expression about life.

V. Finkelstein disapproves our use of the phrase "Religion is fantastic reality." This phrase may be found in Christopher Caudwell's *Further Studies In A Dying Culture* (p. 17, The Bodley Head Edition). Caudwell takes his thesis from Karl Marx's *Introduction To A Critique Of Hegel's Philosophy Of Law* (ibid, p. 75: "The man who has found in the fantastic reality of heaven. . . ."

"We assume Mr. Finkelstein is familiar with these works and the ideas they express. We feel our article (and the nomenclature used, for the most part) was grounded in writings available to those interested in both Marxism and art history. Perhaps the above reference will change Finkelstein's conclusion that "to the writers of (the) article, anything an artist believes becomes his own reality."

VI. Apart from his limitations and his hedging we would agree with the sense of Finkelstein's statement:

"I do not mean that some people politicians, professors or critics, should sit over art and dictate to it what is true or not. The condition for the discovery of truth is the free interchange and argument of ideas, and the battle ground is society itself."

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