

# politics

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Edited by Dwight Macdonald

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## The Music of Soviet Russia

by Kurt List

## Post-War Condominium

By George Padmore

## Comment

### Three Worlds

THE glow of world brotherhood induced in the press by the Teheran meeting has ebbed away into a spooky twilight in which prowl sinister shapes of power politics. Even the man-in-the-street is now beginning to realize that Willkie's "One World" is actually Three Worlds, whose imperialistic interests are already beginning to clash in World War III tempo before World War II is over. This growing suspicion may have been basically responsible for the unexpectedly bad beating Willkie took in the Wisconsin primaries.

Public uneasiness has been increased by the general belief that the Allied invasion of Europe is close at hand. It is awkward that the period in which the ultimate military effort of the Allies is to be made should coincide with such a wave of popular anxiety over the purposes and consequences of the war, but such are the hazards which political leaders today face. No wonder Anthony Eden recently complained that never in his experience has foreign policy been so difficult to conduct.

The question which Americans are asking more and more is that which a group of Republican Congressmen recently put to Secretary Cordell Hull: Has the over-all international organization endorsed at Moscow and Teheran by the United States, England, and Russia "been abandoned in favor of piece-meal arrangements on various topics now deemed to have importance in the post-war world?" Hull's

answer did not satisfy the Congressmen, nor the nation. The Twohey Analysis of Newspaper Opinion, for example, shows an incredibly rapid drop in editorial support of Roosevelt's foreign policy: from 80% favorable at the beginning of February, to 20% only two months later. The columnists have been twittering ever more insistently. Dorothy Thompson: "If we enter Europe without a plan, while the Soviets have a clear one in reserve, we stand to become caught in situations for which we are completely unprepared." Arthur Krock: "If we have a postwar policy toward Europe, including the disposition of Germany, the time is overdue to state it." William Philip Simms: "Anglo-American policy has reached such an obscure, undecipherable stage that United Nations circles here [in Washington] regard it as the prize mystery of the war."

So great has been the clamor that the aloof State Department has put the unhappy Mr. Hull on the air twice in recent weeks with lengthy expositions of American foreign policy. His speeches produced little effect, perhaps because they consisted mostly of pious platitudes, reassuring only to the editors of *P.M.*, who urged their readers to clip out the sacred texts and preserve them "for permanent reference".

It will be noted that two things, by no means synonymous, worry the average American about his country's foreign policy. One is that the allegedly democratic war aims of the United Nations have turned out to be mere phrases, and the post-war world threatens to be an even ghastlier mess than the pre-war world. The other, and I think more acute, anxiety is that in such a world his country's national interests will not be sufficiently protected, i.e., that American imperialism has not sufficiently worked



out a strategy to get the upper hand over its Russian and British competitors. The failure of the liberal and labor movements in this country and England to dominate the war effort on both the domestic and the foreign-policy fronts, or even to hold their own against the reactionaries—this failure, predictable from the moment they gave “critical support” to the present war governments in England and America, has caused the man-in-the-street to lose interest in reform and progress, for the moment, and to put his faith in the victory of *his* imperialism over its competitors. Hence Willkie’s defeat, hence the recent enthusiasm in the British Commons, from Tories to left Laborites, for the strengthening of the Empire after the war.

The anxiety of Americans is intensified by the curious fact that, of the three major powers, the one with the mightiest economy is the one with the weakest and most confused foreign policy. The situation after the last war promises to repeat itself after this: an unaccountable failure of what would seem to be by far the strongest imperialistic power to dominate the postwar world. It may even go so far as a repetition of the withdrawal movement of the twenties. Isolated behind their oceans, Americans seem to be still a provincial people. This psychology probably derives from the unique position of American capitalism, which has up to now had a domestic economy sufficiently broad and developed to sustain it with comparatively little intercourse with the rest of the world. It may be that this is no longer true, but at least the American domestic economy comes closer to it than is the case with either Russia, which needs the higher technology of Europe, or England, which needs the markets and raw materials of colonial and backward European areas. And whether true or not, most American businessmen apparently still believe it.

There are Three Worlds. Their relative positions, and their policies, have shifted greatly in the past year. Let us try to see how each fits into the present picture.

## WORLD NO. 1: THE SOVIET UNION

A year ago, such a survey would not have begun with Russia. But her military success, and the relative ineffectuality of Anglo-American arms, have given her the initiative in world politics today. Furthermore, Russia has a much more aggressive and definite foreign policy than either of her war partners. This fact, which has manifested itself with especial force in recent months, is the basic fact about world politics today.

The Teheran conference was held at the beginning of December. This was supposedly the final seal on the indissoluble brotherhood of the Big Three. No one proclaimed this more fervently than the Russians. The American Communists, for example, have in a few months created a mythos of Teheran which gives that Iranian city all the overtones of the Bastille or Bunker Hill. “Enemy of Teheran” has become the new anathema for housewives who buy on the black market.

It is, therefore, not surprising to find that since Teheran the Kremlin has taken a whole series of unilateral actions, without consulting her partners, which have shattered whatever unity and confidence once existed among the Big Three. It is these post-Teheran actions of Russia, indeed, which have been mainly responsible for her partners’ present state of nerves. Rarely has the conflict between form and content of international power-politics been more ironically revealed. The main events in the chronicle may be listed as follows:

**Dec. 12, 1943:** USSR signs a 20-year mutual aid treaty with Czechoslovakian Government-in-Exile. Move not popular with England, which in April, 1942, had intervened to stop the negotiation of a similar treaty between USSR and Yugoslavia. Stronger position of USSR now shown by fact she now goes ahead despite British objections. Move thus represents (1) power-play against rival British imperialism; (2) move to block a Central European Federation by detaching the Czechs; Russian policy evidently to deal with smaller nations one by one, preventing their economic or political union. (On Nov. 18, 1943, *Izvestia* editorially stated Russia’s hostility to any federation of small European states, adding that Molotov had outlined this stand at the Moscow conference, and Hull and Eden had not objected.)

**Jan. 4, 1944:** The Red Army crosses the Polish frontier in pursuit of retreating Germans. Kremlin continues to insist on territorial demands on Poland, and to rebuff Anglo-American attempts to compromise issue.

**Jan. 4:** *Pravda* castigates Willkie for expressing uneasiness about Russian attitude on Polish question, in *N. Y. Times*’ article, “Don’t Stir Distrust of Russia”. Willkie article in general was warmly favorable to USSR.

**Jan. 17:** Sensational “expose” in *Pravda* of alleged separate peace negotiations between “high” British and German officials.

**Jan. 26:** Moscow rejects offer of U. S. State Department to mediate in Polish border dispute.

**Feb. 1:** Pope Pius XII is denounced by *Izvestia* as pro-fascist.

**Feb. 1:** Supreme Soviet changes Soviet Constitution so as to give more autonomy to the 16 constituent Soviet republics, enabling them to maintain their own armies and have their own diplomatic representation abroad. Most likely interpretation of move: preparation of a Soviet governmental structure which will facilitate absorption of new border regions, on fiction of merely joining a loosely federated union of autonomous nations.

**Feb. 22:** Major speech by Churchill in Commons, in which he (1) definitively throws overboard Mikhailovitch in Yugoslavia and backs up Stalin’s man, Tito; (2) gives in on Polish border question, promising Poland indemnification from East German territories; (3) scraps Atlantic Charter.

**March 3:** Roosevelt inadvertently reveals that it was arranged months ago to give USSR one-third of the captured Italian fleet.

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March 13: USSR formally recognizes Badoglio Government. Move taken without consultation with England and USA, which have not yet given such recognition. From Hull's request of March 17 for "clarification and explanation", it would seem these powers do not approve. Possible reasons for move: (1) to gain control of Italy via a reconstituted Badoglio government, in which USSR would be in "on the ground floor"; (2) to assert a sphere-of-interest in the Mediterranean, as against England; (3) to show the German generals that Stalin is willing to do business with them, too, if they kick out the Nazis and form their own conservative regime. (No. 3 was suggested by Freda Uteley in *The New Leader*.)

April 16: Vishinsky, Assistant Commissar of Foreign Affairs, "suggests" that Badoglio should immediately form a new Italian government "on a wide basis representing all parties".

April 21: Badoglio announces formation of such a government. Includes representatives of *all* the major parties, including Communist, Socialist and the Action Party.

"This cook will prepare peppery dishes," wrote Lenin about Stalin in his "testament". What the master chef of the Kremlin is now preparing for his allies the future will show. A Moscow dispatch in the *N. Y. Times* of April 30 is rather alarming, however. "The dominant themes for Russia's third wartime observance of May Day," it begins, "are that the Soviet Union is fully committed to the principles of the Moscow and Teheran conferences and is doing everything possible fulfill the decision taken there; that Russia is seeking to strengthen its coalition with Britain and the United States and to anticipate the enemy's efforts to sow discord among the Allies; and that the Soviet Union aims at a diplomatic wall of military isolation for Germany." After this ominous report, Churchill and Roosevelt would do well to be prepared for plenty of pepper in the soup.

## WORLD NO. 2: GREAT BRITAIN

Recent Soviet policy—and the increasing military power of which it is an expression—is causing great changes in British foreign policy. Lacking the population and resources to function as a world power by herself, Great Britain has always had to rely on combinations with other countries to maintain her position. For centuries she got along with her famous balance-of-power policy in Europe, throwing her weight to the weaker side to offset first France (18th and early 19th centuries) and in recent times Germany. A year ago, she shaped her policy towards co-operation with Russia. But it now looks as though Russia will come out of the war more powerful than had seemed possible a year ago.

Where is the Enemy? British policy is therefore slowly shifting. Two important editorials in the *London Times* give the measure of that shift. On March 10, 1943, the *Times* proposed an Anglo-Soviet bloc to share "joint responsibility" for running postwar Europe, and specifically to make sure that Germany would not again rise to dominance. A year later, on February 28, 1944, the *Times* ran another lead editorial: Germany must not be dismembered after the war, and must remain "an important member of the European body politic and economic." In the interim the Red Army had advanced from Stalingrad to the Danube.

This shift was anticipated by F. A. Voigt, editor of *The Nineteenth Century and After*, who wrote in his September issue:

"Eastern Europe has come to comprise the industries of Central Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean. To be master of Eastern Europe is, therefore, to be master of all Europe. If England were to abdicate in Eastern Europe, she would be abdicating in all Europe. Such a policy would lead to her isolation, it would destroy the British ascendancy in the Near and Middle East. It would, by placing the Balkans and the straits under the domination of one power, bring the British command of the Mediterranean to an end. It would isolate Turkey and eliminate British influence in Iraq and in Iran and threaten the security of India and of the Persian Gulf. It would compel England to reconsider her attitude toward Germany.

"Russia is determined to control the industries of central and southeastern Europe, especially those of Bohemia. . . . If she succeeds she will, in time, be master of Europe, perhaps in association with Germany. . . . Russian aspirations contain the stuff of all Anglo-Russian tension for the last 100 years. They would, if realized, overthrow the balance of power. They would, in the end, compel Great Britain, whether she liked it or not, to modify her attitude towards Germany."

This prediction has been realized, like the similar forebodings of General Smuts, which I commented upon here recently. Smuts proposed that England head a league of European nations as a counterweight to the postwar power of Soviet Russia. But Russia is only part of Britain's problem. There is also the United States. And so Smuts, who is much the most intelligent and far-sighted statesman of contemporary British imperialism, also proposed a strengthening of Empire ties. More recently, Lord Halifax put forward a similar scheme which seems to have been favorably received by the governments of all the dominions except Canada, which is within the American sphere of influence. The conference of Empire prime ministers which is about to open as this is written is expected to result in a closer knitting together of the Empire.

Inside England, there has been a change of sentiment about the Empire. When Churchill declared in 1942 that he had not become the King's first minister to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire, a considerable section of liblab (liberal-labor) opinion protested. By now, however, the difficulties of England's postwar situation have become so plain, and the possibility of a progressive solution so remote, that the Labor Party has become more and more Empire-conscious. It has officially supported present policy on India and has opposed any "premature" freeing of other colonies. Emanuel Shinwell, one of Churchill's most persistent Laborite critics, recently told the House of Commons that he was now in "hearty accord" with Churchill's 1942 statement. "We have no intention, not one of us," he added, "of throwing the British Commonwealth of Nations overboard to satisfy a section of the American press—or any one else." Applause resounded "from all corners of the house."

"Export or Die" The most logical postwar ally of England, for all sorts of obvious reasons, would be the United States. Yet it is precisely this cooperation, so natural from a historical and psychological viewpoint, which is economically impossible. After this war, England will be a debtor country for the first time; stripped of her overseas investments, her traditional dominance in international banking and shipping threatened by new competitors, England will have to make up an enormous annual deficit in her balance of trade by means of greatly



increased exports. While American business hopes to restore a measure of free trade after the war, Great Britain is evolving a strictly planned, state-controlled economy. The Federation of British Industries and the Trade Union Congress are agreed on this just as the National Association of Manufacturers and AFL and CIO are agreed on the preservation of "free enterprise" as a postwar goal. "We are moving into an altogether different form of society," Herbert Morrison recently told a labor audience. "For some time to come we in Britain will be working out a form of partnership between the state and large-scale industry."

This trend in domestic economy is reflected in a similar trend in Britain's world trade policies—and vice versa. On February 22, the Federation of British Industries, which last year put out a detailed program for a kind of "democratic-corporative" economy run by organized business with the labor unions as junior partners, issued a complementary statement on international policy. The Federation recommended the creation after the war of "an international economic council, to estimate requirements and guide the future of postwar world trade." Shortly afterwards, the London *Economist* began publication of a series of articles entitled "Principles of Trade" which rejected Hull's beloved reciprocal trade agreements in favor of Schachtian measures: import quotas, export subsidies, exchange control, Government buying of certain commodities. The *Economist* proposed the formation of a "Sterling Bloc" which would wall off an area of world trade within which Bloc members would agree to buy as much as they sold—or, if they fail to do so, to allow their favorable trade balances (i.e., the debts owed them by other countries) to be cancelled after a certain period. Equally revolutionary was the additional proposal that each member of the Sterling Bloc should agree to take measures to avoid depressions within its own economy, i.e., to plan and centrally control its economy. Both ideas are anathema to American capitalism, which hopes to free itself of such state controls as now exist, and which wants the postwar world to be a creditor's not a debtor's world. (It is all curiously reminiscent of the Populist controversy in this country at the turn of the century, even down to the "easy money" recommended by the British "bancor" plan and the "hard" money favored by the American "unitas" plan.) But the *Economist* is not greatly concerned by what American business thinks—or rather, cannot permit itself to be concerned—and concludes with a warning to the United States that, with Russia conducting her foreign trade as a 100% state monopoly, and with England organizing some kind of Sterling Bloc, it is unrealistic to keep on talking about international free trade after the war.

Already the two policies have clashed at several points. Lord Keynes' "bancor" plan for international financial relations was, as one might expect, much broader and involved much more planning and centralized control than did the "unitas" plan which the American treasury put up against it. An international conference is to be held this spring at which the whole question will be discussed. Even more pointed is the current activity of the Department of Justice against international cartels, which are being prosecuted under the Sherman Act. When President Johnston of the U. S. Chamber of Commerce was in England last fall, Lord McGowan, chairman of the powerful British chemical monopoly, said to him: "I see no hope for collaboration between British and American business unless the U. S. repeals its Sherman Anti-Trust Act. Can we in England look forward to that?" Johnston replied he didn't think so. One can imagine Lord McGowan's feelings when

the Department of Justice a few weeks ago sought an anti-trust indictment against his own Imperial Chemical Industries.

Nor are these questions of general principles the only source of Anglo-American antagonism. In many fields the two powers would clash violently even if they were in perfect agreement on principles. I might cite the current "freedom of the air" controversy in postwar aviation, the proposed American pipe-line across Arabia, the delicate question of what is to be done with the huge American merchant marine after the war, the ambition of New York to replace London as world finance capital, the rivalry for trade and investment in South America and Asia. There is no space to go into these here, but their mere listing should give an idea of the scope of the conflict. It is no wonder that Britain looks for support after the war to the Empire, to the smaller nations of Europe, to Germany, perhaps once more it will be even possible to work something out with Russia—but under no conceivable circumstances to her American cousins.

### WORLD NO. 3: THE UNITED STATES

The contrast between the postwar economic ideas of the American ruling class and those of the Russian and British is suggested by the Baruch-Hancock report on "War and Postwar Adjustment Policies", which is accepted by business, labor (Murray of the CIO at least), and the Roosevelt Administration as the basis for postwar economic policy. "With peace," write Baruch-Hancock, "each has the right to make what he pleases. Governmental direction and aid disappear. The markets become free and each individual is dependent upon his vision, his courage, his resourcefulness and his energy. . . . The war has been a crucible for all of the economic systems of the world, for our own, for Communism, Fascism, Nazism—all the others. And the American system has out-produced the world."

It would have been hard to believe, at the height of the New Deal, that an attitude like the above would ever again command general assent in this country. Yet the miracle has come to pass. The war has driven Britain towards state capitalism and the United States away from it—ideologically, that is. It is remarkable how within the past year, all our leaders of opinion, from conservative to liblab, have come to agree on "Free Enterprise" as a postwar formula. The right concedes, in words at least, that enterprise must be "free" from private as well as state control, while the left concedes that enterprise must be "free" from state as well as private control.

The Liberty League was the last expression of what might be called the "pure" ideology of Free Enterprise: that the system automatically spreads blessings if the legal owners are allowed complete freedom in making use of their property as they think best. The contemporary conservative doctrine is expressed in a recent ad by the great business publishers, McGraw-Hill: "Free enterprise does not imply the freedom to use any or all means to make a profit. It does not mean the right to monopolize. It means the opportunity and the obligation to compete." At the annual meeting of the National Association of Manufacturers, President Crawford formalized the new big-business line when he stated that the NAM no longer stood for "unqualified free enterprise" but rather for "free, private and competitive enterprise . . . the absence of all uncontrolled monopoly and special privilege wherever they may have been found in the past."

The left has also made concessions. The Communists



have formally adopted "Free Enterprise" as their 1944 slogan, insisting that the reactionaries have no right to monopolize so inspiring a concept. Stuart Chase has lost much of his faith in nationalization of industry, and now urges that a large sector of the economy be reserved for private enterprise. Vice-President Wallace has confided to the press his vision of a postwar America "where all can become members of the middle-class . . . The spirit of competition will and must continue to be one of our main driving forces. We can have full employment without destroying private enterprise . . . Horatio Alger is not dead in America and never will be."

**Popular Capitalism** The whole trend is epitomized in the intriguing idea of a "people's capitalism" recently put forward by Eric Johnston, the president of the U. S. Chamber of Commerce. This is the theme of his new book, *America Unlimited*, as also of his article in the September *Reader's Digest* with the wonderful title: "Three Kinds of Capitalism: Which Offers a Poor Boy the Best Chance?" At first glance, it seems daring of Mr. Johnston to say "capitalism" right out loud. (It is an interesting sidelight on capitalism that the very word has come to have a pejorative flavor. Thus I remember Ralph McA. Ingersoll, in his pre-P.M. period, when he was Luce's gauleiter on *Fortune*, citing, among other instances of my alleged smuggling of radical propaganda into my articles, my frequent use of the word "capitalism".)\* However, the way that Mr. Johnston defines capitalism takes all the curse off the word.

"From a strictly economic angle," he begins, "there is capitalism everywhere." He lists three types: (1) bureaucratic (Russia, Germany, and "seedling growths" in Washington); (2) "capitalism of monopoly and special privilege" (flourishes most in . . . England); (3) "Then there is a *people's* capitalism. I come from it. I want to see it survive for every poor boy and girl in America after me . . . Only America, I think, can light the world toward an ultimate capitalism of *everybody*." So we now have a "people's capitalism" as a fitting companion to the "people's war" and the "people's century". I suppose next we shall be hearing about "people's cartels" and "the imperialism of the common man".

**Freud and the Sherman Act** All these formulae should be considered under the head of psychiatry rather than economics. The compensatory mechanism is obvious: the more monopolistic industry becomes; the more the State intervenes into capitalism; the more the middle classes are squeezed out of the control-sector of the economy; the more all this happens, the more powerful the compulsion to believe in the possibility of a future reversal of these tendencies. Some of the "Free Enterprise" ideologues are doubtless aware of this, but I think most of them are the dupes of their own rhetoric. Otherwise, one would expect some more plausible program to be evolved for securing Free Enterprise than the enforcement of the Sherman and Clayton Anti-Trust Acts.

For it is a fact that all of them, from Willkie and John-

son to Wallace, put all their hopes on trust-busting. One really thinks one is back in the days of the Boy Orator from the Platte when one reads Wallace's anti-monopoly speeches. His Dallas speech against the railroads, for example, showed with copious documentation—lately buttressed by the testimony of Assistant Attorney-General Berge before the Kilgore Committee of the Senate—that railroad rates have never been competitive, that the I.C.C. has failed for fifty years to regulate them effectively, that discriminatory rail rates have kept the South and West in a state of semi-colonial dependency on the Northeast, that "new restraints have appeared with the outlawing of the old", etc.

It was an impressive performance. But Wallace proved too much. For if all this is true, two questions arise: (1) why has half a century of Government regulation, including ten years of Wallace's own New Deal, failed to make any headway? (2) Why is it reasonable to expect the same method to work in the future? On the contrary, it is clear that the trusts to be "busted" have been getting bigger all the time, and that the present war is concentrating American capital at a specially rapid rate. These facts at once refute the trust-busting ideology and make it psychologically all the more necessary for supporters of capitalism to cling to it.

**International Enterprise** The realities behind the "Free Enterprise" ideology are most clearly exposed on the international scene. For obvious reasons, the capitalist state has always intervened most decisively in foreign, rather than domestic, commerce. Tariffs flourished in the great age of American *laissez faire*. It was Schacht's devices for controlling foreign trade which later spread to the German economy itself. And so we find a much less unanimous agreement on "Free Enterprise" even as an ideology when American business looks beyond its national borders. As Arthur Pincus showed last month, Governmental agencies have taken over much of the trade and practically all the investment in Latin America since the war began. Strong airline interests are pressing for the "chosen instrument" policy in postwar aviation—that is, setting up a state-regulated monopoly of all foreign air transport. Plans have been reported to merge all the foreign interests of American cable, radio and telephone companies into a single Government-backed communications trust which could compete on equal terms with the British trust, Cables & Wireless, Ltd. The deal Secretary Ickes made with two American oil companies for a Government-built trans-Arabian pipeline is another case in point.

This is by no means the dominant trend, however. There is strong opposition from within business to each of the above moves. And the archaic free-trade notions of Secretary Hull are still this country's official postwar line, whatever the London *Economist* may think about them. There are two reasons American business favors international free trade after the war: because it thinks it is powerfully enough organized on a private basis to lick all foreign competition—i.e., American trusts are bigger; and because it wants a free field for its economic power in the colonial preserves of the great European powers, especially England. Russia is now acquiring the kind of economic hinterland in Europe that England has long had scattered over the globe, a hinterland fenced in by political and military power. It seems unlikely either will open the gates to the American Free Enterprisers. And even the stout heart of a General Motors vice-president might falter at the prospect of taking on Imperial Motors, Ltd., or the Soviet Automotive Trust in a competitive battle. The re-

\* "When this book first appeared (1926)", writes R. H. Tawney in the preface to his "Religion and the Rise of Capitalism", "it was possible for a friendly reviewer, writing in a serious journal, to deprecate in all gravity the employment of the term 'capitalism' in an historical work, as a political catch-word, betraying a sinister intention on the part of the misguided author." One is also reminded of the story, perhaps apocryphal, that President Butler of Columbia told his faculty member, Louis M. Hacker, that he liked everything about the latter's "Triumph of American Capitalism" except one thing—"Why, Mr. Hacker, was it necessary to use *that word* in the title?"



sults of such an awakening may be either a retreat to economic isolationism, in which case the state will have to become even more actively interventionist if capitalism is to survive, or else the emulation of Russian and British methods, which also call for more, not less, state control of the economy. Either way, "Free Enterprise" seems doomed even as an ideology.

Olla ● Roosevelt's reply to the protest of the Podrida American clergymen against saturation bombing of Germany (see "Comment", last issue) is a curious exercise in logic. "Obviously," writes Presidential Secretary Steve Early, "Obviously the President is just as disturbed and horrified by the destruction of life in this war as any members of the committee. Thousands of people not in uniform have been killed. The easiest way to prevent many others from being killed is to use every effort to compel the Germans and Japanese to change their philosophy. As long as their philosophy lasts, we shall have more deaths, more destruction and more wars. That philosophy has nothing of Christianity in it." Thus we have this interesting syllogism: The Germans' philosophy is not Christian because it is based on death and destruction. Our philosophy is (by implication) Christian. Therefore, the only way to get the Germans to accept our philosophy is to inflict unlimited death and destruction on them. Q. E. D.

● It might be added that the London *Review of Foreign Affairs* (as quoted in *Human Events*, April 6, 1944) estimates that to destroy 54 German cities of over 100,000 inhabitants each (excluding Berlin) and containing 25% of the German population, it would take at least 10 raids of about 1,000 bombers for each city. At the present rate of operations, this would take three years. To destroy 105 major cities, involving 38.5% of Germany's population, would take six years. "The question arises," adds the *Review*, "whether a country which has between 25% and 38.5% of its population so affected can continue the war. It is difficult to answer this question." Thus it seems doubtful that mass bombing is indeed the "easiest way", as Roosevelt with unconscious cynicism put it. Though, of course, after six years of it, the Germans would undoubtedly be quite ready to accept our philosophy, which by that time would be indistinguishable from what Roosevelt alleges theirs to be.

● Readers of Kurt List's article in this issue will be interested in his recent piece in *The New Leader* called "Seven Reasons for Shostakovitch", which punctured that overinflated composer so effectively as to move Olin Downes to an interminable counter-attack in the *N. Y. Times* of April 30. In columns of newsprint, Mr. Downes, noted for his reactionary esthetic ideas, insists that Shostakovitch is not so bad as all that. His most effective point is that Shostakovitch is a Russian, and that "Russia is peering into her future."

● The chapter from Thucydides which appears as a "Modern Text" this month was in type when the April 26 issue of *Human Events* came into the office. This contains an article by Felix Morley on Secretary Hull's recent warnings to neutral nations that they had better be more neutral on our side in future. Mr. Morley takes both his title—"Judges in Your Own Cause"—and much of his text from this very chapter of Thucydides. Thus are monthlies scooped by weeklies. A more cheerful thought is that here

is striking confirmation of the timely timelessness (or timeless timeliness) of Thucydides.

● My favorite general is Patton. Some of our generals, like Stillwell for example, have developed a sly ability to simulate human beings. But Patton always behaves as a general should. He wears special uniforms, which like Goering he designs himself, which are calculated, like the ox-horns worn by ancient Gothic chieftains, to strike terror into the enemy (and into any rational person, for that matter). He writes blood-curdling poetry apostrophizing the God of Battles. He slaps shellshocked soldiers and curses them for cowards. When Italian mules obstruct the progress of his staff car, he has them executed on the spot—doubtless with full military protocol, including bandages eyes (optional). And now he has shown that he can turn even a routine affair like opening a new Anglo-American service club in London into something memorable. "The idea of these clubs," ruminated the general in the presence of reporters, "could not be better because undoubtedly it is the destiny of the English and American peoples to rule the world, and the more we see of each other the better." Once more the general was in the headlines, once more the Army publicity staff wearily got to work. . . . Patton's only rival in my affections is General MacArthur, also a master of the grand military manner. MacArthur's literary style is more satisfactory, but he lacks Patton's punch. A few more such generals, and militarism will be a dead issue in this country.

● There are a number of references in this issue to *Human Events*, a news-letter edited by Frank Hanighen, with Felix Morley and William Henry Chamberlin as contributing editors. It appears weekly, its material is generally fresh and presented from a realistic point of view, and it presents long-range ideas and perspectives instead of the ephemeral gossip of most news-letters. *Human Events*. It costs \$3 for three months, \$10 a year. Address: 1702 K St., N.W., Washington 6, D. C.

● Two news items are interesting in connection with Niccolo Tucci's "The Cause that Refreshes" last month.

The *N. Y. Times* correspondent, A. C. Sedgwick, on April 28 last cabled from Italy: "It is evident that the Italian people . . . reserve as one of the first benefits under the liberalized Badoglio regime, the right to be indifferent to it. They seem to feel specially licensed to show fatigue and lassitude in their fledgling freedom. On the principle that man does not live by bread alone, it may be argued that the highest standard of living prevails in Southern Italy. Spiritually speaking, people in the South have achieved as much as is humanly possible. . . . Yet it does not seem to be enough. . . . The preoccupation is with bread." Apparently, Sedgwick is quite serious in the above, for he goes on to criticize the Italians' indifference to their "fledgling freedom" as unreasonable, since they are no worse off as to food than are the peoples of lands occupied by the Germans. Could be.

And the British Anarchist paper, *War Commentary*, quotes an item in the London *Evening Standard* of Feb. 22 which is even more Tuccian:

"Opening his wallet, Tommy Trinder showed me last night a 50-lira note issued by Amgot in Italy. Printed on it are four slogans: Freedom of Speech, Freedom of Religion, Freedom from Fear, Freedom from Want. I remarked that the slogans were not printed in Italian, but in English. 'Yes,' said Mr. Trinder. 'That is so that the natives shall not be corrupted.'"



# The Music of Soviet Russia

Kurt List

**F**AR ahead of the Red Army, the music of Soviet Russia has advanced to the West and conquered our concert life. The critics, usually prompt to refuse a passing grade to living composers, have presented no critical evaluation. The hysterical enthusiasm which greeted the works of Shostakovich, the organized activities of first rate conductors (Koussevitzky, Rodzinsky, Stokowski, Mitropoulos) on behalf of Russian music and the exchange of symphonic, not diplomatic notes between Russian and American composers (Shostakovich and Roy Harris) are unique musical phenomena. Such noise is not Apollonian; reasons for this frenzy will have to be sought in other fields.

In October 1917, the power in Russia changed hands and the arts were entrusted to a new stratum, inexperienced in the fostering of culture. Czarist society had been more conservative in music than in the other arts, largely because only the Czarist family had the means to further orchestras, opera performances, etc. Modern experiments met with great hostility.\* Western musical radicalism was so unfamiliar in Russia that the harmonically complex works of Wagner found little understanding. The dominant musical level in 1917 was national music wrapped in the cloak of sugary romanticism. At its best it reached Tchaikovsky but more often remained salon music à la Rubinstein. Balakireff's Free School, once the center of radical experimentation, had long since closed down for lack of funds. Of the "Big Five", the founders of the nationally independent tendency, only Rimsky-Korsakoff's Chopinesque works and Cui were left in the repertoire. Classic tonality, modified retrogressively by the Phrygian scale (taken from the ancient Slavic Church music), was the basic material of Russian music prior to 1917. Dissonance was the work of the devil. The style was essentially harmonic with a noticeable lack of counterpuntal devices.

## The Revolutionary Years

The revolution which had so thoroughly changed the lives of the Russian masses was helpless at first. Though it recognized the necessity for bringing music to the masses and the masses to music, it did not know how to go about it. It gave material support to the composer, it sponsored concerts for the people, it encouraged folk singing and dancing and it was deeply concerned not only with the propagation of music but also with its moral aspects. However, it did not change the traditional musical education

except that the doors were opened to everyone.\* The Conservatories kept their old forms and continued to work in their cobwebbed technique. Many of the well known artists had left the country. Those who remained took over the musical leadership. But who were they? Men educated in the stuffy atmosphere of the Conservatoire, hostile to anything progressive. The leading figures then were Medtner, born 1879, Gliere, born 1875, Glasunoff, born 1865, Glebov, born 1884, and Sabanayev and Miaskovsky, both born 1881. At the time of the revolution their average age was about forty years. They all had occupied important posts under the Czar and had never displayed any predilection for revolutionary activities prior to 1917. Though Russia had been involved in many politically critical situations since Glinka and though a great many intellectuals had participated actively in the progressive movements, the noted musicians had remained completely aloof. Scriabine, encouraged by his friend Plekhanov, toyed for a while with the idea of studying Marx's *Capital*, but never did.

Shostakovich, in a younger, more enthusiastic and radical generation, a student in the Conservatory of Leningrad from 1919 to 1925, tells in an autobiographical study, published in *La Revue Musicale* of December 1936: "Once my studies were finished it became necessary for me to overhaul a great part of the musical baggage that I had acquired. I understood that music was not only a combination of sounds disposed in this or that order, but an art, capable of expressing, by the proper means, the most diverse ideas or sentiments. This conviction I did not acquire without pain. It suffices to say, that during the year 1926, I did not write a single note."

An engineer who worked in Russia during the Civil War points out the tremendous difficulties. He comments on the Soviet Government's educational policy:†

"In the matter of the reorganization of university teaching hardly anything has been effected, if one excepts the fact that the universities are open to all—a thing of small moment in a revolutionary period, and to workers who have better things to do than to listen to old-time learning . . . A 'certificated' teacher in front of a class is as great a risk as a Czarist officer at the head of a division of the Red Army . . . Writing, arithmetic, geography, history, all of the evil past. Throw the old litter and the old books on the scrap heap! . . . Monopoly must be destroyed not in production only; not in material output only must bureaucratic leadership be replaced by the active co-opera-

\* Moussorgsky's original and daring work was described by Tchaikovsky, prototype of his society, as "the lowest, commonest parody of music; it may go to the devil for all I care." Other experimenters, like Stravinsky, had found a field of activity in Western Europe long before the revolution. Even Scriabine who was conservative enough to dislike Strauss and detest Schoenberg found more acceptance abroad than in his native land.

\* The thirties brought changes in this respect. Musical education became so expensive that only the highest paid workers could afford to send their children to Conservatories. The price of admission to concerts had increased a thousand percent. While the average ticket cost twenty kopeks in 1926, in 1938 it cost two rubles.

† *New Policies of Soviet Russia*, "The Intellectuals and the Russian Revolution", S. J. Rutgers, Kerr, Chicago.



tion of all and each, but the same thing must be achieved for science, art and all culture in general . . . The expropriation and socialization of capital, therefore, is insufficient, unless followed up by the socialization of intellect and culture . . . The titanic war we wage is one and indivisible. It is against monopoly, whether monopoly of money or monopoly of mind."

But precisely the latter war was never waged to the necessary extent.

It cannot be denied that many outward changes were effected: people had the opportunity to visit concerts and to study music; hundreds of workers' choruses, orchestras, brass bands, balalaika groups, etc. were founded—by 1925 there were six thousand such groups; courses in listening were held in workers' clubs. The Trade Union Council trained many musical leaders for music propaganda work among the people. The publishing houses, taken over by the state, offered opportunities to many new composers, though even then there was at times another tendency, namely, to restrict state subsidies.

It was in these years that a younger generation tried new and daring experiments, but the development of music did not keep pace with other arts. In cinema, theatre and literature the beginning was marked by a radical art development. For a while futurism was declared the official tendency, but there were only sporadic attempts at musical innovations. Nicholas Roslavetz under Schoenberg's influence, Arthur Lourie and George Rimsky-Korsakoff, (a grandson of the noted composer) wrote works affected by the Western radical style, mostly quarter-tone music as developed in Czechoslovakia under Haba.\* Several societies for the promotion of new music were founded, e.g. The Society for Modern Music under Miaskovsky, Feinberg, (a Chopin epigone who wrote mostly for the piano), Sabanayev and Belaiev, (both conservative critics) and the Russian Association of Proletarian Musicians, later dissolved in 1932, whose aim was to promote proletarian as opposed to bourgeois music and to weaken European influences. These societies were radical in name only. They were actually a protest against the older generation united in the Composers' Society under Gliere, Ippolitov-Ivanov and Glasunoff who were not only music reactionaries but wrote most mediocre music, transforming banalities into pompous symphonies. Miaskovsky, always wavering between the shallowness of the eighties and the more sincere conservatism of the early twentieth century belonged to both societies.

A more serious attempt to replace the old practices was the newly founded Prolet-Kult, consisting of workers who were sincere and interested but who lacked artistic background. They had to concentrate on a radicalism of extra-musical content, e.g. titles, lyrics, etc. and of necessity neglected the real problem, the musical essence. Their initial manifesto is full of such statements as: "The basis

of our program is Marxism-Leninism, or—what is the same—dialectical materialism. The bourgeoisie painted everything in a rosy light, the proletariat sees it realistically from its own point of view. Schoenberg displays dark pessimism, metaphysics with no way out and mysticism exhaling incense. His music is therefore impoverishment and not enrichment, ergo reactionary. Proletarian composers do not want to invent something new, they follow traditions: folk music and bourgeois music as far as it represents the third estate. The purpose of the association is to realize the policy of the CPSU in the field of music." Though the Prolet-Kult was pushed aside later by the government, its first theoretical ideas, combined with the reactionary conception of the academicians, had laid the cornerstone of the official theory of "socialist realism". Igor Glebov, the critic, describes the music of the Prolet-Kult with brutal frankness: "From the standpoint of both melody and harmony this music is a succession of commonplace, vulgar phrases, truly bourgeois music and in bad taste at that."

### Official Policy

Instead of permitting this general confusion to develop freely, the government saw fit to bring order into a chaos which might have been the source of a cultural renaissance. Government interference was partly due to the demands of the artists themselves who insisted upon an official decision on the one and only acceptable tendency. Such was the monolithic spirit reigning among the intelligentsia even then. The government acted reluctantly at first. The Commissioner of Music, originally music coordinator, from 1922 on gradually became the final authority on style. He was the middle-man between the government and the artist. Glebov says: "Under his guidance the artistic institutions passed from a chaos of internal autonomy through the phases of collegiate administration into the subordination of all the parts and groups to one person appointed by and responsible to the government." Other more indirect means of control were the music critics like Glebov and Sabanayev with semi-official status, whose opinion made or broke a work; the publishing houses, (all in the hands of the state) which repeatedly rejected music on the grounds that it was too "pessimistic" or too "intellectual", and the government competitions for compositions on revolutionary subjects. At first criticism was directed mostly at the extra-musical content but since 1925 style itself underwent severe attacks.

In *Voices of October*, Joseph Freeman sums up very accurately the state of musical creation in the years following the revolution: "Composers of the older generation continued to compose along lines established before the revolution; on the other hand, the younger generation of musicians, moulded by the revolution, were animated by a different attitude toward life and art. Most of them considered even Prokofieff, Scriabine, Medtner and Rachmaninoff as belonging to the distant past—from the social point of view—though in musical structure they followed these men to a large extent." Sabanayev observes: "Extreme radicalism with its cult of sharp dissonances, its overthrow of former laws and modes of harmony and musical theory, so characteristic of the young composers of Western Europe and America is here almost entirely absent."

\* Roslavetz, who had issued a manifesto in behalf of modernism in 1919, in 1930 started to write popular marches. George Rimsky-Korsakoff, who had founded the Society for Quarter-Tone Music in 1923, dissolved it later and in 1937 wrote songs to Pushkin texts in the traditional idiom. Lourie, who was Commissioner of Music prior to 1923 had to resign because he fostered radical music. He emigrated to France in the thirties and later came to America.



From 1918 to 1922 the symphonic repertoire consisted chiefly of works of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. The most modern composers represented were Scriabine and Strauss. Surveying the opera performances in Leningrad in one year (1920) I found seven works by Rimsky-Korsakoff, one each by Glinka, Tchaikovsky, Borodine, Glasunoff and Serov and two by Moussorgsky. The Western composers were entirely absent and the only modern works were two ballets by Stravinsky.

From all this one conclusion is clear: making music readily available to large masses was insufficient. By not changing the methods of teaching and manner of performance, by determining the style and by restricting free artistic invention, no solution of the actual musical problems nor any radical development was effected. No doubt distrust of the West, fear of "bourgeois" influences and the inexperience of the masses in music influenced the government to foster national conservatism. As bureaucratic cynicism grew, trust in the masses' revolutionary strength yielded to the belief that a new society had to be imposed on the people from the top. Under those circumstances, the tendency to entrust music to well established professionals became fixed. Confined to decayed traditional musical background, led by old time academicians, lacking novel media for performance, Soviet Russian music got off to the worst possible start.\*

Since 1932 the music policy has remained essentially the same. The Commissioner of Music has been replaced by a Soviet Art Committee. Only the most untalented, aided by loyal but ancient professors of the Conservatory like Gliere, are left to perform the function of judges. Materially the position of the Soviet composer is magnificent as compared that of his Western Colleague. He is supported by the state, his works are performed and the millenium for the artist seems to have arrived. Scores of composers are commissioned for new works and the remunerations are exceedingly high. Many new orchestras are directed to perform the works of the living composers and contemporary music fills a large part of the concert programs.

But hand in hand with this generosity goes the demand: compose the tune to which the whole nation may dance or keep silent. There is no room for anyone who insists upon his own way. No performance, be it under the most modest circumstances, is possible without the consent of the authorities. The vicious attacks of the Soviet press in 1934 against the same Shostakovich who is now so highly celebrated are known in part. The alternate shelving and resurrecting of composers is an everyday occurrence. The artist is left in a continuous state of insecurity and anxiety. Free creation under these conditions is impossible. In spite of all the revolutionary phrase-making, the government does not want music which would differ from that of the Russian past or of the capitalist stagnation.

\* The development of Stravinsky and the early Prokofiev had been completely neglected. Their works were the synthesis of Moussorgsky's realism and Debussy's impressionism. This strange combination of Eastern realism and Western symbolism found its climactic expression in the musical satire. Stravinsky's *Petrushka* and *L'Histoire du Soldat* and Prokofiev's *Classical Symphony*, though the composer ascribed to it much different intentions later, were characteristic of the satirical style.

### Program Music—the Solution

It was not easy to restrict the revolutionary enthusiasm of the younger generation to the limits of the pre-revolutionary works. Neither was there a way out for the academician who, torn between the material changes and the burden of his past, had to produce a compromise somehow. The unfamiliarity of the audience with Western modern music and its apathy toward innovations affected the new generation in the same way that the dead weight of the past and the bewilderment at the enormous changes affected the academicians. The first period of music after the revolution was characterized by scores of works which combined reactionary musical form with revolutionary content.

The industrial change of the Nep period, startlingly new to the country, found its musical expression in works like *Electrified* by Polovinkin and the famous *Forge* by Mossoloff, crude imitations of industrial noise set within the frame work of traditional musical material. On the peasant front, Kastalski was not able to progress from this style with his *Agricultural Symphony*. Radicalism was confined to the titles of works which commemorated the revolution and the Civil War, e.g. Shostakovich's *Second (October)* and *Third (May-day)* symphonies, Miaskovsky's Cantata *Kirov is with Us*, the first musical condemnation of Trotzkyism, and his *Sixth Symphony (Revolution)*, Prokofiev's Cantata *for the Twentieth Anniversary of the Revolution* to words of Marx, Lenin and Stalin. Here then the problem seemed solved, the recipe simple: radical titles—conservative music. And the Russian public, unburdened by previous experience, eagerly accepted revolutionary works in the style of Medtner and Gliere as the expression of revolution, the more so since revolution was uppermost in their minds.

Program music, in a word, seemed to offer a way out of the dilemma. Program had never been alien to the Russian musician. In the timid gropings for national independence, composers of the national school had already leaned heavily on Russian literature, emancipated much earlier. The main works of Borodin, Balakireff, Rimsky-Korsakoff are operas, ballets or tone-poems. Even Tchaikovsky, strongly inclined toward absolute (without program) music at times found it necessary to adorn his symphonies with titles. (*Vide the Sixth as Pathétique*). No wonder then that after the revolution a music blossomed remarkable only for its revolutionary titles.

But the problem of program music is quite ticklish. If the program is expressed in a musical imitation of outer physical events, as for instance in Rossini's storm scene, ("William Tell") it is clear that such processes can be imitated in nearly any style and can still convey the desired impression. If however, the program is rather indefinite and gives expression only to general concepts, for example Beethoven's *Eroica*, then new ideas will demand new musical expression, new material and new style. Thus a storm has always been expressed more or less by the use of the chromatic scale, no matter in what period or country it has been imitated, but for the conception of heroism varying musical material has been employed. Beethoven's hero—in Beethoven's words "the man who will bring freedom to the world"—is founded on the comparatively simple tonality of the later classics, his motifs wandering through the major chord melodically, while harmonically based on



the dominant-tonic relationship. Wagner's hero, the man to free the world from metaphysical evil and to bring about purity beyond our physical existence, lives in the realm of chromatics, mediant relations and deceptive cadences. Both heroes are the products of their times just as their music has its technical origin in the respective periods. The hero of the bourgeois revolution and the firm establishment of tonality are bound together; the hero through the political and ideological thoughts, the music through the development of the brass instrument which at that time determined the clear tonality and the use of the major triad through its limitation of possible tone selection. Wagner's hero comes from the metaphysical world of a society which has left its interests in the secular plane. The music, due to the increasing industrialization, can make use of the newly perfected valves (greater tone selection) and thus offers free reign to the development of chromatics.

Music of philosophical content does not necessarily convey the impression intended by its program. The transference depends only slightly on the skill of the composer. The mental state of the audience, its associations with a certain style, its receptivity to certain ideas—these are the factors that determine its acceptance or rejection of a program.\*

The Russian composer, partly freed from Western style, introduced a new tonality derived from Eastern and Church scales. After the revolution, the newly introduced complex Wagnerian harmonies and the classic sonata form were no longer compatible. The sonata is built upon a simple harmonic relationship which was destroyed by the intricacies of the new harmony. A form evolved which, though called sonata or symphony, was comparable to the harmonically involved works of Liszt, Mahler, Bruckner and Franck rather than to the sonata form par excellence, the symphony of the classics. In chamber music, structural defects cannot be concealed by the tone color of contrasting instruments; therefore there was no choice but to abandon the new harmony and to employ either classical or archaic relationships. The Russians chose the latter. This chamber music, when it is more than salon music, demonstrates the undecidedness and tragedy of the Soviet composer with the combination of pre-Bachian style characteristics and modern expressiveness.

If a composer builds a large structure (sonata) with unsuitable (post-romantic) material, no matter how great his talent, he will fall short of the task he has set for himself. But he can still write effectively within a small structure. This sheds some light on why Tschaikovsky and Shostakovitch reached comparative mastery within each segment but were not able to establish logical continuity in large structures. Shostakovitch has never reached a stage in which he could develop a theme though at times his inventions are magnificent. In his music one is always

\* Richard Strauss once told me that ever since he conducted the *Third Symphony* by Mahler in a Workers' Symphony Concert in Vienna at the height of Social Democratic power, the first movement evoked in him the impression of thousands of workers parading the streets with red flags in a May day demonstration. Mahler himself, however, describes the content of this movement as: "Summer is marching in. The humorous-subjective content is presented. Summer is thought the victor,—in the midst of all that grows and blossoms, dreams and desires and finally what we sense. (Angels—Chimes—Transcendental) — Above all is eternal love in us — like rays convening in one focus."

painfully aware of its medley character. Interestingly enough, his style remained ambiguous even after his official rebuke. He employs archaisms in slow movements but in faster compositions has not yet rid himself of those satirical inclinations which are his best feature. His march movements, supposedly representing the victorious workers, sound like a splendid parody on some monstrous pomposity.

Prokofieff, schooled very extensively in the West, bridges the contradictions of a direct development from barbarism to degeneration by consciously employing archaic forms in pseudo-modern, mostly satirical clothes. (Gavottes, Classical Symphony, etc.) In an interview with the *New York Times* he expressed his feelings by proclaiming a "Return to Classicism." He said: "I want nothing better, nothing more flexible and complete than the sonata form." But his polytonal material, modern orchestration and formal incoherence make his music the inconsistent cloak of occasionally fascinating content. Thus the works, more than originally intended, are bound to appear as satires and travesties on the very forms so admired and revered by their composer.

#### Music Under the First Five Year Plan

When the importance of the peasant problem and the national question began to have their effect and many new social strata and nationalities were drawn into active and passive musical activity, music as auxiliary to cinema and theatre, as communal singing and dancing was emphasized. At the same time the interest among the peasants and Eastern tribes in symphonic music rose tremendously. Composers were faced with the problem of writing music which could be performed and understood by comparatively untrained people. The artist was compelled to "simplify" his music—i.e., to force his development back to a period with which the masses were somewhat familiar. His material therefore had to be taken from the vulgarities of the eighties and the Eastern folk melodies, Modern harmonies, complicated counterpoints and large forms were more and more out of the question.

The Soviet government spent millions to create interest in national music. The exploration of folk music, more than six hundred years old, became the first task of the composer. National music was being created. Composers like Spendiarov in the Armenian school, Krein and Griesin in the Jewish school, Muradeli in the Cossack school became the heroes of the day. Turkmenian, Tadjik, Uzbek music flourished. As long as this music was restricted to the specific territory, it was partly the national expression of the respective tribes; but when it entered the concert hall in Russia proper, it was infected with the old Western mannerisms of Rimsky-Korsakoff. Katchaturian, lately so artificially fostered in America, is an example of this nationally tinged neo-Tschaikovskyism. The Red army became an independent and powerful body and music for its soldiers had a conspicuous place. All this on the same primitive level.

Simultaneously it became necessary to draw on musicians from Western Europe to supplement the scant num-



ber of trained Russians. Conductors, teachers and instrumentalists were sought. It was only natural that the musicians of the German Republic, seething with political and artistic revolt, should turn hopefully toward the newly created Soviet state. Scores of the most talented and idealistic German musicians entered Russia and brought along their acquaintance with the new Western music. Though the Russian was bewildered by the radical German development, he now accepted for the first time what in Germany was part of the glorious past, but which was still being extensively featured by German conductors: Wagner, Strauss and Mahler. Shostakovitch, partly under influence of Stravinsky's musical satire, began his new style—a combination of Russian realistic sketchiness and German voluptuous romanticism. Prokofieff, after ten years in exile, revisited Russia which under the influence of the European musicians gradually performed his works. A turning away from the revolutionary content went hand in hand with these developments. Shostakovitch's opera after Gogol's novel *The Nose* (1926) was described by *Pravda* as "bourgeois decadent". His ballet, *The Limpid Stream*, painting life on a Soviet collective farm, the first portrayal of present and very ticklish problems rather than of past glorious deeds, was criticised by *Pravda*—"Shostakovitch treats the Soviet theme too lightly". A dislike for the once encouraged satire appeared among the authorities at the moment when it became clear that the satirized problems were practically insoluble. The antagonism between the newly awakened radicalism and the backward nationalism was officially expressed for the first time in a discussion on formalism (the German-influenced Moussorgsky tendency) and realism (the nationalist development of the Tschaikovsky trend) which was to last for over six years in the Soviet press.

The climax of the argument was reached in 1934 at the first performance of Shostakovitch's opera *Lady Macbeth*

of *Mzensk* in which the composer presented in his most radical manner the age-old theme of the nymphomaniac vampire against a Soviet background. The style, though markedly showing Mahlerisms, seems to approach Stravinsky more closely. To the European and American observer this opera signified that Soviet music was breaking loose and had found its own modern characteristics. Not so the Soviet authorities. *Pravda* unleashed an attack unprecedented in its fury: "The theme and the entire treatment is vulgar. The opera is a leftist monstrosity, a Soviet perversion of taste. The listener is plunged into a mass of intentional discords. Fragments of melody appear on the surface, are drowned, reappear, and are once more submerged in the general roar." The art magazine *Rabotchy y Teatr* wrote: "Shostakovitch is the foremost representative of the two tendencies extremely dangerous to Soviet art, pathological naturalism, eroticism, and formalistic perversion, as demonstrated in *Lady Macbeth* and primitivistic schematicism as in *Limpid Stream*." It is noteworthy that the criticism was based on priggish sexual morals as well as on musical conservatism. Music plays such a vivid role in the life of the Soviet people that the newspapers carried head lines on the front pages: "AGAINST FORMALIST PERVERSION OF ART", "FOR MUSIC THAT MILLIONS NEED", "AGAINST THE ADVOCATES OF MUSICAL PERVERSION".

The Soviet regime saw the danger clouds of attack from the capitalist West and began to orientate itself culturally toward a national traditionalism. Russia ceased to be the "fatherland of all the toilers", and once again became "Mother Russia". The argument was finally decided when Stalin very pointedly and *ex cathedra* described Dzerzhinsky's opera, *And Quiet Flows the Don*, as the typical opera expressing the Soviet sentiment. This opera, after the novel of Sholokhov, is in choice of subject and musical style just the opposite of *Lady Macbeth*. It is nationalistic in its dramatic content and pervaded by the conservative Russian tradition of Glinka, Tschaikovsky and Glasunoff in its musical material. As a result Shostakovitch, horrified at the reception of his work, repented, withdrew his *Fourth Symphony* written in the *Lady Macbeth* vein, and disappeared for a while from the Russian musical scene.

### Popular Front and War

The increasing emphasis on collective security and the resulting popular front policy of the Comintern inaugurated a new art policy. The Russian past had become respectable again and with war drawing closer a nationalism was developed which did not stop at praising present-day Russia. The Soviet Republic rallied around it all former enemies. Political emigrés tried to return to the fatherland. Only a few were accepted, among them Prokofieff, who became the most ardent advocate of national art. This composer, whose strength had lain in humor and satire, wrote only one more work in this vein, *Lieutenant Kije*, a satire on an attempted overthrow of the Soviet government. His other works show the strong nationalist tendency, *Alexander Nevsky*, *Overture on Russian Themes*, and the opera *War and Peace*. Works by other composers written in this period all deal with Russia's national qualities as indicated by their titles. To mention a few: Belyi's *Slav Suite*, She-





balin's *Russian Overture*, Dzerzhinsky's operas *And Quiet Flows the Don* and *Nadia Sveltoff*, Shaporin's *On the Fields of Kulikov*, Koval's *Emilian Pugatchov*. Fewer works follow the exhortation to continue the bourgeois heritage. Kabalevsky's opera *Colas Breugnon* after Romain Rolland's novel, celebrates the French folk hero of the past but attempts of this kind are infrequent. Shostakovitch, who returned to grace with his *Fifth Symphony*, fulfilling all the requirements of "socialist realism", nearly fell victim once more to the new line. He planned his "Sixth Symphony" as a choral work to words of Lenin. The popular front line, stressing the bourgeois heritage and departing from the revolutionary phraseology, forced him again to shelve his original plans and the *Sixth Symphony* was performed without words or program. Nevertheless, first presented at the December festival of 1939, the peak of the nationalist orgy, it competed unsuccessfully with the nationalist works of Prokofieff, Koval and Shaporin.

The war brings no changes. Nationalism is firmly established and it is only natural that parallels with the past Russian invasions are drawn. Kabalevsky writes an opera, *Near Moscow*, dealing with the siege of that city, and Shostakovitch completes his now famous *Seventh Symphony* on the invasion and his *Eighth* on victory and post-war Russia. If absolute music is written, Russian or far Eastern themes are the exclusive material and quite a few works have risen to fame in the past year on the strength of their mere nationalistic content, as the piano concerti by Katchaturian and Kabalevsky.

The popular front policy, nationalism and war have not brought any changes as far as the musical treatment itself is concerned. The question of style was, once and for all, decided in 1936 with Stalin's proclamation of socialist realism as the only art worthy of the Soviet citizen. There has been a much stronger leaning toward cloying romanticism, an over-simplification of the melodic line, a greater tendency toward the medley construction with almost complete neglect of the development of themes and a more carefully guarded avoidance of dissonances. But these are only logical responses to the demand of realism. Prokofieff recently stated: "Bach uses dissonance as good salt for his music. Others applied pepper, seasoned the dishes more highly until all healthy appetites were sick and until the music was nothing but pepper. I think society has had enough of that. We want a simpler and more melodic style for music, a simpler, less emotional state . . . Counterpoint can only go a certain distance." This is a thrust at Schoenberg and the other protagonists of the Western music revolution. There are also rebukes for the past attempts in Russia at radical music. Shostakovitch says: "We regard Scriabine as our bitterest musical enemy because Scriabine's music tends to an unhealthy eroticism, also to mysticism and passivity, and escapes from the realities of life . . . Music is a vital weapon to the struggle."

However, Shostakovitch remains the most radical of all the Soviet composers. This explains his tremendous success abroad and his comparatively small acclaim in Russia.\*

\* Though Shostakovitch won the Stalin prize of one hundred thousand rubles for his "Piano Quintet", quite a sum for a "socialist society" intending economic equality for all, he was never very successful with the Russian public. The prize was much more a reward for his compliance with the government regulations of style than a general recognition of his talent.

The West was never naive enough, in spite of all the propaganda, to accept the primitivity of the Katchaturians. Russia, on the other hand, was not prepared to listen to anything going further than the simplest past. Thus we have two types of music, simplicity for the home consumption and sophistication for export purposes. The more radical music must remain within the limits dictated by the authorities. Starokadomsky's "Orchestra Suite", strongly influenced by Hindemith, but not very radical by Western standards, has never won any acclaim in Russia though it was performed successfully in Paris in 1937.

Russian music is being used abroad for political purposes. Whether our music will succumb to the shallowness and the easy success of the present Russian style will largely depend upon the future political influence of the Soviet Union. With politicians of all shades jumping on the Russian bandwagon, it is not unexpected that musicians are following. As far as Russian music itself is concerned, no new development seems possible under official domination. When the patron commissioning the work prescribes the style, the work will reveal the ignorance of Maecenas. The salvation of Russian music is inseparable from the freedom of the Russian people.

## Koestler: A Note on Confusion

MR. KOESTLER writes so well, with such sensitivity to the evil reality and so much sympathy for the good things in life, that any serious criticism tends to take on the color of sectarian dogmatism. Though probably not an intentional part of his strategy, it is nonetheless effective. When he says that "we are fighting a total lie in the name of a half-truth," one can *feel* the truth of the metaphor. (Presumably his experience in broadcasting for the BBC gives him that air of inner certainty). And to object to such an obviously apt turn of speech is to risk appearing a boor, like the naive logical positivist who rips into the poem demanding logical and literal coherence, and ends up stating that Shakespeare doesn't make sense. If, as some think, Koestler is writing poetry, then the discussion ends right there. But usually those who praise Koestler's poetry somehow or other end up praising his philosophy or his politics, or some other prosy aspect of his writings. With sufficient reason, I think. For Koestler is writing philosophy and politics too—bad philosophy and questionable politics.

Through all of his writings runs a philosophic theme, old and rather disreputable, which sees in science the degeneration of the human quality, lays the blame for current horrors at the door of the prevailing spirit of rationality, and looks for rescue to an inner light of the spirit. This line has been heavily overworked by Catholics, neo-humanists, and heterodox mystics, yet the leftist twist freshens it a bit:

"I believe that the day is not far when the present interregnum will end, and a new 'horizontal' ferment will arise—not a new party or sect but an irresistible global mood, a spiritual springtide like early Christianity or the Renaissance. It will probably mark the end of our historical era, the period which began with Galileo, Newton and Columbus, the period of human adolescence, the age



of scientific formulations and quantitative measurements, of utility values, of the ascendancy of reason over spirit."

*Darkness At Noon* is a brilliant analysis of the workings of Stalinist "logic" with its axiom of infallibility, its half-baked "experimentalism", and its cults of posterity and History. But it goes further and points the accusing finger at science, logic, and rationality itself. These latter are accused of fostering a "vivisection morality" which is stubbornly quantitative, blind to the mixed qualities of life, and which pursues its goals ruthlessly in accordance with the inevitable-ness of a Euclidean demonstration. "In old days, temptation was of carnal nature. Now it takes the form of pure reason." Countered to this is the "grammatical fiction", more generally known as Conscience, which is instinctively Christian and humane, the true elicitor of ethical values, the protagonist of decency against the indifferent syllogism, and which is now being suffocated under the burden of science that humanity has assumed.

In *Arrival and Departure* the point is made even more sharply. The hero-revolutionist, an exile in Neutralia, is subjected to psychoanalysis wherein it is revealed that his rebellious spirit is merely a compensatory expression of guilt feeling, traceable to childhood events. His search for Justice is a neurotic symptom; his trials and suffering a sought-for martyrdom. The ethical content of action is always fictitious, values are "a matter of glands, nerves, patterns of reaction conditioned by heredity and early experiences." Cured, he is urged by his psychoanalyst to make the "rational" choice, flee to America, busy himself with personal affairs and adjustment to his environment. But, at the very last moment, his "inner core" rebels, and

he enlists in the British Army to the tune of: "If one accepted a faith, one should not ask because of what—the 'because of' should be taken for granted beyond questioning. He who says 'because of' will be open to disillusion."

While there is urgent need for a discussion of ultimate values and their relation to specific choices, Koestler's excursion into the unconscious is obviously a pretty silly affair. The logical errors are grossly evident, the prime one being a confusion of causal sequences: psychoanalysis, neurology, sociology, etc., constitute different frames of reference and no one frame can completely explain the others. The field of moral activity may be confined to stricter limits than some others, but it does possess an ascertainable autonomy. If one's "inner core" can escape the cycle of frustration-compensation, why can't the same be true of one's reason? And how explain the innumerable divergencies of belief if they are all determined by so common a source as the human psyche? And if the totalitarians are the end-product of scientific thought, as they are in this perverted system, just how did they attain exemption from the Freudian scheme? But the main objection lies in the field of politics, not logic. Reliance upon self-evident convictions encourages a fanaticism of bloody principles, makes of social affairs a laboratory for the resolution of metaphysical conflicts, and cultivates that sense of infallibility which makes possible a Moscow trial. Spiritual revivalism should always be with us, but when it is allowed to dictate programs of action the tumbrils can be heard in the distance.

It is quite disappointing, after all this philosophizing, to observe its political issue: a resigned support of the United Nations in the present conflict. Formulated with the tact and delicacy becoming a pessimistic and disillusioned radical, it spares us the usual verbiage and hollow battle-cries. But from one who has called for a "fraternity of pessimists" to build "oases" in this bloody interregnum, we expect a more spirited proposition. Or, perhaps, since one man's oasis is another's desert, there is a more basic divergence of opinion than is at present apparent. In any case, it is certainly a shame that an appeal to one's innermost feelings should produce such an unprepossessing vision.

IRVING KRISTOL

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## "The Only Really Moral People . . ."

STUDENTS of political pathology would do well to put aside the *Daily Worker* for a few minutes and read a remarkable document which appears in the February issue of *Fourth International*, organ of the Socialist Workers Party. "How the Trotskyists Went to Jail", by Joseph Hansen, explains many things about the American Trotskyist movement. Offhand, I can not recall having read anything, even in the Stalinist press, which was quite so nauseous a mixture of sentimentality, smugness and leadership.

Hansen writes with all the restraint of a sob sister reporting the Lonergan case for the *Daily Mirror*. He doesn't fall into bathos, he positively seeks it out. Under his treatment, his party's leader, James P. Cannon, takes on all the corny dignity of Warner Baxter playing Abraham Lincoln. Nothing escapes this Bolshevik Boswell. Cannon's watch—"a present from Local New York". His cigar—



"a present from seagoing Trotskyists". His suit: "When America's No. 1 socialist exchanges his clothes for prison garb, he will get a receipt for that grey suit the Los Angeles comrades gave him," I thought. "When he gets out, it will be the first thing he puts back on—that suit is party harness, so to speak." Cannon's wife bids him goodbye at the station: "In my mind . . . came the image of Natalia Trotsky, the great woman hero of the Marxist movement." Cannon's train passes Harlem: "The lines in Jim's face grew deep and grave." Cannon passes the Palisades: "The pillars of a famous geologic formation moved in stately procession into the past. . . . The sun fell on his hair as the train leaned around a curve and the iron grey waves lighted up luminously. Jim's lips moved: 'The Palisades are beautiful.' Ever *le mot juste*."

This pious sentimentality toward the leader of the in-group is coupled with an arrogance towards the out-group (in this case, roughly 129,999,500 of the 130,000,000 inhabitants of the United States) which verges on paranoia. The compensatory role of this attitude hardly needs stressing: it is a classic psychological symptom of sectarian groups, whose arrogance is generally in direct proportion to their powerlessness. Thus Hansen reports the talk of some of the Trotskyists at a "last supper"—he calls it just that—before entering prison :

"Our movement is historic," said Dunne. "Take our press, for instance. The first volume of *The Militant* is a collector's item, worth I don't know how much. Compare it with other radical publications. Who cares about the first volumes of *The Call* for example?"

To which Hansen adds his inimitable touch:

As I listened to these native American socialists, I could not help but conclude: When the history of our country is written by future historians, they will not look for material at Hyde Park where Roosevelt employs a staff to file away minutiae about himself. They will dig painfully into . . . the files of Trotskyist publications, to find out what the real figures of American history were like.

Evidently Roosevelt will be lucky to get a footnote in future histories of the period 1930-1950. The chapters compiled from the files of Trotskyist publications promise to be epic: CHAPTER IX: 1929 DEPRESSION BEGINS, JAMES P. CANNON AND MAX SHACHTMAN LEAVE COMMUNIST PARTY. CHAPTER XII: CIO LAUNCHED, LITTLE STEEL STRIKE, JAMES P. CANNON AND MAX SHACHTMAN LEAVE SOCIALIST PARTY. CHAPTER XV: NAZI-SOVIET PACT, WORLD WAR II BEGINS, JAMES P. CANNON AND MAX SHACHTMAN LEAVE EACH OTHER.

But the high point comes in Hansen's report of his conversation, on the train, with Cannon about how John Dewey came to head the commission that investigated the charges against Trotsky made in the Moscow Trials. They were probably passing the Great Lakes at the time, but Hansen unaccountably omits to record his Leader's reactions to those famous geologic formations. ("The Great Lakes are big," said Jim simply.)

Considering that Dewey disagreed strongly with Trotsky's whole political outlook, and considering the pro-Stalin climate of liberal opinion then, it might seem rather a fine gesture for an aged philosopher to assume the active chairmanship of the commission and make the long trip to Mexico City to give Trotsky a chance to prove his innocence. The credit, however, is miraculously shifted to . . . James P. Cannon. "I wouldn't let him go," says the Leader,

"until he agreed to do something for justice. That was how he came to serve on the Commission." And a casual, generous remark of Dewey's is quoted as though it were his entire motivation: "He [Cannon] appealed to my better nature." Thus it is not Dewey who deserves credit (except that he is conceded to have a "better nature") but Cannon, who sternly shepherded Dewey into the paths of righteousness. ("Jim smiled warmly at the memory.")

Nor is this all. Cannon goes on:

"But even John Dewey was not wholly impartial. As a judge, it would have served the cause of justice to simply announce the verdict of not guilty, without interjecting his own personal views on politics. He took advantage of the occasion to attack the theory of socialism; in that he departed from strict morality. *When the history of this epoch is written . . . they'll discover that the only really moral people were the Trotskyists.*" (Emphasis mine)

It was perfectly moral for Trotsky to deliver before the Commission an exposition of his revolutionary socialist views (and a superb speech it was), but it is immoral for Dewey to state that, as is well known, he has a different political philosophy. (Assuming he did so, that is. I have just looked up the two volumes put out by the Commission, and I can find no such statement of Dewey; nor is there any in his "Truth is on the March" speech—at least there is none visible on a cursory reading.) And words almost fail one before the colossal impudence, the *nerve* of Cannon's final remark about the Trotskyists being the "only really moral people" in this epoch. From what I know of Cannon and his followers, which is considerable, and from what I know of Dewey's public behavior, which is less but sufficient, it is not Cannon who has the right to talk about morality. It is also worth noting that Trotskyists these days often substitute moral righteousness for political analysis, a mental trait which neither convinces the outsider nor permits themselves to grasp clearly what is actually going on in the world. Lenin and Trotsky were moral—but they also produced ideas.

The above was written with some hesitation. Cannon and the rest are serving prison terms, victims of a monstrous frame-up by the Roosevelt Administration. They are in jail for their socialist convictions, and one must respect them for that and support every effort on their behalf. As far as their political program goes, furthermore except for their support of Russia in the war, the Cannon group stand for many of my own convictions. It must be said, also, that there is another wing of American Trotskyism, the Workers Party, which is less open to the criticisms made above; that Hansen is an extreme type even among Cannon's followers, one much more common in the Stalinist than in the Trotskyist movement; and that even within his own group his article has aroused hostile reactions.

Nevertheless, Hansen is a leading figure in the Socialist Workers Party; some of the worst parts of his article are direct quotations from Cannon, the main leader; his article was printed in the party's official organ; and such things don't happen accidentally in a party like the S.W.P. The reason, finally, I think it worth devoting so much space to the whole business is that for seriousness, energy and revolutionary devotion the American Trotskyist movement is still better than anything else we have. It is, therefore, rather tragic when some of its leadership shows such pathological symptoms. These symptoms are not new, of course, and grow from the Bolshevik organizational tradition—but that is another and larger story. DWIGHT MACDONALD



## What to Do With Europe

Joe Gould

IT is obvious that when this war ends some way must be found to protect peace-loving cannibals and head hunters from the blood lust of Europeans. I do not agree with those who believe that the whole continent should be dynamited and sunk beneath the waves. Of course this would be a permanent solution, but it is not very practical.

However, Europeans have proved that they are incapable of governing themselves. No one nation is able to take over the task of administration. This would also endanger



Joe Gould, sketched by Don Freeman

world peace. Europe must be divided into appropriate sections and each of these assigned to some other group for settlement and exploitation. This would be retribution for the past sins of the continent.

Ireland should be equally divided between the two Moslem sects which hate each other bitterly. This would perpetuate the tradition of bigotry which is so imbedded in the soil of the beautiful Emerald Isle.

Great Britain offers a problem. There are many claimants. Perhaps the most logical are the blacks of Jamaica and Barbados who have always been loud in their professions of loyalty to the Empire.

Scandinavia will get off lightly. They will be protected by the tribes of North American Indians. This is only fitting, for the Nordic superiority began when Lief Ericson brought back red-skins to improve the breed. These In-

dians were believed for many centuries to be descendants of the lost tribe of Israel. (But why bring that up?)

France will be ruled by the Tonkinese and the Senegalese. Holland will be assigned to the Javanese and Sumatrans. Belgium's rulers will come from the Congo. Spain, of course, will be handed back to the people of Morocco, and Italy will be the not too glamorous prize of Halie Selassie. The Islands of the Mediterranean will be rejuvenated by Polyesian and Mironesian blood. Afghans and Indians from Pernesian Alps will control Switzerland and the Balkans and nomadic races such as Arabs will wander over the rest of the continent.

At first sight it would seem appropriate to give Germany to the Jews, but even better it would be to hand it over to the followers of Father Divine thus conciliating the German instinct for supernatural leadership.

## The World of Moloch

WE seem to be approaching the "era of integration," an age where large economic and political units are massed power blocs, and culture is pulverized into *faith* to serve as a unifying concept and spiritual dress. The Protestant Reformation created the individual; but capitalism lived at his expense. The cost, in terms of human personality, has been tremendous. Atomized beings no longer will live in isolation, and so, less out of hope than of some deep longing for emotional security, people are yearning for absorption, for faith. A universal cynicism is turning into a desperate hunger to believe. And on all sides "the callers" for faiths are hawking their wares. We are being flooded with a new theological language, sacred and secular, with talk of 'salvation', 'faith', 'affirmation', 'values'.

Robert M. Hutchins tells of the need of a "moral, intellectual and spiritual revolution . . . the whole scale of values by which our society lives must reversed . . . (it is) . . . the crusade to which we are called." Harold Laski talks of "the regeneration of values and the revitalization of the mind." One calls for a Mediaeval Unifying party the other for a Communist party. And the grotesque reality is that the words are the same, the promises the same; each serves a different Moloch, but the Totalitarian God is the same: A "horrid Moloch" which, in Milton's words, is "besmeared with the blood of human sacrifice and parents' tears."

And Harold Laski is prepared to pay this Moloch's price. That is the monstrous meaning of a new book by him, *Faith, Reason and Civilization*, which has been published in England (Gollancz) and which will be published here by Viking Press sometime in June.

"No doubt as the revolutionary idea has established itself," he writes, "it has involved in those whom it has influenced cruelty and cowardice, dishonesty and disorder. These are part of the price a society is bound to pay which attempts the transvaluation of all values." The "fantastic cruelties" of the Russian regime, as he himself puts it at one point, must be judged, "in their historical proportion.



Those who accept the Christian faith do not regard the stains upon its record as disproof of its insight." The Church promised the 'hereafter;' Laski offers the soothing balm of "history."

Laski's new book approaches on the philosophical level—no, the theological level—the political issues he raised in *Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*. But this work is of deeper import, for here is he offering a 'social cement' to tie together his political views. One might expect that in a book laying bare his deepest convictions, there would be some careful thought and organization. But the book sprawls in sloppy, disorganized fashion, wordy and repetitious, rhetorical rather than reasoned, shrill rather than factual.

This is not accidental, but an organic defect in the 'political' Laski. His thinking is not geared to persistent problems of human motivation and values, despite the flaunting of scholarship and footnotes, but to the transient play of headlines. "It is impossible to doubt," he writes pontifically, "that the spectacle of Russian heroism in the two years of struggle against Hitlerism has convinced the common man, all over the world, that there was a magic in the Revolution of 1917 somehow adaptable to his own concern. . . . Stalingrad is the resolution of a problem for him that he must solve or die." Yet nowhere in the book, except for two scattered paragraphs, does Laski come to grips with the concrete problem of evaluating and analyzing the Russian regime. The book is not philosophy, but a sermon. In this Canossa to the Kremlin, Laski accepts a secular religion; his aim is to be one of its priests.

Laski's thesis is that the world can no longer live in an "acquisitive society", that it demands a "unifying faith." Our civilization, he writes, is in a state of disintegration comparable to the breakdown of the Roman world. And as Christianity then proved to be a "unifying faith" holding men together in a rational order, so today the Russian Revolution is the *only* faith that can provide a "common basis of living . . . security and hope of happiness."

The idea of Russia assumes the form of a *mystique*, repeated in tom-tom fashion:

It seems to me inescapable that the Russian idea will play the same part as the principles of 1789 in reconstituting the outlook of the next age . . . the Russian idea seems most likely to be the pivotal source from which all values will find the means to renewal . . . they [the Russian leaders] have set on foot a revolutionary remaking of power which has already begun to affect both the human spirit and social institutions something like the force of the Christian revelation two thousand years ago . . . the principles of the Russian revolution have a similar function (to early Christianity) to perform. They have the mysterious power of renovating values, of renewing the faith of man in himself, at a time when the dark shadows seem otherwise like a close about him. . . . They [the Russian leaders] have built, as it were, a temple of refuge for the human spirit where there can be preserved that right to dream, which in the last analysis, is the source of man's power to win his mastery over the hostile forces in the universe. It is, I think, this instinct which the central idea of the Russian Revolution has the capacity to satisfy. . . .

Note the choice of certain words: "mysterious power of renovating values," "temples of refuge," etc. The theological drug is guiding the pen. "Russia" is a luminous Nirvana shining in history.

But is the Russia of 1944, the Russia of 1917? Are the values the same, the hopes men live by the same? After all, October was made in the name of the proletariat; the defense of Stalingrad in the name of Nevsky, Suvorov and Kutusov. But no, the Russian Revolution, for Laski, is a holy idea not bound in space in time. As Sidney Hook remarked of a Hutchins votary, he is "committed to adoration, not analysis."

Laski does venture some concrete remarks about the *operations* of the Soviet system and I have collected all of them. Here they are:

Men cannot in the Russian social order live as parasites upon the efforts of others. . . . It is a fact beyond dispute that the economic system of the Soviet Union has given the ordinary worker the right to a say in the conditions under which he labors. . . . The Soviet Citizen enjoys what may perhaps be termed a democracy of a secondary order, the import of which we must not minimize. He can criticize his foreman or manager; he can protest against the inefficiency of his factory or farm or even Department of State. He can make suggestions which touch the pith of his daily life. . . . The haunting fear of dismissal is not an omnipresent spectre in his home . . .

This is not even worthy of the Dean of Canterbury. "It is a fact beyond dispute . . ." In 1936, Laski wrote a preface to a book by Franz Neumann on *European Trade Unionism*. In a section on Russian labor, Neumann wrote:

They have not even a really socialistic function. By the decree of September 7, 1930, the trade unions were forbidden to interfere with the functions of the factory manager. This decree, therefore, put an end once and for all to the Bolshevik practice of granting the workers the right to industrial collaboration. . . . The similarity of the Italian and Russian situation appeared in similar events. Like Rossoni, Tomskey had to relinquish the leadership of the trade unions. The new policy, by which the trade unions were made subservient to the exigencies of the Five-Year Plan, led to increasingly sharp conflicts . . .

It is a harsh judgment but Laski either is dishonest, writing a propaganda tract for the uninitiated, or he has capitulated completely to a new theology which offers salvation in the "judgments of history." For this suspense of critical theory applies to only part of the book. Several essays are devoted to a fierce and merciless criticism of the role of Christianity today as an instrument of capitalism. In often shrewd and penetrating analysis, Laski tilts at the Catholicism of Christopher Dawson, the Christian ideas of T. S. Eliot, the defeatism of Joyce and the pedantic scholarship of Sir John Clapham. Borrowing heavily from J. M. Robertson, he makes some pertinent historical analogies on the role of religion as a "restraint on the multitude." But coming to Russia, the critical spirit departs.

Not once in the book is there even a mention, let alone an analysis, of a bureaucracy in Russia, the role it plays, or a discussion concerning the new nationalism, or the



emergence of a class state. "The latter [Russia]," he writes, has found a new way of life, faith in which might well play the part supernatural creeds had played elsewhere."

There is a reason why Laski substitutes 'adoration for analysis.' For in him there is the deep will to believe. Laski, like Bliven and other *New Republic* liberals, is the tired radical. He is tired of the constant struggle, of the necessity to analyze and criticize. There is a need for belonging here too, if he is to sustain himself. It is no mere coincidence that Bliven should write an article entitled the "Hang-back Boys" and complain that the radicals still hold to their critical attitudes rather than submerge themselves into mass movements; or that they refuse to recognize that Russia is "one of the dynamic centers of energy" of the world. These men have mesmerized themselves with a myth, and they refuse to distinguish between appearance and reality. The gospels were one thing, the actions of the Church another, this Laski admits from history. But the idea of October and the role of Stalin's Russia are indistinguishable. While Laski excoriates T. S. Eliot for retreating into a form of mystical Anglicism, and flays whole groups who have "fled from the struggle," not once does he come to grips with the bitter analyses made by the poets of Socialist disillusion, Silone, Gide, Dos Passos.

After these two thousand years of betrayal, when the Gospels promised God but the Church brought stagnation, when nationalism promised group pride and dignity and brought war, we would hope that any faith making claim upon us should bring *performance* on earth, not 'vicarious performance' in the heavens or in the future.

But the source of Russia's strength is precisely that it is a religion, with an array of myths, seeking to satisfy a religious hunger. The dividing line which modern society strove to maintain between religious and social facts has disappeared in Russia. The lines separating state from religion, civil administration from 'priesthood', pro-

fane art from sacred art, science from dogma has dissolved. Religious feeling—the veneration of the regime—is at the bottom of all institutions—artistic, literary and scientific. That is what gives it the unity and cohesion.

Laski is one of the heralds of the "age of the word." As music is being reduced to "tunes that can be whistled," ideas are being reduced to phrases that can be sloganized. Laski sits as a high priest of the new religion, fashioning the ideas and slogans—all under the heading of faith. He is assembling the new myths of Moloch.

The sickness Laski displays here is a sickness that is eating deep into modern man. Erich Fromm has characterized it as an "escape from freedom." His analysis, applied to the German intelligentsia and middle class, is just as true for the "radical intelligentsia" who clasp the 'compelling myth' of Bolshevism.

Laski's book is a clinical evidence of Sorel's distinction between Utopias and Myths. A Utopia, Sorel pointed out in a striking letter to Daniel Halevy, can be refuted by showing that its economic system is incompatible with its premises. But myths cannot be refuted because their believers "always picture their coming action as a battle in which their cause is certain to triumph." Laski once believed in Socialist Utopias; the harsh criticisms of the realities of the Soviet earth has driven him to the "compelling myths" and to the peddling of what Plato called "the noble lies." It was Bergson's shrewd insight that in modern times, it is not only religion which dominates the mental life, but the revolutionary myth as well. Laski has demonstrated that the two are becoming one.

*Faith, Reason and Civilization* undoubtedly will have a profound effect in the liberal world. It is timed to meet the needs of a whole group of people who seek to submerge themselves in "heroic action." Its history, written in a grand manner, provides a smooth assurance for those who are seeking faith and security. But it is not a rhetorical lapse that while Laski speaks constantly of Faith, he never talks of Freedom.

DANIEL BELL

## ***The Anglo-American Condominium***

George Padmore

IN any analysis of British Imperialism one salient fact must always be kept in mind: that England without an Empire would be merely a geographical expression, an insignificant island of 46 million people off the fringe of Western Europe. England's world greatness is based upon her imperial structure, chiefly upon India, that brightest jewel in the Crown of the British Raj. For this reason, whatever concessions or modifications the postwar world may witness in colonial reconstruction, no British Government—Tory or Labour—will ever voluntarily relinquish Britain's hegemony over her sources of raw materials, markets, reservoirs of man-power. And this is all the more true as it becomes evident that America will emerge from this war the greatest imperialist nation of the twentieth century, and as such, Britain's chief commercial competitor for the markets of the world. Guided by this principle

of self-interest, she is determined to preserve her status as a great world Power, come what may.

Before this war, Britain drew annual tribute amounting to £200 millions from her overseas investments, which returned to this country in the form of foodstuffs and raw materials. Today, with the loss of a number of her investment sources, British imperialists must cling more strongly than ever to the advantages which a Colonial Empire provides.

Mr. Churchill has frankly stated that he has not assumed the responsibilities of the King's first Minister of State to preside over the liquidation of His Majesty's far-flung imperial dominions. Like all pro-consuls, he believes, as Earl Baldwin once declared that "the British Empire is an instrument of Divine Providence for the promotion of the progress of Mankind."



The covert struggle between Britain and America for imperial mastery is being pushed more and more into the open as the determination of the war is considered to be approaching nearer. And this struggle is being voiced by prominent British and American capitalists. There is knowledgeable recognition that *"a fundamental difference in psychology existed in Britain and America which would make team play between the two nations extremely difficult after the war."* This is the expressed opinion of no less a figure than the President of the American Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Eric Johnston, who imparted it to a press conference at Washington (on September 2), after a three weeks' visit to Britain. Britain, Mr. Johnson went on to say, believed in controlled markets, the United States in free competition. It was not, he asserted, necessary to reconcile these two divergent views, but it was necessary to recognize them.

Wendell Willkie also believes in free competition on the world's markets, and particularly on the markets of those territories now forming parts of the British Empire. This is the underlying motive of his ostensibly democratic championship of freedom for colonial peoples, which he puts forward in his book, *One World*. Freed from the political control of their present British rulers, the native bourgeoisie would inevitably turn to America for the provision of capital, capital machinery, and all the other instruments necessary for the development of industrial economy. For there is no doubt that with its greater industrial potential, most advanced technology and financial resources, America today occupies the same relationship towards world economy as Britain did during the last half of the nineteenth century, when she was the workshop of the world, and the City of London the greatest money market. Hence wider markets are an absolute necessity for U. S. capitalism, and as things stand, they can be secured only at the expense of the British Empire.

Capitalists in both countries recognize this most clearly, and that is why, as Mr. Eric Johnston stated, Britain believes in controlled markets, the U. S. in free competition. But while, as Mr. Johnston further maintained, it was not necessary to reconcile these two divergent views, there are sections, both within the British Empire and the U. S. A., which believe that they can be reconciled through some form of mutual cooperation. This will be expressed through a closer working agreement with America and the British Dominions in the exploitation of colonial territories, especially Africa.

The political blue-print of this new Anglo-American partnership was first expounded by General Smuts, the wily Boer statesman responsible for the imposture of the Mandates System. He comes forward once more as the strategist of the new Colonial Imperialism. "Condominium" will now supersede "mandates." The cloak of altruism will once again screen imperialist self-interest.

Briefly, Smuts proposes to group the various British colonial regions according to their geographical position into federal units. For example, the Caribbean territories, including British Guiana and British Honduras, will be united into a kind of West Indian Federation under a joint Anglo-American Commission in which Canada will participate. The West African colonies of the Gambia, Sierra Leone, the

Gold Coast and Nigeria, together with the adjoining French regions, will be brought into a West African Federation. Here again, America will have to be offered certain interests because of the proximity of points like Dakar and Bathurst, Freetown and Liberia, to the South American countries (Brazil in particular). In East Africa, a similar group will comprise Kenya, Tanganyika, Uganda, British, French and Italian Somaliland, and parts of Abyssinia, under South African and British control. The native territories of Basutoland, Swaziland and Bechuanaland will be incorporated into the Union of South Africa; and the two Rhodesias and Nyasaland, with the Belgian Congo and the Portuguese territory of Mozambique, will be linked up to form a Greater South Africa. This would provide new lands for the increased white population which the South African Government intends to promote as a means of augmenting the present white minority population, to counter the vast black populations in these areas. They will also provide an internal market for the South African industries which have come into being since the outbreak of this war, and which will have to be turned over to peacetime manufactures in order to stave off unemployment and economic collapse.

A similar scheme is envisaged for the islands of the Pacific and the regions of East Asia. In that part of the world, England, America, Holland, Australia and New Zealand will operate as joint partners, while certain territorial concessions will be made to China, possibly at the expense of French Indo-China and Siam. Britain, however, still intends to retain Hong Kong and sole control of India and Burma.

This, in simplified outline, is the Tory blue-print of post-war Empire.

British imperial experts believe that such a form of joint administration between the English-speaking races will provide the basis of a lasting alliance between Britain and America, and will at the same time satisfy those American business circles which advocate the "Open Door" policy in British imperial territories, whereby they can have access to raw materials on the same terms as the British, and markets for their goods.

This new colonial "Regionalism," as it is being called, has the support of circles most closely interested. Practically all sections of European opinion in South Africa, for example, are eager to benefit from some sort of international participation of this kind. They have only been divided as to who should participate. In the past, some have been for the participation of Germany, but General Smuts, representing the City of London, has for many years looked towards British interests to help promote South African mining economy, and he now welcomes the idea of American participation. He has been guided in this orientation by the fact that Germany was considered to have territorial and political aims in South Africa, and other parts of the Dark Continent, while America is not wishful of assuming the responsibilities of colonial administration, being quite willing to exert her imperialistic requirements through the methods of dollar imperialism, which she has been using in South America, Cuba, Haiti, Liberia, and elsewhere.

Speaking to Reuter's Special Correspondent in Pretoria



on August 27 last, General Smuts declared himself "*all in favour of the Americans coming to Africa, and I support the idea of consultative councils on which America, as well as Britain and other interested countries, would be represented. America wants to trade and is opposed to imperialism or annexation.*"

In fact, Anglo-American capital is already well entrenched in the Union of South Africa. It holds the major interest in the Witwatersrand gold mining industry through the Anglo-American Corporation of South Africa, Ltd., which also has interests in the diamond mines, and in the copper development companies of Northern Rhodesia and the Belgian Congo.

It is not unlikely that this co-operation of America in exploiting the natural resources of Africa and other parts of the British Empire will to a very great extent suit the interests of Yankee capitalism and British colonisers. There is to be a new dictionary of euphemisms. Just as "Regionalism" is to replace "mandates," so "partnership" will oust "trusteeship."

The form of "partnership" envisaged will give the native peoples of Africa some wider representation on legislative councils, probably through the addition of one or more unofficial members. This will be done in order to placate progressive public opinion both in Britain and the colonies themselves, but there should be no shadow of doubt that the British imperialist will not give us real administrative control. The Governor will always be there to exercise his powers of determination and veto. Even where a wider democracy is permitted through the Constitution—Jamaica has been given universal suffrage—the ultimate result will be the same, as it is in Ceylon, which has the most advanced Constitution of all the British colonies. The Governor's veto, however, decides affairs in the final resort, and in most instances the wishes of the people come to nothing.

Lord Hailey, who has replaced Lord Lugard as the chief authority and spokesman on colonial affairs, addressing the Royal Central Asian Society on July 7, on "The Colonies and the Atlantic Charter," said that he was "one of those who join in believing that the opportunity should be taken of instituting Regional Councils for dealing with the dependencies, suitably grouped for this purpose. These bodies would endeavor by consultation and joint discussion to coordinate the economic and other policies of the dependencies and would review the progress made by them."

The personalities which would make up these Regional Councils are indicated in the choice of the Committee just appointed by the Colonial Secretary to advise "on questions of economic policy in relation to the Colonial Dependencies, including particularly matters of general policy arising on programmes of economic policy." The extremely reactionary and arch-imperialist Duke of Devonshire is the Committee's chairman, and apart from one or two economists, the members include only representatives of the City of London. There is Sir William Goodenough, deputy chairman of Barclays Bank and also on the boards of the Commercial Union Assurance and the Mercantile and General Assurance; Sir William Howitt, director of Ashwell and Nesbit (Engineers), and of the Constantine Steamship Lines; Captain B. H. Peter, managing director

of Westinghouse Brake and Signal; Sir John Hay, director of the Ocean Marine Insurance, the Mercantile Bank of India, and over twenty different rubber companies and other colonial undertakings. It is quite obvious where the interests of this Committee lie—certainly not with the colonial peoples. They are the self-same interests which have been and still are exploiting the colonial peoples.

In the new "Regional" plan, the Americans will supply the finances through investments, etc., while British interests will retain political and administrative control. In this way the satisfaction of the post-war colonial needs of Britain and America will be made to dovetail as far as possible under the exigencies which will arise as a result of America's emergence from the war as the greatest capitalist Power. So long as Britain remained the dominant Power, she could dispense with any cooperation such as "Regionalism" anticipates; but imperialist crisis makes this form of cooperation necessary, while leaving political power in British hands. For retention of political control means retention of a certain amount of economic control.

The British Labour Party is also giving its endorsement to "Regionalism." It has for a long time advocated placing colonies under international control, and is earnestly supporting the various educational and labour bodies which the Colonial Office is setting up, and which, while erecting a fine democratic front, are actually time-stalling machines. Despite its paper declarations, the Labour Party in practice differs very little from the Tories on the fundamental principle of Imperialism, and its collaboration in matters of imperial conduct is practically implicit.

Where Labour leaders differ with the out-and-out die-hard imperialists is on the question of the undisguised exploitation of the natural resources of the colonies with cheap native labour. Labour is in favour of a more widespread extension of social services, education, and the like. It is a humane colonialism, which envisages self-government of some of the colonies at a hazily distant future. It is all a very gradual process, to be accomplished by slow stages, and emerges out of the Labour Party's general conception of Socialism as being the last stage of Capitalism. That is why it is able to adopt such confused resolutions as the following, which was accepted at the Labour Party's recent conference:

"This Conference expresses to the Colonial peoples its appreciation of their participation in the United Nations' war effort; it declares that the terms of the Atlantic Charter and the 'Four Freedoms' should become active principles in Colonial administration and proclaimed in a special Charter to the Colonial peoples; it demands that all forms of political and economic imperialism shall be rapidly liquidated; it urges the abolition of 'Colonial status' and the rapid realisation of genuine partnership between this country and the Colonial peoples; it insists that the Government (in consultation with the Colonial peoples) shall press on with the social and economic welfare of their territories, including adequate education, health and nutrition services, and the attainment of political rights not less than those enjoyed or claimed by British democracy; it asks for the application of a Socialist policy in the economic organisation of the Colonies, and the acceptance of the



principle of international supervision and accountability in Colonial policy and administration."

But how can there be a socialist policy in application in the Colonies when there is no socialist policy in Britain? And of what kind is the international supervision to be in present circumstances? Certainly only the "Regionalism" of General Smuts. So that, in the end, all the protestations and resolutions of the Labour Party notwithstanding, its policy on Colonies and Imperialism is almost undistinguishable from that of the Conservatives.

In the final analysis, however, what the post-war world will bring to the British and other Colonial Empires depends to a large extent upon events in Europe, and these are now beginning to shape themselves.

## Popular Culture

### Shostakovich's Eighth Symphony

With the usual officiousness, plus a prefatory talk by an American general and a handsome payment by CBS, Dimitrij Shostakovich's newest work, the *Eighth Symphony*, was presented by the New York Philharmonic under Arthur Rodzinski. The most striking feature of the work is a greater tediousness and languor than in the composer's previous offerings. Designed as a preview of the post-war world it contains very few modern harmonic devices and is restricted to the texture of the traditional Russian school. Wagner and Bach are still there, but the Mahler influence seems to have disappeared.

The symphony is very long; no other contemporary composer could dare to present so little and uninteresting material at such great length. Written in an antiquated style, reminiscent of the monsters of the French academicians of 1890, especially the insignificant Saint-Saens, it permits the listener to slumber through the whole performance without the disturbance of any even momentarily interesting passage. Shostakovich's incessant plagiarism makes his music pleasant to the general audience; one enjoys meeting old friends. But this plagiarism produces incoherence in the structure to such a degree that the work could end at any of the sectional closes. Primitive and monotonous rhythms in the percussion section recur with frightening obstinacy; though designed to add interest to the pale material, they effect laboriousness rather than excitement. The climaxes, appearing too often and too unevenly to be highlights, sound hysterical because of the orchestration which pairs very high flutes with mumbling bass figures in the lower strings.

The satiric element, once the composer's forte, is gone. The work assumes animalistic character, but it has not the charm of the cocker spaniel as one finds it in Eric Satie or the primeval robustness and vitality of the beast as can be encountered in some of the works of Stravinsky and Bartok. Here the animal is a creature which just ruminates in its cave. There is no sense of life, laughter or love in this artificial sombreness.

The symphony is written in five movements—two fast and three slow ones; the last three form one unit. The slow movements show more musical intent and sincerity than the fast sections which have a quality of incidental movie music to drunken Casino brawl scenes of Czarist officers

in the manner of Josef von Sternberg. Bare of ideas, humor and purpose they are grim and almost obscene in their emptiness. Shostakovich knows only two types of expression, which he repeats ad nauseam and which have become intolerably cliché: the slow austerity of Bach on the Asiatic Steppes, and the fast and perverted marches.

Programatically, the symphony represents the eighth chapter of Shostakovich's *History of the Soviet Union*; musically it is a survey of the music of the late nineteenth century.

The audience, apparently considering its passive participation an essential contribution to the war effort, reacted enthusiastically; the musicians present were embarrassed and I was bored.

KURT LIST

CARTOON CAVALCADE. Edited by Thomas Craven. Simon & Schuster. \$3.95.

The insistent tastelessness with which Mr. Craven has converted the Benton-Curry-Wood school of painting into an American Renaissance is now dragged into service as a tool to help in the assembling of "the best American humorous cartoons from the turn of the Century to the present." A natural for Simon & Schuster at a time when collections of cartoons are selling in phenomenally large editions (from Thurber, Whitney Darrow, and Addams on down to *Esquire* contributors and Private Breger), Mr. Craven's book is the most ambitious attempt yet to survey this field of popular art.

Over six hundred cartoons from 1883 to 1943 are included. These have been slapped into place in a rambling chronological order that could not be bettered for promoting a lack of understanding of the cartoon's development in this country. Anything, indeed, goes: political cartoons, comic strips, and the "social cartoon" are jumbled together with nothing but dates of publication to link them. After reprinting a number of early political cartoons, Mr. Craven dispenses with later examples on the grounds that they fail to amuse him. (His criteria of selection is, simply, "They must be funny." It would be nice if more of them were.) And so the mutations of American politics as shown in its cartoons must be searched for in other pages than these; the curtain falls somewhere around the toothy-drawings-of-Teddy-Roosevelt period. Thus the unamused editor eliminates the few interesting political cartoonists of our own time—notably Fitzpatrick—altogether.

Comic strips are not well represented and those that get in are poorly arranged; the last half of the book is almost completely given over to work from *The New Yorker*, with occasional interruptions by Skeeze or Blondie who seem a bit out of place. The differences between the closed worlds of each type of cartoon are profound; and had each been included in a separate section, we might have been permitted to see how the newspaper strip, which began with comic intentions, turned into a device for relating somewhat cretinous stories of romantic adventure, McFadden-esque solemnity, or of pseudo-scientific repetitions—usually turned out with a nice eye for pseudo-masochist effects. How did we ever get from Foxy Granpa to Pruneface? It is a question that would no doubt fail to amuse Mr. Craven. But then Mr. Craven believes that our cartoons are what they are because Americans are a wholesome, fun-loving people.

The volume also contains three long essays by the editor—"lucid, gay, and civilized talk," says the dust-jacket. Three examples of Mr. Craven's lucidity, variety, and advanced state of social culture follow. "Phil May was a



scream." "The intellectuals were strange souls who had lost their moorings . . . They talked of Proust, Joyce, and Freud, of Picasso, Gertrude Stein, and other nonessentials . . . The intellectuals were lost because they had no sense of humor." Best of all, though, is this: "The closest approach to the French acceptance of sex appeal appeared in the drawings which Nell Brinkley used to make for the *New York Evening Journal*."

*Cartoon Cavalcade* is all too painfully reminiscent of a scrapbook to which some thoughtful but none too discriminating cartoon-lover—one with a well-nourished mania for preservation—has devoted many happy hours with scissors and paste. But with scissors and paste only.

WELDON KEES

**COMICS AND THEIR CREATORS.** By Martin Sheridan. Robert T. Hale & Co., Boston. \$2.75.

Mr. Sheridan has something to say about some seventy-five comic strips. But what he says is singularly unimposing. Each of these strips is covered by a thumbnail biography of its creator, or an interview in the worst newspaper manner. The histories of the cartoonists and their work are presented by banal anecdotes, salary figures, and relative merits in golf. Sheridan's understanding of the comics and the men who draw them really seems to be limited to a hungry appreciation of their salaries. The publisher believes the book will appeal to "every young-minded American." Perhaps. But for the undiapered reader the book has the single merit of containing some pertinent facts, not easily obtainable, about a very important field of popular culture. (It is a mistake to see comics as mere "kid-stuff" when, for instance, some sixty Annapolis midshipmen belong to the Supermen of America Club! And in November of 1940, 350 colleges and towns celebrated Sadie Hawkins' Day, taken from Al Capp's "Li'l Abner.")

The hundred or so big syndicated artists—hired men of Hearst and Captain Patterson—receive very large salaries. (The figures of cartoonists' top salaries are a self-contained and nasty comment on our culture: comic—\$150,000; sports—\$45,000; editorial—\$25,000.) Largely a gay crowd, these boys began their careers by caricaturing their grade school teachers; now they work hard, make money and play a lot of golf. "They hold the well-deserved rank of America's court jesters," says the author—a little too revealingly. These men no longer draw uncomplimentary pictures of teacher.

The comic cartoonist "is expected to please everybody." He believes that readers "will follow the strip which offends no one." With these directives, the tendency, of course, is to produce vacuous stereotypes. Chic Young, creator of "Blondie"—which, like so many other strips, is addressed to the suburban class—presents his "esthetic": "I look for little things like the ashes on the rug . . . even the dark substance under a tomato ketchup top. . . . You see, I am catering to the average American family." The family to which he "caters" (such a mild word!) is not "average," but petty-bourgeois. In the production of popular art, *the paramount factor is the conception of the audience*. Our popular culture, as humor and as wish-fulfillment, deals on the whole either with petty-bourgeois lives or with the life to which the petty-bourgeoisie aspires. The purpose, obviously, is to make everyone identify himself with the "middle class."

One of the greatest effects of good art is to make people see themselves differently, by identification in new, fruitful perspectives. This is the other side of artistic creativeness, for it is the expression of such perspectives which provides

the artist's essential worth. However, when the needs of class control determine the material of art, and when these needs are reactionary and disease-like, creativity is sharply limited or completely smothered. Art is dangerous; it tends toward freedom. And in art, freedom and creativity can be equated. But freedom can have no content in a class society on the downgrade—it can be only an illusion, a word. In this day, good art achieves its freedom by starving for an audience. The success of bad art is *manufactured* by the ruling class.

One of the few successful alternatives is George Herriman's "Krazy Kat." It is considered among the most original comic creations. Herriman's idea of the popular artist's relation to a mass, unsophisticated audience suggests the approach with which Sergei Eisenstein first worked. "The people don't know what they want. And if they get an entirely new taste of something that's good, they'll want it until they find something better. But we've got to give them the initial taste. . . ." This approach conflicts with the Philistine attitude that good art is for a small section of the population, while any trash can be tossed to the masses. Originality in form and variety in content are appreciated by all. The social reasons which account for "the initial taste" being so seldom given, the truly creative product so infrequently received, are responsible for our poor popular art. The mass may be ignorant, but it is not inherently unresponsive to good art.

For thirty years George McManus has been exploiting, in "Bringing Up Father," the theme of an Irish bricklayer who comes, somehow, into a great deal of money. Jiggs receives nothing from his money but a world of trouble with his family: they become typical nouveaux-riches. He prefers corned-beef-and-cabbage and poker with the boys to the life that wealth offers. The sop here is patent. A strip called "Radio Patrol" is written by Eddie Sullivan, who "believes in making heroes of the police department." The principal character, a cop, "is good-natured, hard-boiled, likes children and dogs." Almost tautologically, art serving banalities itself becomes banal. Casper Milquetoast, H. T. Webster's "The Timid Soul," is an extreme caricature against which the pin-point ego of any harassed petty-bourgeois can release itself. The same reader, for anti-thesis, can turn to Superman (do you hear zooming comets?), "the ultimate in heroes" and "the man of iron" who is ever successfully "for the right and against the wrong."

Siegel and Shuster, sons of a small shopkeeper and a poor tailor, are the creators of "Superman," the most significant of the comic strips. Siegel, who writes the continuity, was a dull student, sickly, and a prodigious reader of dime-novel stuff: he immersed himself in his tradition. Sociologically, Superman is a naive and timely god-concept: he comes, literally, from another world; he is indestructible; and he has a social conscience—which never bites him, for he *acts*, and always with success. For example, in the early years of the war he destroyed the Siegfried Line and carried off Hitler and Stalin to be judged by the League of Nations. Politically, Superman is a pre-fascist creation.

A psychiatrist, Dr. Laurretta Bender, speaks of the role of Superman in the lives of unhappy young boys (the audience is not nearly that limited): "(He) would seem to offer the same type of mental catharsis that Aristotle claimed was an attribute of the drama." Not quite, for there is surely a big difference between *re-creative* dramatic purging and, at the other extreme, the kind of catharsis effected by literary escapism on the level of masturbatory humor and fantasy. The former, even if it is a release from immediate pressures, can be tragic or—in the non-esthetic sense—unpleasant. Its "catharsis" is artistic. But



a thing like "Superman" gives vicarious satisfaction to explicit social frustrations. It cannot be tragic or displeasing, nor can it contain that essential realism which is a quality of all good art. For it has a purpose: this is art in the service of social neuroses. And that service is the meaning of most comic strips. . . . Pearls are produced not by serving but by opposing disease.

DAVID T. BAZELON

"The Conquest of Europe on the Screen: the Nazi Newsreel, 1939-1940," by Siegfried Kracauer. *SOCIAL RESEARCH*, September, 1943.

The best writing on films to appear in a long time. The author combines sensitivity to film technique and historical imagination. The most interesting part of the article is a comparison of Nazi and American newsreel technique. In the former, "the pictures prevail over the commentary"; in the latter, vice versa. The author estimates that in most American newsreels 80% to 90% of the shots are "covered" by words; in sixteen Nazi newsreels he examined, only 31% of the shots were so "covered." He gives a striking example:

"In one of the German reels the statement, 'German stukas start for an attack on military objectives in England,' is accompanied by about twenty shots of the take-off and flight of the German squadron. A recent American newsreel uses about four shots to show a similar action: Army planes taking off from a carrier. But these four shots . . . are deluged by the following commentary: 'Army-Navy cooperation is graphically evident as an airplane carrier transports a fleet of Army fighting planes—though not taking them to any harbor. At sea, some distance off shore, the speedy fighters take off—and deliver themselves to their destination. One after another, they go. On to an undisclosed destination, and to the Army planes the Navy men say Happy Landing!'"

(An OWI short currently being shown, *Day of Battle*, manages to take the edge off some remarkable action shots of the sinking of an American carrier by Japanese planes by means of a constant stream of excited banalities which almost convince one the whole thing is routine stuff. With proper music and cutting this could have been an epic, instead of a kind of sporting event—"He's up . . . He's down! . . . There they go! . . . And another Nip bites the dust!")

The author suggests that the American technique makes the spectator uncertain whether he should follow the words or the pictures, thus dividing his attention and weakening the effect. "Much could be gained by eliminating this competition." I was recently told of an interesting illustration of this. A commercial firm made a movie to educate their salesmen about the product. It was found that the movie distracted the salesmen's attention from the information dispensed by the commentator. Since the information was the "point," the solution was to subordinate the image by eliminating the motion and reducing the film to a series of stills. The aim here was to effect the conscious mind. But, according to Kracauer, the Nazis' aim is to "repress the intellect and directly affect the emotional life. . . . The spell of the image smothers interest in motives and reasons." Hence the predominance of image over words, a procedure which, regardless of its motive, produces interesting cinema.

The implication of the above (though not stated by the author) is that American films use words because they appeal to conscious intelligence. But is this true? The commentary is always an "official" stereotype, as in the above

examples, with as little relevance to reality as the Nazis' use of images. The appeal is to conventional emotions and prejudices, not to intelligence, and the information is always subordinated to a propagandistic aim. It would seem rather a simple case of technical backwardness, for which those of us not in sympathy with the ideology of our newsreels may be grateful, whatever the cost to us as cineastes.

The rest of the article describes such elements of Nazi film technique as the association of objects (flowers and children to 'pretty up' soldiers, guns, Hitler) linkage and counterpoint of images; transitions; the way the camera is used to give the crowd a personality. For example:

"To complete the impression of the individual's nullity, the camera always pans and travels while giving details. Its constant movement denies the independent existence of the man in the crowd. How different from the classic Russian films! Even though these also indulge in crowds, they manage to show that they are a rally of individuals. What remains of the advancing mass of revolutionary workers in Pudovkin's *Mother* is the self-possessed face of the woman leading the procession." Or this:

"And no sooner do the incessantly moving cameras light upon Hitler than they come to a standstill. By stopping momentarily their ceaseless motion, they feature him as the true source and goal of the mass below."

I might add that the Museum of Modern Art Film Library published in 1942 a study by Mr. Kracauer, *Propaganda and the Nazi War Film* (90 pages, \$1), which, while needlessly stiff and abstract in its writing, is an original and in some ways profound analysis. It illuminates not only the Nazi war films, but also, through them, the nature of Nazism itself.

DWIGHT MACDONALD

Just received from England:

## THE RUSSIAN ENIGMA

by

**Anton Ciliga**

This book, first published in France in 1938 under the title, "Au Pays du Grand Mensonge", is one of the most important studies of Soviet Russian society ever made.

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# Modern Texts

## The Melian Conference

(From Thucydides' "History of the Peloponnesian War" Chapter XVII.)

*For the peoples of Poland, Greece, Sweden, Turkey and Czechoslovakia; and the editors of "The Nation".*

The Athenians also made an expedition against the isle of Melos with thirty ships of their own, six Chian, and two Lesbian vessels, sixteen hundred heavy infantry, three hundred archers, and twenty mounted archers from Athens, and about fifteen hundred heavy infantry from the allies and the islanders. The Melians are a colony of Lacedæmon that would not submit to the Athenians like the other islanders, and at first remained neutral and took no part in the struggle, but afterwards upon the Athenians using violence and plundering their territory, assumed an attitude of open hostility. Cleomedes, son of Lycomedes, and Tisias, son of Tisimachus, the generals, encamping in their territory with the above armament, before doing any harm to their land, sent envoys to negotiate. These the Melians did not bring before the people, but bade them state the object of their mission to the magistrates and the few; upon which the Athenian envoys spoke as follows:—

*Athenians.*—'Since the negotiations are not to go on before the people, in order that we may not be able to speak straight on without interruption, and deceive the ears of the multitude by seductive arguments which would pass without refutation (for we know that this is the meaning of our being brought before the few), what if you, who sit there were to pursue a method more cautious still! Make no set speech yourselves, but take us up at whatever you do not like, and settle that before going any farther. And first tell us if this proposition of ours suits you.'

The Melian commissioners answered:—

*Melians.*—'To the fairness of quietly instructing each other as you propose there is nothing to object; but your military preparations are too far advanced to agree with what you say, as we see you are come to be judges in your own cause, and that all we can reasonably expect from this negotiation is war, if we prove to have right on our side and refuse to submit, and in the contrary case, slavery.'

*Athenians.*—'If you have met to reason about presentiments of the future, or for anything else than to consult for the safety of your state upon the facts that you see before you, we will give over; otherwise we will go on.'

*Melians.*—'It is natural and excusable for men in our position to turn more ways than one, both in thought and utterance. However, the question in this conference is, as you say, the safety of our country; and the discussion, if you please, can proceed in the way which you propose.'

*Athenians.*—'For ourselves, we shall not trouble you with specious pretences—either of how we have a right to our empire because we overthrew the Mede, or are now attacking you because of wrong that you have done us—

and make a long speech which would not be believed; and in return we hope that you, instead of thinking to influence us by saying that you did not join the Lacedæmonians, although their colonists, or that you have done us no wrong, will aim at what is feasible, holding in view the real sentiments of us both; since you know as well as we do that right, as the world goes, is only in question between equals in power, while the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must.'

*Melians.*—'As we think, at any rate, it is expedient—we speak as we are obliged, since you enjoin us to let right alone and talk only of interest—that you should not destroy what is our common protection, the privilege of being allowed in danger to invoke what is fair and right, and even to profit by arguments not strictly valid if they can be got to pass current. And you are as much interested in this as any, as your fall would be a signal for the heaviest vengeance and an example for the world to meditate upon.'

*Athenians.*—'The end of our empire, if end it should, does not frighten us: a rival empire like Lacedæmon, even if Lacedæmon was our real antagonist, is not so terrible to the vanquished as subjects who by themselves attack and overpower their rulers. This, however, is a risk that we are content to take. We will now proceed to show you that we are come here in the interest of our empire, and that we shall say what we are now going to say, for the preservation of your country; as we would fain exercise that empire over you without trouble, and see you preserved for the good of us both.'

*Melians.*—'And how, pray, could it turn out as good for us to serve as for you to rule?'

*Athenians.*—'Because you would have the advantage of submitting before suffering the worst, and we should gain by not destroying you.'

*Melians.*—'So that you would not consent to our being neutral, friends instead of enemies, but allies of neither side.'

*Athenians.*—'No; for your hostility cannot so much hurt us as your friendship will be an argument to our subjects of our weakness, and your enmity of our power.'

*Melians.*—'Is that your subjects' idea of equity, to put those who have nothing to do with you in the same category with peoples that are most of them your own colonists, and some conquered rebels?'

*Athenians.*—'As far as right goes they think one has as much of it as the other, and that if any maintain their independence it is because they are strong, and that if we do not molest them it is because we are afraid; so that besides extending our empire we should gain in security by your subjection; the fact that you are islanders and weaker than others rendering it all the more important that you should not succeed in baffling the masters of the sea.'

*Melians.*—'But do you consider that there is no security in the policy which we indicate? For here again if you debar us from talking about justice and invite us to obey your interest, we also must explain ours, and try to persuade you, if the two happen to coincide. How can you avoid making enemies of all existing neutrals who shall look at our case and conclude from it that one day or another you will attack them? And what is this but to



make greater the enemies that you have already, and to force others to become so who would otherwise have never thought of it?’

*Athenians.*—‘Why, the fact is that continentals generally give us but little alarm; the liberty which they enjoy will long prevent their taking precautions against us; it is rather islanders like yourselves, outside our empire, and subjects smarting under the yoke, who would be the most likely to take a rash step and lead themselves and us into obvious danger.’

*Melians.*—‘Well then, if you risk so much to retain your empire, and your subjects to get rid of it, it were surely great baseness and cowardice in us who are still free not to try everything that can be tried, before submitting to your yoke.’

*Athenians.*—‘Not if you are well advised, the contest not being an equal one, with honour as the prize and shame as the penalty, but a question of self-preservation and of not resisting those who are far stronger than you are.’

*Melians.*—‘But we know that the fortune of war is sometimes more impartial than the disproportion of numbers might lead one to suppose; to submit is to give ourselves over to despair, while action still preserves for us a hope that we may stand erect.’

*Athenians.*—‘Hope, danger’s comforter, may be indulged in by those who have abundant resources. if not without loss at all events without ruin; but its nature is to be extravagant, and those who go so far as to put their all upon the venture see it in its true colours only when they are ruined: but so long as the discovery would enable them to guard against it, it is never found wanting. Let not this be the case with you, who are weak and hang on a single turn of the scale; nor be like the vulgar, who, abandoning such security as human means may still afford, when visible hopes fail them in extremity, turn to invisible, to prophecies and oracles, and other such inventions that delude men with hopes to their destruction.’

*Melians.*—‘You may be sure that we are as well aware as you of the difficulty of contending against your power and fortune, unless the terms be equal. But we trust that the gods may grant us fortune as good as yours, since we are just men fighting against unjust, and that what we want in power will be made up by the alliance of the Lacedæmonians, who are bound, if only for very shame, to come to the aid of their kindred. Our confidence, therefore, after all is not so utterly irrational.’

*Athenians.*—‘When you speak of the favour of the gods, we may as fairly hope for that as yourselves; neither our pretensions nor our conduct being in any way contrary to what men believe of the gods or practise among themselves. Of the gods we believe, and of men we know, that by a necessary law of their nature they rule wherever they can. And it is not as if we were the first to make this law, or to act upon it when made: we found it existing before us, and shall leave it to exist for ever after us; all we do is to make use of it, knowing that you and everybody else, having the same power as we have, would do the same as we do. Thus, as far as the gods are concerned, we have no fear and no reason to fear that we shall be at a disadvantage. But when we come to your notion about the Lacedæmonians, which leads you to believe that shame

will make them help you, here we bless your simplicity but do not envy your folly. The Lacedæmonians, when their own interests or their country’s laws are in question, are the worthiest men alive; of their conduct towards others much might be said, but no clearer idea of it could be given than by shortly saying that of all the men we know they are most conspicuous in considering what is agreeable honourable, and what is expedient just. Such a way of thinking does not promise much for the safety which you now unreasonably count upon.’

*Melians.*—‘But it is for this very reason we now trust to their respect for expediency to prevent them from betraying the Melians, their colonists, and thereby losing the confidence of their friends in Hellas and helping their enemies.’

*Athenians.*—‘Then you do not adopt the view that expediency goes with security, while justice and honour cannot be followed without danger; and danger the Lacedæmonians generally court as little as possible.’

*Melians.*—‘But we believe that they would be more likely to face even danger for our sake, and with more confidence than for others, as our nearness to Peloponnese makes it easier for them to act, and our common blood insures our fidelity.’

*Athenians.*—‘Yes, but what an intending ally trusts to, is not the goodwill of those who ask his aid, but a decided superiority of power for action; and the Lacedæmonians look to this even more than others. At least, such is their distrust of their home resources that it is only with numerous allies that they attack a neighbour; now is it likely that while we are masters of the sea they will cross over to an island?’

*Melians.*—‘But they would have others to send. The Cretan sea is a wide one, and it is more difficult for those who command it to intercept others, than for those who wish to elude them to do so safely. And should the Lacedæmonians miscarry in this, they would fall upon your land, and upon those left of your allies whom Brasidas did not reach; and instead of places which are not yours, you will have to fight for your own country and your own confederacy.’

*Athenians.*—‘Some diversion of the kind you speak of you may one day experience, only to learn, as others have done, that the Athenians never once yet withdrew from a siege for fear of any. But we are struck by the fact, that after saying you would consult for the safety of your country, in all this discussion you have mentioned nothing which men might trust in and think to be saved by. Your strongest arguments depend upon hope and the future, and your actual resources are too scanty, as compared with those arrayed against you, for you to come out victorious. You will therefore show great blindness of judgment, unless, after allowing us to retire, you can find some counsel more prudent than this. You will surely not be caught by that idea of disgrace, which in dangers that are disgraceful, and at the same time too plain to be mistaken, proves so fatal to mankind; since in too many cases the very men that have their eyes perfectly open to what they are rushing into, let the thing called disgrace, by the mere influence of a seductive name, lead them on to a point at which they become so enslaved by the phrase as in fact to



fall wilfully into hopeless disaster, and incur disgrace more disgraceful as the companion of error, than when it comes as the result of misfortune. This, if you are well advised, you will guard against; and you will not think it dishonourable to submit to the greatest city in Hellas, when it makes you the moderate offer of becoming its tributary ally, without ceasing to enjoy the country that belongs to you; nor when you have the choice given you between war and security, will you be so blinded as to choose the worse. And it is certain that those who do not yield to their equals, who keep terms with their superiors, and are moderate towards their inferiors, on the whole succeed best. Think over the matter, therefore, after our withdrawal, and reflect once and again that it is for your country that you are consulting, that you have not more than one, and that upon this one deliberation depends its prosperity or ruin.'

The Athenians now withdrew from the conference; and the Melians, left to themselves, came to a decision corresponding with what they had maintained in the discussion, and answered, 'Our resolution, Athenians, is the same as it was at first. We will not in a moment deprive of freedom a city that has been inhabited these seven hundred years; but we put our trust in the fortune by which the gods have preserved it until now, and in the help of men, that is, of the Lacedæmonians; and so we will try and save ourselves. Meanwhile we invite you to allow us to be friends to you and foes to neither party, and to retire from our country after making such a treaty as shall seem fit to us both.'

Such was the answer of the Melians. The Athenians now departing from the conference said, 'Well, you alone, as it seems to us, judging from these resolutions, regard what is future as more certain than what is before your eyes, and what is out of sight, in your eagerness, as already coming to pass; and as you have staked most on, and trusted most in, the Lacedæmonians, your fortune, and your hopes so will you be most completely deceived.'

The Athenian envoys now returned to the army; and the Melians showing no signs of yielding, the generals at once betook themselves to hostilities, and draw a line of circumvallation round the Melians, dividing the work among the different states. Subsequently the Athenians returned with most of their army, leaving behind them a certain number of their own citizens and of the allies to keep guard by land and sea. The force thus left stayed on and besieged the place. . . .

The siege was now pressed vigorously; and some treachery taking place inside, the Melians surrendered at discretion to the Athenians, who put to death all the grown men whom they took, and sold the women and children for slaves, and subsequently sent out five hundred colonists and inhabited the place themselves.

#### US CHAPS AND YOU CHAPS

A story is going the rounds in London. . . . Two officers were travelling in a railway train compartment where the passenger was a young and obviously healthy man in civilian clothes. After looking down their noses at him several times, they began to make audible remarks about people who weren't "doing their bit". Finally he took notice of the comment by saying:

"If it hadn't been for us chaps in the Foreign Office, you chaps would never have got your war."

—"N. Y. Times", April 22, 1944

## Free and Equal

### Negro Leaders and The Harlem Riot

SIR:

I was pleased to see, in your March issue, the favorable notice given to Harold Orlansky's excellent pamphlet, *The Harlem Race Riot: A study in Mass Frustration*. But a few notes concerning the role played by the liberal Negro leaders should be added to the story of the riot.

Mayor La Guardia was prompt to explain the outbreak as "hoodlumism". To call it anything else would have given his administration a black eye. The conservative press and the New Dealers both took the same line, illustrating once more that on all vital issues, at all times when the status quo is shaken, the liberal mind and the conservative mind will unite in program and language. Each organ of course had its peculiar quirk. For example, the *N. Y. World-Telegram* thought the Communists had something to do with the riot, whereas the *Daily Worker* belabored the fifth-columnists.

And what of the Negro leaders?

The first example is Elmer Carter, for many years editor of *Opportunity*, the official organ of the Urban League. In his column in the *Amsterdam News*, he wrote on August 14:

"God knows the battle is tough enough as it is without having to divert our forces to beat off attacks from the rear. And that is what happened in New York the other night when for twelve hours the Negro front was savagely attacked from the rear by a riotous gang of hoodlums who carried death and destruction through the streets of Harlem.

"We might as well face the cold facts. And the facts are that lawlessness in Harlem has been given impetus by the inability or the unwillingness of police officials to curb

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it by swift and stern measures. Before we can advance . . . we have got to eliminate the enemy in our rear."

This is a *Negro leader* speaking, this advocate of tougher police measures against "the enemy in our rear" — i.e., against the citizens of Harlem!

For years before last August's riot, Elmer Carter and other leaders of the New York Negro community had been criticising Mayor LaGuardia for not giving Harlem enough hospitals, playgrounds, schools, price and rent control. Walter White of the N. A. A. C. P. wrote in *The New Republic* for August 10 last: "New York had another riot in 1935. Mayor LaGuardia appointed a bi-racial commission which held hearings and submitted a report which included recommendations that might have prevented . . . the riot of August 1, 1943. But unfortunately the report was never made public and most of its recommendations were unheeded." Unfortunately.

In the months immediately preceding last summer's riot, these Negro leaders had been attacking the Mayor unmercifully because he had okayed the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company's Stuyvesant housing project, which will exclude Negro families. A. Clayton Powell, Jr., the demagogic city Councilman from Harlem, was especially violent in his attacks on LaGuardia, which he delivered in the Council, in his *People's Voice*, and in Madison Square Garden. But when the wretched living conditions in Harlem, for which LaGuardia bears much responsibility, finally produced the August riots, Messrs. Powell and Carter rose up to damn not LaGuardia, not the ghetto conditions of life in Harlem, but such of their own people as took to the streets to protest, in their own way, against this injustice.

Here we may see in action the typical liberal bourgeois who spends his life as a "race man", writing and speaking about the Negro's exploited life. But when the Negro comes out in the street to end it all, thoroughly inflamed with the militant words of the "leader", this same bourgeois throws himself on his knees, calls on God, and sends for the police to curb his followers, who are now "hoodlums".

Another example is a representative of the largest "Negro rights" organization, Mr. Roy Wilkins, Assistant Executive Secretary of the N. A. A. C. P. and editor of its official organ, *The Crisis*. Writing in the *Amsterdam News* on the same day as Elmer Carter, he says:

"The Harlem outbreak . . . wild, indefensible destruction of property . . . was the boiling over of pent-up resentment in the breasts of millions of American Negroes all over the country. . . . The Harlem riot was a mad, shameful, disgraceful orgy."

"We cannot have riots. . . . If they are to be outlawed permanently our Negroes have got to take their feelings off their sleeves and chips off their shoulders; and our white folks have got to come out of their mental straight-jackets on the Negro question."

This is a very interesting statement, one not as vitriolic, not as dogmatic nor as unqualified as Elmer Carter's. The reason is that the N. A. A. C. P. is a different type of organization from the Urban League, and breeds a different kind of leader. The Urban League derives most of its funds from white philanthropists, and its representatives are the professional social-worker type. The N. A. A. C. P. on the other hand is a membership organization with branches throughout the country. Its leaders have their ears to the ground and they do not dare, indeed cannot, be as crude as Elmer Carter. Note the dual themes in Mr. Wilkins' statement. "Mad, shameful disgraceful orgy" — this is for the Governors and Senators who sit upon the N. A. A. C. P. board; for the Government officials with whom Mr. Wilkins must deal; and for the Negro bour-

geoisie of whom he is a part. "The boiling over of pent-up resentment in the breasts of millions of American Negroes all over this country" — this is for the masses. What a tight-rope the Wilkinses walk, carrying water on both shoulders! "Negroes have got to take their feelings off their sleeves . . . white folks have got to come out of their mental straight-jackets" . . . here is medicine for both sides, straight from the doctor's medicine-bag.

It is significant that the fuse which fired the magazine was the rumor that a Negro soldier had been shot and killed by a white policeman. Even the most ignorant can sense the contradiction of a jimcrow army fighting a democratic war: the contradiction of a country ordering a man to risk his life to defend it, and in the days and in the years he is doing so, barraging him with a constant stream of insults and humiliations. He is even beaten, shot, murdered. It is difficult for a white person to understand the various emotions that run through a Negro as he or she sees the loved one for the first time in a military uniform. The first impulse is to laugh, and one does laugh at him — for being dressed up in the uniform of somebody that does not want him. Then one gets sentimental, because the soldier is going to risk his life. And as one thinks, "Risk his life for what?", one gets mad and swears that if someone messes with him, that someone will get cut up.

No big-time lawyers, no legal representatives of the big Negro organizations sought to intervene on behalf of the rioters as they stood in court during the days immediately after the riot. After all "hoodlumism" is "indefensible". And so was lost one of the greatest opportunities for dramatizing the cause of the Negro. An able and competent lawyer could have drawn from these defendants the story of their lives, and in those days when everything pertaining to the riot was front-page news, the cold naked facts — not the "liberal-democratic" propaganda — of how a section of American citizens live would have startled the world. These people stood alone in a court that had already prejudged them. They received justice in the form of thirty, sixty, and ninety days. WILFRED H. KERR

#### Reply by Roy Wilkins

Mr. Kerr has quoted my column of last August in the *Amsterdam News* accurately.

My only disagreement is with his interpretation of the motive which he says prompted the passages he quotes. The risk of being misunderstood or of having motives ascribed is one which every commentator must take.

Since 1922 when I wrote editorial comment for the veteran, but now defunct weekly, the St. Paul (Minn.) *Appeal*, I have been observing, as a newspaper man, the whole picture of interracial relationships in America. I began writing a regular weekly column in 1924 for the Kansas City (Mo.) *Call* and continued it for seven consecutive years until I came to New York in 1931. For the past seven or eight years, with one slight interruption, I have been writing a column for the *Amsterdam News*.

I cite this long experience in this field merely to point out that I was writing columns long before I came to work for the NAACP and that a glance over that output will show the NAACP has had no influence on my expression of opinion. It is thus a little absurd to say that I write one sentence "for the Governors and Senators who sit upon the NAACP board; for the Government officials with whom Mr. Wilkins must deal; and for the Negro bourgeoisie of



whom he is a part," and another sentence "for the masses."

Expressions identical with the ones in the column of last August may be found throughout the columns I wrote before joining the staff of the NAACP.

Protagonists for racial or other minority groups fall very easily into the trap of ascribing motives to so-called leaders of those groups on the basis of the composition of the organization, the source of its income, the scholastic training of the individuals, the political affiliations of officials, alleged class loyalties, etc. This type of reasoning completely ignores the fact that there are certain basic standards of conduct for all people regardless of their color, religion or station in life. If we are to make a sound analysis of a condition and a sound appraisal of behavior, we have to begin first of all with the basic standards. It only confuses the discussion, instead of clarifying it, to reach into thin air and pluck out a "motive."

It is an undisputed fact for those who deal in realities of the so-called race problem that there is an obligation both upon the Negroes and upon the whites to work toward a solution. The Negro cannot content himself with sitting down and merely yelling, with no acknowledgment of his own shortcomings and frailties, and no attempt to apply corrective intra-group action to bring himself to accepted basic standards of behavior and performance. Any commentator upon the current scene who refuses to acknowledge that Negroes can be hoodlums, and can be guilty of flagrant anti-social activity and who is unwilling to do anything except to heap blame upon the majority group fails to have a balanced view of the situation. Such a person is a demagogue and an opportunist riding the popular waves of racism. Conversely any commentator who fails to tax white people with the obligations they owe in this interracial problem is unbalanced.

I have no apologies to offer for my comment on the Harlem riot. It is unquestionably true, as I stated, that the treatment Negroes in the armed services have been receiving at the hands of civilian authorities, including police, accounted for the instantaneous flare-up in Harlem upon the report of the shooting of a Negro soldier by a civilian policeman; but, allowing for the intensity of that resentment, it seems to me that we do not service to the cause of

improving race relations by attempting to ignore the obvious fact that there were scores of incidents of pure, unadulterated vandalism and hooliganism in Harlem which following in the wake of the first report.

To admit that does not in any sense admit control by "Senators, Government officials, etc."

ROY WILKINS

## Books

**THE COMPLETE JEFFERSON**, Containing His Major Writings, Published and Unpublished, Except His Letters. Assembled and Arranged by Saul K. Padover. Duell, Sloan & Pearce. \$5.00.

Thomas Jefferson was a large slaveholder when, at the age of twenty-six, he became a delegate to the Virginia House of Burgesses. One of his first acts there—one of the first political acts of his life—was the introduction of a bill (which failed) providing for the emancipation of slaves. The oldest son of a wealthy landowner, he later as a state legislator wrote the bill abolishing entails in Virginia and helped to draw the one terminating the rights of primogeniture, thus striking at the root of the state's landed aristocracy and making possible the wider distribution of land among small owners. Whenever privilege threatened to usurp individual rights, he opposed privilege disinterestedly and consistently, as in his resolution for religious freedom in Virginia, his "Kentucky Resolution" attacking the Alien and Sedition Laws, his constant concern for minority rights, his anxiety over the spreading power of the judiciary. The victim of some of the most intemperate and scurrilous attacks ever made on a public man in this country, he remained an uncompromising advocate of free speech and a free press. At the end of his long life he left a number of public papers, some published work and a vast body of letters which expressed with admirable precision and clarity his political beliefs. This new collection is devoted to Jefferson's public papers and published works, using only such letters as express ideas not found elsewhere in his writings.

Jefferson was a brilliant literary craftsman, writing with logic, restraint and felicity. Quotable remarks of statesmen, particularly of statesmen dead a long time, tend to ossify into axioms, at the same time curiously levitating beyond the reach of criticism. They become Gospel—the American Scriptures—and all sorts of devils quote them.

It is interesting that Jefferson, the most articulate and quotable of American presidents, is invoked comparatively seldom for justification in modern politics. It is interesting, too, that only within the last few months has a comprehensive plan been undertaken\* to collect and publish all the written work of this extremely important political figure.

One can only guess at the reason for this neglect: maybe Jefferson was too radical. "Calculate," he wrote apropos Shays' Rebellion, "Calculate that one rebellion in thirteen states in the course of eleven years is but one for each state in a century and a half. No country should be so long without one." His basic political belief was that political power rightly belongs to the people, and that it is the people who, when fully informed on the issues, show the

\*Jointly by Princeton University and the *New York Times*. The work is expected to take ten or a dozen years and fill some fifty volumes.

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best judgment in exercising it. "They are the only sure reliance for the preservation of our liberties," he wrote. It is not a belief in which many modern political groups, either of the right or left, can take much comfort, and Jefferson's statements on the subject do not lend themselves flexibly to Procrustean adjustments. Remarks applying to specific contemporary issues can be distorted by removal from their textual and historical context, but not those bearing on fundamental principles. Is it possible to make anything else out of the beautifully absolute statement: "*Reason and free inquiry are the only effectual agents against error*"?

This collection, which eloquently illustrates the extraordinary range of Jefferson's interests, is gratifying in that it gathers his major writings, except the letters, into one volume, and arranges them under headings covering politics, religion, science, philosophy, education, etcetera. Doubts as to the adequacy of the editing are raised, however, by the assertion in the preface that most of the documents have been taken from published collections. The documents in the original are available, and it seems the part of a conscientious scholar to go to them rather than to reply on secondary sources, particularly since Jefferson has suffered much from careless and arbitrary editing.

LAURA WOOD

**CAPITALISM, SOCIALISM, AND DEMOCRACY.** By Joseph A. Schumpeter. Harper. \$3.50.

When a professor of Economics at Harvard University flatly states in so many words that "socialism is inevitable . . . and that it *can* be democratic," it is no wonder that the publisher's blurb advertises the book as "indispensable for everyone concerned with America's future." The subject matter is profoundly important; the treatment is unorthodox, bordering on "heresy;" but the discussion and analysis are profoundly disappointing and—to this reviewer—boring. It would require a book of at least equal size (375 pages) to examine all the important unsupported assertions (virtually no evidence is cited for original propositions), factual misstatements, faulty interpretations, and bad reasoning of which Schumpeter is guilty.

Part I is allegedly a non-technical summary and evaluation of the Marxian doctrine. Marx, states Schumpeter, was a great man, a genius, although Marxism is a religion based on outmoded economics and infantile sociology. Schumpeter grants Marx a remarkable vision but apparently the only valid part of his theoretical approach is the Economic Interpretation of History, "one of the greatest individual achievements of sociology to this day." Schumpeter's criticism of the Marxian theory of imperialism will suffice to emphasize the puerility of his approach especially since it bulks large in his "telling" array of indictments.

The Marxian theory of imperialism, particularly as developed by the "neo-Marxists," among whom Schumpeter lists Rosa Luxemburg, is a "nursery tale" and "degenerates into the formulation of popular superstitions." Here is attached the following impudent and revealing footnote: "This superstition is exactly on a par with another that is harbored by many worthy and simple-minded people who explain modern history to themselves on the hypothesis that there is somewhere a committee of supremely wise and malevolent Jews who behind the scenes control international or perhaps all politics. Marxists are not victims of this particular superstition but theirs is on no higher plane."

And what is this "superstition"—on no higher intellectual plane than anti-Semitism — of which Marxists are guilty? Simply, the only realistic explanation of modern society: namely, that the accumulation of capital, accompanied by a falling rate of profit, forces the export of surplus capital and leads to competition for world markets and trade, which in turn produces conflicts (class struggle among various national bourgeoisies and between bourgeoisie and proletariat) that periodically require solution by force of arms. To be sure, it is Schumpeter's out-of-hand rejection of the theory of class struggle that is responsible for his pathetic position. For, if there is no class struggle, then it obviously becomes absurd to speak about the capitalist class launching a nation into war for imperialistic reasons. "As a matter of fact," says Schumpeter, "very little influence on foreign policy has been exerted by big business . . ."

To the question propounded in Part II, Can Capitalism Survive?, Schumpeter, after extolling the virtues of the bourgeoisie and capitalism for 100 pages, answers "no." The reasoning is curious; nay, remarkable. Average real per capita income has approximately doubled from 1870 to 1928. It can be expected to double again from 1928 to 1978, thus eliminating poverty. Why, then, is socialism "inevitable?" "Because capitalist enterprise, by its very achievements, tends to automatize progress, . . . it tends to make itself superfluous—to break to pieces under the pressure of its own success. The perfectly bureaucratized giant industrial unit not only ousts the small or medium-sized firm and 'expropriates' its owners, but in the end it also ousts the entrepreneur and expropriates the bourgeoisie as a class which in the process stands to lose not only its income but also what is infinitely more important, its function." Thus, the "merchanization of progress" and the "absence of a feudal or equivalent protecting strata" lead to the "destruction of the institutional framework of capitalist society." "This evaporation of the material substance of property," etc. creates a "social atmosphere hostile to capitalist interests." Eventually ("a century is a 'short run'"), "in the fullness of time," capitalism disintegrates and the bureaucrats and intellectuals—the managers?—take over; socialism, "whether we like it or not" supplants capitalism and is therefore "inevitable."

The above, brief but fair, summary of Schumpeter's "contribution" to economic theory demonstrates that he does occasionally flirt with reality; but at the first real contact with the living world his theory, like Burnham's, evaporates into the professorial mumbo-jumbo that it is. And, for all Schumpeter's non-Marxian protestations, he is not averse to pointing out how "similar" his theory is to Marx's, how much more closely he, rather than Lenin or the "neo-Marxist" disciples, follows the master.

The complete emasculation of Marx takes place in the last paragraph of Part I: ". . . Evolution was for him (Marx) the parent of socialism. He was much too strongly imbued with a sense of the inherent logic of things social to believe that revolution can replace any part of the work of evolution. The revolution comes in nevertheless. But it only comes in order to write the conclusion under a complete set of premises. The Marxian revolution therefore differs entirely, in nature and in function, from the revolutions both of the bourgeois radical and of the socialist conspirator. It is essentially revolution in fullness of time. It is true that disciples who dislike this conclusion, and especially its application to the Russian case [Schumpeter's ignorance of Trotsky's Theory of Permanent Revolution is evidenced here, as well as in the last part], can point to many passages in the sacred books that seem to



contradict it. But in those passages Marx himself contradicts his deepest and most mature thought which speaks out unmistakably from the analytic structure of *Das Kapital* and . . . carries . . . a distinctly conservative implication." (sic!). In other words, to strive for socialism now is unMarxian, as capitalism (according to Schumpeter) is still far from being fully mature. . . .

While in Parts III, IV, and V, *Can Socialism Work?*, *Socialism and Democracy*, and *A Historical Sketch of Socialist Parties*, Schumpeter says that socialism can work, theoretically even better than capitalism, that it can be democratic and that the parties of socialism (meaning the Social Democrats) have a promising political future, although the result "is much likely to present fascist features;" the less said about these parts the better, for they betray not only a false conception of socialism, but an amateurish confusion between democracy and democratic rights and an abysmal ignorance of the history of the socialist movement.

Aside from all the obvious implications of the book, such as that the bourgeoisie need not fear socialism for another hundred years, there are two significant features which justify a review of a book published in 1942. The first I have already alluded to. The author is guilty of an increasingly common mistake, a failure to penetrate to the essence of both capitalism and socialism. Like so many others, some of whom should know better, Schumpeter persists in restricting capitalism to a period where state control of the economy is not its dominant aspect. He thus loses sight of the most significant trend in the evolution of present-day capitalism, the emergence of a new stage of capitalism which for want of a better term I have called state monopoly capitalism functioning as a Permanent War Economy — see *Politics*, February, 1944. Centralization and state control, while perhaps leading in the direction of socialism (they can just as easily lead toward fascism, and have) do not *ipso facto* suffice to establish socialism. Socialism cannot begin to exist without state *ownership* of the basic means of production and the abolition of the bourgeois state power; these plus democracy (the working class in power) can begin to lead to a socialist development of society. Otherwise, there is complete confusion of terms, Stalin's Russia becomes an example of socialism, as does Hitlerite Germany, etc. Reality loses all meaning and scientific analysis is impossible.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the book, however, is the fact that a respectable publishing house, not noted for philanthropic motives, has seen fit to bring forth a book which attempts a serious discussion of the basic relationships among capitalism, socialism, and democracy, and which is superficially anti-capitalist. This merely attests to the fact that the present war has made some people aware that the only rational alternative to a permanently reactionary capitalism is socialism. At least, there is some awakening of interest in these questions, but the reader who is interested in a meaningful discussion of them will have to look elsewhere than in Schumpeter.

WALTER J. OAKES

**THE AMERICAN STORY OF INDUSTRIAL AND LABOR RELATIONS.** By the New York State Joint Legislative Committee on Industrial and Labor Conditions. Albany, N. Y., 1943.

Controversy broke out in New York City when this little volume was considered as a text-book for the city schools. The published commentaries were a bit confusing on just

what issues were in conflict. Some professional friends of labor concluded that the book was not an adequate history of labor—and cited the omission of the Haymarket riots as evidence. Other critics raised the question of the state publishing its own text-books. Working together, the friends of labor and the devotees of free enterprise for publishers succeeded in rejecting the book as a school text.

Whatever the reasons for it, the decision was commendable. The book has the common defect of text-books—it is dull to the point of nausea. There are interesting pictures, a plethora of over-elaborate pictorial charts, and lots of heavy-typed subtitles—and a text that is foreordained to bore any school-child to tears. It purports to describe industrial conditions in 1790, 1840, 1890, and 1940, to discuss modern labor conditions and governmental agencies for insuring a fair fight between workers and employers, and it sets forth a preview of coming attractions in this same theater. The descriptions are insufferably arid, dehumanized, and devitalized. School children in the "child-centered school" (Remember that one?) deserve a better diet—unless this insipid assortment of facts is deliberately meant to convince the children that economics is, indeed, the dismal science!

But the purpose of the book is clearly propaganda for bureaucracy. The "New York State Joint Legislative Committee on Industrial and Labor Conditions" is less interested in presenting the case of labor or industry than it is in making an elaborate exposition and defense of its own operations. Over and over, dozens of times, appears the phrase: "We, the people, have acted through government . . ." We, "the people", have acted through government to settle strikes and conflicts; "we, the people, have acted through government" to secure fair play, help business, workers, and even consumers. This constant reiteration of the phrase is a conscious attempt to identify "we, the people" with a governmental agency, and to set "we, the people" off against both capital and labor. Only those who have abandoned hope in human betterment can endorse this glorification of governmental machinery.

—One final footnote: the volume was well-designed in format and typography. Someone gave careful thought to making an attractive book. But the execution was terrible. Typographers might note the slavish effort of the printers to reproduce the typescript in book-titles—instead of italics, all book titles are underscored just as they were in the typed copy! Or, they might notice the failure to fill out the spaces around quarter-page cuts, or the erratic practice of "bleeding" some illustrations and not others. The free enterprise boys do a better job of executing worse designs! This, however, is not an adequate argument against state-written text-books. Printers and editors can be taught; the basic question is whether any state agency can be trusted to write an honest account of its own activities?

WILLIAM B. HESSELTINE

**OMNIPOTENT GOVERNMENT: THE RISE OF THE TOTAL STATE AND TOTAL WAR.** By Ludwig Von Mises. Yale University Press. \$3.75.

A Period piece. Von Mises preaches the gospel, as he has all his life, of Manchesterian *laissez-faire*. He denounces impartially Nazism, Stalinism, Marxism (reformist or revolutionary), and the milder forms of politicalized economics represented by the Weimar Republic and the New Deal. "Durable peace is only possible under perfect capitalism, hitherto never and nowhere completely tried or achieved." And why not? Because people are stupid and don't understand their real interests. What can be



done, then? Apparently very little. Almost all the book is a polemic, rambling and without much new in either ideas or data, against Nazism and Marxism. There are six pages of "Conclusions" which simply reiterate that no good can ever come of interfering with the free working of capitalist economic laws.

Among living economists, Von Mises is a sort of Last of the Mohicans. He presents a romantic, even a heroic, figure as he confronts modern history armed only with the economic doctrines of Manchester. Uncas was brave, too. But not very interesting from an intellectual standpoint.

D. M.

## The Intelligence Office

### On "The Coming Tragedy of American Labor"

*A number of people in the labor movement were invited to comment on Daniel Bell's article in the March issue. The replies received to date appear below. They are their authors' personal opinions, and do not necessarily express the union's policy.—ED.*

I am afraid Mr. Bell is correct in his foreboding of imperialism as the grand consequence of this war. Perhaps it will be national, perhaps collective on the part of all or some of the United Nations. As he has pointed out, and Dr. Alfred Braunthal at greater length (in the March issue of *Studies in Postwar Reconstruction*), the saving feature of wholesale economic entrance of advanced countries into backward areas could be the raising of labor standards of regions to be developed. This would do most to bring world economic parity and discourage further wars. No policy would be more enlightened from the standpoint of internal health of the United Nations themselves. On the other hand, exploitation would be the brief preface to fresh conflict.

The International Labor Organization could become the powerful protector of native labor populations. The ILO, however, is making itself at the moment the avowed partisan of the United Nations, begging to be their advisor (read instrument) in settling labor and broad social terms of armistice and peace. There seems to me grave danger that if the ILO, at the outset, becomes subordinate to the United Nations, though with the highest professions, it will remain so and find itself put to ignoble purposes.

Unless organized labor of the United Nations has quite lost its demand for a better world after the war, a program of imperialism will need to stifle labor protests within the imperialist countries. At that point the ILO may find itself snatched from the role of peace table advisor and, dressed in cap and apron, assigned the duty of dosing home labor with soothing syrup. This is too likely. Of each country's four delegates to the ILO, two represent government, one employers, and one workers. In the event of organized imperialism, government and employer representatives would work together, leaving labor, even if militantly opposed, in the hopeless minority. All sorts of reasoning would be brought forward to cajole or coerce labor into agreement or acquiescence. Immediate gains for labor in imperialist United Nations, through full production of materials and machines for export, would make this easy in the beginning. When labor fears awoke, ampler social

security measures would offer a sedative. By the time the effect of this specific had worn off, the damage to the world economic and political situation would have been worked, and new war would impend.

The ILO must somehow be the champion, both bold and wise, of all labor everywhere—in victorious nations, in beaten nations, in backward areas. The ILO, for the sake of its historic role, should spurn the temptation to become the adjunct of this single peace, however promising the opportunity seems at the moment. Peace must be made many times more. One may venture the belief that the ILO should hold all labor above all wars. This is not utopian unless the hope of eventual continuing world concord is utterly deceptive.

Of course confusions stand in the way. The ILO is primarily a creature of governments with all their pressures and ambitions. Labor under one government or a group of governments readily believes that official military or imperialist design is synonymous with human freedom. The ILO has been chased from its palace at Geneva and perches tenuously in a converted residence in Montreal. It hankers to be restored to a position near a victorious throne. But it will do better to live poorly in exile while it erects for itself a handsome hall in the hearts and hopes of workers of the world, repressing the triumphant and raising up the trampled.

BROADUS MITCHELL

INTERNATIONAL LADIES GARMENT WORKERS UNION, AFL  
NEW YORK CITY

Mr. Bell has raised questions of urgent concern in his article. Despite a few errors of fact, he has shown a deep insight into the fundamental trends affecting labor.

The chief weakness of the Bell approach, however, is an over-emphasis on politics and underestimation of the dynamics of economic conflict and interest. Labor will move vigorously in its own behalf but not until economic urgencies have arisen. The workers do not react in anticipation of severe economic crisis. The current war prosperity has created an illusory sense of security even though the workingman does think the future looks dark.

The leaders of labor, especially in the major CIO unions, know what's coming and are trying to prepare for it. However, such leaders are greatly restricted by political confusion and disinterest, part of which characterize their own thinking.

Bell puts too much faith in a Labor Party, worthwhile as it would be. Too many friends of labor and intellectuals within labor's ranks, oversimplify the problems of the labor movement and brush them off by implying that a Labor Party would be the final and overall solution.

Labor's basic strength is economic; its strongest weapons are still its economic weapons. The CIO's top leadership is showing great wisdom in its gradual development of renewed economic power and determination. The days ahead must find workers fully prepared to withstand corporation attacks and to undertake an aggressive campaign to gain fairer distribution of income, better guarantees of security and new levels of industrial democracy.

Those who help to shape public opinion can make a very great contribution if they get behind these efforts, not only to aid rank and file labor understanding, but primarily to educate the public. The American people should learn the real day-to-day meanings and values of industrial democracy and be integrated in the struggle for a just economy.

To do this job effectively, intellectuals themselves must learn some things most of them don't now know; namely,



that labor's direction is determined in the first place at the shop level and that labor's real struggle concerns the daily relationships between Management and Employee. Until the small details that make up the lifeblood of our unions are fully understood and appreciated, the intellectual will not speak for labor and adequately defend labor's case.

BEN FISCHER

ALUMINUM WORKERS OF AMERICA, CIO  
NEW KENSINGTON, PA.

## INTELLECTUALS AND BUREAUCRACY

I have just read Mr. Mills' challenging article on the role of the intellectual in society. For those of us who are finishing graduate work and who are not yet ready to surrender political ideals and the self respect of believing in our own effectiveness, Mr. Mills finds an appreciative audience. The problem reaches deeply into our personal lives. Many of our predecessors are now working in Washington, and from the content and bitterness of their complaints, one might characterize them as Strachey once described the Social Democrats: "they are everywhere in office and nowhere in power." I, for one, was grateful for Mr. Mills' disinclination for naive optimism and his unequivocal vigor in stating the realities of the situation. And indeed, I am pleased that *Politics* is establishing a precedent for this type of discussion.

I should like, however, to raise some fundamental criticism of Mr. Mills' analysis and discussion, criticism which I am inclined to believe is not without political significance.

Max Weber, as you perhaps know, pointed out the increasing trend of bureaucratization of modern life. In his essay "Wissenschaft als Beruf" he discusses the intellectual in particular and the pressures of bureaucratized universities. Following Weber, there has been much discussion in Sociology of bureaucratic structure and personality—Mannheim's discussion of "bureaucratic conservatism", Robert K. Merton's article on "Bureaucratic Structure and Personality" are a few of the outstanding efforts to come to grips with the problem. It is important to note that all of these writers are concerned with bureaucratic structure as compared to non-bureaucratic social structure and are not concerned with bureaucratic social structure in a system of private enterprise as compared to a different type of economic organization. Weber makes it clear that bureaucratic structure would be characteristic of modern socialism as it is of monopoly capitalism.

This approach is entirely permissible for certain problems in social structure. Mr. Mills, however, tends to confuse the pressures on the liberal intellectual of bureaucratic structure with the pressures of *capitalist* bureaucratic structure. One is a problem of technical organization. The other is a problem of a conflict of interests. For example, Mr. Mills does not make clear whether it is the necessity for making profit or the separation of artist and director in Hollywood which frustrates the artist. He does not make clear whether the radical who finds the means of communication increasingly denied him is the victim of growing resistance of a counter revolutionary class or the technical structure of cartelized communication.

It is extremely important to disentangle these two problems. If bureaucratic structure is held responsible for the frustrations of intellectuals there is the danger of misdirecting aggressions and longing for the good old days "before bigness". Conversely, if the problem is defined solely in terms of capitalism, we may overlook the recalci-

trant and by no means simple problem of insuring grass roots participation and control in a socialist society.

If we turn to the present situation in Washington, intellectual-experts are enjoying greater prestige and functional importance than they ever have had before in this country. Increasing dependence upon specialized knowledge has brought professors and intellectuals into the government by the drove. And it is a mistake to believe that they are merely "fact-finders". Where areas of indeterminacy exist and the expert knows how to reach the right ears, he makes policy. Certainly, empirical studies are needed on this problem. We should expect to find, however, that the frustrated intellectuals in government bureaucracy are the pragmatic liberals of the Jerome Frank and the Pendleton Herring genre who went into government with the assumption that it was the domain of critical intelligence, and the means of bringing about far reaching social change without the violence of revolution. The frustration develops when we begin to evaluate how meager the liberal social change they have brought about is and how great the reaction is.

It is impossible to go into this problem here with as much detail as it requires. I only want to suggest that Mr. Mills' confusion of bureaucratic structure and capitalist bureaucratic structure and their ensuing frustrations is not only academically careless but may be politically misleading.

NEW YORK CITY

THELMA HERMAN

## QUERY ON SOURCES

Peter Meyer's article, "The Soviet Union: A New Class Society", cites a number of official decrees of different dates. How can one verify these citations? In discussing with "fellow travellers", the mere assertion that such and such data comes from a certain decree is met with the invariable answer: "There is no such decree." I should appreciate information as to sources. . . .

BROOKLYN, N. Y.

A. M. BELFORD

*The text of each decree is printed in either "Pravda" or "Izvestia" of the day after the date of the decree.—ED.*

## IN DEFENSE OF AVERY CRAVEN

I wish to state that your contributor, Kenneth M. Stamp, is way off base in his evaluation of Avery Craven in his article, "Our Historians and Slavery" in the March issue.

I studied under Dr. Craven and I can truthfully say that while he always strove to understand the complexities of the issues involved, he never sought to condone them. To call his book, *The Coming of the Civil War*, an apologia for slavery is to misrepresent an honest and humanitarian scholar.

NEW CUMBERLAND, PA

CPL. X

## BATTLE OF PETERSBURG: SECOND ROUND

I purchased the first issue of "POLITICS" thinking I was going to find it a worthwhile magazine. I was not wholly disappointed. But . . .

Mary's Letter from Petersburg, Va., stamps the magazine as a typical socialist publication — that is, full of Northern arrogance and snobbery, full of bigotry and a detestable assumption of superiority. I have tried to be



a socialist since 1923, but it is not easy to be a socialist in the south. . . .

Mary thinks the South "should be occupied before Germany." . . . Mary, with the rest of the socialists, seems to forget that the South *was* occupied before Germany. It fought a four years war against capitalism and lost. It was occupied by the Northern Army and a Carpetbag government, and for years it went through experiences such as France and Greece are now experiencing. . . .

Instead of occupying the South, I suggest that the 80-year occupation be ended. . . . Dispossess the Northern capitalists that mercilessly exploit the South. . . . I make a further suggestion. If, after the present murder fest is ended, there is another move to revive the principle of self-determination of peoples . . . let the Southern people vote on staying in or going out of the union and abide by the results of the plebiscite. Subject peoples of the South could stand a little self-determination.

You'll reply that the South should apply the same principle to the Negro. I agree. But I am aware that the South is not ready for this.

HERBERT M. SHELTON, D.P., D.N.T.

DR. SHELTON'S HEALTH SCHOOL

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## Coming in *politics*

Don Calhoun: *The Political Relevance of Conscientious Objection*

Victor Serge: *The Revolution at Dead-End* (1926-1928)

Max Weber: *Class, Status, Party* (A key chapter from Weber's great work, "Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft"; translated by Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills; first time in English)

Nicola Chiaromonte: *Croce and Italian Liberalism*

George Orwell: *The Ethics of the Detective Story*

David T. Bazelon: *Green Ashes, a story*

Dwight Macdonald: *The Great Dissenter—a profile of the late John Marshall Harlan* (with text of his dissent in "Plessy v. Ferguson")

George S. Schuyler: "An American Dilemma" (a review)

Abba P. Lerner: "The Structure of Soviet Wages" (a review)

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## CLASSICAL VS. MARXIST ECONOMICS

Macdonald's "The Revival of Political Economy" (POLITICS, March 1944) raises a number of questions. I am not so sure that the classical economists of the Smith-Ricardo school saw the political aspects of economic theory. In this sense it seems to me that the earlier Mercantilist theoreticians with their insistence on the welfare of the state as the aim of economy (Colbert) have a much clearer view of the link between politics and economy. The classical economists rather conceive of economy as governed by eternal, *natural* laws and it is only Marx who again integrates the economic science into a larger socio-political science. Marx then contradicts *natural* economic laws and reunites politics and economy. The difference between the classical economists of the Smith-Ricardo school and the later marginal and mathematical schools, seems to me to be not so much that the ones are political and the others are not, as that the earlier school has still the vigor and the grasp of developing capitalism—it still proposes solutions with assurance and has the force to elaborate general laws, whereas the later schools become more and more specialised, incapable of a large elaboration, concerned only with detail. (It seems that the evolution in the field of economy is somewhat similar to the one in the field of history which Korsch sketched in his *Partisan Review* article two years ago). I agree of course that since the thirties there is a marked revival of political economy under the pressure of necessity. In a sense the Keynesians are much nearer to Marx's basic approach than classical economy—because they have succeeded in piercing the veil of the fetishism of commodities and are no longer hindered by "natural economic law".

NEW YORK CITY

LOUIS CLAIR

—Mr. Clair is right. I must have phrased my comments on the classical economists badly. What I meant was not that Smith and Ricardo didn't believe in "natural" economic laws, but that they related these laws to general social and political policy more closely than their epigone successors in the late 19th century.—D.M.

## CONTRIBUTORS

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