

politics

October, 1946

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The Russian Culture Purge

THE current purge of arts and letters in Russia reveals, even more profoundly than the aggressive character of Russian foreign policy, that the Stalin regime proposes to alter the present international balance of power in its favor, and that it is preparing for the ultimate probable outcome of this attempt: a war with the Western powers. The novel and disturbing feature of this purge, as against previous ones, is the emphasis put on a break with Western culture. The most prominent themes—and any one who has followed the Soviet press, with its ritualistic repetitions of formulae, know how prominent a theme can become—are the viciousness and vulgarity of Western culture and the immense superiority of Soviet culture. There is a quite deliberate attempt to snap whatever frail links remain between Soviet and Western culture, to destroy any feeling of liking, respect or even common humanity on the part of the Russian people for the peoples of the West.

The word "alien," for example, occurs frequently. Marx used the term "alienated" to mean "cut off from human values." The Soviet bureaucracy, however, identify the Russian people with humanity, and apply the adjective "alien" to whatever is not Russian. In a sense, they are right: at least, Russia under Stalin has indeed become alien to the values of Western civilization. A qualitative difference, disturbing in its implications, does seem to have developed in the last fifteen years between Russian culture and our own. Such principles as freedom, justice, truth, mercy, such notions as the Rights of Man or our own "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," a certain respect for the independence of the individual, even of the artist—these still have some currency in the West and retain some force for most men. But they are apparently by now totally lacking in Russian culture—so

far as it finds expression accessible to observers outside the country—which has become debased to a point more barbaric, irrational and psychopathic than the worst Hollywood can show us. This is an extreme statement. I think it is justified by the material presented in this article.

Bureaucratic Comedy

One's first reaction, as a "Westerner," is that the cultural purge is just funny. One of the characteristics of bureaucracy in general and Soviet ideology in particular is humorlessness. Here, by the way, may be a major weakness of Stalinism; some well-placed ridicule might be the most effective weapon of opposition, the talents of Voltaire rather than those of Lenin may be what is needed to shake the foundations of that great grim pompous structure.

A sense of humor is, essentially, a sense of proportion. Bergson defines the comic as "something mechanical en-crusted on the living" and adds: "Complete automatism is only reached in the official who performs his duty like a mere machine, or again in the unconsciousness that marks an administrative regulation working with inexorable fatality and setting itself up for a law of nature." Bureaucracy always tends to set up itself (i.e., its will and the regulations and "directives" that express it) for a law of nature, to treat the real world as though it were structured in such a way as to be completely amenable to manipulation by its authority.* The real world, however, is not structured that way. And

* One reason for the fantastic behavior of the Russian delegates in the U.N. and at Paris is that the only way they know of thinking and acting is in terms of bureaucratic manipulation; but this won't work with persons over whom they have no authority.

when the bureaucrat tries to treat it so, the result is always comic.

So in the cultural purge we find almost unbelievable things. A jazz band is reproved for the "ideological scantiness" of its jive . . . *Red Sport* reminds its readers that athletic events are held primarily "for the glory of the State" . . . The Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party orders all editors to "carry on a decisive struggle against apolitical and unideological theatrical criticism" and to require their reviewers to employ only "the principles of Bolshevik criticism" . . . *Pravda* denounces children's magazines for printing "nonsensical fairy tales, which take the youthful reader out of the realm of reality or distort the truth about the Soviet Union" and recommends that they pay more attention to "the problems of life and struggle in our socialist fatherland" . . . The Sherlock Holmes stories are excoriated by *The Moscow Evening News* because they "poison the minds of readers" with a "criminal romanticism" which diverts them from the problems of the five-year plan.

It is all very funny, unless one considers it from the standpoint of one who lives in the Soviet Union, or of one who lives in a world in which the Soviet Union is a great power. Then it becomes rather frightening.

Three Dogmas in Search of an Artist

If the purge must be taken seriously, it is not because it involves the fate of very much good art. When the first great "cultural offensive" took place after Stalin came into power in 1928, the objects of attack were painters, architects, musicians, poets and movie directors who had made the Russia of the twenties one of the great centers of creative experimentation. Some committed suicide, most capitulated and tried to debase their work to the required level; by the time the second art purge came along, just before the Moscow Trials, very little was left of Soviet art and the masters of the twenties were beaten and demoralized men, just as the Old Bolsheviks who were finally disposed of by the Moscow Trials were physically the individuals who had made the 1917 revolution but spiritually were shadow-men, broken by years of persecution and, even worse, corrupted by repeated capitulations. If this was true even in 1936, one may imagine the state of the arts in Russia today, after ten more years of Stalinism. No, it is not because any living, creative tendencies in Soviet art are being stifled—they expired many years ago—that one must take seriously this new purge. It is under the heading of politics, not art, that it is to be considered.

The purge is being conducted to impress on the cultural workers of Russia, three dogmas, which may be summed up as follows:

DOGMA I.: ART IS A POLITICAL INSTRUMENT. *The only justification, or even meaning, of a work of art lies in the extent to which it serves "the interests of the people," which are frankly identified with the policies of those in control of the State.*

DOGMA II.: ART IS A DUTY, NOT A DELIGHT. *This is true for the artist, who must be Responsible, Constructive, Optimistic, Healthy-Minded, and who must in every note, line, or brush-stroke concern himself with the Problems of the Struggle for Socialism and the Fulfillment of the Stalin Five Year Plan. It is also true for the audience, which is to be edified rather than either moved or entertained by artistic works.*

DOGMA III.: WESTERN CULTURE IS ALIEN TO AND INFERIOR TO SOVIET CULTURE. *Since Western culture is decadent, "ideal-less," shallow, vulgar and provincial, it must be mercilessly criticised and rejected as an influence. Soviet culture, on the other hand, is the most profound, creative, and advanced in the world.**

The formulation of the above dogmas is not exaggerated for satirical purposes; it is an accurate summary of what has been said over and over again in the Soviet press of late months. Those who are sceptical are invited to read the following narrative of the purge, which has been drawn mostly from Moscow dispatches to the *N. Y. Times*. The one thing to be always remembered about the policy of the present masters of Russia is that there are no extremes of barbarism and irrationality, literally none, from which it draws back. "Something mechanical encrusted on the living."

Thunderclouds

The first muttering of the approaching storm was the announcement, on May 21, of a five-year plan for movie production. The officially approved list of themes is worth giving in full:

1. *The advantages of the Soviet system over capitalism.*
2. *The role of the Communist Party.*
3. *Solidarity and friendship of the many nationalities composing the Soviet Union.*
4. *The people's vigilance, patriotism and duties to the State.*
5. *Commemoration of outstanding war heroes and heroines.*
6. *The Soviet way of life.*
7. *The family.*
8. *Mother heroines (mothers who have ten children).*
9. *Children and youth.*
10. *Problems facing the Soviet Union.*

* Theoretically, that is. For since the Soviet political system is superior to all other systems, it must follow that the objective basis for an equally superior culture exists. There is, however, an unfortunate contradiction between this objective basis and the subjective achievements of contemporary Soviet art. The Central Committee makes no secret of its belief that the actual—as against the theoretical—state of Soviet art is, not to put too fine a point on it, lousy. This state of affairs is due partly to the slackness and recalcitrance of the artists, partly to the corrupting influence of provincial Western art. The Central Committee has issued clear directives for both these evils to be corrected at once.

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11. *Documentaries of the five-year plan.*
12. *Industry, agriculture and life in the sixteen Soviet republics.*
13. *Popularization of achievements in science, engineering and technical progress.*

This list is as much a "resignation from the world" as was Stalin's February speech. It is also a resignation from art, and even from entertainment. A people who would willingly sit through five years of movies on the above themes are not a people like ourselves or like any other people known to history. One's hope is that the Russians, if they do sit, will at least not sit willingly.

The purge opens in the field of art about the same time as in industry. On July 7 it is announced that the just-completed second part of Eisenstein's new film trilogy, *Ivan the Terrible*, would not be released. (The Eisenstein case is considered in detail later on.) A week later the purge begins to broaden out and gather momentum. *Culture and Life*, the official organ of the Propaganda and Agitation Board of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party—as I was saying, *Culture and Life* in its July 17 issue prints a long denunciation of tendencies in opera, theatre, painting, films and architecture. The article takes a dim view of any further staging of foreign plays because they distract audiences from "the fundamental problems of Soviet reality" and because they are "soaked through and through with an ideology alien to Soviet Society."

The Lightning Strikes

On August 14, the Central Committee of the party meets to review "the state of the ideological front," which it finds in very bad shape. The seriousness with which these matters are viewed in Russia is shown by the Committee's entrusting the initiation of the grand purge in art to the second most important bureaucrat in Russia: Col.-Gen. Andrei Zhdanov, Chairman of the Soviet Union and Secretary of the party's Central Committee.

A week later, on August 21, the lightning strikes.

The ideological front seems to have been weakest in Leningrad, perhaps because Leningrad has always been more "Western" in its outlook than the other great cities, perhaps because it suffered particularly during the war, which forced the bureaucracy to slacken their reins a little. On August 21, therefore, the writers of Leningrad hold a lengthy meeting presided over by the well-known literary man, Col.-Gen. Zhdanov, who expounds his theory of art in an hour-long lecture. He reproves the Leningrad writers for having strayed into "nonpolitical channels, deprived of ideology and principles" and for having "lost the sense of responsibility to their people, State and party." His main positive points are: (a) literature is a duty; (b) this duty consists in repelling "the hideous slanders and attacks against our Soviet culture" and launching hideous slanders and attacks against Western culture (not put quite that way); and (c), which is worth italics and a new paragraph:

"If feudalism and, later on, the bourgeoisie in the period of its flourishing, could create art and literature asserting the new systems . . . then surely our new socialist system, embodying all that is best in the history of human civilization and culture, is capable of creating the most advanced literature, which will leave far behind the best creations of olden times."

(The fact that not only has such a literature not been created, even according to Zhdanov, but that since Stalin's ac-

cession to power in 1929 Soviet art has steadily degenerated in all fields—this suggests to Zhdanov's bureaucratic mind not that his premise may be faulty as to the nature of "our new socialist system" but simply that purges, plans, and directives are urgently needed. Nor is he worried by the fact that twelve years ago the bureaucracy was pointing out precisely the same "contradiction." In *Moscow News* of June 9, 1934, for example, we read: "The brightest hopes of all mankind are being fulfilled in the Soviet Union, where all life is based on the doctrine of socialism. Art is still lagging behind the practice of triumphant socialism. It sees the future very dimly." Purges, plans, directives were showered down on the arts then, with the results Zhdanov sees today. This drying up of all the springs of artistic creation is the surest indication of the real quality of the Soviet social system.)

These contributions of Col.-Gen. Zhdanov to esthetic theory instantly convince the assembled litterateurs of Leningrad, who unanimously pass a number of interminable resolutions restating each of the main points of his lecture, admitting their own lack of culture and taste, pledging themselves to a "merciless fight against ideal-lessness, vulgarity, political aloofness and so-called 'pure art,'" and promising to set about at once creating innumerable poems, plays, novels and essays which would be "high quality artistic work" and would express "the majesty of our victory, the pathos of rehabilitation and Socialist construction, and the heroic deeds of the Soviet people in fulfilling and over-fulfilling the new Stalin five year plan."

But the Central Committee is taking no chances; even before Zhdanov mounts the lecture platform the Leningrad literary world has been purged. On August 20, the day before his lecture, *Culture and Life* publishes an official article (which is reprinted next day on the front page of *Pravda*) announcing that the literary magazine, *Leningrad*, has been suspended, and that a new editor has been appointed for the other leading Leningrad literary organ, *Zvezda*; to make everything doubly sure, this new editor is the vice-chairman of the Central Committee's propaganda department. The former editors of both magazines are castigated for having published the work of two well-known writers: the satirist, Zostchenko, and the romantic poet, Anna Akhmatova. The former's work is "alien to Soviet literature" and "calculated to disorient our youth and poison their minds. He paints the Soviet order and people in a distorted form, libelously describing the Soviet people as primitive, uncultured, foolish people with provincial tastes and morals. Zostchenko's viciously hooligan description of our actual life is accompanied by anti-Soviet attacks." As for Miss Akhmatova: she is "a typical representative of empty, ideal-less poetry, alien to our people," whose work is "saturated" with pessimism, decadence and art for art's sake; it is furthermore harmful to Soviet youth and it "cultivates a spirit of worship of Western bourgeois culture alien to the Soviet people."*

* This repudiation of both realism and art for art's sake suggests that what the bureaucrats are really after is the kind of art that adorns our post-offices and state capitols: virile men, bosomy women, draped in classic robes and bathed in golden light, representing all sorts of serious and worthy ideas with bore the hell out of any one whose eye accidentally lights on them. This in turn suggests that the Russians must be a very patient people. Also that it is impossible for a backward country like Russia to break with Western culture; all the bureaucrats can do is to see that their art workers follow the most primitive forms of that culture.

As for the editors: they forgot they must be guided "by what is the vital foundation of the Soviet system: its political policy." They also forgot that literature "can have no other interests outside of those of the people and the State. The task of Soviet literature consists in helping the State to properly educate youth . . ." (The identification of the people and the State, by the way, may be significant, as is the use of "State" alone in the next sentence. Hitherto the Stalin regime has been embarrassed by the failure of the State to wither away as per Marxian doctrine; it has been silent or apologetic on the subject; now it seems to be losing this shyness.)

Drang Nach Westen

As the purge develops, the anti-foreign theme becomes ominously louder. On September 1, the Central Committee prohibits any further exhibition of plays by Maugham, Pinero, Kaufman and others, rather naively pointing out that such plays have driven Soviet plays off the stage, and that only three of the twenty plays then in the current repertory of the Moscow Art Theatre dealt with contemporary life in Russia. Presenting foreign plays is called "an attempt to poison the conscience of the Soviet people by a conception hostile to Soviet society, to reawaken survivals of capitalism in their minds and in their everyday life." (The grimness of present-day Russian life must be considerable if it takes a police order to get the theatre to put on plays dealing with it, and if plays showing life in Europe and America must be banned lest they awaken desires for capitalism a quarter-century after the revolution.)

The next day, *Pravda* adds some advice: "Plays must reflect the life of Soviet society in its constant movement forward, contributing by all means to the development of the best sides of the character of the Soviet man, which showed themselves with special strength in the Great Patriotic War." (For an index of this special strength, see documents II and III in "The German Experience," elsewhere in this issue.)

On September 8, Tikhonov, president of the Union of Soviet Writers, is dismissed from his post, and Zostchenko and Akhmatova are expelled from the Union. Henceforth only writers may belong to the Union who "stand on a platform of Soviet power and participate in socialist construction"—as stated in paragraph 2 of the Union's charter. The Union also denounces Boris Pasternack's poetry as "apolitical and ideal-less, isolated from the masses of the people."

On September 22, the collegium of the Ministry of Cinematography (such titles, like cannibals wearing top hats, testify to the barbaric level of present Soviet culture) dismisses the editor of *Cinema Arts* from his post, especially criticising his publishing of "Eisenstein's profoundly erroneous formalist article that in essence advocated art for art's sake." (Thus the anti-formalist witch-hunt, which was being prosecuted intensely in the early thirties, is still going on—which is quite a tribute to the vitality of formalism, a term by which is understood in Russia the use of any esthetic devices in producing works of art.)

Izvestia's editorial for the same day, addressed to writers and cinema workers, outdoes all previous efforts:

"Our writers' fighting task is to give a crushing repulse to slanderers attacking Soviet culture and socialism and at the same time castigate the corrupted and corruptive culture of bourgeois society . . . Our culture stands on an immeasurably

higher level than bourgeois culture . . . What can the best representatives of Soviet society, the creators of its culture, learn from the fashionable 'workers' of the modern West and of America—who express merely the moral disintegration and rotting of the capitalist system? Is it not clear that our culture has the right not to act as a pupil and imitator but, on the contrary, to teach others the general human morals?" (For further news of the Russians as teachers of human morals, see documents II and III of "The German Experience," elsewhere in this issue.)

Not even the most world-famous of living Russian artists—whether deservedly so seems to be in question—namely, Shostakovitch, escapes the hunt. His turn comes—as it did once before, in 1936, when Stalin complained that workers couldn't whistle his tunes on the way to work—on October 1, in the official *Culture and Life*. His new Ninth Symphony is held to show that the composer "has not overcome in himself the ironical sceptic," that he lacks "warm ideological conviction" and that he has been influenced by Stravinsky, "an artist without a fatherland, without confidence in the leadership of high ideals and without deep ethical principles." Shostakovitch's Ninth is described as "a respite . . . a temporary forgetting of big serious problems for a playful and fanciful trifle" and he is sternly asked whether this is any time for "a famous artist to take a vacation, a rest from modern problems" in order to imitate the ancient classics with their "joyful rhythms." (The bureaucratic critic never asks himself, of course, *why* Soviet artists want a respite, a vacation, forgetfulness, joy and play; in his naive denunciation, the critic unconsciously reveals the antagonism between the creative temperament and the drudgery ["big serious problems"] the State bureaucracy would impose on it.)

The Moscow radio on October 2 accuses the novelists of America of an "escapist" attitude during the war, contrasting with them the Soviet writers who "spent years at the front helping to defeat the enemy with pen and sometimes gun in hand." Also, wartime American novels were of low quality (quite true), while wartime Russian novels were marked by "high moral quality and profound and important ideas."*

The Eisenstein Tragedy (Continued)

There seems to be a natural hostility, incompatible with the best will on both sides, between modern totalitarianism and artistic creation. Capitalism perverts art or makes its practice more difficult, but totalitarianism simply liquidates it. In a predominantly private-capitalist society like our own, there are crannies in which the artist and intellectual can survive, as well as conflicting forces of which he can take advantage. Frick, the steelmaster, used to sit on a Renaissance throne underneath a Rembrandt reading the *Saturday Evening Post*, but the middleclass intellectuals, for all their economic impotence vis-a-vis Frick, were able to provide an

* Not even the shameless Ilya Ehrenburg dared make such a claim on his recent visit here: "We didn't have time to create literature; we had to defend it." (His secretary added that Ehrenburg had written "about 3,000" articles during the war, which is a solemn thought indeed.) Ehrenburg also had the misfortune not only to praise Pasternack's poetry but even to adduce Pasternack's high literary standing in Russia as proof that art is free there. This was before the Central Committee had spoken, of course. Ehrenburg hastened to adopt The New Hermetism, refusing an invitation to an intellectual congress in Switzerland last month with contemptuous remarks about bourgeois frivolity. Similarly, Prokofieff and Shostakovitch, who had both accepted invitations to conduct their work with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, have cancelled their trip.

audience for Joyce and James and Proust and Eliot. The "contradictions of capitalism," that bourgeois anarchy at which generations of Marxists railed, now turn out in our present ghastly period to have their advantages. For in the kind of society that has developed in Russia, there are no crannies, no contradictions, no conflicting forces—at least none of a growth sturdy enough to give shelter to the artist. There is only one culture, one conception of art, one criterion of taste and achievement; and if, as seems to be fatally the case, the one standard is that of Frick reading the *Satevepost* (without the Rembrandt), then the most dignified way out for the artist is Mayakovsky's.

The best illustration I know of this generalization is the career of Sergei Eisenstein, in my opinion—and not only mine—the greatest master the cinema has yet produced. I have written a good deal about the earlier phases of Eisenstein's tragic career* and anyway the general outlines are well-known. My point here is that Eisenstein has made every possible effort to adapt his talents to the uses required of them; he not only capitulated and kept on capitulating in the most cynical and shameless way, but he actively attacked the esthetic principles on which his great films are founded (see his book, *The Film Sense*, published over here in 1942) and lent his prestige to such political maneuvers as the N. Y. *Times* of February 19, 1940, reported, during the Nazi-Soviet pact: "Sergei Eisenstein, one of the most prominent Soviet film directors, today launched a Soviet-German cultural cooperation program over the Comintern Radio Station. Broadcasting especially to Germany, Mr. Eisenstein said that friendly Russian-German relations established last year formed a solid basis 'for increased cultural cooperation between the two great peoples.'"

The tremendous significance of Eisenstein's post-1929 career is that, in spite of all his efforts to produce the kind of art the bureaucracy wanted, he has been unable to do so. Between his last great film, *Old and New*, which appeared in 1929 just as the Stalin regime was consolidating its power, and the present, he has begun numerous projects which have come to nothing, has done a first draft of one film, *Bezbin Meadow*, which was destroyed by the authorities before it was publicly exhibited, and has completed just two films: *Alexander Nevsky* (1938) and the first part of a projected trilogy, *Ivan the Terrible* (1946). I have seen *Nevsky*, and it is my judgement that it is a bad movie, and for reasons directly connected with the politics of the Kremlin; it seemed to me at the time "a static kind of masque or pageant, slow-paced, devoid of any content other than a poster-like kind of patriotism, and quite conventional in its cinematic technique." Montage, the basic principle of cinema, which in the twenties Eisenstein, Pudovkin, Dovzenko and the other Russian directors took over from D. W. Griffith and made the cornerstone of their art, in *Nevsky* has degenerated to a Hollywood level; the film has become again simply a photographed stage play. *Ivan* sounds like the same kind of thing, from the accounts of it in *Time* (April 1) and *Les Temps Modernes* (June).

The reasons why the Russian bureaucracy objected to montage, which is an expression of "formalist" tendencies in the cinema, are too complex to go into here; the curious are

WELL DONE, THOU GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT!

LAST winter Michael Ivanovitch Kalinin died. He was a mediocrity who for many years successfully filled the post of President of the Soviet Union. His success was due to two qualities (aside from his mediocrity): (1) he looked like a typical peasant, and (2) he knew how to keep his mouth shut.

According to the July 2 issue of "Trud," the organ of the All-Union Central Council of Soviet Trade Unions, the Council of Ministers has decreed that the following measures shall be taken to keep green the memory of Michael Ivanovitch Kalinin:

1. Erect monuments to Michael Ivanovitch Kalinin in Moscow, Leningrad, and Kalinin.
2. Change the names of
 - (a) Königsberg to Kaliningrad, and Königsberg Province to Kalinin Province;
 - (b) Krasnogvardeiskiy district of Leningrad to Kalinin district;
 - (c) Krasnopakhorsky district of Moscow Province to Kalinin district;
 - (d) Kolpinsky district of Tallinn to Kalinin district.
3. Give the name of Michael Ivanovitch Kalinin to
 - (a) the Tallinn locomotive repair shops (where Kalinin worked in exile), which henceforth shall be known as the Michael Ivanovitch Kalinin Tallinn Locomotive Repair Shops;
 - (b) the Altai tractor works in Rubtsovsk, which henceforth shall be known as the Michael Ivanovitch Kalinin Altai Tractor Works;
 - (c) the machinery plant in Podolsk, in the Moscow district, which henceforth shall be known as the Michael Ivanovitch Kalinin Podolsk Machinery Plant.
4. Give the name of Michael Ivanovitch Kalinin to
 - (a) the Higher Military Pedagogical Institute, which henceforth shall be known as the Michael Ivanovitch Kalinin Higher Military Pedagogical Institute;
 - (b) the Second Guards Rifle Tamansky Red Banner Division of the Order of Suvorov, which shall henceforth be known as the Michael Ivanovitch Kalinin Second Guards Rifle Tamansky Red Banner Division of the Order of Suvorov.
5. Publish in 1947-8
 - (a) the complete works of Michael Ivanovitch Kalinin;
 - (b) the authorized biography of Michael Ivanovitch Kalinin;
 - (c) an artistic album depicting the life and work of Michael Ivanovitch Kalinin.

(It is the duty of the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute to prepare the materials and to publish the works of Michael Ivanovitch Kalinin.)
6. Change the name of Vozdvizhenka Street in Moscow to Kalinin Street.
7. Establish 40 Michael Ivanovitch Kalinin scholarships of 500 rubles each, supplementary to the existing ones, for outstanding students in the following institutions: the Lomonosov State University in Moscow (10); the Timiryazev Agricultural Academy (15); the Michael Ivanovitch Kalinin State Pedagogical Institute in Kalinin (5); the Lenin Institute of Railroad Transport Engineers in Tiflis (4); the Polytechnical Institute in Tallinn (3); the Kazak State University (3).
8. Create a Michael Ivanovitch Kalinin Museum in Moscow, reflecting the life and work of Michael Ivanovitch Kalinin.
9. Instruct the Executive Committees of the Moscow and Leningrad Municipal Councils, the Executive Committees of the Moscow and Kalinin Provincial Councils, and the Council of Ministers of the Georgian and Estonian Soviet Socialist Republics to set up memorial plaques on all buildings connected with the life and work of Michael Ivanovitch Kalinin.

referred to my articles in PR. The point is they did object, and Eisenstein complied, but with the result that he completed only two poor films in almost twenty years, and the further result that he has been in difficulties with the authorities throughout most of the period. Most of the other talented artists in Russia have also tried hard to follow party directives; their attempt has not succeeded, any more than his, in avoiding constant harassment. I suggest that one difficulty is simply that they are men of talent—that is, conscious, per-

* See the three-part study, "The Soviet Cinema, 1930-1938" in *Partisan Review* for July, 1938; August-September, 1938; and Winter, 1939. Also: "The Eisenstein Tragedy," *Partisan Review*, November-December, 1942.

ceptive, experimental, mentally alive individuals — and so threaten Stalin's bureaucracy despite their earnest wish not to.

Another difficulty is that serious artists, especially in a still primitive country like Russia, naturally are influenced by the ideas and techniques of more advanced countries. There is a spontaneous internationalism about good art. The current campaign against "alien" Western influences is the most extreme but by no means the first such since 1929. As I noted in 1939: "It was precisely this international character of the Eisenstein cinema that most alarmed the Kremlin. If the masses are to accept the present totalitarian dictatorship as a fully realized socialist society, they must be cut off from contact with more advanced cultures. And so, in the last ten years, the Soviet Union has been slowly isolated . . . This campaign is designed to reinforce, not to combat, those characteristic defects of backward cultures: provincial smugness, the ignorant acceptance of inferior, banal art forms as 'healthy' and 'normal,' and a corresponding suspicion of more advanced forms. This is what, esthetically, the theory of 'Socialism In One Country,' has meant." There is an added motive today: to prepare for war against the West, and a war in which the Soviet Union will be alone except for a few small satellite nations. In the "collective security" period and after Germany had attacked her in 1941, Russia looked on the Western powers as allies, potential and then actual. Her cultural policy, therefore, could not reach the degree of hermetism it is now attaining. Eisenstein made *Nevsky* in 1938 and *Ivan* was projected and largely finished during the war period. For all its faults, the former is a sophisticated film, and extremely "formalistic" in the stylization of costumes, acting and setting and in the elaborate composition of each individual shot. It is not at all the sort of home-grown provincial film—a blend of stodgy realism and naive melodrama—we generally get from Russia these days. When *Culture and Life*, therefore, criticises *Ivan the Terrible* for its "failure to portray contemporary reality" and its "cold and passionless historicism" and calls for fewer films about literary and historical figures and more about "the simple Soviet people who are the real creators of history," one can assume that even a Soviet editor would not criticize a historical film for not dealing with contemporary life, and that what is meant is that the stylized, ornate technique of the film is now considered "formalistic," "decadent" and "Western." It is also just possible that Eisenstein took advantage of the historical pageant to escape from that Contemporary Reality which both Russian artists and audiences seem to wish to forget. This suggests in turn another speculation, which there is no space to develop, namely: why is it that the dominant classes in America feed the masses dreams, romance, "escape" culture while their peers in Russia adopt just the opposite policy, although both have the same end in view?

WITH THE MARXICOLOGISTS: Padded Cell Dept.

In the sitdown strikes of 1935-7, the American workingclass demonstrated that it was striving to raise itself to the level of the tasks imposed upon it by history, that is to say, to create a socialist society. Since that time, it has moved with gigantic strides until today in its most advanced sections it challenges the bourgeois ideas of production, distribution and exchange on a national scale and backs up these conceptions with a many-millions strike. This unprecedented radicalization of a giant workingclass . . . No revolutionary today can deny the possibility that two years from today the American proletariat could cover the nation with soviets.

—James R. Johnson, in the "Bulletin" of the Workers Party, Feb. 28, 1946.

Office of Facts and Figures

A billion and a half dollars is a lot of money. It is, for example, what the women of the USA spent last spring for new Easter hats and dresses. It is also, for example, \$150,000,000 more than the total US contribution to UNRRA for the year 1946.

The National Urban League reports that in the city of New York there are 300 Negro painters, 260 Negro carpenters, 22 Negro licensed electricians, 6 Negro plumbers, and 2 Negro plasterers. Progressives will be pleased to know that the New York building trades are almost 100% unionized.

The Parisian paper, Le Monde, of March 8 last, states that captured documents now in the hands of the French authorities reveal that during the occupation 240,000 French men and women applied for German citizenship. No reliable figures exist as to how many actively took part in the Resistance, but 240,000 would be a generous estimate.

With the above, cf. the U. S. Army estimate of the number of Japanese citizens imprisoned on political charges during the war. The figure is one million (1,000,000). (N. Y. Times Dec. 21, 1945.)

Papers have been filed in the Surrogate's Court in Poughkeepsie, N. Y., in connection with transfer taxes on the estate of a lately deceased local citizen. His name: Franklin Delano Roosevelt. The gross valuation of his estate: \$1,821,887.

The vital statistics on the Nuremberg "War-Guilt" Trials are as follows:

Days consumed	284
Words spoken	5,000,000
Record (no. pages)	15,000
Original documents	3,000
Affidavits	300,000
Propaganda value	0
Justice done	0

On August 3, Dr. Gallup's investigators asked the American people: "What do you think will be the most important problem facing this country during the next year?" 87% of the answers put some domestic problem first (inflation, food shortage, housing, etc.); 10% put first "maintenance of peace and conducting foreign affairs"; 3% put first the atom bomb. These answers indicate that, as this journal has frequently maintained, Americans are still a provincial people, inadequate for either world empire, world government or international socialism.

Konigsberg in East Prussia was founded in 1255; the last nine kings of Prussia were crowned there; it is the "holy city" of Prussian junkerdom. Its present name: Kaliningrad.

When King George II landed on Greek soil, returning from exile, the press recorded for history his first words. They were: "For the latter part of September, you are having fine weather, aren't you?"

Some Notes on Soviet Science

MOST of the science news from present day Russia is as wonderful as Paul De Kruif's medical articles in *Reader's Digest*, as familiar to the American ear as a Hearst Sunday Supplement article. The accent on thrills, on the incredible, is the same. Medical magic restores dead dogs and dead men to life. Soldiers wounded in highly important organs are brought back by skilled surgery to their duties of increasing the population of the Fatherland. A serum called ACS is rumored to be a potential cure of cancer, as well as a means of nudging every citizen past the century mark. Hearts and other vital organs are shuffled around among various animals with the enthusiastic abandon of a schoolboy working on a fly. Finally, Professor Konstantin Bykov has received the Stalin Prize—which includes an award of several thousand rubles—for conditioning a dog's heart so that it beat faster when a bugle is blown. At first adrenalin was injected into a dog whenever he heard the notes of a bugle. Later, the blaring bugle alone would cause the dog's heart to beat faster and his blood pressure to rise. The next step seems obvious enough. Professor Bykov has only to condition a Soviet citizen in the same manner, substituting one of David Zaslavsky's editorials for the notes of the bugle.

Another important aspect of this sudden flood of scientific news out of Russia is the enthusiastic reports of a great many leading British and American scientists on science in the Soviet Union. In 1941, according to a report on Soviet medicine recently published in the American journal *Science* (published by the American Association for the Advancement of Science) there were 223 separate Institutes for medical research in the Soviet Union. These Institutes employed 19,000 scientific workers. And now that the war is over, the scientific budget of the government has been increased, and new institutes are being created, not only in medicine, but in atomic physics, and many branches of applied science. Scientists in Russia are awarded prizes which bring with them tens of thousands of rubles. They are awarded leading political positions. The enthusiasm of the younger workers is extreme, and visiting scientific firemen are given hearty receptions. Such a public appreciation of science is particularly dazzling to American scientists who are accustomed to public honor only when they serve as front men for large corporations or construct the more universally lethal of our war weapons.

Nevertheless the evidence indicates that science in the Soviet Union, like all aspects of Soviet culture, is merely a pistol pointed at the head of the enemy of the moment. Sometimes the enemy is fascism, sometimes the massive forces of Finnish imperialism, and sometimes the rigors of the Russian climate, which forbids the raising of five crops a year.

Russian science has also succumbed to the intense wave of nationalism which has engulfed Russia during and since the Great Patriotic War. Russian priority in many scientific fields is coming to light, just as the hidden virtues of such nature's noblemen as Ivan the Terrible are being uncovered. Perhaps the recent religious tolerance of the Soviet government has made the Russian people more susceptible to Chinese ancestor worship. If we are to believe a press release from VOKS (published by the USSR Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries) which was reprinted in the February 15th issue of *Science*, "For two centuries, Russian scholars, inventors, engineers, and talented, self-taught scientists created the bases for modern electrification." The report goes on to

claim that—among others—the lightning rod, the searchlight, the electric motor, and the transformer were given to an ungrateful world by Russian genius. Radio was the "inspired invention" of A. S. Popov, while radio broadcasting was invented by M. A. Bonch-Bruевич in 1920.

Another indication of the fierce attachment of the Russians for a national past that they are rapidly creating for themselves, is contained in the March 29th issue of *Science*. J. G. Tolpin writes a letter which announces that the newly founded Institute of the History of Natural Science in the USSR is prepared to begin a program of publication. The only three historical journals Mr. Tolpin mentions by name are the projected *History of Russian Natural Science*, *Outstanding Leaders of Russian Science*, and *Great Contributors to Russian Science*.

In spite of huge budgets and a plethora of jobs, Soviet scientists are as subject to occupational hazards—which usually involve disappearances and sudden death—as the characters in a Punch and Judy show. Typical cases involving mine-run scientists may be found in an article which Philip E. Mosely wrote for the November, 1938 issue of the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. In ethnography, for example, Prigozhin was the "leader of a terrorist band." An ethnographer named Zelenin was denounced for having a book published in pre-Hitler Germany. Bogayevsky had "attributed class antagonisms to Cretan society, which Marxism classified as a pre-class society." Nikolsky, Tolstov, and Meshchaninov "underestimated the duration of tribal society in the history of mankind." And Motorin, Busygin, and anonymous others were denounced for having attempted to "liquidate ethnography as a science."

One of the most remarkably favorable presses of all Soviet scientific achievements has been received by Alexander A. Bogomoletz, the noted Soviet student of longevity who died in July of this year at the age of 65. He was regarded as the discoverer of the magical ACS which has been variously reported as able to keep the body tissues from growing old, helping prevent cancer and infections, and hastens the healing of injuries to the body tissues. But as Anton J. Carlson, noted physiologist and last year's head of the American Association for the Advancement of Science has said, "all the claims for this serum are still on trial." Carlson, in a review of Bogomoletz' book, *The Prolongation of Life*, in the July 21 issue of the *Chicago Sun* has further accused Bogomoletz of many contradictions in his theory and places him in the long line of Slavic life-extenders which includes Metchnikoff of Bulgarian buttermilk fame, and Voronoff and his monkey testicles. And one skeptical American student of the Russian scene has suggested that Bogomoletz was not as interested in prolonging human life in general, as he was in discovering a way in which the life of one man, Josef Stalin, could be prolonged.

Case History: The Genetics Row

Since 1936, Russian genetics has been in the throes of one long theoretical convulsion, a convulsion which by and large has been hidden from bourgeois eyes. There was a time when Russian geneticists attended international congresses of their fellows. Scientists admitted that Vavilov, the leading Russian geneticist, was a figure of world importance for his researches into the origin and development of food plants. He had culti-

vated more than 35,000 different kinds of wheat, for example, and shown that civilization depended upon food plants that came from Southwestern Asia and Ethiopia.

A world meeting of geneticists was scheduled to meet in Moscow in 1937. Then, according to Robert Simpson writing in the *Saturday Review of Literature*, the invitation was suddenly withdrawn. The Englishman, P. C. Koller, writing in *Science*, reports that no Russian geneticists attended the Sixth International Congress of Genetics which was held in Edinburgh in 1939, even though a large delegation was expected to attend. And even after World War II, Russian geneticists did not attend the London Conference on Genetics. And this in spite of the fact that Vavilov had been elected, *in absentia*, president of the 1939 congress.

So much is agreed by all authorities. But what has been going on in Russian genetics has only been understood by piecemeal interpretation. Mosely, for example, reports a struggle between the followers of Vavilov and the followers of a younger man named Lysenko. Early in 1936 Lysenko opened the battle against Vavilov by attacking the geneticist A. S. Serebrovsky. By 1937 Lysenko had denounced Vavilov himself. The charges flew fast once they were started. The geneticist Yagol was arrested in 1937 as a fascist agent. Serebrovsky followed the formula by recanting his "counter-revolutionary and unscientific" ideas. In October, 1937 the *Bolshevik* began to review the "cleansing" of the "genetics front". It was discovered that the *Journal of Biological Reference* had been edited by the "fascist agent in Soviet biology, M. Levin".

Meantime, Lysenko, although he had received a tepid reproof toward the beginning of his campaign, advanced rapidly. Simpson reports that Lysenko now heads the Lenin All-Union Academy of Agricultural Science, which was created for his special benefit. He is a deputy to the Supreme Soviet, a member of the commission investigating German war crimes. He has received the Order of Lenin with its valuable money prize. His books sell in the millions.

Part of Lysenko's rise has been due to researches on plants that have been reported to be of great practical importance. He developed the process of vernalization or yarovisation—which was originally discovered by the American John M. Klippart about 90 years ago. By treating wheat seed with moisture, and varying the amounts of light which fell upon it, Lysenko was able to change winter wheat to spring wheat, and vice versa. The treatment with light was based upon the work that two American botanists, Allard and Garner, had done on "long day" and "short day" plants. The Russians have reported that vernalization increased wheat yields considerably. They say that four or five crops of spring wheat a year can be grown by applying Lysenko's principles. Simpson reports that attempts to use Lysenko's principles outside the Soviet Union have met with little success.

Another step in Lysenko's campaign came in 1939. In the *American Journal of Heredity* J. W. Pincus reviews the report of a conference held in early March in Moscow, on the subject of plant breeding. Lysenko seems to have completely dominated the conference, which was reported under the title of *Under the Banner of Darwin*. Lysenko pointed out that there were two distinct trends in Russian genetics. One followed Mendel's theories, and held that environmental conditions do not essentially change an organism. The other followed Darwin and recognized that the environment could change the nature of the organism and the characteristics it passed on to its descendants. As far as Lysenko is concerned, Mendel's law that second generation hybrids segregate in a ratio of 3 to 1 as far as their characteristics are concerned is completely false.

At this conference, Vavilov presented the standard, world-accepted scientific statements of the principles of heredity as

they have been worked out by Darwin, Mendel, Thomas Hunt Morgan, and others. He was supported by another scientist who pointed out that all Russian varieties of wheat had been developed by these accepted methods. But his cause—and the cause of what is generally considered world science—was already defeated before the conference began.

Lysenko's associate, Prezent, was quick to attack Vavilov's ideas. He ridiculed the Mendelian theory as "Three like mama and one like papa, or three like papa and one like mama." Prezent concluded the debate by pointing out that there were two Americas. They are the "America of the drosophilist Morgan and the America of the Creator of Varieties—Burbank. While Vavilov is for the America of Morgan, we, Darwinists, are for the America of Burbank."

There is, of course, only one trouble with Lysenko's appeal to Darwin. There is nothing in Darwinism to indicate the environment can permanently change the nature of the organism. On the contrary, such ideas were held by the biologist Lamarck, whose evolutionary theory was overthrown by Darwin. The second year student in American high schools can explain the fallacies of Lamarck's theories.

Lysenko won the dispute hands down. Vavilov, like so many millions in the Soviet Union, simply disappeared. Vladimir C. Asmou, writing a letter in the March 1, 1946 issue of *Science* says, "We now have reliable information that Vavilov died in a concentration camp in Siberia in 1942." (The Russians have been so contemptuous of world scientific opinion that they have seen no need for either confirming or denying the report.)

Americans have had an opportunity to examine Lysenko's ideas at first hand with the publication of his book *Heredity and Its Variability*. There are three reviews of this book before me as I write this. One is by Waldemar Kaempffert, science editor of the *New York Times*, who first began writing about the Lysenko-Vavilov controversy as far back as 1939. Another is by L. C. Dunn, Professor of Zoology at Columbia, Chairman of the American Soviet Science Society who writes in *Science*. The last is by Robert Simpson in the *Saturday Review of Literature*. All three reviews are in complete agreement: Lysenko runs completely counter to all known facts about breeding.

Kaempffert points out that Lysenko derives his ideas from Mitchurin "a sort of Burbank." It was Mitchurin whom Lysenko quotes as having invented the term "pea law" for Mendelian science. More in sorrow than in anger Dunn points out that Lysenko is a sort of "biological fundamentalist." This is putting it mildly. Scientists believe that no matter how—with a few exceptions, such as X-rays and the drug colchicine—an organism is affected by the environment, the offspring of the organism will not be affected. No matter how many generations of rats have their tails cut off, the stubborn offspring make their bow into the world equipped with tails. Russian geneticists hold that this sad state of affairs must be combatted; it demands, to quote one of Lysenko's chapter headings, "The Liquidation of the Conservatism of the Nature of Organisms."

What explanation is there for Lysenko? A few solutions may be suggested; in the first place he is an ideal citizen of a society that has a complete contempt for theory in favor of practical results. Lysenko as a Darwinist is just as plausible and consistent as Hitler as a practising member of the Chasidim. But Russian leaders, Russian theoreticians, would be perfectly willing to teach that the moon was made of green cheese if it would add five bushels to the average annual yield of wheat per acre. Once the state apparatus is under tight control any idea can be made to be believed. Which makes pathetic and naive Dunn's remark that Lysenko represents a "small

minority group." The fate of small minority groups in the Soviet Union is not that of honors and publication.

But the men who condemn theory, still realize that theory is valuable as a window dressing. They were not, for example, willing to expose Lysenko's *epigone* Lamarckism to the give-and-take of an international congress. The reception might not be favorable; the delegates could not be forced to keep one eye on the agenda, the other on the Lubianka.

There is one other reason why a totalitarian bureaucracy would like to believe that the effects of the environment might be inherited. Perhaps—we can almost see the hopeful gleam in the bureaucrat's eye—it will be only necessary to conduct one purge, eliminate the enemies that belong to a single generation or two. Once an entire population can be brought up in blind worship of the leader, the children will grow up docile creatures of the state. And it must be remembered that all through the twenties and thirties, the single prize jewel of Russian science was the "conditioned reflex" of Pavlov, a method by which growls and purrs in the government press could be expected to create desired actions in the population.

But there is one fundamental difference in lying about history, or politics, economics, and art, and in lying about science. In lying about the former topics, the results are not immediately fatal to large numbers of people. But scientific facts cannot be ignored and distorted without running an immediate and practical danger. When history is invented, only the dead are slandered, only the living subjected to false ideas. Lies can be piled upon lies indefinitely. But when the facts of genetics are ignored in a country with a rapidly expanding population, somebody is going to starve.

According to Simpson, Lysenko's triumph meant that the carefully-conducted plant breeding experiments of Vavilov have been abandoned. Instead, the agricultural experiment stations are concentrating upon grafting experiments in order to change the fundamental nature of plants. World genetics and Russian genetics cannot be both right. Chances are that we need merely to sit back and wait for the opening blast in *Pravda* followed by months of detailed denunciation, which will remove Lysenko from the Russian scene.

GEORG MANN

PERISH-THE-THOUGHT DEPT.

The New Postwar PM you've heard talked about will be a more complete—and a better, stronger—PM than we've ever been able to get out before. It will be more like PM than PM itself!

—editorial by Ralph Ingersoll in "PM," May 6.

AT LAST—A REVOLUTION!

Unnoticed in the steady flow of European political crises, the French Constituent Assembly has adopted, without debate or opposition, a law which ends all government-regulated brothels next October. . . . This is a veritable revolution in French attitudes.

—Worldover Press report, July 17.

OH WELL, YOU CAN'T HAVE EVERYTHING!

The Tabun gases are blood and nerve poisons. . . . Exposure to a high concentration causes instant death. It is capable of penetrating the skin and causing death by systemic poisoning. . . . The disadvantages of this new gas are several: it can be easily washed or removed from the skin with no danger if done promptly; contaminated surfaces are easily cleaned. . . .

—Hanson W. Baldwin in "N. Y. Times," July 5.

PROGRESS IN COLOMBIA

With unprecedented speed, the Colombian government has been driving through a significant set of social laws which promise to aid the masses in their everyday life. . . . Another basic law obliges every citizen to vote in all elections under various penalties which include, in some cases, imprisonment.

—Worldover Press report, July 17.

Comment

The Seamen's Strike

The greatest maritime strike in U. S. history ended on September 12. For the week it lasted, hardly an American-flag ship moved out of any U. S. port. Some 90,000 members of AFL maritime unions were directly involved, but the refusal everywhere of the CIO maritime unions as well as the tugboatmen and longshoremen to cross picket lines brought the total workers idle to some 500,000. There was no violence; neither the shipowners nor the Government made any attempt to sail the struck ships; "token" picket lines of one or two men to a pier were sufficient to close down all operations. When one adds that it was a strike against the Government and that it ended in complete victory for the unions, one might conclude that it was of enormous political significance. It was, but not in the class-struggle sense. Rather in the same way that the business community's offensive against OPA is significant: as part of the clash between "free enterprise" capitalism and State capitalism.

Early in July, the two AFL unions—the Seafarers' International Union (SIU) and the Sailors' Union of the Pacific (SUP)—negotiated a new wage scale with the shipowners; this scale was higher than the new scale the CIO maritime unions had gotten a few weeks earlier. The shipowners then joined the unions in asking the Wage Stabilization Board (WSB) to approve the new scale. The WSB is to labor what the OPA is to business: a Government agency that is supposed to hold down prices (in this case, the price of labor) so as to prevent inflation. On August 24, the WSB ruled that it would approve wages for the AFL unions up to the level obtained by the CIO unions, but no higher. When the WSB stood pat on this ruling, the strike was called.

U. S. Labor and "Free Enterprise"

The strike was novel in that the employers, after their lobbyists in Washington had unsuccessfully tried to get the WSB to permit the payment of *higher* wages, stood firmly behind the strikers throughout the strike. What united capital and labor against the Government was the fact that the ideology of both in this country still is more "Free Enterprise" than "Statist." The sailors were proud that they got their wage rise without any help from the State; and all the more indignant when the State tried to take it away. "We negotiated directly with the ship operators—there was no Government in the picture," declared John Hawk, of the SIU. "The board's refusal to sanction legitimately-won increases throws the whole thing out." "This type of action, if allowed to continue," warned the SIU journal, "will destroy free collective bargaining, and at the same time foster dangerous Government control of unions and industry." While John L. Lewis, the greatest Free Enterpriser of them all, rumbled that he had advised the AFL "to withdraw from that economic boar's nest that calls itself the Wage Stabilization Board."

The boar's nest was certainly in a tough spot. If it permitted the new rates, how could it deny other increases, which it foresaw would be demanded at once, beginning with the CIO maritime unions? Its function would then be meaningless. But on the other hand, as Chairman Wirtz of the board had admitted on June 29, the Government's wage stabilization policy was directly linked to its price stabilization policy. OPA is hardly a bad joke any more; real wages are estimated to have declined between 10 and 20% (depending on the politics of

the calculator) in the past year; the price index rose 8 points from June to August 15, and since then—to judge from my own personal shopping experience—has gone up even faster. There was thus no basis in equity for the WSB's firm stand.

There was even less basis in practical politics. When unions and employers go on strike together against "bureaucracy," and when the strike gets complete support from all the workers in the industry, then one might have thought even the Truman Administration would have seen that the seamen could not be denied their raise. Because this administration is composed of provincial mediocrities without ideas or principles, it is often assumed they must be "practical politicians." But it is quite possible to have no ideas and also to be extremely impractical, as the Wallace speech episode showed. The handling of the seamen's strike was an earlier illustration.

Prodded by the strike, the WSB reviewed the case. On the sixth day of nationwide paralysis of shipping, the board . . . reaffirmed its original ruling. "Willard W. Wirtz, chairman of the board and 34-year-old former law teacher at Northwestern University, calmly told reporters: 'No further action is contemplated by this board; there is no appeal from this decision.'" The "calmly" is magnificent; King Canute could not have done better. Wirtz's stand is in the tradition of Gary and Girdler—and it is notable that the Garys of today are young law professors in government jobs. However, even Truman could see that calm was not quite enough. The following day, in one of those lightning reversals for which his administration is becoming notorious, his brain-truster, Steelman, the Stabilization Director (without consulting, or even informing, Chairman Wirtz) overruled the WSB and granted the seamen their raise.

Three-Cornered Struggle When Truman personally intervened to break the railroad strike last Spring, Marxists concluded, no doubt with a sigh of relief, that we were back on familiar ground. After the confusing New Deal and wartime interludes, the Government was coming out in its true colors as "the executive committee of the bourgeoisie." And when Truman went on to demand legislation permitting the President to draft strikers into the armed forces and jail them if they refused to return to work, the Marxists' suspicions became certainty. (It does not take much to bring certainty to a Marxist.) The bourgeoisie, however, reacted to this proposal of their executive committee most peculiarly. Senator Taft at once mobilized his Republican colleagues in a successful fight against the striker-draft bill; the AFL and CIO were joined in opposition by the National Association of Manufacturers; even the railroad managements turned against Truman. In a word, the issue was not class struggle but rather Statism, and on that issue capital and labor made common cause.

The same thing happened several times during the war. When, for example, Roosevelt in June, 1943, asked for an amendment to the Selective Service Act to "enable us to induct into military service all persons who engage in strikes . . . in plants in the possession of the U. S.," the proposal was denounced by both *The Daily Worker* and *The Wall Street Journal*, while Henry Wallace and President Mosher of the NAM made remarks about "fascism." In the first issue of this magazine (February, 1944), apropos another unsuccessful Roosevelt move towards Statism—this time his proposal for conscription of all labor during the war—I noted that it was not "just a question of weakening the unions. It is significant that both the U. S. Chamber of Commerce and the NAM are opposed to a national labor draft. Business evidently fears the strengthening of State control even more than it welcomes a blow at unionism."

The Federal Government under Truman, as under Roosevelt and, I venture to predict, under future presidents, plays a more complex role than "executive committee of the bourgeoisie." It is to an increasing extent an independent force, sometimes mediating between capital and labor, sometimes throwing its weight behind one or the other as its own advantage seems to indicate, and always attempting to extend the sphere of its authority. Thus Truman last spring (after his earlier pressure on the auto and steel industry on behalf of the strikers) broke the railroad strike and made elaborate preparations to call out the Navy and the Coast Guard to break the CIO maritime strike if it had materialized. Two months later, not a word is heard about using the Navy to break the AFL maritime strike, and the Government capitulates completely after a week. These shifts in policy come from the differences in specific situations, and—when considered in conjunction with the Government's persistent efforts to get more control over both unions and industry—indicate a three-cornered conflict between capital, labor and Government rather than the two-party class struggle.

The F. D. R. of the Pampas When the new Argentine ambassador in Washington recently described President Peron, as "struggling for the same democratic principles which were found on the banner of President Roosevelt," many an honest liblab was shocked. Was not Peron a ruthless dictator, pro-Nazi during the war, and the boss of a military clique which has extinguished Argentinian democracy? Did not *The Nation* excommunicate him in a special supplement this spring? How come this blasphemy?

Yet the ambassador was telling the truth, as much as any diplomat does. As I have noted, the old left-right categories don't seem to work very well; and, as I also noted several years ago apropos the curious "Bolivian pattern," they are especially fuzzy in Latin America, where fascist-minded military men have been leading the workers in nationalist revolt against *Yanqui* imperialism. Peron is not a liberal (and it is doubtful if FDR was, either) but he is certainly a Progressive. His followers call themselves the *descamisados* (shirtless ones), which is reasonably close to *sansculottes*. When he was elected President last winter in a scrupulously honest election by the biggest majority in Argentine history, it was the workers and poor farmers who backed him, and the businessmen and rich landlords who backed his "liberal" opponent. Although the Communists and Socialists had elected deputies before, in that election they failed to elect a single one; the masses were all for Peron. Like Roosevelt, he has a wife who travels around making political speeches, receives trade union delegations before breakfast, tirelessly agitates for social reform, and is an ardent feminist who may soon become Latin America's first Secretary of Labor. Like Roosevelt, he is going in for a little quiet rigging of the Supreme Court, four of whose justices are currently being impeached by his majority in the Chamber of Deputies. Since his election, dictator Peron has parodied Roosevelt—or, more frequently, gone far beyond him—in many other ways. Specifically, he has:

—reduced prices on such workingclass staples as bread, sugar, spaghetti and cooking oil.

—kicked out the heads of the Sociedad Rural (stronghold of the landed aristocracy) and the Industrial Union (ditto of big business) and put in his own men.

—done the same with the Stock Exchange. (He refers publicly to "those five hundred bums in the Stock Exchange.")

—nationalized the Central Bank of Argentina, solemnly observing: "Countries of recognized liberal tradition have commenced to adopt nationalization and understand that it is nec-

essary to place general interests above the antagonistic interests of private interests." His immediate motive: to get unlimited funds for his military program, which comes to half the total budget.

—nationalized the newsprint industry (as a club over the newspapers).

—backed the great strike last March of packing-house workers.

—resumed diplomatic relations with Russia, after 28 years of non-recognition.

—issued decrees putting the entire banking system directly under the nationalized Central Bank, which controls their loans, fixes rediscount rates. It is estimated this will cut bank profits at least 50% and may drive out of the country foreign banks like the National City Bank.

—put through the Chamber a bill to buy out, for \$95 millions, the Argentinian subsidiary of the International Telephone and Telegraph Co.

—arranged with Britain to set up a mixed Argentine-British company, under Argentine control, to take over the great network of British-owned railroads. At the signing of the treaty, Peron promised that before his six-year term as President ends, "not an inch of soil nor a breath of air" in Argentina will fail to belong to the Argentine people; he made it clear he proposed for the State to take over not only all foreign-owned enterprises but also most privately-owned big business.

It is not surprising that the liberal journalist, Carleton Beals, should write in a recent issue of *The Progressive*: "In spirit and practice, I should say that Argentina, at the moment, is probably the most 'democratic' country in Latin America." One could hardly expect a liberal to perceive that when such measures are taken by such a leader, the conclusion should be not that his regime is democratic but rather that the commonly accepted notion of democracy needs re-examination.

The Squatters Become News

A week after George Woodcock's London Letter arrived, the British Communists moved in on the squatters' movement. Our press, which had ignored the movement until then, was instantly filled with news about it. The impression given was that the movement was organized and led by the Commies; but in fact, as Woodcock's letter shows, it began spontaneously last spring and had spread to nation-wide proportions months before the comrades muscled in. With their usual flair for publicity—which means understanding the lack of imagination of big-circulation editors—the Commies took a movement which was not "news" so long as it was only a messy, sprawling, disorganized series of actions by tens of thousands of uninteresting ordinary families in various undramatic parts of England—took it, and made it front-page "copy" by a few dramatic seizures of London luxury apartment buildings. To them, then, all credit—for showmanship.

The London demonstrations were executed in the Communist style: with smooth organization, tight discipline—and no regard for the interests of the squatters. They began with the capture of the Duchess of Bedford House, about to reopen at rentals of \$42 a week up. "As if by magic, nearly 2,000 people from all sections of London started gathering on Kensington High Street in the fashionable West End. At 2 o'clock sharp they moved en masse toward the Duchess of Bedford House. They gained possession quickly, and took nine other buildings of varying sizes in the exclusive neighborhood." (*N. Y. Times*, Sept. 14). The very next day, the Government, delighted to have a popular excuse for cracking down, denounced the Communists as factionalists seeking political capital (which they were) and—for the first time since the movement began last

May—dared to begin legal action. On September 17, the courts issued orders for eviction. The Communists gave up the fight instantly: they had milked dry the publicity, and from then on there could only be difficulties. The following day, therefore, the demonstration was deflated with the speed (and dignity) of a pricked balloon. The impresarios issued new "directives," and the supers trudged obediently off the stage, many of them no doubt bewildered and resentful, but helpless once they were deserted by the leaders in whose competent hands they had foolishly left their cause. "As swiftly, but far less dramatically than it began, the London squatters' movement collapsed today . . . The capable organizing talent of the British Communist Party, so evident in the seizing of the buildings last week, was absent this afternoon as the squatters struggled out of the buildings with their few belongings to seek new shelters." (*N. Y. Times*, Sept. 19).

Mr. Bevan and Property Rights

Ironically, the cabinet minister who has had to cope with the squatters' movement is Aneurin Bevan who was all through the war the fiery spokesman of the extreme left wing of the Labor Party. (His American analogue is Walter Reuther, whom he resembles both in his Progressive ideology and his opposition to the Commies.) As Minister of Health, Bevan is responsible for the housing program. Forced to go easy for months because of the great public sympathy for the squatters, Bevan felt he could cut loose once the Communists entered the picture. His reaction, as seems always to be the case when these much-advertised Progressives get into positions of power, was indistinguishable from that of any Tory. Talking of "violence and lawlessness" (though there was none of either in the whole course of the movement), Bevan even denounced the squatters as "anarchists."* A letter from Woodcock, just come to hand, gives a glimpse of Bevan's future plans:

"The emphasis placed by the Labor ministers on property rights was most illuminating. Now they are proposing to make the laws against trespass and entering buildings more watertight. Up to the present, it is a case of civil action, and has to be tried in individual and specific cases, so that an offender can only be sent to prison after a court injunction has been issued and he has refused to allow it, thus perpetrating a contempt of court. Now the Labor ministers propose to make it a criminal offense, and are thus more zealous in their protection of property than several centuries of Whig and Tory parliaments."

In a lead editorial in the September 13 issue of *Tribune*, the organ of Bevan's group, the editors admitted that, "emotionally," it was hard not to sympathize with the squatters. But they affirmed that "emotion is not a good enough basis on which to found a policy" (why not?) and admonished the squatters that priorities must be observed and problems must be solved in a planned, orderly way. They remarked that if the Communists were allowed "to go around seizing property indiscriminately" (noting, with just a touch of wistfulness, that

* This term has a curious history. Up to World War I, it was the only word the American ruling class knew to describe those who rebelled against capitalism; and to this day, such backward institutions as the State Department and the immigration authorities still solemnly ask applicants for entry into the country whether they have "anarchist" beliefs. In general currency, however, the word has been obsolete for generations because of the sad fact that there are so few anarchists and so many communists and socialists. But it is odd how often it is revived as a swear-word whenever the Authorities get into a tight place. (Thus Bevan's usage is matched by the royalist premier of Greece who recently denounced his Communist opponents as "anarchists"—which must have brought a smile to the faces of such Kremlin officials as still possess unatrophied facial muscles.) Odd, and possibly significant as an instinctive recognition by Authority that anarchism, and not communism or socialism, is the one irreducible challenge to its pretensions.

in Russia, where planning IS planning, such behavior would be punished by shooting) "why should not others do the same? What a joke it would be if any one who felt hungry decided to help himself to a leg of lamb from the nearest butcher's shop!" Their conclusion was solemn: "Britain has decided to solve her postwar problems by democratic means. If things move too slowly or things go wrong, there are democratic ways of protest." (These respectable defenders of property rights used to edit a caustic, independent, hard-hitting journal—but that was B.P., Before Power.) Of course, precisely the whole point of the squatters' movement is that it arose only after these "democratic (read: legalistic) ways of protest" had failed to produce decent housing. Direct action has proven much more practical and effective. "The present wave of squatting has been ended by the C.P. betrayal," writes Woodcock, "but the achievements have been great: the camps are to be left, Bevan has ordered an immediate check-up of all unoccupied premises, and a promise has been made of a speedup in building before Christmas." It might be added that, according to *Time* of Sept. 30, Bevan has just "announced a program to house 20,000 Britons in some 700 unoccupied army camps." That the camps have been occupied for months makes no difference; in the bureaucrat's world, nothing ever happens until a Program has been drawn up to make it happen.

The squatters' struggle shows us our modern political world *in petto*. A popular movement arises to set right an injustice. It is met by the non-Communist politicians, whether liblabs in Britain or their royalist allies in Greece, with repression in the name of Law & Order. The Communists seize the chance to play, with some plausibility, the role of tribunes of the people. Their leadership is authoritarian, dishonest and wholly subordinate to Russia's political strategy of the moment. But it is the only effective leadership the popular masses can find, and so they follow it. The conflict then becomes transformed into one between Communism, which means ultimately—and usually not so damned ultimately, either—Russian imperialism, and the upholders of Law and Order. The Communists make political capital by leading the just and popular cause; the Law & Order party cashes in on the fear of Russian imperialism; and the little people who began to fight for their rights in the first place are lost sight of in the dust of big-power strife.

The Absent-Minded Professor

An example of a rare, almost extinct, species of *homo sapiens* has been found in Finland: a man who speaks his mind openly under circumstances which any sensible Progressive could have told him were completely hopeless. His name is A. I. Virtanen, and he is a professor at the University of Helsinki and a Nobel Prize winner. Last December Dr. Virtanen took a trip to Sweden to talk to some of his colleagues in his field, which is agricultural research. A press conference was held in Stockholm for the distinguished visitor. A local Communist reporter asked him what he thought of recent Russian discoveries in agricultural science, and whether he thought the Russians would use his methods. No doubt the unfortunate journalist anticipated a pleasant tribute to the scientific achievements of Finland's mighty neighbor. Instead, one of the really great moments of recent history took place. Terming it "an idiotic question," Dr. Virtanen went on to formulate his feelings about Russia in the following precise terms:

"I must say that I am very critically minded so far as the Soviet Union is concerned. As long as the Russians think it is right to conquer a neighbor's territory, such as Karelia, but do not permit Germany to make conquests, I cannot collaborate with them. One cannot treat the matter as if nothing has hap-

pened and I'll have nothing to do with the Soviet Union."

One can imagine the hush that fell over the press conference after that. Also the "scandal and great uproar" in Finland and Sweden that followed the next day. "It is regrettable," editorialized one Swedish paper, shocked to its marrow, "It is regrettable that a man with Professor Virtanen's prominence makes such a careless statement at an open press conference." As for Dr. Virtanen, he declared "he could not understand why newspapers should be interested in his personal opinion of the Soviet Union." The professor is either very innocent or very the reverse. In either case, it is inspiring to know what a few such sensible fools still exist.

Hersey's "Hiroshima"

The New Yorker did a bold thing when it devoted its entire issue of August 31 to John Hersey's long reportage piece on Hiroshima. It was also a useful thing, judging by the popular sensation the issue seems to have caused. For what Hersey tried to do was to "bring home" to the American reader just what the bomb did to the human beings who lived in Hiroshima. The device he used was at once obvious (yet no one else thought of doing it) and journalistically effective: to interview a half dozen of the survivors some months later, and reconstruct in intimate human detail just what each of them did, felt and thought from the time of the dropping of the bomb until he interviewed them. As I say, his piece apparently affected a great many readers. But I must note that it didn't for some reason affect me; in fact, I found it so dull that I stopped reading it halfway through. For one thing, I don't like *The New Yorker's* suave, toned-down, underplayed kind of naturalism (it might be called "denatured naturalism," as against the cruder—and, to me, preferable—variety of Dreiser and the early Farrell). For another, Hersey is feeble as an artist, with no style, no ideas, no feelings of any intensity, and no eye for the one detail that imaginatively creates a whole; so he puts in everything, which gives a relaxed, monotonous effect; I could not help thinking what the Hemingway who described the Caporetto retreat would have done with the theme, and in a fourth the space. These defects of art produce, and are produced by, what seems to me a moral deficiency: the dead-pan, keyed-down approach is so detached from the persons Hersey is writing about that they become objects of clinical description; the author appears like a specialist lecturing on some disease, with "interesting" cases on the platform. The "little people" of Hiroshima whose sufferings Hersey records in antiseptic *New Yorker* prose might just as well be white mice, for all the pity, horror or indignation the reader—or at least this reader—is made to feel for them. And yet Hersey's intention, which apparently was successfully communicated to many thousands of other readers, was to convey precisely such emotions. It is puzzling. Perhaps my feeling is simply that naturalism is no longer adequate, either esthetically or morally, to cope with the modern horrors.

"Test Charlie" Is Postponed

Truman has postponed "indefinitely" the third Bikini atomic bomb test ("Test Charlie"), which had been scheduled for next March. The interesting thing about this is the reasons given, which are (a) economy, (b) secrecy, (c) the first two tests gave enough information, and in fact everything except (d) such tests are not conducive to a peaceful world.

Franco's Fall—More Information

An article by Alan Hare, just returned from Spain, in the *London Tribune* for September 6 confirms so remarkably the letter printed in last month's *Intelligence Office* that it seems worth quoting its gist:

"I met in Madrid a member of the Socialist Executive Com-

mittee who is also their representative on the Alianza, the underground alliance of all Spanish republican parties . . . He described his party's attitude: they were willing to form a coalition with all political parties from the Monarchists to the extreme Left with the exception of the Falange. This coalition would take power as soon as Franco was removed, and govern Spain during the time needed for the various political parties to put their program before the people and for the democratic idea to be revived—a period of perhaps two years. The coalition would abide by the result of the elections . . . The Socialist Party, he said, was stronger in Spain today than it had been in 1936 and could if necessary paralyze all Spanish rail and road transport by strikes."

In two respects this report differs from our letter: (1) it includes the Communists in the Alianza; (2) it emphasizes the importance of support from the big powers, especially Britain, if the conspiracy is to succeed—the Army in particular is described as being disaffected to some extent, but as hanging back because it feels the British do not want to get rid of Franco. The Labor Government's conciliatory attitude toward Franco thus becomes all the more scandalous.

LONDON LETTER

BY FAR the most important event in recent months has been the rise of the Squatters, the unorganised movement of the homeless who have seized army camps and other unoccupied premises all over the country. It is a genuine popular movement, sponsored by no political group, stimulated by no agitators, but arising out of a widespread recognition among the homeless themselves that they would have to wait a good long time for the government to do anything about housing them.

The movement began, quite unobtrusively, on May 10th, when a family in Lincolnshire moved into the officer's mess of a disused camp. The authorities did not know what to do, and before they had decided whether to evict the family, twenty more families had moved in, and the problem became a formidable one, since to evict all these families would require a show of force for which none of the government departments wished to take responsibility. The matter rested until July, when the news of the Lincolnshire squatters reached the newspapers. The publication of the story was the impulse that provoked the discontent of tens of thousands of homeless people into taking direct action, and the squatters became a nation-wide movement. First, they moved into a number of camps near Sheffield, then the wave of action spread into the Midlands, Wales, London, Glasgow, until there was hardly a town whose homeless people were not moving out of their overcrowded lodgings into the comparative spaciousness of the army huts. It is impossible to reach any comprehensive estimate of the number of families who have taken part. As long ago as the 18th August, *Reynolds' News* gave an estimate of 10,000 families, based on information that had reached their office. Personally, I think this an under-estimate even for that time, and the movement has been increasing steadily since then.

Now almost all the available camps and huts within easy transport distance of the towns have been filled to capacity, and homeless people who did not get their huts in the first rush are sometimes to be found searching for empty huts in the same way as they searched for flats before.

In some areas, the movement has not stopped at the camps, but has extended to the appropriation of large, unoccupied buildings. In Dundee a castle with a hundred rooms was taken

over by nineteen families. In Aberdeen, 49 families occupied two large hotels, and near Dumbarton, six families moved into a country house. Near Glasgow, some families have actually installed themselves in disused warders' quarters at Barlinnie prison.

In all this extensive direct action, the people have acted with superb restraint and self-discipline. So far as I know, not a single act of personal violence has occurred. The occupations of the camps have been orderly, and have often been organised secretly with great efficiency, so that the "operation" of occupying a camp by a number of families has taken place at a single time. Where really sound reasons have been given why a building should not be occupied, the squatters have usually been willing to leave, but otherwise they have stood firm. In almost all the camps, committees have been formed to deal with common affairs, and to protect the interests of the squatters. In some areas these councils have united into federations—an example is the Birmingham area, where 12 camps, inhabited by 800 squatters, have formed a federal council.

The first reaction of the government was one of powerless astonishment. The departments concerned had no moral answer to the justice of the claim of the homeless to live in camps which were not being used for any other purpose, particularly when the housing programme is so much behind-hand that no large proportion of the people could hope to be housed for a long time. The restraint of the squatters gave no grounds to complain of disorderliness. In fact, the government had no arguments at all, and decided to take the usual course of a government faced with the inevitable—to legalise it. Just as the action of the Vigilantes two years back resulted in the taking over of empty houses, so the action of the squatters resulted in the military authorities offering 850 camps to the Ministry of Health for housing purposes. The offer was ironical, since the squatters had already occupied those which were accessible or inhabitable. Official orders were given to allow the squatters to stay, and the local authorities were told to turn on the water and electricity supplies.

But then came the sting in the tail. The local authorities were also told to take over control of the camps, and the squatters were informed that they would have to leave by the winter. How the situation will shape now it is difficult to see. The attempt to establish control by local authorities is obviously a move to destroy the communal form which the settlements assumed naturally, and so, by turning them into collections of individuals ruled by local government officials, to make them more amenable to eventual eviction. Whether the original vigour which the squatters showed in their seizure of the camps will persist, it is hard to say, but I think they will retain sufficient obstinacy to make the attempt to evict them in the winter a major operation requiring violence which the Labour Government will not care to use.

The squatters' movement represents the most important example of direct action among the English people since the general strike of 1926, and is more remarkable because it has been so much the people's own act—so completely divorced from any kind of organisation or leadership. The squatters are completely anonymous rebels, the ordinary men and women who have tired of waiting for better conditions and have at last decided to do something for themselves. At a time when almost all the movements allegedly representing the workers fill one with despair, this great movement of the poor and homeless gives a new hope. I am not exaggerating by saying that it is the most important event in the British labour movement for 20 years, and all the more significant because it has taken place completely outside the recognised structure of that labour movement.

Another encouraging feature is the lack of widespread antagonism towards the squatters. A few bureaucrats have talked of regulations, a few Tory editors of the need for law and order, but the mass of the people of all classes have been very friendly, while most of the press have reported events with objectivity and the left-wing papers, from Liberal to Communist, have felt the way of the wind sufficiently to give more or less open support. Many outsiders helped with transport and in other ways, while soldiers in whose camps squatters settled in some cases used army lorries to carry furniture. In no cases have ordinary soldiers shown anything but consideration, and, amazing though it may seem, even the police seem to have behaved with relative sympathy. Altogether, this has been a great demonstration of spontaneous militancy among the people such as we political commentators had given up anticipating, and, incidentally, a vindication of the efficacy of non-violent direct action methods in forcing the hands of governments.

IF THE squatters have demonstrated such an encouraging spirit, the official labour movement shows further signs of decadence and of a tendency to coalesce with the structure of government. The latest development is the agreement between the London Passenger Transport Board and the Transport and General Workers' Union for a closed shop among certain sections of the Board's employees. The situation in the London Passenger Transport Board is that most of the employees belong to the T.&G.W.U., Bevin's own union, which was originally organised as a "revolutionary union" for the unskilled workers, and which has since become one of the most reactionary English unions in its attitude of collaboration with the government and the employers. But some 5,000 of the L.P.T.B.'s employees belong to another union, the National Union of Passenger Workers, which was founded in 1938 after the breakaway of a number of busmen who were disgusted by the sell-out of the T.&G.W.U. in the London bus strike of 1937. The N.U.P.W. concerns itself with industrial issues only, and claims to eschew political entanglements. It therefore does not belong to the Labour Party or T.U.C. and has recently been attempting to form an organisation of the eighty small unaffiliated unions. Apart from its industrial line, it has little in common with revolutionary unionism like that of the old I.W.W., as it has the usual structure of salaried permanent officials, etc., but its very smallness makes it rather more democratic in practice than such monolithic structures as the T.&G.W.U.

The leaders of the latter union have long been aiming at the destruction of its smaller rival, so that the whole of the road transport industry could again be organised in one block. At the same time, the officials of the L.P.T.B. would be pleased to remove a troublesome small union and to negotiate with a single large union which is always willing to reach a compromise and which for many years had not been known to support a single strike.

So far, the decision affects only 12 members of the N.U.P.W. at one of the Board's tramway depots. The T.&G.W.U. at this depot refused to let its men work with these N.U.P.W. members unless they joined the bigger union, and paid fines for having left it previously. The men refused, on the grounds that they had a right to join whatever union they chose, and the L.P.T.B., on representations from the T.&G.W.U., suspended them on May 27th. Now they have been given notice of termination of employment.

This is obviously merely an experiment, as the T.&G.W.U. has already decided to pursue a closed shop policy for the rest of the L.P.T.B.'s employees, and also in the provinces. Moreover, the attack on small unions looks likely to commence in other industries. The Miners' Federation, with the Commu-

nist Arthur Horner newly elected to the Secretaryship, has decided to appeal to the new Coal Board for a closed shop decision in its favour. The Manchester Ship Canal has just given notice to twelve men for refusing to join the National Union of Railwaymen, and a number of local authorities have brought in closed shop resolutions.

The closed shop principle in industry has always been a mistaken policy, since it interferes with the individual freedom of the worker and turns into an act of compulsion that solidarity which can only be effective if it is given freely in the spirit of voluntary and willing co-operation. In practice, it has increased the centralist and dictatorial tendencies within the unions which have enjoyed it, and the danger is more patent than ever today, when the T.U.C. unions have become part of the machinery for administering industry, and will use any advantage they can gain to strengthen their control over the workers. There is no longer any question of fighting company unions, which were never much used in England. The T.U.C. unions have now made the company union unnecessary, and this is what the mass of the English workers have still failed to realise. The drive towards complete domination over industry by the T.U.C., in alliance with the Ministry of Labour and the employers, goes on apace, and what emerges will be an English version of the Labour Front. Any new industrial movement of a radical and militant nature will have to fight the old battles over again, only this time not merely against the employers, but against the triple alliance of employer, union and state. It is a tragic fact that the rank and file of the union members have not realised this, and, in many cases, actually carry on strike action for the closed shop without understanding that the application of this principle today cannot fail to militate in favour of industrial dictatorship.

AMONG the political parties, the most interesting situation is the crisis within the I.L.P. (Independent Labour Party). For some time now the I.L.P. has been troubled by internal disturbances over affiliation to the Labour Party. Most of the older members wished for reunion, and at the conferences their voice carried the issue against the more clear-headed arguments of the revolutionary libertarian section led by men like F. A. Ridley. The repeated rejections by the Labour Party of the I.L.P. plea for affiliation caused many members to consider rejoining the Labour Party as individuals, and a sign of an impending slide in that direction was given by the resignation of Fenner Brockway from the editorship of the *Socialist Leader* and the Political Secretaryship of the party. The death of James Maxton adds a further complicating condition. Maxton was one of those rare men, like Lansbury, who seem to go through a lifetime of political work and yet remain uncorrupted. Maxton's talents and his standing in the Labour movement of the 1920's seemed to mark him out for leadership and he might even have become the leader of the Labour Party if he had not always been so concerned to defend any cause that seemed worthy. He was a great fighter for freedom, and an anarchist can pay no better tribute to a politician. Maxton's personal influence was very great, and there is no doubt that, not only did he draw much support to the party by his personal record and amiability, but, more than any other, he prevented the differences between the moderate and revolutionary sections from developing into an open split. With the death of Maxton and the departure of Brockway, it seems likely that the I.L.P. will break up, the moderates departing into the Labour Party, and the revolutionaries, under the ideological leadership of men like Ridley, adopting a more libertarian and uncompromising line which will probably involve them in at least a temporary decline in numbers and political influence.

YOU ask me to describe the magazines that are appearing in England today. We are living in a period of promises. The restriction on the publication of new periodicals has been withdrawn, and we are allowed a comparatively small amount of paper for such magazines. The literary world is agitated by a whole flock of schemes for new magazines; some will never emerge, others will survive one or two issues, one or two may live on into good magazines. *Values*, *The Critic*, *Front Line Generation*, *Work Democracy*, *Vision*, are some of the titles you may or may not see on new English magazines in the near future.

Meanwhile, there has yet been little in the way of new periodicals, except for *Polemic* (subscription 16/- for six issues, from 5 Bathurst Street, London, W.2). This is described as "a magazine of Philosophy, Psychology and Aesthetics," and really does maintain a very intelligent standard of writing and thought on social and philosophical subjects, marred, perhaps, by a donnish preciseness. On the whole, it is well worth reading. The only other new venture of interest that might be described as a magazine is Geoffrey Grigson's *The Mint* (Routledge, 10/6), a bound volume due to appear at long intervals, and devoted to more or less straight literary and aesthetic topics. Its quality can best be described as 'remote,' and it can be likened to one of those Samuel Palmer gardens in which Mr. Grigson's thought chooses nowadays to forget the world of actuality.

Of the literary periodicals which flourished during the war, most of the wartime 'little mags' have already died away under the new conditions. *Horizon* remains, tracing in its precious way the whimsical personalities of its editor and his kind. It is worth reading as an index to the intellectual interests of the liberal and slightly moneyed, but the quality of its material is very uneven and thin, robbed of any consistent significance or relevance by Mr. Connolly's fear of 'dulness,' which prevents him from publishing very much that attempts a serious analysis of literature or society. (Sub. \$6; 6 Selwyn House, Lansdowne Terrace, London, W.C.1).

The Adelphi continues as a pacifist literary quarterly, edited by John Middleton Murry. Its attitude is rather bound up with the Christian community philosophy, but occasionally it publishes very good literary articles by writers like Eliot and Read, and, on the whole, its lack of recognition is to be regretted. (Sub. 7/6, Lodge Farm, Theltham, via Diss, Norfolk).

New Writing lives on in the form of *Penguin New Writing*, a quarterly miscellany published by Penguins (one shilling an issue), and edited by John Lehmann. A few items from early issues of *New Writing* are usually reproduced each time, and the rest of the magazine is filled with stories, poems, articles, theatre reviews, etc., which combine the English primness of the 1920's (Edith Sitwell is revived with great shows of homage) with the very frailest ghost of the cult of working class writing practiced by the ex-public-school authors of the 1930's. However, it gives a fair cross section of the English literary world, and Spender occasionally contributes good critical articles.

Of *Now*, as I am the editor, I can say little, except that I have endeavoured to present in a live and uncompromising manner the opinions and work of writers who have a libertarian social attitude. During the war *Now* has appeared irregularly, at very long intervals, but from January it will appear as a regular magazine, every two months. George Orwell, Herbert Read, D. S. Savage, Julian Symons, Alex Comfort and Roy Fuller will be among its regular writers. (Sub. \$3.25 per year. *Now*, 27 Red Lion Street, London, W.C.1).

The only remotely Communist literary magazine is *Our Time*, which pursues a "people's art" line and shows a steadily increasing tendency to avoid ideological or political issues.

The lack of party writers has forced the editors to throw their net very wide, and I doubt if more than a minority of the contributors have membership cards. I know that at least one anarchist was invited to write—and refused. In spite of this watering down of propaganda, the general standard of *Our Time* is banal and unintelligent.

Of the political periodicals I give the following brief check list:

Tribune. Formerly the organ of the Bevan group. Now supports the Labour government somewhat uncritically, and has lost most of the vigour of its early days. Literary section very poor. (222 Strand, London, W.C.2. Sub., \$6).

Economist. Invaluable for the student of the economic and industrial life of Britain. Its editorial columns often give surprisingly sound analyses of political situations from an independent viewpoint.

Socialist Leader. I.L.P. weekly. Woolly on general political issues, but well-documented and generally sound on colonial matters. (Sub. 10/6, 318, Regent's Park Road, N.3).

Freedom. Anarchist fortnightly. Has presented a sound series of criticisms of the English labour government from a revolutionary standpoint. Also includes good foreign commentaries and articles on anarchist theory. (Special American sub., \$1. 27 Red Lion Street, London, W.C.1).

Forward. Glasgow socialist weekly. Live criticism of political affairs, lately somewhat tamed owing to support of Labour government. (26 Civic Street, Glasgow, C.4—2d weekly, no sub. mentioned).

Peace News. Pacifist weekly. Provides a consistently intelligent commentary on foreign affairs. Other material usually dull, owing to lack of a united political attitude in pacifist movement. (3, Blackstock Road, London N.4. 2d weekly—no sub. mentioned).

Labour Research. Gives sound monthly analyses of labour conditions in England. (Labour Research Dept., 45, Lincoln's Inn Fields, London. Sub., \$1).

Colonial Parliamentary Bulletin. Gives a full account of government statements on the colonies, with official figures, etc. (African Press Agency, 22 Cranleigh Street, London N.W.1. Sub., \$5).

Left. A monthly forum of socialist opinions. Occasional good articles on foreign affairs. R. E. Fitzgerald, 21, Brookside Road, East Barnet, Herts. Sub., 5/-).

Empire. Formerly gave sound criticism of colonial policy, but lately has become diluted by support of government. (Fabian Colonial Bureau, 11 Dartmouth Street, London S.W.1. Sub., 6/-).

In addition to the above, there are two official publications which are extremely useful to the student of English affairs. One is the *Ministry of Labour Gazette*, giving information on wages, analyses of strikes, unemployment figures, etc. (H.M. Stationery Office, York House, Kingsway, London, W.C.2.). The second is the new *Hansard*, a thick weekly volume which gives full reports of all debates in the House of Commons, together with all the information transmitted in answers to questions. The subscription is £3 a year, from the same address as the last, but the amount of information given makes it well worth while.

These represent the most valuable publications in England today, but the student of minor political groups may be interested in the following sectarian papers, all of them unreliable and sterilised by group dogmatism—*Labour Monthly* (C.P.), *Socialist Commentary* (Socialist Vanguard Group—former MSI), *Socialist Appeal* (Trotskyist R.C.P.), *Socialist Standard* (Socialist Party of Great Britain), and *The Socialist* (Socialist Labour Party of Great Britain).

GEORGE WOODCOCK

The Karachi Mutinies

WHEN British leaders found last February that disaffection was widespread among the Indian armed forces, they undoubtedly began to have serious misgivings about their ability to retain control of India. The British were not misled by the naval strikers' formal demands for better conditions of service and demobilization; they appreciated perfectly the threat to the Empire that was obvious in the enlisted men's conduct and mood. Even Indian leaders in the independence movement were somewhat surprised by the strikes and the support given them by the men in other branches of the armed forces. The Indian army and navy had been considered purely mercenary, but now the implications of the events of last February are plain to Indian as well as British leaders.

The mutinies and strikes were not confined to Bombay and Karachi, which received most of the attention of the newspapers. Sympathy strikes among civilians took place in Calcutta, Madras, Ambala, Poona and Vizagapatnam as well. In the American press the Bombay events received rather extensive treatment, but the mutiny, *hartal* and riots in Karachi were only briefly mentioned here. From the Karachi and other Indian newspapers, however, a fuller account may be gleaned. The actions described occurred Wednesday, February 20, through Sunday, February 24.

Among the ships of the Royal Indian Navy at Karachi were the *Hindustan*, *Bahadur*, *Chamak* and *Himalaya*. On Wednesday enlisted men of the *Hindustan* struck. Some hours later those on the *Bahadur* asked their captain to receive their demands for better conditions of service. Upon his refusal, they also struck. Meanwhile the men of the *Chamak* went on a "stay-in" strike.

Thursday morning, strikers of the *Bahadur* freed two enlisted men who were confined to a cell on shore, and then marched to the dock where the *Chamak* was located. Strikers of both ships marched toward the *Himalaya* and were joined by the men assigned there. Now a sizeable force, the men entered launches and headed for the *Hindustan*, anchored nearby. Sea patrols, according to Karachi newspapers, failed to stop the men from boarding the ship. On board, British personnel tried to dump all the ammunition to prevent its use by the strikers, but the latter, now in control, managed to get to the ammunition in time to save it. Meanwhile, at 11 a.m., the newspaper reports continue, British air-borne troops on shore opened fire as the Indians tried to board the *Hindustan*. At 11:30 the Indians fired back from the ship, forcing the British to move to safer positions on shore.

According to the official government version of the events, when the men tried to reach the *Hindustan* military police went to arrest them. At this point the police were fired upon from the ship, and returned fire. Then the *Hindustan* opened with all her guns. The casualties from this exchange were: on board the *Hindustan*—2 Indian sailors dead, 5 injured; on shore—2 civilians dead, 40 injured; among the British forces—1 dead, 2 injured. After the firing the enlisted men of the *Hindustan* removed the Union Jack from the flagmast and raised in its stead a blood-soaked piece of the shirt of one of their men killed by British fire. Another re-

port says that the sailors on the *Hindustan* raised both the Congress and Muslim League flags.

Thursday afternoon passed quietly. In the evening the strikers permitted British personnel to leave the *Hindustan* and then moved the ship further from shore to make more difficult any British attempt to board it. Meanwhile on shore other strikers from the various ships held a meeting at which they restated their demands and passed resolutions calling for the release of the Indian National Army soldiers on trial, and for the withdrawal of Indian troops from Indonesia.

All Thursday the British received reinforcements from neighboring areas. They patrolled the harbor and allowed no Indians to approach it, not even the highest provincial officials.

Friday was the day of surrender. During the dark hours of the early morning, the British mounted field guns and mortars in the harbor area. Later in the morning the strikers on the *Hindustan* radioed that they would end the strike if their demands were met. The British replied that the demands would not be met and that unless the men gave up, action would be taken against them. The strikers refused to surrender. At 11:15 that morning (Friday) the British, covering the ship in a semi-circle on shore, opened fire. The Indians on the *Hindustan* returned fire, and the battle continued for twenty minutes. Then the strikers, overwhelmed by the British volume of fire, and fearing explosions of ammunition, surrendered. They were immediately arrested, and refused to take food. The "stay-in" strikers on the *Chamak*, *Bahadur* and *Himalaya* surrendered on Saturday, when the Bombay strikers gave up in obedience to requests from Congress leaders.

On Saturday the people of Karachi reacted. From daylight on the stoppage of work and business (*hartal*) was complete. Shops remained closed. Street cars stopped running at 9:30 a.m. This *hartal* was not officially called by anyone; the idea appears to have taken hold of the people and to have spread informally among them. The British District Magistrate of Karachi, acting on authority of the Criminal Procedure Code, forbade all meetings and processions after 6 a.m. At noon he forbade gatherings of more than 5 persons. *Hartal* was officially prohibited and the government arrested 3 Communist Party leaders who urged it at a meeting.

Just before noon the clashes began. All morning the people had been congregating informally. They tried to converge upon Iddgah Maidan, an open place in an important part of the city. Wave upon wave of people approached the area. At 11:35 a.m. the police began to use tear gas to disperse them. This failing, at 12:45 p.m. they used more tear gas and made a light *lathi* charge. (A *lathi*, the famous weapon of Indian police, is a large bamboo stick ringed with metal at the striking end.) In spite of appeals to leave the area, made by local Congress leaders and the Premier of Sind (the province of which Karachi is the capital), the crowds became more aggressive. They stoned police vans. At 1:45 p.m. police fired into the demonstrators. By 4 p.m. tear gas was used continuously around the area, preventing reinforcements from reaching the surrounded demonstrators.

At 7 p.m. British troops arrived. Thereafter the tension decreased, the crowds gradually disbanded. In all the police had fired 6 times in unison, killing 8 persons (4 Hindus, 3 Muslims, 1 Sikh) and injuring 19. After nightfall, according to a government communique, there were more riots in

various parts of the city, including attacks upon government buildings and police stations, attempts at arson, and assaults upon government servants. The official account listed 4 dead and 33 injured among the demonstrators and 10 hurt among the police.

Sunday was quiet. British military units patrolled the scene of violence. Congress members were present also, appealing to the people to go about their affairs as usual. The incidents were ended.

A significant aspect of the Karachi events was that the people, Hindus and Muslims alike, acted in disobedience of their local and national leaders, all of whom had called upon the navy men to end the strike while declaring their support of the strikers' demands. Apparently the popular temper was so anti-British that the usual restraints could not avail. This defiance of their leaders is not, however, to be interpreted as evidence of an ideological gulf between the Indian people and their representatives in the struggle against the British, for the defiance was but short-lived and the leaders are not suspected of softheartedness in their attitude toward Great Britain.

One reason Congress asked for moderation was that during the week of the violence it was announced that a cabinet mission would leave England to discuss a new constitution with Indian leaders. Coming on the heels of these disquieting acts of Indian sailors, soldiers and civilians, the cabinet members must have gained a vivid impression of the mood of the Indian people. This may account for the surprising generosity the British subsequently displayed, in their negotiations with Indian leaders.

A little-reported aspect of the week's events was that Hindus and Muslims acted in common, outside the formal opposition of the leaders of both groups. This fact, too, could not have escaped the visiting statesmen, or the Indian leaders themselves. It would seem obvious that a campaign against the British in India would enlist the sympathy and active participation of all sections of the Indian people, regardless of the differences that may exist among their representatives. Until the British leave India there will be many cases of spontaneous violence there, at first not ostensibly for independence, but then, as despair turns into rage, on the issue of independence itself. India is likely to become a graveyard of British troops and officials, a gravestone to imperialist intransigence.

MORROE BERGER

Silone's Resignation

FROM Italy there has come recently the news that Ignazio Silone has resigned the editorship of *Avanti*, organ of the Italian Socialist Party, and has used the occasion to utter a denunciation of the totalitarian tendencies which seem to be linked inevitably with the development of mass political parties. The following *resume* of Silone's article is quoted from the French newspaper, *Combat*, which reported Silone's resignation in its issue of the 18th July last.

"These (the mass parties) can represent, for democracy, the same danger as the trusts in economy. They tend in the interior of their organisations towards an oligarchical regime, towards the concentration of the direction of the party among

the hands of a few leaders, linked to each other by the solidarity of gangster chiefs towards the outside world. These parties gain more and more hold over public opinion.

"It is useless to combat monopoly in the economic order and to protect it in politics, for politics exercises a more and more direct influence on economic life: one kind of trust would thus simply be replaced by another.

"One cannot be content, concluded Silone, with proclaiming pathetically, as is done in France, the rights of the individual. Liberty is not menaced only in the realm of ideas: that menace is linked organically with certain aspects of modern collective life. It is not necessary here to contest the parliamentary right of the victorious parties to form a ministry and to govern, but it is necessary to proclaim the right of citizens who have different opinions or who have none at all; they should not be pushed to the edge of public life, nor considered as orphan citizens or pariahs. The role of the Constituent Assembly should really be to struggle against the fatality which seems to push the mass parties on the road to totalitarianism."

In *Freedom* we have paid particular attention in a number of articles to the activities of Silone, whose writings in the past have been characterised by a deeply libertarian trend of thought. We were shocked when Silone returned to the active life of a party leader, and expressed our disapproval, but we also refused to believe that the fine ideas of Silone's books had been expelled wholly from his life.

We have been at least partly justified. Silone has seen from within the corruption of Italian political life, has detected the totalitarianism implicit in the actions of all parties, even of the left. He has resigned from his influential political post, and has made his denunciation of the tendencies which he regards as dangerous. But, while we are glad to see this change in attitude, we regard Silone's reservations as illogical. If the mass parties are to be allowed to hold power, as he suggests in the last paragraph of the quotation, then how can the rights of others be safeguarded? The traditional rule of numbers in any assembly or parliament can only preserve the domination of the large party machines and confirm their totalitarian tendencies.

Silone, in fact, has reached a critical point in his development. If he is to become once again a significant social thinker, he cannot remain poised between the ideas of authority and liberty. The only logical termination of his denunciation of party politics would be a realisation that such evils are inherent in political life, and that all movements which struggle for political power will be corrupted by totalitarianism. Unless he proceeds to this realisation, and abandons politics altogether, Silone must decline into a minor ornament of the Socialist movement, too honest to become powerful, too divided to be of any use to the cause of freedom. On the other hand, if only he realises to their full the libertarian implications of his own past writings and present actions, he may yet be a valuable thinker and fighter for freedom.

GEORGE WOODCOCK

(Reprinted from "*Freedom through Anarchism*"
(London), August 10.)

ONWARD AND UPWARD AT BIKINI

Among scientists commenting today on Monday's test was Prof. Simyon Alexandrov of the Soviet Union. "The test was conducted brilliantly and the explosion was obviously terrific," he said, "but the air blast was rather weak." Dr. Alexandrov added that engineers "should be put to work to get a high degree of efficiency from the bomb." ("*N. Y. Times*" story from Bikini, July 5.)

The number of live pigs and goats, even on the "Nevada," startled us, but on learning that the animals would be dead within a few days, everybody felt better. The story was still hot; the bomb was still the biggest thing of all time. (Report by Alan Harrington in "*The New Republic*" for July 15.)

THE GERMAN EXPERIENCE—THREE DOCUMENTS

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The three documents printed below have come to hand from people whom I believe to be reliable but whose names cannot be made known for various reasons. The first two are, as their form indicates, personal letters; the authors are Germans of a "left" political orientation. The third document was passed on to me by an American who has recently been in Germany. "The author," he writes, "is a German girl of 25, solidly anti-Nazi. She refused to join the Bund Deutscher Maedel because she didn't like being regimented, and later she worked in an underground movement and narrowly escaped the Gestapo."*

The documents are printed here for their own intrinsic interest, and also because they add something to themes already treated in POLITICS. The first letter is interesting in relation to my own "The Responsibility of Peoples" (POLITICS, March 1945), which in fact indirectly stimulated its writing. The other two offer further confirmation of the facts related in the documents printed in our January, 1946, issue under the heading "The Last Days of Berlin." It may be objected that to print such accounts of a long-past horror is merely to add to the already uncomfortably hot flames of American-Russian antagonism. But there are several reasons why it seems to me these two narratives should be published. Some scepticism was expressed by readers that the Red Army could have behaved so atrociously as was described in "The Last Days of Berlin"; the present accounts should establish the facts once for all. There is no better indication of the inhuman, perhaps "sub-human" would be more accurate, character of the present Russian form of society—unless it be the current "purge" of arts and letters—than the behavior of the rank and file of the Red Army in Berlin (and by no means only in Berlin). These, then, were the kind of people the "Russian experiment" had produced! (Likewise, the less brutal but equally corrupt and insensitive behavior of our own "boys" in Europe was, or should have been, something of an eye-opener to those who foolishly talk of "American democracy.") And finally, the stories are good in themselves, especially the letter addressed to "Dear P.," the first half of which conveys more powerfully than anything else I know the kind of intolerable situations, something really beyond humanity, which so many Europeans have somehow tolerated, in the sense of surviving.

DEAR G:

I discovered when reading your letter that even you are sharing the illusions still cherished by the emigrated leftist intellectuals from Germany. I am afraid none of you is aware of what 15 years of efficient psychological treatment by Dr. Goebbels did to the German "national character" (already disintegrating after half a century of intense industrialization and all it implies). The German emigres still want to believe that the "dehumanization" was a specialty of a small minority or of chosen troops; they still believe that it was only the SS or the Gestapo who killed the Jews in the concentration camps in Poland, whereas I know positively—I had this information thoroughly checked—that only in the beginning was the mass executions of Jews reserved to the SS. Already in 1942 the normal Wehrmacht units could be sufficiently "trusted" to participate in the killing. I know of some officers and non-commissioned officers who did not like to give the order to shoot; they asked some comrade to act for them. But

on the whole the average young Wehrmacht soldier was quite as well adapted to this job as was the SS-man. Some of them vomited a little when it started, but they soon got used to it. I remember a young and handsome soldier who, wanting to give me a proof of his human kindness, told me with quite a lot of moral pride that he never shot the Jews below the waist in order to prolong their sufferings, as did some of his comrades.

I observed the same reactions—or better lack of reactions—on the part of the mass of the Germans during the winter 1944-1945, when Mr. Worns, the nazi specialist for Jewish questions since 1933 in the Ministry of the Interior, had started new measures against half-Jews: Half-Jews were to be employed exclusively for hard work (in mines, in quarries, as road menders, etc.) or for unhealthy and dangerous work in factories where they were to take the place of the Russian and Polish prisoners required for building trenches behind the Western front. I talked to a lot of people about these measures, particularly about a case I knew personally: a half-Jewish girl just out of hospital after a serious operation and still very feeble, who had to work during the coldest weeks of January ten hours per day, without proper clothing, in the open air in the ruins of a street. She had gone to see the officially-appointed doctor, who had promised her easier work and who kept his promise: instead of having to work on the stones, she was permitted to work only on the wooden doors and the window frames among the debris, getting the nails out. Well, the dog-loving, flower-loving, music-loving, peaceful petits-bourgeois (who represent the bulk of the German population) to whom I told this story thought the measures were "certainly necessary" and a "perfectly justified self-protection against these dangerous vermin." Some people were even disagreeably surprised to hear that half-Jews were still alive in Germany and had even been allowed to work as engineers with Zeiss and other war production plants before Mr. Worns had interfered. The only people who expressed their indignation were factory workers, intellectuals, and Christian-minded members of the aristocracy.

I know what I am talking about, for I have lived in Germany from Winter 1941 to Spring 1945. You would understand what I mean and that something terrible has happened to the "German soul" if you could only have seen the faces of thousands of young soldiers as I have seen them in the garrison town of Potsdam where I lived: these fresh clean terrifying empty depersonalized numbed faces. This was not the expression the German soldiers had in 1916 and 1917, although they too had been patient and disciplined, but I remember well the expression of suffering and weariness and suppressed anger most of them had. I am afraid this was the birth of a new and terrible race I have been witnessing.

(Of course, my observations might be true only for the persons I spoke to: Berliners and Germans from the eastern parts of the country. It seems that things are a lot better in Western and Southern Germany and in the formerly socialist parts of Silesia. In these parts the opposition was getting stronger every year.)

Now I ought to explain how I came back to Germany. You certainly know that in May, 1940, when the German had invaded Northern France, the French confined all women of German or Austrian origin at Camp de Gurs (Basses Pyrénées). We shared this internment camp with the Spanish anti-Franco fighters who fled to France after the victory of

Franco. The Petain government later took control of the camp, transforming it into a Concentration Camp for 10,000 Jews brought there from Germany. I remained there until October 1941. At this time, a nazi commission had regular access to our camp, in spite of the fact that Gurs was situated in the "Free Zone" then not yet occupied by the Germans. This commission began to send Spanish and German internees to work as prisoners in the fortifications alongside the Atlantic Coast, where they had to dig without cover under the constant bombing and were killed or wounded at a rate of 60%. I therefore preferred the risk of letting myself be transferred from German-ruled France to Germany. (My German naturalization from 1932 was considered by the Germans as being still valid, as I had of course not divulged to them the fact of my official renunciation of this newly acquired citizenship.) Besides, it was my opinion that the particular situation of the war (the Germans were badly in need of hands) created favourable conditions for a political emigreé to attempt to go back to Germany and fight the nazi from *inside*, even if it were only by talking to people and conveying political information to them. My subsequent experience in Germany proved that this form of individual and unorganized underground work was possible and useful, at least as far as upper-class intellectuals and factory workers were concerned—the *petits-bourgeois* were politically unapproachable.

Incidentally: I found no trace of any organized underground work in Berlin. Although the nights with total blackout and a moonless and starless sky and absolutely nobody in the streets offered lots of opportunities, I never discovered on the walls or on the Litfan-Saulen a word of protest or an oppositional political slogan. Only once I saw at Potsdam on the dusty outside of an electric railway car an expression of discontent: its author must have been one of the French prisoners or forced-labor-civilians employed at the station; it read: "*Merde!*" and did me a lot of good. Sabotage acts were committed, but as far as I am informed only by foreigners and (for quite different reasons) after Stalingrad, by people in leading and military economic positions who were realizing that they had bet on the wrong horse. The only attempt of organized leftist underground work I heard of was undertaken in 1944 by Communists and was perfectly ridiculous: they camouflaged a political group as a sporting club and started collecting funds; the incoming money was carefully noted on lists with full names of the donors. Of course, everybody got caught. Then there was the underground work organized inside the party by discontented nazis. This is a very interesting and very important problem of which I know too little. Catholic and Protestant underground work existed too.

When the nazis brought me back to Germany in December, 1941, I was at first assigned to a secretarial job with an aluminum expert. This work was too closely connected with the war production which I did not want to serve. I managed to get transferred to a perfectly neutral occupation in a lawyer's office specializing in divorces and insurance claims. There I had a lot of interesting psychologic and economic insights. For instance I was deeply impressed by the many personal letters in my dossiers (never meant to be read by a third person) where you could trace the influence of nazi propaganda in every line, even if they were written by non-nazis. But here too I am speaking of that lower middle class whose adherence or acquiescence was Hitler's most durable support.

During these years in Germany I had, of course, to submit to frequent questioning by the Gestapo and the Sicherheitsdienst and to the usual shadowing and restriction of movement imposed upon suspect persons having lived abroad during the war. I owe life and liberty to the fact that at Potsdam

where I had taken lodgings a certain tension existed between most Gestapo officers and the nazi party; the Gestapo officers tried to shield "their" cases against the interference of party organs. This tension had complex reasons. Here is one of them: The big and most important factor in Potsdam was still the old Prussian military aristocracy which, though collaborating with the nazis and sharing their imperialistic tendencies, still wrinkled its nose at them and pretended to condemn their methods, particularly in inner-German and Jewish questions. Up to July, 1944, Himmler tried to avoid hurting these people's feelings. So he had only picked officers appointed to the Gestapo at Potsdam, which consequently was not quite true to type. That is why, though working in Berlin I stayed all the time at Potsdam at a very expensive and exclusive boarding house patronized by "the *creme of the aristocracy*." Some of these people really went out of their way to prove that they did not mind my being a half-Jew. Thanks to this special atmosphere at Potsdam, I even got freed from the dangerous factory work I was assigned to in December last.

It is a pity I was such a political suckling when we last met—something like a greyhaired *enfant-arriéré* en politique. It is now that I would like to meet you and ask you a lot of questions, as, for example, why the leftist movements had indulged in such a criminal neglect of mass psychology. Is it all because Marx had not had sufficient time left after his economic researches to put down his views concerning the super-structure (how do you say *Uberbau*?)? One aspect, of the question, not the most important, but still important enough, has to do with the role of the Jews and with their inability to feel their way through the rather dark labyrinth of the "German soul" . . .

Warmest Regards,

SEPTEMBER 18, 1945

G. N.

II

Dear P.:

It seems an eternity since we last wrote to each other. And what a time it was that lay between. But Anni and I came through everything. As if by miracle, one would say, but really only by sheer accident. 450 air-raids are something and Berlin looks it, too. However, we were lucky; our place still stands even if much demolished. We are very poor of course, but then a suit of clothes is enough.

During the struggle for Berlin we spent two weeks in the basement. The artillery fire was child's play compared with the bombings. Still many people died. They were sprawled out in the streets, some ironed flat by passing tanks. But one's sensitivity had already been lost. This is war and one passes on. No help is possible anyway.

On April 29 Anni and I came very close to death. Six Russians entered the basement at night. They got hold of the women and raped them. They did not find Anni at first. The women cried terribly and we had to listen to it. Somewhat later the six Russians pointed their pistols at us. "Uhri, Uhri," they demanded. But there were no longer any watches. Other Russians had taken them before. They stood four of us against the wall. Mrs. Helene G. (60 years old), Mrs. R. (70 years), Anni, whom they had meanwhile dragged from behind a bed, and myself.

Ivan counted to three before he fired. The first bullet hit Mrs. G. straight in the face and killed her outright. Mrs. R. was the next target. The bullet hit her in the mouth, but bleeding terribly she kept on living for awhile. Then it was our turn. Ivan fired twice, close to our heads, but only to scare us. One goes down like a sack that has been kicked, one's head buzzes, surroundings disappear as in a fog. Yet, the shock enlivens the memory:—somewhere there must be still an old

watch from a dead aunt in a handbag. Hands tremble, one cannot find anything, the handbag empties on the floor, and then, finally, the thing is found.

Ivan takes the watch. "One more Uhri," he says, and counts again to three. Two more shots are fired, we both go down for a second time. Paralyzed by fear the others in the basement make no sound. There are six Ivans around us; some smile in a sort of embarrassment. I remember this very clearly. We pull ourselves up and stand once more against the wall. But we no longer care for our lives. Finished forever, this, then, is the end. For 30 years of struggle; there stands the tovarich, the comrade, killing for a lousy watch. Hate is of no use here. Possibly even more terrible things happened in Russia, were done to his people. Nobody understands the other's language. You are tovarich, I, the Communist. No, you are fascist—all Germans are fascists. It is hard to find a Russian soldier with even a beginning of class-consciousness. The war transformed them into mercenaries—their interests: alcohol, women, watches. A human life means nothing, a cow is far more valuable. To die is not so terrible, but to die for this—it is unbearable. Go ahead then, tovarich, kill your German comrade, I yell at the Russian, knowing that he does not understand me.

He is a White Russian, well built, with regular features, rather sympathetic. He stinks of perfume; the Russians emptied whole bottles over themselves. They imagined that must be something like "culture," and they wanted to impress our women.

Anni and I embraced each other, we said a few good words to one another, we felt that we were alone, removed from our surroundings. Ivan dropped his pistol and then the incomprehensible happened. The same human being who had just killed two women, without moving an eyelid, in order to get a watch, who, before that had dragged Mrs. T. away from her bed and her two small children to rape her in spite of all her begging for mercy, this same human being, yes, let us say human being, is now stroking us, trying to cheer us up. "Good, good, sit down," he says—and then the six Ivans leave the basement of death.

Do you understand that I begged this man, that I demanded of him, to kill us? But so it was. This was the nervous collapse and if a friend had not come to our aid at this point, we would no longer be alive. The terror remains, however, as this may be repeated any day, any night.

Take this description as one of many thousands. Great numbers died during the capture of Berlin, many by their own hands. Yes, Russia was once the land of the workers and peasants, it was once the centre of a revolutionary movement that shook the world, and now it serves the most brutal militarism. This is nothing new of course. We have long known it. Still, it is terrible to experience a verification that far exceeds all imagination.

How poor we are I think you know. The hunger was terrible. For three months we did not see an ounce of fats. There was no transportation at all, the resulting chaos was terrific. I lost 70 pounds, Anni 40. Momentarily it is somewhat better, but there is a shortage of everything. Send something if you can. Cigarettes, too. We have only the butts we find in the streets.

Do you know, P., what just comes to my mind? It was the summer of 1921, or 1922—we both went to the Lenitzsee for a swim. We were resting on a hill overlooking the sea; pines were standing on the hill. And the sun was shining; just a summer day like many when the Berliners stream to the outdoors. We spoke of politics and girls . . . Do you still remember when we were playing "Everyman" in my apartment? . . . When we got drunk, talked big, and felt so miserable afterwards? . . . Things like these are going through my mind. Apparently sentimental and even stupid. The pressure of the long

years of terror disappears only slowly. One has to remember living to get used to life again.

The fairy-tales begin—once upon a time there was enough to eat and one could sleep every night. The houses had roofs and windows. There was furniture standing in the rooms and one could really live in them . . . We have to rise from the dead as it were. The sun is shining again, but one cannot help thinking—is the sun really also shining for you? Go on from here yourself. Maybe you will get an idea of how Germany looks today.

Here in Berlin there are about 150 left of our old group. There is enough work to do but all is still illegal, thanks to the G.P.U. The leaders of the socialists and communists try to form a unity organization. The contradictions involved in such an enterprise provide a new field of work. All problems raised will be discussed on the basis of principles. The unity movement stems from the Russians. It is designed to compensate for the loss of prestige on the part of the C.P. because of the practical experiences of the German workers with Russian bolshevism. From our own point of view there is really no reason why these two reformist parties should not get together. Some of our friends entered the C.P., conscious of the limitations imposed upon their work there. But at the moment there is no other possibility to work politically. The occupation enforces this situation.

The Allies attempt to re-construct some kind of rump-capitalism and the labor organizations are trying to get a voice within this enterprise. Most of the communal and administrative positions are in the hands of the S.P. and C.P. We live in a time of arrested revolution. But all is restlessness under the cover of the occupation. Although living conditions are terrible, no explosion is possible under present circumstances. All that can be done is to help prepare ideologically for a practical activity that has still to come. The direction of our activity is against all kinds of authoritarianism.

We have some small study groups for socio-economic questions. Much time is taken up, however, with questions of the day which we try to relate to fundamental social relationships. It is not possible as yet to publish a paper. We would soon be eliminated. The "democracy" that is here in everybody's mouth is not democratic enough to face the mirror of criticism. Of course the first job of the occupation is to prevent a revolution. There was unity in the struggle against Hitler and there is still unity with regard to the revolution. The allied unity ends only at the division of the imperialistic spoils. As we recognize that our own development is dependent upon that of the world scene, all we can bring about is ideological readiness for the coming struggles.

A capitalistic, planned world economy is theoretically possible. The condition for its realization is, of course, the elimination of competition by way of war. Some of our masters seem to know this very well. And thus many more millions of workers are destined to die on the road to world rule. Never before was a workers' international more necessary than now. This time, however, the light will not come from the East. I think you can imagine how much we desire contact with you and other friends abroad. Almost 13 years of absolute isolation from the world means that we need you people more than ever before.

I press your hand in friendship, as always, yours,
FEBRUARY 3, 1946

K. R.

III

During the last days of April, 1945, Berlin was like a stirred-up ant hill. People hurried through the streets, pausing now and then to look worriedly at the workmen frantically building barricades. Nobody was sure whether they

would serve their purpose or not, but still everyone hoped that they would be completed. From hour to hour with increasing frequency, we heard rumors that the Russians were getting nearer and nearer the city from the East. Wherever one looked, one saw the worried eyes of children, the pale questioning faces of women, and excited men arguing.

On the afternoon of April 26 the first refugees from the eastern part of Berlin came through the streets, with baby carriages and carts piled high with the rest of their belongings. The wave had reached and struck them first. No one knew where these poor people were to go, and everyone was so busy with himself and his own family that he seemed to have no feeling for the misery of others. The refugees brought the most dire reports; they were all leaving because the Russians were acting inhumanly. At first these stories did not make me nervous, but after I thought about them they did. For a grain of truth is usually back of even the most extravagant rumor.

And again it was night. As always, an air alarm. The same drama as the night before—blood red sky, buzzing airplanes, crashes of bombs. It seemed to me as if the sky was a shade redder than the night before—that meant the Russians were getting nearer. The next day, on the 27th of April, all men who were still available were called into the Volkssturm. Youngsters of 15 and old men of 60 were given anti-tank grenades and sent to the barricades. The old ones shook their heads, but the young ones were proud that they too could now play their parts. For what 15-year-old boy really believes seriously in death?

Now the rumors were becoming almost unbelievable. One rumor had the Russians in Tempelhof, another had them somewhere else, and so forth. But every rumor indicated that the Red Army was treating people terribly. They were burning houses, shooting people, and raping women. The women and children in the cellars were beside themselves. After sitting all day long in the cellar, almost without sleep, and without hot food, they could easily imagine themselves already raped or killed . . .

Now it seemed as if shell-fire was being aimed at us from all directions. Window glass shattered, plaster and bricks flew through the air, pieces of woodwork fell into the street, and you could hear the screams of people who were frightened or hit by them. It was chaos! Then came the frightful news that the water supply had been cut off. The fire guard managed to attach a hose to the hydrant. Now water had to be brought in in pitchers. The people stood in long queues, and as the shells flew over they ducked and held their breaths. Then again came the scream of a shell, and in the same moment a crash. A shell had burst in the middle of the line of people waiting at the hydrant. I was standing there too, and had just gone a few steps away with my pitcher. Some of the women were torn to shreds. After that, the street was empty, with the bodies soaked by the water still running out of the hydrant.

Early on the morning of the 28th came clear sunshine. What a contrast! Death and destruction all around, and over it all smiled the sun. Soldiers slipped through the streets with readied guns, and now and then shots rang out. I screamed to the soldiers, wouldn't they please tell me where the Russians were? One stopped a moment, looked at me and said in a dead voice, at the Schöneberg station. A shudder went through my body. Now it could be only a short time before the Russians reached us.

In the afternoon all of a sudden it became completely peaceful. Only every now and then one could hear the click, click of rifle shots. A few people stepped out on the street expectantly. What could this peacefulness mean? Presently we knew. I saw the first five Russians, led by an M.P., come

down the street. They sauntered quietly along, stopping here and there to speak with the few people who were standing outside. What happened was just the opposite of what we expected. The Russians, well clothed and well fed, came to the people, shook hands, and said: don't be afraid, we won't do anything. They offered cigarettes, rested for a moment, and went on. People sighed with relief; nothing horrible was going to happen. Here and there one heard again a little laughter. I looked around with joy; it was a child and his mother. I had thought, we had all forgotten how to laugh.

Who could think now, that our suffering was just beginning?

Nobody yet dared to go back into his apartment this night, and as before everyone stayed at the cellar. So long as it was light, there seemed to be nothing to worry about, but with the dark we all became once more nervous and anxious. And then came the first Russians into our cellar. They were by no means as well dressed as the first ones, and behaved as we had expected the Russians to behave. They inspected everyone with their flashlights, and stole what seemed at the moment to be valuable. Especially watches. For the moment, nothing more happened. People tried to rest.

Then, about three in the morning, two women, weeping loudly and completely disheveled, came running into our cellar seeking shelter. They were from the next street, where already the Russians had begun to drag the women from the cellars and rape them. It was indeed true, what I couldn't bring myself to believe. I trembled, for I didn't know how I would behave if the same thing should happen to me, and it seemed certain that it would. The two women wept and sobbed as they frantically told their experiences, which naturally threw all the women into such excitement that they too began to weep and wail. The children began to scream.

Toward morning I went out with another young woman to look around. As we stepped out on the street, a Russian immediately called to us and ordered us to halt. I immediately feared the worst and was petrified. He asked us various questions, and looked from one of us to the other insolently, sizing us up. Then he said I should go, and the young woman had to come with him. She began to scream. Her mother came, and seeing the Russian forcibly dragging her away, flung herself around his neck and implored him to let her daughter go. As she would not desist in spite of his threats, he pulled out his gun and shot her. Then he dragged the daughter into the first story of the house, kicked the door open, and raped her. After a long time the daughter came back, pale and apathetic.

After this, we did not dare step out on the street any more. We sat trembling in the pitch-dark cellar and waited for whatever should happen. Then we heard the rolling of many wheels over our heads, and the sound of horses' hoofs. I listened carefully—did I hear rightly? I had thought the noise was on the street, but now I was convinced that the Russians were moving right into our court. I looked through the window and it was true—they were setting up a field kitchen. What would happen to us this night was only too clear. For the first time in the whole week I became nervous, and began to shiver and shake. My sister begged me to give her all our veronal tablets so that she could poison herself. My mother only sat and stared at nothing with anxious eyes. Dear God, I am thankful today that I did not have a pistol available, as I would have deliberately shot all three of us. I began to think of various ways to escape, before the Russians should discover us. We immediately began to make ourselves as ugly as possible. We tied our hair tightly in back, smeared our faces with soot, and put on the most ragged old clothes. Only to become unattractive! We really looked most frightfully,

and if the situation had not been so desperately serious, I would have laughed at the sight of us.

After a long discussion we decided to leave the cellar and move into one of the upper stories of the house in the back of the courtyard. We ran through the courtyard without looking around, being only glad to be out of the dark cellar. A Russian tried a flying tackle at me, but I was faster than he. Then we sat down in the apartment, and listened for the door, to see if anyone rang or knocked. Who would be the first to be seized? My sister wept and wept without stopping. The bell rang! I jumped up—but where could I go? Was it a dream—I heard my father's voice, asking if we were there. Yes, it was he, and with him my brother-in-law. They had run away from the Volkssturm during the night, and had managed to get home. Now I began to cry too.

We considered how we could hide ourselves, particularly my sister, as she was almost losing her mind. We hid her in the attic, and piled trunks and boxes in front of her. I was too big to be hid in that fashion. Under the bed, behind the wardrobe, all of these places did not seem safe enough, since as we had heard, the Russians looked carefully everywhere for women, and woe betide those they found hidden! Again a piercing scream! This time they had raped an elderly spinster in the front house, so hard she almost bled to death. We brought my sister back out of the attic, it wasn't safe enough. I went with my father to another family in the house, to find out what they were going to do that night. I had hardly gotten inside their apartment when the bell rang. My friend and I looked at each other in horror. Now it was us. Russian voices outside the door, and then a kicking of boots against the door. Two Russians came in. We both went pale with fright. They sat down in the kitchen and looked us over carefully. Fortunately my friend's father spoke Polish, and could at least understand. After much hemming and hawing, they explained that they would come back in the evening to sleep with us girls. However, if he had any intention of hiding us, he and his wife would be shot and the apartment gutted. Thereupon the gentlemen took leave.

After a long discussion we decided to submit to what appeared to us to be inevitable, and began to get ready. The mother of my friend made us hot water to wash with. The whole thing was so horrible, I had a continuous feeling I would go to pieces. But could I go away and thereby become responsible for the deaths of two people? So we waited, pale as chalk, for the Russians until eight o'clock in the evening. Nobody had yet come. Suddenly we decided we would all go to the cellar and barricade ourselves there, let come who would. Very quietly we crept across the courtyard in the dark to the cellar, where we spent a ghastly night. I thought I would choke, when about midnight I heard steps and Russian voices coming down into the cellar. We clung close to each other. We prayed silently that they might not find us, and they didn't find us.

The night passed without mishap, what would the day bring? Cold and exhausted, we went back to our apartment. The hot coffee was refreshing. Now all the water was gone, and we had to get more. To get a pitcher of water you had to stand 3 or 4 hours in line, and then when one had finally gone the long way home, half the water was spilt out of the pitcher, or if one had bad luck, the Russians would take it away from you to give to their horses. Naturally women could not dare to go for water.

On top of all this, came the beginning of starvation. We had used up all our food supply, and no more could be bought. Each piece of dry bread became more precious than a piece of gold. People went out on the streets and cut off meat from dead horses. There was no dead horse that had not

been hacked; only the remnants remained on the street, skin, hoofs, head, entrails and tail.

I looked from behind the curtain at the street. It was packed with Russians, wagons and artillery. The wagons were packed full of stolen trunks, mattresses, etc. The streets were an unholy mess of straw and excrements, which the horses kicked about, and the Russians answered calls of nature right on the street.

We all sat around the table and debated what we would do for the coming night. My father then had a good idea, that we should go for the night to an apartment on the third floor. Experience had shown that the Russians seized women mostly from the cellars, the ground floors, and the second stories. Apparently to go higher was too much effort for them. At dusk we crept quietly up the stairs, barricaded the door with boards, and lay down on the bed. It was the first night when we at least had the feeling of being safe.

It grew dark, and then the frightful drama of battle began again. The red sky, which was always moving toward the West. There were footsteps running through the streets, and raucous voices called out, "Open up, open up!" Then there was the banging of boots and guns battering down the doors, women's screams for help, excited men's voices, shots. Thus it went on for the whole night, and one could not think of sleeping. Toward morning things became more peaceful, our nerves quieted down, and we got a couple of hours of sleep. But we were still very frightened, and waited for the new day with anxiety.

I looked out of the window. It was still early. I shrank back in horror. Now I knew what the shots last night had meant. The people were lying on the street shot. Nobody knew why. There were dead from almost every house. Many people had committed suicide, particularly women and young girls. Whole families died together, for fear, for hunger, or because they were shot. How many women lost their lives trying to protect themselves from rape! These women were shot through the stomach. Men who tried to save their wives were shot. Children died after their parents were killed. All these people were buried by their neighbors in the front yards, or where there was a vacant piece of ground, as it was not possible to take them to the cemetery.

The misery grew from day to day. People were almost starving to death, and then one morning came the news that the Russians had found a large store of food supplies and everyone was allowed to take whatever he could carry. I thought at first it was a ruse to entice the women out, but it seemed not to be. People ran for their lives to get there first, and there I learned for the first time how men can turn into beasts. It was horrible the way no one would leave anything for the others, but each tried to take even more than he could carry, and the way the strong people simply tore the weak ones apart. One could only get what he could carry away quickly. But the lives of many people depended on what they could get. My father and my brother-in-law too managed to get what they could, and we were thankful to them that we had something to eat for the next weeks.

We women now lived day and night in the apartment on the third floor, and hardly even came to the window, so as not to run any chance of being seen. Our house was visited day and night by the Russians, and they broke into one apartment particularly although the woman there was no longer young, but had a 14-year-old son. On this afternoon too (April 28) we heard again the breaking open of the door and the poor woman's cries for help. Three Russians burst in and raped her. Her son was compelled to witness the whole process. Finally another householder got up courage and went to the Commandant to report the matter. A Commissar came immediately back with him, and surprised the last of the three

soldiers. We heard only a wild scream and three shots, and then there was silence. The Commissar had shot the soldier without a moment's hesitation. He came smiling and peacefully back into the court, and as if he had had only an amusing experience, stuck his pistol back into his belt and ordered three Germans to haul the dead man out of the apartment. The Commissar took the man's papers, and then we had to bury him: this finished the business.*

The same sort of thing went on for the next 8 days, only the fighting moved continuously toward the west. It was said that the Kurfurstendamm was now the center of fighting.† After being closed up for 8 days I couldn't stand it anymore, and went out a little way on the street with my father. Oh, what a picture of devastation! Never in my life had I believed it possible that a big city could look so shattered and miserable. Most of the trees had been chopped off or torn up by the roots, and lay sprawling across the street, the trolley-wires were snapped and hung in zigzags, the pavements were torn up, great chunks of stonework from the houses were lying all over the place, the blinds hung sadly out of the windows of half-wrecked or burned-out houses. Here and there stood wrecked autos, smashed bicycles, and shot-up street cars and armored vehicles. Artillery of all kinds and calibers had ended their more or less victorious journey here. And everywhere were the newly dug graves of German and Russian soldiers.

What shocked me the most were the officers' decorations, which had been thrown away, and were lying around on the street—iron crosses and other kinds of medals.

After another week the first bread was available; one-half a loaf per capita for the week. To get it you had to stand in line from 6 in the morning till 10 at night. Half a loaf seems now so little, but then it was a lot, and one came out of the store like a little king when one had one's half-loaf finally in one's hand.

Now finally the women also dared to go out on the streets, but they did not make a pretty picture. Though we all looked miserable and haggard already, we made ourselves as much uglier as possible. Even the Russians must have had to admit that never in their lives had they seen so many horrible women as in Berlin!

Now I allowed myself to go further in the city, and was eager to find any acquaintances and find out whether and how they had survived. But it was hardly any use, for the picture was the same everywhere. Destruction everywhere, and dead Russian and German soldiers lying all around. Hardly a person bothered about them or thought to bury them. The most people would do would be to shift them over to the curb, or carry them into the nearby parks. I saw more than once Russian autos rolling over the dead bodies, without the least attention, squashing them flat. There was not even an office to send out death notices.‡

* "When the Red Army starts a big offensive, its commanders hold out prospects of unrestricted rape and pillage as encouragement to the troops, but later they try to stem the tide of lust—not on the grounds of humanity but because it threatens to undermine discipline." (B. J. Kospoth, correspondent with the Russian troops in the invasion of Germany, in the *Washington Times-Herald*, August 5, 1945.)

† The Kurfurstendamm is on the average only 4 kilometers from the Schoneberg station, which shows what a slow process it was for the Russians to "mop up."

‡ The Allied Control Council did later set up such an office, which has now completed the job of sending out death notices in all cases where it was possible to identify the victim.

Free and Equal

Counter-Attack

IN Taylor County, Georgia, four white men called Macie Snipes, colored, out of his house and shot him to death. It was the day after the state primaries, in which Macie Snipes had been the only Negro in the district to vote. The coroner's verdict: self-defense . . . In Holmes County, Mississippi, five white farmers flogged to death Leon McAtee, a colored farmhand suspected of having stolen a saddle. It turned out later that some one else had stolen the saddle . . . In Walton County, Georgia, some twenty white men stopped a car on a back road, dragged out of it two young Negro couples, the Malcolms and the Dorseys, and shot them down by the roadside. They were "looking for" only one of the four: Roger Malcolm, a 27-year-old farmhand who had wounded his white employer in a fight. The other three, including the two young wives, were killed to prevent them identifying the mob later. No arrests have been made.

These were three of the five lynchings which took place in the South this July and August. In those two months almost half as many lynchings occurred as were committed in the whole five-year period, 1941 through 1945.* The decline in lynchings during the war and the current sharp upsurge are both related to the considerable wartime improvement in the Negro's social status. White pressure to keep the Negro down was relaxed partly because he was needed for war work, partly because the ideology of a war allegedly against Nazism made racial discrimination a bit awkward. On his part, the Negro acquired a more confident, self-respecting and even at times aggressive attitude. Some advances were made: the FEPC mitigated racial discrimination in jobs, though its significance was more symbolic than practical; poll taxes have been abolished in several Southern states; certain states, notably New York and California (under Republican governors), have passed anti-discrimination laws; the Supreme Court last year outlawed the "white" primary in the South, and the Federal Government has to some extent enforced the right of Negroes to vote in Southern primaries. Other gains which have not been made so far seem likely to come soon: thus only the obstructive tactics of the Southern bloc prevented legislation against lynching and for a permanent FEPC going through the last two Congresses by big majorities.

1.

The outburst of lynchings thus appears to be a counter-attack by the white South, a desperate attempt to put the Negro back "in his place" before it is too late. They all came within a few weeks of an even more significant counter-attack—and were undoubtedly stimulated by its success—namely, the victory in the Democratic primaries of three notorious "White Supremacy" demagogues. (Since the South,

* About the same time as Leon McAtee was being whipped to death for the theft of a saddle he didn't steal, in another Mississippi county another colored man, Buddy Wolf, father of ten, was killed in a lunchroom by a white deputy sheriff who "thought he heard some one make a derogatory remark." This killing is not counted as a lynching, however, since it was an attack by a single white man on a Negro. If such killings by white individuals were included in the lynching statistics, the totals would be horrifying even in relatively "good" periods.

like Russia, is a one-party region, the Democratic nomination is tantamount to election.)

In Mississippi, the poorest and more culturally backward state in the union, where less than 10% of the population votes (because half of them are the wrong color and the rest can't pay poll taxes), the two "most sinister buffoons in Congress" (*Time*) were renominated: Senator Bilbo and Representative Rankin. Both ingratiate themselves with the folks back home by foulmouthed attacks, delivered right on the floor of the nation's legislative assembly, against kikes, dagoes and niggers. Rankin, who is returning to Congress for his *fourteenth* term, did not even bother to put on a campaign. Bilbo had to work harder: he had four opponents, none of whom fought him on the only issue he raised—White Supremacy—since they all shared his viewpoint, though in a more genteel way; but he got more votes than all four combined. Few Negroes voted, perhaps because of such campaign sentiments as this, from a Bilbo speech: "I call on every red-blooded white man to use *any means* to keep the niggers away from the polls. If you don't know what that means, you're just plain dumb."

In Georgia, another sinister buffoon, ex-governor Eugene Talmadge, whom the DuPonts for a brief period in 1935 backed as a coming fascist politico, made his re-entry into politics by winning the Democratic nomination for governor. He, too, raised only one issue: White Supremacy. His speeches dealt with such momentous topics as a promise to institute searches of all incoming Pullman cars from New York City and other foreign countries and to have any colored passengers hauled off by the triumphant forces of Law & Order. His opponent was James V. Carmichael, supported by Georgia's present governor, Arnall, the most liberal of all Southern politicians. The definition of Liberalism in the South, naturally, does not include reference to what is delicately known as "the race question." Like Bilbo's opponents, Carmichael avoided the one issue Talmadge raised. "He told his audiences on several occasions that his family had lived in Georgia for more than a hundred years and that he understood Southern traditions as well as the next man [fellow by the name of Talmadge—D.M.]."

It is hard to see how the racist demagogues can be defeated in the South unless the White Supremacy issue is met, however cautiously. For the logic of White Supremacy has drastic consequences, including the use of physical terror as the ultimate argument (see Dollard's moderate and therefore all the more convincing development of this point in *Caste and Class in a Southern Town*). The liberals are squeamish about facing up to these consequences; like Macbeth, they would like to have the fruits of the crime without committing it. But the demagogues are clever enough—one might almost say: serious enough—to see the absurdity of squeamishness in carrying out a policy of racial oppression.

2.

Just before the primaries, both the *Saturday Evening Post* and the *N. Y. Times Sunday Magazine* carried feature articles exposing Bilbo as a racist demagogue. It is not often that conservative organs crusade for such a cause. Two questions suggest themselves: (1) how effective were the articles? (2) what do they show about sentiment outside the South? The answers to both are discouraging.

(1) Both Bilbo and his opponents attributed much of his success to the attacks from "up North." (The *Times* and the *Post* are national publications, covering the Midwest and Pacific Coast as well as the North; but to the Southerner, in his peculiar isolation, all that is not The South is of necessity The North; he would undoubtedly place Europe and Asia also Up

North did he ever give a thought to such remote regions.) "Let 'em holler up there," said Bilbo's campaign manager, "and we'll sweep the state." Rankin and Talmadge also made political capital out of criticisms levelled at them by "buttinsky damyankees"; it is the resentment of the provincial and rustic against the "outsider." Thus the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* reports that the Mead Committee's disclosure of Representative May's involvement in the Garsson munitions scandal seems to have actually increased his chances of re-election in his native Kentucky. "Another of those damyankee plots" is how one local paper puts it.

(2) When to such articles in conservative journals one adds the sympathetic attitude on Negro issues shown by other large-circulation organs such as *Colliers* and the Luce magazines as well as the big sales of recent books like *Strange Fruit* and *Black Boy*, one might be tempted to conclude that non-Southern Americans have become remarkably free from racialism. (Another straw in the wind: the *Times*' recent decision to omit the adjective "Negro" in reporting criminal actions by Negroes.) Actually, all one can safely deduce is the tautology that the editors of such publications are becoming civilized about racism. This is, of course, important because of their influence on the public; and the shift may even portend a similar shift later on in the mores of the non-Southern public. But as yet, at least, no such change is observable at the grass-roots level.

For example, in the July issue of the useful "Monthly Summary of Events and Trends in Race Relations" (free on request from the Social Science Institute, Fisk University, Nashville, Tenn.), one reads that during the convention of the NAACP in Cincinnati, the white employees of most downtown restaurants concertedly took "sick leave" for some days to avoid serving the colored delegates; that, in the month of June, "27 Negro homes in covenanted areas in Chicago were bombed"; that the white pastor of a Methodist church in Marysville, Mich., was forced to resign after he had urged that the local industries should give jobs to Negroes; that the 4-H Clubs (the national young people's farm organization), meeting in Washington under the sponsorship of the Department of Agriculture, barred Negro members from their sessions; that in Salem, N. J., six restaurants closed their doors to avoid serving 1,000 Negro Elks convening in that city.

Such episodes, which are part of everyday American life and so get little attention in the press, are in some ways more ominous than the better-publicized acts of violence. When a single month, chosen at random, can yield such a crop, one senses that rank growth of racism at the grass-roots which bursts forth suddenly in such monstrous fruits as the 1943 Detroit race riot.

3.

The current crisis, however, is not in the North but in the South. The whites have launched their counter-attack. It is too soon to tell whether they are in the position of the Russians at Stalingrad or of the Germans in the Ardennes.

D. M.

DEPARTMENT OF UNDERSTATEMENT

It will be a few years before the Soviet Union can give central attention to satisfying the demand for consumers' goods.

—Earl Browder in "The New Republic," Aug. 12.

THE CIVILIAN MIND

Gen. Eisenhower today was honored at the Metropolitan Museum of Art as a "soldier, diplomat and statesman through whose wisdom and foresight many irreplaceable art treasures were saved for future generations."

—UP dispatch from New York, April 2.

MacArthur, the great pacifist general. . . .

—Frank Hanighen in "Human Events," May 1.

Periodicals

"Inflation," by Alvin Hanson. Yale Review, Summer, 1946. "Depression Round the Corner," by Seymour Harris. The Nation, September 14, 1946.

Professor Hanson is the indirect inspiration for many of the New Deal's economic policies and his article therefore acquires a special significance: one can readily imagine it having been read in Washington offices to find ideological ammunition in behalf of a policy of mildly-controlled capitalism. The article is a direct polemic against those conservative economists who favor a policy of no price controls and who argue that the inflationary spiral has in any case already begun.

Hanson lists several factors which he claims militate against an immediate inflationary spiral. Government expenditures have been sharply cut in comparison with the last war, thereby restraining the tendency towards run-away prices and making possible the accumulation of a surplus to be used in the future as a strategic capital formation. The present tendency is towards consumers' spending, rather than as after the last war producers' investments, thereby decreasing the possibility of over-capitalization.

Hanson argues for direct price controls as a means of sliding the country into the period when demand and supply will function on fairly equal terms: "If this warped structure of demand were allowed to work itself out under free market forces, a distortion would inevitably result not only in the price or cost structure but also in the allocation of productive resources. Excess employment and investment would be drawn into the areas of concentrated demand. This would produce geographical and occupational dislocations, a disturbance in the wage structure and ultimately excess capacity in certain industries. A secondary 'reconversion' would then become necessary, after the emergency period had passed, to the more normal peace-time demand."

Hanson then disposes of the theory that low wages are a break on the inflationary tendencies. For low wages would only lead to higher profits, which would lead to real estate and speculative markets. And ultimately low wages would result in a decreased market capacity and then to deflation and unemployment.

Have wages however gone up to the point where the capitalist structure could not function without price increases? Hanson denies this frequent assertion. He points to the large increase in productivity, to the elimination of overtime and to downgrading which leave average hourly earnings "substantially stable," and to the repeal of the excess profits tax which make it possible for industry to shift portions of its gross earnings from the government to labor without encroaching upon its net earnings after taxes. In other words, the present price rises—which have taken place after Hanson's article was written and went unheeded—are a kind of super-profit or super-exploitation on the part of industry, cashing in after an unprecedentedly profitable war.

In a sense Hanson's article is already dated: the steps he urged have not been taken and so we cannot see how well an experiment in liberal economics would have worked out. However, he is vaguely aware of the insufficiencies of his approach, for towards the end of his otherwise closely reasoned article, he suddenly scratches his Achilles heel by remarking that the "inadequate demand in view of our vast productive potential" remains the major internal problem of American economy.

And for that problem Hanson and his school do not seem to have a satisfactory answer.

The Harris article is a rather grim recounting of the present economic march to disaster which the American economy is taking; it is an account of what has happened since the advice of Hanson and his Washington friends was ignored. He points to the fact that "by weakening price control, prematurely removing control of demand (by relaxing priorities and the like) and cutting taxes, the government is encouraging spending now." The upward movement of prices and profits has resulted in an investment boom, "now running at the rate of \$25,000,000,000 a year. The country needs consumer goods but is getting an excess of capital goods, including rises in inventories." So apparently the errors of the last post-war period *are* being repeated, Hanson to the contrary notwithstanding.

Harris' list of government policies which lead to inflationary dangers is really damning. He notes the continued investment in non-residential construction, made possible by government relaxation of housing controls, which will keep rentals buoyed up beyond even current rates for years to come. He notes the government financial policy which by allowing banks to gain 1½ per cent on governmental securities and then exchange them for cash, has resulted in an increase of bank profits from 6.2 per cent in 1940 to 11 per cent in 1945. The administration's policy of holding back on the release of surplus factories and goods has also prevented the demand-supply gap from being narrowed. Nothing has been done, charges Harris, to meet "the large collapse which now seems inevitable" in the next period.

Hanson's warning, written before the emasculation of price control, and Harris' grim account of what is actually happening lead to extremely dark views about the development of American capitalism in the period directly after the post-war boom. The instinctive sense of foreboding which ordinary citizens feel is here given theoretical form. As for Hanson's optimism, it is doubtful if he would maintain it today in light of what has been happening. One must conclude that, in addition to the expected difficulties of capitalist economies, the policies of the Truman administration have revealed such a lack of foresight and imagination as to class it as one of the least competent in the long list of mediocre administrations from which America has suffered.

"Schizophrenic Motifs in the Movies," by Parker Tyler. Sewanee Review. Summer 1946.

Parker Tyler is one of the few people in this country who writes movie criticism which is not merely intelligent, but often brilliant in its perceptions. He has succeeded in doing what few other critics have: he has integrated both the sociological and psychoanalytical approaches; and he uses his critical method with intelligence and imagination. The only drawback is that he is occasionally unintelligible, that his thought is sometimes choked by his words.

Tyler's article continues along the lines of movie analysis begun in his recent book. He identified three techniques of schizophrenic representation in the film: (1) the momentary loss of identity for comic effect; (2) the loss of meaning of what the character is doing: a split between physical and mental activity; (3) "the retarded mental-reflex," what is known in Hollywood jargon as the "double-take."

To illustrate the first of his three categories, Tyler analyzes the performances of the comedian, Hugh Herbert. Herbert's work demonstrates "a Utopian brand of psychology peculiar to America"—the conception that there is but a short distance between the clown and the genius. The absent-minded professor or the abstracted Company President whose be-

haviour seems ridiculous, often succeeds in hitting on an idea which will bring him fame and wealth. This conception is "integral with the democratic system in America, under whose psychological aegis, the "fool" or poor man may become "wise," the rich man . . ." Thus, Herbert, who often plays the zanie who succeeds, personifies the American superstition that out of "fooling around" will come the effective and unique spurt of genius.

Simultaneous with Herbert's suggestion that his character is one day going to surprise the world with a brilliant stroke of genius, he suggests in the meantime that his "idiosyncrasy . . . renders its possessor helpless and therefore 'morally' exempt." We see therefore how Herbert's characterizations fulfill two vicarious needs for the average moviegoer: the suggestion that he may someday "hit the jackpot" and the suggestion that in the interim he should not be judged too harshly. Herbert's characters provide ". . . the exhaust valve for the average person created by the expectation that one's dreaming will logically, faithfully, magically translate itself into one's doing."

"Bernard Shaw's Politics," by Eric Bentley. Kenyon Review. Summer 1946.

Mr. Bentley is in the position of knowing a good deal about literature and next to nothing about politics—a most unfortunate dilemma for a critic discussing a political writer. And for unstated reasons he is out to give Shaw a political whitewash from childhood to senility, with results that are pretty sad.

Bentley's analysis is an attempt to disprove or smear over the usual leftist objections to Shaw's politics. He confutes those who find the early Shaw a mere Fabian reformer insufficiently revolutionary, by making of Shaw's famous dispute with the Marxist Hyndman, a caricature of the reality; he denies that the Fabians were the English equivalent of the Social Democratic "revisionists" whose theoretician was Edouard Bernstein. Twisting the Fabian phrase "inevitability of gradualness" from its real context: its rejection of revolution and its similarity to Bernstein's conception that the movement is all, the goal nothing; Bentley makes of it the platitudinous idea that socialism will take a long time to construct. In Bentley's version the reader gets a picture of Fabians who, for all their timidity in periods of social quiescence, were essentially revolutionists. This much to prove that Shaw was not a mere reformer.

Then Bentley proceeds to dress up Shaw's middle period in which hero-worship played such an important role. This slick feat is accomplished by practically ignoring Shaw's heavy leaning on Nietzsche, his constant emphasis on the *leader*, an emphasis which has come to fruition in the tragedy of modern politics. Forced, however, to comment on Shaw's repeated apologies for Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin, Bentley offers the lame excuse that Shaw's apologies were merely intended to stir complacent liberals out of their antedated beliefs in laissez-faire capitalism! (There is no suggestion in his article that Mr. Bentley might be spoofing . . .)

And finally, to explain Shaw's systematic partiality towards totalitarianism, Bentley performs the most astonishing feat of all. He explains Shaw's approval of Stalin's Russia "for having made leadership a vocation" (Bentley's words) by viewing it *approvingly* as a development of Shaw's conception of the "efficient leader" (that is, the unobtrusive but powerful civil service career man.)

Shaw really requires no political whitewashes. He wrote some superb plays and stimulated people to think; but his wit

should not lead us to condone his thought. For in addition to Shaw the non-conformist there was also Shaw the conformist: he had a persistent tendency to conciliate powerful, if not quite respectable, intellectual movements (Fabianism, Nietzscheism, Stalinism, modern totalitarianism.) His Socialism was aristocratic rather than plebian, stemming from Ruskin and Carlyle rather than Marx. It was a Socialism For Gentlemen with a touch of Superman thrown in; thus, he wrote in one of his most important political works, *The Revolutionist's Handbook*:

"The only fundamental and possible Socialism is the socialization of the selective breeding of Man: in other terms, of human evolution. We must eliminate the Yahoo, or his vote will wreck the commonwealth."

This was a "socialism" which Mencken could, and did, hail; it seems today peculiarly jejune and passe. Only the extraordinary nimbleness of his mind prevented people from seeing the shallowness and second-hand quality of most of Shaw's ideas. And not all of Mr. Bentley's misdirected ingenuity can obscure that fact.

"Science in Soviet Russia," by Waldemar Kaempffert. N. Y. Times Magazine, September 15, 1946.

A survey, especially interesting in relation to Georg Mann's article in this issue. Kaempffert is more respectful of the achievements of Soviet science than Mann is, citing various American and British scientists who have testified to Russian achievements in electronics, nuclear fission, metallurgy, biology, soil science and agrochemistry, and noting: "In 1915, Czarist Russia had only 150 research centers. Today there are over 2,250 scientific institutions in Soviet Russia, and the number of research scientists and engineers is well over 40,000." On the politicalization of science in Russia, however, he is in accord with Mann. He notes that not only did Vavilov disappear in 1939—"he died in 1943 or 1945 under circumstances that the Soviet Government has not seen fit to reveal"—but also that after 1939 "his name did not appear in the footnotes of papers published in botanical periodicals." (This touch will be familiar to those who recall the revisions of history texts the regime has put through every few years.) Kaempffert cites some typical titles in Russian scientific periodicals: "The Dialectics of Graded Steel," "The Dialectics of the Internal Combustion Engine," "Marxism and Surgery." He also reports: "Toward the end of the Trotsky purge, the Astronomical Division of the Academy of Sciences passed some impassioned resolutions, which were signed by the president and eighteen members and which declared that 'modern bourgeois cosmogony is in a state of deep ideological confusion resulting from its refusal to accept the only true dialectic-materialistic concept, namely, the infinity of the universe with respect to space as well as time,' and a belief in relativity was branded as counter-revolutionary."

"Labor's First Year," by Jack Winocour and Michael Young. The New Republic. October 7, 1946.

There is, I believe, a requirement of the Federal Trade Commission that all advertising must be plainly labelled as such. The Commission should take notice of this article, which is not so marked. Either the editors of *The New Republic* were paid by the British Exchequer for printing this institutional ad, or else they are even poorer editors than the last ten years of their magazine would lead one to suppose. Let the F.T.C. investigate and decide.

Like all such institutional "copy," which is designed to create good "good will" and invariably succeeds in creating only

a numbing boredom, this ten-page survey lacks both ideas and information. As an analysis of a great historical phenomenon, it is as incisive and objective as one of the "talks to liberals" which Mr. Edward L. Bernays, the well-known public-relations counsellor, foolishly pays *The New Republic* to run on its inside front cover. (I say "foolishly," although it is a word not generally associated with Mr. Bernays at least not in monetary matters, because his copy is as journalistically valuable as the Winocour-Young job, and he could probably get it in for free if he talked to Mr. Bliven.) The stuffy officialese in which the article is written—a low dialect invented to say as little as possible in as many words as possible—should indicate to any one with the slightest ear for language that its authors (one of whom, incidentally, is *The New Republic's* regular London correspondent) are interested in concealing rather than communicating information. Those with no ear for style may be convinced by the fact that in ten pages of print the authors found no space for even a sentence on the Labor Government's activities in Greece. To be scrupulously fair, the word "Greece" (and no more) does appear twice, viz: on page 442 ("Greece, Indonesia, Iran, India, Egypt and Palestine have been major centers of concern.") and on page 444 ("If the government has been the target of attacks, even by its warmest supporters, over Palestine, Greece and Spain . . ."). The latter, by the way, is the only reference to the Government's Spanish policy.

The editors of such journals as *The New Republic* have waxed very moralistic, in their day, over the venality of the commercial press. I don't seriously accuse them of taking money for this article, but I do suggest that corruption is not just a money matter, and that to print such a whitewash of one's ideological friends is just as low as to "go easy" on big advertisers.

**"Survey of Japan's Defeat," by Ardath Walter Burks.
Far Eastern Survey, August 14, 1946.**

A summary account of the United States Strategic Bombing Survey which examined the causes for Japan's defeat. The Survey came to several interesting conclusions:

(1) "It is surprising to learn, from Survey evidence, that the totalitarian states did not enter the war totally mobilized in the economic sense despite the dictatorial power which made it possible to do so . . . long-range economic planning and complete mobilization for a protracted war were delayed, as in the case of Germany, until it was too late." In fact, the success of early military operations hampered total economic mobilization until after the late 1942 defeats. This, writes Burks, was due to "inadequate realization of requirements and not to inherent limitations of the economy."

(2) The air attacks launched against Japan were even more deadly than is commonly supposed. "The attack was more concentrated in time and the target areas were smaller and more vulnerable. In the aggregate, 104,000 tons of bombs were directed at sixty-six urban areas, in which some forty percent of the built-up areas was destroyed. Approximately thirty percent of the entire urban areas lost their homes . . . Total civilian casualties in Japan were approximately 806,000, of which 333,000 were fatalities. *These casualties probably exceeded Japan's combat casualties.* Approximately 185,000 of the total casualties reportedly occurred during the initial attack on Tokyo of March 9, 1945."

(3) *The atombomb, for all the talk of its saving lives "in the long run" was militarily superfluous.* Victory had already been achieved. "Hiroshima merely hastened the reluctant political decision." Before a single atombomb was dropped,

the economy of Japan was completely crippled: steel production was at twenty-five percent of capacity; rail transportation at fifty percent.

(4) What delayed the surrender was not Japan's "spirit," but rather the cumbersome and inefficient bureaucratic apparatus by which the nation was ruled. Peace feelers—their existence denied at the time by the U. S.—were put out in May, 1945, through Russia. But the outdated and clumsy feudal-bureaucratic government machine could not react rapidly enough; in the words of the Survey: "The time lapse between military impotence and political acceptance of the inevitable might have been shorter had the political structure of Japan permitted a more rapid and decisive determination of national politics."

From this dry, sober official report the nature of modern warfare emerges clearly: an automatic machine-process whose course even the top leaders, let alone the common people, are able to affect very little (Tolstoy's *War and Peace* is more to the point today than ever.) The people are the chief victims of this process, and it is absurd—as well as unjust—to talk about their "responsibility" and "war guilt."

THEODORE DRYDEN

Digging at the Roots, or Striking at the Branches?

"I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race, where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat."

(John Milton in "Areopagitica")

"The essence of reactionary politics is to try to get people to behave in a class society as though it were a classless society, i.e., to stop 'playing politics.'"

(Dwight Macdonald in the first issue of this magazine — only two-and-a-half years ago)

HUXLEY'S *Time Must Have A Stop* closes upon a scene in which the young mystic's father, unable to make sense out of a world in decay, asks his son Sebastian: "And what is to be done about it?" Sebastian goes to the loud-speaker that is blaring news of the frightful turmoil and chaos of the world and says: "One can either go on listening to the news—and of course the news is always bad, even when it sounds good. Or alternatively one can make up one's mind to listen to something else." And then he pushes his father into another room where they cannot hear the loudspeaker any more . . .

Dwight Macdonald and the writers of the "New Roads" series want to shut off the radio, they want to escape from the ugly noise of a world in agony—an absurd and terrifying world where millions are dying in squalor, where millions are sick and frightened, a world where good is horribly tainted by

evil, where the fight against the monsters has polluted the hands of the heroes,—into a world of purity and cleanliness. They are in desperate quest of some sort of vantage point removed from the confusion of the battlefield, unstained by its blood and its sweat and its tears. They want to break away into some little private garden (they call it “sexual emancipation” or “Justice and Truth”) which, like *Candide*, they can cultivate while the storms blow outside. They seek purity and thus look for New Roads out of filthy reality in the most varied directions.

The spirits of Freud and Reich, of Tolstoi and Berdaiev, of Kropotkin and Proudhon are called upon to lead the way. A most bewildering array! New Roads in politics,—but our pathfinders have not yet understood or have forgotten that action in politics implies participation, that politics, the concern over the city, means taking part in the embroiled life and the dubious combats of the *polis*; that without involvement there is no politics; that politics cannot be carried on by speculating about it from the outside.

They have not realized that their retreat from the masses, from the class struggle, prepares the road for precisely that abandon, that relaxation which will open the gates to the onrush of “evil,” as the Stoa was both the expression and the portent of the decline of Athens. They haven’t yet realized that retreat toward individualism is nothing but the reverse side of the totalitarian medal and that they who set out to fight more effectively the status quo must—though unwittingly—bolster it. What excellent subjects those whose Kingdom is not of this world!

* * *

Dwight Macdonald in his “The Root Is Man” makes a number of points which indeed seem to be crucial for the understanding of our times.* He should be thanked for having raised issues which are commonly ignored in current discussions dominated by the postivistic worship of “facts.” He recognizes the fundamental alienation that today exists between man and the institutions which he has created and feels the urgent need for saving those basic human values which are in increasing danger of complete obliteration by the onrushing tide of the new barbarism.

With the underlying purpose of Macdonald’s argument I find myself in wholehearted agreement. Who of us has not felt in recent years the need for a restatement of some of the most fundamental tenets of our beliefs? Who of us has been able sincerely to affirm that he still retains the old assurance, that he still possesses the well-rounded *Weltanschauung* which

* It is often exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to discuss Macdonald’s paper because of a lack of proper definition of the terms used. In the attack against science, one often suspects that what is really meant is only an attack against a particular postivist philosophy of science—which incidentally I reject just as emphatically as does Dwight Macdonald. Sometimes the object of scorn rather seems to be the particular body of scientists who have become willing tools in the hands of the ruling class of America. Then again the attack against science seems to be directed against a particular way and method men have evolved through the ages to master their environment.

Similarly, sometimes “marxist” stands for “Trotskyist,” sometimes it stands for “Social-Democrat” and sometimes it stands for a strawman that exists nowhere than in Macdonald’s imagination. One of the prerequisites for intelligent discussion would be a consistent definition of terms. The only attempt at defining a concept clearly has been made with the definition of “Radical” and “Progressive.” But I haven’t yet met a single person who belongs to either of the categories, they all seem to fit somewhere in between. Since the definition makes it impossible to classify it is valueless: a hindrance, not a tool.

earlier he felt could be used to gauge with assurance the welter of daily phenomena?

But, as I shall attempt to show, the new road to which he points can lead to no solution of these problems and can indeed only further aggravate those very conditions which—at least in theory—he undertakes to overcome.*

1. Individual and Society

Our stratified society is impervious to individual assaults, it even defies the individual’s attempt to understand it. For political understanding is not solely the fruit of intellectual insight but of active involvement, and political action, to be effective, cannot be individual but only collective.

To the individual in this society, as George Lukacz has emphasized, the surrounding world, his social milieu, must appear brutal and senselessly fatal, eternally alien to his being. As long as the intellectual does not transcend his private being he cannot actively transcend the societal reality and change it in its totality. There is no private escape from this “world of necessity” of which Stephen Spender speaks. The particular freedom thus claimed—predicated as it is upon the unfree conditions of the whole—must therefore necessarily remain pure pretense. We cannot hope to lift ourselves from the bog of inhuman conditions by our own moral tuft of hairs. Inasmuch as man is a creature living in history, the “existence” that surrounds him never is “existence as such” but always a concrete historical form of social existence.

The individual is a historical product. He can be changed only through historical change. In fact the whole artificial distinction between individual and society is only another example of the departmentalized thinking to which we have become accustomed in our culture. “The debasement which is going on is of the human being in its entirety, not of the person in isolation or of society in abstraction” (John Dewey). The disjunction of “society” and “individual” is proper to the cultural habitus of an antagonistic society in which the rulers found it necessary, to quote Dewey again, “to attempt to moralize industry, commerce and finance (namely the conditions under which human beings actually live) by exhortations addressed to the conscience of ‘the individual,’ i.e., the application of a sentimental poultice.”

The cry for the salvation of the individual in fact serves those who in reality dominate society. The emphasis on the

* I purposely have avoided any “defense” of marxism in the body of the following. It would seem an unrewarding task. I call myself a marxist, but living marxism primarily is a method of investigation and a guide to political action, not a set of doctrines. Let’s leave marxist fundamentalism and ancestor worship to the Trotskyist mandarins. There is nothing that resembles so closely the New Road approach to Marxism as the methods used in the instruction courses for young communists. For young communists, all of Marx’s findings are the embodiment of all that’s good and true. The New Road writers also take Marx’s findings en bloc—only for them they are the embodiment of evil. In both cases we deal with an essentially religious approach. Isn’t it exceedingly unimportant to learn from Mr. Chiaramonte that Marx was wrong on page 66 of the *Capital*? If marxism is a scientific theory (and it is as such that it is rejected by the New Road writers), what is of interest is its general method as a tool that enables one to go about analyzing intelligently and changing the society in which one lives. The hairsplitting about the words of Marx seems to me to be a sign of the particular backwardness of American radical thought which never was expression and part of a popular movement. Therefore American radicals as yet have not been able to use the tools handed down by Marx for the theoretical and practical penetration of the problems of their society and are still limited to an endless and dreary exegesis.

individual aims at developing new revolutionary means, but—because such are the pitfalls of subjectivism—in fact only prepares adjustment to the mentality of the atomic age. In that age, the citizen should by all means be kept from concern over the large political issues; the ever-present danger of a creative contact between the rebellious intellectual and the masses must be avoided at all cost. Concern for morality and justice, as long as it remains a private concern, may be considered an inoffensive hobby. There may well exist exemplary model colonies cultivating simple living right next to the Bomb Laboratories. Those who wield power know well that their society cannot be unhinged by some individual lever.

The radical intellectual can overcome his estrangement from this society only if he succeeds in associating his individual feeling of alienation with the aspirations of the class which as a whole is alienated from this society. There are no shortcuts on this road.

Theories that are not suited to uncover the essential core of the alienation of man and thus to transcend reality serve a very definite purpose in the cultural superstructure: they furnish the ideologies whose function it is to divert man's attention from his real miserable existence. Indeed it can only be in the interest of the rulers that man should not comprehend the social intricacies which make for his misery, but rather be imbued with the illusion of his absolute individual value in order to reconcile his individual inner happiness with the general misery.

2. Revolt Against Determination and History

Dwight Macdonald clothes his revolt against present realities in an attack against Marx whom he accuses of worshipping the deity "History," oblivious of human values. This is the Marx who wrote: "History does not use man as an instrument to fulfill its own purposes, as if it were a person apart. History is nothing else than the activity of man pursuing his own aims." But the attack aims not at Marx alone; it rejects all those who have attempted to uncover the historic limitations of human action and purports to loosen all the bonds that tie individual action to the societal framework.*

To recognize that man's conduct is limited by historically determined circumstances is by no means an abdication on behalf of a "higher force"—history. To say that man's acting is limited is not to say that it is impossible or useless. On the contrary: such limitations could not be considered a problem, and

hence would not be studied, without the underlying desire to actively interfere in history. The question whether the individual determines history or history the individual is a non-sensical question because it cannot be answered, for history is not a person apart and man does not exist outside of history. There is a dynamic relationship between both: man interferes in historically given conditions the better to master his environment, the better to emancipate himself from the blind laws of nature. Thereby he makes history: he creates new conditions which will in turn determine future interferences. But we have not yet been shown how he can consciously interfere to change his estate without the benefit of accumulated experience and knowledge. Where does one seek to secure the vehicle for a fundamental overturn of society if not in the appropriation of all past human experience?

"Those who cannot remember history," says Santayana, "are bound to repeat it." Among Marx's main achievements is exactly what I would call his negative science, i.e., the knowledge of what man cannot do. This negative science based on history indeed forms a part of man's positive emancipation; for he can then avoid misdirecting his energies and hopes into a sphere where fulfillment is unattainable.

If human history no longer is seen as a continuum but rather as an accumulation of accidental events, if no historic laws can ever be established, then everything is possible. "Free will" reigns supreme, unhampered by the boundaries and restraints of historic realities. Once these limiting forces are rejected it becomes easy—at least in thought—to posit any and everything. If the test of rational confrontation with realities is discarded, then "free will" can indeed be let loose. But then also ends any possibility of rational intercourse. In this mystical and irrational sphere, relativism is universal.

Thus would be achieved precisely the contrary of what was intended: where the setting of binding values was aimed at, relativism is supreme. Then there are only two possibilities: either free will becomes a personal inner affair and there remains only the turning inward of the mystic—by definition inaccessible to the canons of evidence—who consciously eschews conflict with the outside world; or free will is turned to action supposedly unhampered, in which case the world is to be steered and manipulated at will and there remains ultimately only the fascist reference to the allpower of the deed. Then action alone can cut the Gordian knot of an existence that remains immune to the approach of reason.

While the rationalism of a bygone age sought all solutions in the sphere of law and understanding, the modern nihilistic appeal to "free will" in fact relies on contingency and abdicates the claims of reason. It seeks freedom in the least controlled area of the human psyche—will, instinct, subconscious—and thus equates freedom with irresponsibility. This theory, if thought out to its logical conclusions, would pronounce the insane the freest of all men. Freedom, however, makes sense only if our acts are part of some determined and ordered universe; they cannot repose on indeterminacy—this would be an absurdity easy to write down but almost impossible to conceive. Human dignity is achieved in active determination, i.e., in the awareness of the possibilities and consequences of one's actions, and not in the mechanically passive determination by "natural" drives.

The overcoming of the estrangement between man and the social structure which he has created in the course of his history, of this domination of things over men which Marx de-

* A reproach against Marx which constantly appears in the New Road series is that he allegedly assumed an automatic "progress," quite independent from the action of men. While it is true that latter-day marxists, especially of the school of Kautsky, have tended to stress an automatic development, while Engels and even Marx might occasionally, in the heat of the battle, have been guilty of awkward formulations in this respect, the thought, nevertheless, is alien to Marx's general conception. How can it be otherwise in a system that makes action and consciousness the cornerstones of the whole theoretical construction? Marx, following in this respect the best German idealistic tradition, sees the central and revolutionary event in the act of becoming conscious of inherent potentialities. For Marx, a grouping of men holding the same place in the process of production becomes a class only once its members—because of their community of interests—have gained insight into the significance of their position and their role. Only if the working class becomes conscious of its particular situation and place in society can it set out to utilize the potentialities for freedom that lie embodied in its situation. Thus mere technological progress—certain "marxists" notwithstanding—never has been Marx's criterion in judging an event. Progress was acknowledged to exist only to the extent that it meant an increase of awareness and a step away from passive determination. Freedom for Marx was the conscious determination of men over their destiny. Progress is a step toward the realm of freedom away from the reign of necessity.

scribes, the reconciliation between man and his society, are the great tasks which face our era. Socialist freedom would mean that we have changed "a world we never made" into *our world*. Then man could begin to control his own destiny. This reign of freedom would not be the reign of the arbitrary; it would still be determined, but actively determined instead of passively.

An illustration: The Poor White who must subsist on sterile soil is passively determined—among other things—by the quality of his earth. If he becomes a member of a cooperative that bands together and through irrigation improves the land, he is, of course, not free from the determination of conditions. But, having become aware of them, he is free to act both to emancipate himself from the passive determination and actively to turn it to use.

A revolt against the given in the name of the chaotically indeterminate, the uncontrolled, has been the attribute of reactionary, not of radical thinking. It involves the abandonment of any attempt at a rational mastery of man's fate and thus makes him a creature of impulses. Then, indeed, man is degraded to the status of a mere thing.

3. Subjectivism and Voluntarism

I have long suspected that the vogue which Trotsky has enjoyed among American radical intellectuals must be attributed much less to his towering achievements as a practical socialist theoretician than to a central trait in the heart of his theory which makes of him in many respects a very poor representative of Marxian thought. I refer to his voluntarism and subjectivism. The fascination exercised by Trotsky on a whole generation of American intellectuals seems to originate from the same source that now prompts the New Road writers to develop their speculations.

Though he succeeded in wrapping his essentially voluntaristic theory in Marxian cloth, Trotsky never was really able to grasp the essence of Marxian thought, namely that the time for a socialist transformation comes only when a desire for socialist action has seeped deeply into the consciousness of the masses, and that there is no way of attaining a socialist goal if there is no self-activity of the masses. His vanguard theory is based on the belief that a group of enlightened minds, possessed of a strong will, is capable of marching the masses toward freedom. The cause of freedom coincides with the cause of the vanguard.

In America, the masses, for a variety of historically ascertainable reasons, never have felt the need for socialist activity. The radical intellectual therefore has always been tempted to lead the masses to socialism "behind their back," to act on behalf of the masses instead of with them. There is that frustrating gulf between what the radical intellectual feels to be necessary and the desperately slow process of mass awakening. The urge to overcome this lag through radical action of a small minority is almost impossible to withstand. Thus America has been the paradise of the patent solutions and crackpot schemes, the paradise of the "model community"—and of the Trotskyist movement.

Trotsky could easily appeal to the imagination of the American intellectual,—this hero who so boldly seemed to defy history, who challenged it with his assertion that there should be a new international because he willed it so, and who never could understand that organizations are the final crystallization of a long ripening of mass consciousness, that an interna-

tional can be but the crowning achievement of a new mass movement, not its starting point.

Voluntarism and impatience with history now are again the outstanding characteristics of the New Road series. The promised Red Special has not arrived in time, they note with dismay; what is thus called for is not, as one would surmise, an examination of the worth of time-tables in the gauging in social processes, but rather an overturn of all basic concepts that have heretofore animated the socialist struggle, and an exaltation of one's own moral self. The masses are viewed with more than little contempt for not living up to expectations. Many a radical intellectual shut off from real contact with the labor movement—a contact that has been intimate in Europe for at least fifty years—looks disdainfully at the everyday struggle of labor. What interest have these miserable demands for a mere wage boost of a few cents in view of the all important issues that encompass his field of vision? Thus the class struggle evades them because they evade the class struggle—to build castles (or model communities) in the air. But free Cities can be built by citizens only, they cannot be planned by an elite.

When listening the other day to Lionel Abel's advocacy of a return to the inner world of magic as the only defense against the atomic bomb, I came to realize how very short indeed is the step from the Commissar to the Yogi. That one who only a few years ago accepted unquestionably the commissar logic of Jim Cannon could so abruptly change into a mystic exploring the mysteries of the inner world is not at all as astonishing as it would seem. In both cases the rationalization is provided for the existence of one who is shut off from the life of the city, rootless, unable to participate, unable to afford the painful patience which is needed for a revolutionary in these times of defeat. There is the cloistered world of the bolshevik organization and the cloistered inner universe of Aldous Huxley. The morbid atmosphere in both is made of contempt for the outside world which has not sense enough—or not enough morality—to accept the advice so liberally bestowed on it. The whole approach is typical of the *révolté* who thinks that mere rejection and not integration and participation in the struggle of the oppressed, is the essence of revolutionary activity. It reminds me of the old Jewish tale of the little boy who steals his way into the Synagogue to spit on the Holy Rolls—and then thinks that he is emancipated.

A whole array of Christian virtues recently has been displayed in the pages of this magazine, but among them humility is conspicuously lacking. In an earlier age the radical intellectual went "to the people," today he sneers at the people. Look at these workers in the atomic bomb plant who, instead of "revolting"—whatever this may mean—merely ask for union rights and decent pay! But this cloistered virtue leads to complete irresponsibility: vide Goodman's demand that everybody cease working for wages,—the dismissal of tremendous strike movements as "not interesting,"—the attempt to make believe that the living standard of the British workers has risen by 80 per cent during the war. Such attitudes are morally and politically as reprehensible as the do-nothingness of the liberal. Where there should be pity and shame for the human condition there is an unbearable schoolmasterly self-righteousness.

For most American radical intellectuals, the class struggle always has been more of an esthetic than a sociological concept. "Class struggle" was not the uninspiring routine of organizing,

the painful and tedious process of education, the slow building up of a circle, of a group, of an organization; it was barricades and red flags, bloody battles and resounding proclamations. These could be vicariously enjoyed and provided the raw material for literary creation.

A certain type of radical intellectual tends to become a political roué for whom only newness can still bring excitement. Thus the abrupt somersaults from Marx to Reich, from Trotsky to Tolstoi, from Lovestone to Berdaiev, and from proletarian dictatorship to the Nirvana. "They invent God when they lose their party cards."

As distinct from an earlier generation of American radicalism, most New Roaders have no longer even the strength to live by their own gospel. They talk of human brotherhood at their literary cocktail parties. They write like the old man of Yasnya Polyana but live like the young Count. Beliefs that are not practiced are not only so much humbug but are also innocuous. The individual revolté unwittingly is an American institution which can flourish only on the particular soil of a liberal culture. His "rejecting" is accepted and assigned a specific place and function in the cultural pattern.

4. The Quest for Absolute Morality

A desperate quest for moral absolutes permeates the whole "new road" theorizing. Justice and Truth are capitalized and it is felt that it might thereby be possible to regain for them a lustre which was lost in the daily grind of earthly contact. This reminds one of the word magic practiced in certain primitive cultures: if a tribesman does a forbidden thing he constantly cries aloud that he is doing the Good and Rightful, thus hoping to fool the Gods. The current cry for Justice and Truth seems to be a related phenomenon; here also word magic replaces coping with the real world.

Macdonald, following Marx, shows the estrangement of modern man from his own nature by the social forces he himself creates. But an important part of this process of reification is precisely the use of abstract concepts which, instead of being means to fight for a better life, become independent deities to whom man is supposed to bow. It is attempted to posit a sphere of values valid in itself and shorn of all contact with human realities. What, I ask, is more inhuman than this bloodless truth and this anaemic justice? What price this sphere of perfection which is supposed not to bear the scars of its human origins and which must provide a yardstick with which to measure all human endeavor, all real processes, as incomplete and finite? What is this other than the old theological trick of degrading the concept of "being human" into "merely being human" (as Karl Mannheim has pointed out)?

Is this not precisely in tune with our times, in tune with the basic alienation that permeates all our thinking? It is the mark of decline of a culture if the intellectual, instead of aiming at unveiling the truth of his times and thus contributing to changing it, is in quest of some superhuman certainty and perfection. What an abdication of a body of people who aspire to independent thinking when it is complained that, when adhering to "mere realities," one will get a view that is merely finite, merely human. As if there were a loss of dignity in admitting that in any visual picture of an object we can only get a perspective view. What curious theological twist that wants us to believe that a human point of view and a historically given lighting necessarily are distortions, as if it were an admission of defeat to concede that answers to certain

questions can be obtained only in terms of the perspective of a given situation. What is this desperate search for certainty but an admission of the inability to come to grips with the realities of our existence?

Moral absolutes are a dime a dozen on the markets of history. What we should be concerned with is their concrete sense, and what relief they can bring to the predicament of modern man. Moral absolutes are nothing but empty forms, given a meaning only through the concrete historical content which is poured into them. Thus Proudhon's (and Chiaromonte's) concept of justice through mutual aid and equal exchange would be unthinkable but as the outgrowth of a commodity-producing society.

Generalia non pungent. What we need are sharp instruments to change the conditions in which man is a degraded and contemptible being—not eternal truths to glorify his condition. Nothing is gained by restating a somewhat sophisticated picture-book morality.

Indignation is a very poor substitute for analysis and to be against sin in general a singularly unproductive affair. To point out what ought to be makes sense only if a way toward the implementation of these worthy desires can be shown, otherwise it is senseless and morally neutral: if we say that workers should strive for more democracy in their unions, that in itself is a moral demand; but if we declare that "there should no longer be any solar explosions," it is a statement without moral connotations whatsoever. Norms with which action cannot comply necessarily are invalid and harmful, for they nourish ideologies whose function it is to obscure the actual meaning of conduct instead of revealing it.

There can be no separation between one's values and one's attempt to master a problem. The choice of a problem points already to what ought to be. If we choose to analyze the institutions of our society, if they present a problem to us, it is because we have passed a value judgment on the human condition. Furthermore, human values cannot be divorced from human action, and, since man's actions are determined not only by his condition but by his desires, his values cannot be divorced from his goal. Socialist values, as Sebastian Franck very well has pointed out, are determined by the specific conditions of socialist action and by the goal: socialism. For example: solidarity is a moral value that could not develop in a competitive and individualistic society since it violated all the fundamental demands of this society. It came into prominence only in a movement that strove, through collective action of the oppressed, to change the human condition. Thus the sameness of position of the workers who do not find themselves in a competitive relationship furnishes the condition for solidarity and the goal, socialism, determines the means: collective action, which in turn generates a specific morality in tune with such action. All those actions are immoral from the socialist point of view which are not conducive to the achievement of the socialist goal: lying and deceit, terror and fraud cannot be means to attain a truly human and brotherly society. Such means, if used, lead to ends different from those initially proclaimed. Thus values cannot be severed from the means to implement them, nor from the goal which they embody.

5. Departmentalized Thinking

Among the most formidable achievements of Marx has been his grandiose attempt to transcend the departmentalization of thought and activities that has become the dominant pattern

in modern society. Marx blazed the path for a total view of society and man. For him, economics was no longer a science dealing with distinct natural laws but with specific, historically conditioned modes of relations between men. Morals no longer expressed superhuman demands placed in a separate sphere. Social problems no longer could be analyzed apart from the whole pattern of culture. For Marx any specific trait can indeed be understood only in its relation to the whole. The parts reveal their significance only if the whole configuration is taken into account. All bourgeois science stands accused of the sin of departmentalization. There can be only one total science of man: it is in this sense that the quotation which Macdonald quite abusively takes as his title should be understood.

From this central concept of Marx the New Road writers shrink away and fall back into the mode of liberal thought which consists in thinking in parts, in the breaking down of a total enslavement into a host of nicely manageable "problems." But it is the relating of all the welter of daily phenomena to the central core of man that makes the true radical. While for the marxist there exists no separation between the means and the end, between theory and practice, because the end is already reflected by daily activity, for the liberal the goal is detached from the means, the form from the content, and the ideal is elevated and severed from daily life into some special sphere. The ideal is a concept divorced from daily realities; it is supposed to conciliate men with a dreary everyday life; it functions as a consolation for daily disappointment in a world that must seem to fall apart to those who cannot grasp its total structure. In the bourgeois mode of thought, belief and action are kept in separate compartments; in the marxist conception, only practice can solve the theoretical problem.

It is only if one views economics as following some sort of inherent special laws that one can swallow the naive assumption of Keynesian theory—as does Macdonald. The trouble with Keynes was precisely that, being a bourgeois economist, economics for him was not part of the science of the laws of motion of human (specifically capitalist) society, but something that could be viewed with disregard of political realities. That Dwight Macdonald accepts the belief that well-trained bureaucrats armed with the Keynes gospel can regiment the body politic is only one illustration of his succumbing to that very sin of departmentalization which he set out to combat.

Partial thinking permeates the whole heated attack against scientists in general and atomic scientists in particular. The Atom scientists are supposed to carry a special guilt, they are sorted out as sinners among the sinners. But why are the scientists guiltier than those who fashioned their instruments, why is Oppenheimer more to blame than Einstein or Newton, or Roosevelt, or Dwight Macdonald for that matter? Where is the chain of evil to end? And even if we could establish such responsibility, what guide would this be to us to avoid "guilt" in the future?

Obviously, nobody will deny that there can exist individual responsibility. However, I do not want to be judge over people's morality but rather to find a way to change their morality. What is needed is an analysis of the sources for the total irresponsibility of our time, as an instrument to make people aware of their condition, because only where there is awareness of all the implications of one's actions is responsible behavior possible. Here again what is needed is to attack the root. And the root is an inhuman society, not the human all too human scientist. If there is a traffic accident the driver is blamed;

why not—in order to prevent future accidents—the maker of the car, the driver's employer, or his school teacher or his landlord, i.e. the totality of factors which determine the action of the driver? It is precisely this departmentalized thinking which makes for the inability of the liberal mind—and especially of most scientists, for that matter—ever to penetrate the core of social reality. "To attribute," says John Dewey, "to 'science' or 'technology' or any other partial phenomenon of a societal totality the evils due to the one-sided and torn conditions of humanity, is to work toward perpetuation and intensification of the crisis."

* * *

With large parts of Macdonald's concrete analysis of the dismal tendencies that today dominate the world I quite agree. It may indeed be that we live in "too early" an age, in which the potentialities for socialism can not as yet be realized. It may be that for a whole period we will have to subsist in the pores of this alien world, condemned largely to contemplation and analysis, almost unable to participate actively in the battles which are being fought, because they will not be our battles. But let's then at least attempt to guard what is most essential to us, our lucidity and our dedication to certain sets of principles and modes of action. Let's not attempt to jump over our own shadow in vain quests to discover shortcuts, and above all let's not deceive ourselves into believing that we attempt to save the world when we only want to safeguard our own moral skin. Indeed, while we act within the limits prescribed by our own ends and with the means that are in tune with these ends we influence the course of history—this is why it is impossible to foretell the outcome of the struggle.* A retreat under the pretext that it is hopeless in itself helps to realize the dreary predictions. That is why we refuse to join your league of frightened moralists. "For us there is only the trying—the rest is not our business." "Le grand capitaine," said Peguy, "n'est pas celui qui n'est jamais battu, c'est celui qui se bat toujours."

Until you have pointed out more sharp-edged tools we shall use those which up to now have seemed to be the most useful, and we have found them in the general conception of Karl Marx. We may fight for an utopia, but revolutionary struggle always has been a struggle for utopias. And, to paraphrase Joyce, what liberation would that be to forsake an utopia that is logical and coherent to embrace one that is illogical and incoherent?

LOUIS CLAIR

* Macdonald accuses Marx of automatism, but he himself assumes all through his article an automatic course toward statism, thus revealing his disbelief in the potentialities of human action. Not for him the marxian certainty that "men make their own history."

COULD BE

Communist Politics Has Special Characteristics, Editor Asserts.
—headline in "The Conscientious Objector" for May.

BARBAROUS, AIN'T THEY?

Divorce is very simple. The couple merely appear before an official to state that they do not wish to be married any longer, whereupon the marriage is dissolved.

—from a report on "Huklandia," the area of the Philippines controlled by the outlawed peasant Hukbalahap organization, in "N. Y. Times" for May 20.

YOU AIN'T KIDDING, BROTHER!

"I don't believe there is any government in the world that uses the trade unions more than mine does, in which they are so integral a part of the mechanism by which our social and economic life is carried on."

—Philip Noel-Baker, of the British Labor cabinet, as reported in "N. Y. Times" for June 8.

The 13th Disciple

IS THE perspective of the proletarian socialist revolution utopian? Is there still a possibility for a successful revolution in Europe? Has the program of Marxism proven to be a chimera?

These fundamental questions are raised by Dwight Macdonald's article, "*The Root Is Man*" (POLITICS, April and July, 1946). This ambitious attempt to develop a radical theoretical system in opposition to Marxism, climaxes Macdonald's curious political development; and we may now say that not only has he broken completely with Marxism, but that he has abandoned the perspective of the proletarian socialist revolution. For Macdonald denies the possibility or relevance of mass social action in our time: his socialist belief is accordingly a mere platonic utopian assertion.

Where is one to begin in a reply to Macdonald? His 40-page article is a grab-bag of modern confusionism: a pinch of Proudhon; a whiff of pacifism; a nod to existentialism; a bow to Wilhelm Reich, founder of the "psychology of the orgasm"; a few scrappings from the anarchists; a touch of philosophical idealism; and a large debt to that illustrious thinker, Paul Goodman. Any rebuttal must confine itself to a few central themes, unless it be longer than Macdonald's article itself; and so I shall restrict myself primarily to the political aspects of his articles with only incidental discussion of the accompanying sociological and psychological baggage.

Macdonald begins, oddly enough, with a quotation from Leon Trotsky. He quotes from that section of Trotsky's article, "*USSR in War*," which poses as a possible historical alternative a world working class unable to seize power in this period of declining capitalism and thereby giving rise to a social impasse which might result in the "eclipse of civilization" and the appearance of a new exploiting class similar to the Stalinist bureaucracy. This historical possibility is transformed by Macdonald into a "deadline" which has, what is more, been reached. The idea of a proletariat as a fighting revolutionary class, capable of seizing power has therefore been proven a chimera; bureaucratic collectivism rather than Socialism is the historic successor to capitalism. For Trotsky you see, gave history a deadline; the deadline has been reached, and Macdonald, a man who believes in collecting his debts, will not grant history any extensions.

Scientific socialism as a system is therefore finished, "for if one bases one's socialist program on capitalist contradictions, and if those contradictions conduct one not to Socialism but to Bureaucratic Collectivism, then one has no real basis for Socialism." But it is still possible to base one's hope for Socialism on "utopian aspirations" of which "the ethical dynamic comes from absolute and non-historical values, such as Truth and Justice, rather than from the course of history."

The Workingclass Is Not "Finished"

Let us face the issue squarely. The European Socialist movement is at the lowest ebb of its history; the world working class has suffered defeats of unprecedented magnitude. If one were to arrange a balance sheet of victories and defeats and let it go at that, Macdonald's conclusion would seem reasonable: the deadline without the revolution has been reached. Yet, what was Trotsky talking about in the article Mac-

donald quotes? Trotsky used the war as a peg on which to hang his general idea: namely, that *if* the proletariat proves to be completely without revolutionary potential—which is not, let it be noted, the same as saying: if there are no revolutions after the war—*then* the perspective of proletarian Socialist revolution will have been shown to be illusory. Trotsky, who also wanted to collect his debts, did not give history any deadline . . .

Is the proletariat without revolutionary potential? Is the revolutionary movement hopeless? We think the answer to both questions is: no. The major social impulses driving the working class to revolt persist; and the working classes of all countries do revolt. Sporadically, in disorganized and disoriented fashion it is true, but they still revolt, even though doomed in the absence of revolutionary Socialist leadership. When one recalls the recent events in Greece, France, Italy and England, especially against the background of the terrible defeats the working class has suffered, then it becomes clear that the Socialist aspirations of the European proletariat remain deeply rooted—and that the problem remains (Trotskyist formula though this may seem to Macdonald) one of destroying the illusion that Stalinism or Social Democracy can bring Socialism and then of building a revolutionary party which can.

Is the building of such a party difficult, extremely difficult in the present world situation? Of course it is! But the experiences of recent history indicate that if the constantly restive proletariat, which has *not* sunk into a state of permanent torpor (quite the contrary!), can be brought into a living relationship with a democratic revolutionary Socialist party, a Socialist victory remains a real possibility.

Macdonald is wrong in so blandly assuming that "the contradictions of capitalism conduct one not to Socialism but to bureaucratic collectivism." The contradictions of capitalism lead *neither* to bureaucratic collectivism nor to Socialism. No Marxist ever said they did, except the mock-Marxist whom Macdonald constructs in order to knock down. The contradictions of capitalism lead to a constantly sharpening social crisis, to the period Marxists designate as the decline of capitalism: its social and moral retrogression. The outcome of this crisis is decided by struggle; and bureaucratic collectivism can arise only as a result of an impasse in which the society of the past is dying and the society of the future is powerless to be born.

Revolutionary Marxists reject the idea of reading off the working class as finished, or of asserting the impossibility of the revolutionary movement making sizable contact with it. It isn't a matter of faith—even though here, if the working class were in a state of torpor for a considerable period of time, we would still on the basis of its past heroic and militant history, take into account the possibility of a resurgence before dismissing it as readily as does Macdonald. But the working class has not exhibited torpor; it has not been quiescent; the mythical deadline which Macdonald attributes to Trotsky (alas! the dead cannot defend themselves!) saw a period of international unrest, revolt, near-revolution. Is it necessary to go down the list of countries to prove this? Of course, Macdonald may say that the revolutionary movement has not succeeded in gaining real leadership of any important section of the working class; a statement which is true, but which does not attempt to understand the *reason* for this fail-

ure. One point, however, is central: so long as the working class does show mobility, unrest, any possibility for raising itself once again to the heights of 25 years ago, revolutionists must continue every effort to bring the Socialist movement once more into intimate contact with the workers. (*) Anything less is desertion.

• As thus far discussed, the issue revolves about the question of the viability of the world working class in the *present* situation. But Macdonald transfers it to still another plane. He abandons the idea that to achieve Socialism mass social movements and actions are necessary; he rejects parties and trade unions; he proposes instead the creation of small "psychological communities" to be "grouped around certain principles and feelings they have in common" and to live "according to (their) true and spontaneous nature."

The Question of Mass Action

With this program Macdonald has of course really abandoned Socialism. He has abandoned it not as a *desire* but as a perspective. For I doubt if even he would claim that the creation of such groups could bring Socialism—whatever other goods they might achieve or whatever development of personality they might stimulate in their participants. The issue has here reached rockbottom: attempted social action through mass movements and organized parties, or "free communes" existing *within the framework of capitalist society*.

Macdonald objects to "mass action today" on the grounds "that any attempt to work along that line corrupts one's purposes." Or "if one resists corruption in the sense of sticking by one's principles, one becomes corrupt in a subtler way: one pretends to be speaking to and for millions of workers when one is not even speaking to and for thousands . . ." The first objection is not novel: it is usual with all ethical absolutists who insist that the chosen means be qualitatively identical with the desired end. But if the means—the highway from the present to the future—is to be identical with the desired end, then two things must follow:

1. The desired end *already* resides in the means, in which case there is no need for social action to reach the end (thus: the theory of "building Socialism now" on cooperative farms rather than building a revolutionary party to overthrow capitalism); and

2. The means has no relationship to the present, since it is morally equivalent to the desired end which is antithetical to the present. The means is therefore *necessarily* ineffective as a connection between the present and the future (thus: pacifism which has admirable ethical aims is not an effective means of overthrowing capitalism precisely because of its failure realistically to analyze capitalism. In practice its doctrine of class peace helps perpetuate capitalism.)

Now this central contradiction between means and ends is a very real one. How to solve the dilemma between a means either too closely identified with the present and thereby distorting the desired end, or a means too closely identified with the future and thereby unrealistic? There is no simple formula.

* In passing: even if one grants the triumph of a hypothetical bureaucratic collectivism, that doesn't *necessarily* make the socialist perspective merely "utopian." The assertion may be true, but we have *as yet* no warrant for assuming so. For class conflicts will continue under bureaucratic collectivism as under capitalism; and on the basis of these conflicts there will remain the possibility of beginning a struggle, perhaps initially on democratic issues, which could result in a socialist revolution.

The problem can be solved only in practice, and not by a formula: the means, always an unstable and tense connective, must have strong ties with both the present and the desired future.

For instance, all revolutionary parties (which Macdonald finds corrupting) face the danger of bureaucratic degeneration, an eventuality which would indicate their corruption by the mores of capitalist society—since all revolutionary parties must, alas, function within the framework of capitalist society. Accordingly some people—such as Ignazio Silone at one time, and now Macdonald—conclude that all parties are necessarily corrupt and should therefore be eschewed. But this conclusion foregoes the possibility of mass action, and thereby the possibility of Socialist revolution. It ignores further the possibility that the masses themselves, who seem for Macdonald a mere inert lump to be manipulated at will, may and in revolutionary situations do exert a corrective and limiting influence on revolutionary parties. Having abandoned the possibility of mass action, is it any wonder that Macdonald, repelled as he is by capitalism, seeks shelter in "psychological communities?"

Macdonald's other objection to "mass action today" is small potatoes: "the pretense to be speaking to or for millions of workers is corrupting." No revolutionary party with a pinch of intelligence so pretends. Manifestoes addressed "to the working class" merely indicates a desire to propose ideas to the class as a whole, even if only a small section of it is aware of them. Every serious party attempts to speak to, and believes its program represents the interests of, the class, group or nation it claims to represent. This sometimes may brush the ridiculous but is not the same as corruption. Simply because the more myopic followers of the Socialist Workers Party talk as if they had merely to push a button and presto! the revolution, is no reason to find mass action corrupting.

Macdonald's dismissal of the very possibility and desirability of mass action is fundamentally an extremely snobbish attitude. For it implies that corruption can be avoided *only* in a community of intellectuals and other saints and that a party in which mere workers participate leads to bureaucratic corruption. I don't wish to indulge in any simplistic exaggerations: it is true that workers in a revolutionary party are often prey to demagogic manipulation by bureaucratic leaders—a danger against which constant vigilance is required. But would Macdonald's groups be any less corrupting? Which of the mechanisms making for corruption in a party would be absent in his groups? Rivalry? Concern with status? Bureaucratic lust for domination and power? Intellectual snobbery? Bureaucratism can exist in poorly organized groups as well as in tightly knit parties.

Marxists are scornful of the attempt to build little groups of "psychological communities"—which at best remain subject to the economic laws and mores of the capitalist society in which they exist and provide solace for a few weary recluses, while in no way solving the problems of the mass of humanity. We propose instead to plunge into the dirty and imperfect business of politics, in which, yes, there is bureaucratism and imperfection. We retain our belief in the validity and relevance of social action because:

1. It has proved effective in the past. With all their limitations, the great revolutions of the past have been the peaks of history, in which masses of people participated with energy and enthusiasm never displayed in their routine living. The

limitations of past revolutions are well known: those of the French, the American, even the Russian. Yet are they not the high points of man's aspiration for freedom, in which with unprecedented self-sacrifice and passion he struggled for liberation? Can Macdonald deny this? He seems to imply it when he informs us that past revolutions failed to solve the basic problems of society. That is in a sense true enough; but these revolutions did solve those problems which it was *historically possible* for them to solve, even if not those which utopian moralists retrospectively assigned to them. They established new, revolutionary social orders. Since mass action has proven effective for previous revolutionary classes as well as for the working class in those instances where it had a sufficiently mature and intelligent leadership, it is a reasonable assumption that it can prove effective for the working class in the future. Certainly no alternative indicates the slightest degree of relevance.

2. The Socialist revolution, by all present calculations, can be achieved in no other way. Neither bold forays by isolated groups (putschism) nor guerilla warfare can abolish capitalism; they can at most, annoy it. And from the ethical point of view as well, the conception of mass action implies at least the attempt and the possibility of involving the masses in political life, of raising their consciousness to unprecedented peaks, as was the case with the Russian workers in 1917.

"Teach every cook to be a minister," said Lenin. "Let the cooks worry about their problems, while Paul Goodman, Nicola Chiaromonte and I form a psychological family to live spontaneously," is Macdonald's improvement.

What does Macdonald propose that the masses do while he forms his psychological communities? They, let us remember, are doomed to wage-slavery even if Macdonald does succeed in learning to live spontaneously and even if his psychological communities get together to discuss, as he proposes, the "perils of child-rearing." As opposed to this kind of puerility, Marxists advocate the preparation in practice, through the mass actions Macdonald scorns, of the required level of self-comprehension, self-confidence and competence by which the masses of the people can move toward self-rule.

What Does Macdonald Propose?

We have thus far discussed Macdonald's general objections to "mass action" on both conjunctural and general grounds; we have concluded that it involves a political abdication. Let us now examine the concrete terms of that abdication as is manifested in his specific political propositions.

"The first great principle would, therefore, be that killing and hurting others is wrong, always and absolutely . . ."

Query: Would Macdonald have opposed the shooting of Hitler if he had been captured by a group of Jews previously confined to Buchenwald?

Query: Would Macdonald oppose the use of arms by a Socialist society against which a minority of Fascists attempted an armed uprising?

Query: Does Macdonald believe that since killing is "always and absolutely wrong" it is possible to achieve Socialism without sometimes engaging in activity "always and absolutely wrong?"

Query: Since he is opposed to "hurting others" and since his position as a member of capitalist society *forces* him to hurt others, does he propose to remove himself from capitalist society? To which island?

"Coercion of the individual, whether by the State or revolutionary party, is also wrong in principle, and will be opposed with sabotage, ridicule, evasion, . . ." etc.

Just what is Macdonald trying to say? When Macdonald objects to coercion of the individual by a revolutionary party, is he talking about the methods of Stalinism? In that case, every Socialist will agree with him, but the point is hardly original. Or is he trying to smuggle something else in? One suspects from the entire context of his article that by coercion he means the discipline of a group of people who, voluntarily entering into certain associations from which they can just as freely withdraw, nonetheless believe that for a common purpose it is permissible to subordinate opinions on secondary matters in order to maintain continuous cooperation. One suspects that Macdonald's rejection of "the coercion of the individual . . . by a revolutionary party" is really meant as a rejection of the principle of group cooperation which necessarily involves occasional subordination. He is engaged in the popular pastime of abstracting the individual from his context as a member of society and making of him something sacrosanct and supra-social. When posed as either a blanket identification or a complete polarity, the relationship between social and individual cannot be understood. This relationship is complex and reciprocal, the status of the individual being largely determined by his role in the social situation.

Macdonald writes, in his section on "coercion," that he is in favor of "sabotage" to achieve his objectives; a few paragraphs before, as noted above, he is against "hurting other people, always and absolutely." But isn't sabotage, even when conducted with the most peaceable methods and aims, bound to hurt other people, "always and absolutely?" If you refuse to be drafted, as Macdonald urges, aren't you "hurting others?" And once you grant one exception, one case when it is necessary to "hurt others," then you are no longer writing about "always and absolutely"; you have moved—perish the mark!—to a standpoint akin to Marxism. You examine social problems in terms of class needs and not ethical abstractions.

"People should be happy and should satisfy their spontaneous needs here and now. If people don't enjoy what they are doing, they shouldn't do it." This profundity is, he tells us, to be taken as a prejudice and not a principle.

Even with this latter reassurance, it is difficult to discuss the point with any restraint. For Macdonald really doesn't know what he is talking about. Does he think it is possible basically to "satisfy spontaneous needs here and now" in a society which does everything to frustrate them? And more important: by what warrant does Macdonald assume to proffer advice to people to cease doing something if they don't enjoy it? Does he think men enjoy being poor, chained to a wretched job, and insecure all of their lives? They work on the assembly lines as semi-automatons because, as a group, they have no alternative. How would a worker eat if he quit his job because he didn't enjoy it?

The basic patterns of behaviour, the things men do and don't enjoy—working in factories, being chained to one place—they endure because *they have no choice*. No choice, that is, except organized class rebellion.

"Socialism is primarily an ethical matter." Socialism is an ethical goal for all the exploited *and* a proposal for a society made possible by the development of technological and productive forces under capitalism. Its ethical relevance rests on

the possibility of its achievement which is based on the development of productive forces to a degree where a society of plenty and leisure can be built.

"*They (that is, Macdonald's friends) will think in human, not class terms.*" Macdonald clarifies this statement by telling us that they will spread their message at trade unions, parent-teachers associations and cocktail parties—though we are in no doubt which of these will be their main arena of activity. His counterposition of human to class follows, of course, from his objection to "hurting anyone"—in which case it would seem that the only logical conclusion for Macdonald, is, with Saint-Simon, to attempt to convince the capitalists of the worthiness of Socialism, for capitalists too are human and are not to be hurt "always and absolutely." For that is the only remaining possibility once the concept of class struggle has been repudiated.

On Progressives and Radicals

Instead of the terms "left" and "right" which he considers meaningless by now, Macdonald proposes "radical" and "progressives." It is true that for one important historical phenomenon, Stalinism, the terms "left" and "right" are now meaningless, but that does not mean that "left" and "right" completely lack meaning, if only as imprecise direction-pointing descriptives.

By progressive, Macdonald means those who "see the present as an episode on the road to a better Future; while the radical he defines as one "who rejects the concept of Progress, who judges things by their present meaning and effect, who thinks the ability of science to guide us in human affairs has been overrated, and who therefore redresses the balance by emphasizing the ethical aspects of politics." This definition permits Macdonald to indulge in the easy amalgam of lumping New Dealers, Social Democrats, Stalinists *and* revolutionary socialists in one group: the Progressives. Macdonald, of course, is The Radical. It is, however, difficult to see why a Southern agrarian who would probably subscribe to most of the points in Macdonald's definition of radical should not be labelled as one; or why a Nazi, who also "sees the Present as an episode on the road to a better Future," couldn't be called a Progressive. Macdonald's new methodology, by virtue of its abandonment of class conceptions, leads only to such confusions.

The counterposition of viewing the present as prelude to the future and looking only to the present is really a childish business. All action in the present has a relationship to the future, and all schemes for the future, if acted upon, affect the present. There is an inter-relationship, as of means and ends. What is wrong with Stalinism is not merely—as Macdonald suggests—that it justifies debased present practices in the name of the future. Stalinism debases both the present and the future: no dichotomy is possible.

* * *

In the above discussion of the political sections of *The Root Is Man*, we have confined ourselves largely to objections to mass social action and the few "concrete" political conclusions which Macdonald deduces from his rejection of the revolutionary perspective. His article contains a great many other things some of which are relevant to the political points, others not. I want to finish this critique by discussing in briefest form a few of these points: the Marxist theory of Prog-

ress which is for Macdonald the villain of the play; his theory of human nature; and his discussion of the relationship between science, history and ethics.

The Theory of Progress

One of Macdonald's most exercised whipping posts is the Marxian theory of Progress. Marxism, he informs us, sees in "the working out of science *good* values (which) are implicit." It sees history as an inevitable progression to constantly higher levels of civilization, the one lodged as seed in the other, the motive force of this progression being the development of productive forces: a belief "that the 'real' nature of scientific advance is to benefit humanity."

In view of this criticism, let me briefly restate the Marxian theory of progress as it is, not as Macdonald makes it to be. Nowhere in Marx's work does one find an explicit and formulated presentation of this theory, but it is possible to derive from the context of his work the following ideas. In his development up till the present, man has been faced with two main problems: the relationship of man to nature and his attempt to dominate it; and the relationship of man to man, in which domination of course also was the decisive element. Until the last 150 years or so, all societies have been based on scarcity in a double sense: the masses of human beings have never had their desires satisfied, and society has lacked the productive capacity to satisfy them.* Capitalism, because of its tremendous expansion of the productive forces, made possible for the first time a society not only with a standard of living "high" in terms of present values and desires (which previous societies could not provide) but also made this society possible on the basis of leisure for those who worked. Scarcity under capitalism, while continuing to be felt, was no longer historically necessary.

Since, however, until capitalism's triumph, man's struggles for existence took largely the form of a struggle with nature, Marxists considered those societies which expanded the productive forces to be "progressive"—that is, to make possible the increased control of man over nature and thereby decrease man's domination over man. In this sense, capitalism, for all the horrors of the factory system, was progressive in *comparison* with feudalism. Capitalism made possible—it didn't guarantee—a socialist society. A direct transition from feudalism to Socialism was impossible because there was nothing to socialize except primitive agriculture and scarcity.

It is true that some Marxists tended to make of the technological index (man's control over nature) a fetish without regard for its social meaning. (This may partly explain the confusion in the revolutionary movement on the question of Stalinist Russia.) But Marx never did; he specifically repudiated that idea. And we for our part need not indulge in that fetish.

In the period of declining capitalism, when the technological advances of science are utilized for reactionary ends, the technological index becomes quite secondary. Once man's relative domination over nature has been established, it is man's relation to man that becomes of first importance. That

* It is true of course, that desire expanded along with productive capacity, thus making for what might seem a seemingly insoluble dilemma. In pre-capitalist societies however, human labor had to be expended at a completely reckless and physically exhausting rate in order to provide subsistence for the many and luxury for a very few. A society of plenty and leisure was impossible. That is no longer the case.

means essentially that in our epoch an act or event is measured by its relationship to furthering the Socialist revolution. When Trotsky wrote that in our epoch the key to the whole historical process is the role of the revolutionary party, he was saying essentially the same thing: the "subjective" factor is today more important than the "objective."

The description of the past involved in the Marxist theory of progress is quite accurate: to see in the past an accumulative development of productive forces which makes possible an increasingly better society is NOT to read purpose into history, not to equate scientific progress with ethical well-being, but rather to relate them.

Enter: Dwight James Burnham Macdonald

Like others who have broken from Marxism, Macdonald cannot resist the temptation to take a crack at a theory of Human Nature. Though he himself once wrote a rather devastating attack on James Burnham's post-Marxian vagaries, he now treads in the latter's footsteps. He rejects the conception that men's natures have been debased by exploitive social institutions; he writes:

"If these unpleasant traits are held to be perversions of human nature, then one must ask on what scientific basis this finding is made; it is an odd conception of normality which expresses itself only in a few individuals and cultures throughout man's long history. Scientifically, the Machiavellians would seem to have the better of this argument."

The key word here, of course, is "normality." Marxists do not claim that the extraordinary values demonstrated by a few individuals and cultures are indications of "normality" (whatever the devil that may mean in this connection!); they say rather that such individuals and cultures are indications of *potentiality*. The Machiavellians, whom Macdonald belatedly sees as having "the better of this argument," believe on the contrary that human nature makes impossible, because of its selfish drives for domination and power, a libertarian society. But if Macdonald believes that the Machiavellians have "the better of this argument" then how can he believe in Socialism at all, even his utopian variety?

Ultimately, a definitive statement about the limitations which human nature imposes upon the construction of a free society, *if it imposes any at all*, will not be possible until humanity undergoes the experience of trying to build such a society under reasonably favorable conditions. In the meantime, we can make reasonable working assumptions that human nature does not necessarily delimit a Socialist society because: (1) all of our experiences and observations about it in the past are based on class societies and therefore what we observe is not "human nature" in the abstract but a socially, class determined human nature; (2) there have been periods in history, such as the revolutionary period in Russia, when masses of people behaved with tremendous heroism, self-sacrifice and nobility, as there have been such individuals at all times, and from both these data we can discover at least potentialities for human nature in the future; (3) humanity has never yet experienced a situation in which it lived in a society providing for it plenty, security and leisure and we have no way of knowing man's potentialities in such a society; (4) from the previous three factors, we can work on the assumption that human nature is malleable, that is, we can work on an *as if* theory about humannature. Like all hypotheses this theory

can be proven only in practice, but thus far it, and not the viewpoint of the Machiavellians, has "the better of the argument."

Macdonald asks if human nature is not by now "adjusted to exploitation better than to freedom" because it "has been so thoroughly deformed by millenia of exploitation." Such an assumption, however, can be made only by accepting the conception of human nature as a constant in history, gradually deformed by millenia of exploitation; but the concept of "human nature" is only a useful bit of shorthand; it really refers to the socially-conditioned human natures of the people who live in each epoch and society. Is there a continuity of tradition which is deforming? Yes. But each historical situation always gives rise to class conflicts, from which come rebellions and the establishment of aspirations for freedom; and this, too, becomes a tradition.

The Marxian attitude towards human nature is not, as Macdonald asserts, a mere value-judgment; it is a scientific hypothesis based on scientific observation. Unlike Macdonald, we are not ready to engage in the frivolous procedure of admitting that the Machiavellians "have the better of the argument" only to blandly work on the assumption that . . . they do not have the better of the argument.

Enter: Dwight George Washington Macdonald

Underlying Macdonald's discoveries is his conception of an Absolute Morality; of "*absolute and non-historical values, such as Truth and Justice*" which derive from "*personal intuition*." Moral values, he writes, "*are ends in themselves; if Truth is a value for one, then a lie is not justified, even if it is in the class interests of the proletariat*." And these values "*have an element which is not historically relative, except in the sense of relating to human beings on this earth and not to Saturnians or Martians*."

Dwight Macdonald does not understand why Marxists are so impatient with him. His difficulty is that he writes as if he is discovering the universe for the first time, and he is genuinely pained if some of us pass by his theoretical productions with the remark that his ideas were demolished decades ago.

The reader will therefore forgive me for saying that while ready to polemize in detail against Macdonald's political conceptions—for these, to the degree that they affect people, are important—Marxists have no patience with his moralizing. For those who succumb, we suggest an appropriate bibliography. A few remarks however:

What does Macdonald mean by saying that "if Truth is a value for one, then a lie is not justified, even if it is in the class interests of the proletariat?"

Ignazio Silone once posed the problem: what should a Socialist, for whom truth is an absolute value, do when a policeman asks him the whereabouts of a revolutionist wanted by the capitalist state? We Marxists have no difficulty in answering that question. We say: we would *mislead* the cops, we would "lie" to them in order to throw them off the track of the hunted revolutionist. Such a "lie" would be in the service of the greater truth which the Socialist movement represents.

Let us sharpen the problem. Suppose the cops came for information, and indicated that they were really on the trail of the hunted revolutionist. In such a situation to refuse to answer the policeman's questions—a means by which the believ-

ers in Absolute Truth might try to evade the dilemma this problem poses for them—would, in effect, mean to allow the cops to continue the search for the hunted revolutionist on a successful basis. The only way to throw the cop off the track is . . . to lie, to deflect him and thereby give the hunted revolutionist time to escape. What would our Absolute Moralist, Macdonald, do in such a situation; he, who believes that "a lie is not justified even if it is in the class interests of the proletariat?"

We hope that neither Macdonald nor the reader will be pained at our having reduced the question of Absolute Truth to such a "vulgar" and "profane" level; but we are convinced that it is on precisely such a level that the matter must be discussed—on the level of the class situation and class conflicts in which we live. We wish only to point out his dilemma; either he confines himself, in the name of Absolute Truth, to the role of stool pigeon; or he makes just one little exception to Absolute Truth . . . in which case it is no longer Absolute; the dike has been breached and the flood rushes through.

Wherein is morality not historically relative and class determined, as Macdonald maintains? If it is not socially molded, as the Marxists say, where in is its source? In the permanent essence of Human Nature? In the Categorical Imperative? In the Essence of God?

Macdonald offers us one interesting example of why he believes moral and esthetic values to be non-relative. He poses the question: why do we in the twentieth century still find great pleasure and meaning in the plays and philosophy of the Greeks? Is there not a timeless quality in their work which applies to all humanity?

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The question is a neat one; and the answer devastating to Macdonald's case. It is true that we find much of value in the Greeks, much that is pleasing and which touches us; but that is because the development of humanity is a continuity. Difference and similarity imply and require each other. Were there no differences between elements compared, they would be merely identical; were there no similarities there would be no basis for comparison of differences. There is, then, much that affects and touches us in Greek drama; but it does not affect us in *the same way* it affected the Greeks. Does the Oedipus story mean to us, the post-Freud generation, what it meant to Sophocles' contemporaries? To pose the question is to answer it: there are no absolute moral values, though there is continuity in moral values as in everything else. We have elements of community with the Greeks, we have elements of difference; there is continuity and there is difference, but there is no Absolute. That exists only in the minds of idealist philosophers.

Macdonald has one final clincher. If there are no absolute moral values, he asks us, how then could Marx speak of *real* morality, of *real* justice under Socialism? Wasn't he in that way smuggling in "eternal and absolute values?" For, if moral values are historically relative, then how could he foretell the morality of Socialism? The answer is simply that one can make estimates of it on the basis of the *moral potential* shown by great individuals and revolutionary classes thus far. We extrapolate from revolutionary morality to what we believe and hope socialist morality to be. In that sense, it is an expectation, a guess and an aim rolled up into one; but it is not a denial of the historical determination of morality.

Dwight Macdonald is aware of the dangerous waters in which he is wading. He knows that from talk of Absolute Morality to talk of God—the only basis upon which Absolute Morality can ultimately be maintained—is but a short step. He tells us, however, that he is not flirting with religion: "even in adolescence, religion has never interested or attracted me." Which while reassuring for his adolescence—and even his young manhood—is not very reassuring for his present state of developed maturity. There are strong psychological, logical, emotional and political drives which tend to move people with Macdonald's present position towards acceptance of the Supernatural. So while he is not yet in the class of one of the genuine 12 disciples of Our Lord, he is at least a candidate; perhaps we can call him the 13th disciple . . .

Macdonald has come a long way. We shall not indulge in moralisms: each can draw for himself the appropriate conclusion. The correlation of the flight from Marxism of Macdonald and his friends with the present period of reaction is obvious enough. But it will deceive only those who wish to be deceived; only those who wish to find rationalizations to withdraw from the struggle which continues to face humanity, the only way in life which gives any promise for the future and dignity for the present: the struggle for Socialism. And Dwight Macdonald, for all his subjective sincerity and Socialist inclination, has withdrawn from that struggle.

IRVING HOWE

Reply by D. M.:

To reply in any detail to my critics would mean writing another article as long as "The Root Is Man"—God forbid—and indeed to a large extent saying the same things all over.

The crux of our disagreements seems to me to lie in the problem of action: What Is To Be Done? Therefore, I have dealt with this at length. There are numerous other points to which some rejoinder might be made, but they are for the most part either misrepresentations of what I wrote (as, the accusation by both writers that I believe that bureaucratic collectivism is the automatic, inevitable next stage of history) or else simply restatements of the very Marxist assumptions to question which my article was written. In the interest of conserving the reader's (and my own) energy, therefore, it seems best to let it go at this. I must confess my disappointment that the argument doesn't seem to have advanced an inch beyond the point at which the "New Roads" series left it.

When Bernard Shaw visited Hollywood, he called on Sam Goldwyn to discuss the sale of the movie rights to one of his plays. After listening patiently to a long harangue by the producer about what a noble work of art the play was and what a privilege it was to have the honor of presenting it to the American public, Shaw finally interrupted: "Mr. Goldwyn, I fear you and I will never understand each other. The difficulty is that you are interested only in art, while I am interested only in money."

So I would say to comrades Clair and Howe that we shall never understand each other, since I am interested only in science and history while they are interested only in metaphysics and morality. Without pressing this point too far, I see this much validity in it: that my criticism of Marxism was to a large extent empirical, while their defense of it, couched in the super-heated language of outraged morality, assumes without investigation the validity of that Marxian system whose claims my article attempted to deflate. That Marxism is a most impressive theoretical construction, and that identification with a proletariat moving towards socialism produces in one a warm moral glow—these points I grant. But the question is, after all, whether the actual and concrete course of modern history justifies either the system or the glow. My view is that it does not, and I amassed a good deal of evidence to show it does not. My critics don't seem interested in this problem; at least they prefer to devote their lengthy essays to exposing the immorality and theoretical inadequacy of my attempt to find a way out of the impasse, rather than to showing that the impasse does not exist. This evasion on their part comes out most clearly when we consider their treatment of what is, after all, the main question: how can we realize, or even simply express, in action today our political values?

Both Clair and Howe confuse the statement (a) that action along Marxian lines is fruitless today with the statement (b) any action is fruitless today. But this is true only if one assumes the validity of Marxism, which is precisely what I question. Their line of attack is, therefore, good polemics but bad reasoning. Let me demonstrate.

"He abandons the idea that to achieve socialism mass social movements and actions are necessary," writes Howe, and goes on later to indict me for "desertion," "withdrawal from the struggle," reducing my socialist belief to "a mere platonic utopian assertion," etc. His premise, however, is faulty. Not being a *complete* idiot, I do not maintain that historical change can be instituted without "mass social movements and action." The question I posed was rather: (a) what are the prospects of such action in our time?; and (b) is Marxism valid as a guide to such action. The conclusions I reached were that the prospects are very dim, and that Marxism is not so valid. Therefore, I am trying to find some way for at least the individual to act. The whole thing is summed up on p. 213 of the July issue:

"Granted that individual actions can never overthrow the status quo, and also that even spontaneous mass rebellion will be fruitless unless it has some kind of conscious program and

also unless certain elementary steps of coordination and organization are taken. But today we confront this situation: the masses just do not act towards what most of the readers of this magazine would recognize as some fundamental betterment of society. The only way, at present, of so acting . . . seems to be through symbolic individual actions, based on one person's insistence on his own values, and through the creation of small fraternal groups which will support such actions, keep alive a sense of our ultimate goals, and both act as a leavening in the dough of mass society and attract more and more of the alienated and frustrated members of that society."

My critics dwell at length on the "unreal" and "escapist" quality of the kind of individual and small-group activity I would substitute for mass action, but it seems to me the shoe is on the other foot. Can the Marxian class struggle any longer be considered "real" in the sense of action? "To point out what ought to be makes sense only if a way toward the implementation of these worthy desires can be shown," writes Clair. "Norms with which action cannot comply necessarily are invalid and harmful." True enough. So Clair cannot tell the worker in Russia today: Rebel, Resist, Oppose your inhuman government! For, with his Marxian definition of action, there is nothing to be done, since no mass movement against Stalinism exists in Russia today. But if we think in ethical and individual terms, we can say to the individual Russian that if he really cherishes freedom and brotherhood, he can and should act in his own little sphere here and now, and that it is "worth doing" and "real" even if it doesn't have big consequences. What he can do, how "far" he goes in resisting—these depend on what he feels willing to risk; but in even the most oppressive societies, since dictators are human and hence fallible, there will always exist *some* possibilities for resistance, disobedience, sabotage; but they can only be grasped if one frees one's self of the Marxian fetish of mass action.

"Action in politics implies participation," writes Clair; "without involvement, there is not politics." True again. But the dilemma of all socialists today is that, if they are true to their Marxian creed, they *cannot* participate, *cannot* become involved. Both my critics write as though they were engaged in mass activity, were really "doing something," while I perversely refuse to act and omnipotently prevent the masses from acting. But, so far as I can see, they are both doing just what I am doing: namely, writing about politics for small predominantly intellectual audiences. They aren't making revolutions, or influencing the masses through propaganda, or building socialist societies, or storming barricades, or even capturing trade unions. In short, insofar as they act at all, they act on *my* basis, and their activity is quite "unreal" and "escapist" from the Marxian point of view which they profess. This is not their fault, of course, nor would it be a reproach to them did they not pretend that in some metaphysical way they are engaging in "mass social action."

When large numbers of people begin to move towards some basic social change which seems to me at all desirable, then naturally I'll go along and take part as far as I honestly can. But this is not the case today, and so we must find some way to continue to exist as people with unpopular political ideas. All I can suggest, and God knows it's not as exciting as the grandiose perspectives of Marxism, is that we get down to something small enough to handle, real enough in terms of what we ourselves as individuals think and feel for us to be able to know whether it is serving our purposes or not. The problem exists; my own solution doesn't as yet satisfy even myself; perhaps no solution is possible. But surely it cannot be met by pretending the class struggle is working toward socialism when it isn't or by pretending one is engaged in mass activity when one isn't or by calling "snobbish" any one who faces up to it.

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