

# new masses

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aug. 26, 1947

## THE NOVEL AS BATTLEGROUND

*by S. FINKELSTEIN*

## ***HOLLYWOOD BLUES***

*by N. A. DANIELS*

## MARXISM AND LABOR HISTORY

*by PHILIP FONER*

# just a minute



THAT was a night we'll never forget—the night of infamy and horror when Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti were burned in the electric chair for a crime they did not commit. August 22 marks twenty years since hundreds of thousands and millions stood in the streets of New York, Boston, San Francisco, Buenos Aires, Paris, London, Moscow, Shanghai, crying out in anger and grief, bound together in the final agony of the Italian shoemaker and the fisherman whose names had become the cause of free men everywhere.

It is difficult to convey to those who did not themselves experience it the tremendous impact of those last few weeks of the battle to save Sacco and Vanzetti. Looking back over the years, it seems to us that not even the struggle in Spain—though of course its effects were more profound and lasting—so stirred the nation, roused so many people from all walks of life in common effort. And remember, this happened in the roaring Twenties, when Coolidge was in the US heaven and all seemed well with the world.

On our desk there lies a small volume called *America Arraigned!* It is a collection of Sacco and Vanzetti poetry edited by Lucia Trent and the late Ralph Cheyney. We don't usually think of the Twenties as

a time of social awareness on the part of American poets. Yet consider some of those who were moved to protest in verse the Sacco-Vanzetti murder: Edna St. Vincent Millay, John Dos Passos, Alfred Kreymborg, Babette Deutsch, Witter Bynner, John Gould Fletcher, Mary Carolyn Davies.

The best poetry, however, will be found in the letters of Sacco and Vanzetti, which were published in book form by Viking. Seven years of suffering and the sense of identification with the workers of all countries gave them, despite their imperfect knowledge of English, an eloquence and a depth of feeling which are rare in literature. Vanzetti's address before being sentenced by Judge Webster Thayer is a noble document that ought to be required reading in all the high schools of the country. And Sacco's words as he took his seat in the electric chair: "Farewell, my wife and child and all my friends," has the cadence of Shakespeare.

Sacco and Vanzetti were anarchists of a type that has become virtually extinct, loving humanity, participating in the labor struggle, welcoming the aid of Communists, Socialists, liberals and others. Their case, a labor frameup of the most transparent kind, was an outgrowth of the anti-Red hysteria after the First World War. Today

the American ruling class is perhaps less crude in its methods, though no less ruthless. The frameup of Gerhart Eisler doesn't involve his life, but it involves his liberty and the liberties that belong to us all. The attempt to railroad to jail Eugene Dennis, general secretary of the Communist Party, Howard Fast and ten other leaders of the Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee is part of the big-business effort to atomize the progressive movement in the thrust toward fascism and war. We urgently need today the kind of unity that was forged, all too briefly, around the Sacco-Vanzetti case.

A. B. M.



"Massachusetts — There She Stands!"  
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# LABOR'S STORY:

## Myth and Reality

**How the Commons school along with the debunkers misreads the history of the American working class movement. Developing a Marxist historical view.**

**By PHILIP FONER**

ARTHUR M. SCHLESINGER, JR., author of *The Age of Jackson*, recently called on intellectuals to abandon what he describes as "the mystique of the proletariat." Worship of the working class, according to this Pulitzer Prize historian, arises from "the intellectual's somewhat feminine fascination with the rude and muscular power of the proletariat [and] the intellectual's desire to compensate for his own sense of alienation by immersing himself in the broad maternal expanse of the masses." But history has demonstrated, argues Mr. Schlesinger, that "the whole conception of the proletariat as an agency of change is meaningless," since workers "try to cure their discontent by narcotics rather than by surgery [and] are rarely swept by the proper mass emotions."

This call will undoubtedly evoke an enthusiastic response from those intellectuals who are beginning to feel a bit uncomfortable in the midst of the current anti-labor, Red-baiting offensive. I can already hear them announce that the working class is not fulfilling its mission speedily enough to satisfy their panting hunger for social change. I can predict, too, that they will rapidly find a more satisfying place for themselves as spokesmen and apologists for reaction. This phenomenon has occurred frequently in our

history, but somehow the working class has managed to survive the fits of disillusionment which have swept intellectuals into the camp of labor's enemies. I am confident that it will survive Mr. Schlesinger's call.

I was particularly struck by Mr. Schlesinger's article because I have devoted considerable time and energy in the past decade to the study of the history of the American labor movement. I emerged from that study with quite a healthy respect for "the broad maternal expanse of the masses," and with a sense of deep gratitude to the American workers who played such a significant role in the growth of our democracy and who, through militant struggle, handed down to their descendants higher wages, shorter working days, better conditions and an improved status in the community. I emerged, too, with the conviction that one of the most vital tasks confronting us today is the development in the labor movement of a consciousness of the importance of labor history as a weapon in the struggle for democratic rights. To arm effectively for today's struggles and to build for the future we must utilize the people's past.

A major task confronting American Marxists today is that of rescuing labor historiography from two schools of writing which have gravely retarded

the working class. The first is represented by the school of John R. Commons and associates, whose *History of Labor in the United States* appeared almost thirty years ago and has since been the accepted history in academic and conservative trade union circles. The work of this school made a notable contribution insofar as it marked the first time that serious scholars considered the history of the labor movement as meriting attention. In addition, their research made available to students a vast body of source material on the history of the labor movement which was unearthed in the course of an exhaustive survey of libraries, bookshops, historical societies, and personal collections all over the country.

At the same time, however, Professor Commons and his co-workers at the University of Wisconsin developed a theory of the American labor movement which has been seized upon by conservative labor leaders to justify their narrow and backward policies. The Commons-Wisconsin school emphasized that our labor movement was the result of distinctive American conditions. They viewed pure and simple trade unionism, job consciousness, non-partisan political action and collaboration between labor and capital as products of historical experience and of a process of adaptation by organ-

ized labor to the larger American environment. They placed great stress upon the peculiarities of this environment (absence of feudal restrictions, free land, class fluidity, democratic political institutions), which, they argued, has prevented the American worker from becoming class conscious. The only labor organizations, they maintained, which could survive in America were those which made their organizations revolve about the individual worker's skill and job. Others, which preached principles of labor solidarity and common action, the unity of the skilled and unskilled in industrial unions, of the foreign-born and native Americans, of Negro and white, of women and men, and dared to project issues other than the limited objective of wage and job control, went counter to the only acceptable "consciousness" for American labor as a whole and were doomed to failure. Then, too, historical experience, according to the Commons school, had demonstrated that the only wise political policy that should be pursued by American labor organizations was that of nonpartisan political action—which in effect tied labor to two major capitalist parties. Labor's efforts in the past to engage in independent political action were described as always ending in failure and always seriously weakening the trade unions.

The American Federation of Labor, under the leadership of Samuel Gompers, emerged, according to this school, by a "kind of natural selection," and it became for these scholars the quintessence of the correct policies to be pursued by the American labor movement. The writings of the Commons-Wisconsin school became in effect a justification on Gompersism — craft unionism, no politics in the unions, and community of interest between labor and capital.

**T**O BUTTRESS this approach the Commons school throughout its volumes attacked Marxist influences in the American labor movement as an alien force which sought to divert the trade unions from their legitimate spheres of activity. This is illustrated, for example, in the discussion of the activities of Joseph Weydemeyer, the first outstanding American Marxist, who arrived in this country from Germany in 1851. To the pre-Civil War labor movement, Weydemeyer gave active guidance rooted in Marxist science. Under Marx's influence, Weydemeyer set himself to correct the sec-

tarian weaknesses of the German-American labor movement, its doctrinaire quality, its failure to examine American conditions concretely, its isolation from the American-born workers. At the same time, he opposed the harmful influences of the pseudo-socialist Wilhelm Weitling, who regarded trade union activities as unimportant and who believed that participation in politics would injure the workers' interests. In 1853 Weydemeyer was influential in organizing the American Workers' League, which called for independent political action by a united labor movement cutting across lines of craft and national origin.

To John R. Commons and associates Weydemeyer was an "agitator" who "sought to take advantage of the trade union agitation of the time" and to use the unions as the basis of a general class-conscious organization which would combine "both trade union and legislative demands." According to Commons, this conception, being alien to the consciousness of American workers, was doomed to failure and was properly rejected by the trade unions as soon as they understood its pernicious character. This analysis, of course, ignores the fact that Weydemeyer helped create the "trade union agitation of the time" by his consistent campaign against those who regarded trade unions as unimportant. As a Marxist, Weydemeyer knew the importance of strengthening the trade union movement, but he also saw the weakness of ignoring legislative demands while the trade unions were battling on the economic front. He also believed that the trade union movement was not the exclusive property of the skilled craftsmen, and raised the issue of organizing the unskilled as well as the skilled. That his approach to the problems of the American working class did not meet with a welcome reception from many craft unions of the 1850's is true, but history has demonstrated the correctness of the program Weydemeyer set down almost a century ago. Today, when labor has proved through its activities of the past decade the validity of Weydemeyer's emphasis upon the need for workers to combine trade union and legislative demands and to organize the unskilled as well as the skilled, it is clear that this pioneer Marxist was no mere "agitator" who sought to foist alien ideas upon the American labor movement, but a profound student of labor problems who pointed the way which the American working

class for its own security had to follow.

The attitude of scorn toward Weydemeyer displayed by the Commons school pervades its description of the work of later Marxists in the labor movement. At all times the Marxists are dismissed as contributing little of lasting importance, and as dealing with fantasy rather than with concrete American problems. Yet as Frederick Engels pointed out in his brilliant preface to the 1887 edition of *The Conditions of the Working Class in England*, the German Marxists who came to this country arrived "armed with the experience earned during long years of class struggle in Europe, and with an insight into the general conditions of working class emancipation, far superior to that hitherto gained by American workingmen." "This is a fortunate circumstance for the American proletarians," Engels added, "who thus are enabled to appropriate and to take advantage of the intellectual and moral fruits of the forty years of their European classmates, and thus to hasten on the time of their own victory."

The more of American labor history that we study, the more apparent does it become that the Marxists made their influence felt in a significant manner. It is impossible truthfully to trace the origin and early growth of the American Federation of Labor without first revealing the basic contribution of the Marxists in overcoming the destructive influence of Lassalleism in the American labor movement, with its conception that trade unions were useless in the struggle of the working class for the achievement of immediate ends and for the abolition of wage slavery. It is equally impossible truthfully to relate the origin and growth of the CIO without first revealing the contribution of the Marxists in the Trade Union Educational League and the Trade Union Unity League, as they set down the basic principles of industrial unionism, organization of the unorganized, unity between economic and political action, and built the foundation for the unprecedented growth of the labor movement in the past decade.

Indeed, the events of the last ten years provide sufficient proof of the inadequacy of the *History of Labor in the United States* by John R. Commons and associates. No one reading these volumes when they first appeared would have believed that the CIO could possibly be born and flourish, for here is a labor organization

which unites skilled and unskilled, regardless of race, creed or sex, emphasizes political as well as economic activities, believes in the identity of interest of the working class of all countries, and dares to go beyond the limits of pure and simple trade unionism. Yet all this, according to the Commons-Wisconsin school, flies in the face of the only acceptable "consciousness" of American labor and is doomed to be still-born. Fortunately, the millions of workers who flocked into the industrial unions after 1935 and who were so instrumental in the victories of the Roosevelt administration in the campaigns of 1936, 1940 and 1944, believed that it was more important to secure decent living standards and greater democracy than to conform to what some historian considered to be the only acceptable "consciousness" for American labor. What is more, even

the AFL was compelled, by the success of the drive to organize the mass production industries, to abandon to an extent its rigid adherence to craft unionism, no politics in the unions and pure and simple trade unionism.

We can rest assured that life itself will continue to disprove the validity of the thesis set forth by the Commons-Wisconsin school, and will supply richer and more abundant proof that the natural course of our working class movement, just as in other countries, is to express and fight for its own class interests. It will continue to do so, I may add, in spite of all efforts of reactionary legislators, employers' associations and their press, to destroy the American labor movement.

**T**HE second type of labor history which has been so harmful to the labor movement is represented by the

so-called "debunking" school, and is exemplified by James Oneal's *The Workers in American History* and A. M. Simons' *Social Forces in American History*. For one thing these men, both Socialists, spoke of the AFL as one reactionary mass and failed to develop the truly progressive origins of the Federation, its major contributions to the labor movement and the influence of the Marxists in this connection. They also failed to reveal the basic reasons for the development of conservative influence which finally dominated the organization, without ever completely eliminating the progressive forces which had been present in the Federation from its inception. These serious distortions gave theoretical confirmation to the activities of the leaders of the Federation who wished to bury the story of the movement's progressive past. They also helped to isolate the progressives in the labor movement by depriving them of valuable ammunition in the campaign to build a truly all-encompassing labor movement.

Another work which fell into some of these same errors, despite some significant merits, was Anthony Bimba's *History of the American Working Class*. Written by a Lithuanian-born Communist who, despite language difficulties, made a careful study of the labor movement of the country of his adoption, the book represents a type of sectarianism which for a period weighted down American Marxist scholars and prevented them from developing a genuine, all-sided understanding of the history of their country.

Then again, these writers viewed American history cynically and regarded all democratic movements as conducted by and for the bourgeoisie. They wrote of the working class as the dupes of the ruling class and saw them serving only the interest of the upper class when they participated in the American Revolution, Jeffersonian democracy and the Civil War. The effect of this narrow outlook was to isolate the labor movement from the best traditions in our history and to hand these traditions over to the enemies of labor, who in turn were able to develop an insidious campaign to convince the American people that labor has always been a selfish force in our society, seeking only its own advantages at the expense of the nation as a whole.

The truth is that organized labor has been since the Civil War the de-



"He claims it's his privilege as a taxpayer."

cisive force in the growth of American democracy, was an active and enthusiastic force in the War for Independence, the War of 1812, and the Civil War, and exerted great influence in the movements led by Jefferson, Jackson and Lincoln. The truth is that the great American traditions belong to the working class, and must be cherished and held aloft with pride by the present-day descendants of the workers who formed the Sons of Liberty in the American Revolution, and the Democratic-Republican Societies of Jeffersonian Democracy, who rallied behind Jackson in the struggle against monopoly and the developing financial oligarchy, and who were a vital force in the battle against the slave power. The truth is that organized labor was largely responsible for the establishment of public education, the abolition of property qualifications for voting and holding office, the abolition of imprisonment for debt, and many other vital democratic reforms which

have benefitted not only the working class but every section of the population. To be sure, other classes united with the workers in these movements, but it was labor that was the decisive force in the battle for these advances. For, as a meeting in Philadelphia in 1835 put it:

"This meeting is satisfied that the working classes are the bone and sinew of the land; and . . . upon their health, virtue and happiness depend the security and perpetuity of our glorious and free institutions."

TODAY we are in the process of developing a Marxist history of the American labor movement—one which will avoid the pitfalls of the various schools of labor historiography in this country which have preceded us and which will illustrate that while there are basic differences in the development of the labor movement of different countries, the common interests of the working class, independent

of nationality, are the same everywhere. To do this requires the co-operation of many students, rooted in Marxist science, who are prepared to devote the hours of research necessary to bring to light the true history of the American working class and to teach modern labor the lessons that can be drawn from the movements of the past. These students will be called upon to pass judgment on what happened in the past so that their studies can serve as a guide for the present. No doubt there will be those who will raise objections to such a procedure and will argue, as did the reviewer in the *New York Times* in his comments on my *History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, that it is not proper for the historian to evaluate, on the basis of the evidence he has accumulated, the correctness or incorrectness of positions taken in the past. But Marxists believe that the historian has a more important function to perform in society than that of accumulating facts. And we will be guided by Engel's penetrating observation in his letter to Florence Kelley Wischnewetsky, Dec. 28, 1886: "There is no better road to theoretical clearness of comprehension than *durch Schaden klug werden* (to learn by one's own mistakes). And for a whole class there is no other road, especially for a nation so eminently practical as the Americans."

It is the function of the Marxist historian to indicate and interpret the mistakes of the past so that these mistakes should not be constantly repeated. It is his function to present the greatly enriched historical view which will enlighten our present struggles, will stimulate the foresight of labor's thinkers and leaders, and give to the great mass of our workers the clarity, courage and determination to forge ahead for the attainment of their immediate ends, and for the accomplishment of the historical mission of the working class: the abolition of the exploitation of man by man.

*Dr. Foner's article was one of the papers read at a recent Jefferson School forum on Marxism and America. It appears here as part of NEW MASSES' series celebrating the hundredth anniversary of "The Communist Manifesto." This anniversary will also be celebrated at a mass meeting in Madison Square Garden, Thursday, September 18, sponsored by the Communist Party.*

## portside patter

*News Item: Report from Italy tells of GI slavery and luxurious living by officers.*

These stories of officers indulging in a life of wine, women and song are highly exaggerated—I know of many officers in Italy who can't sing. And reports that every officer has a jeep for joy-riding are simply not true. Actually several of them are often forced to share a staff car.

Regulations for officers are just as strict as they are for enlisted men. Even a man with the rank of Captain must stand inspection and is subject to disciplinary action if his squad of orderlies doesn't keep his suite in proper order.

As a matter of fact, billets for the men are in the cities close to their daily jobs while officers very often have to ride for an hour to distant resort hotels. It should also be remembered that officers have to pay for their food. The men can get all the Spam they want free, while an officer is forced to pay as much as fifty cents for a few pounds of steak and potatoes.

Rumor-mongers spread wild tales about officers having an abundance of hard liquor and soft women. Actually a coke costs an EM only five cents, while the officers pay up to three times

## By BILL RICHARDS

that amount for the same drink with only an ounce or two of Scotch added.

*The probe of the Hughes contracts and expense accounts has proved to be a political flop. The most the committee got out of the whole deal was a few good telephone numbers.*

Herbert Hoover foresees "no immediate depression." It would be vastly more encouraging if this great prophet had predicted depression just around the corner.

*A veterans' organization has asked for a ten-year embargo on immigration. Hereafter they will be known as the Military Order of the Purple Heartless.*

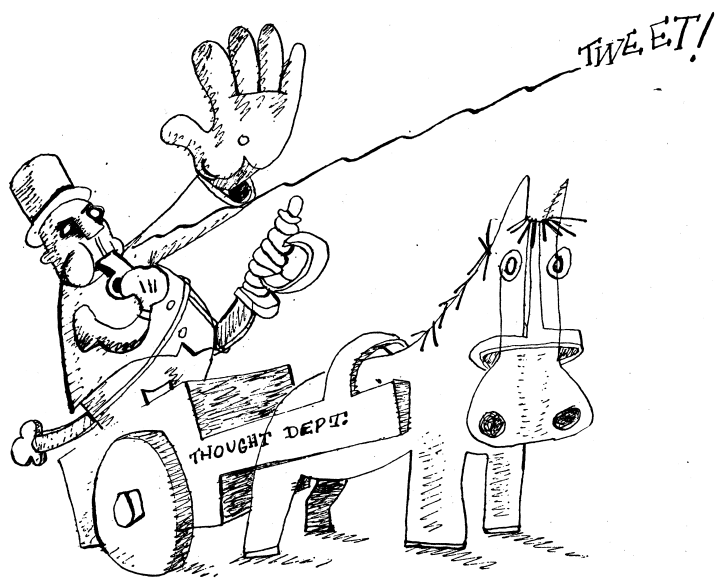
Carroll Reece of the Republican National Committee says that the GOP will base its Presidential hopes on the record of the 80th Congress. This bit of strategy comes as a cheering note to anxious Democrats.

*The budget for the United Nations amounts to half the cost of a modern battleship. In the midst of our high cost of living it is pleasant to know that peace can still be had at a moderate price.*

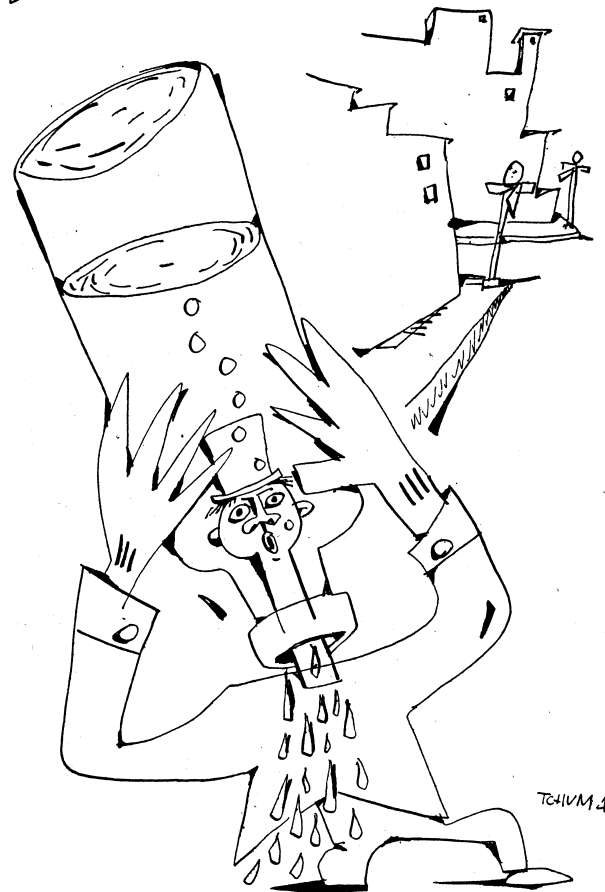
# KLOWN ALLEY



## THE DRUNKARD



"The Traffic Kop"



TC1VM.47

# HOLLYWOOD LETTER

by N. A. Daniels

Hollywood.

IF ANY readers of NM are still under the industry-manufactured illusion that Hollywood writers live in swimming pools and have no troubles aside from tax-dodging and ulcers, they might profitably be referred to the current (August) issue of *The Screen Writer*, organ of the Screen Writers' Guild and probably the most lively publication to come out of what somebody has called "the Forest Lawn of the Arts."

The SWG's Economic Program Committee has prepared and published a comprehensive survey of writer-employment here, and the picture is pretty ghastly. Of course, we have been looking at this picture for some time, but this series of articles—together with the official report of the Economic Program Committee which is being presented to a general membership meeting of the SWG—will jounce the complacent, even those in the upper brackets.

For it is now as plain as the nose on a bipartisan Senator that writer employment is at its lowest level in many a year, with some 440 of the Guild's 1400 members employed as of July 1: 262 by the majors and 178 by the independents. The balance of our membership is in a pool, all right—a pool of more or less permanently unemployed, not a swimming pool.

In a concise article entitled "First Steps in Arithmetic," Ring Lardner, Jr. points out not only the low level of employment, but additional factors that make the picture even less encouraging than it might otherwise seem. For example, says Lardner, "There is no direct means open to us of solving this problem: we can neither persuade the studios to make more pictures nor make it a Guild responsibility to see that a single individual member gets a job. Most of the devices to which trade unions generally resort to combat unemployment are impractical for our purposes because of the special nature of our craft. No system of seniority rights, automatic upgrading or spreading of work by shorter hours can be made to apply to screenwriting. Spreading the work by putting more men on the individual job is . . . out of the question. . . . Spreading the work by limiting the number of weeks in a year a man may work . . . if it could ever be practical in a field with such sharp differences in talent . . . would require a complete closed shop, which is not only unrealizable but temporarily illegal."

Various ameliorative measures will be proposed at the SWG membership meeting, but they scarcely strike at the root of the problem. Among them we find a demand for a guaranteed annual wage; licensing of material; compensation for remakes and reissues of older films; a scheme to encourage the production of original material for the screen, etc. No one of these palliatives will be achieved without a terrific battle, but there is no doubt that this battle must be joined in the near future.

Right now, for example, the Industry (you always dignify it with a capital) is in panic because of the British tax of seventy-five percent on American film imports. Eric Johnston, president of the Motion Picture Producers Association, is screaming about the British desire for "a dollar's worth of film for a quarter" and the producers' association has acted promptly to cut off *all* film exports to Britain until the British come to their senses and realize that they need American films more than they need American dollars.

This is a bad situation—for the British *ad valorem* tax and the American retaliation have had a further immediate effect on production here. The way the boys are talking now, they are definitely going to make fewer pictures and cheaper pictures. (They do not talk about making better pictures.) Fewer and cheaper pictures will automatically mean fewer jobs in every category of employment, and current budgets are already undergoing revision downward, which means ditto.

In addition, there has been a tendency for some time now (in view of European dislike for our product) to shrink the payroll through various time-honored devices: layoffs, wage-cuts, faster shooting schedules, fewer purchases of original material, more reissues of old films, more remakes of old films, flat deals made to writers who would normally command larger salaries but being hard up must take what they are offered or go jobless. One particularly fascinating dodge, which is becoming more prevalent, is the offer of an assignment that carries a fifty-percent wage-cut, the balance to be paid "if the film is made" in the form of a "bonus."

THE industry is not only in panic; it is in a dilemma. It is in the universal panic which is afflicting capitalism and will afflict it more in the days to come. It is in the specific dilemma of having to face a shrinking market for its products abroad. And the foreign market has always been counted on to provide the gravy after the cost of production is taken care of by the American market.

Now if you were a producer faced with this dilemma, what would you do? Well, there is one simple thing you *could* do—you could make *better* films. But then you would be faced with the additional dilemma that "better" can only mean one thing: progressive. Progressive in the sense that the product would actually deal with the lives of human beings as they live them, not the opium dream-world Hollywood has been conjuring up ever since we were all children and lived in a dream-world of our own creation.

And this is specifically what the majority of producers simply do not want to do: they do not want to make more progressive films. They want to make less progressive films. The majority have so far not been affected by the simple equation offered by such a film as *Crossfire*, which is going to be an enormous box-office success, precisely because it is a progressive film and handles a subject the producers would rather leave untouched. (In addition, it was "cheap" to make in comparison with the super-epics the ordinary producer makes under the fond notion that the more money a picture costs the better it is.)

These are some of the problems the screenwriters and other craftsmen will be discussing with increasing frequency in the lean days which are upon us in Hollywood. Solutions will not be ready-made or easy of application. But one thing will come out of the discussions—a much deeper understanding of how this industry actually operates.



# Afternoon

**It seemed to Julian that the family never talked together without mentioning to the children that they must never become cigar-makers.**

**A Short Story by JOSE YGLESIAS**

**Illustrated by Stefanelli.**

**M**ANY afternoons Julian used to run across the lawn to his aunt's home and wander from kitchen to living room to parlor. Or he sat on their porch swing and swung back and forth on it. At home the porch was so small that one could only sway a little on the swing. A little exuberance sent it back against the wall, so that one was confined to lying still and reading. There it was that he spent long hours reading, from midday when the sun shone directly on his book or his eyes, the dark and bright lights flashing across his vision so that he had to steady himself when he got up, until late afternoon when his mother called him in to supper.

But his aunt's porch was quite different. People ran in and out of the house, and he never thought of reading on their porch swing. He and his cousin sat on it, their legs dangling down to reach the floor, and pushed back and forth. There was space to swing in, and if the chains twisted in mid-air and sent them sideways, there were no flower pots in the way either. Julian and Olga sang and yelled and no one minded them.

Singing on his aunt's porch was so exhilarating that he forgot about propriety. They waved at and welcomed the neighbors walking back from the cigar factories. "Who's that coming down the street?" they sang to the tired cigarmakers and laughed wildly at their own audacity. "Gimme a little kiss, will yuh, huh?" Julian sang to Olga, and again they would scream with laughter. They sang stridently with none of the archness of band vocalists, but they felt that they were in tune with what went on outside of Ybor City. Everyone, they felt, must think they were Americans; and they laughed to have so fooled them, for, really, you know, their eyes told each other, we are not. We're Latins. And the afternoon dissolved in laughter until, suddenly, they were exhausted and the swing was still.

One day Julian left Olga on the porch and went in to get a glass of water. Juanita sat by the stove in the kitchen reading a novel. "*Madre mia*, what yelling you two did!"

"Juley, Juley," Olga called from the porch, "come out and play some more."

"You see," he said to his aunt. "No," he called back, "I'm tired." He was immediately dissatisfied. Play, she called it. Julian did not like to do something that was so planned. Besides, Olga was younger than he, and he was soon going to finish junior high school. Anyone would think that he had not read any books if he played like that with Olga.

"Tell me," he said to his aunt, "what are you reading?"

"Oh," Juanita put down the book and standing in front of the stove stirred the beans in the large pot with a tablespoon. "It's a novel by Carlotta Braeme. It's not for you."

"Why? Because it's in Spanish?" Julian knew that was not the reason, but he wanted to find out although he knew what the answer would be. No one in his family thought that novels were anything to waste one's time on. The very word seemed to mean that it was trifling and ridiculous.

"No, *chico*," his aunt answered a little impatiently. "They are very romantic, only good for women."

"Oh," he said. Men are not supposed to be romantic, he thought.

"Well," he told her in imitation of his uncle, "don't let the beans burn again."

"*Anda!* Away with you," she brandished the tablespoon at him. "You know too much."

In the living room, which once a year—on Christmas Eve—was used for dining, Julian sat at the large round table and read the afternoon newspaper published by the Americans in Tampa. A hand-embroidered tablecloth covered the table and in the center of it

stood a bowl of wax fruit scratched during the many conversations held there every night. Julian had once enjoyed making little grooves in them with his fingernails, but he thought them much too decorative now to destroy the bright yellow of the banana and the pink flush of the peaches. To contemplate them once in a while, instead, during his reading of the serialized novel in the newspaper, gave him a feeling of affinity to the story of estranged loves in nice homes that the newspaper most usually told.

**T**HERE in the living room he waited for his uncle and his cousins to arrive from the factory. His grandfather, who lived down the block, would come to sit an hour before supper in his eldest daughter's living room and read and talk for a while. All of them brought the pungent smell of tobacco with them, and Julian felt that it was a kind of glamorous and shameful perfume. Certainly the inside of the factories must be full of curiosities, but being a cigarmaker was, no doubt, a kind of failure. It seemed to him that the family never talked together but that it mentioned at least once to the children that they must never make cigars.

Juanita came into the room with her paper-bound novel and sat in the rocker. That was a sign that the others would soon start to arrive. Julian refolded the paper and laid it on the table for the older men to read. Pancho was the first to arrive. He was married to Juanita's oldest daughter, and they lived next door.

"*Ola, Juana*," he always said, and sat up at the table to read the paper. Invariably, too, he quoted from it to whomever was in the room. "These Americans in the South are not going to vote for Roosevelt because Al Smith campaigns for him. They are nothing but bigots."

"Oh, this life—" Juanita began when Mario, her husband, came in.

He was always cheerful, and he always smiled. Julian was very proud of him because he was a foreman in one of the factories. Walking to the movies in Ybor City one day, Julian had heard a woman sitting on a porch say to her next-door neighbor, "That's the nephew of Mario."

Mario took his jacket off and said, as he loosened his tie ostentatiously because he was the only one who wore a tie and jacket to the factory, "*Ola vieja*, old woman, what are we going to eat tonight?" And Juanita always answered with coquettish impatience, "You'll see."

"And listen," she said as if it followed quite naturally, "the binder was terrible today. They were little dry strips that broke in your hand like grass. I didn't think I would ever get my bunches to stay together."

"Yes," Pancho looked up from his newspapers, "the wrappers were short and so dry that they would not stretch."

"In other days," Juanita added ominously, "your cigarmakers would leave you."

While Mario considered what to say, Julian asked, "What is a wrapper?" Mario was the only one, since he was cautious about what he said, who ever gave him a chance to get in the conversation, and Julian had decided that he should know what they were talking about. So much of their trouble, it seemed to him, had to do with "wrappers," "binders," "bunches." His uncle, glad to avoid answering the others, smiled at him and with one arm out, the hand cupped as if holding a cigar bunch, told him. "That is the tobacco leaf that goes around the outside of the cigar. The roller gets the bunch—"

"*Oye, mejor que no aprendas*," Juanita admonished Julian. "Yes," Pancho backed her up. "It is better if you do not learn."

"What's wrong with making cigars?" Julian asked Pancho although he already knew there was no glory in it. Didn't they always say, "If you don't make good grades we'll put you in a cigar factory?"

"Why?" Pancho was mockingly astonished.

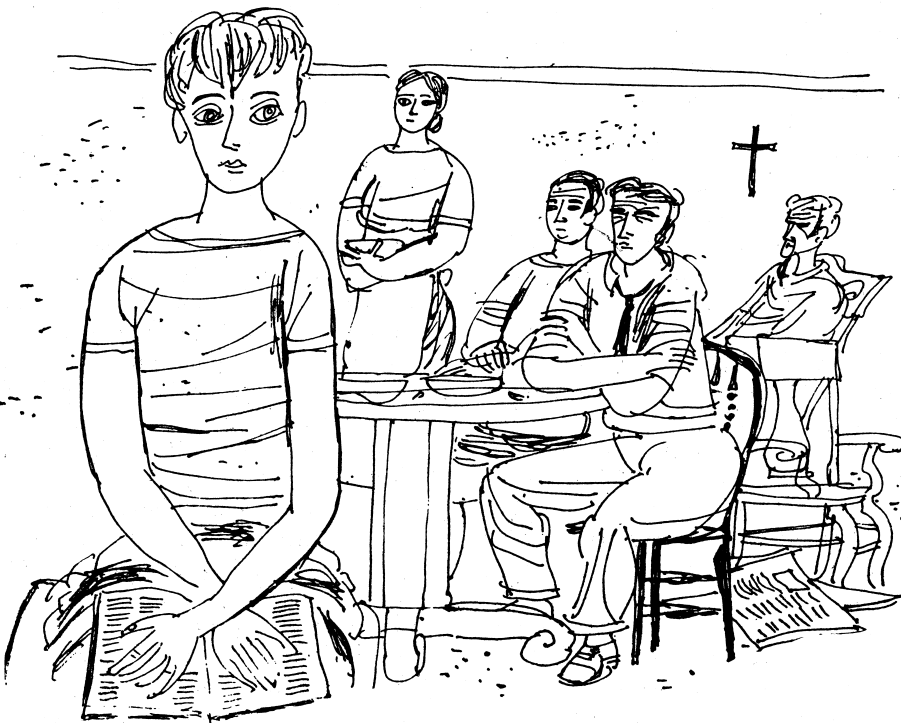
"You ask your grandfather when he comes, why," his aunt answered sternly. "Fifty years in a factory, that is why."

"In other days," Juanita continued to Mario, putting aside her novel since there was no going back to it now,

"in other days the cigarmakers would go out on strike."

"**T**HAT is what we need—a strike." The grandfather of the family, white-haired and pink-cheeked, walked into the room with these words, and pointed a hand whose fingernails were stained a tobacco brown at Mario. Juanita got up and gave her father the rocker. "Sit here," she said. "You must be tired."

"We are afraid of hunger — that is what is wrong. When I was a little boy in Key West I used to eat stones,"



the old man said dramatically. Then he smiled. "I don't believe it," Julian said, but no one seemed to have heard. His grandfather, in any case, once he started talking never heard anyone. "For twelve dollars a week we suffocate in tobacco dust and polish rotten tobacco for the capitalists to smoke. That is all we deserve. Everyone agonizes all day. Hurry, hurry, hurry to finish the three hundred cigars by five o'clock. We are a lot of cowards."

"Roosevelt says we should not be afraid," Pancho read from the newspaper. "They play '*Happy Days Are Here Again*' everywhere he talks."

"Humph," the grandfather snorted. "We won't have them with that dry old man, Hoover." The grandfather had been walking up and down the room, punctuating his talk with gestures and loud emphasis. As a sign of disgust he sat in the rocker. There was

a jesting seriousness about everything he said, so that Julian thought about these scenes as if they were a kind of play-acting. After all, who was starving? It was not, he thought, like the books he read. No one dies, there was no tragedy, all his family did was talk in loud voices. They could not be important, and they all spoke in Spanish.

"A ten-month strike," the old man said, and, his hands on his stomach, rocked back and forth. "Make them afraid, and you see the tobacco get better."

"Ten-month strike? When did the cigarmakers ever win a strike?" Mario asked. "You know that, old man. Who is going to feed the children?"

"There they have you. Everyone is afraid of starving," the old man stopped his rocking and got up. He slapped his hands together and said, "You are starving already." Julian thought quickly of his schoolmates. Which of them was starving, he wondered. "Juley," his grandfather pointed to him, "Juley was born during the ten-month strike." The grandfather dropped his arm, and Julian tried to interpret his smile. To have been born during an exciting time! A long stretch of time when all the family was home like this all day long, arguing and talking and drinking coffee like in the days of the Christmas holidays.

"Juley," his grandfather asked him

tenderly, "what did you learn in school today?" What did he learn in school? Oh, a lot, but what did his grandfather know about the importance of algebra? "What did they tell you about Abraham Lincoln?" his grandfather insisted. "Your grandfather was born the year he was killed."

"These Americans!" Pancho said and put the newspaper away: it never seemed to satisfy him. "When they have a good man, they kill him or they bathe him in tar like they did the union men."

"That's not true," Julian screamed at him. "That's not true. That's un-American." His face got red and he felt like he did when he was younger and had what his family called tantrums. And he screamed some more. "Just because you did not make money. If Henry Ford makes money because he has brains, then he is entitled to it." Yes, he was going to make money, Julian felt in his anger, because he had brains like the Americans.

"Old man," Pancho said to the grandfather, "you better tell Juley what they did to your brother when he hid the union organizers."

"What a temper!" the old man said admiringly. "Don't yell so much. Talk with reason like I do."

"With reason!" Juanita laughed. "He is just like you." She went to the kitchen, laughing and shaking her head, to look at the food. "What a family!" she called back from the other room. "Everyone has too much temper for his size."

THE three men looked at him and laughed, all for different reasons. Julian felt as if he were going to cry, and when he saw his grandfather's proud smile, he had to look away and handle the wax fruit. Why didn't they hit him? This feeling like crying without having been hit or the threat of it was silly, he thought. They were not so bright. They had not gone to school. What did they know?

"Juley," his grandfather said, "don't forget when you're a great man that some of that money belongs to the cigarmakers. You don't remember my brother, The Americans flogged him when he hid the union organizers. He was the mayor of West Tampa," the old man stopped to laugh for a moment, "but they flogged him anyway."

"They plant thorns," Pancho said, "and they want to gather flowers."

Juanita came into the dining room with the tablespoon in one hand when

Tomas, her newest son-in-law, came in with her daughter Manuela. "*Ola familia!*" he said like an actor entering the stage. "There he is," Juanita said as if she meant this is the end. Tomas threw himself on his knees in front of her, arms outstretched like a singer enfolding a high note, and cried passionately, "*Mi amor!*" Juanita tapped him on his head with the spoon and everyone laughed when he acted crestfallen and rejected. With one last attempt to win her approval, he grabbed her ankle. "Tell me that you love me," he pleaded.

"What a type!" Mario said. "These Cubans are all jokers."

"Tell your father," Tomas said to Manuela, "how I won you, my sugar cane." "You Spaniards!" he said to Mario, going over and slapping him on his chest. Julian laughed to see this. The family was getting perilously close to jokes and references that he was sure he was not supposed to hear. His fingernails finding the grooves in the wax fruit, Julian wondered when someone would suggest that he go out and play.

"He never has a serious moment, mother," Manuela said. "We are not supposed to stay here, so don't let him spend all afternoon talking."

"What a lottery you won with him," Juanita said indulgently. "What are you doing to my daughter?"

"Your daughter is the luckiest girl in the city, and she loves what I do to her."

"Tomas, *madre mia!* Shut up," she said sternly, but they all laughed, even Julian dared to smile. "But I have something serious this afternoon," Tomas said. "I want all of you to join the union."

"Again," the old man said. "Are there organizers in town?"

"Sure, but it is a secret. That is, we don't want the manufacturers to know right away. It's been a long time since we had a union, and we have to give them time to get used to the idea."

"God damn it," Mario said indignantly. "Don't talk about it in front of me. Look at what you are doing. Why don't you bring the organizers here to eat chicken and rice? Hell, I'm a foreman. Wouldn't my owner like to know I let you do this?" He shook his head in dismay. Mario never really became mad, but he looked as if he might start yelling any moment, too. "God damn it, don't pass out cards when I am here."

"Well," Tomas suggested sympathetically, "why don't you go to the bathroom for ten minutes?"

"Juley, Juley," Olga's voice called from the porch, "come out and play. Tony is here." Mario was talking and Julian could not make out the rest, but in a second he could hear her voice again. "Come out and play," she shrieked.

"Yes, Juley," Juanita said. "Go out and play."

"I don't want to," he said low, hoping it would not become a family issue keeping him from the rest of the conversation. He picked up a book, pretending to read it. Every once in a while, it seemed to him, the whole family worried him about not playing and too much reading. He was beseeched and besieged on all sides.

"You cannot read all the time," Pancho insisted. All the attention of the room was turned to him, and he knew it was about to begin again. At such times he hated them, and he no sooner thought that than, the blood rushing to his head, he wanted to cry.

"I DON'T read all the time," he said, angry that such a wonderful possibility was not open to him. Instead he had to defend himself from so terrible an accusation. "It's good to read," he added in a loud voice.

"But what does he read?" Juanita asked, and answered herself, "fairy tales!"

"That's not true. I don't read them any more," Julian defended himself. He felt that he would soon be yelling again. If he did not, he knew that he would cry and then they would have won.

Tomas, the union blanks still in his hands, stopped them all. "Why shouldn't he read if he wants to? Even fairy tales, Juley. It is good to know that things come out right in the end. Fairy tales are about the happy life. And when you are older there are not many afternoons when you can play instead of argue . . . time enough . . ."

"That is right," the grandfather said, rocking back and forth, his hands on his stomach. "You go ahead and read and get out of the cigar factories. I have been making cigars since I was fourteen. I could hardly hold up my pants then, and now I am beginning to lose them again."

"You study now," Mario, always the foreman, Mario who had been glad to be quiet for the last few minutes,

said. "You make a lot of money and show the Americans. You have the chances we never had because you got brains."

"Who cares about money?" Tomas asked the whole room. He was about to begin another argument with Mario, but he stopped himself when he saw

Julian was hunched up sadly over the wax fruit. He pulled him playfully to the middle of the room.

"Forget about money," he told him. "Do big things."

Julian looked at them all from the center of the room, and again he felt like crying. He walked over to the

table and placed the wax fruit in the bowl. He must go out and think this over, he thought. On his way out to the porch his grandfather reached out and stopped him for a second before he let him go again.

"Don't forget us, Juley," he said. "Don't forget me."

# **Howard Hughes and Howard Fast**

**An Editorial by JOHN STUART**

**H**OWARD HUGHES now stands as a unique figure who turned the tables on his accusers. I do not defend him as a millionaire nor do I blink the fact that the mores and morals of the big money are his too. But I do see in the case of Hughes the dominant, the main thread that runs through American civilization today: whoever challenges the movers and shakers of American fascism, the kingpins of monopoly, runs the terrible risk of character assassination, if not imprisonment.

It is at this point that Howard Hughes and Howard Fast meet. Both are independent entrepreneurs. Both are outside the Wall Street domain. Both believe in competition—one in the realm of business the other in the realm of ideas. Hughes is opposed to the air-transportation monopoly crushing him. Fast is opposed to the monopolization of thought, to his being gagged by self-appointed censors. Between the two there is a great disparateness in outlook, in background, in conviction. Hughes' cultural values are apparently represented in such films as *The Outlaw*. Fast's cultural values center on man and science, both of which merge in creative work that has made Fast among the most widely read and warmly regarded novelists of our day. Hughes has no record of long, premature anti-fascism. Fast has. But in spite of all these differences both were and are threatened by a common enemy.

The object lesson of the Hughes case, as of the case of Fast, is that no one with self-respect, whatever his fortune, is safe from the ugly inquisitions conducted by a Senator Brewster or a Representative Thomas. For standing erect and defying the Un-American Committee Fast was fined and sentenced to three months in prison. That might have been Hughes' fate if his financial resources had not helped get him and his testimony a big play in the newspapers and plenty of time on the air.

In the fullest sense it was the people who saved Hughes from continued persecution. Americans in the vast majority hate the monopolies and their missionaries in and out of Congress. When Hughes hammered back, after Brewster and his circus dominated the headlines for days, there was established a unity between him and the millions who followed the proceedings. Their disenchantment with monopoly grew even greater and Hughes in the public mind became a David poised against the Pan-American goliath. They could see the political ambitions of the pygmies who held the hearings in air-cooled chambers. They learned under Hughes' pressure how Senator Brewster had accepted favors from Hughes' enemies. They could see too that the smearing of President Roosevelt, the maligning of a dead man, was a means of advancing Republican ambitions in an election

year. People learned these things from their newspapers and their radios and their resentment drove the Brewsters to cover. What was to have been the great Republican crusade of the year fizzled away into nothing.

I have no doubt that had the case of Howard Fast and his co-defendants of the Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee been presented fairly in the press and on the radio, if the position of Fast and the others had become public property, the Un-American Committee would not have dared cite them for contempt. There has been a conspiracy of silence against them, against Eugene Dennis, against Gerhart Eisler. Millions are not permitted to judge for themselves the abuse of their civil rights. When Eisler was portrayed by the Un-American Committee as a foreign agent, an atom-bomb spy, the newspapers splashed these fables over their front pages. But when Eisler defended himself and his lawyers ripped the tissue-thin fabric of the prosecution's case, hardly a word appeared in the press. Eisler as a monster was magnificent copy. Eisler as the victim of frame-up was no news.

Yet Fast and Eisler and Dennis are the victims, as Hughes has been, in monopoly's game of protecting its power and forestalling any challenge to its dollar-mad rule. All of them, including Hughes, are fighting the aggressions of the trusts—Hughes for his own reasons and the others out of their devotion to progress and democracy. All of them are the targets of star-chamber proceedings where Senators or Representatives not only exceed their powers but use them to shield the country's real enemies and advance their aims. There is urgent need for investigations of those who profited and cheated on war contracts, a continuation of the very small beginnings made in the May-Garsson case. There is need for an exposure of the corporate powers that skyrocket prices and place a straitjacket on the life of every American who works for a living.

But we shall not get these investigations, this lifting of the curtain which the steel and oil and power trusts have erected around themselves—not until the country fights for them and stops the perversion of Congressional inquiry. The Hughes investigation has disgusted enough Americans to make it possible to demand, as Sen. Murray has proposed, an investigation of the investigators. It has offended the sense of fairness of too many of us to allow the matter to be dropped while the chief culprit runs off to vacation in Maine.

Today, with Congress controlled by hatchetmen who use their powers to destroy people's reputations, endanger their livelihoods and crush ideas and movements they consider heretical, no one is safe. Not even a Howard Hughes.

# GUILTY OF ANTI-FASCISM

Washington.

WITH the aged anti-Semites and lunatic fringe, ladies in pearl chokers and crimped gray hair smiling approval from spectators' benches, a jury of seven men and five women returned a "guilty" verdict against Gerhart Eisler last week. Interestingly enough, while the jury needed to agree on only one of nine things, as charged, to find him "guilty"—membership in or affiliation to the American Communist Party, use of one of six names, or residence in the United States prior to 1941—it was on the membership and affiliation charge that there was most discussion. On the first vote on this the jury was divided ten to two, said three jurors I spoke to later. It was impossible to get any clear agreement as to the total number of ballots taken, however, and the foreman kept glancing uneasily toward a person a little distance down the corridor as I queried them. This turned out to be Manning Johnson, an ex-Communist organizer, billed as the prosecution's star witness, who cordially shook the jurors' hands and pronounced, "A just verdict."

The conviction will be appealed. Eisler will be sentenced in October; the maximum sentence is five years and a \$5,000 fine. The defense is being conducted by the Civil Rights Congress.

IN SUMMING up, chief defense attorney A. J. Isserman called the jury's attention to the recent trial of an American, Chandler, who was sentenced to life imprisonment for speaking and writing for Hitler. "And now we're trying an anti-Nazi," he said, and commented on the strangeness of it. Even government counsel, he said, had to admit that yes, for a time, "they did very successful work in fighting Hitler," the "they" including the defendant. "And as much as Mr. Hitz tried to separate the defendant's laudable anti-Nazi activities from his Communist activities, he couldn't do it," said Isserman. "They were two sides of the same coin." He reminded the jury of FBI agent Lamphere's testimony that they had been trailing Eisler since he got off the boat in 1941. "The government could have prosecuted for

**The final act of the Eisler trial follows the script by the Un-American Committee**

**By VIRGINIA GARDNER**

false statements in 1941, '42, '43 and '44," he said. "But the government in its wisdom did not prosecute."

The whole resistance or underground movement, Isserman said, like our American underground railway for which we honor Harriet Tubman, Harriet Beecher Stowe and others, had to contain illegality upon illegality, he said. And he pleaded with the jury that Eisler, who was "a friend of our friends and an enemy of our enemies" before we were engaged in the world struggle for human decency and freedom, be allowed to go home to help prevent another war.

At no time did anyone associated with the defense entertain any real hope for other than a "guilty" verdict, so well known is the established pattern of behavior of Washington juries in a court which is a part of the federal courts and the city where Jim Crow, intimidation of government workers and general fear of government authority are so strong. This was despite what the defendant termed "a fair trial on unfair charges." Anywhere else the defense would have been hopeful after so many government witnesses proved to be busts.

Latest farce of the trial came when Manning Johnson was brought back to the stand by the government. His tale of a meeting in 1933 in Buffalo of Earl Browder and the defendant with Canadian Communist leaders Tim Buck and Sam Carr had been exploded when the government was forced to agree the Canadians were in prison at the time. So Johnson, after days of preparation, again appeared before the jury and was shown pictures of Carr and Buck. No, those weren't the men he saw, but a third picture he was shown was that of a man introduced as Carr, he said. Then a Canadian Royal Mounted Police

officer was put on the stand to say that the third picture was of a Communist organizer, Stewart Osborne Smith of Canada. Prosecutor William Hitz appeared triumphant—until the defense told the court it had a telegram from Smith saying he never met the defendant, never heard of him until this case broke, never met Johnson and never was at such an alleged meeting in 1933.

Earlier defense witnesses Avrom Landy, editor of International Publishers, and A. B. Magil, executive editor of NEW MASSES, had testified respectively that not only was it not true that the defendant picked a slate of Party candidates in Cleveland in 1934, and not true that he attended a meeting of *Daily Worker* department heads and criticized the editor in 1935, but that such goings-on could not happen.

AFTER the sudden folding of the Brewster committee's hearing designed to smear the late President Roosevelt, attendance at the Eisler trial, sparse throughout, increased a bit. A grandmotherly, gentle-faced old lady seated directly behind this reporter was heard to say to another spectator, "Oh, I'm for Brewster, through and through." Later I heard her whisper: "Now, could you tell me? I know that two of the defense lawyers are Jewish, but the little attorney, is he Jewish, too?" Approaching her after court one day, I asked her name, but she coyly declined to give it. She was a visitor from Long Beach, Calif., and was seeing Washington through the Brewster-Hughes hearing and the Eisler trial. "What do you think of this case?" she was asked. Without a moment's hesitation she replied: "Oh, I think he ought to hang." Asked if she thought so before she came to court, she said, in a conversational tone, "Oh, I've always thought all Communists ought to be hanged."

Another constant attendant was a large man with a handsome mustache and white head of hair, Bob Miller, an attorney widely known here for killing his wife's psychiatrist and being promptly acquitted by a jury. He told me the only reason he was there was

that it was cool in the courtroom and he was on vacation. Mr. Miller also was frequently seen at the other trials initiated by the Un-American Committee.

So was still another faithful at the Eisler trial, Ellis O. Jones, one of the defendants in the abortive wartime sedition trial. Mr. Jones recently shared the platform with Gerald L. K. Smith when he spoke here, unmolested and unpicketed, in the shadow of the Washington Monument. When a small group of young persons booed some flagrantly anti-Semitic passage in his talk, which almost word for word duplicated a part of his speech before the Un-American Committee in 1946, Smith said to them: "Jews, don't be so touchy."

WHEN Joseph Starobin, foreign editor of the *Daily Worker* and author of the "Hans Berger" stories for which Eisler supplied ideas and research material, was cross-examined by Prosecutor Hitz, Mr. Hitz was particular to know if Mr. Starobin was "biased." Mr. Hitz sounded quite virtuous about it. In an effort to prove Starobin was biased he read headlines and even paragraphs from stories he had written while the trial was in

progress. Actually this just gave Starobin a chance to say, under redirect examination by Attorney Isserman, that the trial itself showed the case to be nothing more than a "petty frameup initiated by the Un-American Committee."

The government, which claims among other things that "Hans Berger" was an alias Eisler omitted mentioning in filling out a form to apply for permission to depart this country, already had placed on the witness stand the most biased witnesses available. They included six ex-Communists, most of them professional anti-Communist witnesses before the old and new Dies committees. On the very next court day after the testimony by Starobin which Hitz so feared would be "biased," Hitz put on as a rebuttal witness his chief mainstay, Robert H. Lamphere of the FBI.

To show just how unbiased is Robert H. Lamphere it is only necessary to quote some of his answers under the deft probing of Mr. Isserman. Under Mr. Hitz' questioning Mr. Lamphere had told the jury that he had interviewed Eisler on July 19, 1946, and had "seen him before." How he happened to see him was comfortably left for the jurors' speculation.

Now one of the few things Mr. Hitz had appeared to be successful in getting Mr. Lamphere to rebut was Eisler's statement that Lamphere, at the July 19 interview, knew about the letter he, Eisler, wrote to the State Department July 9 informing them he had received a Soviet transit visa. No, Lamphere told Hitz, he hadn't told Eisler he knew of the July 9 letter. But, he added, he had told him he knew he was attempting to leave the country and go to Russia and from there to the Soviet zone in Germany. Isserman asked: "When did you first know he was going to the Soviet Union?" Stalling, Mr. Lamphere said, "I knew it." Then he said: "I'd seen him enter the Soviet consulate."

Q. How did you happen to see him enter?  
A. I was on surveillance.

Q. (Cupping a hand behind his ear as if he hadn't heard) What? A. I was on surveillance—I was surveilling Gerhart Eisler.

Q. Oh, you were following him? A. Yes.

Q. This was in 1946—how did you happen to be "surveilling" him then? A. We were surveilling him as a suspected Comintern agent.

Q. As a matter of fact haven't you had him under surveillance—A. (Interrupting) Yes, since the day he stepped off the boat in 1941.

Q. And you've had him under surveillance ever since? A. Yes, sir, off and on. (He personally became active in the case in 1944.)

The defense has claimed all along that, except for the time in Marseilles in 1941, when to get an American transit visa essential for him to get to Mexico, he concealed his membership in the German Communist party and thus escaped with his life from the Gestapo, Eisler never concealed his adherence to the German party. And the defense claims the State Department had the information all along that he was a German Communist. In connection with this Eisler was asked, "Have you publicly indicated your support for the German Communist movement?" He replied: "Whenever I wrote or spoke about it." Did he deliver a speech making that clear? Yes, on Feb. 24, 1946, he said, before a German-American group in the AFL Hotel & Restaurant Workers Union in New York. He identified excerpts printed in a pamphlet called "Stop Bundist Activity," with a sub-title, "Peace on Earth: How a German Veteran of the Thaelmann Brigade Sees It."

Doubtless there was one member of



"I feel another spell coming on. Who am I? What am I doing here?"

## One Man's Life . . .

the jury to whom "Thaelmann Brigade" meant little or nothing, however. The juror in question was Joseph C. Farrall, the dour-looking man with a receding chin in the front row, Juror No. 9. Mr. Farrall has three brothers who are members of the Knights of Columbus, but during the selection of a jury he denied that he knew what the K. of C. position on Spain was. Cynical-minded observers, aware that the defense by that time had exhausted its arbitrary challenges, found Mr. Farrall's general unawareness of the K. of C. Spain, etc., rather odd, as well as his tolerance of Communists. Here are some of the answers made by Mr. Farrall, a government electrician at the naval gun factory here, in reply to Isserman's queries:

Q. Do you believe it to be part of your obligation as an employe of the government to be opposed to Communists? A. No, sir, no.

Q. (Incredulously) The answer is "No" to that? (Question repeated.) A. No, I don't think so.

Q. Are you familiar with their position [the K. of C. brothers] on aliens? A. No, sir.

Q. On Spain? A. No.

Q. Have they discussed with you, ever, the position of that organization on the Franco regime in Spain? A. No, sir.

Q. You are familiar with the character of that regime, are you not? A. No, sir; I have never read about it.

Q. You have never read about Franco Spain or about the Loyalist cause in Spain? You have never read about them? A. No, sir.

Q. Have you heard any lectures or sermons on the question of the Franco regime in Spain? A. Not that I can recall.

Q. Have you heard any lectures or sermons on communism? A. No, sir.

After this, and when the government smugly announced to the court, "The government is content"—meaning with the selection of the jury—Judge Morris turned to Mr. Isserman. Was the defense content? "We are forced to be content," said Isserman unhappily. ". . . Frankly, I am not content. The defendant is not content." But this was Washington, D. C., and the jury was a *fait accompli*.

AFTER the noted composer Hanns Eisler, brother of Gerhart, gave the lie so completely and succinctly to Ruth Fischer's testimony, the most Mr. Hitz could do apparently on cross-examining him was to ask if he was aware that the *Daily Worker*

IT HAS become fashionable in certain circles to wonder whether, living as we do in an aftermath of mass murder and threatened with the instant destruction of millions, the life of just one man here and there is of any great import to us. We have even heard well-intentioned people say, "The Communists are right. Only society as a whole matters; the individual is nothing." This is as good a time as any to tell such addled friends that Communists have never held to any thesis which slights individual dignity or underrates the value of human life. They oppose any concept of abstract humanity which seeks to divorce itself from individual men and women. They believe that one must act as though each person is a surrogate for all mankind. That is why they have always fought such protracted and arduous battles for individuals who were falsely accused, denied their civil and human rights, or persecuted for their race, belief or national origin. That is why they now urge that the fight go on to free Lemas Woods, twenty-four-year-old Negro soldier, sentenced in the Philippines, May 1946, to hang for the accidental death of his tentmate. Though Woods' recent sentence upon retrial by a court martial in San Francisco has been reduced to three years hard labor and a dishonorable discharge, his "crime" being involuntary manslaughter rather than murder, we believe that the sixteen months' suffering Woods endured facing the gallows is enough punishment for the accident for which he was responsible. In practical terms, this means that Mark Clark, Commanding General of the Sixth Army, should either suspend Woods' sentence or commute it to the sixteen months he has already served.

Let us remember that one year ago in a Philippine Army stockade, desperate, lonely young Lemas Woods wrote these words to his father, a Detroit auto worker: "I was beaten very bad and I had to make a statement so they won't beat me any more . . . because I am a Negro they give a death sentence and I don't see what for, daddy." Woods was then tried and convicted in three and a half hours, evidence to acquit him having been disregarded by his defense counsel, a soft drink salesman, as harmful to his case. A letter of the prosecutor to his commanding officer at the Philippine Base Service Command, in which he expressed doubts as to the credibility of one of his own witnesses, was never forwarded to the Advocate General's Board of Review in Washington.

But Woods' father is a member of the United Auto Workers Union and of the Detroit Civil Rights Congress. That is why his son is alive today. The case was taken to Ernest Goodman, the union's attorney and a director of the Civil Rights Congress, who with Carlos Ramos, executive secretary of the Philippine Lawyers' Guild, uncovered the evidence that saved the soldier's life. It was the Lemas Woods Defense Committee of the Civil Rights Congress, co-chaired by George F. Addes, UAW-CIO International Secretary-Treasurer, and Reverend T. T. Timberlake, president of the Baptist Ministers Conference, which organized mass support for a fair trial. At the second hearing all the evidence that had been given and accepted at the former courtmartial was completely discredited.

There is a threefold lesson to be learned from the Lemas Woods case. It exposes the nature of military justice and the need for complete reform of a system which has taken the lives or made a mockery of the rights of thousands of common soldiers. It raises once again the specter of the unspeakable oppression of the Negro people. But it is also testimony to the power of people to exact justice by united action. That is why we rejoice at the change of verdict, and yet warn that Lemas Woods must not be forgotten. Let us free him now.

CHARLES HUMBOLDT.

had characterized his music as "Marxist magic." No, said the composer with interest.

Isserman then asked him one question under redirect examination. Was he now under contract to do the music for a motion picture in Paris? "Yes," he answered smilingly, "*Alice in Wonderland*—and I assure you, Mr. Hitz," he said, turning and giving Mr. Hitz a radiant smile, "it is not Marxist magic."

Ruth Fischer, the Trotskyite sister of Gerhart and Hanns, had testified for the government that she met Gerhart in Hanns' Paris apartment in the summer of 1933, where he told her he was going to America to show the

"stupid Communists" how to run their party. But Hanns' version was that he saw Gerhart alone, that he had not seen him with their sister since their father's funeral in 1927, when the two did not speak. He described seeing his brother depart from Paris, that June of 1933, five months after Hitler came to power, an event which necessitated Hanns' leaving Berlin. "I saw him to the station, and if I may say so, it was with a heavy heart I saw him leave on a train in the direction of Germany. For though he did not tell me where he was going, the train was headed east and I knew then he was returning to Germany, again to expose himself to great danger—and for

him I had great admiration and respect."

WHEN, far from being shaken by the going-over Prosecutor Hitz game him, Gerhart Eisler couldn't seem to resist making a quip, Justice Morris appeared to enjoy it along with the spectators. Dubiously examining a portion of the record of an alien hearing last March shown him by Hitz, Eisler said: "I don't think I testify in this garbled way. . . . Not even I speak English that way. I think"—glancing over his spectacles with a disarming smile—"the only persons I harm in this country are the court stenographers."

### *Rite for the Anxious Mind*

He sits among the other stiffening men  
In the dense light of the banquet room  
Thinking of his blank and loveless acts.  
His thought, like a shadow run to cover  
Of its own shadow, offers and retracts,  
Avoids mirrors where it may see itself.

Greedy of pain, the inward turning knife  
Falls on the table with a shiny sound;  
(It is in conscience that he most excels,  
Suffers for all the members of the club)  
His life spatters the cloth, is passed around,  
And each one sips and is restored and thinks:  
How much we bear, the poor should pity us!

CHARLES HUMBOLDT.

### *The Ratless Cat*

When I came home my mother cat said,  
"Tom," she said, "I wish I was dead."  
When I came home my father cat bawled,  
"It's cats like you make it tough on us all!"  
When I came home my brother cat scratched me,  
And said he wished a dog would catch me.  
When I came home my sister cat said,  
"You put the gray hairs in mama cat's head!"  
When I came home my grandpa spat,  
"You've ruined the last years of a feeble old cat!"

When I came home without a rat,  
Mom, pop, brother, sis, and grandpa cat  
Took one long look, gave one loud groan,  
When I came home, when I came home.

NAOMI REPLANSKY.

### *The Alligator*

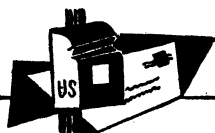
Emerges in late afternoon out of the sweltering  
Slime bottoms of Brazilian basins,  
Slithers through bullrushes over which wheel blue  
Butterflies he shears at, poking  
The broad snout among blossoms; dozes  
In ferns, or sinks in the oblique shade  
At turns of contagious rivers,  
He kicks and thrashes in that mothering ooze,  
White underbelly rolled upward as he settles  
Backward, travels the currents with tail bucking

Soundlessly; at nightfall drops in peat-beds.  
Within the long housing of his head  
What anxieties lie, beneath his eyelids working raw  
Phenomena to his dumb authority?  
What touch of spring-like season splits  
The skin he discards annually on the bank  
To rot with aged leaves, while he goes  
On nine centuries duration of life? Is it for

The lope and swing of nimbler animals  
His gleaming appetite stirs? Are the birds  
Of Amazon he sees pick scraps from his back-plates  
His friends? Or does he endure simply  
The history so ordered in his veins,  
The event complex and dignified  
When, one night cold as geologic time  
His father, the sea-shocked polliwog  
Fell breathing on dry land, raised up and saw  
Shapes of leaves, trunks, northern lights  
And stars falling into rivers.

ALLAN BLOCK.





## Roger Baldwin Replies

**T**O NEW MASSES: On my return from the Far East, I find your issue of May 20 with a leading article headed "Roger Baldwin, What Are You Hiding?" It suggests some sort of collusion between myself and the chairman of the House Un-American Activities Committee.

Aside from the unscrupulous political journalism that attacks a man out of the country who cannot be reached for the facts, the whole import of the article is not only false but precisely contrary to the facts.

When I was invited by the War Department to serve as a consultant on civil liberties in Japan and Korea, both the American Civil Liberties Union board and I debated whether I should accept as an official or arrange to go independently. Among other factors we considered was the possibility that I might be attacked publicly by the bigots, especially by the members of the House Committee. They are all aware of the Union's long opposition to that committee, and of my own complete support of every move made by the Union against it. Public controversy over my official fitness would have compromised the mission.

I called on Rep. Thomas solely to determine whether the acceptance of an official position would be likely to arouse attacks from his committee or fraternal elements. I was satisfied that it would. That, among other factors, decided me to arrange to go unofficially. I reported the results of this and other inquiries along the same lines to the officers of the Union, and we all agreed that from every standpoint my services would be more useful as an independent citizen, going with full War Department cooperation. That was then arranged.

It is evident that NEW MASSES' political guess-work rates a pretty poor low.

ROGER N. BALDWIN.

New York.

## Rebuttal by Gardner

**I**MUST confess I am astonished that Mr. Baldwin admits in black and white what I refrained from saying because it would be only surmise, although it seemed a probability; that he went to see Chairman Thomas in order to clear with the Un-American Committee.

That Mr. Baldwin so blandly brings this

out as a sort of defense for seeing him on what members of the ACLU board told me was a private mission is to me no less than shocking. For a man who officially holds a position in an organization which defends the civil liberties of our country to abase himself before the committee his organization so rightly has condemned is, I submit, not only lacking in dignity; it is downright unprincipled appeasement.

It is interesting to note that the parley with Rep. Thomas was a success from Mr. Baldwin's point of view, and that the Un-American Committee did not attack him in his role of proffering advice to General MacArthur on civil liberties.

Despite Mr. Baldwin's oblique remark, "I reported the results of this and other inquiries along the same lines to the officers of the Union," several members of the ACLU board knew nothing about his having seen Mr. Thomas, and B. W. Huebsch, the treasurer, who said he knew of it, did not pretend that any report had been made of it to the ACLU board. He said he had learned of it through Mr. Baldwin and could not divulge the nature of the advice he had sought, but that it was not on behalf of the ACLU.

I have no apologies to make for my story, which was a factual account of what Rep. Thomas said about the "meeting of minds" he and Mr. Baldwin had experienced when the latter visited him. I tried to reach at least five members of the ACLU board, including the president, and did reach three, in Mr. Baldwin's absence.

VIRGINIA GARDNER.

Washington.

## "Socialist" Tories

**T**O NEW MASSES: Taking full advantage of the mess the pseudo-socialists Attlee and Bevin have made of the British economy, the reactionaries here are firing their heaviest guns to discredit socialism.

In the New York *Times* of August 3, Russell Porter with obvious malice wrote as follows: "The parallel between mercantilism and socialism is thus seen to be a close one. In either case there is diminishing incentive for the average man to work and produce." And further on, "By jumping from the frying pan of cartelization into the fire of socialism, it has become evident in their current experiment, the British

people have not improved their economic position."

On August 6 the *Daily Mirror*, which I picked up in the subway, had a cartoon and editorial painting British socialism in the blackest of colors.

I think that this kind of propaganda needs to be vigorously countered. Humanity has reached a stage of economic maladjustment that only true socialism on a universal scale can cure.

First it should be pointed out that British Labor Party leaders have always been one-third Socialists in words and two-thirds Tories in thought and deeds. That those now at the head of the government, particularly Bevin and Attlee, are also imperialists as brutal as any self-confessed aristocratic Tory has ever been. The Laborites are cooperating with American reactionaries to prevent the peoples of Europe and of Asia from going socialist in any form; that is one of the reasons the Laborites have no scruples whatsoever in agreeing to every political string the American reactionaries include in their conditions for making loans to them. One can be sure that a new loan, which appears on the way, is going to clinch the total sell-out by the Laborites to American reaction. They covet the Ruhr and the Ruhr is going to be turned over to them for another meager loan!

I shall be looking forward for vigorous comments by you in the forthcoming issues of NM on this important subject.

A. GARCIA DIAZ.

New York.

## Those Turkish Friends

**T**O NEW MASSES: As a consequence of the Truman Doctrine we have made friends with a new dictatorship called Turkey, whose domestic policies are not too well known in this country.

We have sent our Navy to Istanbul on demonstrations of good will, and one of our generals (with his staff) has held conferences with the Turkish general staff, inspected the Turkish military installations and issued a bold statement: "Nothing will give me more pleasure than commanding a Turkish army equipped with modern American arms." (From General Oliver's statement to the Istanbul press on June 18, 1947.)

And now the Turkish government through one of its agencies, Ankara University (all institutions of higher learning in Turkey are controlled directly by the government) replies to our acts of friendship: The senate of Ankara University has declared that one of its professors, Muzaffer Serif, who is a well known psychologist and author of several books in English, has been discharged from the faculty for marrying an American woman. Let's save our friendship for those countries where it will be appreciated.

A. Z. BILL.

Bloomington, Ind.

# review and comment



## THE NOVEL AS BATTLEGROUND

**The sociological critic looks to literature  
for knowledge of the way men shape history.**

**By S. FINKELSTEIN**

*This is the last of three article reviews on contemporary criticism.*

TO READ the criticism of Edwin Berry Burgum, after that of Yvor Winters and Thomas Mann, is to rediscover in literature the world in which human beings make their history.\* Winters is completely lacking in a sense of time and social change in relation to literature. His chosen field of examination is the special laws of the literary art, its craft with word image and sound, its ideas as studied for their abstract morality or immorality. Thomas Mann's approach is that of a mind wholly limited to the bourgeois philosophy and literary tradition. To him the decadence of this tradition is as fundamental and all-encompassing a world-truth as were its glorious achievements when it first appeared as a revolutionary force in history.

In contrast to both, Burgum looks to literature for whatever light it can throw upon human beings as they shape history. At the same time he makes history a test for literature, comparing an author's insight into historical and social change to the fullest knowledge people can have of what is going on in the world about them. His is a point of view not so much opposite to that of Winters and Mann, as one that rather includes their contributions and goes beyond them. The difference in approach can be seen in comparing the range and scope of the three books. Winters' *In Defense of Reason* was a clinical study of the literary craft.

\* THE NOVEL AND THE WORLD'S DILEMMA, by Edwin Berry Burgum. Oxford. \$3.75.

Mann's *Essays of Three Decades* was a tribute paid to his literary heroes, the formative influence on his own mind. Burgum's book is a study of the novel, chosen because it is the literary form most characteristic of our times, the art form in which more than any other the moral and social conflicts of our time are being fought out. He has assembled most of the great and many of the near-great novelists of our century: Thomas Mann, James Joyce, Theodore Dreiser, Marcel Proust, Franz Kafka, Thomas Wolfe, Gertrude Stein, Ernest Hemingway, Andre Malraux, William Faulkner, Virginia Woolf, Richard Wright, John Steinbeck. The project he has set himself is to study both what these writers have made out of the form of the novel and what their collective work has to tell us about our society.

This is a most exacting task. We have here a host of different cultural traditions, different styles, different backgrounds of psychology and historical experience. The demands such a project makes upon sheer literary sensitivity and historical knowledge are tremendous. When Burgum is successful, he writes what is probably the best literary criticism in America. He is not always successful. Because of the demands such a project makes on him, every failure on his part to penetrate into a historical problem with the utmost clarity leaves him immediately open to criticism. It is Burgum himself, as a comprehensive thinker about our society as well as about the literary art, whom we will examine here.

The study of Thomas Mann may be taken as an example of Burgum's strength and weakness. Describing

*The Magic Mountain*, he says, "In the relations between these characters is indubitably to be found a basically authentic materialistic history of society under monopoly capitalism. . . . Writing during the years of the Weimar Republic, Mann is not only depicting the degeneration of the German character which deepened after the First World War; he is also, in an uncanny way, foreshadowing the birth of fascism."

It is doubtful whether Mann meant the book to be such a history, for by his own admission neither fascism nor monopoly capital were part of his thinking at the time. The area of experience drawn upon for this book is the Germany immediately before the First World War rather than the Germany of the Weimar Republic. The fact that the hero of the novel, after seven years of intellectual debate, goes off gaily to war is a sign of degeneration, but it is obvious from the book that Mann approved of Castorp's decision. The degeneration is in Mann.

Of course, there is a continuity between the Germany of the First World War and that of the Weimar Republic. The liberals and Social Democrats who did the will of the German industrialists during the war also shot down the German workers after the war, while allowing the industrialists a full grip upon the republic's economic life. And in the fascination that Mann-Castorp feels for Naphta's logic, whose premise was contempt for humanity, and for Peeperkorn's arrogance of physical and monetary power, we can find a valid symbol of the helplessness of German liberalism before the power of reaction.

Thus there is a relationship, as Burgum points out, between Mann's symbols and the movement of history, but the book is not the full historical picture Burgum says it is. The relationship to social conflict is more subconscious than conscious. Being subconscious, it cannot be comprehensive, for Mann's mind itself is being pushed around by the conflicting forces. Very keenly Burgum says, "there, Mann might say of Castorp, but for the grace of being a writer, go I." He does a wonderfully skillful job in analyzing Mann's pretensions to philosophy, which go no further than an air of skepticism thrown over reason, science and any definite claim man might make to knowing the world. Had he carried this line of examination to its conclusion, and shown Mann's novel

to be only one revealing aspect of German degeneration, he would have had a successful essay.

**B**UT in trying to read too much into Mann's work he arrives at a false explanation of Mann's failure. "They," he says, speaking of Mann and Dryden, "failed because they sought to become comprehensive expressions of periods of disunity, when to be comprehensive at all may well be impossible, and certainly must be, when outmoded attitudes alone are employed." Mann's fault, however, was that he offered the part for the whole. Missing from Mann's thinking and world view is the German working class. The proletariat never appear in his writings, whether in realistic or symbolic form. Had Burgum seen this clearly, he would have been able to explain what he means by "outmoded attitudes." These are nothing more than the bourgeois world view which, for all its pretensions to liberalism, looks upon the working class as an enemy, a horrible spectre of barbarism, and regards the most arrogant Junkers and monopolists as, in some way, its cultural kin. Thus Burgum would have been able to show that it is possible to be comprehensive if a thinker adopts the world view of the working class, its realistic understanding of the class struggle at the core of social change. For the First World War, in which the working class was used as a tool, was a class struggle, and the Weimar Republic was the battleground

in which German capital, aided by outside capital and German Social Democracy, broke the working class.

Throughout his book Burgum uses such vague formulations as "periods of disunity," although he really means periods of rapid transition, when the class struggle is sharpest. Talking of the decline of poetry, in relation to prose, he says, "We are caught between two worlds, one dying, the other seeking to be born. In the conflict between the two, the common basis for poetry has disappeared." He forgets that Dante, Shakespeare, Milton and Blake wrote poetry of absolute greatness in exactly such periods of rapid transition. Burgum conceives of society as a unity which first seems to disintegrate, and then integrates itself. "Only in a society which, beneath the eternal disorder of the surface, is dynamically functioning toward goals of accepted value is to be found this basic psychological integration of the personality which is requisite for the flourishing of poetry." The writer and thinker, however, does not have to wait for this happy state of affairs, when classes are abolished. He can accomplish such an integration by allying himself with the class that fights against outmoded social institutions, and demands the full use of man's knowledge and powers in the service of social progress.

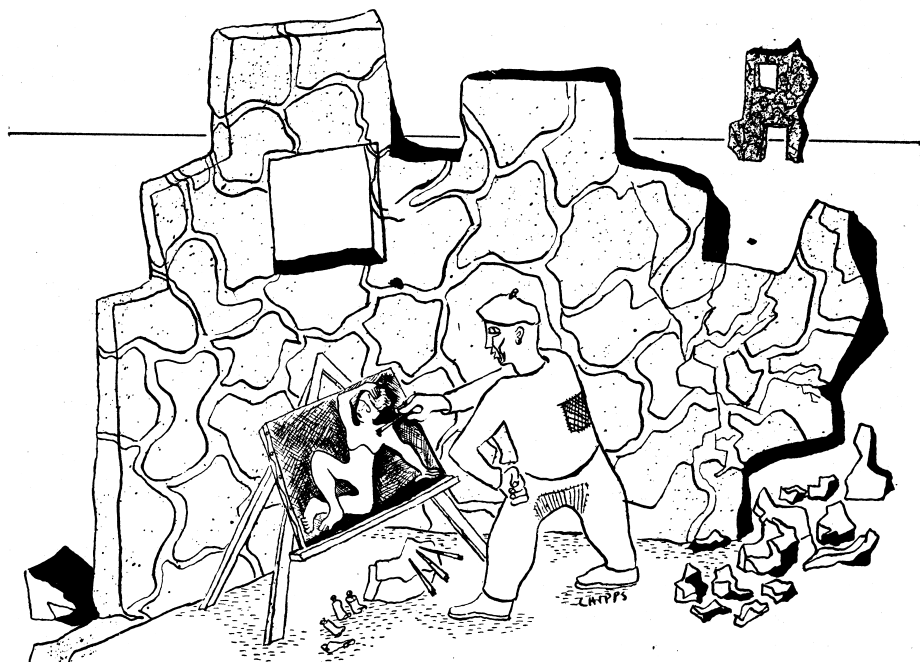
Almost all the critical studies in the book are studies of decadence, which Burgum relates to the decadent world of capitalism. Unlike the writers he

studies Burgum does not accept decadence as the whole truth, as if the world were literally dying. He speaks of another world in birth, using generally such vague terms as "democracy," "popular welfare," "constructive as well as destructive phases of society." Such terms are inadequate, however, to present the role the working class plays today both in thought and in the movement of history. Marx says, "No social order ever disappears before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have been developed; and new, higher relations of production never appear before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the womb of the old society itself." The thoroughness with which bourgeois thinkers portray a world in complete disintegration is an indication that the forces for a better world are not somewhere off in the future, but present, strong and bidding for victory.

**I** DO NOT mean simply that the critic must state more clearly and affirmatively, in criticising bourgeois writers, that the working class is left out of the picture. It is not necessary to include the working class in every picture. Dreiser, for example, left the organized working class out of most of his novels. Whatever segment of society he chose, however, he examined with a mind free of bourgeois inhibitions and psychological ties, penetrating to the social causes behind his characters' frustrations with such absolute clarity that he might be said to embody in his writing the working class, realistic, view of the world.

The critic's problem is one of studying the very areas of experience the artist has drawn upon for his work, and determining the actual shape of the struggle taking place in those areas. The greatest number of the writers Burgum studies reject the working class as a part of their world, or a part of their thinking. The struggle at the core of society is present in the works of these writers, but with no clarity as to who the antagonists are. The result is that it becomes an inner struggle, carried on through characters who are symbols less of real people and forces than of the indecisions and conflicts in the artist's own mind. The critic's job becomes one of translating these conflicts back into real experience, giving realistic names to the antagonists.

This is a task of the greatest im-





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portance, for once these writers are clearly understood and put in a proper perspective, the values they have to offer are immense. Such writers as Joyce, Proust, Kafka, are not efficient tools of capitalism in its struggle to hold back human progress. As Burgum reveals throughout his book, the despairing picture they offer of the world in which all thought is bourgeois thought is not one that does credit to the bourgeoisie. The theme of such writers is that if this is the best of all possible worlds, it is still a hell. As bourgeois thinkers, they are miles above the liars and hacks who misuse and distort language every day to fit their master's needs, miles above the literary parasites who appoint themselves great writers' courtiers and interpreters. Their accomplishment is that they have raised the psychology, the art forms and cultural traditions which the bourgeois world brought into being to the highest pitch of subtlety, of penetration into the human mind and into every nuance of sense perception. Art will be different from this when exploitation of man by man is abolished and a classless humanity can apply itself to the further conquest of nature and the further growth of the human being. But the new art, like the new human being, will make use of all the craft, the sensitivity, the study of the human mind even in despair which these artists have brought into being as long as they worked as artists. As Marx says, speaking of private property and its one-sided development of human sensibility, "Human existence had to be reduced to this absolute poverty in order to give birth to its inner richness."

IT is therefore a major task of interpretation that Burgum has set himself. His weaknesses come in not grasping the specific nature of the struggle taking place wherever these artists have gathered their materials, and in not regarding himself as directly involved in a class struggle. The result is that his critical portrayals are rarely complete and comprehensive, although full of fine insights. Sometimes he errs in appraising the actual social problem involved in a book. Sometimes he distorts the meaning of a book in a strained effort to find a valid basis for optimism and progress in literature rather than in life, as if he were over-eager to make writers a mouthpiece for his thoughts.

These faults are apparent in the

treatment of three American writers, Faulkner, Wright and Hemingway.

Burgum's conclusion, after studying Faulkner, is that his characters represent "the American variant of a decadence that is common to Western culture as a whole." Recognizing that these characters come from the same Southern state, he dismisses this fact as unimportant, saying that they "transcend the provincial." But the special nature of the class struggle in the South, the special pattern that decadence takes there, cannot be ignored by the critic without serious damage to his criticism. Faulkner's characters cannot be fully understood without seeing them in the relation they have to the Negro people of the South, regardless of the inadequacy of Faulkner's handling of the Negro. The inner fears and outer brutality, the tendency towards psychopathic violence come directly out of the oppressive position of the Southern middle-class white over the Negro. And just as Burgum does not give Faulkner enough credit for discerning what oppression does to the mind of the oppressor, so he gives him too much credit for his mystical hopes of some future redemption.

The study of Richard Wright has some fine criticism, especially in showing the transition in his writing from realism to an emotionally distorted fantasy that only simulates realism. But the national problem, which is the central theme of Wright's art, is discussed in such superficial terms as the following: "The demand for Negro labor in time of war, the growing acceptance of Negroes by the trade unions, the appearance of Negroes in the top ranks of virtually every cultural and intellectual profession, the committees on fair employment practices are but a few of the justifications for optimism." Burgum passes over the fact that the oppression of the Negro stems from the economics and politics of American capitalism rather than from the white man's ignorance of the Negro people; that the demands of the struggle for national freedom run far deeper than for a patronizing fair treatment in a white man's world (if that were possible in a world where exploitation of labor must make every use of racial divisions and hatreds). And so he does not see how completely Wright has perverted the theory of the national struggle of the Negro people. He says, "Bigger's hatred is shared in varying degrees by every Negro and

every worker, and indeed by every individual who feels deprived of a chance to fulfill his potentialities." But the hatred in *Native Son* is Wright's, not only Bigger's, and it is carried to the point of alienation from and contempt for his own people. It is a reactionary approach to the Negro people.

Had Burgum followed with more confidence the implications he found in his sensitivity to Wright's style, and then studied the national question more deeply, he would have revealed Wright's distortion of the character, needs, and paths to progress of the Negro people in America.

A SIMILAR combination of a fine sensitivity to the psychology of style, with a failure to track down the full political implications of a writer's argument, is found in the study of Hemingway. Burgum shows that Hemingway's style is only a pessimistic, death-haunted individualism masked by a naturalistic idiom borrowed from common speech. He shows how Hemingway, pretending to be a political realist in his novel on the war in Spain, started with a point of view that "obligated a wrong interpretation of political events." This point of view was that of the "lost generation"; a disillusionment born out of the First World War, which became a determination "never again to be fooled by false promises." Out of this distrust of false promises came a distrust of all promises, a distrust of any struggle for democracy and freedom. The disillusioned bohemian must distort facts to prove his pessimism justified, and must defend the underdog so long as he is convinced the underdog will remain under.

Had Burgum examined the "lost generation" in the light of the actual political and economic struggles of the Twenties, he would have seen that the fundamental problem was the relationship of the intellectual to the working class. The first shock of disillusion for the postwar writer came when he sighted the imperialist hand that had carried on the slaughter in the name of democracy. The next step, if the fight for true democracy and against imperialism was to be carried further, had to be an alliance with the working class.

Hemingway, like most of the "lost generation," failed to take this step. Burgum shows how he distorted political realities as a "rationalization of the problems of the bohemian person-

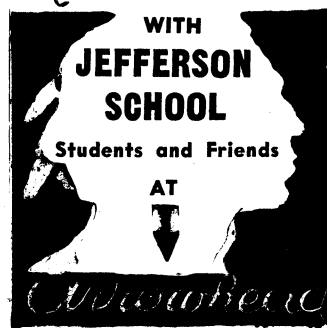
ality." He fails to show how Hemingway distorted the character of the working class, never portraying it in terms of the love for other people and the collective struggle most characteristic of this class. His "underdogs" always fight a hopeless battle, and alone; their approach to the struggle for freedom is suicidal. They are given a psychology typical of the cut-throat struggle of the middle-class individualist. His prize-fighter of *Twenty Grand*, his fisherman and smuggler of *To Have and Have Not*, find no allies. They face exploitation as the treading in *Death in the Afternoon* face the bull, or as a man fights a death he knows is inevitable. His Jordan moves among the Spanish people like a ministering angel, whereas the truth is that the Americans who fought in Spain found their faith in humanity confirmed over and over again by the heroism and organization in struggle of the Spanish people. Burgum is wrong in finding anything progressive in Hemingway's anarchism, or in seeing in Hemingway a "rebelliousness which demolished class distinctions." It is no demolition of class distinctions to portray upper and lower classes as equally psychologically decadent.

Thus Burgum's book, like many of the works he describes, achieves only a partial success. Yet its contribution to American criticism is an important one. His premise is that if an artist's appraisal of reality is false or distorted, this falsity and distortion must be revealed in the very style and form of his work. A writer's style is the creation of his perceptions of reality and his concept of the human personality. His form, the very movement, organization and unity of his work, depend upon his grasp of a form and order in society. This thesis is applied brilliantly throughout the essays.

If I have leaned heavily upon the shortcomings of Burgum's book, it is not because there is an extensive body of Marxist criticism in America to which this book can be compared and found lacking. Burgum has made a real contribution to American criticism. He has set himself the task of examining, with few exceptions, the biggest minds operating in the field of prose literature in our times. He has treated them with dignity by expecting from them an exploration of the world which the modern man can use in solving his own problems. Judged by the standards he himself raises, he has not penetrated deeply enough into the

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class struggles which are the moving force in social change, and so he has not been able to give a comprehensive account of the mind of the writers he examines, or of their place in the traditions of culture. Burgum, like any artist worth respect, has written as much about himself as about the people he describes. His successes come when he has solved most successfully the social problems he raises. His failures come precisely when he does not make himself clear as to what is happening on the social and moral battlefield he is describing.


## FILMS

"PAGEANT OF RUSSIA," which heads the current program of Soviet documentary films at the Stanley, is a pictorial report, in color, of the exercises on All-Union Physical Culture Day, celebrated at Moscow in July, 1946. The best athletes of the sixteen Republics were represented in a colorful demonstration of mass activities, foot-races and solo feats of strength and precision. Among those participating were groups from physical culture schools, trade unions and other organizations.

The rhythmic precision of the group formations is incredible, even though there is occasionally something of the feeling of a Busby Berkeley production. The sameness of the group demonstrations is relieved by shots of the people in the audience, including Stalin and Molotov; of the presentation of flowers to Stalin by two remarkably ingratiating young children; and by the occasional superimposition of shots relating the various groups to their native locale.

The photography is excellent, having been done by thirty-five cameramen strategically stationed in the stadium, and the color is unusually beautiful, without the sharpness we find in many color films. All told, the picture adds up to an interesting documentary on the emphasis which the Soviet Union places on the building of the health of its people. There is a sense of well-being and relaxation in audience and participants as well. (And right here it should be noted that the uniforms of the athletes are significantly lacking in military design.)

In keeping with the *Pageant of Russia* is a documentary, *The Human Heart*, beginning with a fluoroscopic



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look into a man's heart and followed by animated diagrams of the working of the heart and a warning against over-taxing that vital organ—a film that is important as a sample of the broad educational program that is current in the Soviet Union today.

The most exciting film on the program, however, is *Northern Korea*, an account of the new freedom that has come to this land after forty years of the terrors of Japanese occupation. We see former sharecroppers (who, through all these years, have been forced to give eighty percent of their crops to the Japanese) at last tilling their own land, confiscated from the Japanese and parceled out to them, at no cost, by the Soviet forces in Korea. There are pictures of women leaders who, having been granted full rights of citizens for the first time in the history of Korea, meet to plan nursery schools and other aids to women. There are hints of the great progress that is being made in the fight against illiteracy and disease: hundreds of new schools and several hospitals have been built since the end of the war. Miles and miles of railroads, too, have been rebuilt.

But the great thrill is in the footage devoted to shots of the people voting, in the free elections held on Nov. 13, 1946. All the democratic parties and social organizations, united behind a single electoral ticket, went to the polls in a tremendous demonstration of joy in what is at last their own government. Here, and in the pictures of the giant carnival-like celebration after the election, the camera has really managed to catch the breathtaking excitement of a people suddenly released, a large mass of people again able to hold up their heads and shout their happiness at being alive, at having friends, and at belonging once more to the world of free men.

The sour note on the program is struck—as is so often the case—by Hollywood, in a Paramount short called *The Hill Billies*, in which a cast of awfully "cute" dogs are dressed vaguely as human beings and play hill-billy music and dance reels and square dances. The film is highlighted by a group of black dogs, led by an "Aunt Jemima" with bandanna and pipe and a half-dozen or so "pickaninnies," singing, in fantastic Negro dialect, "Shortenin' Bread." I cannot imagine why anyone would see fit to include it on such a program as this.

ETHEL KLEIN.

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