

million

NEW LEFT WRITING

Edited by
JOHN SINGER

SEAN O'CASEY
HUGH MacDIARMID
REGINALD MOORE
GEORGE BORODIN
MULK RAJ ANAND
WINIFRED HORRABIN
LANGSTON HUGHES
JOHN ATKINS
ANTHONY HERN
S. D. TREMAYNE

★ FIRST
COLLECTION

ART REPRODUCTIONS
One in Full Colour
SOVIET WAR CARTOONS

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PUBLISHED BY WILLIAM MACLELLAN, 240 HOPE STREET, GLASGOW, C.2.
PRINTED BY WILLIAM MCLELLAN & CO. LTD., 240 HOPE STREET, GLASGOW, C.2.

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Reproductions of Soviet War Cartoons between pages 24 and 25.

Reproductions of George Hannah's paintings between pages 40 and 41.

about million

THIS is the first of what we hope will be a series of self-contained collections of poems, stories, articles, reviews, illustrations, and, in the future, plays, scripts, "reportage" and any new vital forms. Apart from trade difficulties new collections will depend mainly on the merit of material submitted. That our contributors must have something to say, and know how to say it, and that the whole must amount to a piece of *creative writing* is our primary aim. We would avoid somnolence, and are willing to risk the offence of literary or political good manners in what is, after all, our search and struggle, and the search and struggle of all our readers, and all humanity; to think out, build and strive for a new synthesis in society. We think it is a Left synthesis. At the same time our "Field of action" is cultural, the work of art, that which is warm, beautiful and *unique*, the world within the individual. But is this world concerned, should it be concerned with the outside world of war and politics, the world of Indians, Jews, Negroes, labour conditions, peace and rebuilding, famine and plenty? Of course. Does birth and marriage and fear of death, and heroic inspired contempt of death, does harvesting and sun-bathing, romance and shipbuilding, the theatre and the sports arena enter this world? Let us re-read the best of Steinbeck, Hemingway, Blok, Silone, Malraux, Lorca, Kafka, O'Casey, Saroyan, Grassic Gibbon, Mayakovsky, Mann, Sholokhov and Capek to know the answer. We are equally tired of the label "Large abstract themes," and that other pigeon-hole ending "He gets down to the guts of the thing." To intending contributors we say, send us your work as often as you like, it will be read with the same interest as the writing of established authors, and it will be accepted or rejected solely by the standards we have attempted to outline in this preface.

THE DOG

SEAN O'CASEY

JOHNNY stood behind Archie sitting near a rousing fire, for it was a cold night and a sharp feeling of frost invaded every corner, eagerly watching Archie attending to the sack. He watched Archie putting a patch over a hole in the sack with a packing-needle and some thin strong twine. When the patch was on and firmly fixed, Archie ran wide loose stitches in and out round the mouth of the sack, using a thicker cord, so that when the ends were pulled the mouth of the sack closed. A dog's muzzle, roughly made of thicker twine, lay on the table beside him.

Archie's dog, a black-and-tan terrier, had darted out one fine morning and had placed, with a sudden vicious bite, a number of tiny evil-looking holes in a little child's white-fleshed leg. The frightened child had screamed, bringing out Mrs. Cassidy with a run, to haul the dog away by it's scut of a tail and shut it safe inside ; then out again to bear the screaming child to it's mother, insisting that the child must be taken to the hospital immediately to have the wound cauterised, while the raging mother shouted to a curious world that she didn't know why, under God's heaven, she didn't know why people who hadn't one penny to rap against another wanted to keep wild and threacherous animals lying slyly asleep in hidlins, ready to leap out at any moment an' leave the red mark of it's venom in the fresh whiteness of a little girl's leg.

Her mouth fixed in a firm line, Johnny's mother had said what's done is done and what must be done must be done now without waiting, so as to be sure that the evil of the wound would stay where it is and strike no deeper, by having a sure hand cauterise it, so that after a day or two of pain, the wound would be harmless.

The child's mother had wept and barged her way to the doctor, her weeping hurried along with the warning that if she didn't let the doctor see it the child would lose it's leg, the whole street and all the passers-by hearing of the day's evil and her child's hurt, Mrs. Cassidy tight-lipped and striding beside her.

"For God's sake, Mrs. Cassidy," the woman had whispered outside the surgery door. "You go in with the kid yourself, for it's fallin' flat in a faint I'd be, if even one o' me eyes caught a glimpse of what the doctro'll have to do."

And Johnny's mother had gone in, plump and plain, crooning encouraging sentences to the frightened little one in her arms ; helping the surgeon by holding the child to be probed and cauterised, calm and callous over the child's cries, or so it's mother said afterwards ; carrying the child back in her own arms and putting her to bed, as if she owned it, as the mother observed ; then running off and coming back again with sheets of transfers fair and finely coloured, of birds and butterflies, of England's rulers from the time of Edward the Confessor, to the first

years of our own liege lady, Queen Victoria ; and then ordering the child's mother, if you please, as if she were the be-all and end-all of the whole world's healing, to let the child rest ; in no way to remind her of the accident, not to mention it in the child's presence, so that with the healing of the leg all shock might fade away ; and finishing with the remark that she would now return to her own place, that the dog would be dead within a day, and the child well within a week.

"Where's the bowler now" ? asked Archie.

"Under the bed in t'other room. He ran off when he seen you sewing the sack."

"Sometimes," murmured the mother, "Dogs seem to have a second sense."

"It wont be long now till he's none," said Archie shortly.

"Will I go in and pull him out" ? asked Johnny, eager to begin the exciting task.

"Oh, let th' poor animal be at peace till the last minute," said the mother quickly."

"A minute or two won't matther one way or another," said Archie, knotting the last stitch to make the whole thing firm. "There, now," he said, holding up the sack for all to see, "strong enough to hold a tiger, an' he in a temper." He tugged at the sack, putting a corner under his foot, and tugging again with all his might. Then he tied two great bricks together with bits of rope and dropped 'em in the sack.

"Slip out now," he said to his mother, "An' see if the sky is dark enough, an' the street is still an 'no life movin'."

Mrs. Cassidy went to the door, opened it, and stepped out onto the path, looked up at the sky, down the street, then came back again into the lighted room.

"It's cold an' quiet an' still outside," she said, "With nothin' to be seen save the shiverin' stars thrying to shelther an shine in the blackness of the night sky."

"Then we'd better get ready to go," said Archie. "Coax him from undher the bed with an oul bone or something." Mrs. Cassidy went into the other room, and knelt down beside the time-worn bed.

"Boxer, here ; Boxer, Boxer, good doggie, come on out an' see the lovely thing I've got for you." She pushed her head under the bed. "Boxer, poor Boxer, come on here." But Boxer didn't stir.

"Isn't he coming, where is he, can't you see him," wailed out Archie. "He's in the farthest corner, pressed up against the wall, lookin' as if he guessed full well what was in store for him." "He'll soon be where he won't have to guess anymore," said Archie viciously, catching hold of the bed and switching it from the wall, and pouncing on Boxer who tried to press away from the clutching hands, his ears hanging limp on his head, his little eyes gleaming, the stump of a tail wagging timidly, and a soft whimper shaking itself from his mouth.

Johnny held Boxer while Archie fixed the muzzel over his snout, binding the end strings tightly round his neck so that he couldn't edge

the muzzle off him. The bowler tried several times to snap with the muzzled mouth, but the snap and snarl ended only in a long low whimper. Then, while Mrs. Cassidy and Johnny held the mouth of the sack wide open, Archie gathered the dog tightly in his arms, bunched the legs together, and thrust him firmly down, down into the depths of the sack, pulling the running cord that was threaded through the mouth, and tying it into a black knot, so that Boxer was safely housed and hindered and hersed for the last short journey to the dark that would never grow light again.

Making a loop in the thick cord, Archie thrust a broom-handle through the loop, saying to his mother, "See now for the last time, if the coast's clear."

She thrust her head and shoulders as far out into the night as she could, and then drew in again.

"It's all clear," she said, "Only a cold an nipping night air to put speed into both your feet."

Gripping the broom-handle, one at each end, Archie and Johnnie lifted it to their shoulders, so that the sack swung between them, and set off up the street, looking like they were carrying corn out of Egypt. Through the cold and frosty night they went, Archie leading, with Johnny steadying the swinging sack. They kept well to the middle of the street, lest a door of one of the houses should suddenly open, and someone come out and grow too curious. They went on their toes, as much as was endurable, like drunken ballet-dancers, like Indian braves, in single file, avoiding any little pool of light, hugging the darkness, and loving the darkness, fearful that some might think their deed evil.

Archie pulled up with a jerk and said, "Hush." He swung over to the further side of the street, and crouched down in the deeper darkness of a sheltering door. A little way up, Johnny heard a slow heavy haunting tread, heavy-footed, and through a pool of gaslight glitter, he soon saw a heavy form, thick and strong, firm and footy, passing through the pool, and Johnny knew that a policeman was passing by, passing by, here's a policeman passing by, my fair ladies.

They waited quite a time till the form had vanished and the sound of the mighty tread had ceased before they slung the sack up between them again. Coming near the top of the street, they heard the sound of singing in the corner house.

"Prendergast's are havin' a party," said Archie, "that's Mouse Prendergast singin' now—I'd know his voice among a million. An' he's still singing the only song anyone ever heard him singin'."

They listened for a few moments to the squeaky voice of Mouse trickling faintly out through the brightly-lighted window :

"O'er thy grave I weep goodbye,
Hear, oh hear my lonely cry,
Oh, without thee, what am I?
Sweet Belle Mahone."

Then the full swell of the chorus came pouring out through the lighted window as everyone joined in :

“ Sweet Belle Mahone! Sweet Belle Mahone!

Wait for me at Heaven’s gate,

Sweet Belle Mahone!”

“ Oh, let’s get on,” said Johnny, “ for the frost’s going through me bad boots, and me hands are numb with the cold.”

They turned, right, round the corner at the head of the street into the waste field running alongside the high grey walls of Mountjoy Prison, standing like a great grey wolf in the midst of the Irish fold. They paused to look at the high stone walls, made higher by three or four tiers of bricks, each barely resting on the other’s edge, held from falling by a thin splash of mortar, so that if any convict, tired of his stay there, tried to escape by climbing over the loosely joined bricks on the top of the wall, they would come tumbling down like a cascade, rousing the sleepy warder in the watchtower, causing him to leap to attention, pointing his gun and let bang at the place the noise came from.

Johnny gazed at the hardy high walls, blacker than the blackest night, and the watchtowers, seeming to tip the stars, where warders stood stretching their eyes through the darkness, with guns all ready loaded, watching and waiting to see that nothing crept from a lonely cell out of the light into God’s marvellous darkness to creep and creep to the wall, and climb and climb on and up to the top, taking down brick after brick, softly and slowly, and laying them, softly and slowly, on top of others as far away as an arm could stretch, clearing a gap, a space, then to lift a leg, cautiously, cautiously, the right leg, straddlewise over the wall through the gap, waiting, still and stony, like the wall itself, listening and listening while the other leg, the left one, was being brought over as softly and shyly as a butterfly’s wings brushing a petal, over the wall, through the gap, cautiously and slowly, and slyly, to crouch, stony and still, listening and waiting, without stir or breath, for the flash and the bang from the rifle of a warder in one of the towers, firing at an escaping prisoner, escaping prisoner, escaping, making the alarum bells go ring ring a ringling, waking the other warders out of a dense deep sleep, and sending them, half naked, with batons and bayonets, charging out through the passages into the square, bent for the place on the wall where the convict was escaping, half way out, hovering on the wall with his hands gripping the ledge, his body stretched down as far as it could string in a stretch to lessen the last quick slithering drop down, scattering the frightened frogs and madly coiling eels squirming in the muddy moat below.

Suddenly, in the midst of the shining stars and the sparkling frost, from somewhere behind the dark grey walls facing them, a voice rang out in a challenging chant, Number One, an all’s well, to be echoed by another answering strongly, Number Two, an all’s well, to be echoed by a third till they faded away into the quietness of the frost and the stars again.

“Number nix,” said Archie, “an all’s well ;” and on he led Johnny, both of them stumbling over the mounds of rubbish thickly studded with weeds, towards the canal, the sound of water pouring over the lock gates coming nearer and nearer to them as they hurried forward.

Archie caught his foot in a tangle of weed, and lurched forward, pulling Johnny down so that his face for a moment was pressed against the living thing in the sack, and he felt the paws clawing violently against his cheek, and a muffled growl and a snarl came curling into his ear, forcing his heart into a quickening beat.

“The damned brute has snapped his muzzle,” said Archie, “Up you get, quick, an’ let’s get it over, before the world hears him howling, an’ a warder, thinking something’s up, let’s fly at a venture, and send a bullet into one of our backsides!”

They hurried over the rest of the way in fear that anyone should hear the snarling coming out of the darkness, and at last reached what Archie said was the bank of the canal ; and Johnny, peering ahead, saw a cold, dark, shiny mass moving slowly along ending in a gurgle and a loud splashing as the slow shiny mass pressed over the sluice-gates and tumbled down into the lock below.

Archie took the broom-handle from the mouth of the sack. “Now,” he said to Johnny, “you take the top an’ I’ll take the bottom, give three fine firm swings, and at the third go, let fly!”

Each took his grip of the sack and swung it back in a wide swing. The thing inside let out a long sickening howling moan. “One,” said Archie, “two, three—go!”

The sack shot away high over the soft moving shiny mass in a curving line, the howling moan rising higher and higher, to be suddenly stilled by a loud splash that stabbed through the sound of the tumbling waters falling through the sluice-gates down into the lock below.

Archie shouldered the broom-handle and turned to go. Johnny thought he saw him give a little shiver.

“Mors omnibus communis,” said Archie, bravely.

“Ay,” said Johnny proudly, rubbing his frost-frayed hands vigorously together, “it takes us, doesn’t it!”

We the Audience

WINIFRED HORRABIN

"A BOBSWORTH of dark, that's all they go for," said a scornful voice. The closely huddled couples in the back row, with no eyes at all for the flickering screen, their thoughts intent on more immediate interests, made no protest. Why should they? It was true, for them.

But for the rest of the cinema audience, the tired worker, the harassed housewife, the gregarious young, or the lonely discouraged old, it was not true at all. It was, for them, a bobsworth of light; of romance, of adventure, of encouragement, and of escape, and well worth the money. A bobsworth of light and sound to take us out of ourselves, as the saying is; out of ourselves indeed, but where to?

Perhaps to a world of fantasy, in the half-dark, the friendly half-dark which hides and shields us from each other and provides us with a window through which we may look at the world from the comfort of our armchairs, our attention concentrated, our self-probing forgotten. Here some of us can see, can experience through emotive response, a life that we miss in living, a working out of things in the triumphant logic of tragedy, comedy, and drama, which is somehow never so satisfyingly complete in our own day-to-day struggles. Success instead of failure, romantic love that is not ephemeral but permanent and conclusive; here we can see hope flourish, or come to fulfilment. Time itself stands still until we catch the fleeting minute and hold it in that frame of light, the passing minute so elusive in the world outside. Here, the camera holds it suspended for our examination.

Outside, the world moves too quickly for us. It batters at our ears and eyes, it is bewildering. It hurries onward too fast for our knowing, we cannot absorb everything, but here, in this half-dark, looking through our window, where light decides the patterns we see, the outside world is for the moment static, even though the patterns move before us.

We see it and ourselves, but how changed. Instead of a bewildering chaos, a complicated flux changing too swiftly for comprehension, we are shown something that is easy to grasp, a part of life, so that the whole of life becomes more intelligible. We are shown the life of our time, the ever-changing present, the curious past, and we begin, dimly, to discern the future. Individually too we are translated, here, where goodness is rewarded and comes to fruition, not in the niggardly fashion of the actual world, but lavishly and romantically as it deserves. Here we are hero and heroine, as in our own lives, the centre of the screen, not one but potentially all the characters in the drama, the super-lover and the super-loved, and for some of us, the unloved. We are everything at once, and nothing too, such spectators as life never sees. Anonymously we

watch our bigger better selves, or enjoy the sight of a worse self giving vent to all the hates we conceal in our hearts. There is something for all of us.

Outside, the tides swirl and sweep us along. No one can tell where. Here we are more than puppets, here we can be men. Outside, others control us, and some of us try to change that too. We are parts of an intricate impersonal machine. We are smoothed and polished and sandpapered, indeed we are made brightly shining parts of the machine. For purposes not always our own we hurry, or are hurried, to places that we may hate, for objects that are often far from clear ; our lives are lived for us, not by us. Great forces that we only dimly comprehend, or know nothing of, hurry us off to death, to disintegration, to the thick of battle. Perhaps we should win through all this, because we believe in some tremendous aim, perhaps we can face the sacrifices thrust upon us because we too would thrust these sacrifices upon others, believing in the outcome of the struggle.

Yet all this is not individual enough for most of us ; it is too impersonal ; we will play our part, we will do our duty, but we claim the right to be browned off.

Here in the half-dark we take refuge, to watch the panorama of which we are a sentient part. Here in a world of wide spaces, of gracious living, there are creatures like ourselves, and how different. Perhaps if we look long enough we may find some meaning in it all, see where the panoramic procession is leading. After all the camera cannot lie, they say!

What does it tell us then, presenting the world to the world? A thousand divergent things, but through that very multiplicity of images some truth emerges. They show us the beauty of the world we live in, mountains, plains, rivers, islets, the sea, the countryside. The secrets of nature, magnified a thousand times, confront us astonishingly. We see the factories where we work, ourselves as masters and cogs, the desert fighting where our sons fall, searing metal against soft flesh, agony and hope in action. We realise that " stark horror " is more than a cliché. We realise that comradeship is as real as bread. We see our mean homes ranked against the hills, built over the mines where we toil, we see the ships we build blown out of the sea, the homes of the rich nestling in virgin parklands. We see ourselves climbing out of the ruins of our bombed towns wheeling our frightened tired children to places that we hope are safe. We see ourselves forging the means to make the enemy and his children run for the cover some hope they will not find. We see our rulers visiting the people, flags, handshakings, troops getting medals, the sailors, our sons, battling with the sea ; the soldiers, our sons, battling on the land, and we, the audience, the people, battling with life. And gradually truth emerges.

The camera which can be made to tell half-truths or to build elaborate lies, shows us the real truth because out of the chaos of its multiple

pictures, a pattern begins to grow and define itself. It tells us that life is only chaotic because we allow it to be chaotic, stupidly, for here at hand, close at hand and demonstrated by the screen, are the means for controlling that chaos. Presenting the world to the world in pictures of actual happenings, as well as in romantic fantasies, it is impossible to conceal the truth. The picture of reality tells its own story. We see the possibility of progress, the necessity for social change, the wonders of science are revealed to us, pointing the direct way to plenty and to peace. Before our eyes we see the work that man has already done—and the destruction his anarchy reaps—nothing is secret any more. The eye of the camera is like the eye of God. Out of the welter of the news-reel, the comic, the romantic, the nature-film, comes, not a dream, but a picture of reality, no fantasy to all but the blind.

We see the world as manageable by man himself, a puppet no longer. We are taken out of ourselves, looking through that window of light, but what we see drives us back again into ourselves, into an understanding, socially and individually, of the tides that move us.

Perhaps this is not what we came for, we, the audience, nor is this truth manifest to all of us. But that is what the camera is doing for us, showing us that life is not some dream with a false promise of a happy ending, but a living moving reality which man has it in his power to direct. A bobsworth of light indeed.

DEBIT ONE

REGINALD MOORE

HE felt mad with anger. Bending low over his desk he tried to cope with the columns of figures that rose meaninglessly to his eyes, but his anger swamped everything, seeming to heave up in tremors from somewhere inside him.

His mind featured one thought. This thought tormented him, stoked his feelings so that his fingers quivered, his lips twitched and tightened.

He had made one mistake in the ledger. One figure wrong. Nygate had taken the figure and trebled it; had expressed it in terms of money-in-hand; had brought in his salary and thrown the lot into a juggle. This time, Nygate said, it was only one figure. But if he could blunder with one, why not with ten, twenty—hundreds. It might involve the firm in a huge loss. If anything like this happened again . . . “Very grave, serious consequences, I’m afraid.”

One figure wrong! For weeks now he had been working overtime, till nine and ten o’clock. Last night he had felt done in. His eyes were smarting sores in his head, getting down from his stool to put the ledger away he had felt himself hardly able to walk, his legs from the knees downwards weak and trembling. He had done the last ledger without checking. And this morning Nygate had found the mistake. One figure wrong.

But perhaps he was being unjust, perhaps the system was more to blame than the man. A lull in his feelings gave a cue to doubt. There were six men away on holiday, two in his section, and it was end of quarter. Yet they expected the double work to be raced through with infallibility. It was unfair, unfair. The firm were lousy with money; they could easily afford to engage extra staff.

This overtime’s wrecking me, he thought. I haven’t an ounce of energy when the day’s over. Do they think eightpence tea money is compensation for sore eyes and nerves like ragged wire? Do they!

But he must think about Nygate. He must decide how much the man was to blame.

It was a fact that Nygate was a tool of the system. But that was no reason why, in dealing with him and the others, he should abandon all consideration. A proper manager would have realized the position and kept on at the directors for extra staff. If they refused to listen then he should use understanding and overlook a few mistakes.

But Nygate never tried to reason with you. He would bully and storm, treat you like a schoolboy. That was where petty things like time-books came in. The time-book was taken away exactly at nine o’clock

in the morning. If you arrived in the office at one and a half minutes past nine you were obliged to go straight to the manager—to Nygate. There was no signing off at night . . .

Gradually his anger mounted again as he thought how an office could be run. What was the sense of all this whipping and scarifying? Men became either stubborn or half-alive. All were neurotic. What was the bloody sense of it when the work suffered and men were made so ill they had to stay home?

He felt hot and savage. Nygate's harsh prinking voice sounded afresh in his ears. "Very grave, serious consequences, I'm afraid." Why the hell didn't he speak plain English and say "You'll get the sack." But no, Nygate knew the value of going all round a statement. It was his custom before speaking to look down at some papers in his hand and frown as if he were consulting your prison record. And he would come to the point slowly, so that you never quite knew which peccadillo he was referring to.

Nygate was to blame all right. He accepted this thought gladly, weary of spending his anger on himself. Yes, Nygate was to blame. He was a swine, a toady. He had been a clerk himself before the War, yet now he behaved like a lord.

It became impossible for him to pretend any longer. I must do something, he thought. There won't be peace for me or anybody till that swine gets a bit of his own medicine.

He shut the ledger with a bang. The office looked up. He met their gaze with eyes half mocking, half blind with rage. Head slightly lowered, back hunched, he crossed the room and went out.

Nygate's office was on the next floor. Going up the stairs he collected in his mind all his memories of the man's pettiness, his bullying—set up a cartoon of him with his black, smeared hair, his faint antiseptic smell, his heavy-lidded arrogant eyes.

On the top stair he lingered.

". . . serious consequences." The doctor was still attending young Tony, the bill would be anything from three to five guineas. Of course there was the dole until he got another job—but would he ever get another one? People wanted qualified men these days. You had to be qualified.

Then he forced his mind on to one track. Nygate. Nothing mattered but that he should be reduced, humbled. The glass panel of the door was a big idiot's eye, mooning at him, cackling. The word "Manager" ran across it. He seized the handle and pulled savagely. Nothing happened. He felt a moment of sheer panic, then, through the welter of his mind, sense emerged. Inwards, not outwards—push, push. He pushed and blundered in. The door crashed back against the wall.

"Nygate," he said, "Nygate, you bastard, I want to tell you something. I want to tell you . . ." But the next word became dribble on his tongue. The desk grew in solid mahogany from the rich red pile

of the carpet. It was clear of papers, the pens lay in their glass rest and the telephone stood firm on its flap. Just an empty desk.

Desperately he tried to go on, tried to say it all if only to relieve himself. But nothing would come. And the footsteps were upon him before he heard them. Half turning, he crouched to one side of the doorway.

"Want to see me?" Nygate swept past him into the room, sat down at his desk. Now he was the Manager, the ruler on the throne. His voice was brittle, suspecting.

"Why, yes, sir. I came"—his voice thickened, betraying him—"I came to . . ." His hand came up to his face and he shut the door and stumbled out. He paused an instant, expecting the voice to shout his name, but the only sound from within was the rustle of papers being pulled from a drawer. Without a mind he went down the stairs, feeling his way like an old man, one hand clutching the banister, his feet missing their step.

F. J. BROWN.

Bravely, My Diligence

Poets sang of woods and stars,
Of trees and the scent of night ;
They sang of the glories of life
Although life lay hidden from their sight.

 (" O singer of Persephone,
 In the dim meadows desolate,
 Dost thou remember Sicily,")

If a poet wants to talk about life—
He must live.

Live intensely with the many-sided nature of a man.
The function of poetry is to popularise
A mode of life
Which the poet
LIVES.

If you sing your life your song is a poem.
Make your life worth living and your song will be worth the singing.
Poets must build the life joyous
That they might sing with truth of joy.
 Not dragged from sights some would not see,
 But dancing. Ariel set free.

Southern Mammy Song

Miss Gardner's in her garden.
Miss Yardman's in her yard.
Miss Michaelmass is at de mass
And I am gettin' tired!
Lawd!
I am gettin' tired.

The nations they is fightin'
And the nations they done fit.
Sometimes I think that white folks
Ain't worth a little bit.
No, ma'am!
Ain't worth a little bit.

Last week they lynched a coloured boy
They hung him to a tree.
That coloured boy aint said a thing
But we should all be free.
Yes, ma'am!
We should all be free.

Not meanin' to be sassy
And not meanin' to be smart—
But sometimes I think that white folks
Just aint got no heart.
No, ma'am!
Just aint got no heart.

BARTOLOMEO VANZETTI.

Last Speech to the Court

I have talk a great deal of myself
but I even forget to name Sacco.
Sacco too is a worker,
from his boyhood a skilled worker, lover of work,
with a good job and pay,
a bank account, a good and lovely wife,
two beautiful children, and a neat little home
at the verge of a wood near a brook.

Sacco is a heart, a faith, a character, a man ;
a man, lover of nature and mankind ;
a man who gave all, who sacrifices all
to the cause of liberty and to his love for mankind ;
money, rest, mundane ambition,
his own wife, his children, himself
and his own life.

Sacco has never dreamt to steal, never to assassinate.
He and I have never brought a morsel
of bread to our mouths from our childhood to to-day
which has not been gained by the sweat of our brows.
Never . . .

Oh yes, I may be more witty, as some have put it ;
I am a better babbler than he is, but many many times
in hearing his heartfelt voice ringing a faith sublime,
in considering his supreme sacrifice, remembering his heroism,
I felt small at the presence of his greatness
and found myself compelled to fight back
from my eyes the tears,
and quench my heart
throbbing to my throat to not weep before him!
this man called thief and assassin and doomed. .

But Sacco's name will live in the hearts of the people
and in their gratitude when Katzmann's bones
and yours will be dispersed by time!
when your name, his name, your laws, institutions,
and your false god are but a dim remembering
of a cursed past in which man was wolf
to the man . . .

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

A FUTURE AND PLEASANT OLD AGE

MAURICE FRIDBERG

It was before the war. Nobody big was angry with anybody big. The world overground was peaceful and sleeping ; half-sleeping, doing things with a grace and polish that becomes peace ; but does not stay peaceful.

A man thinks of the future, and pleasant old age. He is not a big man, but small. He has a small business, working five days a week for the landlord, he sixth day to pay for food and a new suit of clothes once in two years, the radio licence, a little hospital insurance in case he goes ill, a few coppers insurance towards his wooden box in case he dies. But nothing in case of war. And the man who thinks of the future, and pleasant old age, is doomed before he sets his mind in motion.

It was 1938, Anno Domini 1938, Munich 1938. The leaves had not as yet begun to fall, the summer sun burned strong high up ; the nursing of the harvest went on smoothly, methodically, without the maximum volume of prayers. There was no crisis in the mind of man.

Yet true, somebody big was angry. But even very big people, giants, get over an anger. The elephant, docile great fleshy being, may quiet a score of quarrelling four-leggeds by standing in their company. But in 1938 there had been none the size of the elephant, and the fox had been left unmolested. Later it is shewn where indeed the fox fed himself up well the size of the elephant and bigger. But in 1938 the man who thought of the future, and pleasant old age, was not concerned with the sizes of fox and elephant.

Hermann his name was. The business, a small one, a nameless one. Old treasures from another age came to him. If there was worm in the wood or cracks in the glaze there was work for Hermann. Perfect treasures never came to Hermann. Studiously, industriously, cleverly, with the hands of the artist he attended his visitors. Shellac and glue ; fine special glue ; splints, and a box of iron shapes, were his workers. He talked with them frequently as he went about his work. Names he had for everything that was of use to him in his work ; peculiar harsh sounding names ; names for every piece, every tool ; names adopted from the radio and the gloomy conversation of his wife ; topical new-age names. Yet, as familiar as these words were to him he was not a man interested in a new age. It was in fun he addressed his subject so, for he was not entirely without humour.

“Hermann,” his wife, a pale sad woman, would say : “Hermann. you know it is dangerous and wrong to use these words in England, Not in front of the customers. So dangerous if there is war . . .”

But Hermann persisted in his fun. "Ach, you are always worrying your hair away with war nonsense," he would reply; "One of these days I am sure you will become bald."

As Hermann worked, he thought of the future, and pleasant old age. He thought of the little money he would need to save away for the time he could go into the country and build with his own hands and his own bricks a cottage, with land and fruit and vegetables and a big tree to shade the sun when it was in the south. He knew the cottage and the land for he had lived with it as a boy on the edge of the Black Forest. Two rooms there would be in the front, filled with pictures and furniture, and photographs on the wall. And the shed away down near the tree where he could work; for what man, even in retirement can keep himself idle the whole of the day?

The time of his planning and thoughts of the future, and pleasant old age, coincided with the time of the fox growing into the size of the elephant. And one day a letter came to Hermann.

The letter was short, but it lacked nothing in its brevity. "They cannot force a man," Hermann told his wife. "They cannot tear down everything with a few words in a letter. They cannot make a man go back. I will stay here with my work and in a few years we will go to the country as I always say."

"It is your big voice," his wife replied, without sympathy. "So many times I have told you it is dangerous with your names and your talk. Now you know."

Hermann went on working but his thoughts were less comforting. The cottage had grown ugly and the land around it arid and faded. His broken legs and damaged carvings he tended silently, morosely. His tools became dead things without name or affection.

Soon, another letter came, a longer one, a more insistent one.

"I would sooner death than they take me," Hermann said in anguish. "I will not be mixed in new worlds and new ages. What do they want from a poor carpenter?"

And his wife replied mockingly; "A few weeks ago you were an artisan; to-day you are a poor carpenter."

Later, a third and final letter came. And Hermann became broken and distracted. He put away from his sight his tools and his fine glue, his iron pieces and shellac. 'Had I been an artist,' he thought, 'it would not have been so bad for me. An artist does not think of the future, and pleasant old age, he thinks of the past. A man could be selfish with the past for none can take it away.'

Slowly and sadly and with fear in his heart he gathered together his few possessions, his tools of an old age for a new age, and silently he prepared for the journey.

But it was now 1939, Anno Domini 1939, History 1939. The big had become impatient and angry. The fox had become bigger even than

the elephant. The world had awakened, the grace and polish gone. The importance of the small had shrivelled. Steel and metal were rumbling. The biggest army, the biggest tank, the biggest airplane, the biggest voice

“It will be war to-morrow,” Hermann’s wife complained sourly. “To-morrow or the next day. Or the day after. We will be taken away, both of us, and put in a cage like the animals, together with the rest of our people who are still left in the country.” And Hermann dallied and hoped.

The first leaves had not yet fallen ; the summer was late, the harvest early, the prayers loud, when they came, four men in a polished blue car.

Hermann was overjoyed.

“It is your big voice,” his wife said with great bitterness and anger. “I knew it ! I told you ! I told you !”

But Hermann rejoiced and said nothing, for even in a cage a man might think of the future, and pleasant old age.

FIRST OFFENCE

FAY KING

Life was good!

Fanyana threw back his head, and laughter rolled from the depths of his chest.

He wanted to run, and leap, and shout with the whole force of his strength. He wanted to sing, and dance, and give vent to his joy. Life was so good.

The sun was burning its way across the metal-blue dome that capped the sweltering world. Heat haze quivered over the broad stretches of macadamised road, and the pavement was so hot that he could feel the itch of it through the leather-hard soles of his feet.

He wore only a pair of patched khaki pants, and sweat coursed in little rivers down his powerful brown body. It felt good to be alive on such a day, with the sun pouring strength into one, and the world dancing in a dazzle of sunshine.

Life was indeed good!

Fanyana thought of the land he'd just ploughed for the white man on whose farm his family squatted, and the thought filled his head like a song. He loved the brown earth, the slow oxen that drew the plough, the long straight furrows.

For six months of the year his family worked for the white man in exchange for the privilege of squatting on his land. That was the law. For six months he must milk the white man's cows, plough and plant and reap his land, herd his cattle, and build his barns. Then for six months he was free, because his boss was a just man who allowed Fanyana to work out his six months concurrently, so that for half the year he might work for himself and earn the money for his taxes, and the lobola cattle with which he would ultimately get Tokozile for wife.

For half the year he could work as garden boy, house boy, ricksha puller, coal heaver, or labourer in the city, and so earn real money for taxes, lobola, and a few of the good things that the white men's stores offered him—gay shirts and gaudy handkerchiefs, beads, mineral water, and jew's harps.

With many Africans it was not so. The farmers split their six months' labour up to cover the whole year, so that the men could never get away to the towns and mines, and earn good money for their needs and their pleasures. The law was so made that the white farmer could exercise this right over the Native families who squatted on his land, and a great deal of misery and trouble resulted, particularly when taxes fell due.

But Fanyana was one of the fortunate ones. For six months he had worked on the farm. And now he was free.

And the sun shone.

And life was good.

He broke into a trot, and turned down a passage leading from the thronged pavement of the main street in the European shopping area, out onto a wider, quieter street, lined with the stores of Indian merchants. Here he could sing. Here he could run. Here he was free.

A Zulu girl, wearing a European dress of bright pink cotton that strained heroically to adapt itself to her generous breasts and hips, leant against a lamp-post drinking mineral water from a bottle. Her one hand rested on her hip, the other held the bottle aloft, and her eyes caught and reflected Fanyan's great joy as he came abreast of her. She lowered the bottle, and laughed. Laughed with him.

"Life is good!" he cried, waving his stick, and stamping out a dance on the pavement before her.

"Wah—meh! Life is good!" she cried back. And their laughter mingled.

"You have just come from the kraal?" she questioned, her black eyes sparkling with merriment.

"I have just come. My ploughing is finished. I have worked out my six months. I arrived in town this morning, and already I have found a job!"

"Good. And the work you have found, clever one?"

"Easy work!" He laughed again at the thought of the easy job he had found, and the good money he would earn. "It is house work. I am to work in a beautiful stone house, and live in a kia that has a bed and two shelves in it. Easy work. And I get thirty bob a month."

"You have done this work before?"

He shook his head.

"Then you will be surprised," she predicted. "You may think there is no work to be done in a beautiful house, but the white people make work. At the kraal it is woman's work to keep the huts clean. It is easy work. The sleeping mats must be rolled and stacked, the floors swept, food cooked, and water fetched from the spring. That is all. But in a white man's house——! You will see."

The thought of Fanyana's initiation into the domestic ways of white folk amused her profoundly.

Fanyana shrugged carelessly and swung on his way down the street.

His self-confidence was unbounded. He knew the strength of his powerful body. He was no fool. His brain was quick, and he learnt easily. He was troubled by no doubts concerning his new job.

His progress down the street was punctuated by bursts of song and scraps of gossip with strangers who were as uninhibited and friendly as himself.

He watched a smart young 'buck' posing on the pavement while an Indian street-photographer juggled with the inside of a monster-camera precariously balanced on a home-made tripod. Fanyana was much impressed. He stepped up to finger the jacket of the navy double-breasted suit the dandy was wearing, and to enquire the price. And he was more deeply impressed still when he learnt that it had cost all of two pounds ten, and the blue shirt with the stripes, five bob.

He sauntered into an Indian cafe, and came out munching a penny bun.

The shop windows fascinated and tempted him, and several times his hand crept into his pocket and closed round the rag that served as a purse for his worldly wealth, while he wrestled with the acquisitive devil within himself.

A coloured man leant against a wall playing a concertina. Fanyana's heart quickened. He loved music as he loved the sun, the earth. As he loved Tokozile. All his people loved music. There was no Zulu man or woman who did not sing, who had no sense of rhythm and harmony. It was part of their lives, part of themselves.

He stood on the edge of the pavement, his attention riveted on the man who played the concertina.

The man looked up, caught his eye, and broke off on a chord.

"You play?" he asked, jerking his head towards Fanyana.

"Yes."

Fanyana's voice was breathless. He'd owned a concertina for many years, and it had been stolen from him one night while he slept by the side of the road on his way to town.

"Then buy it," the coloured man suggested.

Fanyana took the instrument and turned it over several times in his hands before finally trying out a tune on it. The tone was good to his ears. The paint was new and bright, and the bellows were a joy to behold. Quaint little figures had been painted on them, and they squirmed and acted before his delighted eyes as he worked the bellows in and out.

"How much?" he asked reluctantly, knowing that he was sunk.

"Ten bob—because you play well. If you didn't I'd bloody well charge you fifteen."

Fanyana accepted the statement as a tribute to his art. Ten shillings represented practically all the money he had in the world, but it would be well spent. He wouldn't starve. His new job began in the morning.

He squatted down on his heels, and the coloured man did the same. From his pocket Fanyana dragged the bundle of dirty cloth, and commenced to work his way through countless knots to the coins stored in their depths.

The coloured man took a fletje from his trousers pocket, and drew it along his lips. Notes rippled from it. He blew upon it, sucked his lips, and wiped it on his sleeve.

Then, cupping it with his hands, and watching the native with calculating, friendly eyes, he commenced to play.

Fanyana paused in his excavations to listen.

"How much?" he asked slowly.

"Five bob."

"Wow! Five bob! No, no, no, no!" He laughed at the very idea. "I'll give you two and six. No more. You would rob me. It is all the money I have—two and six."

The man shrugged, still smiling.

“Three bob, then, because you’re my friend,” he conceded. “It’s bloody well Christmas box, man.”

Fanyana took it, and tucked it under his arm.

He worked the last knot loose, and counted the money out into the man’s palm.

He remained where he was after the other had left him. Just one ticky remained to last him until he got his first month’s wages in four week’s time. But what did it matter? His happiness was almost too great. He played first one instrument then the other. Several passers-by stopped to listen, and to discuss the terms of his purchase.

The music mounted to his head like the fumes of beer. He sang to the accompaniment of his concertina, and clapped his knees as he made music with his fleitje. More and more people stopped to listen.

“Better get over by the gutter,” one advised, “or the police’ll take you.”

Still playing he slithered across to the edge of the pavement on his seat.

What a life it was!

Here was he with six month’s freedom, with an easy job, with two beautiful musical instruments of his own, and the ability to play them.

He wedged his fleitje between his knees and bent his mouth to it, while he held the concertina out before him and played a duet.

A tiny Indian girl, wearing long green silk trousers and an orange over-dress, sat on her heels before him and watched his performance with wide, astonished black eyes. Gold ear-rings adorned her ears, and her jet hair hung in a pigtail down her back. This, she thought, was even more wonderful than an elephant.

A Zulu policeman strutted down the street, his face a mask of arrogance. He twirled his knob-kerrie as he walked and snapped disdainful eyes at the Natives and Indians who came within his line of progress. It was his duty to see that these people conformed to the rules of law and order laid down by their white masters in their great wisdom. He had obviously fed his belly and conceit like a glutton, and he looked down the fat pads of his cheeks at the children who played in the gutter, affecting not to hear the rude noises they made after him, though they rankled in his indignant ears.

He heard Fanyana long before he sighted him, and as he approached his indignation mounted.

This man was disturbing the peace. It would have been bad enough had he contented himself with playing one instrument at a time, but to play two simultaneously——! The policeman’s curiosity was piqued, but dignity forbade friendly investigation.

He pushed the audience aside, and prodded Fanyana with his foot.

“Stop!” he ordered.

Fanyana had a healthy fear of the law, but the music had gone to his head, and he laughed up into the scowling face of the police ‘boy.’

“You don’t like my music?” he cried. “Listen to this, then!”

And he played a tune that leapt and stamped and whirled like a dancer at a wedding feast.

"I arrest you!" declared the constable. He clapped handcuffs over Fanyana's wrists, and pushed him to his feet.

The fletje and concertina—the beautiful concertina with the little painted figures on the bellows—fell to the gutter with a clatter and moan. Surprise gave way to anger, and anger to fear, as Fanyana bent to recover his precious possessions, and yielded without demur when he was roughly propelled into the middle of the road.

He'd lived in towns before. He knew the futility of opposing the law. The only thing to do was to submit quietly, and hope for the best.

He was marched to the police station. He was questioned, his instruments were taken from him, and he was locked up for the night.

"I must begin work to-morrow morning, or I lose my new job," he explained to the white man who wrote in a book. "Will I get out to-morrow morning boss?"

"What a hope?" the man grunted without looking up.

And the Native constable who had arrested him kicked him twice for daring to address a European police officer.

A Native in the cell next to his raved in delirium tremens all that night, and the police shouted at him to shut up his bloody row for God's sake, and once they struck him with a sjambok, but to no effect.

In the middle of the night there was a commotion outside Fanyana's cell, and a Coloured girl was dragged down the corridor by two Native police 'boys,' while a couple of white constables followed, laughing at her swearing and pleading, and at the fact that her blouse was torn and her breasts were exposed. She was a girl of about eighteen, and there was blood on her mouth and shoulder, and her eyes were wide and staring. She was pushed into the cell on the other side of his, and her crying continued throughout the night.

"Shut up, you bitch, or I'll have you gagged!" the white policeman warned her several times, but her moaning continued.

Fanyana thought she had been raped and badly handled, but couldn't be sure. He knew of a girl who'd been drugged and raped, and left on the beach in a bad way. The police had found her and arrested her, and she'd served three weeks hard labour for her misfortune.

Such things happened.

He was taken to the court house with a dozen other offenders the following morning.

He was afraid. He was troubled about the job. And he was angry at all he had seen and heard during the night. It had been his first experience of prison, and he understood now why friends of his came out after spending terms of imprisonment for contravening some of the incomprehensible laws of the white man, with anger flaming in their hearts, and dangerous thoughts in their heads.

The magistrate was obviously bored with the morning's work. He regarded Fanyana as he would a wall, and Fanyana felt that no image of himself reached the great white man's eyes.

The police 'boy' who had arrested him gave evidence.

"He was playing a mouth organ and a concertina at the same time, your Worship, and disturbing the peace," he said. "I warned him to stop, your Worship, but he continued. So I arrested him your Worship."

The magistrate yawned.

Fanyana was told to state his case. He explained very earnestly that he'd come to town from ploughing the land, and that he didn't know it was an offence to play music in the street. He'd intended no harm.

The magistrate's eyes looked over his head.

"I find you guilty," he pronounced. "Half a crown, or four days' imprisonment with hard labour."

"But I have no money. I have only a tickey!" Fanyana cried. "I will lose my job, boss!"

He was silenced and led away to serve four days' imprisonment with hard labour for his first offence.

SOVIET WAR CARTOONS

Facing page 24

Facing page 25

1. Tass window number 12 on Kuznetsky Most St.
2. Poster called "We shall avenge."
3. Boris Efimov. This cartoon appeared in 1934 and concerns the campaign against depression and panic which was carried on in Germany. Caption runs "Secret Device, a spring which automatically spreads the mouth into a beautiful Aryan smile." The artist remarks: "A much more powerful model would be needed after the African victories, at least 1,000 H.P."
4. Red Army men reading anti-fascist posters.
5. Cartoon by Kukriniksi. "The Finns are defending their frontiers across the Don."
6. One dark night a fascist military jackal met a prowling hyena on a battlefield. "The skunk got up and slowly walked away," runs a music-hall gag. In this case, the hyena.
7. Cartoon by Kukriniksi. "The time draws near when the Red Army, jointly with the armies of our Allies, will break the backbone of the Fascist beast." Published in *Pravda* (From May 1st order of supreme commander, marshal of the Soviet Union, Stalin).
8. Boris Efimov. Mussolini's winter campaign for salvage, in this case human "Wool." The salvage goes to Germany (*Went* seems likely). Hitler is nothing if not 'thorough!'
9. Cartoon by Kukriniksi. "Laval and the Fascist Ring of the Niebelungs."
10. Hitler and Ribbentrop's "Whole of Europe." The typical "Collaborators," a gang of thieves and bandits.
11. *On the approaches to Leningrad* is the title of this Kukriniksi cartoon. Stalingrad would be equally appropriate.
12. By Boris Efimov. Fascist attitude to literature and art. The notorious Nazi remark, "When I hear the word 'culture' I push back the safety catch of my Browning."

ОКНО ТАСС № 12



ФАШИСТСКАЯ ОПЕРАТИВНАЯ С ВОЗДА



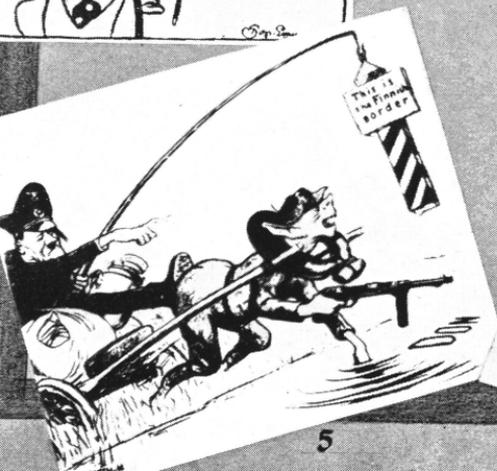
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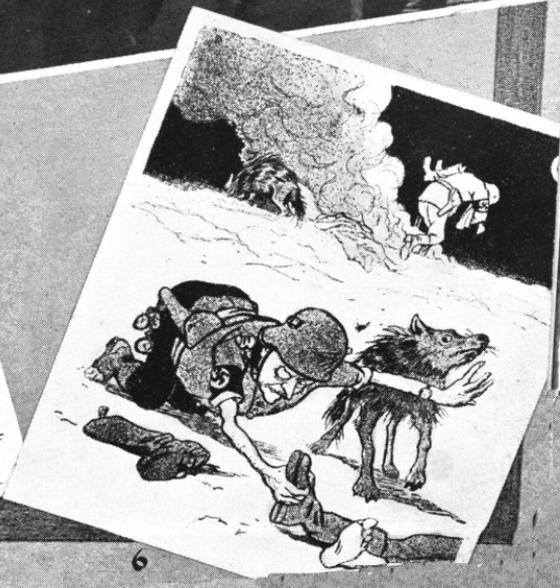
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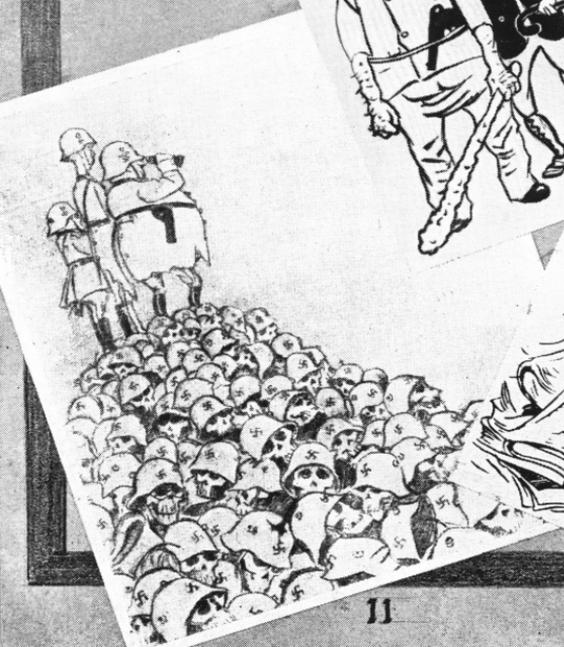
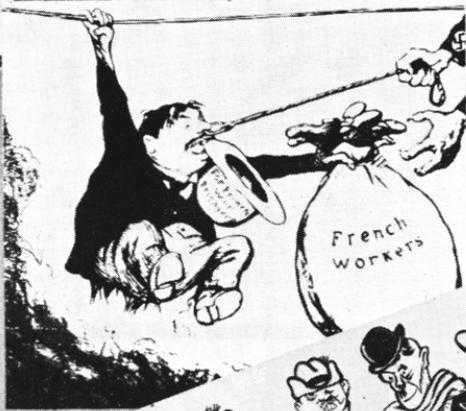
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SOVIET WAR CARTOONS

Militant Satire

ANTHONY HERN

BEFORE a window of a building on Kuznetsky Most St. in Moscow stands an ever-changing group of people. Red Army men and officers, sailors of the Red Navy, children, factory workers, office employees and housewives stand, chuckle and learn, and pass on. Others take their place. Not an hour of daylight passes without a similarly constituted group standing in front of this window in Kuznetsky Most St. in Moscow.

Behind the window is an artist's studio. Here is the distinctive smell of oils, the traces of charcoal, bottles of Indian ink, pens, canvases, drawing-boards. Over in a corner a huddle of men are in conference. One of them holds up a brilliantly coloured poster. He is Paul Sokolov-Skalia, Stalin prizewinner, and mentor to many rising artists. The others gaze at the poster. There is a murmur of comment, criticism, and appraisal. Some of the artists in the group would be known by name to those familiar with recent Soviet art. There is Radlov and Shukhmin, Savitzky and Vladimir Lebedev. There is the poet Samuel Marshak. And the writer Demyan Bidny. Outside, the small crowd eddies round the window, ever-changing in composition, but constant in its intense interest in the posters exhibited.

This house in Moscow is the headquarters of the famous Tass windows organisation. Behind that window, beyond the artist's studio are rooms where engravers and colour-printers are at work, are smooth-running presses, and busy despatch departments. Straight from the machine-room to plane and train go the posters, to Siberia, and to Murmansk, to Baku, and to units of the Red Army on all fronts.

Ordinary "production" posters for work stimulus are not the concern of the people who constitute the Tass Windows organisation. Their job is to produce vigorous war-winning satire in poster form. There are no agency hacks here. The call is for artists, for artists who want to co-operate in the war against Fascism, who realise the importance of ideas in modern war. They must produce militant satire in poster and cartoon, explaining and encouraging, making the fighters laugh and also hate, establishing a living link between the men who fight with Tommy-gun and minethrower and stormovik, and those who fight at bench and lathe and in the swelter of the furnace-room.

The posters in the window constantly change. A new angle, a new development, a fresh absurdity of Goebbels, a further demonstration of Hitler's intuition—new posters. Yesterday a raven Hitler postured in the feathers of a peacock. To-day a Goebbels, bastard result of unnatural mating between a rat and a monkey, gibbers before a microphone. To-morrow the arms of a Red Army man and a British soldier will tighten the noose around a dictator's neck.

There is Socialist satire at its strongest. Behind the drawings lies a lifetime of artistic experience. And in these sharply etched pictures breathes a potency of hatred and bitterness. The soul of a people who have looked upon the face of the enemy, and seen the trail of the beast over their land stares out in primary colours from the Tass posters.

There are posters that do not appear in the window, or in any of the thousands of Tass windows all over the U.S.S.R. These are the posters specially designed by Sokolov-Skalia's department for factories, for workers and children. These posters will be displayed on works' notice-boards, on trees near a Red Army encampment, on a school blackboard. But whether for specialised or general use, all the cartoons and drawings are marked with the same intense feeling, rising at times to heights which the English word "cartoon" cannot, by its associations, hope to encompass.

The Soviet cartoon, whether in poster or newspaper, is usually different in style and content from the work of popular cartoonists in Western Europe. Very rarely do balloons belly out from the mouth of a subject, carrying comment or gibe. Frequently a printed caption or apposite quotation drives home the point, but generally the Soviet cartoon strives to hit the political nail cleanly on the head without fuss or literary aid.

Most Soviet cartoonists are also "artists" (in the restricted sense) in their own right. The duality was established in the Soviet Union chiefly by the poet Mayakovsky, who drew his own cartoons and added verse that was not always doggerel. Since then Soviet cartoonists have carried on the dichotomy tradition. Boris Malkin and Vitalye Gorayev are distinguished oil painters. Lev Brodaty's work as a cartoonist comes interestingly close (he uses pen and wash) to his more orthodox output as a genre painter. The most interesting example is provided by the Kukriniksi. This name covers the identity of three artists—Ku for Kuprianov, Kri for Krilov, Niks for Nikolai Sokolov. For years they have worked as a team, contributing joint ideas and carrying out their work co-operatively. Together they illustrated Gorky's books, and their plates for a Soviet edition of Chekhov are remarkable for their sense of landscape and lyrical quality. Their cartoons are in marked contrast. Jointly they were awarded a Stalin prize of 100,000 roubles. They remitted the money to the State Defence Fund, asking that a tank should be named for them, and named "Merciless." The choice of this word is significant, for it is evident in their work as cartoonists. They pull no punches. Their hatred of the Nazis blazes in the wake of their brushes.

Here is an ape-like Laval carrying a sack labelled "French workers," and holding between his teeth an organ-grinder's begging-hat ("for French war prisoners"), being led literally by the nose by means of a Niebelung ring on the end of a rope pulled by a Nazi fist. Here is the Finnish donkey with a candy carrot dangled before its nose labelled "This is the Finnish border." Here is a gang of cut-throats and thieves—Spanish, Rumanian, Hungarian and what-have-you, lined up to show

what scourgings of Europe the New Order is choosing as its officers. No sentimentality in these posters of Kukriniksi. Three German generals are pictured gazing at Leningrad through field-glasses ; they are perched high on a hill ; one of them stout as Cortez was—but the hill is a mound of German skulls, tin-helmeted. (They have a facility for devastating literalness. When Stalin spoke, in his May Order of the Day, of joint action “breaking the backbone of the Fascist beast,” the Kukriniksi contributed a cartoon to *Pravda* which showed Britain, the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. doing just this.)

The Soviet cartoonist who most nearly approximates to British conceptions of the type is Boris Efimov whose work appears largely in *Red Star* and *Pravda*. He is immensely popular with the Red Army, and has been known widely in the Soviet Union for twenty years. A sergeant wrote to him from the front line, “The value of your work is inestimable. All the Red Army men know your cartoons, and your biting wit. We don’t know you, we don’t know whether you are young, or old and grey-bearded, but we have a pet name for you—Borechka.”

Ever since the Nazis seized power in 1933 Efimov has been satirising them. A cartoon in 1934 depicted a German citizen obeying the behest to avoid depression, and walking past some stormtroopers with a glorious Aryan smile. But the cut-in proves that the smile, like most things German, is ersatz, and getting less effective at that. Efimov’s work is simple and direct. He establishes in all his work an instant bond between himself and reader. Goebbels as a diseased monkey, which some would consider an under-statement, is Efimov’s idea. In his cartoons Hitler appears in various guises, but always shady-villainous and usually with a down-at-heel look.

A lot of the putput of Soviet cartoonists is used in leaflet propaganda to the German troops themselves. But the chief public is always the Soviet people. The cartoonists have realised the truth that art is a social function in the final sense. There is nothing esoteric in their work. Their aim, it has been said, is “to advance knowledge by awareness of reality.” Through the medium of Tass windows and by encouraging letters from newspaper readers, Soviet cartoonists gain inspiration, drawing new potency not from earth or air but from the great mass of the people. It is the interaction between the artist and history on the one hand and the artists and the people on the other, that is the secret of the strength of Soviet militant satirists. In the war against Fascism their voice is a powerful weapon, but they speak with the voice of the people, and in that is its power. Their hatred is the people’s hatred. They do not, however, merely interpret in a passive sense. Reflecting, they help to change, to rebuild, to mould the future. That is why they hold such a unique position in Soviet society. That is why the crowds still eddy and swirl round the Tass windows on Kuznetsky Most street.

INCIDENT AT SEA

IAIN CRAWFORD

I SAID, "She's steady on North seventy-two west. Error's eight west. No wind to speak of." The second mate said, "Right." I walked down the bridge ladder thinking about something in a book I was reading. I went across the deck to my cabin, closed my cabin door, and exactly at that moment it came. There was a terrific explosion, deafening, followed by two more explosions further away. The ship heeled over. I was hurled against the after bulkhead and the ports burst with the sea's weight. The water crashed into the cabin, hitting the opposite bulkhead. The water poured in, two great spouts from where the ports had been, and a steady gurgling flow from a jagged hole that had been a steel plate. I struggled to the door. The lock stuck, and I wrenched till it gave. The ship was lying on her side and I dragged myself into the alleyway. It was a mass of water coming from forrard. I got a breath from somewhere, and dived, swimming aft, under water, as never before. My hands groped along the steel plate and my knees hit the familiar ventilation shaft. I came up and saw daylight as my feet hit something solid. I pulled myself along a line to that part of the deck that was still above water.

The Lascars were swarming on to the boat deck, chattering and screaming. I looked aft to the guns. The twelve pounder was a twisted mass of metal, and in the deck was a jagged gaping hole. The lascars were fighting to get to the boats. One on the water had capsized, and men clung to it. The mate, blood streaming fown his face, yelled, "Use your guns on them if they wont keep off." I drew my revolve and fired above the heads of the mob. The old man was beside me. I asked about the rafts. He said, "All right, if you have time" I raced forrard, and cut the forrard rafts loose. One of them was too well lashed to the rigging, and as I climbed up to cut through the ropes I could see the submarine lying on the surface, a lean grey shape, like a wolf, about half a mile off. The rope parted. The raft splashed into the sea. I sprinted back to the boat-deck; no one there. The ship shuddered and rolled further over. I climbed up to the side and saw a lifeboat pushing off below. There was a fall handy, and I clambered down it and dropped into the boat.

In the lifeboat were twenty-nine men. Nineteen lascars and ten Europeans. We pulled away from the ship. She rolled over further, then an explosion roared from the boiler-room, and she slid bow first under the waves. The submarine dived, not bothering about us, and we were alone, except for two other boats and various floating muck. "How long did she take to go?" asked a seaman. Someone said "Seven minutes."

One boat dropped astern. We hoisted the sail. We had a rough idea about our position; we were about five hundred and thirty miles due west of Trinidad. I got Sparks aft and asked him quietly if he had got a message over. "No such luck," he answered. "Tried hard enough, but the main aerial went before we could get through." We closed the other boat—the old man and the second mate were in it. We arranged to keep in touch during the night by flashing a torch every half hour.

At two in the morning we lost them. The next day it was hot. The sun was bloody. One man died of wounds that afternoon. Water was short. The lascars grumbled and addressed themselves to Allah, alternately. Night came again, very cold, and the loss of my shirt which had been torn up for bandaging annoyed me. The wooden thwarts were very hard, the gunwale stuck into my back, oars poked between my shoulder blades, the tiller tugged at my weary arms.

Dawn and more heat. More strident demands for water, more ostentatious tapping of my revolver holster. Night and cold again, but the friendly reliable stars to cheer us, and guide us. The same again, and the same again. Signs of sunstroke by now and the thin end of madness. Five days. One man is mad and has to be tied up. Two more are buried, and every order has to be backed up with the revolver.

Dawn again. The light is stronger. A speck above a cloud appears. It's a plane. We dip flares in the water, we wave, shout, I fire my revolver. He's going away. No he isn't, he's coming back. Christ, look, he's disappeared, he's missed us. But the plane returns, comes soaring down towards us, a twin-engined, brown-painted medium bomber, with the white star of the United States Navy on its side. It circles round us. The pilots wave. We wave back. Then the plane heads away off towards the horizon. We cheer like blazes. We even manage to take the number of the plane. The drinks we're going to buy that plane crew when we get ashore. But the day passes, and yet another night arrives, and with it a rising wind. A heavy sea, the wind blowing hard, and the sail bellying. The lifeboat rolls, and we are far from comfortable. Spray drenches the boat and every man in it. It's gale force now. We bale all the time. Another man dies, with gangrenous wounds, and in oath-ridden delirium. The wind drops towards dawn. The sail, which we had taken down, is hoisted again, and a fresh breeze drives us along at a good pace. On the horizon is a long purplish cloud. Later, as the light strengthened, and we get nearer, we see. It's land. Black and purple mountains and patches of green. There's a long point now, with what might be a lighthouse sticking out. Planes come out. They circle overhead. They take photographs. Everyone is too relieved to even swear at them. We can see the point clearly now. The lighthouse looks old and disused.

One of the hands jumps up and is standing on the gunwale with one hand against the mast. From behind the point slides the long grey shape of a destroyer.

"It won't be long now sir," says the hand.

JOE CORRIE.

Highland Clearance

Heard no more the lilt at churning,
Song of herd or cradle crooning,
Hearts are silent, save for moaning.

Eyes of ours have seen the parting,
Light as day the night around us,
With the blood-red flame of sheiling.

Graze the sheep of greedy tyrants
O'er the green graves of our grandsires,
Wait the boats to sail the landless.

Dark and fair and young and hoary,
To the boat must go like cattle—
Och! our hearts are broken, broken.

MILES CARPENTER.

Lament for a Lover

The world curled in the bud,
The world unfurls its flower,
The canker is gnawing in the bud,
And my love I'll see no more.

The world unfolding in the bud,
The canker in the flower.
The canker drowns in rising sap,
But my love I'll see no more.

He has departed on a ship,
Departed on a train.
The hazel ripens in the woods,
But my love lies dead in Spain.

Despair goes stepping sombrely
Across the haze of hills.
Despair sprouts up in the solitudes
Of the hemlock hollows.

Echoes across the tenements
Where men regard their haunts.
Pressed by enormous shadows,
Where men walk in their haunts.

My love rose up in the sound of bugles,
He rose and came to me.
The sirens wept with morning face,
My love I did not see.

He rose and spoke in the sound of bugles,
Across the factory air.
"Oh, do you not hear another voice,
that denies despair"?

"For I shall sprout in the blossom,
and I shall shout in the bud.
For men are rising, rising,
rising to avenge my blood."

He rose and spoke in the sound of bugles,
He rose and spoke to me.
"I live in the strength of every man
that fights for liberty."

"The world curled in the bud,
The world unfurls its flower.
I rise in million by your side,
in this zero hour."

The Quick of the Green

In the soft shoots of lilac, the quick of the green,
The world comes up lovely again.
But the black frost cuts to the quick of the green,
And the world shrivels in pain.

If the world were cut down to the stump of the tree,
And humanity's loveliest flower
Were crushed under foot, there will still be the root,
And the quick of the green will be there.

So my heart shall sing in the quick of the green,
As we break through the frost of our pain.
The shoot of the people in unity hardens,
And the world come up lovely again.

MAURICE LINDSAY.

Poem

O sailors, sailors, now to what far port,
The voyage ended, all your sailing done,
The bleak wind burrowing your driven hearts,
What new horizons further than the sun?

The Critic

The cunning eyes cocked in the carrion pen,
Tradition's pathways laced within his mind;
Dead actors indexed for his heart to find,
Unfurl, extole, and snugly file again:
Whose thoughts, more subtle than a surgeon's knife,
Pierce aspiration's well-considered schemes,
Unstitch the stuffing from an author's dreams
And cut across his characters of life,
Are yet but players in a poor conceit,
Which seeks to chain the pulse of hidden worlds
On a brief rock of learning, where he hurls
New poets' singing to his scornful feet;
Till, smashed against the headlands of his pride,
He sinks in battle with a ceaseless tide.

SYDNEY D. TREMAYNE.

Poem

Far, far and in the mist
Cloud clinging
Cleft and lift, green rolling climb,
Trough, pluck and loom
Lithe, lumber-leaper, lone
Spiller of dream, spray spatterer, salt in the wind.

And you are joy, my timeless,
Deeper than doom.
And you are joy, my city,
Bubble and blame.
Cheat, charlatan fly-with-the-hour,
Time wrestler, rock and wrecker, a curse on the air.

And surely the devil will get you.
Devil may care!
Spawn, brawn and brimstone, climb!
But subtle you are, Delilah
Subtle and frail.
O lovely my drowsy, my slender,
Lean dark to me in your tenderness, wept the fool.

JOHN ATKINS.

The Diplomacy of Force

The diplomacy of force grows golden wings.
It shelters the mystery, rings round the patchwork
Of unanswerable arguments. Point your revolver
And attend to the consequence.

In my heart I feel a liking for displeasure.
I shout down the trespass, will not believe the assumption
That all who prosper are sad in their gaiety.
Perhaps the gay are gay, and the sad are rags in the wind.

If the world, like the ploughed field,
Awaits the Messiah, who then may he be?
Sometimes I know the answer, it is faith
In a courageous face turned to a highbrow sneer.

Poem

It is not enough to watch.
It is not enough to wait upon the shore
Of a sullen sea, whose breakers slowly crash
Their purple tongues on huddled pebbles
And smear away the footprints that you felt
Were signatures of social magnitude.
And it is not enough
To stand submissive while the soul
Is pierced by bombs which flower like the seed
Of evil in a closed cup.

But it is worth the coin of misery
To bridle fear and pronounce decision
Of such events as challenge sanctity ;
To sweep the air with 'planes of thought
And passion stated in a manifesto ;
To relinquish hold on cardboard elements
And fill the atmosphere with coils of hope.

Letter Home

There is less space between the stars
Than lies between your eyes and mine.
Each field, each hedge, each promontory
Is drawn to horizon's farthest reach
And my hands grope in a sullen void.

But stars not fields can estimate
The bridge that joins our hearts,
Too fine and small for space ;
As geometricians define a line,
Too small for it to exist.

TOLSTOY'S "WAR and PEACE"

MULK RAJ ANAND

It is only a generation or two ago that Tolstoy died, and yet he already seems like a giant, a figure as great as Shakespeare and Goethe and Hugo and Heine. This may be because his life coincided with vital changes in the history of his country, the abolition of serfdom which he helped to bring about, and the rapid Europeanisation of Russia which, in his latter life, he resisted. But I believe he towers above many of his contemporaries because he rendered forth the life of his epoch in those wonderful pictures which are scattered over his novels and stories, and particularly because he is the author of *War and Peace*.

Some people may ask, on reading these superlatives, if we are discussing greatness what about the great epics of India, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, or Lady Murasaki's epic tales of Japanese Court Life, the *Tales of Gengi*? Or they may point to Balzac's *Comedie Humaines* Cervantes *Don Quixote*, to the novels of Hardy, or even to the novels of Tolstoy's precursors and contemporaries in Russia, to the *Captain's Daughter* by Pushkin, to Gogol's *Dead Souls*, and to Dostoevsky's *Brothers Karamazov*. But no: *War and Peace* is in quite a different category from the epics and chronicles of the past, however great they may be, for it is cast in the peculiarly modern form of a novel, a novel with inherent laws of its own, a form which is a considerable advance on the narratives of older times. And it stands incomparably head and shoulders above all the high class fiction of the 19th century because it is the nearest approximation to the *true* novel, because it is the most ambitious reproduction of events in time, a representation which seeks, through all the aids of illusion, to create a development mirroring the reality of a whole period.

The definition of *War and Peace* I have attempted, though of the broadest kind, has at least this merit, that it distinguishes it as a modern novel from all the chronicles and recitals of previous times. In a novel *things take place*, but in a recital they have taken place. The novelist tries as far as possible to render the words and actions of his characters, and the recreation of their lives, in their own terms; the recitalist substitutes abstract description for the actual action, and uses symbols and signs to define the scene or the state of mind he seeks to reproduce. The modern novel still oscillates between these two methods, but *War and Peace* is the advance guard of the new method, and by thus putting it in perspective of the age in which it was written, we judge it from the internal criterions evolved from within the novel form itself.

For what is the Victorian novel in England or the great novel of Russia attempting to do if not tending towards a dramatic technique

which eschews the story-telling manner of the old recitals (where a moral idea is proved or illustrated) and, increasingly, to translate life at the time when it is being made? And where is a novel, even among the novels of the age of the great novel, which either aims to render the drama of life or achieves it so completely, almost as if the writer was witnessing, was in the thick of this drama, with all the violent slashes of thought and emotion in all its subtlety of shade and nuance. Of course there are other novels with at least the quantitative breadth of *War and Peace*, for the 18th and 19th centuries, during which the novel form was developing, was the age of the several volumed romance, as for instance Scott's *Waverley Novels*, the *Comedie Humaine* of Balzac, and the serials of Hardy. But apart from the fact that none of them are yet wholly free from the old recital element, which of them gives the effect of space in such a compass as does *War and Peace*? What a book it is—*War and Peace*! Vast as Russia, into it enter both the continents, Europe and Asia, with a clash of cymbals; across its pages blow the gales and the winds of the steppe, the mountains, the deserts and the valleys, into it flow the rivers, and, between the lines, there wells up a strength and a power as though from the hidden springs of the characters, and everything moves and flows, as in an orchestra, the sharp overtones and the slow undertone, all of which suddenly gives place to an intense moment, like a lightning flash illuminating everything or at least releasing us from the necessity to grope in the dark for "something else," till we are wandering again, from day to day, from decade to decade . . . And Tolstoy is the invisible conductor, or like his own idea of God on high, who, having created His Universe, looks on like a silent spectator, and who is yet the moving spirit behind the internal life of everything, though he is really outside all. To vary the metaphor, one may say that the great novelist here is at his most objective, a just and impartial arbiter of the destinies of the people whom he informs with the passion of life, into whom he breathes its vital spirit.

"If," says Dimitri Mirski the Soviet critic, "there is a dividing line between the old and the modern novel, Tolstoy marks it." And, I believe, what Mirsky has in mind as Tolstoy's chief contribution is what I have called his perfection of a new dramatic technique as against the old narrative which was still the method of Turgenev and Dostoevski. And though in his early books he insists on the point of view, on the motives underlying the words and actions of his characters, in *War and Peace* he not only lets the characters speak without much intervention through action, but dramatises the thought content itself by showing the psychological development of his characters. Thus he achieves reality on several planes, a reality which is the more forceful because it is not completely in the control of the master, but flows along releasing various chords with a rhythm of its own, an essentially poetic rhythm.

In saying this, I am not unconscious of the formlessness of *War and Peace*, of the large tracts of very pedestrian and boring passages in the book, especially where Tolstoy gives us chunks of discursive sentiment. But as with Shakespeare's long bouts of ranting and big-worded

jingoistic pomposity (witness Henry IVth and Vth) so Tolstoy's lapses into heavy-footed prose are to be judged as parts of the whole.

Apart from the powerful and vivid sense of reality which is the chief impression one gets from *War and Peace*, there is throughout the book the extraordinary sense of the humanity of Tolstoy's characters. I do no mean merely that they are valid and authentic portraits. They are that. But they are imaginatively recreated so that they become more than themselves, symbols, transparent media for the social and biological urges that are working through them. All the three wonderful households that dominate the book, the Bolkonsky's, Besukhovs and Rostovs, with their offshoots, all are individual and all are instinct with the passions that are to destroy them and recreate them through their children, in the awkward era through which they are passing. Pierre, the clumsy but sincere adolescent grows up almost to be a hero to the new generation after the old Prince Andrea and Vasili are gone ; and Natasha, whom we have seen pass from childhood to womanhood, with children of her own, projects the life principle of all the older women, Anna Mikhaylovna, Anna Pavolvna, into the new generation. But all these and the hundreds of other characters who crowd the stage of Tolstoy's imagination and act out their impulses, do not do so because they are ideas which change, but because they represent social forces whose conflicts of will and aspiration inevitably lead them through greed and hate, through anger and love, to the destinies inevitable to their natures. So great, in fact, is Tolstoy's genius for presentation of type and character, the bully, the love-sick maiden, French coquettes, fidgety old men, gossiping old women, butlers, coachmen, generals and kings, that *War and Peace* becomes a monumental, intricate, and encyclopaedic history of early 19th century Russian society.

And though, as I have said, Tolstoy's characters, here, are more flesh and blood than the opinions they tended to become in his later novels, they nevertheless reveal certain fundamental truths about themselves and their world. For instance, Tolstoy shows through the lives of the aristocracy which arranges marriages for money, and secures sinecures and privileges through influence, which violates honour while upholding the conventions, which is quarrelling for property and prestige, how rotten and moth-eaten is that order. Shining in contrast is the peasant Karatayev, whose simplicity and natural dignity ennobles his humble and narrow life. The social climbing of Boris, the gallantry of the superficial young cadet Rostov, who achieves his highest exaltation as he salutes the Czar on parade, the banalities of the women at diplomatic receptions, the colossal egoism of Buonaparte, all the most despicable traits of the bourgeois corrode this set-up. And Tolstoy destroys them in a way that is almost final, so sharp and so subtle is the irony he employs, so pointed his satire.

But what is the meaning of this vast book, people ask. What is the novel really about? What is the story?

There I feel like Mr. Foster when faced with a similar question. "Yes, oh dear, yes, the novel tells a story," answers one of his spokesmen

in a drooping regretful voice. And that is the only way in which one could answer such a question about *War and Peace*. For, of course, there is no story here. And all honour to Tolstoy for having abolished the artificial convention of the story. But there are various themes in the book. Mr. Percy Lubbock thinks that *War and Peace* depicts the struggle between youth and age. As this struggle is an eternal one, one which is obviously always being waged, I consider this rather too vague, too sweeping a description. Certain other critics emphasise that it is a book about the patriotic war of 1812 ; while others like Miss Vera Brittain consider it the " most superb novel ever contributed to world peace."

My friend George Orwell has suggested more pertinaciously that its chief value is in exemplifying a new attitude to war. Certainly it is the first really great human document about war. In the Homeric legends, or in the old epics of India, wars were waged by gods or by men who were demi-gods, and they mostly expressed the will and aspiration of early societies for cohesion, both for internal and external action. But where a number of tribes got together and formed military democracies, the character of war changed, because men waged it to protect newly emerging nations against the greed and jealousy of neighbouring states. The barbarous monarchs who chose, later, to consolidate their power through pillage and plunder and to live on the labour of slaves created a new conflict, however, which was to change the basis of war further, making it both revolution and war. Thus war became a peculiarly human activity. Now Tolstoy poses a great moral question, one which, hitherto, people in Europe had been disinclined to ask ; " Isn't this bloodshed, this enormous sacrifice of life a crime against humanity ? " he seems to say. He does not answer this question, except that where he makes a young soldier walk into battle puffed up with the pride of the salute he is offering to his officer, and completely oblivious to the death which is immediately in store for him, Tolstoy already shows the piercing slant of his vision. Also, as Orwell suggests, the realism of Tolstoy's description of Austerlitz goes even beyond comparison to an attitude of pacifist humanism, and is in direct contrast to the mood and tempo of such a positive poem as Tennyson's *Charge of the Light Brigade*. " Is it worth while noticing trifles " ? a prince is made to say, when a cannon-ball falls into the Russian lines, wounding, killing, and scattering men in confusion. And elsewhere Tolstoy insinuates this with a repetition only relieved by the variety of his hints and gestures.

But it would be false to say that in this massive epic Tolstoy had already taken up an attitude of uncompromising pacifism, though he did do so later. For if he regards war, here, as a crime against humanity, he also seems to consider it the punishment of a crime. And, though the battle of Borodino of 1812 is one of many crises in this book, it is in a way the central theme on which everything hinges, as Kutuzov, the victorious general, is in a way the central character. Tolstoy depicts the role men are compelled to enter on the battlefield, he measures the time, the space, and the peculiar conditions of a hundred and thirty years ago in all their horror and grimness, even though a battle then only lasted a

day or a few hours, on a great front which lacked the breadth and depth of 1914, or 1941. And although the armies clashed only on a meagre two-and-a-half miles, as against the immense fronts of succeeding history, the parallel cannot of course be stretched beyond that, for the pattern of society behind the front was then very different, even though Tolstoy's portrait of Napoleon is almost like the Soviet cartoonists drawings of Hitler.

But besides these two questions, is war a crime against humanity?—or the punishment of a crime—there is a third question. Who will win the war, the unconscious ill-informed Ivor Ivonovitch and his 120,000 brother soldiers of Russia or the aristocracy engaged in death grips of a battle within itself and against those social forces seething beneath it. Which is the real, the stronger, the greater force? Plator Kuratayev or that “puppet of circumstance,” Napoleon? Tolstoy's *War and Peace* may therefore also be said to have ushered in the era of the common man in literature, however he interpreted the “group soul,” or the community versus the individual in his subsequent discourses.

Such are some of the questions which *War and Peace* poses for us. And though it raises more questions than it answers, it does what only a very great novel can do, describes certain tendencies and plunges us, who tend to close our eyes and ears, into abysses below the facile and ephemeral generalisations of daily life, intensifying our perception of worldly events and releasing us, liberating us, to a sense of all that lies buried within us, and to a compassionate understanding of everything outside us.

But of course *War and Peace* is a great deal more even than that. If not the eternal drama which some would like to call it (because there is nothing eternal), it is a vast documentary epic in which those zephyrs of history, the men and women of Russia in the early 19th century, live and move and have their being. I have already compared it to an orchestra, may I call it the symphony of Moscow 1800-1812?

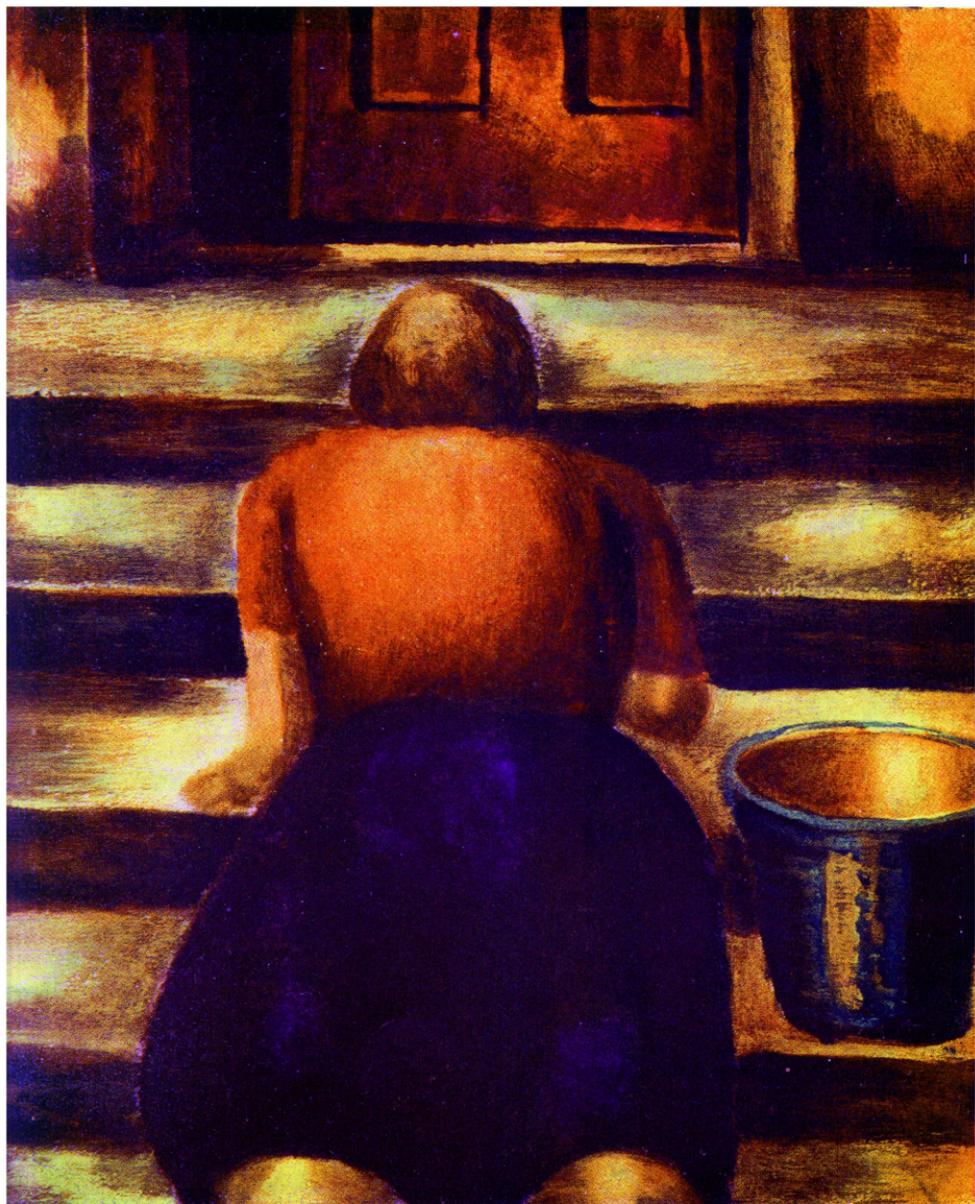
The Painting of George Hannah

GEORGE HANNAH, two of whose paintings are reproduced in the following pages, is a working-class Scot in the middle forties. He lives and works in Glasgow where he was born, paints during every available minute, would like to paint all the time. Almost unknown except to his immediate circle of young Scottish artists, we believe that his highly original productions will attract a wider audience in the future. He has been sketching and painting since childhood, and particularly since he was invalided out of the Army in the 1914-1918 War, when he served under Lord Allenby in Palestine. Hannah dislikes art theorising, but welcomes friendly discussion which he says should stimulate and not pigeon-hole. In such an atmosphere he would point out that art is a common impulse, that the urge to make something, to design, to paint, carve, sing, and dance is latent in all human beings, in children, in savages, and, in spite of the defects of modern civilisation, in men to-day. It is this part of our being, says Hannah, which prevents us from succumbing to that robot-like dullness which the dictators would like to batter us into, and it is from this bubbling inner well that we must derive the strength to transform our lives.

Individual experience, he continues, can only possess depth and validity if it mirrors and expresses communal experience. That this experience, the lifeblood, the spirit of all real art, is often rejected and scorned by critic and public alike, is a phenomenon we recognise as part of history. All artists have faced it to varying degrees, but though it is inevitable, it can change, it can be less inevitable as society changes.

Leaving more detailed criticism to the experts, we can say that his painting has warmth and atmosphere. It grips. Nevertheless, his future work will show whether his art fully embodies his own tenets. These are that painting must combine colour, composition and mass in supreme synthesis.

His favourite modern painters are Cezanne, Daumier and Derain.



Charwoman

GEORGE HANNAH
1943



Street Scene

GEORGE HANNAH 1943

THIS RUSSIAN LAND

GEORGE BORODIN

BURENKO was summoned by the German Commandant. He stood stiffly to attention before the august personage, and gazed unblinkingly into the monocled face of the Prussian. "No, your Excellency"; "Yes, your Excellency"; "Of course, your Excellency," was all he seemed able to say.

But the Commandant was furious. "We have appointed you as mayor of the village," he told Burenko, "but you don't seem to be able to keep order. Who has blown up the hall under our very eyes? Who has blown up the barns? Who has destroyed twelve of our aeroplanes? Blown up pontoons? Demolished tanks? Who?"

"The guerrillas, your Excellency. The misguided peasantry, sir."

"Have you had the proclamations posted in every street?"

"Yes, your Excellency. There are more proclamations than there are houses. Everything has been explained to them."

"Then why do they fight against the authorities? Don't they know that I can burn the village over their heads?"

"But please, your Excellency, think of the property," Burenko pleaded.

"I am perfectly prepared to think of the property. The Ukraine now belongs to Germany. I shall give this village twenty-four hours in which to surrender the incendiaries, to name the men who are committing these outrages." He turned to his *aide*. "I believe I am right in saying that the leader of these bandits is a man with a gammy leg. Some preposterous peasant that has become a legend in this district in the last two weeks. You know who he is?"

"Why no, your Excellency," said Burenko, hoping that the village would be left intact by the Germans.

"Haven't you got any man with wooden legs living in your dirty hole?" asked the officer. Burenko thought.

"Think again," the Commandant advised. "If you are hiding anything so much the worse for you. You will be mayor of dust and ashes if you don't speak the truth."

"Well," said Burenko, "there is a man, but he is very old. It couldn't be him," he stuttered.

"What is his name?"

"His name is Comrade . . ."

"We don't recognize any comrades here, Herr Burenko. What is his name?"

"Kovalenko," the German-appointed mayor gasped. He was almost frightened to mention the name.

"And has he a house here?"

"Yes. The third down the street."

"Very well then, you and Herr Koslovsky go and interrogate his family."

"They have probably disappeared," said Burenko, "but we'll go, we'll go."

"And take some soldiers with you," warned the Commandant.

When the two men and a platoon of soldiers entered Kovalenko's hut they found Maruska shelling peas. She did not bother to stop as the Germans entered. "Line up," ordered Koslovsky. "You are now talking to the man who owns the village of Petrokovka. If you behave yourselves and help the authorities, you will be allowed to till the land." He pointed to Maruska, and speaking to Burenko, asked him who she was.

"She is the wife," Burenko whispered.

"So you are the wife of this Kovalenko. Where is your husband, my good woman?"

"I don't know," Maruska replied calmly. "He left some weeks ago."

"And you haven't seen or heard of him?"

"No. He left with the other peasants."

"Then why did he leave you here?"

"I don't know. I suppose there was no time."

"And who is that young woman?" asked the officer, pointing to Leah.

"She is my son's wife."

"And the girl?"

"She is my daughter's daughter."

"It's all very confusing," said the officer. "The whole lot of you are lying. It's obvious. You," he said to Leah, "where is your husband?"

"I don't know."

"Well, then, perhaps we'll help you to know." He seized her by the wrist and pushed her over to the soldiers. "Help her to make up her mind, will you?" One of the soldiers greedily seized Leah round the waist and hauled her out of the hut.

Little Shura ran to her grandmother and buried her face in her lap. Very soon there was a terrible scream from Leah and then silence, "You know," said Burenko, "I don't think this is strictly necessary, your Excellency."

"It is necessary to teach these people a lesson," the officer snapped back. The soldiers brought back the lifeless body of Leah.

"Hang her up on the door-post with this message: 'She refused to tell of the whereabouts of the guerillas.'" Then, turning to Maruska, he said: "Listen, old woman, do you want to go and join your daughter-in-law? Where is this Kovalenko? Where is your husband?"

Maruska stared for a moment at the hate-filled face of the officer, but she did not reply. "Make her speak!" he ordered Burenko.

Burenko advanced and clasped his hands piously in front of him, "Please, Maria Alexandrovna, please speak. Really, you know, it doesn't pay to be obstinate. No harm will come to you or to your husband. Only he must be taught the error of his ways. The Revolution is over, Maria Alexandrovna. Russia will have a Tsar. Now it's no good being obstinate. Tell us where your husband is. I promise you no harm will come to him."

Maruska clasped her hands in front of her. "You are a liar and a traitor," said this old woman, "and no Tsar will come to rule over the Soviet people. If you want my husband, find him for yourself. But I warn you, for every death you have caused, a hundred of you will die. For every tear you have made people shed, you will shed a thousand."

"All right," said the officer, "hang her. These obstinate peasants. They never seem to learn."

They hanged Maruska over the door-beam and jeered as she died. Only Burenko hid his face in his hands, for he had a premonition.

"Now," said the officer, "perhaps the child will speak. Come here," he called the little girl. Then he softened his voice. "Sit down there, my dear. Don't be afraid."

"I am not afraid," said Shura boldly. "I am not afraid of anything."

"That's right. Now you see your grandmother was a bad woman. So was your auntie. They wouldn't help us. But you will help us, won't you?"

"Oh, yes, I'll help you," said Shura.

"We want to know where your grandfather is gone. You probably heard people speak about him in your house. We won't do him any harm. We'll just bring him back here and he can go on living with you. You understand?"

"Yes, I understand."

“ Good. Now you tell me everything. I’ll write it down ” The officer took a knife out of his pocket and after he had sharpened his pencil, laid it down on the table. “ Remember,” he warned, “ no lies. We’ll punish you severely if you tell lies.”

“ I won’t tell lies,” said Shura.

“ That’s a good girl.” The officer turned to Burenko : “ You see, that’s the way to deal with children. They are much more helpful than the grown-ups.” He took a bag full of sweets out of his pocket. “ Here, have a sweet! We’ll give you lots of sweets if you tell us everything.”

Shura approached the table and sat down on the chair beside the officer. She smoothed down her hair and put one hand into the paper bag which the officer had pushed out in front of him. With the other hand she suddenly seized the clasp-knife on the table and plunged it into the officer’s chest with all her might.

Boris was reading out an article from the *Pravda*. Kovalenko’s guerilla force had now swollen to more than two hundred men. They were planning a campaign of action against the headquarters of the German tank brigade in Petrokovka. As yet, they had not heard of Marusha’s and Leah’s fate, let alone what had happened to Shura.

“ This is written by Alexei Tolstoy,” Boris said. A deep silence fell upon the men. Alexei Tolstoy was a beloved and well-known writer.

Boris began :

“ This evil has fallen on us all. The enemy is ruining our land with fire ; his tanks scar our fields. He wants everything that is ours—that has been ours through the age-long centuries.

“ The fortunate and unfortunate gather together. Even he who hoped to hide like a cricket in a dark barn and chirrup away there till better times, even he now realizes that alone one cannot save oneself. Our motherland prevails over all other feelings.

“ Everything we see around us, things that perhaps we hardly even noticed—or never valued—the smell of rye-bread in the smoke, the snow swirling round the cottage—all this becomes immeasurably dear to us. All faces, all eyes, reflect one single absorbing thought. We who live in this age are the guardians and caretakers of our motherland.

“ This movement of the people springs from the depths of the centuries and reaches out to the longed-for future in which they believe and which they create with their own hands for themselves and the coming generations.

“ Some day the various national streams will merge into one storm-free sea, into one single humanity ; but this belongs to the future. At

present our age is an age of grim struggle for our independence, for our freedom and for the right to build our society and our happiness according to our own laws.

“ Insane Fascism is the enemy of all national culture, including that of Germany. It strives to crush any national culture, to wipe it out. Its Pan-German idea of all the world for the Germans is the wily ruse of a big financial gamble in which countries, cities and men are only a form of impersonal stock-exchange quotations flung into the total war. The German soldiers taken prisoner before Mozhaisk and Maloyaroslavets and before Leningrad are just as void of personality, just as bedraggled and filthy as paper money in the hands of international speculators and other riff-raff.

“ The Nazi Command unload this deadened mass of humanity like sacks on to the bayonets and guns of the Red Army. They march no longer believing in anything, not even that once they lived in their own land, or that some time or other they will return. Germany has become nothing more than a factory turning out war machines and human cannon fodder.

“ By the fifth month of the eastern war every German, unless he is weak-minded, has realized that to conquer the whole world will be even more difficult than to advance ten miles or so before Mozhaisk.

“ These are the people who intended to conquer us, to drive us from Moscow and from the whole of our land.

“ To hell with these Germans! Millions they may be, but we have many millions more. At present they have a superiority in armaments, especially tanks. But arms are fired by men. The Red Army is annihilating these men who do the firing. With increasing experience, confidence and cool-headedness our Red Army is doing its work of annihilating the Germans. They are making a last and desperate attempt on Moscow, in the vain hope of breaking through to the heart of our native land.

“ Their calculations are crazy. Moscow is more than a strategic point, more than the capital of our State. Moscow is the idea which embrace the whole of our culture in all its national dynamic. Our road to the future lies through Moscow. Near Moscow the German war machine will be exhausted, and then the whole trend of the war will change.

“ The land of our forefathers has swallowed not a few hordes of invaders striving to conquer it. In the west empires rose up and perished. The great were debased. The rich were made poor. Our native land grew and strengthened and nothing can shake it. Our land will swallow these German hordes. Thus it was. Thus it will be!”

When Boris had stopped reading, the men turned round to discuss the article, to appreciate the fine phrases and the finer sentiments which motivated the writer. The paper was more than three weeks old. Now they knew the conditions on the Moscow front had changed radically.

Moscow was in great and mortal danger. The Nazi army had pushed near Klin. Kovalenko's guerrillas, more determined by the news, struck many new and daring blows at the enemy.

"And here is a lighter interlude," said Kovalenko. "We have found these letters on the bodies of the last lot of Germans we have killed. Here, Boris, you translate this one, from Halvar Trotz, to his wife Elizabeth."

Boris read :

"Dear wife,

I have already material for four dresses. I shall try to get more. It is very difficult to get anything much here, but I am now more cunning than I was in France. Write and let me know if you received the ring."

The guerrillas roared with laughter. "What about this one?" asked Kovalenko.

Boris read out another letter. "This one is more tender," he said, "it's to a German private from his wife. Listen, she begins :

'My dear Fritz,

Many thanks for the skirt you sent me. Can you get any stockings there, my darling? We cannot get anything here. Can you get any stockings, silk, shirts, underwear, or any kind of good material where you are? If you can get any of these do send them to me."

The men had been constantly in action over ten days. They defeated various punitive expeditions which had been sent out against them in the forest. They hadn't bathed or changed their linen for a month. The need for cleanliness came upon them suddenly. There was a broad cool stream in their forest hide-out which the men used to bathe in.

But Kovalenko's orders were very strict. There had to be at least half of the company on guard before the others could wash. Boris, as second-in-command, had always the duty of selecting the men for washing and those that were to stand on guard. "Load the machine-guns and the rifles," ordered Kovalenko ; "have them ready to fire."

Fifty men stripped like one and plunged into the water. A huge chunk of soap was passed round and great tufts of grass were torn off to be used as scrubbing-brushes.

Suddenly came the rattle of automatic rifles. "To arms," shouted Kovalenko, leaping naked out of the water and seizing a machine-gun. The clothed and unclothed men fell on the grass, and began firing on the attacking enemy.

Apparently it was only a small scouting party and Kovalenko's men found no difficulty in scaring them off. But he knew that as not all the Germans had been killed, they would have to move their camp because on the next day the Germans would send a much larger force to round them up.

After the men had finished washing, Kovalenko addressed them thus : " I am glad to see," he said, " that you behaved like soldiers. Even without your trousers. They tell a story of Peter the Great. There was once a soldier who was standing sentry guard on the bank of the Neva. He suddenly took it into his head that he would like a bath. He stripped, put his clothes next to the rifle and hopped into the water. Well, then Peter himself appeared on the bank. The soldier immediately jumped out of the river, grabbed his rifle, stood to attention and rapped out : ' Beg to report.' Said Peter the Great to him : ' You deserve to be shot for deserting your post. But in view of the fact that when you jumped out of the river, you grabbed the rifle and not your trousers, your punishment will be mitigated.' And you did well, lads. You not only grabbed your rifles but you also gave the enemy one in his trousers."

The December offensive swept the Germans out of reach of Moscow. The Russians battered them with every advancing step. German communiques announced that the retreat was according to plan—to stabilize a winter-line ; but nowhere was the front stabilized.

Instead, the new armies of the Soviet Union threw themselves into the winter fray. With them was Olga. She was with the forces that re-occupied Yasnaya Polyana. Her mind flew back fifteen years when she and her husband had come to Yasnaya Polyana for their honeymoon.

The scene of desolation was terrible Olga gasped in horror. " How could they ? " she asked. " How could they ? What was it all for ? What victory can they gain by desecration ? "

The Germans had been in Yasnaya Polyana for a month and a half. Before retreating southwards, the remnants of the routed 296th division set fire to everything that could at all remind the world of Tolstoy's name.

Olga gazed with tears in her eyes at the wooden summer-houses in which she and Boris had often sat and held hands. The beautiful secondary school, called after Tolstoy, too, had been set on fire. The rest-home and the small hospital—they were bonfires.

She was speaking to Maria Schegoleva, a member of the museum staff. " Why, they have even destroyed the bridge he built with his own hands. The garden-benches. Where is the apple orchard which he loved so much ? "

" Only one thing," said Schegoleva, " one thing only escaped and that was the house that at one time belonged to Prince Volkonsky. How and why that escaped fire, we don't know." Then she told Olga the whole story.

" It was on 29th October that Swastika-marked aeroplanes first appeared over Yasnaya Polyana." But she could not go on any further with the recital. " Here," she said, " here is a cutting from a paper. Read it for yourself."

And Olga read in silence with her head bent. "They machine-gunned and bombed the estate and the surrounding villages furiously, although no Red Army troops were here. Only by good luck no bomb hit the Museum.

"Many people were killed by bombs in the Yasnaya Polyana collective-farm, including the chairman. At two o'clock in the afternoon Tolstoy's great-granddaughter, Sofia Tolstoy, came running to the cellar under the Museum, where our staff were sheltering from the bombs, and said German tanks were passing the estate along the highway.

"Soon three German officers came to the estate and demanded the keys of the Museum. After making a tour of the halls, they snatched the visitors' book and wrote: 'The first three Germans in the campaign against Russia have arrived in Yasnaya Polyana.'

"They installed themselves in Volkonsky's house and began plundering the estate. They caught all the chickens and wrung their necks, slaughtered the forester's cow and broke open wardrobes in search of warm things. The curator was ordered to clear the Literature Museum of all exhibits. He replied: 'That is impossible. You must understand that Leo Tolstoy lived here. Better find another house.' They shouted: 'Shut up and obey orders!' while a German menacingly presented a tommy-gun.

"On the morning of 31st October the Germans began breaking up the Literature Museum. Exhibits which it took decades to gather, the rarest manuscripts and books, furniture, paintings by Repin, Levitan, Surkov and other eminent Russian artists, numerous photographs, books by Tolstoy published in all the languages of the world—all these were thrown into the cellar.

"Then came the turn of the 'Museum of the Epoch,' the house where Tolstoy lived. 'This will be the barracks' was the German general's order. All the exhibits of this Museum were thrown into a great heap in the hall and on the terrace. German officers broke open the wardrobe and trunk and even took underwear which had been Tolstoy's. Higher ranks were interested in souvenirs—rare photographs and wood carvings. These disappeared into their knapsacks. Hay and straw were brought into the rooms and Nazi soldiers made themselves at home in the Museum of Yasnaya Polyana.

"On one occasion they began chopping up Tolstoy's dining-room table and his arm-chair for firewood. A member of the Museum staff applied for help to a certain Demidov, a former landlord, whom the Germans had brought along with them. He snubbed the complainant. 'The Museum will be liquidated,' he said. 'This will be an agricultural estate.' The Museum staff, however, maintained their protest, saying that there was firewood in the vicinity. A German doctor named Schwartz said: 'We do not need any firewood, but we will burn every thing connected with the name of your Tolstoy.'

“The Nazis turned one section of the house into a latrine. Valuable trees and shrubs, planted by the writer himself, were ruthlessly felled. Valuables, such as furniture and pictures, were loaded on lorries and sent to Germany.

“Before retreating from Yasnaya Polyana, the Germans decided to burn down the Tolstoy Museum. In the library room they built a great stack of firewood, straw and books, soaked it all in kerosene and set fire to it. The fire destroyed the floor and the walls. The grey winter sky can be seen through holes in the ceiling. Another bonfire was lit in the room where Tolstoy himself lived. Here the walls are black with smoke, the door is charred. A third fire was lit in the room of the author’s wife, Sofia Andreevna, which now bears the same charred appearance.

“The German plan, however, was thwarted by Soviet men. Despite machine-gun fire, a young doctor from Tula Hospital, Ilikhin, and a secondary school student, Komarovskiy, made their way to the blazing house and began putting out the flames. Soon members of the Museum staff, Schhegolev and his wife, and collective-farmers, came to their assistance. They fought the fire for four hours and saved the house.

“We walked along the narrow path through the forest to Tolstoy’s grave, a spot sacred to every Russian and to every cultured person in the world. We shall not forget Yasnaya Polyana.”

Some time after Jock’s departure, Kovalenko and his guerrillas surrounded the village of Petrokovka. Stealthily, like soulless shadows, they approached from the darkness. Kovalenko had dearly wanted to bring his tank. But caution prompted him to go on foot.

Every German sentry they passed, they dispatched in the silent inimitable way of Kovalenko’s hard fist.

When he and Boris, together with about ten men, reached the garden-gate of his hut, Kovalenko put his hand into the hedge and began rummaging about. “Where the devil are the peas and beans?” he said.

Boris had already discerned through the darkness the bodies of Leah and Maruska. He stifled his gasp so as not to reveal his horror to Kovalenko. But as the old man was about to enter the hut, so he saw the body of his wife swinging heavily in the breeze.

Fury, a terrible fury entered his eyes. Then he glanced down to the foot of the swaying corpses and saw the small body of Shura riddled with countless rifle shots and stabbed with bayonets.

Boris cried out, unable to restrain himself. But Kovalenko seized him fiercely by the arm and said: “Come on. They shall pay for it.”

Burenko’s cottage was not far away. They found him in bed. When the terrible figure of Kovalenko came into view, he dived helplessly into his bedclothes and clung to the feather-bed. “Come on Burenko. You are going to visit your friend, the Commandant.”

"Oh, no, no, no, no," screamed Burenko, "please believe me. I had nothing to do with it, Vassili Stepanovitch. Nothing at all. I would not touch a hair of your family's head. I am not a child-killer, you know me. I am your old friend, your collective farm director. I am faithful to the Soviet, I am a revolutionary. Oh, comrades, comrades, let me join you, let me fight with you against these murderers! These assassins of babies, oh, let me, let me!"

"Get up," said Kovalenko, drawing his enormous sabre, "or I'll split you in two like a melon. Put your trousers on."

Burenko obeyed weakly. His hand instinctively went under his pillow. "You won't need your money," said Kovalenko. "The thirty pieces of silver are no use to you now, Mr. Burenko."

"Where are you taking me?" Burenko cried. "I must know. For the peace of my soul, I must know. I am not a wicked man, comrades. I am a foolish man. I confess everything."

"You are going to dinner," said Kovalenko.

"To dinner?" Burenko's eyes glistened. "Then are we going to have dinner together?"

"Yes," said Kovalenko, "together. Together with the German Officers." Burenko left his cottage without a struggle.

Kovalenko forced him down on his knees and made him creep along beside him like a reptile on his belly. Another two sentries were garrotted silently.

A light was burning in the collective farm office which the German officers had converted into a mess. Noiselessly the guerillas surrounded the place. "You are going in there, Burenko. You are going to sit down with them at the table as if nothing had happened."

"But I am not invited," Burenko protested. "How can I? Nothing is going to happen, is it?"

"Nothing that you will remember," answered Kovalenko. "Go on." They thrust the hapless Burenko towards the door.

He stumbled a few times on the steps and then entered the room. The ten German officers had just time to place a look of astonishment on their faces when ten grenades smashed their way through the windows and exploded.

"That is that," said Kovalenko. "Let us now bury our dead."

As Kovalenko lifted the tortured little body of Shura and pressed it to his breast, so a drone of aeroplanes suddenly grew louder. Artillery began to open fire on Petrokovka. Apparently the presence of the guerillas was known. Thousands of incendiaries rained down on the wooden houses. But Kovalenko and his men stood their ground. They

were paying their last respect to the dead. His own hut was flaming. The fire was licking at the feet of Maruska and Leah. The old man looked terrible as he spoke.

“ Our beloved native Kolkhouz will soon lie before us in a waste of ashes. Better given to the fire than to the enemy. Burned hands bowed the trees to the earth. Don't worry, brothers, the branches will grow again more beautiful, the Kolkhouz estate will be green again. New beautiful cottages will rise again. Our daughters will plant the gardens with thyme and mint and sunflower. The rain will run down into pails from a new gutter. Our songs of freedom will be heard again, more beautiful, more loyal, across our new life, one forever in the fight against the bloody Fascists. It will all come. It is inevitable. We are coming, brothers. We shall return.”

“ We shall return,” said the guerillas, lifting their fists and shaking them to the heavens.

From "This Russian Land" by the courtesy of Hutchinson & Co.

HUGH MACDIARMID.

A Poet Rejects a Right-Wing Plea

We are transported into the flaming heart of the world ;
We stand in a place to which all roads come ;
In a light which makes all riddles clear.

Love and Pain, Terror and Ecstasy,
Strife and Fulfilment, Blasphemy and Prayer, are one another's shadows,
Meeting and fading in a single radiance that is not light or heat,
But a movement, a flowing, that carries us along
And yet leaves us steadier, more certain than we ever were before.

"It will take," you say, "A very good poet, and a very stable politician,
To achieve the simplicity that accepts and subsumes all the complexities".
But that is not our task—but to eliminate, outgrow
These complexities, as the world of life outgrows
The unwieldy statures and the monstrous shapes
Of prehistoric life.

It is no use saying to me
That what we need
Is an imagination reaching out
To embrace the human reality,
Which unites the combatants.
The other monkeys had their points
But man evolved from a particular kind
And humanity must outgrow our enemies here,
As life in its various lines has outgrown
Many of the forms it took in earlier days
And which are now extinct.
So, pro-Fascist, we are resolved
On the elimination from life
Of all that you stand for and are,
Knowing it is already an intolerable anachronism
With no more relation to us
Than the gorilla retains to man.

It is no more the poet's task
To reconcile the opposite beliefs
Which animates the Right and the Left
—To engender the recognition of one's foe,
As in some sense a partner in a common struggle,
Of which the issue is in the hands of "God,"
That it is mankind's task to undo
The circumstances which bred out the saurians,
And bring them back into life again ;

Or the gardener's duty not to set aside
A plot for some particular flower or fruit,
But to grow them all on the same patch of ground,
And somehow reconcile and make them grow
With a certain harmony and mutual advantage side by side!
Or the animal lover's task
Not to keep doves in a dovecot and rabbits in a hutch
But rather leave them wild in a world
Which also contains snakes and stoats.
—I am not interested in a plea to "Live and let live,"
When it means to abandon the right to pick and choose
Between the poison and the antidote,
On the ground that they mutually grow alongside each other
And are both manifestations of life.

These considerations concern us no more
Than would a cry that it is the poet's task
While yet in the flesh,
To write not as a man
But as the angel he might soon become
If our Christian doctrine were right,

We will lose something in the process.
—Some characteristics of brute strength,
Of stature and other primitive endowments,
For which, later, at a safe distance,
We may entertain some admiration,
But which life will never recapture, any more
Than it will recapture the size of the saurian monsters,
The proportions of mammoth and mastodon.
—And any such "loss" will be far more than made good
By what we gain.

SYDNEY GOODSIR SMITH.

Llanto for Federico Garcia Lorca

ON THE 6TH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS EXECUTION IN SEPTEMBER, 1936

In Granada, in Granada
They dumbled the mou o a makar,
In Granada, in Granada
They murdered Garcia Lorca.

Ye bard o the tinks, o gipsy Spain,
Frae Granada, frae Granada,
Aa the gangrel folk that scorn chains—
O wae fur Garcia Lorca!

At dawn agin a sun-white wae
In Granada, in Granada,
The rifles reik, O see him faa,
Daith rins at the tyrant's order.

But they shall pey for that they did
In Granada, in Granada—
Franco and his men o bluid,
Their hauns are reid wi murder.

Mair nor jist aneemie
Was killt yon morn in Granada.
For daith is neer a boundarie
Tae the voice o a folk was Lorca.

Ay, he was Spain, anither Burns
In Granada, in Granada—
O wae fur thae whan the tide turns
That strak doun Garcia Lorca!

And wae fur thae in ilka land
Or Galloway, or Granada,
Hae dung the libertie o man—
For bards than daith are stranger.

And aye their leid is Freedom
In Galloway or Granada,
O greit fur the tinkler's martyrdom
An the dumb deid mou o a makar.

Ay, greit fur Lorca, bard or waifs
Saw birth an daith in Granada,
Wae fur the sang was stancht yon day
While the sand rins reid wi clanger.

But sing o the victorie was gained
In Granada, in Granada—
For aye yir bluid shall dirl throu Spain,
Federico Garcia Lorca!

The Soldier's Wife

The soldier's wife got a nice surprise
From the ancient town of Prague,
A pair of dear little high-heeled shoes
That's what came from the great town Prague.

The soldier's wife got a nice surprise,
From Oslo over the sea.
From Oslo he sent her a little fur hat,
She purred like a cat
To wear that fur hat.
That's what she got from Oslo over the sea.

The soldier's wife got a nice surprise
From rich old Amsterdam.
From there he sent her a diamond ring
Matching her white skin,
A scintillating ring.
That's what she got from Amsterdam.

The soldier's wife got a nice surprise
From Brussels romantic town.
From Brussels he sent her some exquisite laces,
O the airs and graces
She wore with those laces,
That's what she got from Brussels romantic town.

The soldier's wife got a nice surprise
From the lights of gay Páree.
At the height of fashion, a chic silk dress,
How she'd longed to possess
Such a chic silk dress,
That's what came from gay Páree.

The soldier's wife got a nice surprise
From the city of Bucharest.
She got a shirt so cute and so gay,
Embroidered so gay
In that cute foreign way.
That's what she got from the city of Bucharest.

The soldier's wife got a new surprise
From the shining Russian snows.
From Russia they sent her a widow's veil,
For the funeral,
A widow's veil,
That's what came from the Russian snows.

Supposing Men Had Eyes

Supposing the squares ran red with blossom,
the stones sang and the pavements danced with gladness,
and there was no more sadness.

Supposing an entirely new colour appeared,
like a new sun, making our white seem grey,
our marble as clay.

Supposing wisdom and knowledge, supposing love itself,
suddenly became the very core of power,
the stem and the flower.

And flourished, and suffering was only its tributary,
never the dam, and evil burned into good,
weeping, because at last it was understood.

Poem

The time for dancing will return, roll the sharp graves
where plough speeds life, irrigate Europe
with deepest hope, bury the brown pest joyfully ;
the human heart will learn ; the time for dancing will return.

The Nigger in the Brick-Pile

How easily the buildings settle and sleep.
Sprawl ; the mad dust dancing,
And the sun content with glancing.

The idea is real ; the idea is very real.
It mingles and it parries
With friends and adversaries.

Alive ; and here are the dead brick-piles.
Alive ; and here is the charnel-house.
Alive in the elephant and mouse.

But the buildings are dying, the cities are tumbling down.
Murder abroad, and panic come to town.
How easy to despair, how tragic to clown.

Until we see the idea, the idea grinning and gleeful,
And purposeful, an irresistible kicking cherub,
Arrogant with young down and a new gown.

LITERATURE AND WAR

JOHN SINGER

I

THE proposition that a work of art, whether produced during war, peace, slump or boom, can be validly assessed only by its own integral standards, by values implicit in the world created by the art-form, and not, in the first instance, by the values of other worlds, be they sociological, or scientific, or philosophical, must be considered with immense respect. It is a premise often enough reiterated, and more often misunderstood. Particular qualities, particular patterns, a certain inspired and round completion, phrase it how we may, what we are looking for is the genuine article. Short story, poem, essay, the novel, the biographical study, or a new ballet, or a painting, all art-forms, subject to their aesthetic laws, must produce in us that authentic quickening of spirit, that warm feeling of complete identity with what has been built up, or has spontaneously blossomed. That the essential difference between true art and its still-born substitute can never be adequately explained merely in terms of technique or school or influence, is certain.

Much of this has been discussed in all its aspects throughout the history of human thought. From Plato to Bacon, from Bacon to Coleridge and Arnold, Pater and Saintsbury, we are enabled to summarise a vast literature, not only of criticism but of its anatomy and function. Its "proper function" as some have put it. When we observe the sometimes pedestrian, sometimes breath-takingly sudden changes in the critical method and approach employed by these writers about writing, when we see the same forces of growth and change affecting creative literature and its critical scaffolding alike, though by no means always simultaneously, we are using lenses which must not become blinkers. The various anatomies of inspiration, exploring the technical and "school" approaches to the written word, have, in the opinion of many writers, over-reached themselves, built an elaborate wordy cul-de-sac of deceptive depth. There is a great difference between a sympathetic and admittedly limited evaluation of, say, Keats, with plenty of quotations, and a pretentiously learned thesis explaining the poet entirely in terms of class or the Industrial Revolution, or even, as has been attempted, through Keats's malady. Attempts to understand and to "explain" the literary trends since 1918 have not always completely failed. That is true. The trouble is that the criticism began to overlap the writing, indeed, became a slick and polished trade. The reaction to this orgy of psycho-analytical and social-economic analysis of the creative impulse and its literary forms, was a violently individual one. At least it became anti-collective, and was promptly labelled "Romantic," "The Return to Anarchism," "Free Experiment." There was another reaction, against all this and

opposing "orderly," "normal" writing too. This reaction has had its day. It, too, was divided into attitudes so opposite that extremes did meet in the most astonishing and sometimes amusing way. I am referring to surrealism and proletcult. The Romantics, the Anarchists, and the advocates of and searchers for a "Twentieth Century Myth," survive, in various ways. Now let me repeat; if I am handed a poem, a short story, a novel, a play, I do not in the *first instance*, want to know what school, what movement, what politics the author subscribes to. Because I am interested in certain living qualities, and in something which I recognise to be timeless and mysterious and untrackable. Select a classic, a Maupassant story, or "War and Peace," or "The Cherry Orchard"; isolate every device, every trick of construction, every conceivable nameable quality in it, and write them all down. Any resultant critical formula, however comprehensive, will no more explain art, or be of *any service at all* to the non-artist in his attempts at understanding or creation, than anatomy can explain what life is. Now the inevitable clichetic reaction to the foregoing is "Art for Art's sake, again." This will be as short-sighted as taking it to mean that a writer should not be interested in politics, schools and movements.

Mr. Stephen Spender, who is becoming more and more worth listening to (as certain of his former colleagues become less and less), has written an excellent study of the position of the poet to-day. The main thesis of "Life and the Poet" is that the poet must preserve his creative integrity, an original and fresh awareness, and must at all costs avoid being blinkered and harnessed by any cerebrally pre-determined attitude. This he should achieve, indeed he can only achieve, not through arrested infancy but through mature simplicity. The loving-father who is always learning and experiencing instead of the romantic little boy who has a horror of growing up. Mr. Spender, one imagines, would have a horror of such utterances as "Truth is Beauty, and Beauty, Truth." He is against all absolutism, and here I am with him, although it is possible that his present distaste for out-and-out practical Marxism is based on the erroneous impression that dialectical materialism claims to encircle everything! To accuse him, however, of a subjective incapacity for facing up to present-day political reality and the role of the enlightened workers, is a serious matter. Nevertheless one is compelled to point out Lenin's love of the classics (of Pushkin in particular) Gorki's genuine friendship and collaboration with the leading Russian Communists, the flowering of the Soviet Theatre, and a remark of Stalin which is a classic retort to Goering and all the Nazis stand for. "Whenever I hear the word, culture, I reach for my purse." But "Life and the Poet" is a very good book and I have learned a lot from it.

In "The Role of the Individual in History," Plekhanov makes a case for the social determinism behind personality. If we accept Clausewitz's 'war is politics,' etc.—although this thesis is rather more transparently begging the question than the first—and relate both to the literature of any war, we will discover certain unfamiliar aspects of many books and writers. Our findings may throw new light on Whitman and

his war, on Kipling and his, on Owen, Sassoon, Graves, and the poets of the last war, on Barbusse, Forster, Montague and the novelists, and we will have to include much that was written in the years following the actual fighting. And some that appeared in the preceding decade. The trouble with this method of approach is its cold-bloodedness. It must be employed with a suspicious reservation. It will, of course, yield results that should be useful when reviewing the writing of this war and its preliminary bouts in China, Ethiopia, and Spain. This critical approach has been well exploited by writers like Caudwell, Henderson, and Eastman, of whom I vastly prefer the first. But I would recommend "Illusion and Reality" and "Studies in a Dying Culture," only to the subtle and the humble.

The ideological and material differences between this world war and the last, with the subsequently varying moods, passions, and social roots, have been explained a hundred times since 1939. Writers like George Orwell and Ritchie Calder are expert at it. But again the trouble is—and I am sorry if this grows confusing—that the social-moral conclusions of these writers, their *explanations* of the differences between Wilhelm-Krupp-Junker imperialism and Hitlerism, as for instance Rauschnig sees it, are in their turn torn to pieces by other writers for whose poetry and prose we may have much respect. Although, again, evidence of a tortured self-questioning need not be accepted as the hallmark of verity. It is obviously silly to lump together people like Aldous Huxley, Auden, Read and Comfort with pathological pacifists of the Christadelphian type. But it is absolutely necessary to read the war-time productions of this group with a very guarded attitude as well as a passion for pure aesthetic. Some readers might not find the mental road between Huxley's "Grey Eminence" and Washington-Wall Street pro-clericalism and tenderness for Spain's present regime, an altogether tortuous absurdity. We can understand, too, their preference for Read's earlier poetry, his art criticism, and bits of the vigorous humanism in "To Hell with Culture," to the word-maze of "Poetry and Anarchism," and the dexterous word-play of "The Politics of the Unpolitical." The last may seem too suspiciously clever. I have not read anything of Auden's since his "New Year Letter," but I do find Comfort's bold anti-political, anti-war reviews and letters rather startlingly militant.

Some of the foregoing may smack of polemic, the oracular. The intrusion of these qualities, to some extent, is inevitable in a short essay aiming at something between synthesis and compromise. The very bones of creative understanding is inspired duality. Owen's poetry becomes clearer, grows into something larger than the passionate lyrical protest, the humanist and often Goya-like etching in words, when we are able to relate it to the prevailing social moods and philosophies of the last war. What deeps and shallows of social growth and change, of added layers of consciousness, are revealed in reading the ballads and lyrics contained in the "Anthology of War Poems" edited by Julian Symons; modest, even sketchy in scope, yet so illustrative of the poet as spokesman for the very core of *what lies behind progress*.

Is it inevitable, to misquote Owen, that for most of the younger poets now writing in Britain the poetry seems to be in the self-pity? Am I wrong? Are the Litvinoffs and the Scarfes really "sounding the deeps" of society to-day, of all of us, of where the life-urge flows, or are they the romantic little boys with a horror of growing up? On the other hand, is Jack Lindsay's *Commando* poem the real thing? It is well worth reading, but I doubt it. Is the fact that Dylan Thomas has written practically no poetry since this war began, that Barker and Gascoigne are sparsely published these days, a pointer about the direction of our most authentic talents? Should there, will there be a vigorous flowering of ballad, lyric, and narrative in a new Left direction through poets hardly heard of, as yet, perhaps just beginning to really write? A new poetry sweating and singing and triumphantly expressing the real reintegration of man, growling and shining through the "phoniness" that since 1939 has been lying low, but refuses to die? If such poets arose would they be accepted and published by "Horizon," by "Life and Letters," or by "Our Time" and "Seven," or would they be rejected by all?

The important writer is a one-man school. Progress is true for those who believe in it. Creation is a positive act and its soil must be generative and regenerative. What I am coming to is the refusal to accept, nay, the impossibility of accepting negation, utter hopelessness, absolute death, on the part of the real writer. He is a human being, expressing himself in a delightful and satisfying vocation. A human being, he may be jubilant or depressed, matter-of-fact, damnably rude and unsocial on the surface, he may be in or out of love, but, underneath all this, all the time, there is a steady beat, a sort of arrogance, a toughness that flows. It is the pulse of his will to create.

This elemental urge must, of course, be disciplined and shaped by hard conscious thinking as well as subjective pattern. Running wild, it must know its direction. At its most luxuriant it must be wholesome. Without certain other qualities and capacities it can become the vicious ranting of Campbell's "Flowering Rifle," Mayakovsky when he nods, Ezra Pound displaying his muscles at a Roman microphone, the crystallisation of that banality some hoped he would outgrow. In friendly New York, away from Europe, away from the Gestapo, the last drops of this will ebbed from Toller and he died. Thus, too, with Stefan Zweig. Suicide was the choice of at least one English writer. Others have died in other ways. Here is reflected literature and war as it affects some of that generation who remember the last blood-bath. But it is something deeper and more significant than a finally outraged humanism we are peering at. To proceed further would be an unending and painful enquiry. But what influences and compulsions lay behind these acts? We can clutch at various new-fangled yardsticks. We can consider the "death-wish in bourgeois society," that Freud-Auden-Left compound, and then, relating it to these writers, a Socialist and Liberal German, a highly cultured Englishwoman, pacifists, and, curiously, Richard

Hilary with his deliberate forewarned decision, how limited it becomes, a label on a cloud.

What are the people reading, what is worth reading, where is creative writing keeping itself and life alive? The first is easy to answer and, depressing, it has its bright patches. They are devouring, primarily, the mammoth Government editions of war reportage. Much of it is obviously ephemeral and trashy. Some of it crosses the border-line of first-class journalism into memorable prose. "Figher Pilot" is a brilliant example of the latter. But in the main, for all their lavishness, the clear printing and the suave photogravure, these bookstall sagas are hopelessly beaten at their aim, the description and interpretation of war, its moods, heroisms, and human reactions, by the better stories and reportage contained in collections like "Modern Reading" and "New Writing." The poetry included in these quarterlies I honestly believe is not so good. I prefer Roy Campbell when he forgets Toledo to Robert Herring lashing the air with cute Hopkinese (slashed sonnet, etc.). I prefer the modest lyrical competency of John Pudney, with its under-current of impersonal pity, its simplicity and pleasing melody, to the repetitive metrical wailing and lamentations of some younger poets. Perhaps this is uncharitable. But barrack-room claustrophobia and unrelieved sexual imagism needs catharsis and inspired detachment before it can be moulded into the bigger sort of poetry.

It would be instructive to discover what, if anything except the sparseness of good contemporary literature, lies behind the awakened interest in the classics and the vogue for popular reprints. It is a refreshing and hopeful phenomena, however, that anthologies of poetry are being widely sold and read. Included in this category are established titles such as Palgrave's, Sir John Squire's, and Methuen's and Dent's series, as well as the more recent and urgent anthologies like Keidrych Rhys's "Poems from the Forces." Much of this poetry is being purchased and read by people who have barely scanned a page of verse since their schooldays.

It would be tedious to list the various branches of pulp reading-matter from the trashy 'formula' thriller to the shelter romance that the people are also reading. Only an ostrich would suggest that vulgarity and hysteria (those philistine twins) are confined to Munich in space and time. Yet what stirring and heartening movements are afoot. The revival of interest in the amateur stage, in poetry and play readings; the growth of the Unity Theatre in London, Glasgow, Bristol, and I believe other cities; the formation of workers music groups; the surge of literary and political zest in the Forces; the tremendous interest in translations of modern and nineteenth century Russian works. The demand, too, for books about the ballet, films, architecture and town-planning, art and science.

Where is creative writing turning? Where indeed are the new directions, views, horizons and transformations? For the urge to *build* and love of life and a passion for that supreme functioning which is real

self-expression are burning more fiercely than ever. I believe towards a new and positive and fighting humanism which is the antithesis of Fascism and Anarchist idealism alike. I believe towards a broader and deeper awareness of the kinship of all men as one organic likeness. Towards the realisation that co-operation and an *economically* classless society far from restricting the individual in his search for expression and fulfilment is in fact his only hope. And for the artists, the pioneers and innovators, for the inspired restless—freedom, the right to differ, the right to experiment, new struggles? Of course!

Creative art is moving towards a new synthesis in which an interpretative neutrality joins hands with humanity.

Literature and war are part of something bigger than both. Something is happening to this main source and, changing, it will change literature and do battle with war and with reaction in all its guises. The true artists, the real writers, all the people in whom there flows a passionate and joyous and positive vitality are anti-fascist to the depths of their soul. And they will recognise and combat Fascism wherever it may be and whatever it may call itself. Creative art is life's greatest ally.

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I wonder how you are getting on with your magazine. I have been entirely prevented by pressure of work from writing anything special, but I should like to be amongst those, if you publish any such list, who cordially welcome your effort, and who feel that there is a decided place for your collection.

Yours very truly,

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“Dear Mr. Singer,

Anyone would feel proud to be asked to contribute to a periodical for which such distinguished authors write; but my trouble is that I am not a LEFT Writer nor a NEW Writer. Left and Right mean, to me, the scum and the silt. New and old mean to me half-baked and stale.

How can you say that you have no thwarting bias, when you use these abominable words in your very title?

If I have any abiding political convictions they are that the criminal negligence of the Right nearly lost us Great Britain, and the folly of the Left, did, in fact, lose France, and they can both go to Hell.

My impression of most New Writing is that it is the Yellow Book all over again, stuck full of ill-digested Freud and Marx and garnished with the sort of technicalities Kipling at least took the trouble to get right. A small, negative feature of its repulsiveness is that it is neither hopeful, positive, nor forward. As I am none of these things myself (except perhaps hopeful) I do not cast a stone at you for that.

I do cast a handful of gravel at the 1943 Decadents for their crazy assumption that they are qualified to lead humanity into the Promised Land.

These, then, are my sentiments; and, unless you wish to use this letter as a free contribution, I'm afraid you will have to count me out.

All the same, I wish you well and hope that you will enrol me as a subscriber if not as a contributor. Your quarterly is very unlikely to be dull if O'Casey, MacDiarmid, Barke and Montagu write for it. I'm not so keen on the Dean and Anand, but they may brighten up in such stimulating company.

Yours sincerely,

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