DAYLIGHT

VOLUME ONE

EUROPEAN ARTS & LETTERS

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THE HOGARTH PRESS

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DAYLIGHT

EUROPEAN ARTS AND LETTERS
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VOLUME I

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Foreword

THIS venture has been launched by a group of English and Czech authors, who had found many points of contact in their views on art and literature and the world around them.

Two ideas were uppermost in their minds when the plan was first conceived. They thought, first, that though much had been done to bring British people and their European allies, whose representatives are in England at the moment, together in a political sense, a bridge still needed to be built between them in those things that touched their lives more deeply; in the things of the mind and the imagination, books, painting, music, the theatre and poetry. It seemed to them that if they could learn to understand one another, to collaborate and to give mutually in those things, the bond might even be more valuable and more lasting than any political accommodation of the moment.

They also felt that, at a time like the present, it was necessary to reaffirm a belief that the culture of Europe is fundamentally one, however important it may be to preserve the individuality of its manifestations in each people or entity within a people, and that it not only has common roots, but also a common future. The need seemed to them all the more urgent, because they saw before them the spectacle of a Power, the military master of Europe for the day, attempting to create a spurious unity, a mirage to tempt that age-old thirst of all European peoples for concord and fraternity, under cover of which it could in fact destroy the whole basis and spiritual purpose of that civilisation.

Their object, therefore, in *Daylight*, will be to create

a centre in which the true rapprochement can be forwarded, in which all problems of European arts and letters can be debated, outstanding creative personalities valued and revalued, translations made of poems and stories from European languages and set beside the contemporary efforts of British writers, and current books examined which have a particularly important bearing on the subject.

The fact that it has been the Czechs who have taken the lead in collaboration with their British colleagues in this venture, is perhaps sufficient explanation why in this first volume of *Daylight* it is the Czechs who are represented more than other peoples of the Continent. The Czechs and the British will indeed, one can only hope, have more and more to say to one another in the future, but it is not the wish of the Editors to maintain any kind of exclusiveness. There are already, in these pages, notable contributions by Greek, French and Irish collaborators as well, and they hope that in future volumes they, and the other European peoples who have a common cause with the Anglo-Saxon world, will be represented in juster proportion, in spite of the many difficulties which must stand, during this period of abnormal stress and testing, in their way.

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STEPHEN SPENDER

TO BE TRULY FREE

THE totalitarian state is a form of government in which the entire resources of a country can be submitted to the ends of the government party in order to carry out the policy of a particular moment. Not only men's bodies, but also their minds are conscripted by a propaganda which in principle leaves no margin for anything but the activities and aims of what is called the State. These aims, seen through blinkers, do not permit wide and disinterested speculation, or long term views of the nature of existence.

In such countries, a short term view of material tasks which the government has imposed on the people, becomes more important than anything else. The organisation necessary to achieve a Five Year Plan, the hatred necessary to win a war or Revolution, the *volte face* necessary to make acceptable a treaty with a country or a class which has long been labelled the most evil of outcasts from humanity; these are the aims of the society and of everyone in it.

It would be an exaggeration to say that art and education had no place in such a society. On the contrary, in some ways they might play a spectacular, and certainly a lucrative, role. Music to lull officials when they are tired, or to relieve work of tedium in the factory, or to drug with metaphysical strains a conquered country, or to accompany military exercises; the painting and architecture of great exhibitions, impressive functions, frescoes persuading the miserable that they are free, prosperous and happy; the literature which persecutes an enemy, acclaims a hero, and makes a hard task seem glorious; all such tasks would be rewarded.

In other words, in the totalitarian states, art is looked

on as the brass band accompanying the march of the State machine. This means that some kinds of culture—those which preach unquestioning obedience and acceptance—are encouraged, others are treated as extremely dangerous.

Some critics show an inclination to accept this state of affairs as inevitable. They argue that in primitive times poetry was a ritual of magical rhythmic speech exhorting the corn to grow, and therefore encouraging the toil of the worker in the field. So, in this view, Stalin was right to stop the performance of the music of a famous Russian composer, because it was not " music for the workers by the workers." The same argument would justify Hitler in raging against artists who paint the sky green and the grass blue.

These arguments may appear whims of the dictators. What is the good or the harm in modernist music and painting and literature that makes the outburst of an uncultured tyrant anything more than temperamental? One has to admit that much of the modernist music and painting banned by dictators may be bad.

Yet there is more to it than that. The point is that the dictators hate any art that challenges them by failing to be an accompaniment to their goose step across the minds of men. This is their view of all culture, shown in education, the stage, the film, newspapers, and every branch of propaganda. Culture must take orders. It must not ask questions.

Whether culture is propaganda, in the widest sense, or whether it asks questions, is the essential difference between culture in the totalitarian states and the conception of a democratic culture. Applying this test, one can see how a superficially ' modern ' style may be incorporated into the propaganda of the modern state, just as the techniques of advanced poetry and surrealist painting can be applied to advertise face cream. But an education which opens the minds of children to our scientific

knowledge or ignorance of the origin of the existing European races, a literature which does not equate human happiness with obedience to the plans of the State, a religious teaching which regards all men as brothers and refuses to brand a nation or a class as devoid of the rights of the rest of humanity: all this is a menace to tyranny.

Of course, education, and art, do not often raise questions as direct as this. At the back of these questions is the sense of the limitations of the human mind, the intolerance of the will set on power, and the presence of death. Dictatorships try to teach us that whatever the dictator does is right; that the party historians, scientists and philosophers are omniscient; that human power can be just, unlimited and eternal; and that death is only an accident which affects individuals, the true carrier of life being not the consciousness of each individual, but a mysterious totality called the ascendant class, the nation, the race, or the State.

It may be objected that I am upholding an old-fashioned liberal individualism. This is true in the sense that I believe that individuals are the carriers of such universal truths as are available to every separate human being. I do not believe, however, that certain individuals are personifications of the will of society, or are entitled by birth or ingenuity to exploit their fellow beings.

What I believe is that educationalists, artists, priests, and those members of society who are the carriers of a tradition and a culture, are particularly aware of the long term conditions of human existence. The educator should not be a pedant or a doctrinaire fussily refusing to accept the present on account of his self-important preoccupation with the learning and tradition of the past: he should be filled with a sense of what is true and living in the tradition—living, in the sense that we shall lose our sense of present values without such an understanding of the past. The artist is acutely aware of the

past and of the long term conditions of life as he is also aware of the confined present span of his own generation. It is the conflict between the sense of here and now and the sense of space and eternity that stimulates his art and gives it that freshness and immediacy which prevent it from being either ephemeral or else drifting off into inexhaustible platitudes of space and eternity.

It is true that in this view an emphasis is laid on the importance of certain individuals who are selected by their genius, and their devotion, to be the carriers of culture from the past into the future. But if these are true carriers of the tradition and not merely eccentric freaks, even their most audacious inventions are only an interpretation of truths that are present always in the consciousness of all men, though circumstances may prevent some men from understanding their own human nature and common heritage.

So a belief in the truth and the disinterestedness of our culture is not an argument for the individualisms of a small minority; it is a powerful argument for the liberation of all, so that they may have the chance to become individuals. The long term conditions of human life, the truths at the back of religion as much as of science, should be rooted as deeply as possible in the lives of all men. Good education, decent living conditions, equal opportunity, leisure, are the essentials for the culture of a free people. If by miseducation, scandalous conditions of living, and lack of leisure, we make the common heritage (and indeed, the common religious task) the rare self-imposed task of a few isolated devotees, then we are weakening the roots of our own culture, and giving an opportunity to the gangsters who would like to make culture simply the subservience of education, the sciences and the arts, to their own lies and aggressions.

Matthew Arnold says that an essential of great poetry is ' high seriousness.' This is also true of a philosophy of life, and of a liberal education. However, a difficulty

which prophets and leaders have always encountered is that the great majority of men live from hour to hour and are not serious. In a democracy where large numbers of people are called upon to choose between policies with far-reaching implications, this shortsightedness of the majority is an obvious danger. But that, in addition to this, the leaders should not give the people an opportunity to develop a long term view of life, that is, the opportunity for every individual to be an individual, is suicidal. We are witnessing the results of this suicidal policy at the present moment.

It is also true that nothing is more difficult to achieve than freedom. To make free and wise decisions, we must be free of fear and self-interest. Unless decisions are made which are not dictated by self-interest, our freedom becomes a mockery. It is because it has become such a mockery in many countries that the stock of democracy has fallen so low at the present moment. Yet there is no way out. We cannot choose between freedom and putting ourselves in the hands of an enlightened and benevolent despot. We must either be really free, and educated, and responsible, or we must become slaves of the basest members of present-day society, the gangsters, the cynical and the corrupt, armed with a more powerful machinery of tyranny than the world has ever seen.

Yet how can a free society win a war against a ruthless unprecedented tyranny, without sacrificing its own freedom? This question is crucial, but the very fact of keeping it always before us may, in the long run, strengthen our freedom. The danger is that too few people ask it, and that others answer it hypocritically, or deny that it need be asked. But if a whole society determined to be free asked it, then the sacrifices made in the name of freedom would indeed be a resolve to win that freedom later.

Apart from these temporary measures, a free society

with a free culture, has greater potentialities than the ruthless dictatorships. A free nation is a living organism, because the lives of the people are rooted in the deepest sense of life. An enslaved nation is a maniac machine driven through the world. These nations are particularly dangerous to-day when machines are so powerful. But ultimately the man in the military machine is less realistic, less capable of adaptation and development than his sane contemporaries, unless he is able to obtain world domination, or else drive the rest of the world mad with him. Even now this seems a remote possibility, and if it were true it would only mean that the tyrants would complete the circle of their mania by destroying themselves. The main problem of civilisation remains, and would still remain, how to be truly free. Culture is at the heart of that problem, because it has the power to keep men's minds and hearts open, even while they are condemned to deal in mechanised death.

GEORGE SEFERIS

MYTH OF OUR HISTORY

(Five poems from a sequence)

Translated from the Greek by G. C. Katsimbalis and Lawrence Durrell.

I.

" The Soul too,
If she would know herself
Must look within a soul."
The stranger, the enemy, we saw him in the glass.

Good lads were the companions—did not growl
Either at toil or at thirst or at the frosts
They bore themselves like the trees and waves
Accepting wind and rain
Accepting night and sun
With the change, not changing.
Good lads they were ; whole days
They sweated at the oar with downcast eyes
Breathing rhythmically,
And their blood reddened submissive skin.
Sometimes they sang, with downcast eyes
As we passed the island with the barbary figs
To the west, beyond the cape of dogs
Who bark.
If she would know herself, they said,
Into a soul she must look, they said.
And the oars beat the gold of the sea
In the setting sun.
Many capes we passed, many islands, the sea
Which leads to the other sea ; gulls and seals.
Sometimes luckless women who wept
Keening for children they had lost ;
And others raving called for Alexander

And glories buried in the depths of Asia.
We have moored on beaches full of the night scents,
With songs of birds, waters which left on the hands
Remembrance of great happiness.
But the journeys had no end.
Their souls became one with the oars and rowlocks,
With the grave face of the prow,
With the trace of the rudder,
With the water which fractured their image.
The companions finished, each in turn,
With downcast eyes. Their oars
Mark the place where they sleep on the shore.
No one remembers them. Justice.

II.

Westward the ocean melts in the range of mountains.
To our own left the Sound wind maddens,
A wind making naked the bone from the flesh.
Our house among pines and carobs.
Big windows. Big tables
For us to write the letters we have been writing to you
These many months, which we drop
Into the separating void to fill it.

" Daystar, when you lower your eyes
Our hours were made sweeter than oil
In wounds, more joyful than water
On the palate, more peaceful than the cygnet's down.
Our life lay in your hands.
After the bitter bread of exile
If we remain nightly before the white wall
Your voice enters like a fiery hope.
And once again the wind strops
Upon the nerve a razor.

" We write to you each of us the same things
And each remains silent to the other,

Looking each of us separately at the same world,
The light and the darkness on the mountain,
On you.

" Who will lift this sorrow off our hearts ?
Yesterday evening, tempest, and to-day
Again the weight of the dark sky. Our thoughts
Like the pine needles of yesterday's rain
At the door of the house, heaped up and spent,
Try to build us a collapsing mansion.

" Among the decimated villages,
On this cape, naked to the south wind,
With the mountain before us, hiding you.
O who will measure this decision of forgetfulness ?
Who will accept offerings at the end
Of this Autumn ? "

III.

Our native place is enclosed, all mountains,
Whose roof is the low sky day and night.
We have no rivers, we have no wells, we have no
Spring. Only a few cisterns, ringing hollow,
Which we adore.

A sound standing hollow, identical with
Our loneliness, identical with our love, our bodies.

Strange we were once able to build
Our houses, huts, byres, and our marriages,
The dewey coronel and the marriage fingers
Have become enigmatic, insoluble to the soul.
How were they born, our children, how grew up ?

Our native place is shut in. They enclosed it
The two black Simplegades. When we go down
On Sunday to the harbours for a breath of air,

We see, lit by the sunsets,
The shattered wrecks of voyages unfinished
Bodies no longer knowing the art of love.

IV.

Sleep, like the green leaves of a tree, wrapped you round.
Like a tree you breathed in the calm light,
In the lucent source I discovered your form:
Eyelids shut, eyelashes brushing the water.
My fingers in the smooth grass found your fingers,
For an instant lay on the pulse,
Sensible of the heart's pain in another place.

Under the plane, near water, amongst laurel
Sleep removed you and made fragments of you
Around me, near me, never touching the whole,
Joined to your silence:
Seeing grown larger or smaller your shadow
Among the others losing itself in the other
World which grasped and released.

The life which was given us to live, we lived it.
Pity those who attend such patience,
Lost in the black laurel, under the heavy planes,
And those whose solitude speaks to cisterns and wells,
Who drown among the voice's circles.
Pity the companions who shared our loss and our sweat,
Who, like the crow flying beyond the ruins,
Were swallowed in the sun, hopeless of enjoying the reward.

Now give us, the other side of sleep, tranquillity.

GEORGE SEFERIS

V.

Here terminate the works of the sea, the works of love.
Those who exist here some day where we end,
If the blood should overflow to darken memory,
May they not forget us, the weak ones among the asphodels.
May they turn upon the mysterious darkness
The heads of the victims.
We who owned nothing shall teach them peace.

GEORGE SEFERIS, the son of a professor of International Law at Athens University who translated Byron into modern Greek, is one of the most distinguished younger Greek poets. He has published two volumes of poems, translations from T. S. Eliot, and a number of essays in periodicals. He is in the Diplomatic Service, has lived in Paris, London and Albania, and is now working for the Free Greek Government in Pretoria.

EGON HOSTOVSKÝ

THE GREAT BETRAYAL

(Translated from the Czech by Ann Krtil and John Hampson)

I AM beginning to write my story of the great betrayal, here in Lisbon, early in September nineteen forty. My name is Frederick David, I am thirty-three years old, a Czech and an artist. I fled from France to Portugal in June. The Germans were at my heels to the very borders of Spain. In 1937, I left home because of family dissensions and because my wife no longer loved me. I wandered about Holland and Belgium selling pictures to my countrymen and, made a living as best I could—chiefly from begging letters.

When war between Germany and the Western Allies broke out, I got to France after great difficulties and volunteered for our army. But I was unfit for military service because of bad lungs and a worse heart, probably brought on by too much alcohol. In a few words, I am a drunkard, a tramp, a gambler, and a cynic. All this according to the judgment of others. According to myself, I am, most of all, a dreamer. I have spent my life looking round a little, dreaming a little, and believing in miracles a little.

This is my first attempt at writing. It is difficult because I don't know how (nor do I even wish) to write chronologically. May the great story tellers forgive me, if I butt into their trade and insist, that a narrative told in the order of time can only offer a fragment of the truth about our diverse lives, since the hidden essence of life does not develop from the past through the present into the future, but. . . . But! Aha, now you think you have me, because I can't go on. Just a minute, I won't give up yet! Let me tell you this way, untutored, perhaps stupidly: There is a centre, a

wonderful moment in life, a kernel, a focus, from which all our mental and physical experiences radiate into the expanse of time, in which there are no lines dividing the present from the past or the future. Not clear? I'm sorry. I am not a writer. Damn it, how else can I explain what lies so close to my heart? Don't you think every life story may be summed up briefly? On one printed page, with three sentences, in five words, or in one?

Believe me, ladies and gentlemen, in one word! If you discover that word, you discover the core of life, and from there you are free to go in whichever direction you choose. Discover the core, and, then send chronology to the devil.

The key word emblazoned in my life,—of all I have seen, heard, experienced, suffered, considered, thought about, and other thoughts about which I failed to reach conclusions, is betrayal. That is the focal word! The focus itself lies in France, whence I have fled,—enclosed in a few hours of time taken from Judgment Day. The parable of all that I have seen, of all that I am still to see, is centred within those hours, which miraculously mirror the ruin that prevailed in the beginning of the world's history and which will prevail at it's end. Since I know the focus of my incidents, since I have a place from which I can start, a place to which I can return, I will write in the order in which we all think and feel, and that is: past the boundaries, or better, beyond the boundaries of time. And so, I start, because of an incident, which happened here in Lisbon two short hours ago.

Before noon the city is glaringly white. The ebb and flow of the human masquerade along the sides of the square grows steadily every minute. The hellish din of people,—to which I shall never become accustomed,—jangles on the air, this ear splitting cacophony is occasionally reft by the inhuman screech of motor-cars

and trams. The Portuguese love noise and commotion. Newsboys shout; sellers of lottery tickets yell; fishmongers and vegetable peddlers offer their goods at the top of their voices; dirty, unkempt children,—whom workworn mothers carry in bundles on their backs, shriek; wide angular women with baskets on their heads sing out the attractive names of their unattractive edibles in a screaming drawl. Most of them go about with one foot bare, the other encased in a ragged remnant which may have been a slipper or a boot. (The Portuguese moral code forbids bare feet, but poverty effects a compromise with morals and one pair of shoes is divided between two persons.) Carts drawn by donkeys joggle along the pavements, songs ring out from the dingy rooms of low houses in the side streets where servants at work are singing very sad songs about love, for which one suffers whether one loves unhappily or happily.

The policemen stand and stare at the deafening congestion of people, animals and vehicles, disinterestedly. I am no longer afraid of the custodians of law in this country, for now I know that the police here don't attack foreigners as police everywhere else in Europe do, nor do they demand papers and certificates which do not exist or which have never been made out for ordinary mortals.

Half a dozen guests sit widely scattered about a dingy cafe where one may buy beer, coffee, or a meal. Outside are two gigantic palm trees, their fanlike leaves nodding in at the windows, behind the palms seagulls are tracing flowing arabesques through thick white clouds. I feel as if I were just regaining consciousness. I am discovering so many peculiarities in the most ordinary settings, which keeps me in a continual state of wonder. For example: Donkeys go about secretly smiling: I knew this in childhood but had forgotten until to-day, that donkeys are always about to burst out laughing.

Once I knew this very authoritatively and saw it too. "Why is that small horse always smiling?" I used to ask my grandmother. "Get along with you, loviekin, who ever told you that donkeys smile?" "But they do smile, look, Granny, see, he is smiling."

From the doorway the sellers of lottery tickets sing out the lucky numbers that are sure to be drawn. If we pay no attention to them, they come right up to the table and pull our sleeves. I will give the bootblack who has just come in a chance to earn a copper. Shine my shoes, boy, and you, waiter, bring me another brandy.

What else is there to do? Have my shoes cleaned, drink and dream.

It is difficult to understand people lately. You understand the words but the words mean nothing. Nothing but a droning noise, emptiness, nonsense. While still in the mood for laughing I remember the girl in Holland. She was seventeen and in love with me because I was an artist, an adventurer and had come from afar. I did not love her—and she threatened me:

"I will go to India with Mr. Daisne. He is married and ugly, but I'll go with him just to make you angry."

"Child, what will you do there?"

"Don't call me a child. What do you think I'll do there? Business and psychology."

"What's that?"

"Business and psychology."

"I don't understand."

"Don't you know what psychology is? It's . . . for example . . when . . . when ladies study, whether prisoners are better off in jail or at liberty. I will do something like that out there, I have talent for it; for business too."

Well, there you see all that one can do nowadays. We, refugees from France, sit here writing letters all day. We write everywhere—to our governments in London,

to Mrs. Roosevelt in Washington, to a famous Rabbi in New York, and goodness knows to whom else.

We write because we think someone will certainly take pity on us and help us get away, for we cannot remain here in Portugal. We are only tolerated here by the grace of the government and the police, and at any moment may be arrested as undesirables. The Germans may come here any day. Ours is a case of emergency, we have suffered much. These, the London government, Mrs. Roosevelt, and the famous Rabbi are our last hopes. We will go anywhere, but would like to go to the United States most of all, but why there, I don't really know. Strange to say the American consul wills otherwise, saying, " I am sorry," and demanding an incredible number of papers. Permission to cross the ocean means a pyramid of papers, dozens of photographs, scores of seals. Also signatures and birth certificates, residence papers and testimonials of good character and behaviour and . . . if you want to sail, you must be able to prove, by a letter, from a reliable person, first of all, that you have been born. No consul, anywhere, will ever believe you really were born unless you present such a letter. If you are a dreamer like me, or an intellectual, and want to go to North America, besides all this you must be able to prove that it is a case of emergency. What does that mean? A trifle. You must be able to prove that the Germans will hang you if they catch you. But even if you forge such a paper, and no one finds you out, you, as a " case of emergency," cannot leave the country immediately but must wait until the danger is imminent, until the Germans are at the border, until no boats sail; and because you are loth to wait for such a time, you apply for permission to go as an emigrant. For this you need, first of all. . . . I no longer know what you need. Why worry, let the horses worry, their heads are bigger. To my no small surprise some people round up all the necessary papers

and actually depart on American, Brazilian or Cuban steamers. I do not believe in papers, I am afraid that all papers are forged, that those who invented all these papers were able to understand them once but now no one understands anything about papers. Neither consuls, nor consul-generals.

I will sit here a little longer. My three friends may come—two Czechs and an odd stranger. He claims to be a Belgian, but speaks no less than five languages equally badly. Both Czechs are at least fifty years old. One is Beran and the other Bachrach. They fled to France because of their non-Aryan grandmothers. Up to the German occupation of Prague they were salesmen. The three of us became acquainted in France. We quickly spent the remainder of Beran's and Bachrach's money—I had none—and then we worked in a French munition factory near Paris. Beran has one obsession, Bachrach another. Beran insists: "You are all going the wrong way, only I am right, I can look anyone straight in the eye and, when necessary, spit in anyone's eye." And Bachrach says: "You know me, I have always been a philanthropist and shall remain one until I die. I expect no gratitude." Beran is the last just man. And Bachrach saves hungry emigrants from starvation, at least he thinks so. He visits Jewish as well as other welfare organisations and assures the heads that he wants nothing for himself. With what results? Up to now, as far as I know, two emigrants have died in Lisbon but neither of starvation. We trust that Bachrach deserves the credit for this. This philanthropist was a spendthrift at home. Now he is adding up all he has squandered since his twenty-first birthday and the sum is almost eight hundred thousand crowns. He assures us that he has cheated Hitler of this sum, for the spent money cannot be confiscated. This information will be entered on his "Emergency Papers."

The three of us are fond of one another, although we

haven't much to talk about. Poverty has brought us close together, poverty and fear ; of fear I still have much to write.

The mysterious stranger is a young man scarcely thirty. Rain or shine, hot or cold, he wears a blue scarf round his neck. His companion is always a very young, slim-hipped girl with forget-me-not blue eyes and fair hair. She sits silent and motionless at his side, and smiles. Her knees are always wide apart, she lowers her lids, and twists her large mouth from side to side, in short—promises much.

The stranger is obviously a representative of some dangerous political organisation, which either exists already or is being organised. I don't know how he lives. He disparages all certainties and derides all hope and divests ministers and generals in the same mockingly monotonous voice, yes, even kings are stripped to their shirts by his pithy comments. He believes neither in Pope, democracy, nor Mussolini, but declares that we three—Beran, Bachrach and I—will never get out of Portugal unless :—that he has chartered some kind of a boat and if we had but a grain of sense we would sail with him.

Whenever he starts talking about the boat and the journey to the unknown, perspiration breaks out all over me and I feel a lump rising in my throat, for while he talks wildly, his companion opens her moist mouth slightly and spreads her knees so wide apart that my senses reel.

If we want to escape with our foreign friend we must, of course, show our true colours, and definitely declare : " No one will win this war."

Since I am writing the truth, we are a little afraid of him, but, for that very reason, do not shun him. Who knows what plots he might concoct if he were out of our sight ? We have practically decided to sail with him, for sail away we must, since we are destined to roam

from land to land. That is our lot. What I am about to say now, ought to be whispered: even if we were permitted to stay here, we would probably try to run away. Fear is ever chasing us from place to place, we are driven by fear of inherited treason. We have glimpsed this shifting treason several times during our lives, but on those occasions were unable to recognise it in all its entirety because we were unconscious of it and were not looking for it. It is only recently, as you will soon learn, that naked, ugly treason has gripped us so tightly that to our dying day we shall never breathe freely again. Therefore, we must go away with our young man. Beran wants to know whether escape on the chartered boat will be an honorable escape. And Bachrach asks: "Who will take my place? Who will look after the refugees when I am gone?"

But the stranger, the sly fox, does not say:

"Look here, Beran, you stopped being an honourable man long ago. You stole the shoes you are wearing. Shut up, I saw you steal the shoes, you stole them in a wrecked, uninhabited house near Bordeaux, where we spent the night. Just remember. We got there in the dark, even the moon seemed afraid of the Germans and shone fitfully. You tripped over the charred corpse of a goatherd. In the morning we were awakened by the one goat left of all the herd. Snout broken and bleeding, the solitary beast was bleating over the human carrion. Don't explain that the house had been smashed and set on fire by a bomb, that it had been ransacked and plundered before we came, do not try to get out of it, the shoes do not belong to you, that's all. You stole them since nobody gave them to you."

No, the stranger does not say that, nor does he mock Bachrach:

"What's that you're spouting about philanthropy, you dope? You go around begging for people no worse off than you are yourself. Do you think a few

worn rags will help them? Stop it, once and for all, everyone's laughing at you, even your needy friends."

If the young man talked like that he would antagonise Beran and Bachrach. He does not want that. He just goes on inquiring about things, towing us toward his unknown goal with maliciously adroit questions:

"Have you faith in your London Government? Did they answer you? Hasn't Mrs. Roosevelt sent you a cablegram yet, Bachrach? Beran, how about joining the army? Aren't fifty-year old soldiers good for something? And you (he turns to me) shouldn't you petition them for call-up papers into the British army, even though you have been rejected by the French? After all, you're an artist, you could whitewash latrines, who else should whitewash latrines if not artists? Tell me, you, who read the newspapers, aren't we free yet? No? Lord, it's slow in coming, isn't it? But cheer up, Luxemburg will step in now, a Luxemburg army is being formed in Canada, and the Norwegian King can still be heard! By the way, do you listen to the broadcasts from London at all?"

And that is how he talks, the scoundrel. But here he comes, with his pretended sister, Beran and Bachrach with them. They must have met on the way here.

"Good-day boys, warm isn't it?"

"Warm?" grins the youth with the blue scarf by way of returning my greeting. "Your discovery reminds me of a guide at home who showed Englishmen through castles and fortresses. He would stop before a fireplace and announce pathetically: "Gentlemen, here you see a hearth or a stove." How do you like my sister to-day?"

"She is charming, as always!"

"I do not believe she is your sister, you scamp, she is the bait in your snare, and nothing else!"

"You're drinking early? Well, order a brandy for me too," Beran decides after a moment's consideration.

And port for Bachrach ! I know him, Bachrach will treat all of us to-day, he has sold his fur-lined coat ! "

Do not think that I am reproducing Beran's words accurately ; that is rarely possible. While fleeing from France, this most unique of men, eliminated some words from his vocabulary daily. His supply of words diminished by the hour. Now his speech is so depleted that only Bachrach and I can understand him. For example, " He did not believe but then found him asleep," means, " X did not believe that Y lived with Z. Therefore, under some pretext or other, X visited Y and came at a most inopportune time, apparently about midnight, and actually saw Z sleeping there."

Bachrach is hiding a smile beneath his moustache. His moustache has grown unrestrainedly in all directions, the whole presenting the appearance of a much neglected, very badly abused, moulting toothbrush. Whenever Bachrach smiles this way it indicates indulgent contempt for Beran or for his news. This time it is plain that the news is absurd. His throat scalded by his drink, Bachrach talks in a hoarse whisper and with great effort, as if dragging his voice up from the very soles of his feet. And he goes on eagerly about himself constantly, lauding himself, boasting about himself, and calling upon me to corroborate his statements. I must confirm that he is as clever as a monkey, that he can catechise a suspicious character better than any judge,— fortunately he does not wait for me to bear him out.

" I have discovered something," he announced pompously, " your eyes will pop out. You know me, said I to myself : it would be a fine how do you do, if I were unable to find out something interesting at Svozils. They have lived here for fifteen years and surely would have a paper from home. You know how I hate to be mistaken. And look, here's a Czech paper of the 23rd of August, practically hot from the press. . . .

Svozil, a Czech settled in Portugal so long, isn't in the same class as one of us, he can write to Prague, can even order sausages from home, that is, if there are any sausages left there!"

Beran is uneasy:

"Touch not! Rather German!"

He wants to say, you may understand: "I would not touch such a paper. I'd rather read a German paper outright!"

But I hear no more of their everlasting dispute. I am reading the paper, a Czech paper! How long since I read a Czech newspaper! I read that there is prosperity at home, that the English have muffed it again, that the Turks had better beware, that the Germans will be victorious everywhere. Ah, how well I know all that! But here! Good Lord, in a small item of news is the name of a friend, an instructor at the Academy of Art. No, not really? He will lecture, yes, really, he will lecture at seven to-night, will open an art exhibition on *Narodni Avenue*. . . . Well, of all things! I can hardly read, spots dance before my eyes as I learn that the art instructor will speak at the opening of an exhibition of paintings by Slavek, another one of my friends! How long since I saw Slavek last? Dear Lord, Slavek! He drank a lot too, of course he did, he liked drink; plum brandy best of all. He came from Hana, and we used to say: "The devil with women, friendship is the only real thing, isn't it, Slavek, it is. . . ."

I am no longer awake, but dreaming! Not really dreaming, but dead. And they are alive there, go to theatres, drink wine, open exhibitions, clench their fists and grind their teeth, crouch in corners, but are still alive! I cannot go to them, dare not write, must not even send a message lest they be at once arrested, for one is not allowed to write from the grave, that is contrary to nature and forbidden by law. I am dead, for when they speak of me back home they use the past tense:

"He said then. . . . Do you remember how once he . . . ? He sat here, that was during the great flood, of course you remember?"

Beran and Bachrach are quarrelling. To read or not to read the Czech paper? That is the question! The young man in the blue scarf is impatient, he swears at them. French obscenities are thrown into a Czech quarrel, and mingle with Portuguese caterwauling and jabbering. The stranger begins his account of the boat and its departure all over again,—we might possibly get to the Azores, land secretly, what of it if they do arrest us there, let them, the Azores will be occupied by the English or the Americans in no time, and we shall be freed. Aha! To be sure! Why didn't he keep quiet, now Beran and Bachrach have one more reason for proclaiming the English and the Americans are the saviours of humanity. Evidently they have not been burned badly enough yet, and will soon have an opportunity of increasing their correspondence by including Colonel Lindbergh's charming letters in their files. A woman's hand strokes my knee under the table and shyly slides higher. And I am dead. How shameless to seduce a corpse! All is shamelessness! I gulp brandy and have my shoes shined, for money I have begged. I ought to be ashamed! The consul won't believe that I was born. I can't go back home, cannot stay here, cannot go to America, I'm not wanted in England. What is there left for me? Two pals. One almost a mute, he lost both baggage and vocabulary in flight. The other a ridiculous scarecrow, suffering from megalomania. But they are my countrymen, they have seen and lived through all that I have. Where does this fellow with the blue scarf want to take us? Let him go to Hell! Why doesn't he let corpses rest in peace? And why doesn't his whore keep her hands off corpses too?

I push the fondling hand away roughly. I am in a

rage, the ineffectual rage of a living corpse, which cannot quite die.

A storm is rising. In a minute it will break. We get into each other's hair daily, sometimes it even comes to blows. As we rave and rant at each other the donkeys lift their heads to mock us, students in long black clerical habits regard us with anger furrowed brows, newsboys and lottery-ticket vendors become silent for a moment and gape open-mouthed at the strange people, who imitate their shrieks in an unknown mirth provoking tongue, redden like peonies, shake fists in each other's faces, spit out, yes, they do all this,—and in the end weep and order brandy. But the local papers warn: "Be tolerant and understanding of the emigrants, for, you must realise that their morals and customs are different from our own."

The storm is due. I thirst for it, call it forth. The reason? A slight suspicion about the young man with the blue scarf. My burning brain now transforms suspicion into certainty. But a moment's patience. A moment in which to smile, that is, show my teeth, at a Portuguese who is just passing by in the street and is waving to me. I once trotted his little daughter on my knee and we have been friends ever since. We cannot converse with each other, we only show our teeth and bow deeply when we meet. He's gone. And now! I push my glass aside and grab the stranger by the shoulder.

"Listen here, you, let me tell you something! Do you think I'm cracked? We've been here long enough, we know all the English agents and the German ones too. True, we are often mistaken about them. But we know who you are. Look out! Men like you caught Beran's brother at home. They stripped him, put a sign on his back reading, "I am a lousy Jew," knocked out his teeth with their elbows and drove him about the city in a coal cart. They fired on students

with machine-guns, dragged girls from their beds and lashing them with whips, drove them naked through ice-covered streets. They have killed children and are still murdering them. They say the little ones stick out their tongues at them. I'm telling you to look out! And your sister too! Nothing more can happen to us three, nothing matters to us any more. See this ash-tray? It's iron, feel how heavy. Just one blow and peace. Understand? One bang over that thick head of yours and all will be over. Don't think we don't know with whom we have the honour to deal!"

Beran is as pale as a sheet. This had never occurred to him. He swears daily that he will strangle the first German spy who annoys him, on the spot. Now his eyes are bloodshot, his mouth idiotically agape, and he has half risen. Surely he is seeing his humiliated brother, is feeling strange spittle upon his cheeks, his whole body aches with racking blows, and his pulses leap with avenging rage.

Bachrach looks remotely clever. Could this chump really be. . . . And could it have eluded him, Bachrach, who is so rarely mistaken? He twists his mouth and strokes his awful moustache.

"Look here, you know me, I . . ."

A shriek stops him. The stranger's sister is screaming. weeping and laughing. She is beating her head against the table and lamenting. For the first time I hear her utter more than one word:

"He thinks I am a whore! Why doesn't he strike me outright?"

I am muddled. I have done something foolish again and feel ashamed. And now the stranger is speaking, so softly that we can hardly hear:

"You three think, that I . . . that I am capable of betraying you?"

The features of the eternal mocker have changed.

His face becomes bloated. He strokes the girl's hair hurriedly.

"I do not betray friends, I only wanted to,—since there is nothing but faithlessness around us,—I wanted you to. . . . You had no right to say what you did! We are alone, you yourself know how terribly alone we are! Who is there to understand us? Those who have seen nothing, have been through nothing? We alone know the truth, therefore we alone will be victorious! We have been tricked a thousand times. What happened in France? Faithless soldiers, faithless generals, unfaithful ministers, unfaithful priests. We belong to each other, how can I betray you even if I want to? Why, you have been betrayed long ago! I'm sorry . . . my heart aches . . . but I'll say no more!"

There is a short silence after these incoherent sentences. Then Beran calls out senselessly into the void:

"I'm going, really!"

He trusts the stranger already. So do I.

"You're all like children," growls Bachrach.

"I believe you," I blurt out, "I've had too much to drink to-day. We will sail with you, if you want us. Here's my hand on it! And I didn't want to insult your sister either."

"We will go away with you!"

"Yes, we will go!"

"With you!" agrees Beran.

Hastily, lest the others see me, I kiss the hand of the tear-stained girl. She smiles through her tears. And once again she is stroking my knee under the table. I shall probably sleep with her very soon. Why not? We will go away with the strange young man, wherever he takes us. Why not? What was that he said about the faithless? He hit upon the right word. What memories that word conjures! Memories of home, of France, of myself—the faithless one! Betrayal! The

great betrayal! I want to dream and then to sleep, sleep long, very, very long, sleep for eternity!

EGON HOSTOVSKÝ (born 1908) *belongs to the young generation of Czechoslovak authors who have found their way to the readers of Southern and Northern Europe. His original inspiration consisted of ghetto motifs—from this arose his preoccupation with humiliated and stunted existences. Many of his best known books have been translated into Serbo-Croat, Dutch and Flemish. He is now living in America.*

DAVID GASCOYNE

NOCTAMBULES

(*Paris : The Nineteen-Thirties*)

THEY stand in doorways ; then
Step out into the rain
Beneath the lamplight's blue
Aurora ; down the street
Towards a blood-red sign
Scrawled swiftly on the wet
Slate of the midnight sky
And then sponged off again . . .
With watchful masks they wait
On stools at bars. I can-
Not see their faces ; some
Are weeping ; now I hear
A shadow sigh : *The band*
Plays recklessly away
Our last hours, one by one . . .
And then a girl in tulle
With black moths fluttering in
The gold mist of her hair
Enters the hard white pool
Of a great arc-lamp's glare
Revealing, where her face
Should be, a gaping hole !
Their mingling voices roar . . .
Now they have gone again :
The Rue Fontaine is full
Of other shadows ; rain
Trickles down postered walls ;
Down cafés' plate-glass panes.
Whispers outside the door,—
Words an accordion drowns . . .
Now like the clink of ice

In highball-glasses come
Their voices from afar :
Straying from place to place,
Not knowing where we go,
We stumble through our dream
Beneath an evil star. . . .
Words the wind's echoes blur,
Lost among tossing trees
Along the Rue Guynemer
Where as the wheezing chimes
Of Ste. Sulpice strike three,
In his tight attic high
Above the street, a boy
With a white face which dreams
Have drained of meaning, writes
The last page of a book
Which none will understand :
While down the corridor
Outside the room return
Their faint footsteps again . . .
They wait outside the door ;
Their whispers fall like sand
In hour-glasses ; I hear
Passionate sobbing ; then
A voice that I've heard before
On many a night like this—
Strident with anguish—cries :
Darkness erodes the hearts
Locked in our breasts ; the Night
Is gnawing our lives away :
O let Lust deaden without end
This aching void within . . .
And when the voice has died
Away, more cries are heard
Which, merging with the wind
In wordless tumult, blend
In an inconsolable dirge

And desperately press
Onwards in waves across
Acres of wet roofs, on
Across the unseen Seine,
Away beyond the Madeleine
And deep into the gulf that yawns
Behind the Sacré Coeur . . .
The rustling driven rain
Ceases awhile ; the air
Hangs numb ; Night still wears on.
Now down the desolate wide glade
Of Boulevard Sebastapol,
Beneath the creaking iron boughs
Of shop-signs hung along each side,
A young American, intent
On finding a chance bed-fellow,
Pursues a vagrant *matelot's*
Slim likely-looking form . . .
An English drunkard sits alone
In a small *bistrot* in Les Halles
And keeps rehearsing the Lord's Prayer
In a mad high-pitched monotone
To the blue empty air.
And in a Left-bank café where
At about half-past four
Exiles are wont to bare
Their souls, a son-and-heir
Of riches and neurosis casts
His frail befuddled blonde
Brutally to the floor
And with despairing fists
Tries to blot out the gaze
Of her wet senseless eyes . . .
One who has wandered long
Through labyrinths of his own brain
More solitary and obscure
Than any maze of stone

Pavements and lamplit walls
Now stops beside the Seine
And leaning down to peer
Into the swirling gloom
Of swollen waters, says :
What day can ever end
The night of those from whom
God turns away His face,
Or what ray's finger pierce
The depths wherein they drown?
Exhaustion brings no peace
To the lost soul. . . . But soon
Behind the Eastern slums
A chalky streak of dawn-
Light gradually gleams ;
And men from women turn
Away to face the wall,
All lust exhausted, in
Dozens of one-night rooms . . .
Then suddenly a chill
Breath sneaks along the stones
Of narrow streets and makes
The lids of rubbish-bins
To clatter faintly, shakes
The rags and scraps and tins
Strewn in the gutters ; and
A rapid shiver runs
Throughout the still, grey, blind
Mass of the city.—Now
As countless times before
I make my roomward way
Across that silent square
Where always as I pass
Them, snarling lions stare
At me with stony eyes
From round about the base
Of their dry fountain . . . O !

NOCTAMBULES

How derelict is this
Hour of Night's ending : when
The Dark's pale denizens must go
With tales untold and tears
Unwept,—their shrivelled souls
Unsold, unsaved,—back to
The caves of sleep, their worn-
Out beds in lonely holes
Wherein they hide by day.
And climbing the last stair
How timeless seems this time
Of vigil in despair :
Of night by night the same
Weary anabasis
Between two wars, towards
The Future's huge abyss.

RENÉ AVORD

THE WRITERS OF FRANCE TO-DAY

Translated from the French by John Rodker

" POETRY demands the whole of one's soul, but there are too many demands on my soul elsewhere." " To my mind a Hugo, a Verlaine, would never have spoken in that way. The sort of exile under which we live would have inspired them, I am sure, seeing what moving poetry exile has produced." So ran a dialogue, quoted by André Billy, between a novelist and a poet, as they stood on the wharfs of the Saône, at Lyons. Exiled in one's fatherland. . . . The phrase is so horrible that André Billy tries to water it down, somehow correct it. " The word exile," he says, " is hardly correct, and in a way anti-French, since a Frenchman could never be an exile anywhere in France : but people know what I mean, and as I do, will modify the usual acceptance of the word." After which, he concludes courageously—and every French writer will ratify that conclusion : " We must profit by this ordeal to attain a higher degree of personal accomplishment."

This ordeal is not merely our military defeat, it is not even the fact that two-thirds of our territory is occupied, it is the total collapse of an organised society, a society which many criticised and still do, but whose supreme values were never repudiated : it is the menace of a more subtle and no less threatening invasion than that of the tank divisions, an invasion by men and ideas foreign to France. For, after the tanks comes the Gestapo, and the bookshops where students buy their books as they leave the Sorbonne, now serves as a bureau for German propaganda.

Philosophers, poets, novelists, all are affected by the tragedy that has overtaken the fatherland : all now

realise, with a sort of naive astonishment that such things could be, the eternal truth that the writer, even those who underlined how solitary they were and aloof, is part of the commonwealth of a nation, and shares in its fate. All now admit the impossibility of escaping the common fate, but all are agreed that liberty must be protected, for, lacking it, even their own creations will be destroyed.

The defeat of France undermined the very bases of public and private existence. The writers, like all Frenchmen, began to question themselves, their responsibility in the past, their functions in the future, what they had done, and what remained to be done?

Of interest are the questions that *Le Figaro* set to them: (1) What, personally, are your projects? (2) Had our literature strayed from the path before the tempest? (3) In that case does a moral recovery seem to you necessary, and of what sort? (4) Should the writer play a more important part in public life? And in what way exactly?

Many great writers, Claudel, Duhamel, Gide, Martin du Gard answered these questions. They dwelt particularly on those numbered 2 and 3.

The most violent attack, as coming from a great writer, was that of Paul Claudel against this literature that immediately preceded the war. "Our literature was following a false track, that is sure! One has only to recall the kind of play put on before the war, plays that were a dishonour to the Paris stage. Of course, I do not place the whole responsibility for this upon certain of our illustrious fabricators of plays, essays and novels, on the (two words censored) of our character, on our novels and our reputation. . . . But what a degree of indulgence for the worst perversities. . . . How dessicated! What an absence of all charitableness! What a poisonous and depressing atmosphere! . . . It was an anguish to me, many a time, during my almost

continual residence outside France." And yet, after expressing himself so severely, he does not hesitate to pay homage to the "numbers of generous-hearted writers who honour our language and character; Duhamel, Ramuz, Henri Pourrat, Giraudoux, Morand, etc." After which he concludes: "Ah well! I was seeing it all in too sombre colours, and the good in the upper regions of our literature more than outweighs the bad."

At the other extreme, the most definite pronouncement is Duhamel's: "Our literature was certainly not following a false track before the tempest fell upon us. French writers continued to pursue the task undertaken for centuries by their predecessors: delineating man, noting his habits, and events. Learning from life. There is nothing better they can do."

Steering a course between these opposing judgments, many of the replies sought, not to attach to literature the responsibility for our misfortunes, not to attack or praise it *in toto*, but, as the mouthpiece of a society unsure of itself, to indicate how that society had managed to stray from the Royal Road and contribute to the enfeeblement of our country.

"It seems to me just as absurd," writes André Gide, "to incriminate our literature in the matter of our defeat, as it would have been to congratulate it in 1918, when victory was ours. Literature is itself a result, and cannot be held responsible for the ageing of the tree of which it is the flower or fruit. By committing literature to such an extent, those who arraign our own literature to-day would lead one to think that that of every victorious nation must inevitably be better. But, by overflowering, the tree grows barren. Germany had realised this peril: while we were shaping and emancipating our artists, she was arming and drilling soldiers. I think of *qualis artifex pereo*, without in any way believing that France has died, even should the

light of its genius be willing to remain, for a time, hid under a bushel."

Reverting with more moderation than Claude Ito the same theme, Jean Schlumberger writes: "I see a somewhat general tendency that merits the designation of false track (or at least that of 'tiresome straying,') which is what one might call *the turning away from basic values*, in favour of everything to be found at the periphery of art and on the confines of psychology.

"I do not deny that such explorings have led to many a discovery and enrichment, but always at the cost of more eccentricity, more audacity and more obscenity. . .

"This descent was chiefly of an aesthetic order, but in more localised form, a social backsliding was taking place. A gang of demolition workers had begun to attack literature as though a stronghold of mighty traditions. I believe that surrealism and its substitutes have now been swept away, but it would be wrong to see these attempts merely as the excesses of writers anxious to advertise themselves. What actually happened, in fact, was that a systematic effort was being made to sabotage the language, to break the logical links of thought and muddle its expression, thereby helping to bring about mental chaos.

"Less harmless was a gangrene that was eating deeply into the novel. I once nicknamed it *misery-ism*. I meant by that a morose delectation in life at its most sordid, a chewing-the-cud of discontent, a relish in proclaiming a universal aimlessness, and a giving oneself up to disgust.

"Our vast and widespread common wretchedness has swept this *misery-ism* away."

It is extraordinarily difficult, when the subject is "literature yesterday and to-morrow" to arrive at any general viewpoint. Contrary to what is often thought abroad, the most typical French writers have remained astonishingly unchanged. Practically all of them,

though in divers ways and confusedly, have the identical feeling that an epoch in our history was ended by the tempest. The majority agree and desire that from the new France a new literature shall arise. "Give us a different society, and we shall create a new literature for you."

True, *Le Figaro's* enquiry reveals great uncertainty, and at times a sort of panic. But how could it be otherwise? Almost all the French, whether at home or abroad, meditate not how to refuge themselves in their private lives, but how to fill their places again in a freed, rejuvenated country. To-day, as in the past, totalitarian regimentation fills them with disgust: but they fear, too, the snares of anarchic individualism or those of a proud aloofness. Besides, they have not the right to write or say what they think. Why then be surprised that their answers seem to get lost in every direction? Marc Bernard, for instance, protests: "We attributed much too much importance to reason; the rationalist spirit has made us lose an immense amount of time." To which Bertrand de la Salle justly replies: "I have heard it said that too much intellect played no small part in our defeat. But we must try and visualise what lies hidden behind this quite surprising complaint. Intelligence may prove an obstacle to the spirit of sacrifice, may inculcate doubt at the expense of decision. But it is a strange subterfuge of one's vanity that would make one prefer to arraign the intellect, rather than some defect of character or absence of probity. Be that as it may, plain stupidity will not get us out of the mess."

Perhaps, most deeply, the secret hope of many young writers is that which Armand Petitjean—a mutilated hero of the struggle—urges with the fury of a hopeless patriot: the reconciliation of the artist with the community. Thus, he denounces those who only yesterday "postulated that the laws of Society are *always* directed against the individual, and the prescriptions of art

always against the artist. Thus, whether 'conformists' or revolutionaries, they each wear themselves out toeing-the-line or seeking ways out, and become in fact academicians or anarchists, no more concerned to change the observances they curse but which they live by, than to create new links between man's determination and the spirit of life and creation. Acting thus, they sinned against the spirit of the West, which says that man, in his self-imposed strivings, shall enlist the totality of nature."

The material conditions necessary to our culture have been, to a great degree, destroyed. Paris, centre of intellectual liberty, the stage, the cinema, of painting, of publishing, is occupied by Germans. To exhibit at the Salon d'Automne, from which Lhote and Gromaire have been excluded for political reasons, one must sign a declaration of racial purity. Books, too, only appear with the approval of those having authority under the Army of Occupation. Abetz and Sieburg have been appointed rulers over the press and all publications. How many must there be who, only recently, put their faith in the smiles and worth-while contracts offered by these individuals, and now are repenting? . . .

Here, quoting the *Journal de Geneve*, we give some details of banned books, first to come under this ban being the works of German and Austrian refugees, such as Zweig, Ludwig, Mann, Vicky Baum, etc. . . . . " To these has been added the forerunner of expatriates, Heine, whose poetical works it is even impossible to procure. As for the French, nearly everything dealing with the 1939-40 war has been suppressed, whether propaganda or journalism. Thus Duhamel's *Mémorial de la Guerre Blanche* and his *Chronique de l'Année* 1939, Henry Bordeaux's *Etapes allemandes* and Dorgelès' *Retour au Front* have all been banned." The intention is obvious: the French must forget they ever fought against Hitler Germany.

In compensation, and this tolerance is no less striking

than the intolerance described above, the theoreticians of total nationalism are but little affected. Nothing by Maurras has been touched: practically everything of Daudet's remain available, as does that of Barrés', while only Bainville's *Les Dictateurs* has been banned.

Obviously, Jewish writers are especially singled out. Of works by Benda, only *l'Ordination* and *La Trahison des Clercs* escape the ban: of works by Blum, only *Stendhal* and *le Beylisme*. Novels to some extent escape, but *Le temps du mépris* and *Espoir* are on the index.

Material conditions are still more difficult for the cinema. Relevant to the cinematograph pre-war industry, here is a quotation from a Paris newspaper *Les Nouveaux Temps*—which is subsidised by the Germans—contributed by a French journalist, hardly likely to be suspected of partiality to the past. "... And yet, this corrupt industry ranked second of our industries; this art, held to ransom by four-flushers and monopolised by illiterates, ranked first in Europe. It owed its prestige to its authors, its producers, its actors, its technicians, and to a few independent and reliable firms, two at least of which had been created by financiers bereft of any sense of patriotism. I attacked them enough, when they behaved among us like so many conquerors, for me to be allowed, now they are out, to acknowledge the debt the cinema owes to them."

This cinematograph industry, the most important in Europe, has lain in a coma for the past year. The takings of the Paris cinemas have fallen by 70 per cent. because nothing but German films are now shown. To compensate, however, the number of cinema theatres that are open has increased (33 against 28 pre-war) because there, at least, they speak French.

Many efforts are being made to start the studios working again. We hear of schemes to bring back from the States those producers and actors who left France, but what sort of conditions will they have to

work under? All producers are compelled to submit their expense-budgets to a control-commission. The scripts are checked in the same way, and those which convey "erroneous and derogatory" ideas about our country, are to be prohibited. To have the right to "shoot" films in the unoccupied zone, there must be sent to Paris, to the German censor, not only a synopsis in French, but two copies of the same, translated into German. These are the slavish compulsions to which French artists must bow, artists whose faith in their task is to-day stronger than ever.

Superficially, the writers, the painters, the sculptors, less enslaved to the raw materials which the Germans control, have greater freedom to create. True . . . but on what are the artists to go on living, in a society impoverished and exploited by the invader? Where shall they find again surroundings which permit that fecund intercourse, that mutual stimulation, that helpful hand lent by the masters? Certain painters (Lhote for instance) have withdrawn to the villages, and there they till the soil and paint. Great things may issue from such an experiment.

Even already, we see, as by some strange reversion to the past, an amazing growth in the number of touring companies. Thirty or more of these companies now range through France, above all in the unoccupied zone.

Of course, not all these touring companies appear to be of equal merit. Some do plays by Georges Ohnet, but others tour the unoccupied zone with first-class works, both classical and modern (as for example, Jouvet, with *l'Ecole des Femmes*). One company, *Comédie en Provence*, has had the courage to present, for the first time, Péguy's *Jeanne d'Arc*. It is a real worker's theatre, which itself makes everything it needs: the actor's design and themselves produce both costumes and props: they also compose the incidental music. Work and profits are equally shared. The average

weekly salary is 300 to 400 francs. But success has already been won; every city of Provence, whether great or small, now invites them to appear; and in every village they find their char-a-banc surrounded by crowds of youthful enthusiasts.

Another company hired the huge stage of one of the Marseilles music-halls for a performance of *Le Malade Imaginaire*. When the curtain went up, it was found that all 2,500 seats were occupied. Still another company, *Comédiens de France*, puts on—for the first time—versions of tales by Daudet and de Maupassant. Other groups are trying to combine folk tales, cabaret shows and popular ballads. No one bothers any more about sumptuous productions, smashing effects, but one company did put on, in Lyons, *l'Annonce faite a Marie* and *l'Otage*, two of the masterpieces of the contemporary French stage. Everywhere, an enthusiastic public is found, which, with patriotic fervour, delights to honour the great productions of the intellect.

Books too are beginning to reappear. Among publisher's announcements well-known, but also unknown names, are to be found. Many of the most famous watch and wait. The *Nouvelle Revue Française* has reappeared in Paris under the editorship of Drieu la Rochelle. The first issue, which contained, it is said, an article by Gide, was seized. Since which, Gide has intimated that he will no longer contribute to the review which he himself helped to found. And the whole of the old editorial board, Paulhan, Petitjean, Malraux, Schlumberger, has likewise resigned.

To *Le Figaro's* enquirer, various writers confided their projects, and all had new books on the stocks. But the danger is as great as ever it was. One can always write: there remains the problem of getting oneself published. To achieve this, will not the writer be forced to evade present reality while seeking refuge in imagination, or amid eternal truths: one way or another,

will he not be led, by degrees, to refrain from committing himself? Can a culture develop freely, if it be not rooted in a free community? A half liberty, under a foreign heel, must imply, necessarily, dangers that are fatal to culture.

This is felt by every French writer, and, though they continue their work for the future, they have set themselves an immediate task for the national salvation: that of maintaining the spirit and traditions of France. To a French journalist who reproached him with being conservative, Vladimir d'Ormesson replied: "Conservative? Yes, the problem is how to conserve France."

(*with acknowledgements to "La France Libre"*)

NORMAN CAMERON

FIVE POEMS FROM THE FRENCH OF ARTHUR RIMBAUD

SONNET

(" *Frenchmen of* '70, *Bonapartists or Republicans, remember your forefathers of* '92 . . ."—Paul de Cassagnac, Le Pays.)

Dead men of 'ninety-two, and you of 'ninety-three,
Pale at the lusty kiss of liberty, who broke,
Trampled resolvedly beneath your clogs, the yoke
That bows the soul and head of all humanity ;

Men who enjoyed ecstatic glory in your pain,
Whose hearts beneath your tatters leapt with love alone,
O soldiers whom the noble lover Death has sown
That in the ancient furrows you may rise again ;

Whose blood washed greatness clean of all impurity,
Dead men of Valmy, Fleurus, dead of Italy,
You million murdered Christs, your eyes sombre and true ;

You and the French Republic we consigned to sleep,
We whom the blows of Kings in prostrate bondage keep—
And these de Cassagnacs speak to us now of you !

THE ROOKS

Lord, when the meadow has gone cold
And in the hamlets tumbledown
The angelus is no more tolled
And nature wears a withered frown,
Make them descend from the great heights,
The rooks, my darlings and delights !

Strange army with such austere cries,
The bitter winds attack your nests !
Along the rivers' yellow crests,
On roads with ancient Calvaries,
Over the trenched and pitted ground
Scatter and wheel and rally round !

By thousands over the French plain,
Where sleep the dead of two days back,
In winter don't you wheel and clack
To make each passer think again ?
Be you proclaimer of our duty,
O bird of funeral, black beauty.

But, saints of heaven, at oak's high top,
Mast on which magic eve doth close,
Forsake May's warblers, turn to those
Who in the wood's deep places stop,
In grass from which there's no retreat,
Chained by a futureless defeat !

SEVEN-YEAR-OLD POET

And so the Mother, shutting up the duty-book,
Went, proud and satisfied. She did not see the look
In the blue eyes, or how with secret loathing wild,
Beneath the prominent brow, a soul raged in her child.

All the day long he sweated with obedient zeal ;
A clever boy ; and yet appearing to reveal,
By various dark kinks, a sour hypocrisy.
In corridors bedecked with musty tapestry
He would stick out his tongue, clenching his two fists tight
Against his groin, and with closed eyes see specks of light.
A door stood open on the evening ; when, aloof,

Under a gulf of brightness hanging from the roof,
High on the banisters they saw him crowing.
In summer, cowed and stupid, he'd insist on going
Off to the cool latrines, for that was where he chose
To sit in peace and think, breathing deep through his nose.

In winter-time, when, washed by all the smells of noon,
The garden plot behind the house shone in the moon;
Lying beneath a wall, in lumpy earth concealed
And straining long for visions, till his eyesight reeled,
He listened to the creak of mangy trellises.
Soft heart! He chose out as his sole accomplices
Those wretched, blank-browed children, of slurred eye and cheek
And grubby, thin, sick fingers plunged in clothes that reek
Of excrement: already old, whose conversation
Is held with gentle, imbecilic hesitation.
And if his mother, catching him at some foul act
Of pity, showed alarm, the child must face a fact
That to his earnest, tender mind brought grave surprise:
That's how it was, She had the blue-eyed stare—that lies!

At seven years he wrote romances about lives
In the great desert, where an exiled Freedom thrives,
Savannahs, forests, shores and suns! He had some aid
From illustrated magazines, whose gay parade
Of Spanish and Italian ladies made him blush.
When, brown-eyed, bold, in printed cotton, in would rush
The eight-year daughter of the working-folk next door,
And when the little savage down upon him bore,
Cornered him, leaping on his back, and tossed her hair,
He from beneath would bite her thighs, for they were bare

—She never put on drawers. Then, though she grappled
fast,
Pounding with fists and heels, he'd shake her off at last
And bring the odours of her skin back to his room.

He feared December Sundays, with their pallid gloom,
When, with pommaded hair, from a mahogany ledge
He read a Bible with a gold, green-tarnished edge.
Dreams pressed upon him in the alcove every night.
Not God he loved, but men whom by the sallow light
Of evening he would see return, begrimed and bloused,
To suburbs where the crier's triple roll aroused
A jostling crowd to laugh and scold at the decrees.
He dreamed of the rapt prairie, where long brilliancies
Like waves and wholesome scents and golden spurts of
force
Persist in their calm stir and take their airy course.

And, as he relished most the things of sombre hue,
He'd sit in the bare, shuttered chamber, high and blue,
Gripped in an acrid, piercing dampness, and would read
The novel that was always running in his head
Of heavy, ochre skies and forests under floods
And flowers of living flesh scattered through starry
woods.
—Then vertigo, collapse, confusion, ruin, woe!—
While noises of the neighbourhood rose from below,
He'd brood alone, stretched out upon a canvas bale,
Raw canvas, prophesying strongly of the sail! . . .

VOWELS

A black, E White, I red, U green, O blue—I'll tell
One day, you vowels, how you come to be and whence.
A, black, the glittering of flies that form a dense,
Velvety corset round some foul and cruel smell,

Gulf of dark shadow ; E, the glaciers' insolence,
Steams, tents, white kings, the quiver of a flowery bell ;
I, crimsons, blood expectorated, laughs that well
From lovely lips in wrath or drunken penitence ;

U, cycles, the divine vibrations of the seas,
Peace of herd-dotted pastures or the wrinkled ease
That alchemy imprints upon the scholar's brow ;

O, the last trumpet, loud with strangely strident brass,
The silences through which the Worlds and Angels pass :
—O stands for Omega, His Eyes' deep violet glow !

SONG FROM THE HIGHEST TOWER

Youth so full of leisure,
Slave to each new taste,
In fine choice of pleasure
My life went to waste.

May the time draw nigh
When loving hearts beat high !

I bethought me : Go,
Hide thee from men's sight.
Never shalt thou know
Loftier delight.

Let no hindrance meet
Thy august retreat.

Ah, the soul is lonely.
Thousand times bereft
Widow, she has only
Mary's image left.

Are prayers truly said
To the Virgin Maid ?

I have suffered so,
Memory is dead.
All my fear and woe
To the skies are fled.

Morbid thirst remains,
Darkening my veins.

So oblivion looming
From the meadow stares,
Meadow wide and blooming
With incense and tares ;

Crazy dronings rise
From the filthy flies.

Youth so full of leisure,
Slave to each new taste,
In fine choice of pleasure
My life went to waste.

May the time draw nigh
When loving hearts beat high !

REX WARNER

THE CULT OF POWER

THE worship of violence, of absolute power, of lawlessness, the setting-up of the individual against the universe—all these are old things. Socrates argued against them: Marlowe was fascinated by them. To-day they seem to have returned, with their old strength newly armed, and more dangerous than before. Indeed the introduction of a new element—the "leader-principle"—into the mixture has had tremendous effects, so that what used to be a kind of individual romanticism now claims the title of a general religion.

The violent self-assertion of the individual is one of the roots of tragedy, which always presents the spectacle of the individual at odds with an environment that is shown to be too strong for him. There is something fine in the hopeless struggle of the hero and the universe, although we know that the universe will win in the end and very often the hero (Macbeth, for example, or Doctor Faustus) is represented as a person who deserves our disapproval. Yet still our sympathy, to some extent, goes out to him, not only because we know that he is in a hopeless position, but also because he corresponds to something in our own nature, a kind of revolutionary urge, a desire to defy the powers that be, a longing for irresponsible freedom from the necessities that press upon us in our ordinary lives. So we watch with pity and terror the fates of those who, whether deliberately, like Faustus, or accidentally, like Oedipus, or by a kind of innocent acceleration, like Macbeth, have set themselves up as arbiters of their own destinies against far stronger forces, have become, as the Greeks put it, "infatuated." It is this pity and terror that produce the "purgation" of our own feelings, and, without attempting to enter upon a deeper analysis, it may be said that

one at least of the effects of this purgation is salutory from a social point of view. We recognise that this revolutionary, iconoclastic urge in ourselves is heroic; indeed all progress depends on it; and we learn that when it acts irresponsibly, against the nature of things, it is infinitely harmful and is visited by penalties which, however dreadful, we still feel are, in a way, deserved. In the most intellectual of all tragedies, the Greek, it is Necessity against which the hero fights, an inscrutable power, often unjust by human standards, yet none the less deserving of reverence. In Marlowe's Doctor Faustus a much more concrete force is imagined, the God of a Church outraged by blasphemy and open rebellion. In Shakespeare we find, together with the Elizabethan admiration for the extravagance of emotion that his heroes show, something not unlike the Greek mistrust of its tendency to carry men too far from the herd, too far from the beaten track into mere lawlessness and irresponsibility, into that state of "infatuation" where the precepts of religion, the ordinary feelings of men, the social conscience become meaningless. We find the same conflict and very much the same attitude to it in Ibsen. Indeed all great tragedy is played against this background of immense forces, forces more powerful and, in the last resort, more estimable than the best that the individual can produce. Using the word in a wide sense, one can say that all tragedy is religious.

The cult of violence and power takes the hero out of tragedy and begins by denying the reality of the religious background—God, Necessity, Law, Social Conscience. It is remarkable that we find some of the best known of the power-experts appearing during or at the end of ages that have been renowned for tragedy—the Athenians with whom Socrates argued, and, in our own country, those thinkers who prepared the way for Hobbes. In these ages, and in others when the power-cult has come to the fore, there has been a general breakdown in

political life accompanied by an uncertainty about moral and intellectual standards.

In spite of the difference in time, the age of Socrates is nearer to us than the age of Hobbes. We have all heard expressed, in a modern setting, the arguments for moral anarchy with which Plato opens his " Republic." They are intellectual, irreligious arguments, and those who use them reject utterly the background of dim yet powerful forces which both tragedy and religion recognise. They make their appeal now, as they did then, to the brilliant and irresponsible individualist, who is conscious of the pressure of society upon him and convinced of his own ability to break free from it. It is the philosophy of the " self-made " man, and, although it has notable successes to its credit, it has never, in this intellectualised form, been able to sway great masses of people. The self-made man will usually admit that he has " made " himself at the expense of others, that he may have won the grudging admiration of his fellows but seldom their enthusiastic support.

Yet these arguments for moral anarchy, the assertion of the individual combined with a refusal to admit the existence of supra-individual forces, are an important stage in the sequence that leads us to the position in which we find ourselves to-day. This individualism, in its " irreligious " form, is the sign of the break-up of a whole social system of values which have, for one reason or another, become too weak to inspire respect or to enforce obedience.

The next stage is not, as the individualist fondly imagines, the triumph of the unfettered " strong man "; for now the forces that we have noticed in tragedy reassert themselves. The masses of people, however ignorant, cowardly and incapable they may seem to the " strong man," are, in the end, infinitely stronger than he. They demand, once he has sapped their faith in their old system of social life, a new system; they will not

rest until they have it; and they will utilise the "strong man" for their purpose. There is a deep sense in which it is true to say that it is the leader who is led, or rather pushed along a path which may end in some desirable situation or at a precipice. What will be its ending is a thing that is determined by forces that are wider still, material forces and also the fundamental forces in the nature of man himself as distinct from those that make themselves apparent owing to a particular stimulus.

Each age, like each tragedy, is different, yet there is a general theme in history, a theme of breaking-up and rebuilding. The same problems, differently stated, constantly recur. Some people will explain the whole according to the strict principles of historical materialism, the changes in the relations between production and organisation. It is an extremely helpful method, but it may be helpful also to look at the same problems as they appear in men's minds, to consider the "superstructure" of ideas which both acts upon the material factors of history and is acted upon by them.

What, in our present situation, would strike one as most remarkable, if one had not observed much the same thing happening before in history, is the rapidity with which generally accepted ideals of the early twentieth century such as toleration, kindliness, objective truth, freedom, have been replaced in many people's minds by their exact opposites. More remarkable still is the enthusiasm with which people have accepted the substitution. It is true that we see this process most clearly in fascism and, amongst fascist states, most clearly of all in Germany; but it would be most unwise to regard it as a process that is wholly alien from ourselves. To say the least, the movement is European. One of the defects in the arguments which Lord Vansittart uses in his attacks on the whole German people is the fact that he should logically at the same time incriminate the Italians, the Spaniards, a large number of the French, and not a

few of his own countrymen. For all these share in the ideals which have plunged the world into war. Fascist ideals appear in the most unlikely places, and, in England, are by no means confined to the followers of Sir Oswald Mosley.

It is suggested here that at the root of this whole cult of power and violence, including fascism, is the philosophy of the moral anarchist, of the individual asserting himself against general standards that seem too weak to be able to restrain him. This is the first stage, and to many people there seems to be something admirable in the attitude of the rebel so far. After all, revolt is the seed of progress. But revolt that is based solely on individual, anarchist self-assertion is against the nature of man and of society. The more successful the moral anarchists are, the greater is the feeling of insecurity in the minds of everyone, including, in the end, the moral anarchists themselves; for in the end they have so sapped the general system of ideas that they have nothing from which to revolt. At the beginning of his career the individualist rebel can exercise his powers with extraordinary satisfaction to himself and others; he can go gaily on his way, smashing down the holy images on every side, not without the applause of weaker spirits. But when all the holy images are destroyed, he will find himself in a great desert, with little to do. His supporters will begin to miss the faces that he has taken from them. Confidence will be replaced by fear, by the worst kind of fear, that which springs from a sense of insecurity and of weakness. It is at this stage that what might have been a hero is apt to turn openly into a villain. Now, in order to carry conviction, his self-assertion must become more and more violent, overt, and exaggerated. It passes all reasonable bounds, taking on the characteristics of a mania or infatuation. Our hero is doomed, like the heroes of tragedy. He is in the grip of Necessity, and more immediately in danger from that Social Conscience

which he has rejected, which may well be, as he has often declared, largely compounded of cowardice, ignorance and conventionality, but which none the less disposes of stronger forces than anything which he can muster. There is one way of escape, and that is by giving to the mass of people, for whom he has so often expressed such contempt, what they want—a system of ideas by which they can regulate and give meaning to their lives (indeed this is something which, by this time, he needs himself). But the old idols are smashed, and to resuscitate them would be to admit failure. There is only one thing for it—after having rejected God to make himself God and to cause it to be generally believed that those characteristics by which he won his first eminence—and perhaps these have been self-assertion, violence, brutality, amongst others—are the characteristics of Godhead. The old faith, the old system of values, must have very thoroughly disintegrated to make such a plan possible. That is an indispensable condition. And the remedy is indeed desperate, for the individualist is turning himself into a leader, losing for ever his irresponsibility, submitting himself to the discipline which he prescribes for others. He must now stand as a father to the people which in the past he has so despised and derided, and the people will insist that he fulfils his function. Though he has invented a religion in which he himself is the central figure, the religion is none the less stifling. And suppose that the religion does not work, does not provide the assurance and security without which people live in fear? Social Conscience is not the only form of Necessity. Such questions may harass him, but he has certainly achieved something remarkable by escaping from his first dilemma. He has made an individual protest into a religion, at least for the time. That is indeed something.

Such, expressed in rather allegorical terms, seems to be the sequence of events which we have seen in Europe recently: from the intellectual sceptic to the power-

addict, from the power-addict to the " leader." And, again as in tragedy, running through the series after the initial successes of the first stage is the underlying note of fear, the consciousness of weakness, which, to be dispelled, demands more and more violence, more and more assertion of the obvious trappings of power.

We have seen that the first condition necessary for the whole process is the break-down of the authority of the established ways of thought. It is this that makes individual moral anarchy certain and in the end provides the possibility of fascism. These established ways of thought may be good or bad, noble or savage. Their survival depends on whether or not they appear to work.

Since the middle of the last century many people in many different ways have pointed out that our established ways of thought do not work, and, with the best intentions, have helped to produce the state of moral and intellectual anarchy in which Europe found itself after the last war. One may notice the rationalist revolt against religion, the socialist revolt against the hierarchy of the state, the revolt of writers and artists of the " ivory tower " school against society at large. It does not matter to our argument that all these and many other forms of revolt had different immediate aims and ideals. They all had in common, like most revolts, the conviction that they were aiming at a kind of freedom from various forms of constraint that were hampering the human spirit—the religious authoritarianism that refused to recognise scientifically ascertained facts, the political backwardness that refused to apply the theory of democracy, the whole life-outlook of the " bourgeois " and the " philistine." And in support of the theoretical onslaught came the stark facts of poverty, unemployment and war to convince even the least theoretical minds that something was wrong with the whole system of ideas on which their fathers had relied.

Far the most important of these facts was the last war

and the last peace. It may be reasonable to lament the mood of cynicism, of pleasure-seeking, of irresponsibility that marked the twenties ; but behind this mood was the bitterest disappointment and disillusion. Churchmen may deplore the emptiness of their churches : they should remember that the Churches of Europe had proved themselves wholly ineffective to prevent an unparalleled mass slaughter. Sociologists may lament the apathy of the electorate : they should remember that the electorate had been outrageously deceived. It began to seem to many people that the governing class was unfit to govern —yet who else was there ? That the faith of the past was meaningless—yet what other faith existed ? More and more people reached the stage at which their " emancipation " was complete. They believed in nothing, and their minds had no points of reference except the most obvious—food, sex, display, " success." If, behind all this, there was any dominant philosophy, it was the old philosophy of the critical revolution, now completely victorious, but by a kind of Pyrrhic victory, for it had lost most of its vitality. Scientific toleration was becoming intellectual laziness, free thought and free love had lost their nouns, rationalism, having overthrown religious dogma, was now, in some bewilderment, chasing its own tail. The battle was won ; yet how dreary, bleak and forbidding was the conquered field !

And now we are in the second stage of the process which we have noticed already. The rebel can only preserve his confidence by more and more outrageous rebellion, while those who have almost automatically followed him begin to regret the absence of the familiar images which he has destroyed. And of course the two tendencies can, and usually do, coexist in the same person.

An interesting example of a mind in this state can be found in the work of D. H. Lawrence, one of the very few writers of the time who really faced up to the

problems of his age. Lawrence had been greatly influenced by a Sunday-school education of the " gentle Jesus " variety, and he rejected it utterly, seeing as well as anyone else the hypocrisy of it in the actual organisation of society. He realised too that the class hierarchy, its structure being determined more and more by money and less and less by tradition, was out of date, that the governing classes to whom he had had to look up in his childhood did not deserve his respect. At the same time he realised the futility and felt the fear of complete " emancipation," of intellectual nihilism. He was conscious all the time that the " gentle Jesus " myth was at any rate one form of a European system of ideas, that the class hierarchy had in the past given a coherence to society that was now lacking. He had rejected both the system of the past and the lack of system of the present. What was he to do? He attempted to build a new system for himself and others. And it seems to us now that his system, for all its fervour, was very largely negative, a mere assertion of his denial of the system of his upbringing. His God, for instance, must be the exact opposite of the " gentle Jesus " of his childhood. There must be nothing at all gentle about the " dark " force to which the dark independent outlaws of his dreams would owe a sort of reverence. Yet he was original in demanding a God at all, in asserting that there must be a re-establishment of a connection between the rebel and the universe. What is most significant is that he found the connection not in the mind or spirit but in something deeper, " darker " and more violent, in sex and blood.

He was not only concerned with the connection between man and the universe, but also with the connection between man and man, since both these bonds had been broken by the intellectual nihilism in which he lived. Here, too, he preserved his character as a rebel. He would have none of the corrupt social structure of

the past, but looked forward rather wistfully to an aristocracy of " dark " men full of sex and supported by their moon-like wives, men who would understand and reverence the dark forces and would control and discipline if need be the materialistic and soul-less mass of their fellows.

It must be admitted that Lawrence was never entirely easy in his mind with regard to this dark aristocracy of his. In " Kangaroo " he regretfully rejects it, but in his later books he returns constantly to his theme of a master-class with a new conception of life, a " male " " dark " conception, in which " blood " takes the place of " spirit," in which the ideal of " gentleness " is to be banished and replaced by something strong, concentrated, violent and burning, like the sun. Yet to the last he is not quite sure of himself. The figure of Jesus continues to haunt him, and in one of his last stories he attempts to convert Jesus Himself to his own conception of life.

His insistence on blood and sex and maleness is all very well as an individual protest; but it lacks something in order to be a creed that is to bind men together, to give them the assurance which they lack. Men have gone to bed with women for very many years now, and have usually enjoyed it. But this enjoyment is not sufficient in itself to form the basis of a new outlook on life, and Lawrence himself seems to have been uneasily conscious of this. Yet he was convinced of the rightness of his protest. He would never be content with the vague and ineffectual generalities, becoming more and more cynical now, of those who followed the " white " forces. He detested such ideals as universal brotherhood, toleration, kindliness in the form in which they were presented to him, for these words and phrases seemed to him the merest hypocrisy, and those who mouthed them were all the time betraying their " maleness," their integrity, by pretending to feel what could not be deeply felt in their present environment, by pretending to believe in things

which were so far from being put into practice. It was the vagueness and dissipation of the " white " ideals that so infuriated him, and it was the apparent concreteness of the sexual instinct that attracted him into making of it the corner-stone of his new system.

Meanwhile, Hitler and others all over Europe, actuated in part by the same feelings that had moved Lawrence, were evolving a much more successful and destructive system of ideals. They, too, had inherited the legacy of the moral anarchists ; they, too, had revolted against the past and yet felt the insecurity, hated the dissipation of the present. In their system also we find the " dark " forces of Lawrence—blood, sex, virility, violence—but these forces are now no longer centred in the sexual nature of the individual. The consciousness of revolt is still present, but now it is allied with a security that Lawrence never felt. The community to which Lawrence looked forward, the leaders and the led, is established. Men act, instead of wasting their energies in abstract thought. And yet, if Lawrence had seen it, he would have been appalled.

Fascism has succeeded, at least temporarily, in making the synthesis that eluded Lawrence. It has preserved the idea of the rebel, but has given the rebel security by making him a leader with an ideal. The very name " National-Socialist," the most brilliant of modern political inventions, shows the nature of the synthesis. For the name is a contradiction in terms. Socialism is the product of the " white " forces ; it is a general idea, based by some minds directly on Christianity, certainly regarded as applicable to all the world, as international. And nationalism was one of those constricted ideas which the critical philosophy of Europe had imagined to be discredited.

Yet into this discredited nationalism it has been found possible to bring together all the " dark " forces of violent revolt against ineffective abstractions, and with

the aid of the idea of socialism these forces have been given the sense of security, of comradeship. It is no longer a band of rebels, collected from all nations and climes, such as Lawrence might have imagined as an aristocracy. It is a whole race that is encouraged to believe itself entitled to assume the direction of the world. What is inside its bounds is good ; what is outside is bad. The standards have at last been re-established : men know what to believe. It is something wholly different from the beliefs of the past. Ideas are no longer to have general, but only particular application ; and this, for the moment at least, makes them easier to apply. There is to be no longer any truck with the dogmatic and generalised belief in a God to whom all human souls are of equal value ; instead there is a human leader to take the responsibility of his own people. There is no more use for the liberal " scientific " notions that the interests of mankind are inseparable. The leader will see to it that his own people get the lion's share. There is no longer any talk of gentleness, of international good will and the like. The armed people confront the world with an independence and virility that scorns such weak notions. Yet among themselves there exists a " real " brotherhood, as distinct from the sentimental professions of the priests and internationalists, a brotherhood in arms.

We have come a long way from the mere individualist, the moral anarchist, who insisted upon the right of the strong man to over-ride constraints, a long way from the polite critic who pointed out the failures and hypocrisies of an agreed system of thought, a long way from D. H. Lawrence, whose " dark " forces were still individual and whose heroes, for all their sympathies with tigers, were horrified by the vulgarity and indiscriminateness of actual war. The " hero " of this European tragedy has been peculiarly successful. The vast forces which in other dramas have so certainly secured his ruin are still there, but they are strangely disorganised, since he

appears, at least for the moment, to have won some of them over to his side. Yet increasing violence, increasing lust for power are the signs of fear, and fear springs from a consciousness of insecurity. So far there is reason for encouragement; but if law and order are to be re-established at the end of this tragedy, they will have to be a different law and order from those which collapsed so thoroughly in the first act. Mere reiteration of European ideals of universal love and justice will cut no more ice after this war than they did in the time of D. H. Lawrence. Life will desire to assert itself within narrow and constricted bounds rather than to be swallowed up in the empty sands of unfulfilled promises and generalities that have no apparent application. Nor is the situation likely to be at all helped by bogus religious revivals led by elderly generals. The only reply to the cult of individual or racial power and violence is the actual practice of general justice, mercy, brotherhood and understanding.

THEATRE AND MUSIC

KAREL BRUŠÁK

THE NEW CONCEPTION OF DRAMATIC SPACE

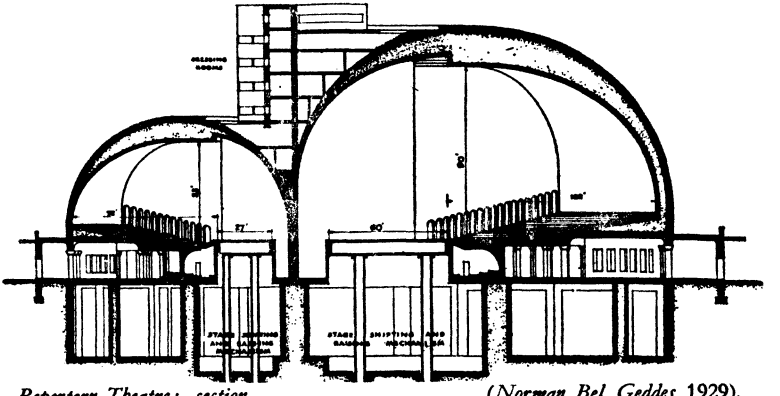
Translated from the Czech by Dora Round

UNTIL recently the development of the theatre has been examined almost exclusively from the angle of literature; the significance of the words has been over-estimated. To-day it is generally accepted that the words form only the basis of a complicated structure—the dramatic production. It is this production which is really the dramatic work: an unbroken continuity capable of infinite variation on the basis of the text, the acoustic facilities, and the performance of the actors within a limited space, aided by other arts, music, architecture and sculpture. It is made up of two connected series, one acoustic and one visual, which we apprehend as spectators, but their relation to the original text is not the same. The acoustic side is determined precisely, sometimes even in minute detail (as, for example, in the music and libretto of an opera); the relation of the visual elements to the work of art which is to be built up is much freer.

If we examine more closely the content of the visual elements, we see that it consists of two parts: the scenery and various scenic effects such as coloured lighting, film projected during the performance, and so on; and the movements, gestures and expressions of the actors, with the mutual relationship of position and action arising therefrom. Let us call this whole unit apprehended by the spectator, "*dramatic space.*" We can distinguish two qualities in it. The first is furnished by the mere existence of its members, and is therefore static; the second is only created and characterised by their change and movement, and is therefore kinetic. Of the static aspects of dramatic space the

most permanent is the architectural element—the *stage*. Upon this is erected from performance to performance the superstructure of the scene, a variable space in the narrow sense of the word, formed by the scenery, scenic contrivances, and so on—the *scene*. And within this space of arbitrary duration (it may be for a single tableau or for the whole play) there is formed a non-material, fictitious space, transitory, conjured up by the movements of actors and spotlights or by the moving images of a film—the *action space*. In highly developed theatrical systems the stage used to have a conventional form. The Greek theatre had its orchestra and proscenium; the humanist, Elizabethan and Chinese theatres had their podium; the 19th century theatre had a hollow cube minus the front wall; in the folklore theatre the stage is formed anew for each performance. The scene may be identical with the stage if the acting is without scenery, but ordinarily it is an independent structure built upon it. The stage, in its most perfect form, is an inner space, limited by the structure of the theatre, and the scene is a fictitious space depicting or suggesting a real space; thus they have no means of expression of their own but are carried out by means of architecture and the plastic arts. In the conception of the scene we must include not only the scenery and scenic contrivances but also the actors' costumes and masks. The lighting belongs to the scene only in so far as it renders it visible, contributes to the definition of place or time, or creates an impression. If it belongs dramatically in the play, emphasising the movement of the actors or forming an independent action, we may include it in the *action space*. In the same way a film, if shown as part of the scenery, belongs to the scene. But it may be shown to supplement the actions of the actors, as Piscator used to do in his crowd scenes, or as an equal partner to their actions, a method invented by the Czech producer E. F. Burian and called by him

" theatergraph " ; for instance, in his production of Pushkin's *Eugen Onyegin*, he used to project an immense close-up of the lovers kissing on a transparent gauze curtain while behind it Onyegin and Tatiana were tranquilly dancing ; the " theatergraph " here expressed poetically the subconscious relation between Tatiana and Onyegin. In cases such as these the film must be included in the action space. It is directly connected with time, which becomes the fourth dimension within which the action takes place. It follows from this that the creation of the action space forms a completely independent art not connected with other arts.



Repertory Theatre: section. (*Norman Bel Geddes* 1929).

In studying the theatre it is useful to compare the development of different systems from this point of view. The *dramatic space* in any of these theatrical styles is its most characteristic quality ; the development of modern drama as a whole has shown clearly that it is less important *what* is acted than *how* it is acted.

If we examine the drama of Western Europe from this angle we see that, with unimportant exceptions, the Italian type of baroque theatre, with its sharp division of the ideal world of the actors from the real world of the audience, has been used up to now. The illusionist

scene has, however, undergone many changes, especially in the production of Shakespeare (Tieck, Gustav zu Putlitz, Immermann, Lautenschlaeger, Brandt, Antoine, Appia, Fuchs, Erler, Craig, Copeau and others); but the remnants of it last to this day and the present scene is a compromise between descriptive painting and objective architecture. The *action space* is an unhomogeneous conglomeration. It is more or less a descriptive illustration of the author's text, but we can easily distinguish its derivation: remnants of the naturalism of Stanislavsky from the beginning of this century, a touch of Dalcroze eurhythmics, something of the spasmodic quality of German expressionism, and traces of the stylism of Tairov and Meyerhold. All the storms and offensives which boiled up at the end of the last century and continued during the first twenty-five years of this have ended in an unruffled and unaltered surface. At the most a step has been made towards the architectural stylisation of the scene and the moderate development of the movements of the actors into the depth of the stage. This has of course been greatly impeded by the fact that most Western European theatres were built before the campaign against the illusionist scene. The stage is the foundation of the whole *dramatic space*, which thus remains practically untouched by these reforms until the actual structure of the theatre is reformed.

The problem of a new conception of dramatic space thus calls for sociological research besides aesthetic study. The theatre is the most socially dependent of all the arts; it is conditioned and determined by the contemporary state of society. The Greek theatre, the Mediaeval mystery plays, even the Elizabethan theatre were for everyone, as the modern Chinese theatre is; but the contemporary theatre in the West has lost contact with the people as a whole and is limited to a very small public. Like all the other arts, it has become

more and more exclusively the property of the upper classes of society. The bulk of the people, whose education is deliberately left imperfect, have ceased to take an interest in it; and this exclusiveness is to-day protected by the economic bar of high entrance prices. The first differentiation was already making its appearance in the Roman theatre, which reserved the front rows for the *equites*, and thus subordinated artistic appreciation to social conditions, but a serious breach between stage and audience only appeared in modern times. Social influences have intervened in the forming of dramatic space. During the Renaissance the stage became stabilised in more or less the form of a porch, capable of creating a high degree of illusion, and since then it has not changed. The auditorium, which was first an amphitheatre and later a horseshoe or the segment of an ellipse, affords the best view on the axis of the stage; the seats here are reserved for people of the highest social position, while the other spectators are not considered; and this condition still persists. But in an essay on dramatic space we must not spend more time on details of the social problems of the theatre, which have often been pointed out, though unfortunately not solved.

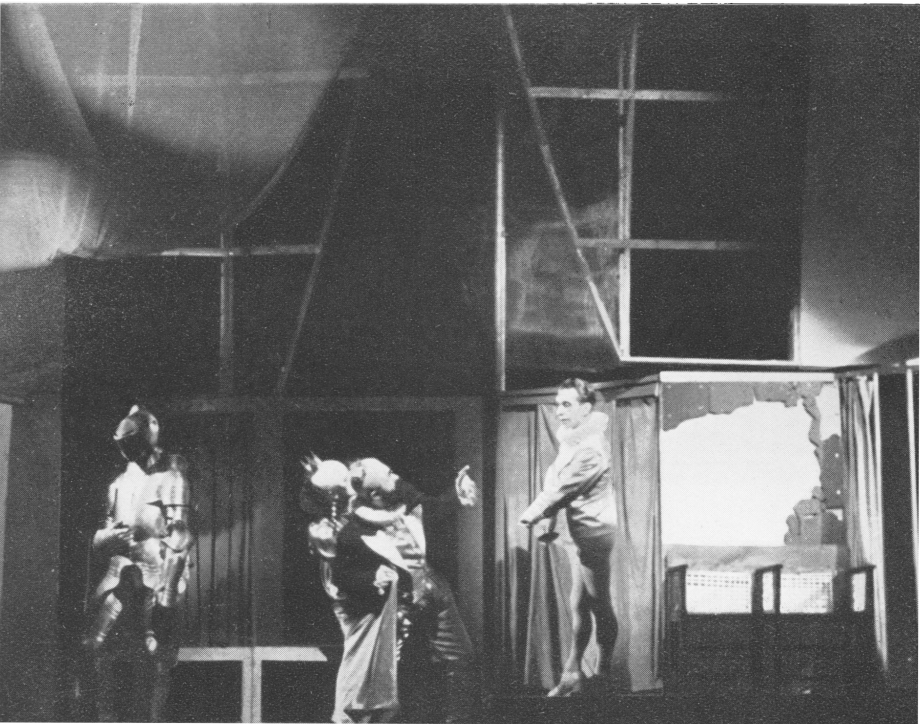
The theatre in the West is not even a place of amusement, as it has sometimes been scornfully called; it is a mere profit-making undertaking. The producer depends entirely on the public, and actor, scene painter, stage hand, etc., depend for their livelihood on the producer. The theatre does not possess the support of society; it sells its wares to certain of the upper classes whose purchasing power is sufficient. Under these circumstances it is, of course, impossible for a producer to experiment. Even if now and then a Maecaenas is found to finance experiments, they are only in isolated cases, distinct from the whole contemporary structure of the theatre, and condemned to failure by their exclusiveness.

This is why society in the "free democracies" has not so far taken an interest in these experiments. The governing class is too blasé, and the working class is too much taken up with its own struggle to follow or support a struggle in the sphere of art. The advanced theatre in Western Europe and America is largely in the hands of amateurs who find their actors and their audience in certain limited circles, and it is not by chance that many of these groups used to be supported by a political movement. Just before this war these groups represented the only advanced theatre in Western Europe; the most important were Les Comédiens Mouffetard, directed by Jean Doat, and Les Comédiens d'Anjou, directed by Pierre Abraham, in France, etc., and the Unity Theatre and Group Theatre in England. The university theatres have also given great attention recently to experimental work. There was the group Les Theophiliens at the Sorbonne, which Professor Cohen helped to start and which performed plays dating from the 12th to the 15th centuries; there was Professor Baker's group at Yale University, and various others.

The attempts which we have recently seen in England, France, Belgium, America and elsewhere to bring the theatre back to the people by building theatres in the poor, industrial districts of the cities, cannot end successfully. These theatres are mainly dependent upon gratuitous performances by companies which play in the ordinary theatres, so that their help is a kind of artistic philanthropy. The theatres for the people have no individual and deliberately planned repertoire, nor have they an individual style, because they can only offer a repetition of a production and thus cannot captivate their audience, who prefer the cinema since it shows them things which they are capable of understanding and gratifies their inferior taste and fondness for sex appeal. The problem of how to bring the theatre back to the people as a whole thus falls under

"The Dance of the Dead Spanish Dancers," Produced at the Osvobozene Theatre (Prague)

"Hamlet," Produced at E. F. Burian's Theatre (Prague)



two heads: in the first place, it must work out its own dramatic space; the people's theatre requires a quite different space from that furnished by a theatre with a stage built for an illusionist scene and an auditorium built for a feudal society; it must ensure that an immense number of spectators are in a position to take in the play perfectly. The second need is for a special production and a special repertoire, with the production taking precedence.

Soon after the last war the German producer Reinhardt was seeking in vain for an equivalent of the theatre of antiquity which would answer to modern needs in a great city. He attempted this by transforming the Winter Circus at Berlin into the Grosses Schauspielhaus. There was still the red plush covered barrier, the proscenium, and the footlights of the inner stage left from the circus; but the complex construction of the stage, separated from the auditorium, did not prevent Reinhardt from including the spectator in the action. But the spectator was somehow isolated and oppressed by the lack of proportion between the small space of the stage and the immense space of the auditorium, which was complicated and split up by the decorations remaining from the circus. Reinhardt drew the spectator into the action by purely mechanical means. He tried to bring the actor nearer to the public by acting in what had been the circus ring; he scattered noisy supernumeraries among the audience, as in the play of *Danton*. Soon, however, he ceased to use the central stage at all and acted on a small upper stage while the audience sat in the circus ring. Reinhardt's mistake lay in attempting to reform only the stage space, that is, one part of the whole complicated structure. But it is not possible to isolate and transform one part of a structure except as a result of changing the whole. Even his reform of dramatic space only went half way. He limited himself to altering the *stage*, leaving the dramatic

space as a whole unchanged; the central stage did not prove convincing because he did not succeed in building up there the requisite dramatic space, as Okhlopkov succeeded in doing later. Moreover, it follows from the social dependence of the theatre that it is impossible to reform the contemporary theatrical system in the absence of certain necessary social changes. That is why the only successful attempts at a people's theatre have been in the U.S.S.R., where the reform of the theatre has not been merely mechanical but has followed from a profound change in society.

Besides the need for a specific *dramatic space* there is a social need for a specific choice of *repertoire*. At the beginning of the Christian era there arose an epic drama, a drama of action, which emphasised the dramatic space in contrast to the dialogue. It reached its culminating point in the mystery plays, which were real mass drama, and this epic tradition still remains in the modern people's theatre. The mass performances arranged by Meyerhold and Evreimov in Leningrad in 1920 had much in common with the mystery plays in their literary foundation and dramatic space. They were acted in the open air in front of the Bourse, the Winter Palace and other buildings; in them as in the mysteries, the action was epic and chronological; it began with servitude under Czarism and ended with the glorious victory of the proletariat; it was rendered almost exclusively by the dramatic space with melodramatic exaggeration.

The solution of the problem of dramatic space in the people's theatre can be achieved in two ways. It can be organised either as a single theatre capable of containing a great mass of spectators, or as a network of smaller theatres. The term " people's theatre " is not justified if we do not realise that in all the small theatres which form the members of this great body there must be retained a certain uniformity of dramatic space so that they may compare in quality with a single great

theatre and not become exclusive. The first method is employed by Piscator, the Bauhaus group, Okhlopkov, Meyerhold, and others ; the second method is that used in the contemporary Chinese theatre and the organisation of workers' theatres as evolved in the U.S.S.R., U.S.A. and Czechoslovakia. The space relation of stage to auditorium also produces different aesthetic results. In the first case, the dramatic space must suit the monumental proportions and static quality of the auditorium ; it makes a direct appeal to the spectators (an educational function demanded by certain reformers of the theatre), and presents a picture. In the small theatres the dramatic space develops differently ; the function of direct appeal to the spectators can quite well exist side by side with a strong aesthetic function. A greater number of combinations of its elements is possible, so that this type of people's theatre is suitable for many purposes.

The first serious attempt to provide a new theatre for a new society dates from the beginning of this century. At the time of the first Russian Revolution, Georg Fuchs, assuming that society had changed and that the theatre must be adapted to suit this change, published in Germany a sharp protest against the contemporary theatre, and especially against the wing type of stage.* According to him, reality is not to be aimed at on the stage ; there is an abyss between the spectator and the play. We need to restore the unity which existed in Shakespeare, in French and Italian comedy, and among the Japanese ; we need to theatricalise the theatre. The new theatre must have an amphitheatre for its auditorium, the stage must be flat and the scene in relief, so that sound is not lost in the height, depth and breadth as it is in a deep stage. Fuchs bases his demand for a relief scene on the assertion that the actor has a tendency to act at the edge of the

* George Fuchs : *Die Schaubuehne der Zukunft*, 1905, and *Die Revolution des Theaters*, 1909.

stage and that the present-day stage, being too deep, is filled with supernumeraries, even at the cost of destroying the effect. Great depth of scene is not even needed for representing crowds, for on the relief scene a single row of people suffices, as in painting and sculpture, to indicate a crowd, while on a deep scene very many more are needed to produce the same impression. In artistic creation, painter and actor must move away from nature. Two points in Fuch's proposal were important: he abolished realism and replaced it by stylisation, and he compressed the action space till it became akin to the scene—space. This of course led to fundamental simplification of dramatic space in the movements of the actors, but not to its impoverishment, as some of Fuchs's critics maintained. Too much movement of the actors, especially in the depth of the stage, more than is indispensable to the changes of position prescribed by the play, must always be at the expense of gesture and especially of expression; its sense-function is, however, easy to replace by the dynamic action of the lighting, while gesture and expression can be more successfully employed. The Kuenstler Theatre, founded in Munich in 1907, was based on the principles of Fuchs; Fritz Erler built the scene. He was the first in the modern European theatre to recognise that the principal creator is the actor; that painted canvas and stage furniture are only in the way, and that the scene can be changed not by a complicated re-arrangement of scenery but by placing a few scenic objects as an indication. Even though Fuchs's relief conception of theatrical space was later abandoned in favour of the architectural stage-space (Copeau, Tairov, Meyerhold, etc.), it was not superseded, for it was conceived principally for a mass theatre with a vast stage, such as has not existed up to now.

The most noteworthy of all the attempts at a people's theatre is that of Erwin Piscator, who got furthest in

carrying out this idea. Piscator made his theatre in Berlin into a tribune for mass education and political agitation, and arranged his performances especially for the fulfilment of these aims; the dramatic space was given the foremost place. He used the experience thus gained when he collaborated with Walter Gropius in planning the Total Theatre in 1926.* This was a great elliptical amphitheatre with a variable stage. The basic form of the stage was a great semi-circle open to the public, with three great platforms which could be moved at will; the principle of the circle was repeated in the orchestra space. This circle was supplemented by a rigid amphitheatre which surrounded it round three-quarters of the ellipse. There were rows of seats upon it as in the amphitheatre, but it could be turned at will, cleared of seats and reduced in height. The uses of the theatre were manifold; the stage could be used as a box-stage or even in three parts by acting on the platforms; it could occupy the whole semi-circle; it could be made central, as in a circus, by clearing the circle before the amphitheatre. The gallery running round the roof of the whole amphitheatre could also be used as a stage. Films were to play an important part; behind the stage and round the amphitheatre were fixed twenty cinematographic projectors. Gropius later varied this plan when he was co-operating in the Kharkov theatre.

Two important elements of Gropius's plan, the amphitheatre formation of the auditorium and the use of film projections in the dramatic space are characteristic of the majority of attempts at a mass theatre. We find the same thing occurs with Farkas Molnar, who collaborated in the work of the Bauhaus group at Dessau. He proposed as auditorium an amphitheatre in the form of an immense U with the principal stage situated between its arms; this stage was in the form

* *See* Erwin Piscator: *Das politische Theater.* 1929.

of a smaller ∩ facing the amphitheatre and furnished with bridges for actors and cinema projectors; behind it were two other stages.

Some of the attempts at the mass theatre, being only the expression of a passing psychosis or the reaction from it, are definitely superseded to-day and have only an historical and documentary value. Such were the mass theatre experiments in the nineteen-twenties, especially as regards the exaggerated conception of dramatic space which predominated at that time and the influence of a dramatic space vaster than the theatre and occupying circus grounds, racecourses and sports grounds. Hans Strotzka of Munich planned a theatre in the form of a hemisphere in which the amphitheatre occupied three-quarters of the base and left one-quarter for the stage; between the amphitheatre and the stage was a circular pit for the orchestra, spanned by a cruciform bridge; this was to be the "stage for sound, colour and light plays." More daring still was the work of Andreas Weininger of Dessau, published in 1927. Weininger considered the dramatic space as the most important guide in the construction of stage space; the ideal space for its development, according to him, was the interior of a sphere. The spectators are placed against the inner wall, under the direct influence of the centrifugal force of the dramatic space, in a new psychological, visual and acoustic relation. The stage is made up of platforms, revolving stairs, oblique surfaces, bridges, columns, and so on, and passes perpendicularly to the vertical axis of the sphere. For this mechanical theatre to realise its task, he uses all possible technical resources, reproduction of sound, coloured lights, films, and so on. His aim is "to bring the people, through an arrangement of new rhythms of movement, to a new way of appreciation."* His plans were never carried out, but it is certain that he was striving for a stage

* Friedrich Kranich, *Buchnentechnik der Gegenwart*. 1933.

space which would have had a great influence on dramatic work, and that he created a new type of dramatic art enormously emphasising the element of motion.

While the idea of joining auditorium and stage in a perfect architectural scheme and including the constructional basis of the scene within this scheme, was only accepted and carried out in Europe in isolated instances, in the United States it soon took root and became the starting point in the construction of stage space. The development of dramatic space there was of course not nearly so complicated as in Europe; while Europe fluctuated continually between two types—the amphitheatre and the auditorium with boxes—America, unhampered by either antique or baroque, created her own simple type of theatre. The auditorium is semi-circular and for the most part without boxes; it has usually a single balcony, placed above the back of the stalls. The stage is the same as in Europe, but the development from the stage with wings was not until recently so systematic as in Europe. In the American theatre realism has not been entirely abolished, or to put it better, the stage space there is complemented by a new and vigorous realism. Its novelty lies in the fact that it builds up the scene by architectural lines and never unites architectural elements with the painted scenery as was done by European realists; this realism builds up the scene to serve the action space and uses light as a space-creating agent.

The films, by influencing the stage, have had an indirect effect upon dramatic space. The American film worked from the beginning with an immense space linked up architecturally; this immense space had to be completed by crowds, individuals were lost in it and did not give it its true scale. On the other hand, the film has the possibility of "close-ups," it can always pick individuals out of the crowd and give them the

possibility of independent action. In this respect the American film for long merely registered the style of contemporary acting. But the American theatre, in adopting the scene of the film, could not accept its action space, which was all to the good.

Norman Bel Geddes embodied most completely this attempt at a new theatre. In 1924 he published a draft project for a theatre which abandoned the old stage in the form of a porch and united auditorium and stage in a single vast space. This individual space is the analogy of the Greek and Renaissance theatre; Bel Geddes also uses the amphitheatre, but he does not spread it round in a rectangular stage but round an almost circular one. The ground plan of the whole is a square; the rising tiers of the amphitheatre are placed diagonally in concentric curves, leaving the corresponding angles free and comprising three-fifths of each side of the square. In the right angle facing the amphitheatre is the stage; the right angle behind the amphitheatre is reserved for the foyer, the stairs to the balcony and so forth. The angle behind the stage is enclosed by a curve, with its concave side to the spectators, so that the stage is roughly crescent shaped and is bisected by the diagonal of the ground plan of the whole theatre. The space thus gained is used for necessary purposes, such as dressing rooms. The stage has no proscenium arch. Its line runs parallel with the curve of the first row of the amphitheatre so that between the auditorium and the stage there is a narrow strip joined to the stage by stairs. The stage is submergible so that the scene can be dropped down. The whole theatre is vaulted over by a single hemispherical vault.

Bel Geddes also published various other projects beside this. The most monumental of them was the proposal which he presented for the competition held by the Soviet Government in 1931 for the Ukranian State Theatre in Kharkov. In this he retained the

proscenium stage but solved the problems of the mass auditorium very daringly. He united three theatres: an indoor theatre holding 4,000 spectators, with an open-air theatre, seating 2,000 spectators, on the roof, and an outdoor mass theatre, seating 60,000 spectators in front; grouped around them were the workshops, rehearsal rooms, dressing rooms, social rooms for the actors, and so on. The building formed a fourfold complex: the side facing the street was concave and contained the restaurant premises; this was connected with the second part, which had a ground plan forming a segment of a circle and contained the amphitheatre for the spectators; it was connected with the third part, whose ground plan was once more a segment of a larger circle and which included the greater part of the stage and workshops; the fourth part of the building containing the dressing rooms had a concave façade facing a large square. The indoor theatre had as auditorium an amphitheatre without balconies, divided into three concentric segments. The stage retained the system of an enclosed space, open to the spectators on one side by a proscenium arch; it was not a hollow cube but a hollow cylinder, for it was bounded by the permanent curve of the cyclorama. The stage consisted of five parts: the main circular stage had a U-shaped apron stage in front of it and was surrounded at the back by another semi-circular stage; these three stages were on hydraulic plungers. Besides this, there was a square proscenium stage with a stationary floor on each side of the apron stage. The apron stage could be occupied by spectators, it could be sunk below the level of the auditorium, so that the actors could use it as a passage, and so forth. The proscenium arch could be extended or diminished at will to suit the size of the stage for an interior scene or a mass tableau. The scenes were lighted by spotlights and bridges placed above and behind the projections of the roof, which followed the curve of the

seats. The scenery workshops were on the right and the sewing shops and wardrobes on the left; their walls were of glass so that the lighting was perfect. The dressing rooms were also on the most hygienic and perfect plan. On the roof of the building was a theatre with an amphitheatre for the audience and a semi-circular stage; it could be reached by lifts direct from the street, or from the indoor theatre. Besides this the whole façade of the building was a graduated theatre stage whose auditorium was the square before the theatre which could hold 60,000 spectators. Five thousand actors could act on the roof stage. The lighting of this immense auditorium and stage was done by six pylons placed around the square, where loud speakers were also placed. Geddes' other plans devoted more attention to the form of the stage, but even here the whole structure of the theatre was thought out and laid down with surprising brilliance and thoroughness.

In another of his projects, Theatre No. 14 (The Intimate Theatre, 1922), he places a submergible stage in the centre of the amphitheatre containing the audience in a space roofed by a pointed vault, around which run two bridges for lighting; the sources of light are invisible to the spectators. In another, The Repertory Theatre, 1929, he united two large theatres as well as a children's theatre and a cabaret in a single building. The larger of the two theatres seated 1,700 and the smaller 750 persons; these were on an analogy with his plan of the year 1924. Between the two domed roofs rose a skyscraper 19 storeys high containing the requisite technical and administrative premises for all four theatres. A third work of his, the Divine Comedy Theatre, was a draft plan of the theatre for Geddes' production of Dante's *Divina Commedia*. Apart from the plan for the Kharkov theatre, which deals with specific problems and is on too monumental a scale, the Repertory Theatre is the most important contribution

towards solving the problem of the mass theatre. It is conceived as an important social institution and takes account of things usually overlooked by most of the other people planning modern theatres: the use of the space outside the theatre for workshops, rehearsal rooms, dressing rooms, offices and other purposes indispensable to the perfect working of the theatre.

If the actual dramatic space in Western European theatres is meagre, its accessories, and in particular the dressing rooms, are more meagre still; while the companies, with the exception of a few stars, are very badly paid and poorly housed. The ideal people's theatre would be a building or a group of buildings including dwellings for the stage hands, actors, workmen, etc., besides the theatre proper and the work rooms. An attempt to realise this ideal was made in the plans for the Work Theatre by the Czech producer E. F. Burian, and the Czech architects Kouril and Novotny. In Czechoslovakia the actors and stage hands had their own trade unions and were mostly engaged by the theatres as regular employees. The theatre founded by E. F. Burian in Prague in 1933 was run on collective principles; it was not the property of a private individual or directed by one director, but each of the group of members—producers, actors, stage hands and clerks—had a share in it; a committee of five was jointly voted to settle financial and other questions; all the members of the group had the same standing and the profits were shared out in proportion to the responsibility and work of each member. The group worked very conscientiously; besides rehearsals for the plays, each of which was rehearsed thirty to forty times, the members devoted six to seven hours a day to gymnastics, languages, the history of the stage, music, costumes, discussion of the production, etc.

The plan for the Work Theatre had Burian's collective group in view; it provided ample living accommodation

for all the members of the group, as well as premises for workrooms of all sorts (carpentry workshop, dressmakers' and tailors' studios, sewing shops, electricians' workshop, film studio, etc.), rehearsal studios and class rooms, dressing rooms and a great hall which included auditorium and stage in a single whole. On a variation of this plan Burian and Kouril built "the House of Culture." Round the Work Theatre they grouped two more theatre with porch stage, lecture rooms and exhibition hall. The Work Theatre was oblong and was not divided into auditorium and stage; it was like the empty space of a film studio. The floor was divided into three hundred squares which could be raised on pistons. Four seats could be placed on each. The division between stage and auditorium could be varied from case to case, so that some of the squares were used for stage instead of seats. The variations introduced furnished various rectangular central stages placed irregularly about the auditorium, a further central stage in the middle of the room, an axis stage on the shorter side and a "Japanese" axis stage with a bridge across the auditorium. This plan was an attempt to embody the idea of a "laboratory theatre" like the one started by E. G. Craig early in this century, and as such was an invaluable piece of work in spite of some minor deficiencies.

The Soviet producer Okhlopkov came very near to realising the ideal of the people's theatre when he was producing at the Realistic Theatre in Moscow. His theatre was quite small, for only 500 spectators, but he resolved the space problem in the manner of the mass theatre. There was a central stage constructed by Centnerovitch; it was a circular podium with steps, and the form was changed for each play; but it was always in the centre of the room, surrounded by spectators on all sides, as in outdoor performances or at the circus. On the central stage there was no scene

in the proper sense of the word; only the most indispensable three dimensional properties were used; the functions of the scene were undertaken by the action space, which indicated place and time. Access to the stage was by side passages through the audience so that the acting went on among the spectators as well as on the steps and in the podium. The action space was also abundantly served by the lighting, which illuminated the scene according to the needs of the group, moving quickly from place to place, so that it took an important part in the play. The actor, who was here left to his art alone and had nothing but his costume to aid him, was in the situation of the actor in the Chinese theatre. But the Chinese actor has at his disposal a whole language of conventional gestures by which he can always express an experience comprehensibly to all: opening an imaginary door, riding an imaginary horse, and so on In the European theatre there is no such tradition; it disappeared with the Elizabethan era; Okhlopkov could not place such a stylistic, symbolic language of movement at the disposal of his actors. He did not even attempt to build up such a system, but where the dramatic space took on the function of a scene, he had deliberate recourse to elements of the Chinese theatre. Young men and girls in blue overalls and masks like the stage hands in the Chinese theatre took charge of everything relating to the scene. They threw confetti over the stage and the audience to make a snowstorm, scattered flowers cut out of lino to indicate the spring, shook blue canvas to provide a sea, stretched a green cloth to represent a table, and so on. In expressive acting Okhlopkov renewed and revivified the realism of the Moscow Arts Theatre founded by Stanislavsky; the whole thing is most instructive and the nearest approach to what we may call pure theatre. Okhlopkov also worked out a monumental plan for a people's theatre; it was an immense building made up of five

concentric cylinders on wheels, built in sections so as to be slid back. The seats for the spectators were revolving chairs arranged in rings between the sliding walls of the cylinders; the rings could be raised or lowered, or turned round. The whole was vaulted over by an immense dome, which could be slid off, giving the audience a view of the sky. Okhlopkov said of this project: This plan for a new theatre does not standardise any of the variations of the theatre form. The sliding walls, movable floors for the spectators and revolving seats help to provide both the ordinary form of theatre interior with a box scene and the method of placing scenic surfaces as in our performance of Pogodin's "Aristocrats" or Gorki's "Mother." To-day we can give a splendid mass production on the theme of the conquest of Perekop, with 600 actors and 2,000 to 6,000 spectators. To-morrow in the same theatre we can move the walls, change the position of the spectators and produce an intimate interior scene.

None of the above-mentioned plans for a mass theatre has yet been carried out; the reasons for this are economic and social, as well as political. In the pursuit of monumentality, Baroque processions and Baroque opera were produced out of doors before the war. As for the future, we must bear in mind what Romain Rolland said in 1913 is true to-day: "Vous voulez un art du peuple? Commencez par avoir un peuple!" (*Le Theatre du Peuple*, 1913). If the craftsmen of the theatre wish the future which governments are now painting for us in such glowing colours to renew the interrupted union between the theatre and the masses, they have no choice but to devote attention to the theatrical systems which have up to now preserved that union. There is the folklore theatre, especially the folk theatre in the Slav countries, the theatre of the Far East, and finally the dramatic elements in the rites of the so-called primitive nations. In these there is

alive a true theatrical element; they have preserved the social truth of the theatre, the charm of theatrical illusion where the spectator is conscious that he is in the presence of an artificial creation and is not disappointed by a false representation of life as in the Western European theatre. We may find here pure stage work and a right relationship to the spectator.

KAREL BRUŠÁK (*born* 1913) *is a prominent worker in the sphere of theatrical studies. He studied the history of art and aesthetics at the Prague Philosophical Faculty with Professor Mukarovsky, the pioneer of structuralism. He later went to the Sorbonne to study under Professor Lalo. In Prague he was associated with Professor Mukarovsky and Dr. Bogatyrev in building up the Seminar for the study of the modern theatre, and collaborated in the Programme of E. F. Burian's theatre. In London he is now continuing his scientific works and is engaged on a comparison of Old English and Old Czech popular plays.*

STEPHEN SPENDER

OLIVEIRO DECIDES

(An episode from a play)

(THE action takes place in a country where there has been a revolutionary rising by the People which has led to class war. Oliveiro is a sympathiser from abroad who has joined the Revolutionary army. Paloma is his wife. Hernandez is secretary of a political party on the same side.

In a previous scene, Oliveiro has been ordered by his superior officer, Pablo Vengar, to shoot Nicolay Callas, mayor of a village. He is told that Callas is a traitor.

Actually, the murder is a private one in which Oliveiro is involved by Vengar, whose wife has been seduced by Nicolay Callas. There is a parallel between the situation of Nicolay Callas, Vengar and Oliveiro, and that of Oliveiro, Paloma and Hernandez. These two parallel situations exist within a public one of the revolution which destroys Oliveiro without his losing his faith in it.)

SCENE: *A light airy room. Window at back of stage with birdcage.*

OLIVEIRO:

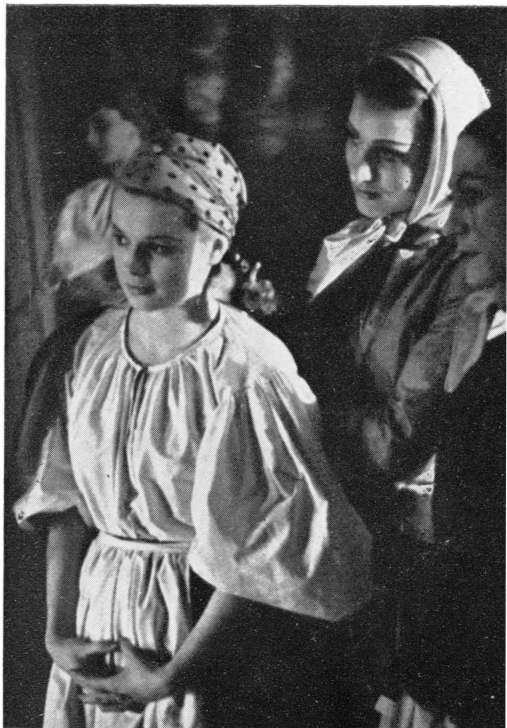
I did it. Now
I must fix my mind into one thought.
That it was necessary, and that I was
The instrument they had to use.
O, but if my life is an instrument
In the grasp of their purpose
Which is historic necessity—
Then I wish my mind were mineral,
My arteries as iron hard against
These boiling doubts and questions.

All photographs of the Anglo-Polish Ballet by Picture

SLAVONIC BALLET IN ENGLAND : Cracow Wedding, *presented by the Anglo-Polish Company, founded in* 1940. *Based on traditional peasant dances and festivals in Poland, with choreography by Czeslaw Konarski, decor by Stefan Wegrzyn, and music arranged by T. Glinski.*

SLAVONIC BALLET IN ENGLAND : Cracow Wedding, *presented by the Anglo-Polish Company.* (*See previous page.*)

SLAVONIC BALLET IN ENGLAND : Maciek is Dead, *presented by the Anglo-Polish Company. Based on a Polish peasant legend, with choreography by Czesław Konarski, decor by Stefan Węgrzyn, and music arranged by T. Glinski.*



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SLAVONIC BALLET IN ENGLAND: from Moussorgsky's Opera Sorotchintsi Fair. *(below) The ballet,* The Night on the Bare Mountain, *and (above)* The Gopak, *the Ukranian folk-dance, presented by the Russian Opera and Ballet Company, founded in* 1941, *with choreography by Catherine Devillier and decor and costumes by George Kirsta.*

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PALOMA :
Darling, you had no choice. You did
What you were ordered to do.
It was a very small thing in a large
War and world. There is no one
Who has noticed the snap of that moment
Which swells so in your mind.

OLIVEIRO :
Paloma,
Do you really think there was no choice ?
Are you quite certain
That Nicolay Callas was guilty ?
And that the command given to me
By Pablo Vengar, was genuine ?

PALOMA : What else could you have done ?

OLIVEIRO :
I don't know . . . And yet, sometimes, I think
That I was not then just a soldier
Carrying out an arduous order.
That there was something else—I don't know what—
Something not simply obedience
Which betrayed me to obey. That some weakness
—Is it written perhaps on my forehead ?—
Spoke from my inmost character
Signing its name upon his skin, with blood.

PALOMA :
Sweetheart, why do you worry ? Why feel guilty ?
Why torture yourself and me ?
There is no one except yourself will ever blame you,
Or almost no one.

OLIVEIRO :
So you do think there is someone,
Someone somewhere who would blame me ?
Who would say : " You should have acted differently !"
The original fountain of some clear voice

Springing to catch the light and speaking
From a lucid source,
Purging my past of every shadow?

PALOMA:

How you misunderstand me!
I only said there might be someone,
Meaning that there is really no one.
Though, for all I know, some silly person,
Whom no one cares about, might say anything.

OLIVEIRO:

If there were somewhere someone
Who would wholly blame me, that means
That everyone hides in his heart some scruple
Some shadow of doubt, and within the shadow
The roaring light of an eternal eye.
Yes, like his two eyes
Which stared at me
So lamentably full of everything.

PALOMA: Full of what?

OLIVEIRO:

So full of guilt and full of innocence,
Full of pity and full of indignation,
Full of defiance and full of terror:
And putting it all together,
Full of nothing but weakness.
That made me shoot, because in the end,
There is nothing we despise so much,
As another's admission of weakness:
Reading in his terrified eyes
The naked image of our fate
Reflected in two marbles.

PALOMA:

You frighten me. Nothing for you
Simply is what it is. You probe beneath
Revealing a continual fate of horror.

Oh darling, the thing that has happened has happened.
It had its day and is passed. Look, to-day is different.
The bird sings in its cage, the sun is shining
On the arrowy leaves outside the window.
You are standing in this room beside me.
Do not plunge your hand into yesterday
And draw the link up from beneath the ooze,
That chains it with to-day.
That was a nightmare. Now we are awake.

OLIVEIRO : I am stupid, I know.

PALOMA :
Try to rest. You must keep still.
Your mind rushes round.

OLIVEIRO :
Something started its wild revolving
And it is not able to stop.
My life shakes in my body like a machine
Revving under my ribs.

PALOMA : Shut your eyes. Lay your head on my breast.

OLIVEIRO :
Dear heart, that throbs beneath this dress,
Bird in the centre of a blue day,
I did not mean to frighten you away.

PALOMA :
Dear sculptured head, you lie like a stone
On my body. I love you. The lines
That a gentle passion carved on your forehead
Are the kindest I have ever seen.
If only you were quiet. If only
The thoughts that hammer in your head
Would leave you alone, to be less noble
But entirely mine.

SCENE FROM A PLAY

OLIVEIRO :
Paloma, I love you, I love you.
But I am torn away by the time
And my head is filled with many voices
Accusing and excusing. Wait, wait,
Love, till I learn peace.

PALOMA : Peace ? When ?

OLIVEIRO : Some day. . . . After this . . .

PALOMA :
Dear love, let me say now,
That I love you for ever.
But, please, you must understand
That your moods frighten me a little.
I would always want to come back to you
Even if I went away
Until I had learned to be more brave.

OLIVEIRO (*leaning against her, his eyes closed*) : How long ?

PALOMA (*in a trance*) : For perhaps a year or two.

OLIVEIRO (*still dreaming*) : You cannot leave me.
I love you
To the point of ecstasy.
When you come into the room
It bursts open with petals like a flower,
Receiving the song of a bird.
The voice which enchants, the gestures which entrance
Me in a swoon of bliss !
Without you the world would be the world
Which soldiers and financiers lay waste.
And yet you are so much my inner vision
That when we are most near
You seem unlike you.

PALOMA (*her eyes still closed*) : I dream, I dream.

OLIVEIRO : What do you dream ?

PALOMA :
A tiger in the desert
Swift, beautiful, terrifying,
Leaps to destroy me with love
In striped flames of sunlight.
(OLIVEIRO *jumps up*)

OLIVEIRO (*shouting*) : Republic !
All crimes are forgotten in that name !
The hoarded streams,
The earth held back a prisoner,
The free spirit locked in a church vault,
The body beaten to be a mule.
All has broken out and pours
Over the fructifying day.
There is nothing except life, and life justifies
Its blind crimes, when it feels
The strength of light on its eyes,
The strength of its free limbs.

PALOMA : Oliveiro !

OLIVEIRO :
To be wholly,
Utterly, completely on their side !
To cancel my separate consciousness,
Obliterate my five senses,
Make my eyes spectacles
To magnify their weak knowledge,
Make my life a blunt brutal edged instrument
Of their hatred, so just, so just !

PALOMA : Off again !

OLIVEIRO :
You too must remember
The palpable feeling of joy in the streets,
Infecting the houses even with flags,
And the sense of a giant released.
Nothing else mattered.

PALOMA : No.

OLIVEIRO :

And every doubt that follows is myself,
The dying feelings of a bad world,
Which I drag round with me here,
Questioning the light, making the pavements
Blank and dull.

PALOMA :

I am tired
Of all this. You go round and round
In a circle, and always come back
To the same place.

OLIVEIRO :

How can I help
My nature ? Why don't you let me be
And love me for what I am ?

PALOMA :

You are nobody when you are like this.
You are an object, a cause, a cave filled
With voices prophesying.

OLIVEIRO : I am much to blame.

PALOMA : It is not a matter of blame.

OLIVEIRO :

No, it has gone beyond blame
Beyond rightness and wrong
Beyond disease and cure.
It is something final and real in me
Which cannot love or be loved.

PALOMA :

How you invent ! I did not say that.
" Which cannot be loved, indeed ! " Why,
It is impossible not to love
The care lying on my heart, which is you.
But also you are like a fate
Which pursues, pursues.

OLIVEIRO :

When we are close together like this,
O, how much we are alone !
This flesh is snow which closes in
And muffles and hides and yet suggests
White endless vast emptiness.
(*He walks to and fro. Her eyes follow him*)
You make me feel that it is wrong
Even to walk about a room.
(*He pauses at the bird cage*)
Dear bird, dear dove, the iris of my eye,
My face is a cage which encloses you.
I love and understand you. If you were free,
My eyes would open as wide as the world
To catch you wherever you might be,
You are so much mine and yet so little part of me.

She goes over and kisses him. They stand for a few moments like this, quite still, in front of the stage.

Pause.

Knock.

OLIVEIRO : Come in !

Enter secretary RAFAEL HERNANDEZ.

HERNANDEZ : Excuse me.

OLIVEIRO : Please come in.

HERNANDEZ : Are you Lieutenant Oliveiro ?

OLIVEIRO : Yes.

HERNANDEZ : My name is Manuel Hernandez.

OLIVEIRO : Welcome, Manuel Hernandez. Allow me to present to you Paloma, my wife.

Pause.

HERNANDEZ : I am a fellow countryman of yours. I come from Seven Towers.

PALOMA : Seven Towers ! That's where I live !

RAFAEL : How distant it all seems ! The Fiesta, the dancing by moonlight, the lights under the trees, the café on the terrace looking out over the harbour.

PALOMA : The little donkeys going from the harbour up the side of the mountain to the citadel, the cactuses, the white towers.

They laugh, looking at each other.

OLIVEIRO : I live at Rolandsville, five miles away. I used to come on a mule every market day, to visit Paloma's family.

All three laugh.

HERNANDEZ : I am delighted to see you both. But I have not, unfortunately, come only for the pleasure of greeting a compatriot, and congratulating him on his charming bride, and congratulating her, too, on her charming husband. I have come also on a kind of business. I am secretary of the bureau of the Revolutionary Party.

OLIVEIRO : Oh.

PALOMA : Won't you sit down ?

HERNANDEZ : To be perfectly frank, I have been sent here to make a few inquiries.

PALOMA : Inquiries ?

HERNANDEZ : Yes, about the murder of Mayor Nicolay Callas.

OLIVEIRO : Murder ?

HERNANDEZ : You didn't know ?

OLIVEIRO : Yes, I knew.

PALOMA : What ?

HERNANDEZ : You knew he had been murdered ?

OLIVEIRO : Killed.

HERNANDEZ : By whom ?

OLIVEIRO : By me.

(*Pause.* HERNANDEZ *gets up and looks out of the window.*)

HERNANDEZ : I have to make it known to you that the murder was not carried out by order of our Party. Our Bureau was not informed of it. If Nicolay Callas had been accused on any charge, we would have insisted on his being tried in public. The murder of Callas was an act of private revenge, because he had absconded with the wife of Commissar Pablo Vengar. Our Committee wishes to see you.

OLIVEIRO : Oh, I knew it !

HERNANDEZ : Lieutenant Oliveiro, what are you saying ?

OLIVEIRO :

I knew it in my heart.
I knew it as one knows what is ominous :
The electric violence coiled
In the hammer-headed cloud,
The emotion behind the coldly reasoned facts
In a murder trial.

HERNANDEZ : You mean, you did not know it.

PALOMA : No, Oliveiro, you didn't know it !

HERNANDEZ :

Lieutenant Oliveiro,
As you are a countryman of mine,
As you are young and have a charming wife
Whose life with you blossoms in silence
Uninterrupted for this summer instant
Before my eyes—I say this
Now, which I will be too involved before long
To repeat again :—Go.

OLIVEIRO : Go ?

HERNANDEZ :

Yes. Do not wait
Until the petals are shattered,
Until the unutterable instant
Of absolute blue
Winks like an eyelid, and shuts down
On timeless night for ever.
Do not hesitate.
Pack up your luggage and leave by the first train.
I shall go back again
To the bureau, and say that I arrived too late
When you were already gone.

OLIVEIRO : Why ?

HERNANDEZ :

Because there are corridors
Twists and turnings in the faces
Which meet your direct honesty.
Around the corner you think the truth waits
But there are voices like traps
With interests and arguments
On which your life will lie
Like a contorting word tripped on a tongue.

OLIVEIRO :

I came here prepared
To kill and be killed.

HERNANDEZ : But not like this.

OLIVEIRO :

Everything that is real happens
In a new and strange way.
When the anticipated hardens into fact
It appals with its shocking reality.
Goodbye.

PALOMA : Where are you going ?

OLIVEIRO (*to HERNANDEZ*): You said the Committee want to see me.

(*to PALOMA*): That is where I go.
Goodbye, Paloma. The reality
Is totally different from the dead appearance
On the face of the slumbering world.
Perhaps I will learn to love you wholly
Through an impassible estrangement.

PALOMA: Don't go, Oliveiro!

OLIVEIRO: Why?

PALOMA:
When you return, it may be too late
For both of us.

OLIVEIRO:
Look, I am happy and smiling.
I am not afraid.

(*Exit*)

HERNANDEZ (*lighting a cigarette and offering her one*): Your husband is a brave man.

PALOMA: Brave? What is that?

HERNANDEZ: You've just seen a pretty good example.

PALOMA:
Is it brave to invoke disaster
When it is unnecessary?
Or is it brave to seek for happiness
And avoid calamities?

HERNANDEZ: I see what you mean. . . .

(*Pause*)

I had not meant to warn him,
But there is something in his manner
It is impossible not to like.

PALOMA :
That is the most obvious thing about him
Everyone says the same.

HERNANDEZ : You are very fortunate.

PALOMA : Yes.

HERNANDEZ :
I must confess
That I myself, although I envy him,
Follow him now with my thought,
Like the sky around his hair.

PALOMA :
To be married to someone whom everyone loves
Is to have very little of one's own.
(*Pause*)
To live with him
Is to be drained by the selfishness
Of the outside world feeding on him.
(*Pause*)
Also everyone remarks on
The difference between our two characters,
And prefers his.

HERNANDEZ : Perhaps he does not understand you !
(*She smiles*)

PALOMA : He understands no one.

HERNANDEZ (*softly*) :
Certainly he does not understand
The innocence of your self-absorption ;
A child's gaze travelling through a mirror
Towards approaching rays of its own beauty
Wondered at for the first time.

PALOMA : You do not understand me either.

HERNANDEZ :
Oh yes, I do.
I look and look into your eyes
And they return a gaze
Which is as though you saw my life
Burnish to a mirror of yourself.

PALOMA :
I do not pretend to be anything
But what I am.

HERNANDEZ :
That is why
My mind like light drowns
In the wells of your eyes.
In their complete and lonely
Entire self-absorption
They are far from all that is
Revolutionary or established
Ugly or beautiful. They are you,
A daughter and a child.

PALOMA :
I am not faithless I am not hard.
I am nothing people say about me.
I love Oliveiro. But I am so cold
And nothing warms the icy seas
Of the blood circling through my body
But the flattering sun
Of complete admiration.

HERNANDEZ : Let me kiss you.

PALOMA :
I don't care what they say.
All the others have each other,
Their flags and deaths in common.
But I am disliked and alone
Except when someone sometimes loves me.

I possess nothing except the loss
Of pouring myself into another
Who gives me everything.

HERNANDEZ: I understand! I understand!

(*He lays his face to hers*)

(*They kiss*)

CURTAIN.

THE EARL OF LONGFORD

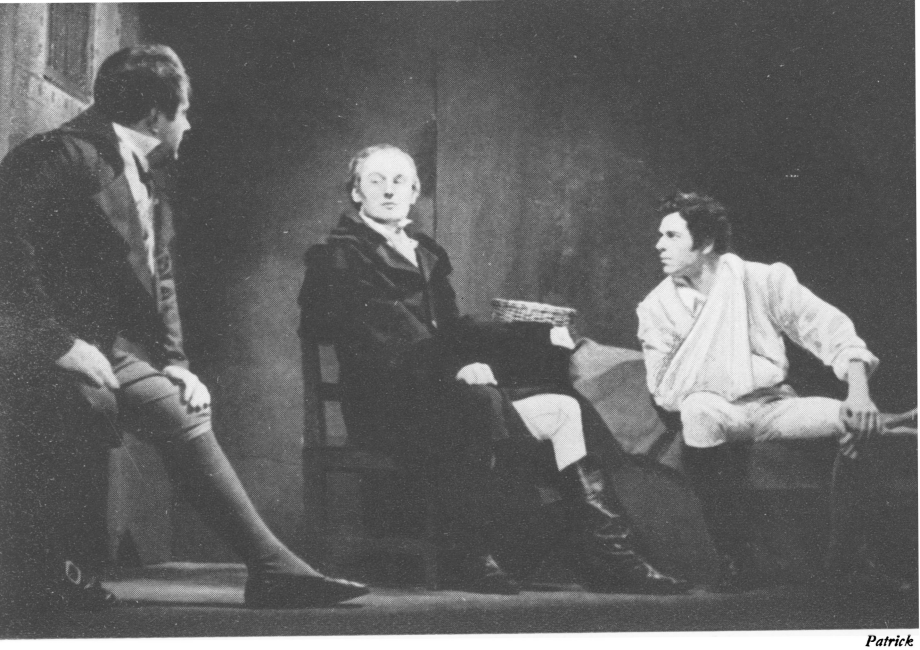
THE IRISH THEATRE TO-DAY

THE theatre is booming in Ireland, whatever the case may be elsewhere in the world. That is not to say that there are not hundreds of thousands of Irish people, even in Dublin, who never set foot in a theatre, and whose only idea of entertainment is what the cinema industry doles out to them. Dublin is perhaps the most cinema-saturated city in existence; picture houses of vast size and extravagant decoration draw queues in every street; yet in spite of this, the theatre is still an object of interest to great numbers of people, and the level of plays presented in Irish theatres is on the whole a high one. At any rate, there is usually something distinctive and interesting to be found; and commercialism is not always supreme.

The fact that a large number of people are keenly interested in the theatre, and regularly attend performances of some intellectual standing, does not mean that plays of a high artistic level and international significance are being written every week. Far from it. The Irish literary Renaissance of some forty years ago, of which the dramatic movement was originally an offshoot, belongs now to the past, and with it the Abbey Theatre as it appears in the literary and dramatic history of the time. The dramatic movement of Yeats and Synge and Lady Gregory, a thing of vast potentialities, working sometimes with the national uprising of the time and sometimes counter to it, produced one or two masterpieces such as the 'Playboy of the Western World,' and the poetic dramas of Yeats, which few people have ever paid to see and which in consequence are hardly ever performed. Then by slow degrees it gave place to the 'popular' type of Abbey play: Irish to the backbone, though detested by many

patriotic Irishmen, clever, cynical, satirical, sometimes farcical and vulgar, often a valuable commentary on Irish life and affairs, but as commercial as Noel Coward, and having little or no reference to the 'Art Theatre' which the Abbey was originally intended to be. There is something of this even in O'Casey's first successes, 'Juno and the Paycock,' 'The Plough and the Stars' and Ireland's favourite 'Shadow of a Gunman.' The principal exponent of this type of play is George Shiels, a dramatist hardly known outside Ireland, but a writer of success after success for the Abbey, who recently beat all Dublin records with a three months' run of the 'Rugged Path': a strong, cynical drama of conditions in a remote rural district where we are informed that crime is almost considered a virtue, and civic consciousness is a joke. In most of his plays the farcical element predominates. Such is the type of drama beloved by Abbey audiences, not the poetical twilight commonly publicized abroad as their usual fare.

In the O'Casey plays, once also prime favourites at the Abbey, there is another element, the strong feeling of disillusion which followed on the establishment of political freedom in an atmosphere of civil war. This is characteristic of the Irish drama of the twenties, being strongly marked also in the earlier work of Denis Johnston, who, however, is associated with the Dublin Gate Theatre rather than the Abbey. The later work of O'Casey has never been played in the Abbey or anywhere else in Ireland, and would be utterly unacceptable there. Side by side with the Abbey comedy, an attempt was made to popularise a more or less tragic realism, corresponding to the Irish realistic novels of the last twenty years, but the response from the audience was not satisfactory. The Abbey public wanted nothing much besides comedy, and the supply of more or less witty plays, often of great technical merit, shows no sign of drying up. The fact is that the Abbey is producing



Patrick

"Lord Edward," by Christine Longford: Dublin Gate Theatre (Longford Productions)

"An Italian Straw Hat." The Wedding Group: Dublin Gate Theatre (Longford Productions

few great plays at present, but is continually producing well written plays. All Irish and almost invariably new, they are well acted and draw good houses. The Abbey's efforts at artistic production and décor are and always have been spasmodic.

For the last ten years the great rival to the Abbey has been the Gate, founded by two actors, Hilton Edwards and Micahel MacLiammoir, as an experimental studio in 1928, and opened as a regular theatre in its own premises in 1930, Mr. Edwards being producer and his partner art-director. The original object of the Gate was to provide Dublin with an international repertory theatre, producing the best plays of all periods and countries. For some years it was run by a limited company. In 1936, Mr. Edwards and Mr. MacLiammoir established an independent repertory company, and I started another, each of which was to occupy the Gate Theatre for half the year, and to tour if they wished during the other half. My company, the Longford Productions, concentrated on tours in the Irish provinces, and has visited some forty towns since that time, and also visited London in our earlier days. The other company, now called Dublin Gate Theatre Productions, visited Egypt and many parts of Europe with great success; and since the war began, has tended when in Dublin to forsake the Gate for the much larger Gaiety Theatre, for reasons which will be explained later.

The plays produced by the two companies associated with the Gate have, after the first few years, been well patronised, of late increasingly so, and that not only by a club or a coterie, but by the general public of all classes. These two repertory companies have produced a large number of new plays, mostly of a type for which the extremely naturalistic technique of the Abbey would not be entirely suitable. They have never considered the production of new work their principal object, nor

have they specialised in Irish plays; but they have done interesting work, none the less, and work which must be considered of importance to the Irish theatre as a whole.

They have largely avoided commercial farces and thrillers and superficial comedy, and have taken rather as their province Shakespeare and the classics generally, the best nineteenth and early twentieth century work from Turgenev to Bernard Shaw, as well as the most important modern plays, conventional as well as experimental, including many of the best of the contemporary Irish writers. And these plays are not merely put on as an occasional despairing gesture in a wilderness of trash, a gesture to which no response is expected but the approbation of a tiny group. They are the regular fare provided by the Gate groups, and supported by the average Dublin theatregoer. I give my programme for the current season now nearing its end, as an example to prove my case rather than an attempt to blow my own trumpet:

> Tobias and the Angel; The Seagull; Much Ado about Nothing; Pride and Prejudice; Othello; The Admirable Crichton; Martine; Mrs. Warren's Profession; Macbeth; A programme of Ballets; The first production of 'Lord Edward' (an Irish historical play by Christine Longford), and 'Hamilton and Jones' (the story of an imaginary Dublin commercial family by Winifred M. Letts).

When it is remembered that the Edwards-MacLiammoir group provides similar fare, and both are well supported, it becomes apparent that even if great dramatists are not sprouting in every street—and where have they ever done that?—Dublin is definitely interested in drama; and when that is the case, there is surely hope of more good plays coming out of Ireland in the future. For the present it is gratifying that there

is no sign of narrow-mindedness, and that taste, if not sensationally 'advanced,' is not contemptible.

So much for the plays seen in the principal Dublin repertory theatres. As to the production and the acting, it is hard for me to speak. The special tradition of the Abbey is well maintained on the whole by the newer generation. The actors there are almost always Irish, though English producers and designers have frequently been employed. In the Edwards-MacLiammoir Company and Longford Productions the personnel is more mixed, there being a fair number of English and other non-Irish actors employed; but the management and general tone in each case is national; and most of the players having worked together for some years, there is no sense that any of them are strangers or aliens. In the early days of the Gate, there was inevitably a good deal of amateurism, but the last traces of this are being stamped out, and strictly professional standards are now enforced. This is also the case in the Abbey, which at its first foundation was an amateur theatre. The disappearance of the amateur from a sphere where he has no place, the professional theatre, is absolutely essential to the development of the Irish drama, if any really good work is to be done. I do not claim that the Dublin theatres are bursting with marvellous actors, but on the whole the standard is high and constantly improving, most of the actors being young and very keen on their work. Production and art direction have also made great strides during the last few years, and in the principal companies the importance of these things is keenly appreciated.

Outside the Gate and Abbey Theatres, if we ignore places chiefly used as cinemas or variety theatres, there are two theatres at present in Dublin, the Gaiety and the Peacock; the one a large nineteenth century theatre used before the war for visits of English touring companies, and now owned by a cinema proprietor, and the

other a very small appendage to the Abbey Theatre building. Neither has or ever has had a permanent company attached to it. The Peacock has sometimes been used by the Abbey's School of Acting, and at other times has been let to amateurs, or of late especially to small groups of professionals who are not employed in the larger theatres. The Gaiety is no longer able to get actors from England, and has accordingly been obliged to look for local companies. Messrs. Edwards and MacLiammoir and their company have frequently played there, and at present it is being let to various small groups, mostly professional, some of which do good work. At other times it is let to amateur operatic societies, of which for some reason Dublin contains an enormous number. But the amateur theatre is one which I have no room to touch on here, though it is very much alive, and provides the professional companies with much of their raw material.

So much for the present state of the theatre in Dublin. In the provinces there are no permanent professional theatrical organisations, but occasional tours of Dublin companies are eagerly awaited, and extensive amateur activity points to widespread interest in the theatre. Small professional companies still frequently play melodrama and variety in remote villages in the most traditional manner; but the cinema has reduced their activity in more thickly populated areas.

Having surveyed the actual position of the drama in Ireland (from which at the moment we must inevitably exclude Belfast, never at any time devoted to the theatre), we find ourselves confronted with the question, what is the significance of Ireland in the theatre of to-day? There is no doubt that since the drama was introduced into Ireland in the seventeenth century, she has made it her own, and profoundly influenced the theatre of the world; first, by supplying a steady stream of dramatists and actors, and then by the foundation of the Abbey,

ancestor by inspiration of numberless art theatres and little theatres,—however much its practice may have diverged from its preaching. Can the Ireland of to-day exercise any comparable influence?

At first one inclines to doubt: the work done in the Irish theatre, though of a good standard and strongly individual in some ways, is not revolutionary, and moreover the theatres aim more and more at providing drama for their own people. The period of constant visits to English and American cities was ending even before the war isolated Ireland dramatically as well as in other ways. And since 1940 English actors are not allowed by their own government to come to Ireland, though a good number are still working here as they have done since before the ban. And the English touring company, with certain exceptions a not very desirable import from the Irish point of view, is a thing of the past. As a result our theatre is driven in on itself; dramatists are thinking less and less of writing for a wider market, and actors have little prospect of better paid jobs abroad. Drama in the Irish language, though still on a more or less amateur basis, is already making headway with government assistance. In fact, Irish drama is more and more an affair for Irishmen, resident as all good Irishmen should be in their own country.

But though at first sight Irish drama does not seem to be in a position to exercise much influence outside Ireland, things may be very different in the long run. Theatres, and theatres very different from the monotonous commercialism of some larger capitals, are flourishing in Dublin, a city of less than half a million inhabitants; and these theatres, while being increasingly forced to rely on their own resources, are being better supported than ever before. Cut off as we are in many ways from the rest of the world, and increasingly inclining to a strong nationalism in theatrical art, there

is, as I have tried to make clear, a remarkable lack of narrow-mindedness in our theatre, whatever may be alleged to be the case in some other departments of our national life. It is true that an attack on the Roman Catholic Church would be about as popular on a Dublin stage as ridicule of the Royal Family would be on a London one; but we have no censor, and in Dublin one could not receive such a note as once was sent me from the Lord Chamberlain's office: 'There are seven "bloody's" in this play: *at least half* must come out.'

I do not think that partial and temporary isolation is altogether a disadvantage; it may in fact so strengthen our theatres in writing as well as in acting and production, as eventually to give us a truly outstanding position in the theatre of the world. The vile habit of writing with one eye on the English or American market no longer affects the dramatists who profess to supply Ireland's demand for new plays; and Irish actors after two good notices from a Dublin critic no longer pack their bags for London. The Irish theatre is stronger thereby, and its eventual influence more likely to be profound.

MOSCO CARNER

MODERN MUSIC IN THE BALANCE

THE many and unexpected vicissitudes of this war seem to have the effect of pushing one's peace-time memories back to a blurred and distant background. This was brought home to me once again the other day when I went through a pile of old papers and books which had to be cleared away. While I was sifting and sorting, a small insignificant-looking pamphlet fell into my hands—a concert programme with annotations. I decided to keep it as a sort of cultural relic. It was the programme of the International Festival of Modern Music held in London in June 1938—the last occasion when composers and musicians of many lands foregathered in a great cosmopolitan city, in a spirit of friendly competition, and the last occasion that modern music mustered its forces in a parade of imposing dimensions and before an international forum. Not more than three years have passed since, yet the event seems already to belong to a remote past. The war has done away with international gatherings and if it has not done away with music altogether, it has practically put an embargo on modern music.

For one who has closely followed the musical activities of this country it is a matter of surprise to find that so little modern music has been written or performed since the outbreak of war. Whether in public concerts or in broadcasts the modern composer seems to have lost his say. Not that he ever had, as a rule, a great share in them. Yet what share he had it allowed one to form a picture of the general trends of modern music. This has now become rather difficult. That a similar situation prevails in other countries that are engaged in this war is as probable as it is depressing. We are told that modern music with its experimental and, hence,

problematical character is not the appropriate kind of mental food for minds greatly strained and enervated by the present happenings. It is argued that classical and romantic music is more conducive to our present state of mind than the various " Isms " of contemporary music. The suspicion that this kind of argument is apt to arouse is that people who think along such lines are inclined to look upon music as a sort of mental medicine to be administered only to frail and feeble minds. For such minds the medicine must be neither bitter nor strong which modern music undoubtedly often is. The great mass of the musical public, by nature conservative and always reluctant to interest itself in works other than those of the familiar classical and romantic composers, appears to have fully endorsed that view as shown in these days by the large attendances at concerts with most unenterprising and hackneyed programmes. True, at the present time financial considerations have a large claim on the choice of works to be performed at concerts that are run on purely commercial lines. Yet the present neglect of the contemporary composer seems to go deeper and to point to a curious contradiction. One of the slogans of this war is that the democracies are fighting an ideological war, a war for freedom of thought and intellectual progress. Yet modern music which in many ways reflects the trends and processes of modern thought is at the present juncture deprecated and more or less ostracized. It is this contradiction between what is preached and what is practised that gives the modern musician ample food for thought. He is bound to ask himself whether the promises which modern music held out some twenty or thirty years ago have been fulfilled. In other words, has modern music been able to find that balance of means and ends, of technique and expression that we justly admire in the music of the past? Does it embody new ideas, ideas that we recognise as peculiar of our times

and as real and individual contributions to the general evolution of musical thought? And lastly, has modern music been able to set up a new standard of beauty and formal perfection—the supreme test of great art?

To answer these difficult questions it is necessary to survey the field of contemporary music from an angle which is sufficiently wide to allow the observer to see that field, not as a self-contained "allotment," but as part of a landscape in which temporal and geographical, or better national, demarcation lines merge into a more coherent and organic picture. Looked at from such an angle this picture shows two main processes at work: on the one hand, the gradual disintegration and final break up of the tonal basis on which music had stood so firmly for the last three centuries; and, on the other, the various attempts at laying fresh foundations on which to build a new and modern art. These two processes—part and parcel of an evolutionary development—overlapped yet a rough dividing line may be drawn about the middle of the first decade of our century. The years fom about 1900 to the beginning of the last war marked the end of romanticism in music and the beginning of what is commonly termed modern music. One of the chief characteristics of romantic music was that the accent was laid on the emotional side. Romantic music was the language of feelings and emotions *par excellence*. No other work showed the essential character of romanticism in music in a more revealing light than Wagner's *Tristan*. Its intense emotionalism seemed to Wagner's contemporaries to go to the very limit of what music was able to express in the way of intense and subjective feeling. Yet this emotionalism experienced a further intensification toward the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries which, naturally enough, manifested itself with particular force in German music. There was the extreme emotional character of Mahler's *Lied*

von der Erde (1908) and his *Ninth Symphony* (1910). There was the highly concentrated and super-charged atmosphere of Schönberg's early works such as the *Kammersymphonie* op. 9 (1906) and the Second String Quartet op. 10 (1907-8). And finally, there were Strauss's "pathological" operas *Salome* (1905) and *Elektra* (1909), with their hysterical explosions and morbid outcries. Music was gradually made to yield every ounce of its expressive possibilities, so much so that finally, as in the case of Schönberg, a single note, a single interval, the colour of a single chord and the timbre of a single instrument received a significance unknown to the music of previous days. As always in art, new ideas and new tendencies create their own technique or, at any rate, develop technical features of their own. In his *Tristan* and his *Parsifal*, Wagner had already shown how the underlying high emotional tension corresponded to an increased use of chromaticism. The consequences were far-reaching. For intensified chromaticism gradually led to an increase of the dissonances, the expansion of the orbit of the major-minor tonality and, incidentally, to obscured tonal relations. The difference between Wagner's style and that of the later German romantics was not one of kind but of degree. For the technical characteristics found in Wagner are also to be found in Strauss and Mahler and the early Schönberg where they appear merely in a more developed and more elaborate form. True, there was a time when the Strauss of *Salome* and *Elektra* seemed a radical revolutionary but in retrospect his style appears as essentially Wagnerian, trimmed with certain new harmonic and orchestral devices. After *Elektra*, Strauss became a "reactionary" in the sense that he returned to the language of his early tone-poems and wrote romantic operas in which the modern element is reduced to not much more than a flavouring spice.

If one may say of Strauss and Mahler that they

consolidated Wagner's heritage, Schönberg, a younger man, tried to break away from it. After having digested the lessons learned from Wagner, he realised that if he intended to go further in the expression of highly emotional "contents," the language of his contemporaries, however advanced it may have seemed at the time, was not adequate. What he was aiming at was music which, completely freed from what he regarded as impediments, should follow in the most direct, most subtle and most flexible manner the complicated, intricate, abstract and extremely concentrated nature of his musical thoughts.

To create such a musical language was a process that occupied Schönberg from about the time of his Second String Quartet op. 10. The way to it had been shown by Wagner. Schönberg, adopting a free chromatic style, did away with the classical laws of chord building, chord progressions, the resolution of dissonances, key organisation and major-minor tonality. What determined the structure of this music were the purely colouristic and *expressive* qualities of vertical (harmonic) and horizontal (melodic) elements. We thus arrive at the expressionistic style of Schönberg's middle period which includes such works as *Das Buch der hängenden Garten*, op. 15 (1908), the *Drei Klavierstücke*, op. 11 (1909), and the melodrama *Pierrot Lunaire*, op. 21 (1912). It is music of an extreme individualism, an individualism that makes no endeavour to be understood by the *hoi polloi*, the great mass of ordinary music-lovers. It is an art for the few initiated. No wonder if this kind of music, in which the logic of its structure is so personal and subjective and so fundamentally different from that of tonal music, strikes the ordinary listener as chaotic and devoid of intelligible meaning. It has, of course, its logic and its meaning however elusive and hidden. Seen in the light of Schönberg's later development, his expressionistic works mark a transitionary

phase of a more or less experimental character. They were instrumental in preparing the ground for a new musical style, the so-called twelve-note or atonal style—perhaps the most important contribution to the evolution of modern music. It grew out of Schönberg's free chromaticism and matured in the years during and after the last war.

Let us here pause for a moment and consider other important developments. While Mahler, Strauss, and the early Schönberg were advancing in the direction in which *Tristan* had pointed, and while also composers of other countries were living, as it were, on Wagner's heritage, there was one musician who tried to emancipate himself from the dominating German influence. This was Debussy. He had been an ardent admirer of Wagner's. But he gradually became aware of the danger for French music of Wagnerian, or shall we say Teutonic, emotionalism by which the musical countries of Europe, and particularly France, were swept in the 'eighties and 'nineties. He recognised it as alien and detrimental to the very essence of French art and French thought. Though technically indebted to the composer of *Tristan* and *Parsifal*, he tried to oppose him by an art in which the emotional source was deeply buried and only vaguely felt by the elusive and most delicate moods of the music. This music was not to *express* feelings, thoughts and metaphysical ideas—which is the German way of looking upon music—it was to *mirror* those indefinable impressions and reactions which sound, light, the colour and shade of objects of the surrounding world produce on almost morbidly refined senses. Debussy's impressionism, this veiled and evocative art, was the very antithesis to the almost exhibitionistic emotionalism of his German contemporaries. It broke the spell of Wagner's magic. With its consummate technique of novel harmonic and instrumental devices it influenced European music at the beginning of our

century to such an extent that Debussy's idiom seemed for a time to become a universally accepted language. It was the last occasion in the history of music that the individual style of a composer left an indelible mark on the music of so many different countries.

The Frenchman's cult of the purely sensuous qualities of music resulted in a technique that was found particularly suitable for amalgamation with the nationalistic tendencies of certain non-French composers such as de Falla's in Spain, and Vaughan William's and Delius's in England. Even German music did not entirely escape French impressionism as witnessed by such phenomena as Schönberg's *Farbenmelodie* and the luscious *Klangstil* of Schreker's operas.

Yet despite its novelty and its attraction, Debussy's path proved in the end a *cul de sac*. His impressionism was an idiom too personal and too limited to allow of much further development. The appeal of this primarily sensuous music reached saturation point comparatively soon. But even before it came to that, music at the beginning of the twentieth century received a new and vital impetus. It was an impetus that blew like an invigorating breeze through the hot-house atmosphere of the decaying German romanticism and the morbid, over-refined nerve-music of French impressionism. It came from the tremendous rhythmic vitality of two composers—Bartók and Stravinsky. Both derived their force from the folkmusic of their respective countries, Hungary and Russia. Both followed at first the line of pure nationalism which was a characteristic tendency in the music at the turn of the last century. (Incidentally, Bartók, by his researches into Hungarian folkmusic, established a clear distinction between the music of the Magyars and the pseudo-nationalism of the Hungarian Gipsies.) But they soon began to speak their individual language in which the national elements were happily absorbed and became,

as, for instance, in the case of Vaughan William, de Falla, and Janacek, a matter of essential thought rather than of actual substance. Yet, despite this amalgamation, Bartók and Stravinsky retained the elemental and, at times, almost barbaric force of their national rhythm. The underlying nationalism of the music of these two composers resulted in a loosening of the diatonic major-minor tonality. Modal turns, pentatonic and whole-tone scales—already used by the early Russian nationalist composers who in their turn had influenced Debussy and other impressionists—the avoidance of leading-notes and so on, shook the foundation of classical tonality—a process that ran parallel with Schönberg's free chromatic style. Besides, other phenomena pointing to important developments in the music of the post-war period were gradually making their appearance such as bitonality and polytonality—the contrapuntal combination of two and more melodies which belong to different keys and thus move on different tonal planes—and linear writing in which melodic lines are contrapuntally set against each other with little regard for the vertical result, thus leading to the most dissonant harmonic clashes.

This was in rough outlines the general picture of music during the years shortly before the last war. Music seemed to be in the melting-pot. Its changes bespoke a new feeling that was coming to the surface and was gradually altering the physiognomy of traditional nineteenth-century art. This process was characterised by a certain ruthlessness and a certain hard and uncompromising directness of artistic aims which were partly the offshoot of the realism that had been asserting itself in the late nineteenth century, partly the outcome of a general feeling that an old world was dying, the world of romanticism with its relative values, and that, perhaps, a new age was heralding itself in which plain reason, more matter-of-fact ideas and thoughts,

and a more human outlook on life and its various problems would bring about a change to the better of humanity. Such ideas were behind the apparently revolutionary character of early twentieth-century literature, painting and music. The war of 1914-1918 seemed, on the surface, to put a stop to all that. But actually its effect was in the opposite direction. It undermined what was left of the nineteenth-century traditions. So much so that the post-war period was expected to bring the millennium, not only for the arts but for the general political, social and cultural conditions in Europe.

The millennium did not come. Instead, Europe was torn between various political doctrines and creeds, particularly in the vanquished countries of Central Europe where a generally unsettled state of affairs prevailed. The political, economical and social aspects of life in post-war Germany and Austria presented the disturbing picture of almost constant upheavals —the result of a feeling of deep dissatisfaction and even despair at the existing conditions. Music in post-war Europe began to show a disconcerting variety of movements and schools. The various " Isms " which they inscribed on their banner were but a reflection of the political and intellectual split that divided society into so many hostile camps. The music of that period was a true expression of the *Zeitgeist*. There was the music with a political message such as Weill's *Dreigroschenoper* (1928) and *Die Bürgschaft* (1932) in which bourgeois society was pilloried and declared responsible for the social injustices of the time. There was *Gebrauchsmusik*, utility music—a typically German variety—in which an attempt was made to provide contemporary music for the amateur and, thus, to bridge the gulf between the ordinary listener and the more advanced school of writing as Hindemith did with his *Sing-und Spielmusiken fur Liebhaber und Musikfreunde*, op. 45 (1927) and Weill, with his school-opera *Der*

Jasager (1930). Closely linked up with this type was the music specially written for electrical instruments, the film and broadcasting which with the constant progress of technical inventions are providing an ever-growing stimulus for the modern composer. The age of the machine found its " glorification " in music such as Honegger's *Pacific* 231 (1924) and Mossolov's *Iron Foundry* (1930)—cleverly contrived musical, or shall we say unmusical, imitations of steam-engines and factories.

Yet the most important among all these tendencies was the so-called New Objectivity. It aimed at getting away from music with a psychological, emotional and metaphysical background—the essence of Wagnerian art and that of its followers—and to create *Spielmusik*, music which was free of any non-musical association and essentially a matter of weaving sound patterns for their own sakes. With its abhorrence of subjective emotion and feeling, its hatred for everything rhetorical, colourful and sensuous, with its marked tendency to simple and terse statements, this new music gradually became an abstract art and initiated the neo-classicistic style the dominant characteristic of which was a preference for the strict old musical forms such as fugue, passacaglia, suite, sonata, variations, oratorio and cantata,—a reaction against the romantic forms of the music-drama and the tone-poem—and contrapuntal writing. Significantly enough, the slogan at the time was " Back to Bach." Neo-classicism was the very antithesis of romanticism, both technically and aesthetically, and was typical of the general trend of music in the 'twenties and early 'thirties. The great number of composers who cultivated the new style included such figures as Stravinsky, his younger replica, Prokofiev, the group of French composers known for a time as *Les Six* with Milhaud and Honegger as their most gifted members, Krenek, Hindemith and Holst.

It is true that the neo-classicistic style was an antidote

against the unrestrained emotionalism of the post-Wagnerian period and in many ways a reflection of the matter-of-fact attitude of the more advanced intellectual circles. But in the long run it proved unsatisfactory, for it went to the other extreme. Neo-classicistic works tended to become not much more than mechanical weaving of insignificant sound patterns, and the cultivation of pure objectivity and technique for its own sake often resulted in insipid and drily cerebral music. About the middle of the 'thirties a reaction began to set in which was particularly striking in the very same composers who shortly before had been subscribing to the view that the " motoric " qualities of a finger-study by Czerny came much nearer to pure and objective music than a Beethoven sonata. Thus a romantic, or shall we say a more human, feeling was sneaking back into the music of the late 'thirties and beginning to form oases in the deserts of dry counterpoint and ' non-emotional ' objectivity which was as often as not a cover for lack of imagination.

While music on the Continent indulged in these various experiments, English musicians showed, on the whole, a more restrained attitude to radical tendencies. This was partly due to England's inherent conservatism, partly to the Englishman's markedly aesthetic approach to all matters concerning art. The older generation of British composer with Vaughan Williams, Holst and Ireland as its most important figures, as well as some of their followers like Rubbra and Moeran, made successful attempts to create a national art which was based partly on the English folksong, partly on the great music of the Tudor composers. The younger generation realising the inevitable limitations of a style in which conscious nationalism was so predominant, emancipated themselves and followed a less restrained and more international line, such as Bliss, Walton and Bush. Even Vaughan Williams was affected by this continental trend in the

more recent British music as witness his *Symphony in F minor* (1935) while the youngest British composers such as Britten and Berkeley are steering a wholly international and eclectic course.

In this constant ebb and flow of more or less short-lived tendencies which make the picture of European music during the 'twenties and 'thirties so diffuse and complicated, there was one firm rock. This was the Viennese school of atonal composers. Whatever one's view on the music of this school, one fact stands out beyond dispute that Schönberg and some of his disciples have shown a consistent and continual development in one and the same direction. They succeeded in creating a truly *new* music which was entirely free of the eclecticism of other contemporary movements. I have already spoken of Schönberg's free chromaticism in the works of his middle period which resulted in the gradual destruction of all the essential laws of tonal music. I said that it was music of an extreme individualism. And so was its technique. So much so that to the outsider it seemed obscure and inchoate. Now Schönberg realised that if there was to be a further evolution of his style, the new laws that, consciously or unconsciously, guided him, had to be formulated and clearly laid down. In other words, a rationale of his atonal technique was necessary. It was not until the early 'twenties that Schönberg evolved what he called "composing with the twelve notes." This system—revolutionary in appearance but actually the logical outcome of his free chromatic style—was founded on the tone-rows, that is, series of notes containing all the twelve chromatic notes. Every composition has to be based on such a tone-row which may be regarded as the "key" and at the same time the thematic reservoire from which to derive motives, themes and chords. As the tone-row is a purely melodic or horizontal phenomenon it follows that twelve-note music is

primarily contrapuntal or linear, its vertical aspect, *i.e.* harmonies being chiefly determined by the movements of the various parts.

It would be little use to discuss in a general article the details of this abstruse and complicated technique. But this much may be said that twelve-note music has opened up a number of technical possibilities which have not yet been fully explored. Moreover, it has greatly added to the purely expressive qualities of music; works such as Schönberg's Fourth String Quartet, op. 37 (1939) and Berg's *Wozzek* (1925), his *Lyrische Suite* (1927) and the Violin Concerto (1935) show the high degree of intense and concentrated lyrical expression that can be reached by twelve-note music. Much as its structural and general technical aspects present a fascinating study to the intellect, it is on the plane of a most expressive lyricism that twelve-note music has given us new and intrinsic aesthetic values.

And what of music's future? To predict the effect the present war will have on further developments is well-nigh impossible. One fact is, however, certain—political events of a radical nature do seriously interfere with the free and unhampered growth of music. This has already been proved in peace-time. For instance, in the so-called totalitarian states, music, like everything else, has become *gleichgeschaltet*. Germany, once one of the leading musical nations, has, in accordance with its general principle of stifling and destroying every progressive and advanced intellectual activity, declared modern art as "cultural bolshevism" and is nowadays producing music in which the cult of German folksong combined with a dull and antiquated kind of nineteenth-century romanticism has led to results as insipid as they are insignificant. So far, the theory of "blood and soil" has most miserably failed to beget anything else but musical nonentities. Even in Russia, with her generally progressive ideas, the modern composer is forced to

conform to the aesthetic rules as laid down by the political authorities and to write music whose chief criterion is its appeal to the great proletarian masses. Here, too, the artistic results have so far not been encouraging. Politics and music do not seem to go well together, at least not when music is lowered to the rôle of a handmaid of short-lived political propaganda whatever its aims. This does not mean to say that the modern composer should not seek his inspirational source in political ideas and events. Politics, in their broadest sense, affect every aspect of life nowadays, and it would be contrary to every psychological law if in his work the artist would not respond to it, consciously or unconsciously. Yet from the point of view of aesthetic values it is a matter of indifference where he derives his inspiration from. It is the translation, or better transformation, of an originally non-artistic stimulus into purely artistic terms by which the work of the artist must be judged. It is the purely artistic result that counts. This, I believe, is the only reasonable answer that can be given to the vexed question of politics and music. (I have allowed myself this little digression because the above issue has of late become a much-discussed topic among modern composers).

As I said before, to indicate the course of music's further development is impossible. The trends of modern music during the years between the two great wars have been too erratic and contradictory to venture a safe forecast. Yet would it be too much to hope that, if the outcome of the present struggle leads to the New Europe as envisaged by the best minds among the democratic nations, music and the other arts will in time, perhaps, show a more homogenuous and more harmonius picture, and establish that standard of true beauty and formal perfection of which I spoke at the outset?

MOSCO CARNER

MOSCO CARNER was born in Vienna in 1904 *where he studied music at Vienna University. For several years he was operatic conductor at Vienna and Danzig. Political events in Germany forced him to leave the country and he established himself in London as a conductor and music critic. Besides being a regular contributor to such papers as* THE LISTENER, MUSIC AND LETTERS, THE RADIO TIMES, *he is the author of a "Life of Dvorak" and a forthcoming book on contemporary harmony.*

VÍTĚZSLAV NEZVAL

THREE POEMS OF PRAGUE

Translated from the Czech by Ewald Osers

NIGHT OF ACACIAS

Two or three days of love has life: then this withered
tree hangs full of a thousand bees and blossoms,
Like the one night in June when the acacias bloom
and die.
The river is wearing a chaplet of lights and is fragrant
with embalmed bathers,
The streets are suddenly wide and sparkling like beauty
shops.
From beyond the river over hanging bridges, with a
rosary of lights,
Invisible gardens are on the march, colliding with
walkers;
They're off to their rendezvous with the parks and the
alleys of the central squares and main streets.
Benumbed I do not recognise the old streets of the
New City
Whose plain and graceless walls are to-day majestic as
palace courts.

O night of acacias, of fountains and of that treacherous
pianissimo, stay,
Make me for ever yearn for love and for Prague;
O night at the end of June, short-lived as passionate
love, as sensual delight.

O night of acacias, do not pass before I have crossed all
the bridges of Prague
In my search for no one, not a friend, not a woman,
not even myself.

O night with summer in your wake, I long to breathe
unendingly your ebon hair;
Your diamonds have bewitched me, I want to look for
them in the waters, poor fisherman that I am.

Oh if at least I could say au revoir to you,
O night in June,
If I were never to see you again,
Let me dissolve in your embrace, my evil fate, my love.

LILAC

I don't love flowers,
I love women.
Yet I slept beneath the lilac.
From afar came the breath of a cellar,
Stuffy as main street flats under the artificial night
Of your artificial eyes,
Of your artificial lips,
Of your artificial breasts and hair styles.
I love you, bunch of lilac,
On the promenade where the gardens step out in the
evening
With roses untold.
Her breasts covered in rose petals
Prague breathes through open windows
Cool twilight.
And while I was asleep
The lilac burst into flower on St. Wenceslas Square.

PANORAMA OF PRAGUE

Like berets thrown into the air,
Berets of boys, cocottes and cardinals,
Turned into stone by the sorcerer Zito
At the great feast;
Berets with Chinese lanterns
On the eve of St. John's Day
When fireworks are let off;—

Yet also like a town of umbrellas opened skyward as
shields against rockets :

All this is Prague.

Leaning over a wall
I want to break this twig of wonderful blossoms.

My eyes drink in the lights of the great merry-go-round
Whose ringing chimes are calling homeward
All its barges and stray horses,
Whose ringing chimes are calling homeward
All sparks of light.

VÍTĚZLAV NEZVAL (*born* 1900) *is considered by many to be the most talented of the new generation of Czechoslovak poets. He has been much influenced by the surrealist movement, as can be seen from the bizarre names of some of his collections of poems* : *Podivuhodny Kouzelnik* (*The Marvellous Magician*), *Papousek na motocyklu* (*The Parrot on the Motor-cycle*), *Falesny Mariás* (*Cardsharpers*), *Akrobat* (*The Acrobat*) *and Básne Noci* (*Poems of the Night*). *The last-named volume is his masterpiece, and contains the long reflective poem* EDISON *in which Nezval's view of life expresses itself in full force. The poems published here are taken from his collection Praha Prsty Deste* (*Prague Through Fingers of Rain*).

JOHN LEHMANN

THE HEART OF THE PROBLEM

IN looking back on the prose and poetry of the writers of the last decade, it is difficult not to feel how incomplete, on the whole, their vision was, how repeated their failure to assemble the fragments of their inspiration, brilliant as they often were, and to give their work that final imaginative intensity which has always been the characteristic of great art. Even before the outbreak of the present war, this sense of disappointment had been growing, of sitting at a spectacle which resolved itself into an endless series of picturesque *divertissements*, no finished ballet ever emerging. And now that we are, all of us, brought into even closer contact with the violent manifestations of the European crisis, now that we can no longer be satisfied with playful excursions into our problems or disjointed annotations on them, and can put our fingers more surely on the weak spots in those diagrams of existence which theorists have so persuasively constructed, our sharpened craving begins more clearly to define the thing it lacks. It is direct and painful experience in our own flesh and nerves of the results of past mistakes, of slick and shoddy thinking and agreeable sentimentalities, which is leading us, both artists and audience, to search for a deeper and more co-ordinated interpretation of the world we live in, an interpretation which, by helping us to understand its nature with the X-rays of the poetic imagination, will make it possible for us to adapt ourselves to it,—and finally dominate it.

Many novels in the years before the war were indeed written with a range of scene and character covering several countries and even continents, but nearly all lacked that final quality which alone can give such ambitious canvasses any artistic meaning. They said a

great deal on a great many topics, but they generally failed to come as near the centre of our spiritual predicament as far more limited fragments and experiments. Here, surely, is the task for the artist of to-morrow we are all looking for: to take the whole scene of Europe, and give it poetic depth. It will not matter in how many lands this artist has loved, fought, watched, listened and suffered, provided that in those aspects of the European crisis which he knows at first hand his experience has been complete enough for him to penetrate the rest imaginatively; provided that he has a European mind. Not cosmopolitan, for that implies something superficial and pretentious; but a mind that can see the culture and the life impulses of Europe as a whole, nourished from one central stem. There has been more than enough national and local peculiarity in the literature of recent generations; in attempting to achieve a wider, European synthesis, which modern conditions not only make more possible than ever before but insistently demand, the artist will be regaining a tradition that is extremely old in western civilisation; it is Tolstoi's tradition, but older than Tolstoi, as old as the longing for European peace and unity, dating back to the Middle Ages, and beyond them to the Roman Empire, and perhaps beyond that to civilisations whose traces are all but lost to us.

To demand a Tolstoi is to expect a phenomenon that only appears at the best about once in every three or four generations; the important thing is that the writer of the future should cultivate his attitude to experience and to art. The three recently published books I wish to discuss here have, it seems to me, a particularly interesting bearing on this subject. They are: Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*, and Franz Hoellering's *The Defenders*.

The themes of these books are themes which are actual to all Europeans, to us in this country as much as

anywhere else, though no one of them is written by an Englishman. One is about events in a state which, though never named, is admittedly the author's image of modern Russia; another is about events in Spain, and the third about events in Austria,—all in the last decade. Hoellering is indeed an Austrian writing about his own country, but Hemingway is an American writing about Spaniards; Koestler, too, is a foreigner to the state in which he sets his scene; but it is the clearest evidence of the essential identity of the present crisis in all countries of Europe, and of the inevitable connection with the crisis of America—that enormous projection of Europe's hopes and powers,—that the problems and passions, the dramatic sequence of events these three authors take as their material in three different countries, are our problems and passions, and working out, whatever surface differences there may be, in the dramatic sequence in which we recognise ourselves as fatally involved. And the fact that the present war is indeed in one sense the culminating expression of Prussianism, and the supreme attempt of the great Central European land-power to seize world power from the maritime empires of the West, does not make it any the less the result of a spiritual crisis that is common to the whole of Europe, and to all that world outside Europe the seeds of whose culture came from her.

It is not possible to contend that these three authors are more than partly successful in reflecting in their artistic mirror the true features of this crisis. No one of them has the range and depth of vision of a Tolstoi, or even of the Hardy who wrote *The Dynasts*; and, except for Hoellering's book which is the weakest in artistic power, they are strongly coloured by the foreigner's subjectivity. Hemingway's Spain, as Arturo Barea has recently pointed out in an extremely penetrating essay, is not the real Spain that Spaniards know, but a brilliant modification of it through Hemingway's

subjective world and particular knowledge of certain aspects of Spain. Koestler has contrived his picture of the modern Soviet state-machine partly from his own prison experiences in other countries, partly from the extremely detailed accounts of the Russian Trials which were published at the time, and whose philosophical implications he has followed out with astonishing subtlety, partly from intimate personal knowledge of many intellectual revolutionaries,—some of whom suffered in the purges. The picture of what went on in the cells of the state-prisons of his book may or may not be true to the practice of Russian political police,—I am not concerned with that here,—but no one who has experienced events in Europe during the past fifteen years and tried to probe beneath the surface of his experience, can fail to recognise that certain tendencies of European thought are here portrayed and analysed with painful veracity, that all the things Koestler describes were perfectly possible given the way men were judging and acting in the thirties, and not merely in Soviet Russia. This is also true of Hemingway's partly imaginary Spain. And when one reads the three books together, one finds very much the same results following from the same ideas and impulses. In spite of the fact three writers of such varying gifts are dealing with three scenes of action so far away from one another, in spite of the differences of temperament and the great differences of judgment which emerge on many points, nevertheless there are moments in all three books when one feels that the authors are about to say the same thing, to discover an identical diagnosis of Europe's ills: moments when, in their three converging underground tunnels, each can hear the pickaxes of the others hammering away, though they have still to meet.

In all three books one finds the progress of the European crisis in the thirties depicted, and the features

which make it so terrifying, which make it seem sometimes as if the whole machine of our lives were running downhill without brakes, and with gathering momentum. Here are the enormous possibilities of power offered by modern science and modern methods of organisation, and the reckless exploitation of those possibilities in a moral void; the phenomenon that follows from this, of ideas appropriate to long superseded stages of technical development existing in a jumble in society side by side with ultra-new conceptions appropriate to the very latest mechanical discoveries; and the all-embracing phenomenon of men seeking desperate remedies for an unjust, poisoned state of society, men who are tortured by the lack of joy in their lives but only seem able to redress that lack through violence or extremism of one sort or another. Who is happy in these books? Perhaps here and there, for brief moments, happiness seems to be attained, but it is unhappiness, the cry of despair that remains in one's ears after reading them. As the crisis between the Dollfuss Government and the organised workers advances with fatal logic in the Vienna of Hoellering's book, it is the outburst of the Social-Democratic leader's wife that one remembers:

> 'When will it start—to-day, to-morrow? Continuously I ask myself. I tell you we won't survive it. But I'm not afraid of that; on the contrary. What I can't bear is that everything came out differently from the way we dreamed and wanted it. Somewhere a great error is hidden and I can't find it. . . .'

And in the last few hours before action, in that tiny episode on a tiny point of one front in the Spanish War which is Hemingway's scene, among the most moving passages, one that remains longest in the mind from a memorable book, is the meditation of the peasant Andres, as he makes his way back to the commander

Goltz at headquarters with a message from Robert Jordan:

'If our father had not been a Republican both Eladio and I would be soldiers now with the fascists and if one were a soldier with them then there would be no problem. One would obey orders and one would live or die and in the end it would be however it would be. It was easier to live under a regime than to fight it. But this irregular fighting was a thing of much responsibility. There was much worry if you were one to worry. Eladio thinks more than I do. Also he worries. I believe truly in the cause and I do not worry. But it is a life of much responsibility. I think that we are born into a time of great difficulty, he thought. I think any other time was probably easier. One suffers little because all of us have been formed to resist suffering. They who suffer are unsuited to this climate. But it is a time of difficult decisions. The fascists attacked and made our decision for us. We fight to live. But I would like to have it so that I could tie a handkerchief to that bush back there and come in the daylight and take the eggs and put them under a hen and be able to see the chicks of the partridge in my own courtyard. I would like such small and regular things. . . .'

Again, in all three books one finds this theme continually recurring: that men have embraced great ideals, or what seemed to be great ideals, but in embracing them have as it were been tricked by fate into crime and disaster. And again and again men are confronted by the irony of fighting and facing death in a struggle which they feel in their hearts has only been the result of foolish blunders; in which they know their leaders are either without the necessary will to victory, or already corrupted by power, or using them cynically as pawns in a game where the reality is very different from the surface appearance; in which

their intellect tells them that success is hopeless. In Hoellering's book one sees the young workers of the Schutzbund realise almost as soon as they have taken up arms that they are too late, that the plan has failed before it was put into action. They watch the expresses roar by in the night,—and that means the railway workers have failed to come out in support of them; they find that papers are still to be bought in the streets,—and that means the printers have stayed by their machines. In Hemingway's book Robert Jordan, who has been thinking back over all his experiences in the cities where the web of the war has been spun, knows that intrigues and self-seeking calculations have ruined his attack before zero hour. In Koestler's book the revolutionary ex-commissar Rubashov, after he has made his final public confession, grasps in a moment of tragic illumination that it is his own idealism and fanaticism that have him by the throat:

> 'Too late to go back again the same way, to step once more in the graves of his own footprints. Words could undo nothing. Too late for all of them. When the hour came to make their last appearance before the world, none of them could turn the dock into a rostrum, none of them could unveil the truth to the world and hurl back the accusation to his judges, like Danton. Some were silenced by physical fear, like Hare-lip; some hoped to save their heads; others at least to save their wives or sons from the clutches of the Gletkins. The best of them kept silence in order to do a last service to the Party, by letting themselves be sacrificed as scapegoats,—and, besides, even the best had each an Arlova on his conscience. They were too deeply entangled in their own past, caught in the web they had spun themselves, according to the laws of their own twisted ethics and twisted logic; they were all guilty, although not of those deeds of which they accused themselves.

There was no way back for them. . . .'

I do not think one can read these three novels, each casting its individual light on a separate portion of the European anatomy, without feeling that there is in all of them an implicit appeal for a return to human values: the burden of their poetry is that our age is destroying itself by too great a belief in material power and dogma. Here they seem to be nearing at least the centre of our spiritual distress; and one might profitably examine more closely the difference between them and the 'political' novels which were being written a few years before, observing the more sombre note of doubt and suffering that has crept in,—though it could already be detected in Malraux's novel of the Spanish War, *Days of Hope*. For the moment, however, the point that seems most important to make is this: that these three books are indeed attempting to diagnose through art the European crisis of our times, but that in no one of them does the diagnosis go far enough to satisfy our imaginative demands, made so much keener by the hard experience of this war. They are, rather, pointers, of varying effectiveness, along a new road that the genius of the future may explore to its end.

DEMETRIOS CAPETANAKIS

THE GREEKS ARE HUMAN BEINGS

I HAVE heard many impressive things about the Parthenon from Greeks and foreigners, but nothing was as painful to me as the words that Constantin Tsatsos, a young professor of philosophy in the University of Athens, used to repeat in his lectures: "We are interested in the Parthenon, not in the workmen who built it. What matters is the work of art, not human beings." His voice was fiery, his gestures prophetic. It sounded overwhelming, but I was revolted. It was so inhuman that it could not be true. I was very young then, but I was feeling in some obscure way that the Parthenon must be so interesting because it speaks of the interesting people who needed it and made it, and because it can still be mirrorred in the eyes of people and affect their lives. What matters is human beings and what becomes of them. That is why, although I want to write something about the modern Greek mind, I am anxious to discuss the people rather than their work. Only if one knows the people, can one understand their works. And in this country modern Greeks are little known.

We can even say that the more educated an Englishman is, the more difficult it is for him to see Greece of to-day as she really is. He has done classics at school, perhaps also at the university, and Greece means for him a world of unreal perfection, of suggestive sounds, of fascinating verses and beautiful but intangible forms. Virginia Woolf called one of her essays "On not knowing Greek" because she realised that the Greek of the classical studies had little to do with any Greek historical reality. In this essay she described in a charming way what Greece means to the most cultivated circles in England: "It is vain and foolish to talk of knowing

Greek, since in our ignorance we should be at the bottom of any class of schoolboys, since we do not know how the words sounded, or where precisely we ought to laugh, or how the actors acted. . . When we read a stanza in a chorus, the end or the opening of a dialogue of Plato's, a fragment of Sappho, when we bruise our minds upon some tremendous metaphor in the *Agamemnon* instead of stripping the branch of its flowers instantly as we do in reading *Lear*—are we not reading wrongly losing our sharp sight in the haze of associations? reading into Greek poetry not what they have but what we lack? Does not the whole of Greece heap itself behind every line of its literature? They admit us to a vision of the earth unravaged, the sea unpolluted, the maturity, tried but unbroken, of mankind. . . . Back and back we are drawn to steep ourselves in what, perhaps, is only an image of the reality, not the reality itself, a summer's day imagined in the heart of a northern winter."

Such dreams can have a tremendous importance in the forming of a civilization—and among them the dream of Greece has been the most effective—but their interference with everyday life can be sometimes misleading. A Greek in England feels often embarrassed when he is introduced to classical scholars. Their eyes accustomed to read Greek texts, do not see clearer for that; instead of seeing the Greek who stands before them as he really is, they fold him in so many verses they know by heart, in so many names of heroes, poets, philosophers or artists they admire, in so many memories from their school or college life, that the poor Greek, who feels himself decked with so much that has but little to do with himself, is overwhelmed. It is still worse when he feels that he is not only associated with the classical studies of the other, but is also compared to the ideal of a Greek the other holds. He feels that the proportions of his body are mentally compared to the proportions

of a Greek statue representing a god, a hero or an athlete, and that his nose puzzles the other because it is not as straight as the famous "Greek nose." The modern Greek is very proud of his ancestors, of course, but he does not like much to be considered only in relation to them. He is more or less conscious of being the product of a much longer history than the few centuries of ancient Greece—he also is conscious of belonging to his own age. He is a reality here and now and he may feel uneasy when his questioner tries to place him by transposing him to a world of dream. Imagine a Greek seeing the person to whom he is introduced receiving the formal words: "this is X. from Greece" as if they were the lines by which Marlowe's Faust is introducing the ghost of Helen of Troy to his guests:

Gentlemen,
For that I know your friendship is unfeigned,
You shall behold this peerless dame of Greece,
No other ways for pomp and majesty,
Than when Sir Paris cross'd the seas with her,
And brought the spoils to rich Dardania.

Such scenes are not rare in the circles of the highly educated. But the opposite extreme, perhaps more misleading, is also frequent in them. Some others who do not want to be deceived by their classical associations, refuse to associate modern Greece with any of the great periods of her history and they insist on seeing in her only her less attractive aspect. More than a hundred years ago, at the time of the great enthusiasm for Greece, Maria Edgeworth, the Irish novelist, described this attitude in one of her characters. "Greece is a dangerous field for a political speculator," she made him say; "the imagination produces an illusion . . .; the reflected images of ancient Grecian glory pass in a rapid succession before the mental eye; and delighted with the captivating forms of greatness and splendour,

we forget for a moment that the scene is in reality a naked waste." Mrs. Edgeworth's character was wrong; what was happening in Greece at this time was more fascinating and more significant than anything that the imagination could produce. In the two Greek poets of the time, Solomos and Calvos, one could hardly find any "naked waste." But Mrs. Edgeworth's character preferred not to know anything; it is so much easier and so much more effective to be the man who does not want to be deceived. It is not surprising that to-day many people have adopted this same attitude towards Greece. By doing so they think they show realistic, sober minds. They forget that this attitude obscures the view as much as enthusiasm, besides being less noble. If they happen to be admirers of T. S. Eliot, for instance, their representation of a modern Greek is the M. Eugenides of the lines:

Under the brown fog of a winter noon
M. Eugenides, the Smyrna merchant
Unshaven, with a pocket full of currants
C.i.f. London: documents at sight,
Asked me in demotic French
To luncheon at the Cannon Street Hotel
Followed by a weekend at the Metropole.

Many business men in London must have met T. S. Eliot's M. Eugenides, the rich vulgar Greek merchant, and they no doubt think of him when they hear of Greece. That is very misleading, as misleading as to think of the age of Pericles when one hears of Greek history. The Greeks of to-day are neither lingering specimens of a race that worked wonders two thousand years ago, nor a Balkan people without any past and without any roots in the history of their land. If one wants to understand them, one must connect them to the whole rather than to some periods of their history, and see them at the same time as modern Europeans. It would be a great pity if the

Greeks were still what they were at the time of Pericles. The history of their sensibility would be much too poor.

A history of the Greek sensibility through the ages—analogous to Virginia Woolf's "Orlando," that delightful history of the English sensibility from the Elizabethan age to our days—would be an extremely rich and thrilling work. The Greek Orlando would be among other things a hero of the Homeric age, divine in his manly strength and weakness; a youth of the Academy of Plato with a mind burning with love; a soldier conquering Asia and the world of wonders under Alexander the Great; a fastidious poet in Alexandria handling words as if they were pearls; the man of taste under the Romans who preferred the peaceful and limited happiness of life in his own country to the "crowd" of Rome; a plotting courtier in Constantinople or a Byzantine monk painting emaciated saints in a background of gold; a scholar refugee teaching Greek to the Italians of the Renaissance; a brigand under the Turks, living on the mountains "in the company of the woods and the wild beasts" and winning his freedom by his sword; a "great interpreter" at the Sultan's court, a refined European in an oriental country ignoring Europe; a hero of the war of the Greek independence believing that "one hour's freedom is better than a long life of slavery"; an enthusiastic democrat of the nineteenth century, and finally a twentieth century man full of vitality, who only a short while ago proved, in the way he fought the invaders of his country, that "he still has a soul in his breast."*

The Greek through his history has had so many experiences, so many ups and downs,—nothing human, neither the lowest nor the highest was refused to him.

* See P. Prevelakis "Poem" in Folios of New Writing, Spring, 1941, p. 70.

THE GREEKS ARE HUMAN BEINGS

The only thing that never changed in Greek civilization was its male character. There were times when the Greek could be called effeminate, as during the Hellenistic and Roman periods, but Greece never lost its manliness. In no time of Greek history do we find women setting the tone—as in the France of Louis XIV for instance—unless we go back to prehistoric times in Crete. Historians said that it was a feminine civilization —but it is too long ago, no one can know anything certain about it; besides we are not interested in history whose traces cannot be found in the present.

What matters is not history as history, but human beings. What matters is the Greeks of to-day and what will become of them. What now matters is humanity and what will become of it.

DEMETRIOS CAPETANAKIS, born in 1913, *is a young Greek writer who has studied at the Universities of Athens, Heidelberg, Cambridge (King's College), and who is the author of several volumes of essays. He now works in the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs in London.*

PANTELIS PREVELAKIS

TWO POEMS

Translated from the Greek by D. Capetanakis

I

The breezes of freedom blow all round me!
My body, like the standing harp left
idle in the midst of the moaning orchestra,
trembles quietly,
forgotten by the pains, by suffering,
forgotten by necessity.
I listen to the quiet resound:
resonator of the universe,
secret, imperceptible response,
—o miracle of love!—
top of a high tree
moved by the songs of the birds.

II

The sunset entered the room,
a red lion.
His reflection fell on the mirror
and I felt his tender paw
touching my bare feet.
I stooped under my table,
that was sanctified by the work of the day,
and I saw him, the sun, kissing my feet
with his red tongue.

PANTELIS PREVELAKIS is a Greek writer who comes from Crete. He studied in Paris and he knows Spain well. Two years ago he published CHRONICLE OF A TOWN, *which is considered a masterpiece in his country; he followed it with a collection of poems,* THE NAKED POETRY.

JIŘÍ MUCHA

THE TWELFTH DAY

Translated from the Czech by Ewald Osers.

HEAVY, monotonous rain was falling and it beat the smell of the clay out of the earth. Together with the water it got to the skin of the men who were crouching in a small, roughly dug-out trench, and with the mud on the ground it formed a smeary mess. And then there was the smell of wet boots and soaked cigarettes. There were a good many more things to be smelt in that incessant rain: sweat, sopping uniforms and stale oil on the locks of the rifles. Greasy dirt disfigured the unshaven faces, getting more sticky with every cold drop that fell on their foreheads.

Minutes passed, crept towards hours. Everyone was silent, lost in thought. They counted how long it took the water to get from their shoulders to their back, from where it would flow in a little rivulet down into their trousers. Once in the trousers, it would get into their puttees and into their boots. And how long would all this take to get properly dry again? That is, if the rain should stop. But the sky was covered with a uniform, low blanket of cloud which looked as if rain could pour from it indefinitely.

Karel piled up a handful of clay and stones and sat down on it. He was holding his rifle between his knees and was thoroughly enjoying the feeling of relaxation in his taut muscles. He never gave a thought to the enemy. For one thing, no one knew where he was and then there was a bend of the river which was sufficient protection against a surprise attack. What worried him most was that he would not get dry again even in twenty-four hours, and then it would start raining again: again the water would get through his greatcoat to his shoulders, again it would trickle down

his back and into his trousers. The same thing all over again, eternally the same, without any hope that it would ever be otherwise.

A short distance away, Pavelka was crouching, belching loudly every few minutes. Every time he laughed, and somehow it cheered Karel. Somewhere in the distance artillery fire was flaring up.

" Competition for you," remarked Karel.

" They grudge a chap the smallest bit of fun. If we could only have a game of cards ! "

" Man, think of ideals, not of cards ! " But somehow not even the jokes came off to-day. Pavelka did not laugh and the rain splashed into the yellow puddles.

" If I come to think of it—somehow one used to imagine this quite differently." Pavelka leant against the wall of the dug-out and pulled his coat over his head. " As a boy I always wanted to be a soldier and to fight against superior odds. One always wants to be a hero at ten or fifteen. And all I care for now is to get home. To get home, whatever it may cost, and to get my clothes dry. Or take them off and never put them on again. Just to walk through the streets and crawl into bed when it rains."

There was a long silence, as before the eyes of both men arose a marvellous vision : white beds, filled up with eiderdowns and clean linen.

" You know, I sometimes think," Pavelka continued, " that people are fighting wars only to get back into bed again."

" We went into it for quite different reasons." Karel stared at the ground. " That's the funny thing about it."

" We went all right ; but one doesn't think of that until one's back home again."

And now there was a short whizzing. No one had seen anything, no one even knew from which side it had come, but it had whizzed quite close over their heads.

"Don't you think we'd better have a look?" asked Pavelka.

"I guess so." But now it whizzed again; several times. And then a machine-gun came to life like someone beating on a gutter.

Karel lifted himself up and put his head out a little bit, just enough to see the bend of the river: but nothing was moving anywhere. Only over his head the whizzing grew stronger, but it now seemed too high.

"Pavelka?"

"What?"

"Dashed if this isn't from the flank!"

"Blimey!"

And now the grass could be seen moving gently as the bullets were brushing through. Just as if a snake had run through.

"Damn, it *is* from the flank. And their aim's good, the swine!"

Pavelka pressed himself into the clay and carefully looked to the left. It was against the wind and the rain blinded him.

"They must be somewhere over there. But then they must have crossed the river!"

Along the whole trench everyone was now on his feet. It was clear that the enemy had managed to cross the river somewhere downstream, where the French had probably withdrawn, and that they were enveloping the position. And now a few advanced machine guns also opened fire.

"They must be over there on the hillside," said Karel, but Pavelka was still looking somewhere down the river.

"What's the matter?" Karel saw how Pavelka's knees were giving and how he slowly slipped down into the mud. "Are you ill?" Then he could see Pavelka's face full of blood and his eyes staring rigidly, while his helmet slipped down his neck and splashed into a

puddle. Heavy rain was pouring down his motionless face.

Karel crouched like an animal. He was staring, staring, trembling, and he felt an enormous fear taking hold of him.

" Pavelka," he whispered. " Pavelka ! " He tried to move him. To lift his head. He tugged at his shoulders. But the dead man was heavy like a block of stone. The water soaked steadily through his coat, and the blood trickled more and more slowly into the yellowish puddle.

" Shoot, man, shoot ! " someone shouted at him.

But Karel at that moment was too scared to put out his head ; he looked round like a frightened dog and only heard some unintelligible humming inside, urging him to creep into the deepest hole and to pile clay on top of himself, all the clay he could find ; if only he could get away from this whizzing and clattering which was all round him : invisible and frightening, dangerous.

Someone caught his arm.

" Shoot ! Over there, they're on us ! " And the shape of a man pressed itself into the clay beside him and fired somewhere to the left.

Karel wanted to raise his head, to snatch up his rifle, but all kinds of thoughts were flying through his head like birds gone wild. Why get up ? Why fire ? To defend what ? Pavelka too wanted to go home. What use to him now, lying there with his head in the mud and his mouth open ? . . . To wait until all this has passed, to wait, at any price, to live, to live—and, whatever happens, not to put one's head out. . . .

The shape by his side tore the rifle out of his hands and threw his own over to him.

" Load it ! "

Mechanically, Karel pushed the magazine in. He handed the rifle over. The man was still taking aim. A shot. He caught sight of his face. Fire was burning

in his eyes. Flashes of two rows of white teeth.

"Got him. Load!"

Karel loaded, but suddenly he felt ashamed; no, not that, it was envy he felt, envy of the soldier for his flashing teeth and his shining eyes. And with a jerk he pulled himself up, pressed his elbows into the soft earth, and saw before him a man running. More and more of them. But he saw only one of them and at that one he aimed. He felt an iron calm when he pressed the trigger. The man flung out his arms and fell to the ground. Karel went on loading and unloading. He fired. He loaded. He fired. And then he was swept forward by the general wave; one after another they jumped out of the shallow trench and ran through the grass and the rain, while the first hand grenades were exploding.

Then Karel was lying behind a small grassy mound, ready to jump up again. He was hot, there was a noise all round, but his hand was as steady as if it were resting on granite. They're retreating, something shouted in him, they're retreating, and while he was firing mercilessly he felt that he'd like to jump up and embrace the shadows of these men who were trying to get away, one after another. So happy he was that they were being driven off.

He paused for breath. As he looked round through the wet blades of grass it seemed to him as if he heard Pavelka's words: "One doesn't think of this until one is back home again." Think of what? What was he talking about with Pavelka? With Pavelka who was dead! Yes, Pavelka was dead! About the war. About why people went to war. But you only think about that when you get back home again.

And now it didn't matter to Karel at all. Reasons be damned: there was a rifle in his hand which fired and fired again; and the men in front were falling or running. Running before him, before all of them, like

quarries in a big hunt.

Karel got to his feet and ran forward, clasping a live grenade in his hand.

JIŘI MUCHA belongs to the youngest generation of Czechoslovak writers and poets. He was born in Prague in 1915, *and studied not only in his own country but also in France, in America and Switzerland. For many years he was a collaborator of the leading Czech daily* LIDOVE NOVINY, *to which he contributed prose articles and poems; he also wrote for literary periodicals. Munich and the occupation of Czechoslovakia drove him from his country; since the outbreak of war he has been serving in the Czechoslovak Army, first in France and now in Great Britain. He contributes to the Czechoslovak papers appearing abroad and is one of the leading members of the editorial board of the literary monthly* OBZOR *which appears in London.*

FRANTIŠEK HALAS

MARSHES OF MAZUR

Translated from the Czech by David Gascoyne

At whose request does this steel manna fall
The shrapnel's shining fruit with deadly core?
The vacant faces of the dead like palimpsests
Lie sleeping in the mire.

The lice-plagued men now imitate
Their lice and gnaw into earth's skin.
Gas makes a rusty stain across the sky,
Here many lost their way.

The marshes of Mazur where strange frogs dwell . . .
Death's faithless melody from mouths
That the mud seeks to smother
Issues in gruesome song of love:

O Mother
Mother

FRANTIŠEK HALAS (born 1901) *is a poet who has grown from a pessimism reminiscent of Chénier to become a sensitive recorder of the transient beauty of things. His central theme is the yearning and love for life which the spectacle of death inspires. His collections of verse, Kohout Plaší Smrt (The Cock Scares Death), Tvář (Countenance), Staré Ženy (Old Women) and his poems of the Spanish War have placed him beside Nezval at the head of the younger generation of Czechoslovak poets.*

V. S. PRITCHETT

THE UNDYING SCHWEIK

THE great comic characters of fiction are the imbeciles, the rogues and the lunatic martyrs. This is true, at least, of the comic characters of picaresque literature. They are the clowns; to quote Andreyev, they are "he who gets slapped." The delusion of Quixote, the simplicity of Mr. Pickwick, the moodiness of Huck Finn, the hypochondria of Svevo's highbrow Zeno, the genial imbecility of Hasek's "good soldier Schweik," belong to a high tradition. Beginning as fools they end as saints.

Perhaps a distinction is needed here. There is no halo on Huck Finn or Schweik—though if Hasek had not died before completing the huge work he had planned, Schweik's apotheosis might have been achieved—and it seems that we should discriminate between the innocent and the ignorant imbecile. The former, like Quixote, have an innocence which is wafted towards the loftiest human aspirations; the latter, like Schweik, are Sancho Panzas. They do not aspire; they represent the sardonic and disabused criticism of hard-bitten, low-minded experience, the droll comment of human nature falling back on its inexhaustible resources of animal repose. In the end, the contrast is between imagination and criticism. Yet both aspects of the clown spring from the same condition and point to the same moral. They are the children of anarchy and they make anarchy's devastating comment on the stagnation, corruption or tyranny of a reigning order. Rogues, innocents, naturals, lunatics and malingerers, they start by making us laugh, go on to make us feel guilty and end by making us wonder who are the clowns—they or ourselves.

At the time of its publications shortly after the last

war, *The Good Soldier Schweik* read like a farcical elegy on the tyranny of the Austrian Empire and on that perennial subject of satire, the secret police and bureaucracy of Central Europe. Virile and crude, pungent in manner and matter, Hasek also expressed that hatred of the lies, the waste and sloppiness of military life and war which all outside the military profession so violently felt after 1918. Where other writers of war books were to describe the war—fallaciously as it now seems to us—as if it had been directed against them personally, so that the reader was brutalised without experiencing a corresponding purgation, the imagination of the Czech humorist did transform his experiences. Here was a book which was unpretentious in the first place, incomplete too, but which had claims to a more lasting place. Since 1918 Schweik has had a double and even treble span of life. He began as a symbolic figure of the patient and irrepressible Czech struggle for freedom. Our laughter was a bouquet thrown to their triumph and the Czech laughter was a recognition of their own victory. Then with the present war Schweik's patriotic significance has returned, and also he has become the ridiculous hero of the muddle of wartime bureaucracy and military discipline. Before, his opponents were merely the German and Austrian Empires; now as he carelessly plays into the hands of the secret police, congratulates his gaolers on their efficiency, pleads guilty on all charges before he has been told what they are, and makes enthusiastic gestures of approval of his tyrants, he devastates a whole system and philosophy with his simple smile. Eagerly he puts his head in the noose, delightedly he goes off to be beaten up, frantically he dashes to the front; beside himself with happiness he takes his superiors into his confidence, and salutes so often that they have to beg him to stop:

"Beg to report, I'm no malingerer. I'm feebleminded,

fair and square. You ask them in the orderly room of the 91st regiment or at the reserve headquarters in Karlin."

Can it be that he is mocking them? Or is he officially mad, i.e. humanly sane, the protest of human nature against human nature's obsessions?

Schweik is obviously one of those characters who, like Mr. Pickwick in a more decorous walk of life, grow upon their authors. Hasek began with the disreputable citizen. Schweik was engrossed in the shady business of the dog fancier when Hasek took him up. He was also usually engrossed in a bottle of rum. He was the born internee, the kind of man who can settle anywhere quite happily. Careless talk was second nature to him, pleading guilty a trained instinct. Presently, after being booted around from one court or medical board to the next, he developed into the wordly batman, who had a special affinity with the sordid employer. His quality was Sancho Panza's shrewd peasant guilelessness. And also his affectability. The authorities did not know, and perhaps Hasek himself didn't know, when Schweik was pulling their legs. Schweik carried good nature to a very suspicious point of bounteousness. When the drunk chaplain preaches to the prisoners early in the book Schweik bursts into tears of contrition:

"The chaplain, pointing to Schweik went on:

"Let each of you take an example from this man. What is he doing? He's crying. To-day with our own eyes we see a man here moved to tears in his desire for a change of heart and what are the rest of you doing? Nothing at all. There's a man chewing something as if his parents had brought him up to chew the cud and another fellow over there is searching his shirt for fleas, and in the Temple of the Lord, too."

The chaplain afterwards accuses Schweik of

shamming:

"Beg to report, sir," said Schweik with great solemnity, staking everything on one card, "that I confess to God Almighty and to you, Reverend Father, that I was shamming. I saw that what your sermon needed was the reformed sinner whom you was vainly seeking. So I really wanted to do you a good turn and let you see there's still a few honest people left, besides having a bit of a lark to cheer myself up."

Schweik's adventures with the drunk chaplain are very funny and Hasek surpasses even the usual extravagances of drunkenness in the narrative. It is all very blasphemous—in this Hasek is attacking the Austrian clergy as well as the alliance of church and state in the war he hates—but the leering chaplain has a moment when in a ridiculous moment, he is almost touching. His remorse, when he stakes Schweik at cards and loses him, is excellent. This episode shows the real comic genius which consists in the capacity to cap a startling joke with a joke yet more startling. Schweik gives the chaplain money to buy him back and the chaplain, carried away by gratitude and enthusiasm, tosses his opponent double or quits and loses Schweik a second time. Students of the comic novel will recognise that incident as a sign of the master.

With the chaplain Schweik had been the faithful watchdog; with his new master, an amorous lieutenant, he is the continual disaster. Again and again Schweik wrecks the lieutenant's career by some awful piece of disastrous zeal. The dog episode, in which Schweik undertakes to get a terrier for the lieutenant and unwittingly steals the colonel's dog, is the crowning one. But if the lieutenant is always being ruined, Schweik somehow manages to find immediate (and festive) consolation. Arrested he waves to the crowd, cheers the Emperor and embarrasses the police by collecting

an evidently ironical patriotic meeting. He always gets public support because he is always a good show. The war-jaded people respond at once to so much free entertainment.

The adventures of Schweik take their concentrated and pungent flavour not from his character only, but also from being confined to the regions of official and army life. He is always tangled up in the crazy world of muddled army files, irritable amateur courts, and wordy military regulations. He moves about hopelessly entangled in red tape and a litter of passes and permits, and Hasek, with the sardonic experience of the old soldier, never lets him go. This is the making of Schweik. This environment keeps him to earth. Dr. Mraz is a minor character in the book but his plight has the eternal quality of the conditions of military movement. He is in charge of a train :

> " Although in civil life he was a teacher of mathematics at a secondary school, there was one carriage which, try as he would, he found it impossible to account for. Also, he could not make the nominal roll, which he had received at the last station, tally with the figures which were reported after the troops had entered the train at Budejovice. Also, when he examined the documents, it seemed to him that there were two field kitchens too many, though for the life of him he couldn't make out where they had come from. Also, it made his flesh creep to discover that the horses had increased by some mysterious process. Also, in counting the officers, two cadets were missing and he had failed to run them to earth. Also in the regimental orderly room which was installed in the front carriage a typewriter had disappeared. . . . Now a chaplain had turned up from nowhere in the prisoner's compartment."

A " squiffy chaplain," fast asleep, as Schweik pointed out.

Schweik ends his career, of course, by losing his regiment and begins a rambling odyssey in search of it. Accidentally, he walks into Russia and is captured. And there Hasek leaves him, intending evidently to draw on his own experiences when he himself was a prisoner in that country. We part with Schweik like that, in the air. Would Hasek have been able to keep up the pace and verve of the early narrative? Towards the end he seems to tire, but remembering Schweik's fondness for prison life, his immediately conviviality in lugubrious surroundings, we can see that Russia had its possibilities.

Totally different as they are Hasek's *Schweik* will stand by Jules Romains *Verdun* as one of the two outstanding books about the last war, one the survey from below, the other from above. The comic book is also tragic, as true humour always is. We laugh with Schweik but we shudder also. Under Hasek's extravagance and knockabout, there is a world which is artistically complete a madhouse with one sane figure in it.

THE SHADOW OF EUROPE

HSIAO CH'IEN

THE NEW CHINA TURNS TO IBSEN

In China, Ibsen is looked upon as a social surgeon rather than as a playwright. For a decade he was almost idolised by the Chinese intelligentsia. Not that we chose him, rather he expressed the mood of the young Chinese when the literary revolution was launched. In those days, China was so hopelessly ill, that she needed a daring doctor capable of prescribing the most desperate remedies. Ibsen appeared the most violent iconoclast to us then. It is difficult for a Westerner to imagine the effect on us when we found a dramatist inciting wives to flee from their egoistic but lawful husbands and making a hero of a crazy doctor who defies the unanimous decisions of a whole town. Social conventions dating from the time of the Yellow Emperor began to be challenged. Individuals began to assert their right to think and act. China, the giant sleeper in the valley of eternity, suddenly woke up from an agonising nightmare. For the 19th century had come to be associated with poverty, corruption and the threats of "ocean devils." The great Chinese Empire was about to sink at any moment. Fate was merely waiting for the partitioning powers to agree. Young Chinese had read the ominous stories of India and Korea. Aware of the impending danger, they were naturally appalled, impatient and deeply angry with native traditions that bound the feet of their women and bent the backs of their men. They revolted, and the Imperial executioner cut off many an intelligent head in the Covent Garden of Peking. But the revolt continued. The Chinese press itself was aflame. In 1909, a newspaper editor was sentenced to one year's imprisonment for printing the headline: To Save China We Need Violent Upheaval. And from 1909

on there was indeed an upheaval! Feuds among waning warlords, demonstrations by students, anarchists and communists. Placid, stoical Confucian China suddenly became a cauldron seething with an unprecedented concoction of good and evil.

In the midst of the revolt, young Chinese, especially those who had studied abroad, found sympathisers in Europe. Foremost of these was the Norwegian dramatist Ibsen. His works seemed to express their own resentment against existing society and their passion for revolt. Too excited to bother about the details of his theatrical art, they called to him from their desperate loneliness, " Beloved teacher, at last we have found you! " He was hailed by young China as a comrade rebel, a champion of individual rights. Thus an Oriental shrine was built for the Sage from Scandinavia. Like all shrines, of course, it was not a permanent one. However, Ibsen was revered by the intellectuals of rebellious China for well over a decade, a very juvenile but memorable decade during which both problem-plays and problem fiction enjoyed a nation-wide vogue.

With the rising popularity of the vernacular, nothing could have departed more from tradition than the modern Chinese drama. It was first experimented with by a group of Chinese students in Tokio, and the earliest European plays adapted were *La Dame aux Camélias* and *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Both appealed strongly to the Chinese who were suffering from racial oppression, and the bonds of a narrow matrimonial convention. But no European playwright had been introduced into China seriously and systematically before Ibsen. About 1917, translations of his plays began to appear in *New Youth*, the leading organ of the movement. *A Doll's House* was followed by *The Enemy of the People* and others, including *The Lady from the Sea*. The sexes were still segregated on the Chinese stage, and at that

time men were proud to play the rôle of the mutinous Nora. In 1918, Dr. Hu Shih, the guiding spirit of the movement (now Chinese Ambassador to Washington), published his essay on Ibsenism. He presented Ibsen as the most sound social doctor for China, " the quintessence of the healthy individualism of the last century. To improve society, we must first build up a sound self, a free and independent personality, critical of our existing environment. We must have the courage to speak the truth, to attack society when it becomes corrupt, like that indomitable soul, Dr. Stockmann."

Ibsen's popularity in China between 1917-1921 cannot be exaggerated. For a time the theme of a play was crudely interpreted as " the social problem it dealt with." Obviously it was also held by critics as a convenient criterion. Some have accused our moralising critics of counting the number of fashionable terms like " hunger " and " exploitation " employed by the author before they passed their final verdict as to whether a work was " solid." But playwrights themselves also formed a habit of describing their works in terms of " problems " dealt with. One author wrote apologetically, " Although the play is aesthetically immature, I am glad to say that I have touched on matrimony and rural bankruptcy, the two up-to-date social problems confronting us." The People's Theatre in its opening announcement in 1921 declared, " Mr. Bernard Shaw once said that the theatre is the place for propaganda. Although we do not fully endorse this, we can at least say that the age to look down on drama as a form of recreation has definitely passed. The modern theatre is a wheel to drive social progress forward ; it is also a microscope to detect the diseases in our environment. It is a merciless mirror in which all the squalid aspects of our community life will be reflected."

Exposure of social injustice and evil has always been a favourite theme of Chinese fiction. Innumerable

novels and stories had been written throughout the ages caricaturing wicked mandarins and rapacious country squires. These were in fact the sole outlet for public sentiment under the Imperial régime. This cardinal function of our literature has continued till to-day without a break, from *The True Story of Ah Q* by Lu Hsün to Chang Tien-yi's *Mr. Hua Wei.* Thanks to Ibsen, this attempt became even more conscious and deliberate. In the Chinese plays of the twenties, the settings were often laid in an atmosphere of corruption, the plot evolving in a family full of concubines, with an ostensibly Confucian but inwardly rotten public figure as chief protagonist. In this inferno, one hears the affected titters of prostitutes, the yawns of millionaires and the mutters of the oppressed. It is not unusual at the climax to have a sober youth flourishing a torch who condemns all the "lice and worms of an accursed society," and welcomes with open arms a vague and undefined new world. One fact that particularly interests me is that Ibsen was an anarchist in youth. The early period of modern Chinese literature was strongly anarchist in character. It expressed a vehement indignation with this clumsily created world and a passion for a rosy paradise where the individual is free.

It is quite safe to say that there is a vein of Ibsenism in nearly every Chinese author. Kuo Mo-jo, one of our most prolific and versatile writers, in his three historical plays written in 1922 entitled *Three Rebellious Women*, preached a mixture of socialism and feminism. Cho Wen-chun, for instance, is the story of a widow of about 100 B.C. who eloped with the scholar Ssu-ma Hsiang-ju who had wooed her by playing his lute. For centuries this incident had been regarded as a shocking scandal. Kuo chose this theme to champion the right of a widow to remarry. The performance of this play by the girls of a Normal School in Chekiang province in 1923 caused the dismissal of its president.

Later, it was gravely condemned as obscene by the local Educational Board.

After a while the development of problem-plays satisfied neither the pure dramatist nor the ideologist. Not Ibsen but the restless spirit of young China was really to blame. Looking back on the waves that washed the banks of modern Chinese literature one finds, to the great displeasure of the Marxists, that the tide immediately following Ibsen's individualism was romantic even to the verge of decadence. When the mania for the serious Ibsen subsided, Oscar Wilde and Baudelaire in various exotic hues caught the imagination of young Chinese writers. In poetry, " the flower of fire " (in block type) was an image used to excess. In drama, the popularity of problem-plays was supplanted by that of the sentimental plays of Tien Han, founder of the famous Nan Kuo Movement. For a time, the stage nearly drained the tear-ducts of Chinese theatre-goers. When they heard that Goethe's " Sorrows of Young Werther " had caused many suicides in Germany, several ultra-sensitive souls promptly sacrificed their lives after seeing Tien Han's " Tragedy on the Lake," or after reading Kuo Mo-jo's *Fallen Leaves*. However, this morbid condition did not last long. In 1925, when the incident occurred in which the Shanghai police protecting the interests of Japanese mill-owners, shot a number of Chinese students and workers, the whole country was flooded with natural indignation. Creation Society, the influential literary group which had been mainly responsible for the decadent trend, suddenly became the passionate exponents of proletarian literature. Thence began the literary civil wars which lasted until the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war in 1937 when Chinese writers formed a united front.

Technically, the problem-playwrights made a serious blunder. They had grasped the social gospel of Ibsen

and preached it in earnest. But they had overlooked the function of popular entertainment. Consequently problem-plays became synonymous with mediaeval didactic plays. Of all the alleged " disciples " of Ibsen, Bernard Shaw is the best known in China. His visit to us a decade ago was as eventful as that of Tagore, though he came merely as a tourist. But how intimately he is associated with the problem-play is difficult to say. The average reader is probably most impressed by his devastating humour and fantastic and fruitful situations. That he is the most successful preacher among modern playwrights is beyond doubt. There have been many attempts to build him a shrine in China. However, a somewhat unfortunate occurrence once served as a warning to all problem-playwrights. In the spring of 1921, a Chinese audience rudely cold-shouldered *Mrs. Warren's Profession.* Till then, adaptations of European plays had been mainly supported by the student class. An ambitious producer, Mr. Wang Chung-hsien, wanted to extend his audience to the ordinary theatregoers of Shanghai. It took him a long time to persuade several popular actors and actresses to take part in the Chinese version of Mr. Shaw's play. Generally, the theatre in which it was to be produced advertised its programme in two newspapers only. This time, Mr. Wang decided to advertise in five. But the most prosperous day of this " problem-play " was only 60 per cent. of the leanest day of an ordinary variety. Even more regrettable, in the second act, when Mrs. Warren began to tell Vivie the story of her life, several fashionable ladies in the front stalls rose to leave—and not without grumbling. After this heavy blow, the producer good-humouredly commented on his ungrateful and unintelligent audience : " Some of them quite failed to understand the play, some understood but found the plot lacking in surprise. Some had moral objections to Mrs. Warren herself and others disliked the repetition of such frequently abused

terms as "freedom of woman" and "economic equality." Of course to those who had seen the play abroad, our performance was far below European standards." Some impulsive critics immediately suggested that we should separate "play" from "ism" altogether. Mr. Wang, however, preferred a compromise. He wanted plays with simple progressive ideas and an intriguing plot. We could thus assure the intelligentsia of the country that we were still on the right track while sparing the yawns of an unintellectual audience.

This "patching-up" scheme did not meet with the approval of the more serious-minded. Admittedly, Chinese dramatic critics began to question the advantage of linking problem to play. Prof. Wen Yi-to, author of *Dead Water*, thought the whole question was but a comedy of errors. "Modern drama came to China by accident. The first playwright happened to be Ibsen, and Ibsen happened to use drama as a medium for preaching his social ideas, so we have imagined ever since that the idea is the foremost element of drama. When Wilde, Shaw, Hoffmann and Galsworthy were introduced to us their ideas always came before their art." The protest of Prof. Chao T'ai-mo was even more frank. He warned playwrights that they had no right to employ actors as mouthpieces for their views on social and political problems. "I think we have misplaced art and life altogether. It is the domain of art to seek into the depths of human nature and to express the fundamental power of life."

To be fair, the primary motive of the entire literary movement was social reform. At first, the campaign was really "psychological reconstruction." Literature was the medium. Art seems to have come in as an afterthought. Since then, Chinese critics have become increasingly sophisticated. But in the beginning of the Republican era, the young Chinese generation, of whom

the writers were the most articulate, was like an adolescent. The sudden realisation of the vastness of the outside world dazzled him, but the senseless civil wars and wretched conditions at home made him despair. He was tormented by both past and present. The future held nothing but uncertainty. He longed to be healthy and free like others, but he did not know how. He was not yet armed with the means of revolution, nor had he mastered weapons of sarcasm. But he realised that mere pessimism was no solution. This helpless, undefined anger culminated in a state of aloof solitude. He was like a dissatisfied boy, tramping a filthy back lane on a sunny afternoon, with his hands in his pockets. He spat at everything. Even to the little dog rushing up to play with him, he would cry "Go away, and leave me alone!" Ibsen seemed to have understandingly patted the back of this sullen down-hearted child. When Dr. Stockmann gallantly concluded in *The Enemy of the People* "The strongest man on earth is he who stands most alone," he seemed to have expressed young China in that memorable period far more than Confucius in any of his utterings.

HSIAO CH'IEN, literary editor of TA KUNG PAO, *is the author of nine books, of which the chief are* CHESTNUTS *and* UNDER THE FENCE. *He is now a lecturer at the School of Oriental Studies in London.*

WHAT THE PRESS SAID

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Desmond Hawkins in THE NEW STATESMAN: "This new venture, sponsored by a group of English and Czech writers, promises to be a war-time successor to those periodicals of the last decade—notably *The Criterion* and *The European Review*—which aimed to represent the European mind."

THE SCOTSMAN: "An impressive beginning for what promises to be an interesting and valuable venture."

THE YORKSHIRE POST: "A book full of enlightenment and hope."

THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT: "One of the best and most passionately European things in this miscellany is a sketch or story entitled 'The Great Betrayal' by a Czech writer, Egon Hostovsky, which pictures a small group of Czech refugees in Lisbon after the fall of France: the tone is fierce, sardonic and poignant, without a hint of sentimental exaggeration."

THE TRIBUNE: "The Hogarth Press will not give up. Among Hitler's enemies—democracy, the Trade Unions, freedom of expression—is another quite as important: culture. This book is a selection of writings by British and Allied writers who aim at creating a new European culture which will form an important part of post-war reconstruction."