

the advertisers and publishers who saw grades being substituted for national brands—disappeared.

Since his friends were still not entirely satisfied with his efforts on their behalf, further changes were called for. To make the desired changes appear the result of open-minded deliberation, another public hearing was held by the Commerce Committee, beginning in the closing days of February.¹ Again the bill was revised, the principal recipients of favors this time being the quack medicine boys headed by Lawyer Thompson. The bill had contained a proviso making it a crime to advertise patent medicines for cancer, tuberculosis, diabetes, and 40 or so other diseases for many of which self-medication is fatal. This particular proviso as it appeared in early versions of the bill was so clear and definitive and so easily enforced that its elimination was probably inevitable. Where other provisions annoying to important interests might be brushed aside in private conferences with considerate officials or in nice arguments before obliging courts, it

would indeed take an ingenious lawyer to find loopholes in this bald declaration: "... *any* advertisement of a drug representing it directly or by ambiguity or inference to have *any* effect in the treatment of *any* of the following diseases shall be deemed to be false..."

The deletion of this section and other changes made by Dr. Copeland and his committee were pleasing to the Senator's friends in the food and drug industries, but were not quite sufficient. Profits of several hundred percent per annum are not uncommon in the medicine business, and with such profits to protect, it is best to let well enough alone. In other words, to have the Tugwell-Copeland Bill die. So it is dead.

Should the bill be revived in the next session of Congress and come up for debate and amendment at the hands of the individual members of the House and the Senate, it is easy to foretell what kind of bill will result, if one reads a proviso inserted in the Tugwell-Copeland Bill in behalf of Senator Johnson of California who wished to preserve for his

state's citrus growers the right to cheat the buyers of citrus fruits by coloring the fruits artificially: "Nothing in this Act shall be construed to prohibit the enhancement of the color of mature and wholesome (oh yeah?—A.K.) citrus fruit to the variegated color thereof, by means harmless to the consumer of such fruits, *nor to require any declaration of such enhancement by labeling or otherwise.*" (Italics not in bill.)

¹ That such hearings serve their purpose is evident from the testimony of James Rorty, speaking as a former advertising copy writer but present at the hearings as correspondent for The Nation. Said he, "... I am impressed by the earnestness and intelligence with which the committee has undertaken its task, and its apparent desire to serve the public interest as opposed to selfish commercial interests." And The Nation editorially called Copeland a physician sincerely interested in protecting the public health and the public pocketbook, prophesying, with its keen understanding of legislative processes, that there would be no further changes in the bill because of the excellent defense of its provisions presented at the hearings by the chief of the Food and Drug Administration.

Danse Macabre

(After Leonov's Sot)

EDITH HART

Uvadiev clapped on his head the chill circlets
of the earphones:

Out of the silence
Out of the night
Came sound
In cataclysm
Came speed
In swirling drones.

Uvadiev fumbled with the tiny dial, his fingers
tense:

Gay music . . .
Germany is dancing—
Germany bleeding from war-wounds;
Aha! France comes dancing
With 33 percent expense
And 18 for new defense.
"Suspense

And everywhere the spring is tight coiled quivering
for release":

Greece! Rumania;
England dancing
With 44 percent for debts
10 to keep the maimed alive
14 to buy better guns next time;
In Daventry
Gloomy unemployed ex-colonels

Blow jazz into big brass horns;
Negroes are softly singing in Toulouse.

"Glued together in couples the whole mad
world is dancing,"

To the *Internationale!*
Bridled by frivolity
And harnessed to the rhythmic scraping
Of patent leather shoes—
To the song that had made strong
The hungry feet of Revolution,
To the song they had died singing
"Dancing!"

Mustard gas is creeping on them as they
whirl and careen" . . .

Into the silence
Of the night
He fled.
Sleepy smoke hung low on the river
And all about him towered fretted steel
Like winter trees against the moon,
The factory was still.
"More to be done tomorrow
And tomorrow!"
And with his tired hands
He stroked the warm flank
Of the great machine.

Literary Wars in the U. S. S. R.

IV: Smugglers of Reaction in Soviet Letters

JOSHUA KUNITZ

IN THE struggle for self-definition and self-assertion on the cultural front, the proletariat's cardinal task, at first, was the detection and suppression of counter-revolutionary propaganda. A classic early example of such propaganda in fiction was the novel *We* whose author, Zamiatin, has achieved considerable fame as far back as 1910. Zamiatin's first book published after the revolution was *The Islanders*—a clever satire on English philistinism. In the period of War Communism he wrote a series of vaguely subversive stories depicting the degeneration of the bourgeois intellectuals—also islanders—besieged by the forces of the risen proletariat. In 1920–21 he produced *We*, which the Soviet censor, after several years of deliberation, refused to pass, but which found its way, in manuscript, to Europe and America, where it was finally translated and published, but where it deservedly failed to attract any attention.

The novel's title was intended as irony. *We* whose author, Zamiatin, had achieved con-early poetry of the revolution. As an anti-thesis to the bourgeois first person singular, the proletariat then thought, spoke and sang the first person plural. "*We* the countless, redoubtable legions of toil!" *We* everywhere! *We* everything! On the other hand, the petty bourgeois ego, driven like a mouse into its hole, peeped out upon the tumultuous world of the surging masses and worried and fretted. Before long its resentment and humiliation crystallized into a kind of grandeur mania; the petty bourgeois ego began to visualize itself as the only carrier of individuality, uniqueness, inimitableness. Coupled with that went its impotent hatred for the mass—that vast, undifferentiated, self-perpetuating "something-in-gray." The crushed bourgeois *I*, isolated from life, sought compensation in sneers at the victorious *WE*.

Zamiatin's novel purported to be a projection into the future socialist commonwealth, when everything would be based on reason, on science, on mathematics. Under socialism, during the reign of science and reason, man, according to Zamiatin, would lose his individuality, would lose his name and his volition. People would wear the same clothes—gray tunics (the color is symbolical!); instead of names, people would carry numbers—males, even numbers; females, odd numbers, and they would all eat, drink, sleep, work, play, and even have sex relations at exactly the same time; A bell would ring, and the young anonymous lovers would draw the shade and go to bed! Everything would run smoothly. There would be no unemployment no sickness, no

worry. Everything would be based on measurements and numbers—on two and two is four. But, says Zamiatin, man is not only reason. What about emotions? What about instincts? And suppose man takes it into his head to rebel; to assert *himself*, his *I*, against science, against reason, against organization, against security? Suppose, just for the devil of it, he, like Dostoevsky's man from the Underground, decides to operate on the premise that two and two is five? Suppose he asserts that man's greatest good is insecurity, suffering and pain? And Zamiatin shows what would happen. The elaborate socialist structure would crumble. Reason would be overthrown. Emotion, color, individuality would be restored. *I* would finally triumph over *We*.

Thus did the dethroned bourgeoisie try to soothe its injured pride. He laughs best who laughs last, it seemed to say. Since reason and science and technology and the whole trend of contemporary history was in favor of the proletariat, the disarmed petty bourgeoisie tried to find consolation in claiming for itself the realm of emotion. These detractors of the machine themselves became unabashedly mechanistic in artificially separating emotion from reason, in artificially posing one against the other. This dualism of "*I*" versus "*We*," of emotion versus reason, rather than reflecting an inevitable split in man's psyche, simply reflected the bivalence of petty bourgeois psychology, the equivocal position of the middle classes in the overlapping of two historical epochs. In a well-integrated classless society, the individual ego will not be pitted against society, but will find its highest expression in functioning harmoniously with society. The creative personality of the genuinely musical person finds its complete musical fulfilment in a happy fusion with the other musicians of the orchestra. The whole problem of society based on reason and the collective as opposed to emotion and the individual is so unreal that one need not dwell on it much longer.

Needless to say, this negative conception of the socialist "utopia" was not wholly original with Zamiatin. The fear of the machine, of science, of positivism, of rationalism, of collectivism had been expressed infinitely more compellingly by other petty-bourgeois writers in Russia and elsewhere. In his earliest struggles against socialist and positivist thought, Dostoevsky, in his *Notes from the Underground*, had posed these problems so challengingly that he has scarcely been excelled by any of his successors. In his pre-Communist days, the Russian symbolist Valerii Briusov

wrote a story *The Republic of the Southern Cross* in which precisely the same problem was raised. The solution in that unhappy land came through an infectious disease called "contrariness." The disease spread rapidly, and the once ideal rational state collapsed. Fear of the robot and and dynamo is not the creation of Zamiatin.

It should also be pointed out that of all the books written on this subject, Zamiatin's is the least convincing and the most boring. To make a sociological thesis about schematic people interesting or even fair reading is too much of a task even for the greatest of writers. And Zamiatin is certainly not among the greatest. The most charitable thing one can say about *We* is that it is an unmitigated bore. Small wonder that *We*, despite its anti-Communist message, failed to create the slightest ripple on literary currents in Europe and America.

Recently, Zamiatin's still-born and deeply-buried work was disinterred in this country by the enterprising Max Eastman—our native model of the "hidden foe . . . who re-incarnates in various forms" and who, "behind a solid barricade of revolutionary phrases," carries on his persistent counter-revolutionary fire. Since my subject in this article is the smuggling of reaction in revolutionary literature, a brief analysis of Mr. Eastman's method as applied to Zamiatin might be instructive. Casting to the winds his often reaffirmed esthetic standards and aversion for "propaganda," Eastman, for obvious reasons, unblushingly pronounces Zamiatin's tenth-rate "romance" a "recklessly imaginative book" possessed of a great "depth of feeling . . . evidently the heart-spoken message of a man of poetry who has delved deeply in science." Eastman does not say to whom the message was addressed. He assures us, however, that "there is not a counter-revolutionary line in it." Zamiatin (according to Eastman) merely pondered "the larger destinies of man"; he merely wanted "to say something about what is to come *after* the technique of capitalist machine-industry has been taken over by a successful proletarian revolution and developed to the full," he merely wondered about "the unhappy situation of poetic people in that complete regimentation of life toward which science seems to lead the way." Not a mention of the real motivation of the novel; not a suggestion as to its anti-collectivist, anti-socialist, counter-revolutionary class character. Just "the heart-spoken message of a man of poetry who has delved deeply in science!"

In characterizing Zamiatin, Eastman takes great pains to draw an aura of revolutionary