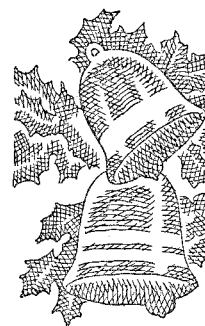




Marxian Literary Critics

By Ernest Boyd



"It's smart to be a Communist" is a phrase not unknown in intellectual circles these days. Class-conscious literary criticism is, in fact, very much in vogue. Mr. Boyd quotes from "Robert Forsythe," Granville Hicks, Michael Gold, and others to reveal the quality and temper of Marxist criticism. He apparently gets more fun out of them than out of the other Marx boys, Harpo, Groucho, etc.

IN their blessed conviction of descent from the Sun-god Marx, our American proletarian critics are the Mikados of the literary world. Not since the faint, far-off, phosphorescent gleam of the New Humanism cast its pale, fitful light upon the by-ways of intellectual life in America has any phenomenon so diverting occurred. Taking a hint from Gilbert's *Mikado*, they seem to have made it their object all sublime

To make each Marxian pent
Unwillingly represent
A source of innocent merriment,
Of innocent merriment.

The humor of the proceedings, in other words, is unconscious, the class-struggle being far too stern to permit of any levity when dealing with the literature of that social-fascist segment of humanity which has not yet learned to take its instructions from *Proletkult*. The only humorist whom they delight to honor is, significantly enough, a pseudonymous "Marx-man," as he is called, who hits at all and sundry from the shelter of a false name, "Robert Forsythe." His humor takes the exquisite form of holding two jobs with ultra-capitalist periodicals, in which he signs his own name, but when it comes to pouring out his burning Marxist soul, he shrinks from the pitilessly unprofitable publicity which his real signature might entail. He does not, however, shrink from sneering at those who have at least had the courage of their convictions.

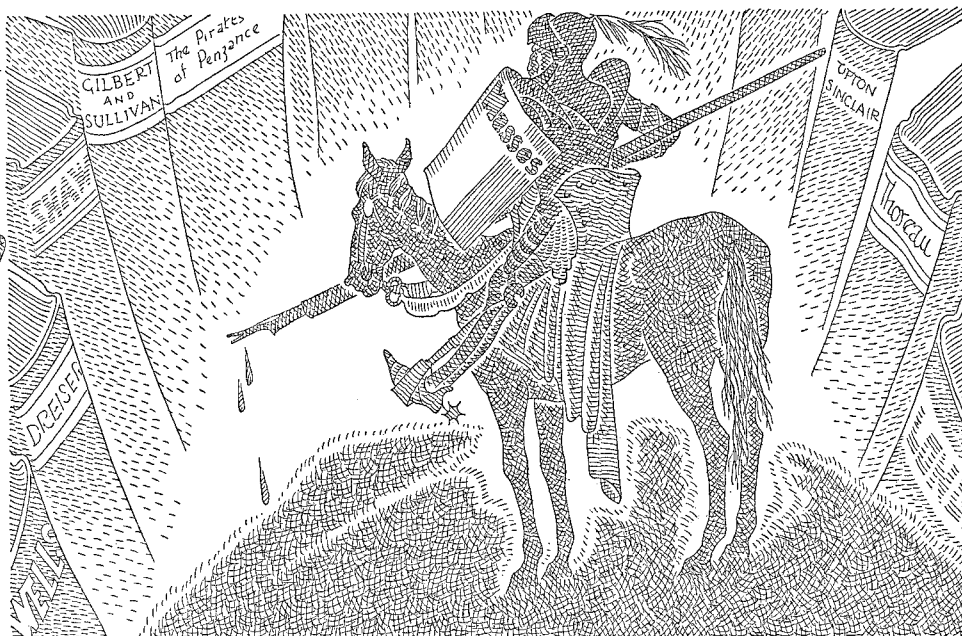
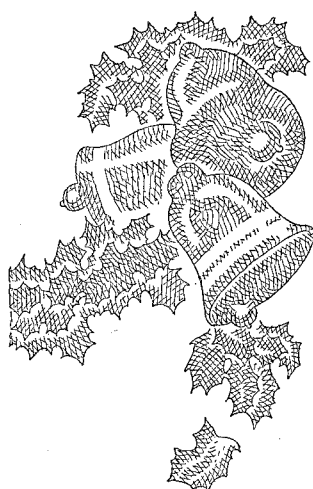
He can, for example, be so unscrupulous—in view of his own ambiguous position—as to suggest that a popular columnist's rejection of Communism is dictated by the fear of losing his job. Ring Lardner is also held up to contempt because he earned his living by

writing for popular magazines, and Mr. "Robert Forsythe" is "embarrassed at the thought of a man with that mind wasting it in such fashion." A group of our most popular humorists is dismissed because of an ability "to make even the most transcendental event trivial." Remembering his own jobs on two capitalist periodicals, Mr. "Forsythe" thus abjures Messrs. Thurber, Frank Sullivan, E. B. White, and J. S. Perelman: "We have no expectation that anything we say will influence them, but if they, in their more reflective moments, have feeling for anything beyond the permanence of their well-paid jobs, we should think that they might have an occasional bad twinge." Bad enough, presumably, to cause them to keep their jobs, but write anonymously on behalf of the revolution in Communist papers, where even the most trivial events become safely transcendental, as for example, when Mr. "Robert Forsythe" bravely demonstrated that Roxy and his Gang were not really superlative artists.

Having begun with a reference to Gilbert and Sullivan and to what, for want of a better term, must be called the lighter aspects of Marxist criticism, I cannot refrain from presenting some specimens of the class-conscious view of their operas. Michael Gold describes the famous pair as "the 'cultural' pioneers of Fascism," and their bourgeois admirers are likened to "Nazis with hands dripping with the blood of workers," who "sentimentalize over Wagner." Then he admits that the operas are "the most glorious nonsense, and the music has a happy folk-dance quality." Like the rest of us, Mr. Gold enjoys his Gilbert and Sullivan, but he objects to sharing his pleasure with us

social-fascists. "They are bourgeois culture-hounds who want to avoid all reality and strength in art. They are the same pleasant exploiters who once danced minuets at King Louis's court, while the masses perished outside." Not only that. Mr. Gold is certain that we should resent the same wit "if it were directed on a Communist path," and he triumphantly concludes that "when we develop a Communist Gilbert and Sullivan, these people will hate it. But whether or not, it is coming soon."

Whether the "it" in that last sentence refers to the revolution, to Communism, or to the omitted word "opera," I cannot say. My guess is that Mr. Gold is promising us Communist Gilbert and Sullivan opera. Possibly it will be written by George S. Kaufman and Cole Porter under assumed names, while they draw salaries for composing Fascist hymns. Of one thing I am certain. There is no trace of Gilbertian humor or wit in proletarian circles, if one may judge, not only by Marxist writing in general, but by Marxist criticism of Gilbert and Sullivan in particular. Harken to one of Mr. Gold's lesser known colleagues on the subject. Ignoring *The Gondoliers* as containing no message for the masses, a Mr. George Wilson thus delivers himself on the opera described by Michael Gold as "the most glorious nonsense," *The Pirates of Penzance*. "Surely no one will disagree that the *pièce de résistance*, the central motif and Mount Everest of this opera, is reached in the second act, when the cops are trying musically to pull themselves together to sally forth against the pirates. It is here that the message is delivered, and it is one that the embattled workers of Rooseveltian America may receive with



glad recognition: A cop's heart is yellow. Faced with the prospect of a fair fight, a skull to skull, toe to toe, upstanding, eye-seeking, slugging match, the cop's knees turn to water, his bowels likewise, and his 'obvious course is now to hide.' It is only when gathered in overwhelming force, with tear-gas bombs, machine guns, bayonets, etc., that he slaps his chest and sings 'tarantara.'

I fear that, so long as this mood is on them, Messrs Gold and Wilson will wait a very long time for Communist Gilbert and Sullivan. Like most of their colleagues, in this and other connections, they have a strange faculty for overlooking the existence of their great-grandfather in Marxism, George Bernard Shaw. He has done—and not under a false name—more than his bit in combining wit with social propaganda. But all that our Marxist critics can say of him is that "By 1935 he is so far behind the times that, if he is to continue play-writing, he ought to enroll in the Yale Drama School." The satire on imperialism and Fascism in his last play apparently completely escaped these eagle-eyed propagandists. Perhaps there is some school where *they* could enroll, if they are to continue to play at criticism. Some elementary instruction is clearly needed. Or is American Marxism a *Jugendbewegung*, based on the early nineteenth-century Hegelianism of Marx?

According to Mr. John Strachey, Mr. Granville Hicks is the fine flower and supreme example of Marxist literary criticism in America, and this view seems to be shared by Mr. Hicks him-

self, if one may judge by the pontifical solemnity with which he distributes his critical awards and reprimands in *The New Masses*. Trailing clouds of professorial glory, Mr. Hicks will deliver courses on how to write various types of proletarian literature, or make an annual survey of the output of "revolutionary literature," in which each author is credited to the last jot and tittle with his or her success as a class-conscious interpreter of American life. He has even carried this class-room method to the point of instructing his readers as to how they should choose their central characters "according to economic classification": the Millionaire, the Worker, the Middle Class. Having made this highly original differentiation of classes, Mr. Hicks magnanimously concedes that "absolutely any one might be chosen for the leading role, and each author has to make his choice on the basis of his experience, his interests, his conception of what is representative and important. This is as true for proletarian authors as for any others."

The millionaire, as one might expect, presents a tough problem for the divine impartiality of the class-conscious Marxist. "A major talent," says Mr. Hicks, is needed, because the silly Liberals are so stupid as to attribute to the wickedness of the individual the defects of the economic system. Dreiser's "old-fashioned determinism" spoiled *The Titan* and *The Financier*. Wells indicted the system in *Tono-Bungay*, but that does

not save him because "he opposes to the wastefulness of capitalism the efficiency and intelligence of science, instead of recognizing the class struggle." In other words, neither author is an orthodox Marxist, so "off with their heads," cries the literary Mikado. It is, however, interesting and consoling to learn from Professor Hicks that "it may be put to the credit of literature that far more novelists have disapproved of multi-millionaires than have approved of them." This is, indeed, a compliment to the heathen outside the Marxian fold! What, I wonder, did Mr. Hicks expect?

Even when it comes to glorifying the American Worker, there are grave difficulties, despite the fact that this is the material with which proletarian novelists are most familiar. The reason is that the writer has to choose between "a worker who is already class-conscious," or one who, "in the course of the story, becomes class-conscious," or "who is not and does not become class-conscious." As this latter category comprises the overwhelming majority of workers in this country, books dealing with them give an impression of "absolute hopelessness," which does not fit into the purposes of Communist propaganda. Hence Mr. Hicks's criticism of such men as James T. Farrell, Edward Dahlberg, and Erskine Caldwell. "Such work cannot, however, communicate the militant hopefulness of the revolutionary," he writes, thereby demonstrating his complete indiffer-

ence to the aesthetic function of literature.

Worse than the worker who refuses to become class-conscious is that incurable bogey of Marxism, the "petty bourgeois," whose numerical superiority over all other types of Americans makes him the quintessential citizen of the United States. Mr. Hicks does not find him promising material because "such a theme does not give the author an opportunity to display the forces that are working against the defeatism and incipient Fascism of the petty bourgeoisie." Moreover, our militant, class-conscious friends feel that they are so terribly lower middle class themselves that they are likely to be "unpleasantly cramped when they concentrate their attention on a typical middle-class character." The best that Mr. Hicks can recommend to the ex-bourgeois proletarians and "fellow-travellers" is to portray that "doomed class" as honestly as they can, and "trust to the sympathetic reader to reconstruct for himself the other half of the story." If this is not artistic "defeatism," to use a term beloved in Marxist criticism, then I should like to know what is.

Sometimes the victims of this kind of kindergarten schooling revolt. When an opportunity was offered to them by *The New Masses* to take part in an "Authors' Field Day: A Symposium on Marxist Criticism" more than a dozen "fellow-travellers" and more or less authenticated, authorized, and certificated proletarian writers responded. The general tone was that of a group of students in the class-room trying to placate their teachers. Mr. Erskine Caldwell confessed that criticism was "about 90 per cent soap-suds," and that "a Marxist critic can work up just as much lather from a cake of soap as a capitalistic reviewer." On the other hand, Mr. Jack Conroy allowed that he had "a sensitive nose for malicious carping, but I could find none of it in Mike's review." This is hardly surprising, since the review in question was that of *The Disinherited*, which was criticized by Mr. Michael Gold in the following terms: "Dear Friend and Comrade Jack: Your novel was assigned to me for review. I began to write my report in the graveyard style of the Nation or New Republic book-spetz, but soon found I could not keep on in that vein. How can I pretend to

be one of these Olympian arbiters of 'truth' when as a matter of fact I am deeply partial to you and your work? A first book like yours, of a young working class author, cannot be regarded merely as literature. To me it is a significant class portent. It is a victory against capitalism." No malicious carping, indeed! Naturally, Mr. Conroy concludes that "if Mike Gold never writes another word of criticism, he has earned the gratitude of proletarian writers and readers."

However, not all the recipients of the kind of "criticism" I have been quoting were so convinced of their unworthiness in the sight of their Marxian patrons and instructors. Mr. Edward Dahlberg very pointedly accused Mr. Hicks of making "no graduated distinctions between writers, except political ones. The problems confronting the poet and the novelist, the creative dilemma and the very processes involved in writing, he is either not interested in or does not comprehend. There is still too much of the humanist and the theocratic New Englander in his temper. Sometimes one actually gets the impression that Hicks dislikes good writing." Mr. James T. Farrell was equally to the point. After accusing his critics of providing cut-and-dried themes for "that generalization, 'the proletarian author,'" he suggested that this figment might be compared to the "economic man" of classical economy. "This vice is largely the product of a hypostasized conception of social classes," which is fatal to the creation of literature. All that Mr. Hicks seemed to gather from these criticisms of Marxist criticism is that Mr. Dahlberg was ill-tempered and that his pupils ought to have profited more from his lectures on how to write proletarian literature.

Mr. Granville Hicks, as I have said, is Exhibit A in Marxist criticism. In *Literature and Dialectical Materialism* Mr. John Strachey, in the course of his not too successful effort to avoid the puerilities of his American colleagues by stressing aesthetics, pays this compliment to Mr. Hicks: "The American revolutionary movement has just had the signal good fortune to have been endowed with a large-scale work of literary criticism from a fully Marxist writer. I refer to Granville Hicks's *The Great Tradition*. . . . Certainly no comparable work of Marxist literary

criticism has been done in Great Britain." While this may be true, it is possible to deduce from that fact the evidence of Mr. Strachey's own pamphlet to the effect that Hicks rush in where Stracheys fear to tread. The specimens of Mr. Hicks's criticism which I have quoted are the measure of his book, whose very title is a misnomer. The "great tradition" of American literature is that of a capitalistic, middle-class democracy. It is, therefore, ridiculous to claim that the handful of contemporary American Marxists—most of whom are not American—are heirs to that tradition. Yet, such is the fundamental thesis of Mr. Hicks's book.

When Mr. Strachey was facing the absurd deportation proceedings which marred his last visit to this country, he was at great pains to prove that his Communism was not to be taken seriously as an incitement to the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a dictatorship of the proletariat. He was merely airing certain theoretical opinions, but had neither the hope nor the intention, he said, of seeing them acted upon. Possibly his laudation of *The Great Tradition* is to be taken in an equally Pickwickian sense. He trips Mr. Hicks up, for example, just as Miss Josephine Herbst did in the *New Masses* symposium, in the act of accusing others of writing for the middle class, while doing precisely that himself, since there is no other class for him to write for. "He, too, writes for the intellectual middle class and for the individual worker-intellectuals." Mr. Strachey thinks that if Mr. Hicks can do this, so can Upton Sinclair, but Mr. Strachey is only an occasional visitor here, he has not yet acquired the true intolerance of American Marxist criticism. On the contrary, he goes so far as to agree with Mr. Dahlberg (who was accused of ill-temper) that "Hicks falls sometimes into an error which . . . is a tempting one for Marxist critics. He hardly seems to pay enough attention to the merits of writers as writers."

Mr. Strachey is not the only Left Wing critic who gets obviously bored by the aesthetic insensibility of the childish doctrinairism of most Marxist critics. Thus, Mr. Edwin Seaver, protesting against an unfair review in *The New Masses* of a proletarian novel which did not meet with the party *Nihil obstat*, insists that the "deficiency in

literary criticism in the left sector" is what Lenin called the "infantile disorder of 'Leftism.'" Some of our middle-class critics have gone proletarian with such headlong momentum that today they are already several miles to the left of themselves." And he further complains about "the assassination of books which fail to do what the author never intended to do and could not have done with the material at hand." This last phrase perfectly summarizes the attitude of *The Great Tradition* towards all American literary achievement. The writers were possibly of some importance more or less, rather less than more, but in any case, not having heard of the Russian revolution of 1917, or having failed to be converted, they are of little significance. Thus this apophthegm, admirably quoted by Mr. Strachey: "Nothing in American literature is more admirable than Henry Thoreau's devotion to his principles, but the principles are, unfortunately, less significant than the devotion." Dialectical materialism says, in other words, that only Marxian principles are worthy of devotion.

A strange capacity for throwing stones is manifested by those who live in Marxian glass houses. Upton Sinclair and Jack London and the pre-war Socialists generally are warned by Mr. Hicks that their work, "unfortunately, shows that official allegiance to a theory and the development of a way of looking at life are two different things." From which one is to gather that a Socialist who believed in the theory of Socialism and viewed life from a Socialistic standpoint could not exist, merely because neither the theory nor the standpoint was Marxian. Here is the doctrine of proletarian infallibility in all its fact-defying splendor. It is on a par with the same author's contention that Mr. John Chamberlain has "a high talent for straddling," simply because he does not write Communist articles in *The New York Times*, and has quite plainly and repeatedly stated that he is not a "hook-line-and-sinker Marxist," although sympathetically interested in Left Wing literature and politics. Mr. Hicks has a colleague whose talent for straddling, as described at the outset of this article, far surpasses that of any non-Marxist. Are "Comrades" alone exempt from such sneers?

Sometimes, it so happens, they are not, but then only in very special circumstances. When Mr. Orrick Johns, then one of the editors of *The New Masses*, discovered that *The American Spectator* was a Nazi "sheet," he made the mistake of citing as a Fascist a writer who was a contributor to both periodicals, and whose detestation of Fascism had inspired the incriminating article. When confronted with his libellous misreading of the article by the indignant author, all that Mr. Johns could say was that, if he had known that the former also contributed to *The New Masses*, he would have read him more carefully. He also warned him not to write for periodicals "definitely and viciously antagonistic" to the Communist movement, but curiously overlooked the "Forsythe" beam in his own editorial eye, so intent was he in discovering the mote in a non-partisan paper, which had ridiculed all dictatorships, and had advocated many causes admired by Communists. To write for such a paper, giving a hearing to all sides, was to enable it to cover up "open hatred and misrepresentation by a pretence of impartiality." Thus the Marxist critic defines free speech.

The most intransigent of the Marxist literary inquisitors is Mr. Joshua Kunitz who, although he refers to "our South," would seem to be biologically closer to the sources of Communist wisdom than those of his colleagues heretofore mentioned. Moreover, he concentrates his attention chiefly on Russian literature, functioning as a heresy-hunter in the best Nazi or OGPU tradition. One can get a very fair idea of what the Comintern means by a "united front" by studying the implacable Mr. Kunitz, who detects the class war in literature even in the most unsuspected places. All "fellow-travellers" look alike to him; consciously, or unconsciously, they express the ideology of the bourgeoisie. Even *The Little Golden Calf*, which was accepted generally as a charming and effective piece of Soviet satire, does not pass muster, although approved by Lunacharsky. "It seemed to me that in places the authors had crossed the bounds of Bolshevik self-criticism and actually challenged the basic principles of collectivism and the Communist state." Presumably Mr. Kunitz's American Bolshevik sensitivities were ten-

derer than those of Lunacharsky, although he refers to "the universal and much encouraged practice of Bolshevik self-criticism," which he manifestly deprecates. Zamiatin and Ehrenburg "pander" to bourgeois audiences, likewise almost every one of the post-revolutionary Russian writers whom foreign readers have accepted as the literature of Soviet Russia. It is significant and characteristic that Mikhail Zostchenko's witty volume, *Russia Laughs*, was not sponsored by any of the proletarian publishers, whereas that pathetic monument of ineffectuality, *Proletarian Literature in the United States*, received the official imprimatur. Its deliberate partisanship in the selection of material suggests the more appropriate title: "Stalinite Literature in the United States."

Marxist criticism, it must be evident, is not confined to those who have any critical sense or any genuine interest in literature. A writer as fine, within his limits, as Gorky is encouraged to launch out into a field where his incompetence is pathetic. "We can cite thousands of books, the heroes of which are swindlers, thieves, murderers, and detectives. This is true bourgeois literature, which strikingly reflects the original tastes, interests, and practical 'morale' of its consumers." Whereupon *Till Eulenspiegel*, *Gil Blas*, *Tom Jones*, and *Arsène Lupin* are mentioned at random, and the wholly forgotten thrillers of Ponson du Terrail are lumped together with Smollett and Maupassant, as if these presented an accurate picture of the literary culture of the middle classes. In a fuddled way the attitude of mind revealed is very comparable to that of Tolstoy, when his religious mania caused him to dismiss as worthless all art that could not at once be understood by the simplest Russian peasant. How many people today, I wonder, have read even one of the twenty-two volumes of *Les Exploits de Rocambole*, not to mention the ninety-nine other works, many in from four to eight volumes, which comprise the writings of Vicomte Pierre Alexis de Ponson du Terrail (1829-1871)? We social-fascists had better study the foundations of our culture.

Another Russian contribution to our literary criticism is *The Intelligentsia of Great Britain*, by a *ci-devant* prince and White Russian, Dmitri Mirsky, who

after unsuccessfully trying with Denikin to undo the revolution of 1917, found refuge, work, and hospitality in England. In return for this he has now devoted a volume to proving that the people who befriended him are contemptible because they are not Marxists or, if they were Marxists before he was born, like Bernard Shaw, then that will not do, because Shaw achieved fame and fortune by writing amusing plays. Possibly he would have been better employed sabotaging the Fabian Society or subsidizing Kolchak and Denikin and Prince Mirsky. Even Mr. Strachey is reluctantly admitted to the fold, stress being laid upon the fact that "the bourgeois intellectual nature of Strachey's Communism is specially marked in the chapters devoted to literature." Like Mr. Kunitz, the *ci-devant* looks with Nazi-like suspicion upon all who cannot offer a Marxian equivalent for "pure" Aryanism. Yet, in his unregenerate days he was not afraid to say that Bolshevik literature "is difficult reading, written in a party jargon which is unintelligible to the reader unless he himself is well versed in Marxism. It is intensely dogmatic and authority plays in it a far greater part than free inquiry—the Marxist is as devoted to authority as ever a medieval schoolman was."

These words from Prince Mirsky's *Contemporary Russian Literature* apply with peculiar appropriateness to Marxist literary criticism in general and to his own atrociously translated diatribe against the intellectual life of England in particular. At the American Writers' Congress last spring a portentous and wholly unconvincing effort was made to create a "literary united front." The dogmatists of the Marxist cult, as the last Comintern meeting showed, may now be a little frightened by the manner in which their intransigence has played into the hands of Fascism. They would like us all to be "fellow-travellers," but they overlook the impossibility for those not possessed by the demon of Marxist infallibility to live in the same intellectual atmosphere. Messrs. Malcolm Cowley, Matthew Josephson, and Waldo Frank very tearfully, penitently, and hopefully urged the sweet reasonableness of cooperation, but they reckon without the despotic arrogance of a group whose notion of cooperating is very like

that of the tiger and the young lady.

The mere bandying about of words like "defeatism," "social-fascism," "world weary," "nihilism," and "pessimism" does not alter the fact, known from time immemorial, that economic adjustment is only a part of man's problem in this universe. Consequently, there can be no united intellectual or literary front, when the very essentials of man's function as an artist and thinker are ignored or deliberately degraded. When Marxist critics try to frighten their opponents by pointing out that opposition to Marxism is, even when unconsciously so, "incipient fascism," they overlook the possibility that Communism and Fascism may be genuinely, and for reasons wholly divorced from nationalism and economics, equally uninviting to those they would convert. If this be pessimism, make the most of it! It is, nevertheless, a point of view which I find generally current in precisely those circles—not *classes*—to which Marxist literary and art criticism is addressed. It is intellectually dishonest, however interested one may be in the material welfare of the proletariat, to accuse those who are not actively Communist of wanting Fascism, or of approving of dictatorship in any form.

Realizing that Trotsky has been excommunicated, but being as yet unbound by any set of absolutists, I have the temerity to read with pleasure, as a relief from the kindergarten school of literary criticism, Leon Trotsky's *Literature and Revolution*. It is reassuring to hear the good sense of: "It is fundamentally incorrect to contrast bourgeois culture and bourgeois art with proletarian culture and proletarian art. The latter will never exist, because the proletarian régime is temporary and transient." Trotsky differs from Gorky in his capacity to realize how bourgeois culture developed, which was certainly not, as he shows, in the manner prescribed by our Get-Marx-Quick Wallingfords, nor does he offer Ponson du Terrail as one of its essential achievements. Even Marxism, he insists, is not the product of proletarian culture, but was formed "entirely on the basis of bourgeois culture."

When he comes to the tasks of literary criticism, Trotsky presents the same refreshing contrast with the local Marxist practitioners of that art. Mr.

Gold might remember occasionally that warning against the kind of people who say, "Give us something, even pock-marked, but our own. A pock-marked art is no art and is therefore not necessary to the working masses." It is also a pleasure to find Trotsky emphasizing the fact that revolutionary art is not exclusively working-class. With his dictum that "pock-marked" art should not be offered to any one, few who care for non-material values will disagree. The best will always be just good enough, but Mr. Louis Adamic in *What the Proletariat Reads* brings evidence to show that this is far from being the view of the majority of American workers outside New York. Few had read and none had liked any of the writers who have received the "niggardly and patronizing" approval—to quote Miss Josephine Herbst—of Messrs. Gold, Hicks, and *The New Masses*. They preferred local papers and cheap magazines to Catherine Brody's *Nobody Starves*, Grace Lumpkin's *To Make My Bread* or Jack Conroy's *Disinherited*.

In sum, I would suggest that what Trotsky says of proletarian art might very well be said of proletarian criticism: it is temporary and transient. Its objectives are to foster a literature which never can exist and for which there is little or no demand outside the purlieu of Union Square. What the American masses read, we know only too well. What the intelligent reading public wants is neither the criticism I have been discussing nor the literature it would foster. If a united "literary front" is required, the obvious way to attain that end is to lend all the support we can to those who would preserve the cultural heritage of Western civilization. Always a relative minority, they now find their lives, their works, their ideals threatened over the greater part of Europe, with but a few voices raised in protest. Whatever may be the procedure best calculated to bring Russia up to the cultural level of the Western world is the sole concern of the Soviet government. Why should we retrograde intellectually, merely because modern Russia waited until 1917 to be born? Our cultural possessions, whether feudal, aristocratic, or middle-class, antedate that year by many centuries. Shall they be liquidated to make a Marxist holiday?



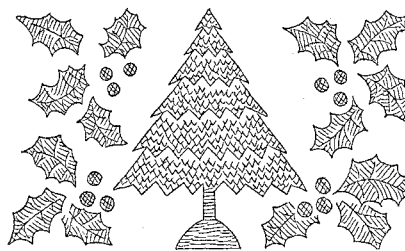
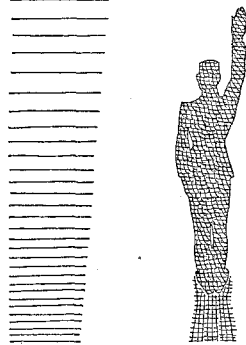
Enemy Country

*A Story of a Young Fascist who brings his dream
of empire to New Mexico*

By Walter Gilkyson



“THE grandeur that is Rome and glory that will be,” Giulio Manisetti softly repeated to himself, keeping time to the measure with swinging body and staccato footsteps that expressed his immense exhilaration. It had been an inspiring evening, the end of a miraculous five days in New York, and the enthusiasm of his new-found friends, the Italians assembled at the house of Cavaliere Aldo-brandini in East Forty-eighth Street, where he had spent the last three hours, carried him forward through the slow sauntering crowd on Fifth Avenue in a glowing mist of anticipation and excitement. At moments, while waiting for the cross-town traffic, he looked upward, vaguely conscious of the summer wind that cooled his face. If the tall pale splendor of this city shone in the sky like the reflection of a crown of empire there was nevertheless no racial depth below the bright arrogance of material conquest, and no undertone of legend to chant its undying assurance of the future. Rome the Immortal. Italian eloquence, at long last to be translated into mighty deeds. Remembering the sublime moment when, just before his departure, he had stood in the presence of Mussolini, his dark young face quivered with exaltation. To him, an engineer of twenty-eight, had been given the task of approving the purchase of ships that would carry Italian troops to Abyssinia. The work was done, and now he was free to return to Italy and take part in the conflict himself.



The Commendatore Manisetti, Podestà of Triano and his father, had cabled him yesterday in English, as if scorning to conceal his message, an expression of pleasure at the success of his son, and a declaration of austere pride in Italian imperial destiny. The antique concision of his words rang with the single sonorous note of a carving in stone, reverberating in Giulio's mind above the clamor of traffic and mutter of voices that marked the huge purposeless confusion of the city. His father had spoken of “my son

Alessandro” who had built a city in a desert, dug gold from the bowels of the earth, and pastured flocks upon plains made fertile by his own hands. The words were a paraphrase from Alessandro's letters; he had taken the way of empire nearly ten years ago. In the cable was a suggestion that Giulio visit his brother, if only for a day, and see with his own eyes the children begotten by Alessandro, the city he had founded, and the noble woman of the West who was his wife.

That Giulio intended to do. He would leave on the *Skymaster*—Balbo's magnificent flight to Chicago interrupted his thought—at eleven forty-five tonight. Alessandro had told them in his letters that the city of Manisetti lay two hundred miles northwest of Albuquerque in the State of New Mexico, and the *Skymaster* reached Albuquerque at one four P.M. By this time tomorrow night he would be in Alessandro's house, face to face with his brother and hearing again his buoyant confident voice which had always seemed, although not heard for nearly ten years, like a prelude to the opera of Italian glory. Alessandro had been before them, but that was like him, the older one, a torrent of energy pouring itself out in victory over a desolate land. There was nothing that he could not do. There was nothing that any Italian could not do. Time had touched them at one of the apocalyptic moments of history.

He sent a telegram from the office in the Plaza Hotel, just the words “I am flying tonight across a continent to