

L I T E R A R Y . . .

Chains Of Steel ... Of Gelatine ... Of Glass ...

"Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains. One man thinks himself the master of others, but remains more of a slave than they are."—Rousseau.

Following the organization of a group of students interested in the study of Socialist politics (I wish I could use the word *philosophy*), there appeared an anonymous farce in these pages. Hard against it came a sturdy reply, whose author's name appeared in bold capitals both at the beginning and the end. Congratulations are in order: to the author of THE RED PERIL, for his discretion in introducing the subject, withholding his name and casting his material in the form which tradition has shown attracts most student attention; to the author of WHY NOT TRY SOCIALISM? for his candid, informative declaration of political faith; to the university, for what appears to be a gratifying alertness and response.

In the hope that the matter will not be allowed to drop, either by the editors of The Gazette or by students at large, these reflections are offered, certainly not by an authority on political doctrine or social conditions, but by one of many who still seek the temporal salvation of man.

Traditional Liberalism, traditional Conservatism, and traditional Socialism (yes, the precepts of Socialism are as old as Lycurgos—see Plutarch) are now hopelessly obsolete, inadequate. It is tragically necessary to remind a generation which has just achieved the power of *entre-detrui*, and which adorns its cafes, children's toys, confectionary and coiffure with the name of that power, that none of the political thought which preceded the first experimental blast provides material comfort for those who have nothing more concrete to anticipate than destruction in the next.

History up to the first blast records nothing but transitions from one phase to another, the transitions usually being at least as long as the phase. An American professor of Political Science defines a transitional period as "a period of transition from one transitional period to another transitional period." It was impossible to indicate a positive demarcation between the white of one phase and the black of the next. It is impossible to say, for example, exactly when the Middle Ages ended and the Renaissance began.

History has always been grey, but immediately before that blast it became blinding white, then jet, hopelessly black. There was no twilight transitional period, yet the most advanced of our political thinking is light grey, with a suggestion of delicate pink.

"Canadians like to think that they are sensible, adventurous and progressive. I laugh. When election time rolls along, only a third of eligible voters will go to the polls, and only a few of them will have a lasting interest in politics." Don't laugh, Mr. Miller. Think. The situation is anything but humorous.

Because of the existence of a decayed world-wide social fabric, I was taken from my home and my studies. Naturally I bitterly resented these conditions. I was on a ship for the United Kingdom four days after I drew uniforms, and my resentment had not been obliterated yet in the dumb, helpless exasperation of unreasoning, unrelenting naval discipline. Six consecutive nights I lay awake on my tiny pipe berth, in the incredible stench of sweating, naked, unwashed bodies,

my head between two feet, my feet straddling another, bodily contact above and below from the proximity of the berths, of which there were more than three hundred in the small lounge.

I accepted the conditions which made this discomfort necessary, and busied myself with plans for the brave new world. At the end of the trip I had a magnificent plan which must surely solve all problems. I suggest this exercise to all interested. It brings some remarkable things to light.

It seemed that the only political party in England which would sponsor my plan was the Labor Party, so in six months I battered my way up to the drawing room (cracked plaster, unclosable doors, new glass in the windows—a V2) of a man whose name I first encountered in English IA and much of whose printed work I had read, Harold Laski.

Here I discovered my horrible guilt. I had been guilty for eighteen years of the unpardonable crime of all youth—the state of being young. My generation have been punished for their guilt, have been sacrificed at the altar of their judges' ignorance and folly. The best of them are dead.

On this occasion, however, I was merely sent to the corner, where I sat and moaned with all the intolerance to which my generation is entitled, while a roomful of Cambridge and London professors, War Office experts, party heads, and war correspondents discussed rare books and listened to Laski's imitations of Winston Churchill.

My career as a traditional Socialist ended, rather illogically I confess, as I supported Laski's hand in my own in farewell, and commenced a four-hour walk through London in furious silence and in the company of the great man who had taken me there against his better judgment and whose last spoken words to me were words of apology.

Yet, to those who like to consider themselves Marxists, I commend Laski's interpretation and definition. (There is an essay entitled "Why I am a Marxist" in the English IA text, PATTERNS FOR LIVING, yet we find its author Laski "a disciple of Fabius" in TIME, November 11—a characteristic Laski inconsistency.)

Mr. Miller, do not accept words written in half jest as "obvious." Do not make definite statements about the outlook of a person whose very name you profess not to know. Remember, what is apparent to you needs not of necessity be obvious to your readers.

STUDENT MUSIC

When considering the recent concert given by the Ladies' Musical Club, which consisted almost entirely of student artists, I am struck by one feature (I shall not call it a mistake) which was fairly obvious throughout; this was the fact that the students chose to attempt difficult operatic works and instrumental pieces which were a trifle heavy, rather than lighter selections more suited to their undeveloped talents. There were, nevertheless, some very creditable performances of difficult pieces. I feel, however, that some of the students would have been wiser to select choices which came more within their technical abilities.

Mr. Seabiscuit, enough belles-lettres. Remember, McGosh himself, when he referred to matters of cosmic controversy, merely touched lightly in his insolent fashion and passed on in good haste. Do not cheapen yourself by imitation. The farce served its purpose.

Man's nature requires that he live with, and dependent upon, his fellow-man. Thereby he finds himself in a position where self-interest and community interest fail to agree. The larger the community, the more violent the disagreement. (It is possible that there is a maximum point beyond which this conflict decreases—herein lies our hope of world unity.) As Rousseau says, man is in chains. Upon what kind of chains he chooses depends existence or oblivion, and he has very few years in which to choose.

In order to choose, he must be enlightened.

For his enlightenment he relies on you, Mr. Seabiscuit, on you Mr. Miller, and on all of us who, if there be no sin but ignorance, are spending these best years of our lives seeking absolution.

GEOFFREY PAYZANT.

Plumber (arriving late): "How have you managed?"

Householder: "Not so badly. While we were waiting for you to come, I taught the children to swim."

For instance, Betty Sly, who sang the Gavotte from Mignon, and Earl Ducette and June Grant, who sang the "Love Duet from Madame Butterfly, might have been more suited to Wagner; Marion Lee Dewis, who played the first movement of Beethoven's Sonata number one very creditably, should never have tackled the Polonaise Militaire, which requires tremendous strength and manual dexterity to perform. Frances Saulnier's performance of the Kreisler Rondo was very good, but it was apparently a little beyond her technical abilities.

The performances which showed real insight into the music were the interpretations of Neil Van Allen, who gave a splendid rendition of Liszt's extremely difficult Spanish Rhapsody; and that of Lorna Roome, who played the andante from Lalo's Symphonic Espagnole, and Kreisler's transcript of Boldini's Dancing Doll; and that of June Grant and Earl Ducette, who managed to combine good singing and the true spirit of Buccini with (rarer still) good Italian in the Love Duet, in spite of a somewhat insipid accompaniment.

An interesting feature was the performance of the first movement of Haydn's Symphony in D by the New Glasgow Community Orchestra. This symphony, although it is listed in some old

German editions as the number two, is actually Haydn's last, and is better known as his "London Symphony," the one hundred and fourth on Mandyzewski's lists. Haydn himself, in a catalogue of the compositions that he recalled having written since the age of eighteen, called it the one hundred and eighteenth. His biographer, Pohl, called it the one hundred and ninth, and it is listed by Fuchs and Wotquenne as number one hundred and forty-four, by Salomoa as the seventh London Symphony and by Zulehner as number seventy-five. The Mandyzewski listing is the one usually followed. It is the last of twelve symphonies written during Haydn's second visit to London, and was first performed in May, 1795, as a benefit concert where Haydn took in 4,000 gulden, equivalent to about two thousand dollars. As Haydn put it, "The whole company was very pleased, and so was I."

On the whole it was a very pleasant concert, and it is to be hoped that similar ones will be presented in future.

TONY BIDWELL.

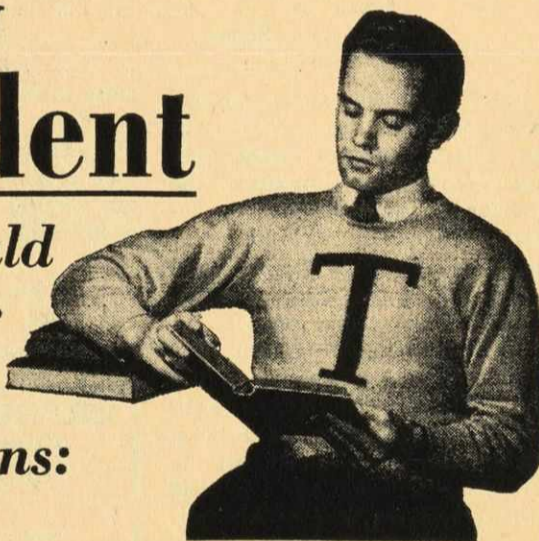
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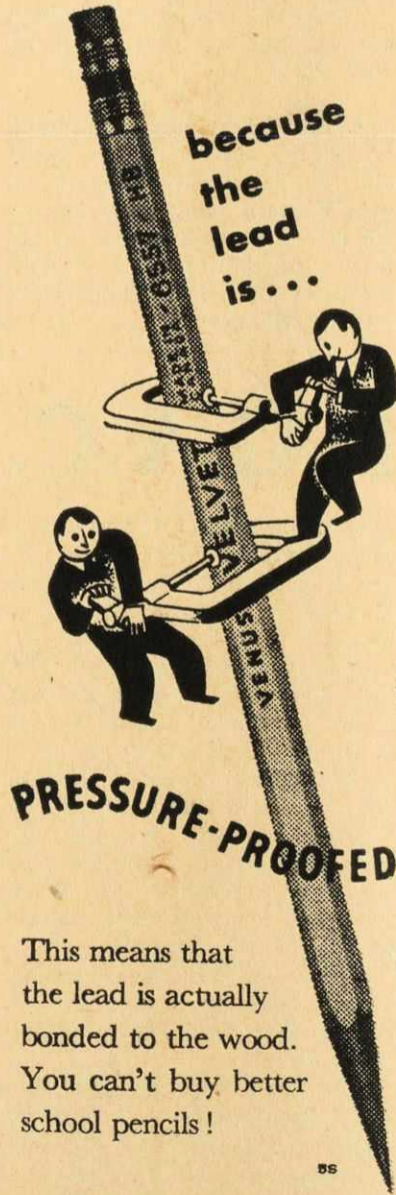
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