

Bertolt Brecht: Plays, Poetry and Prose

*Edited by* JOHN WILLETT

*and* RALPH MANHEIM

Journals 1934-1955

problems that interest him. at the moment he solves all his problems 'by force'. to characterise persons he cold-bloodedly (or hot-bloodedly?) uses shadows, which he draws across faces, the laws of gravity, like those of anatomy, he ignores, his figures kneel on air. occasionally quite wooden figures are found in lively settings, nutcrackers among normal people. but despite all the misfortune, lack of skill, shortcomings and stumblings he will from time to time in a roundabout and pathetic way grasp his problems in a firm grip and make progress. he is now making an oeuvre for the first time, at my instigation. by composing 27 sheets using one and the same technique (pencil) he is setting down the unevenness and inconsistency of his style in all its 'nakedness', so to speak, 'drawing his way up'.

the world situation is getting more and more confused. if the USSR had brought an alliance with the western powers into being, there would have been two ways open: 1) the USSR could support the powers that be and allow them to replace the nazi system with a 'normal' capitalist one, dependent on the western powers. 2) it could force the formation of popular fronts and thus endanger the prosecution of the war. (2) persevered with until 1939 led to the collapse of the alliance. as matters now stand the USSR could find itself in the position of having to support the nazi regime, and how is that to be done even using furnace tongs?

29 jan 40

ljungdal gives me a little essay on the **WORLD VIEW OF DIALECTICS**. it is cleverly and carefully written, but it has the usual shortcomings: hegel's dialectic is not derived from real history, but from the history of philosophy. and it is not shown functioning in marx, but has the character of a constituent of a world-view.

however, what a lucid little work compared to the **HISTORY OF THE BOLSHEVIKS!** the author of this history is as it were clear and imprecise, he hews his sentences into shape with an axe and constantly cuts his own fingers in the process of writing. revolutions are derived from metaphysics, they happen because the old yields to the new and because the only thing 'that is irresistible is what comes into existence and develops'. everything is dependent on everything else, and developments happen with miraculous leaps. the identity sentence is valid in the main for 'things in nature', and the ultimate contradictions which must not be whitewashed over, are capitalist conditions. the class struggle must not be hemmed in, but has to be fought out to the end. then one writes memoirs and spares a grateful thought for dialectics. everything is on the

way up, the old dies, the new triumphs, it is a matter of 'the transition from an old qualitative condition to a new qualitative condition'. the new is naturally of better quality.

31 jan 40

dialectical thinking corresponds to a differentiated society with powerful productive forces which develop quickly in catastrophic form amid wars and revolutions. the intensified class struggle, the legality of competition, unrestrained exploitation, the accumulation of misery via the accumulation of capital – it all means that dialectics more and more becomes the only possible aid to orientation. such phenomena of a social nature as the progressive isolation of individual social functions, coupled with those same functions' growing dependence on one another, the development of relations among the constituent members and the increased friction this causes, all this sort of thing teaches us how to think dialectically. the proletariat sees nations as people fighting one another, as a unit it sees nations as being against it, the proletariat. only the realisation of their simultaneous unity and disunity enables it to pursue a rational policy. it is the same with the classes; the ruling classes do not form 'a reactionary mass', yet they do just that in one context, when facing the proletariat, in itself a unity. what people must strive for is a formal democracy, of which it is known in advance that it will never become political, only economic. the dictatorship of the proletariat can be conceived as the first form of non-formalistic democracy. the private ownership of the means of production (one owner instead of 50 owners) is on the one hand historical progress, but it soon becomes an anachronism, and production is held up by the individual owner of those means. such observations and experiences are developed by dialectics. – it is high time people began to derive dialectics from reality, instead of deriving it from the history of ideas, and using only selected examples from reality.

10 feb 40

i am reading a lot of macaulay, at the moment **LIFE AND WRITINGS OF ADDISON**. the english are to be envied for their literature which has a real history and real continuity, because a national life existed and the bourgeoisie came to power at an early stage. and what criteria! when m[acaulay] writes, supposedly in praise of addison, that his best verse is as good as POPE's second best. excellent analysis of the poem **CAMPAIGN** which glorifies the battle of blenheim. he reminds us that the poem's

48 Sweden, 19 March 40

main claim to fame was noted by JOHNSON, namely '*the manly and rational rejection of fiction*'. up to then poets had had commanders in the field participating in battles like homeric heroes. now addison compares marlborough to an *angel, guiding the whirlwind*'. and he points out that the effect of the simile comes from the unconsidered line '*such as, of late, o'er pale britannia pass'd*'. england had been ravaged by a typhoon just previously. he stresses 'the advantage which, in rhetoric and poetry, the particular has over the general'. the germans do not have any literature as yet, if one looks closely. one or two tall, spindly champions, entirely unconnected with one another, each with his own criteria, a pathetic particularism in poetry. there was simply no centre, no city like london (or paris or rome). in addition to which education had to be acquired privately, since there were no great schools. even goethe can be classed as an autodidact.

19 mar 40

bedridden 3 weeks with influenza. i am helpless against the clutches of that kind of thing when i have no major work on the go.

in addition to which i cannot work with a temperature.

am considering a little epic work, THE FEARS OF HERR KEUNER, something in the manner of CANDIDE or GULLIVER. herr keuner is afraid that the earth may become uninhabitable if too great crimes, or too great virtues become necessary before a man can make enough to live on. thus herr keuner flees from country to country, since too much is asked of him everywhere, be it self-sacrifice, or bravery, or cleverness, or desire for freedom or thirst for justice, or cruelty, or deceit etc. all these lands are uninhabitable.

Hitler occupies Denmark 49

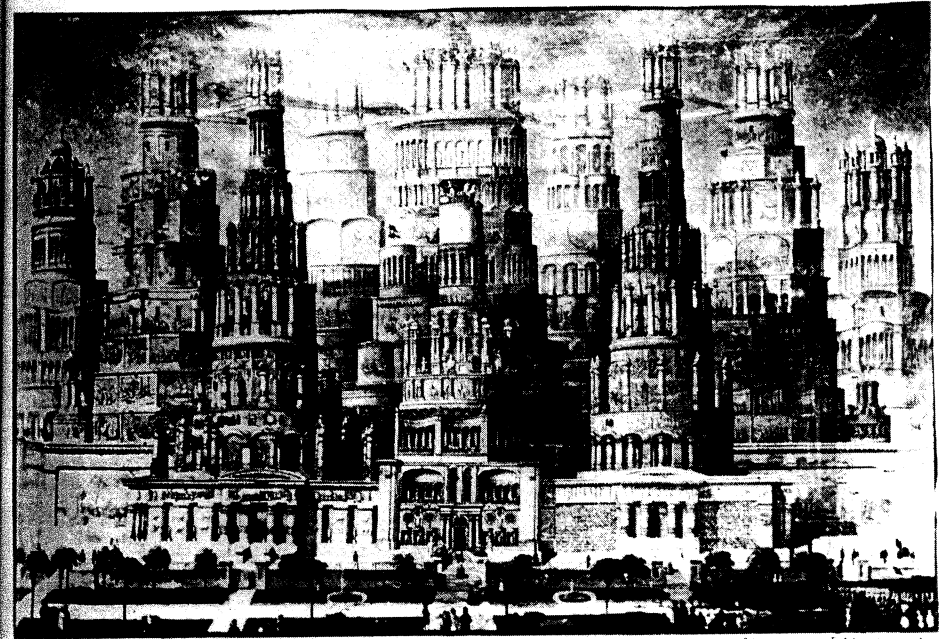


LYSKARNA BENÄTTER DANMARK OCH  
ANGRIPIER NORGE

9 April 1940. The caption reads 'Germans occupy Denmark and attack Norway'.

21 jul 41

we arrive at san pedro, the harbour for los angeles. martha feuchtwanger and alexander granach the actor meet us at the pier. elisabeth hauptmann has had a friend of hers rent a *flat*\* for us. she herself has a job near NY.



ERASTUS FIELD'S AMERICAN MONUMENT  
*He admitted that it might be faulty.*

Museum of Modern Art

A fantasy by Massachusetts painter Erastus Salisbury Field (1805–1900).

22 jul 41

feuchtwanger lives in santa monica, in a big, mexican-style house. his personality is unchanged, but in appearance he has aged. he is working for the theatre here on a play about a german astrologer and charlatan. his advice is to stay here, where it is cheaper than in NY, and where there are more opportunities for earning.



**AMERICA HAS MUCH TO LEARN** from the fate that befell French Democracy. One of our greatest articles was Lion Feuchtwanger's "Lost Souls Limited" in which he pictured the tragedy of France's fall.

Lion Feuchtwanger (centre) in a French internment camp; he was in Les Milles and Nîmes till the capitulation.

1 aug 41

almost nowhere has my life ever been harder than here in this mausoleum of *easy going*\*. the house is too pretty, and here my profession is gold-digging, the lucky ones pan big nuggets the size of your fist out of the mud and people talk about them for a while; when i walk, i walk on clouds like a polio victim. and i miss grete, here especially. it is as if they had taken away my guide as soon as i entered the desert.



Lockheed bombers destined for the R. A. F. mass at Floyd Bennett Field in Brooklyn. Flown from the hard-working Califorma factory (see previous page), these Hudson bombers will

have their wings stripped off, like those at the right, before being shipped. Hudsons are dependable planes, greatly admired by the British. They are being built at the rate of four a day.

American-built Hudson bombers waiting to be shipped to the RAF.

Winston Churchill at his house in Chartwell in 1938. From *Life*.



A tray of bottles (right) stood in Churchill's Chartwell study when this picture was made in 1938. Miss Moir says he always likes to have bottles where he can see them.

#### Churchill (continued)

A third and somewhat irreverent picture of Mr. Churchill mischievously refuses to be forgotten. It is a still life of a plump, middle-aged gentleman looking at an array of bottles of whisky, brandy, champagne and liqueurs. When he was in America he liked to have his little stock of bottles so arranged that he could see it from his bed.

Mr. Churchill enjoys a drink. I have noticed that it seems to renew his strength and energy; it brings a sparkle to his eye and added fire to his manner. "You can't make a good speech on iced water," I have often heard him say.

At home or on travel, at work or on holiday, Churchill drinks a glass of dry sherry at midmorning and a small bottle of claret or Burgundy at lunch. To Mr. Churchill a meal without wine is not a meal at all. When he is in England he sometimes takes port after lunch, and always after dinner. It is at this time that his conversation is most brilliant. In the late afternoon he calls for his first whisky and soda of the day. Like most Englishmen he drinks it without ice. He likes a bottle of champagne at dinner. After the ritual of port, he sips the very finest Napoleon brandy. He may have a highball in the course of the evening.

Mr. Churchill, though never a heavy eater, is a connoisseur of good food. But one cannot exactly call him a gourmet because he has not the gourmet's love of complicated and exotic dishes.

He enjoys a perfectly done lamb chop and considers soups "a good culinary institution." He is fond of seafood, especially clams and American oysters which are larger than those in Europe. When in the U. S., he would often build a whole meal around fish. He insists upon having his meat roasted, because in roasting none of the juices and none of the flavor is lost.

"I want some solid, substantial sandwiches," he once announced to a head waiter who was preparing him a picnic lunch. "Get hold of a large loaf, and don't cut the slices too thin—or too thick, either. Trim the crust off the edges and put plenty of butter on the bread. Please see to it there's enough beef for us to know it's a beef sandwich. And make certain that the beef comes clear to the edge of the bread. I don't like to bite twice into a sandwich before I can tell what's inside of it."

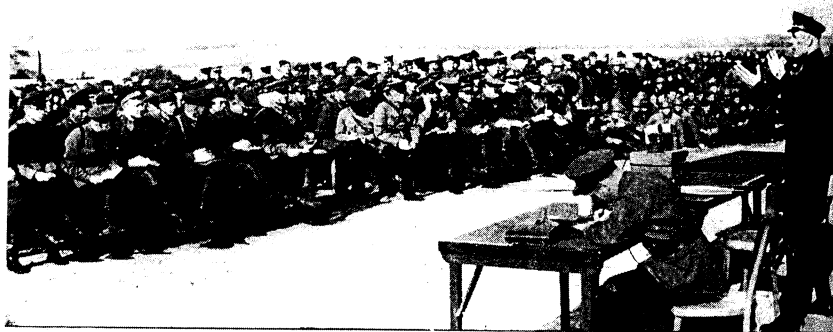
All this was rattled off with a very pronounced lisp, which left the unfortunate waiter completely bewildered. "Never mind," said Mr. Churchill impatiently, when he realized the man had not taken in a word. "bring me some paper and a pencil." And then and there he proceeded to illustrate the exact size and thickness of the sandwiches with a series of quick sketches, little blueprints of gastronomic architecture.

9 aug 41

i feel as if i had been exiled from our era, this is tahiti in the form of a big city; at this very moment i am looking out on to a little garden with a lawn, shrubs with red blossom, a palm tree and white garden furniture, and a male voice is singing something sentimental to piano accompaniment—it's not a wireless. they have nature here, indeed, since everything is so artificial, they even have an exaggerated feeling for nature, which becomes alienated. from dieterle's house you can see the san fernando valley; an incessant, brilliantly illuminated stream of cars thunders through nature; but they tell you that all the greenery is wrested from the desert by irrigation systems. scratch the surface a little and the desert shows through: stop paying the water bills and everything stops blooming. the butchery 15,000 kilometres away, which is deciding our fate right across europe at its broadest point, is only an echo in the hubbub of the art-market here.

[august 41]

walter benjamin has poisoned himself in some little spanish border town. the *guardia civil* had stopped the little group he belonged to. when the others went to tell him the next morning that they were being allowed to carry on, they found him dead. i read the last article he sent to the institute for social research, g  nther stern gave it to me, commenting that it is complex and obscure, i think he also used the word 'beautiful'. the little treatise deals with historical research, and could have been written after reading my CAESAR (which b. could not make much of when he read it in svendborg). b. rejects the notion of history as a continuum, the notion of progress as a mighty enterprise undertaken by cool, clear heads, the notion of work as the source of morality, of the workforce as prot  g  s of technology, etc. he makes fun of the common remark about its being astonishing that fascism should 'still be possible in this century' (as if it were not the fruit of every century). in short the little treatise is clear and presents complex issues simply (despite its metaphors and its judaisms) and it is frightening to think how few people there are who are prepared even to misunderstand such a piece.



MARSHAL TIMOSHENKO (right) INSTRUCTING OFFICERS  
*How genuine was the military culture?*

Marshal Semyon Timoshenko (right) addressing Red Army officers.

[august 41]

and now to the survivors! at a garden party at rolf nürnberg's i met the twin clowns horkheimer and pollock, two tuis from the frankfurt sociological institute. horkheimer is a millionaire, pollock merely from a well-off background, which means horkheimer can buy himself a university chair 'as a front for the institute's revolutionary activities' wherever he happens to be staying, which for the moment is at columbia, though, since the rounding up of the reds has started on a grand scale, horkheimer has lost the urge 'to sell his soul, which is more or less what you always have to do at universities', and has gone west, where paradise awaits. so much for academic laurels! – they keep about a dozen intellectuals' heads above water with their money, and these in turn have to contribute all their work to the journal without any guarantee that it will ever be printed. this enables them to maintain that 'saving the institute's money has been their principal revolutionary duty all these years'.

4 OCT 41

trying to think of subjects for films i tell REYHER the plan for JOE FLEISCHHACKER IN CHICAGO, and in a couple of hours we develop it

into a film-scenario THE BREAD-KING LEARNS TO BAKE BREAD. there is no proper bread in the states and i like my bread. my main meal in the evening is bread and butter. r[eyher] takes the view that the americans are still nomads, and nomads don't know anything about eating. for that you have to study what the soil produces etc. they have no use for real bread because you can't sell it sliced, which it has to be so they can eat it on the move or wherever they happen to be standing. they really are nomads. they change professions like shoes, build houses to last 20 years and don't stay that long, so that home isn't any specific locality. not for nothing has the *great disorder* spread so luxuriantly here.



BEAR AT 9 P.M. WITH A MASS WALK-OUT. STRIKE SIGNS SAID: "STEEL WORKERS FOR DEFENSE BETHLEHEM FOR PROTEST" AND "BETHLEHEM WORKERS FOR THE LAW"

'Strike [at Bethlehem Steel] began at 9 pm with a mass walk-out.

5 OCT 41

the conflict of interest between various groups in france and britain in relation to foreign policy has rapidly and steadily grown more acute in the last decades. these countries scarcely fight as nations any more. the bank of france switched from the british tories to the german ruhr industrialists (in the middle of the war), because they thought that they



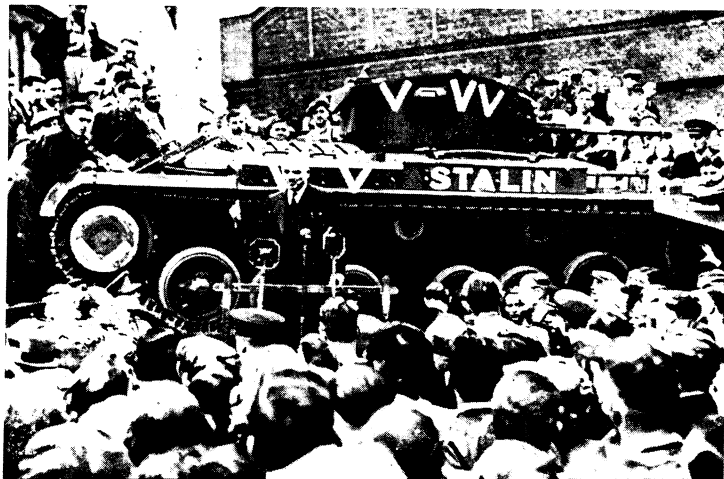
could defeat the french people better from the german side. - history really will call this war *the wrong war*.



Sergeant Thompson of Scotland Yard (right) has been Mr. Churchill's bodyguard for 20 years. (The Yard assigns a man to every prominent British statesman, in or out of office.) Thompson also serves unofficially as valet, secretary and personal adviser.

Churchill with his police bodyguard Sergeant Thompson.

7 Oct 41



THE GENTLEMAN FROM OMSK  
The workers sang: 'Arise ye slaves!'

Associated P

7.10.41

## Hitler hurls 6000 planes, 2 armies against Moscow

This explosive phase of the current controversy coincided with return from Rome of Myron C. Taylor, who is Roosevelt's special ambassador to the Vatican, and with some remarks on the subject by Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt.

Mrs. Roosevelt's reference to the dispute came during her regular Sunday broadcast which is sponsored by coffee interests. She said there never had been any question in Russia of preventing people from getting together to form a church but that the difficulty arose in connection with education, especially education of young men for the priesthood.

She remarked also that there is no real difference in the form of the Soviet Union government to lay and "the other dictatorship governments."

Father Walsh issued a state-

ment demanding an end to religious freedom and calling on Roosevelt indirectly to compel Stalin to make good on constitutional guarantees.

### Anti-Religious Red Paper Quits

MOSCOW, Oct. 6.—(AP)—The Soviet magazine "Anti-Religion," bi-monthly organ of the militant Atheist League, suspended publication today.

The magazine served as a guide of the same Society which published the newspaper Besbozhnik (Godless), which previously had ceased to appear. The reason given in both cases was to conserve paper.

DETROIT, Oct. 6.—(AP)—The Ford Motor Co. today announced 20,000 workers in its River Rouge plant and other units would be dismissed tomorrow because of curtailment in civilian automobile production.

It was the motor industry's first major discharge of civilian workers.

The company indicated the men would not be recalled until the firm begins large scale production of defense orders—probably in six months.

## Exchange of prisoners cancelled

By JOHN A. FARRIS JR.  
Verified.

NEWHAVEN, England, Tuesday, Oct. 7.—(AP)—British authorities today canceled the scheduled start at dawn of an exchange of British and German war prisoners after a new hitch in the repatriation plans developed over an apparent misunderstanding of the number affected.

"The German government have declared themselves ready to exchange about 100 prisoners," the broadcast was quoted. "These are aboard ship at Newhaven. With regard to further development of this scheme, diplomatic negotiations still are in progress."

## MINER: ★ WAR CANTERBURY 'PROUD' OF RUSS

LONDON, Oct. 6.—(AP)

The Archbishop of Canterbury told the Canterbury Diocesan Conference today that "we may well be proud of our new ally," Soviet Russia, because of the manner in which she was waging "the battle for world freedom" with "heroic courage and tenacity."

"The true self of this country just emerged," declared the archbishop, who is the ranking prelate of the church of England.

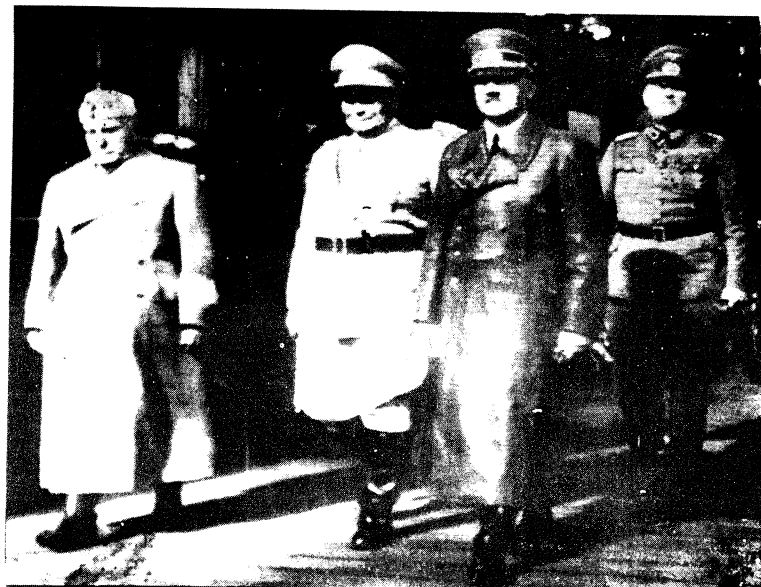
"Can we doubt that with this rising up of a whole people there will come a revival of their deep and ineradicable sense of religion?"

The archbishop foresees "closer relations between, on the one hand, a new Russia, united by affliction and emancipated from the errors of the past, and, on the other hand, the British commonwealth and the United States" after the war.



8 oct 41

argued with feuchtwanger about the omnipotence of historians. he says, with a mixture of amazement and triumph, that he finds it remarkable how the describers take over history, how horace 'made' augustus, how the prophets in the bible 'built up' the kings. he needs all this to arrive at the notion that *he* will 'in the final estimate' determine posterity's opinion of hitler. our point of departure is caesar's posthumous fame. when i put machiavelli's portrait alongside mommsen's all he can see are writers, individuals, tastes at work. the 'quality' of their formulations is what is then decisive. that machiavelli sees a condottiere, mommsen an enlightened monarch, going along with the middle classes etc, interests [feuchtwanger] little, since it robs the tui of his omnipotence.



MUSSOLINI, GÖRING, HITLER ON THE RUSSIAN FRONT

Advancing on Moscow. From the left, Mussolini, Goering, Hitler, ?.

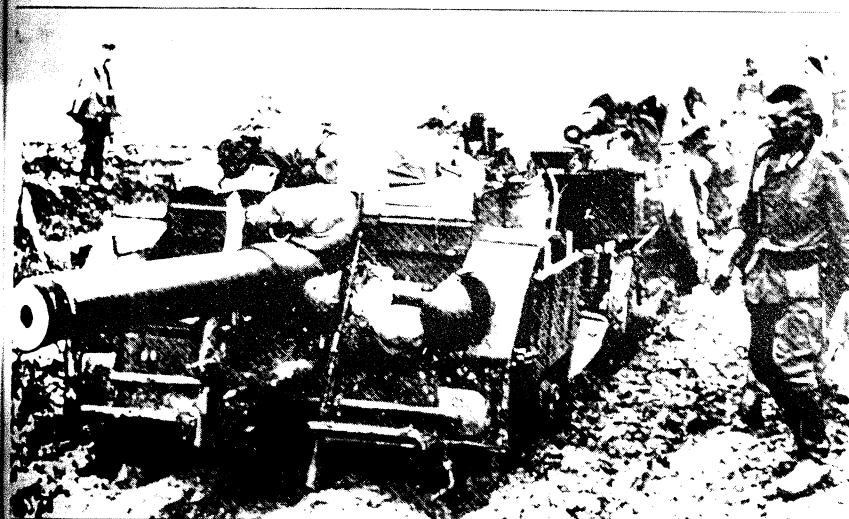
20 oct 41

evening at mankiewicz's, who works with o[rson] welles, whose film CITIZEN KANE (about hearst the newspaper tycoon) is much talked about.

BEN HECHT who has come over from NY gives mankiewicz a delicious account of all the NY flops, as a sort of present for his host. 'nobody is writing serious plays any more,' he says. the effect of the crisis in 29 and the new deal seems exhausted, it was too weak to put the drama on its feet. broadway triumphed and demonstrated that it has a stomach like mithridates for minor poisons. the muckrakers have turned into gold-diggers.

21 Oct 41

the wrong war goes on. the butchery of the janus-heads. with every week the war is prolonged by a year. the only people who deal with the future any more are the astrologers. in LANG's villa grown adults, refugees, sit and listen to the british court astrologer (a former novelette writer for the berlin illustrated weeklies), a fat booby who identifies the constellation of stars in may 1940 as the cause of hitler's victory over france. he gets very angry if anybody suggests that with hitler's superiority in tanks and planes april or june would probably have done just as well.



BOGGED GERMAN GUNS

*Some are in a hurry.*

Sticky patch on the Russian front.

22 OCT 41

remarkable how very different the situation of the drama is here after scandinavia. the obstacles there were pretty well all political, and that didn't prevent you from writing. here they are aggravated by those of a wholly commercialised theatre in addition. BEN HECHT, say, goes into a bar and talks about a plan for a play, ie he tells them the setting (the morgue) and a few gags and a colleague instantly replies 'put me down for \$1000, ben.' horrifying as it is, this system might function if the political situation were different (maybe the situation at the cradle of capitalism, in elizabethan times, wasn't very different from what it is now, at its grave). but you need the great tabula rasa to play on, the sense of beginning, and the audience that is productively concerned about public affairs, about res publica.

22 OCT 41

the attitude to money here gives away their colonial capitalism. you get the impression that everybody here is where he is just to get away. they are only in the USA to make money. it is nomadic theatre, by people on the move for people who who are lost. time is money. prefabricated types are assembled, rehearsals are a matter of patching things together. nobody lives in the colonies.

25 OCT 41

evening at döblin's. little rented house for \$60 a month that they have to leave, now that he has been *fired*\* along with 8 others who got *picture-writer*\* contracts when they arrived from france, including heinrich mann). he has nothing and nowhere to go, but still shows his old berlin sense of humour. what business could he start? to sit medical examinations he would have to study for a year, to work as a healer he would have to speak english (i can hardly hypnotise a man to ask him for the word that i want to say to him). it might be possible to screw something out of the film industry if you could set up a brothel for elderly ladies, for that would help tame the censorship which is largely in the hands of these ladies. - i suggest to him he should modernise half a dozen classics.

26 OCT 41

afternoon at REICHENBACH'S. he is a physicist, working at california university, empiricist, logician, pupil of einstein. he compliments me on the bits of physics in GALILEO and on the history in it, but then a couple of psychoanalysts turn up and i switch the conversation to astrology. and the belief in astrology turns instantly into a mother complex - the belief in hitler is also some such thing; then there is a bit of narcissism in it, since you get the stars involved with yourself etc etc. r[eichenbach] talks about wishful selection in connection with the forecasts, but he too spares the totemists with his new logic. i for my part scarcely ever take part in discussions if i can't turn them into discussions of logic.

26 OCT 41

plays like SHAKESPEARE'S histories, dramatisations of chapters of chronicles, always seem to me closest to reality. there is no 'idea' in them, no concern to shape a plot, scarcely any topicality. all you get is an illumination of established facts with occasional corrections on the lines of 'any other way is almost unthinkable'. courses on the drama should begin with a comparison between KING JOHN and the chronicle from which it was presumably taken. the sequel: STRINDBERG'S plays about kings. it would naturally be imperative to study where the glorification or debunking takes place.

27 OCT 41

KORSCH sends some essays from 'living marxism'. in one of them he gives a short survey of the state of monopolisation in the USA, in the light of which it seems that democratic principles can in fact no longer have any function. in a certain sense the similarities of the two great movements, fascism and bolshevism, which have created the new state forms in accordance with their joint tendency toward planned economies, emerge more clearly than their dissimilarities. there are the all-powerful parties, working both in parliament and with para-military formations, the revolutionary forms, the hierarchies, the police systems, the five-year-plans, the propaganda methods, the militarisation of youth, the myths, the controlled prices, the waves of terror etc etc, but they are also quite different classes at whose behest this centralisation (which is costing these various classes a great deal) is being implemented. it is possible that

168 Los Angeles, 27 October – 1 November 41

the fascist counter-revolution may be sparing the proletariat some very grisly measures in this connection by executing them (in both senses) itself. this is the kind of thing fascist corporations do better than soviets. pity k[arl] k[orsch] doesn't seem to see this.



DNIEPERSTROY DESTROYED

Advancing on the Crimea.

27 OCT 41

salka Viertel, who wrote many of the great garbo films, tells how, in a film that was to present the life of madame curie, what was originally to be the main scene was cut. in it the curies reject a huge american offer for their method of producing radium, since they, as scientists, cannot turn inventions into monopoly products. the industry didn't want to shoot it, though they had at first been very keen on it. it is immoral to do something for nothing.

Hardt on Rilke and Goethe; Hitler as a 'nonentity' 169

27 OCT 41

the nazis are pushing into the crimea, threatening the caucasus, leningrad and moscow, the british watch 'with concern', but FEUCHTWANGER shows the utmost astonishment if anybody doubts that the russians can still win. any doubt seems to him to be sheer lunacy. i am very pleased.

27 OCT 41

we eat with ludwig hardt, the reciter, and the conversation comes round to rilke or the development of taste at the expense of appetite. here again we have the 'delicacy' of the german bourgeoisie, the delicacy of the upstart whom nobody stirs up. the feudal salon, that school for the bourgeoisie, didn't exist in germany. nor is there a capital, with a central literary market, a forum. art has no life, life is the pretext for art. what you get are not poems with feeling, but poems about feelings. the characteristic example is the 'famous' (there is naturally no such thing as real fame in this context) rilke poem about the panther. enter an oppressed creature, robbed of its freedom: the aristocrat! the beauty of the beast, innocence on a higher plane, nature which is above question. the philistine turns the matter into poetry, declares his own incompetence, asks nonetheless, what must he be feeling, having fallen into our hands? – it is not, of course, the german aristocracy, but the french one, the foreign one.

the conversation then turns to GOETHE, who, when he is delicate, at least doesn't turn everything into delikatessen. his uncertainty in matters of taste is interesting, and, more interesting still, is how his occasional slide into banality, as in the line 'this eternal dying and becoming' in the great hafis poem, lends the whole thing a certain elemental quality.

1 NOV 41

feuchtwanger tells how COLLIERS rejected an article of his on hitler because it contained 'wishful thinking'. he had presented HITLER as a nonentity, a meaningless mouthpiece for the german army, an actor playing at being the führer etc. in short, h. is not supposed to be a 'personality'. i, though of course i have all sorts of objections to the personality cult, think it important that he is one. but the americans can't see how a man the USA is prepared to spend 40 billion wiping out can be a

nonentity. of course he is a personality of a different order from the lavals, daladiers, chamberlains, halifaxes, stresemanns, brünings etc. f. accuses them of judging by success. what else should they judge by? naturally the old nonsense about novelettes being more successful than shakespeare is trotted out. i suppose, when you get down to it the way hitler is judged is only important because for all these he's-a-nonentity-ists it forms the basis for their judgement of the entire upheaval in germany. this makes national socialism a deformity, a wrong turning, a mistake. then how about the healthy part of the body, the straight path, the solution?

1 NOV 41

nowhere is writing about theatre more difficult than here, where all they have is theatrical naturalism.

14 NOV 41

it is difficult for refugees to avoid either indulging in wild abuse of the 'americans', or 'talking with their pay-checks in their mouths' as kortner puts it when he is having a go at those who earn well and talk well of the USA. in general their criticism is directed at certain highly capitalistic features, like the very advanced commercialisation of art, the smugness of the middle classes, the treatment of culture as a commodity rather than a utility, the formalistic character of democracy (the economic basis for which – namely competition between independent producers – has got lost somewhere). so homolka throws out bruno frank because he gets to his feet and shouts, 'i will not permit the president to be criticised here,' kortner shows up lang as the source of an anti-semitic remark, nürnberg hates lorre etc.

16 NOV 41

bought a little chinese amulet in chinatown for 40 cts. think about a play, THE TRAVELS OF THE GOD OF HAPPINESS. the god of those who would like to be happy, goes travelling across the continent. in his wake a trail of murder and outrage. soon he comes to the authorities' attention as the instigator of, and accessory to, many crimes. he has to go into hiding, becomes an outlaw. finally he is denounced, arrested, tried and condemned and about to be executed. he then turns out to be immortal. he reclines happily in the electric chair, smacks his lips when he drinks

poison, etc. the distraught executioners, chaplains etc leave exhausted, while the crowd outside death-row, which had come to the execution full of fear, goes away full of fresh hope . . .

16 NOV 41

DEUTSCH, THIMIG and KORTNER give a reading in a jewish club. kortner reads most of the german war primer, and the effect is surprisingly powerful. (the audience consists of jewish refugees, mostly well-off.) k[ortner] does not read them as single poems but makes a rhapsody of the whole thing, reading quietly, musically, a little sadly at first, then ending aggressively, a masterly performance.

17 NOV 41

korsch's laconic comment on CHILDREN'S CRUSADE 1939 is that there has been a change of tone since the THREE SOLDIERS, but otherwise he is unstinting in his praise. hedda korsch has appended an english translation.

18 NOV 41

KORTNER, who is generally feared here as the great thersites who rails with biblical (or maybe lutheran) power and vividness, is quite exemplary in his ability to resist assimilation. he even denounces the climate: the spring breezes which here in god's own country can suddenly turn into tornadoes that lay waste whole swathes of countryside, the 'rare' rain which turns into a deluge, the eternal sunshine which desiccates the brain so that people end up only being able to write hollywood films etc etc. absolutely determined that he will still one day play LEAR at the berlin state theatre, he thought fit in 1940 to join roosevelt's election campaign. he persuaded the columnist dorothy thompson (formerly mrs sinclair lewis) to drop wilkie and back roosevelt, a highly significant turn of events. he wrote speeches and articles for her etc. even the 'stürmer' had a picture of him as a semitic devil, dictating thompson speeches. but he didn't have the fare to go to the white house for tea after the election . . .



STEELMEN PURNELL, GRACE, FAIRLESS

Presidents respectively of Youngstown Steel, Bethlehem Steel and U. S. Steel.



JOHN L. LEWIS & DAUGHTER KATHRYN

The leader of the CIO unions.

20 NOV 41

BERGNER has read the SZECHWAN play, heli thought she would like it and told her the plot beforehand. she was very disappointed on reading it and found it 'as boring as it is grandiose'. all very weird and stagey, she could stop reading at any time, nobody would be in the least interested etc etc. i advise her to read it through again. ask her whether she would like to be in a version of heywood's A WOMAN KILLED WITH KINDNESS directed in the elizabethan style as a choice, exotic morsel. she was not uninterested.

21 NOV 41

as a follow-up to the success of the evening in the j[eewish] c[lub] the organiser reuss wants to do an all-brecht evening in december. massary got the 'jewish wife' and max reinhardt wanted to stage it with her. i was against that since heli was much better and SEÑORA CARRAR didn't seem certain. but massary had already refused to appear in a brecht evening anyway; she wanted to do the sketch in a mixed programme, but in the end decided on NAUGHTY BOYS (?). the brecht-evening is in doubt, there are objectors . . .

22 NOV 41

the negro CLARENCE MUSE has made an adaptation of THREEPENNY OPERA and wants to do a black production.

16 jan 42

skill and morality in our society go ill together; when the morality of a society becomes asocial, it is no bad thing if art develops its own craftsman's morality, but otherwise remains 'amoral'. a productive social order will develop a social morality alongside its craftsman's morality as an integral part of its skills. a mode of acting which reproduces human behaviour in such a way that society can react productively to it, demands something like a sense of responsibility, that is, a moral quality. it is, of course, necessary to convert the must-sentences into may-sentences. for the actor it is a question of emancipation, of acquiring the right to exert an influence on the shaping of society. he has to develop from a moral object into a moral subject. morality becomes production. the artist now not only has a responsibility towards society, he makes society face its own responsibilities. in short, society ceases to have the character of an infallible authority, and the artist has to represent it fully.

17 jan 42

in the evening visit ludwig hardt. he is an old-style reciter, who loads each word with atmosphere, a kind of accompaniment ('stuffed words, with apple sauce'). i say i'm for an open, unparsonical declamation, avoiding all sonorous cadenzas, crescendos and tremolos. stumble, in the process, on goethe's MAHOMET'S GESANG, and am repelled by its mixture of pantheism, philistinism and programme-music (its a sortofa picture of a river, dintja know?). compensate by digging out the arab blood feud poem in the DIVAN which i very much like.

hardt complains that in a hall this poem would call for some comment. i find comments a good thing, because they separate the poems from one another, equip them with an a-effect and set them on firm ground. poems are unsociable creatures. on the whole they are disagreeable when herded together, and they get on badly with one another. also their colours rub off on each other and they keep chipping into one another's conversation.

18 jan 42

wiesengrund-adorno here. he has grown round and fat and brings an essay on RICHARD WAGNER, not uninteresting but restricted to grubbing around for complexes, inhibitions, suppressions in the consciousness of

the old mythmaker, in the manner of lukács, bloch, stern, all of whom are merely suppressing an ancient form of psychoanalysis.

19 jan 42

at lang's. he again praises atlantis to the ersatz skies. he sees a special lifestyle where i only see high capitalism: possible that i can't see the 'real' atlantis for the high capitalism; but he just obscures it. here you have the unadulterated version before you; development, without anything actually developing.

21 jan 42

odd, i can't breath in this climate. the air is totally odourless, morning and evening, in both house and garden. there are no seasons here. it has been part of my morning routine to lean out of the window and breathe in fresh air; i have cut this out of my routine here. there is neither smoke nor the smell of grass to be had. the plants seem to me like the twigs we used to plant in the sand as children. after ten minutes their leaves were dangling limply. you keep wondering if they might cut off the water, even here, and what then? occasionally, especially in the car going to beverley hills, i get something like a whiff of landscape, which 'really' seems attractive; gentle lines of hills, lemon thickets, a californian oak, even one or other of the filling-stations can actually be rather amusing; but all this lies behind plate glass, and i involuntarily look at each hill or lemon tree for a little price tag. you look for these price tags on people too. – not being happy in my surroundings is not something i like, especially in these circumstances. i set great store by my status, the distinguished status of refugee, and it is quite unseemly to be so servile and keen to please refugees as the surroundings here are. but it is probably just the conditions of work that are making me impatient. custom here requires that you try to 'sell' everything, from a shrug of the shoulders to an idea, ie you have always to be on the look-out for a customer, so you are constantly either a buyer or a seller, you sell your piss, as it were, to the urinal. opportunism is regarded as the greatest virtue, politeness becomes cowardice.

21 jan 42

in the last few days i have skimmed superficially right through this journal. naturally it is quite distorted, for fear of unwelcome readers, and