

Capital Journal

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'LEADEN BELLS OF MODERN POETRY'

The Saturday Review issue of February 6 reprints as a guest editorial the acerbic opinions on modern poetry delivered before the Authors Club recently in London by Lord Dunsany, the Irish playwright, poet and author on his election as president of the club.

Modern poetry is afflicted with the same decadence that permeates senseless modernistic art, music and literature, architecture, drama, radio and television, and even politics with its New Deal wirehairs, punks and commies.

Dunsany says the writers of so-called modern verse speak as though they revealed something new and better and asks if the poets of the world labored in vain if their meter is unnecessary, if a line of prose will do as well. He queries:

"Has the honor that all lands and all ages have given to Homer, Dante, Milton and Shakespeare been given in childish ignorance that meter doesn't matter at all? Are we in our acceptance of the rejection of meter wiser and better informed than Tennyson? Did he know nothing when he wrote of Virgil as 'Wielder of the noblest measure ever molded by the lips of man'?"

"Are the hexameters of the Iliad nonsense? Is so-called modern verse all wrong and the lines of some recent playwrights right?"

The Irish poet says the people of this age remind one of King Lear, out in the thunder, listening to the ravings of a mock madman and about to lose his own reason and cites examples of modernistic poets to prove his contention, stating that "when you understand them, you will surely be no longer sane," or "is the fumbling of these so-called poets when there is good English in which to write or is it that their thoughts are too fine for our language as some have unkindly supposed?" And he continues:

"Or is it that their clumsy lumber can no more be carried by our glorious language, which was good enough for Shakespeare and Milton, than a load of scrap iron could be suitably carried in a royal coach? These are the antipodes. They are to Milton and to the Muses what Robespierre was to the Court of France. Some may bow to them. Many do. But do not call them poets. Say dull lines of rhythmless prose are better than the meter of Milton if you must; say you get the pleasure from turgid obscurity that some get from rotten cheese; but do not call it poetry."

Dunsany concludes by asking whether their "leaden bells are better than our old chimes?" He states that the aim of literature is to make all as clear as possible while "the modern stuff is to make it unclear." Such lines are "only weeds hiding for a little while at the bases of the pillars of the temples of great gods."

The same comparison holds most of our modernistic stuff, not only in poetry but all along the line of the fine arts.—G. P.

IMPASSE REACHED ON GERMANY?

The Big Four foreign ministers were eloquently silent on Germany in their announcement that they will take up a peace treaty for Austria no later than Friday and possibly sooner, but their shift to a new subject indicates that they have reached an impasse on Germany.

The west supported German unification after free elections in the east as well as the west zones, with the German people free to chart their future course without outside coercion from any source. We think any fair-minded person will admit this is eminently fair. If the Germans wanted to align themselves with Russia they could do so and we couldn't prevent it.

But it is clear by now that neither the east nor the west Germans want this, particularly the east people who now know communism from first hand contact. The riots throughout the eastern zone in the past few days reminded Russian officials, if they had forgotten last June, what to expect if free elections are held.

So the Russians stood pat. No German unification except as a completely disarmed, neutralized country, cut off from the west, at the mercy of Russia. The western powers turned this down. France included. So there was and we fear will continue to be an impasse. This was the biggest subject to be discussed at the conference and no agreement will be reached on it.

But we think the conference was wonderfully worth while from our standpoint. There is no concealing from the German people or the rest of the world that Russia dare not permit free German elections, that it is Russia that stands in the way of German unification. Russia will emerge from this conference with hardly a friend left in Germany, even among leftist elements that have carried the torch for the Soviet heretofore.

AN IMPORTANT LABOR DECISION

We imagine the leaders of organized labor must feel consternation at the decision of Texas U.S. District Judge E. C. Nelson that the Santa Fe railroad has no constitutional right to enter into a union shop agreement with 16 nonoperating unions.

Nor is the judge's ruling, which it is said will be immediately effective throughout the whole Santa Fe system, based on the Taft-Hartley act. It is based on the U.S. constitution. He rules that a union shop agreement, forcing all employees to join the unions whether they wished to do so or not, would violate rights guaranteed by the first, fifth, ninth, tenth and thirteenth amendments.

Here is an assertion of the "right to work." We have heretofore established in our law the right of labor to organize and maintain unions without coercion or other pressure from employers. But does the right of the individual to work without belonging also exist in this supposedly free country?

The issue is a crucial one. The judge's decision is sure to be appealed and the ultimate decision will come from the U.S. supreme court. It may prove as important for the whole country as the forthcoming decision on school segregation will be in the south.

PORTLAND STEPS OUT

The Portland Dock Commission's deal with Kerr Gifford & Co. looks like a much needed forward step by our state metropolis which should pay rich dividends through the years.

Terminal No. 4 is to be expanded by construction of eight steel storage tanks and a car dumper capable of unloading a railroad carload of grain each six minutes will make this the largest grain handling terminal west of the Mississippi river.

Many will remember when Portland had the lion's share of the Northwest's grain export business, 87 percent in 1929. This has now sunk to 32 percent. The lease agreement just entered into is calculated to give Portland by far the best facilities in the Northwest and should recapture for that port a big business it once had, but had lost.

The people are going to be asked for an authorization of \$12,000,000 to expand the port facilities, which include the grain elevator. This looks to us like a much more feasible program than this multimillion dollar recreation project in case Portland can't afford both. It certainly is from the all-important bread and butter angle.

ANOTHER EXPERT OPINION



POOR MAN'S PHILOSOPHER

Bodenheim Slaying Marks End to Greenwich Village

By HAL BOYLE

NEW YORK, (AP)—The slaying of Maxwell Bodenheim, a futile poet and novelist, is a flamboyant epitaph to a Greenwich Village that is gone.

It is a kind of mortal farewell to a Bohemianism that died long ago, and for almost 25 years has become to the outsider a Manhattan tourist attraction. The tourists still feel they have to see Greenwich Village just as they used to visit Grant's tomb.

They go to Radio City now or visit the top of the Empire State instead of calling on Gen. Grant. But time doesn't dim the magic of some names. And so they still like to beam at the bumps on the Bowery, gawk at the law-abiding chop suey dens of Chinatown that the late O. O. McIntyre pictured full of slant-eyed opium addicts—and they like to go to Greenwich Village, hoping to see the mad, bad, Bohemian artists at play.

The passing of poor Max Bodenheim is only the irony of the death of a symbol. He came here out of the Chicago literary school as did his arch rival, Ben Hecht, who co-authored "The Front Page," with Charles MacArthur, another Chicago newspaperman.

At one time they all were regarded as midwestern Bohemians. Then the roads went different ways. MacArthur married Helen Hayes after, so the legend goes, winning her heart by holding out some peanuts and saying, "I wish they were emeralds."

But both MacArthur and Hecht went on to hit the literary jackpot. Bodenheim never became popular. His life resolved itself, according to many critics, into a victory of alcoholism over a fine talent.

He settled in Greenwich Village and became a character in an out-of-date Bohemianism. He died of a 22 caliber bullet through the chest, and the saddest and perhaps the truest thing you can say of Maxwell Bodenheim is that it is he who pulled the trigger. He picked the right size gun to measure his final stature as a writer. Max pulled the trigger on his own life long ago, or at least on the promise that his life held. And why he did it is his own secret, and our mystery.

John Masfield mopped a bar-room floor in Greenwich Village, and later became famous. Eugene O'Neill dreamed and loved and probably drank there. So did Edna Millay, Alexander Hamilton, Edgar Allan Poe, and a very eloquent living friend of mine named John Lardner, and a hundred talented others.

My wife, and I, when young, lived for seven happy years next door to the home where once had dwelt Richard Harding Davis the Ernie Pyle of his day and three doors from the apartment house where Mrs. Franklin Roosevelt lived for a time, too. As a matter of fact, Ernie Pyle lived in Greenwich Village briefly, and was unhappy there.

Greenwich Village today is one of the nicest residential communities for some of the most solidly respectable people in America. It has a few of the finest restaurants in the land. It also has a few cheap tawdry night clubs that are a disgrace to it and the people who come there looking for "atmosphere."

They are tearing down Mark Twain's old home to put up a big apartment house. New York University, where Thomas Wolfe taught English by day and brooded and wrote by night, is gradually ringing Washington Square, the heart of Greenwich Village, and some oldtimers fear, turning it into a campus.

Real estate men say that one out of three young, eager, ambitious people who come to New York want to settle first in Greenwich Village. They seek inspiration and atmosphere, and being young, they think they can find it where other people they have heard of found these things before them.

But, accepting Greenwich Village as a symbol, did Maxwell Bodenheim ever find it, although he came here, lived here and died here? He became a Greenwich Village character for the tourists while the real Bohemians were enjoying Park Avenue.

The lesson of Bodenheim, certainly, is that the best address for a man's inspiration is his own mind, and that the home of any true artist is always his heart, where he really lives.

Can you become another Abraham Lincoln merely by moving to Springfield, Ill.?

Unemployed Up 459,000 in Year

By JAMES MARLOW

WASHINGTON (AP)—One of the best thermometers for showing the state of the nation's economy is the government's figures on the number of people employed and jobless.

Every month the government produces a fresh batch of figures. How does it get them? They're collected by two government agencies: the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and the Census Bureau. The BLS does it by mail and the Census Bureau by knocking on doors. The two agencies work independently of each other.

The BLS covers less ground. Its surveys don't include farmers, domestic workers, the self-employed and unpaid family workers. The Census Bureau takes in practically everybody.

Once a month, in an arrangement dating the eighth day of the month, the Census Bureau sends 300 paid people around to 25,000 homes in 68 counties, including the country's 21 largest metropolitan areas.

These census-takers—called enumerators—go out with a prepared list of questions and cover an estimated 48,000 individuals 14 years or older living in the 25,000 homes.

If that seems a small number of homes and individuals on which to draw conclusions about total employment and unemployment in a country the size of this, the Census Bureau says:

When unemployment reaches around two million, for example, its estimate on the total number unemployed will not be off by more than 150,000, and when employment hits around 60 million, its estimate will not be off by more than 350,000.

The Census Bureau's latest figures for the week of Jan. 5-9 show 29,778,000 employed, 2,359,000 unemployed. In the same week of 1953 the figures were: employed 60,800,000; unemployed, 1,900,000.

If you do some subtraction on these figures you'll find that while the total number of people employed in January 1954 is 1,022,000 fewer than a year ago, the total number of unemployed has increased only 459,000.

The Census Bureau's explanation: a number of people who were employed a year ago but aren't now are not looking for jobs now so they can't be considered unemployed.

The enumerators ask questions like these: Who's working in this house? Anyone looking for work? If so, how long has he been looking? Anyone doing part-time work?

The government doesn't have the means of making a check on every individual every month. But both agencies have a guide or measuring stick—economists call it a benchmark—for checking the approximate accuracy of their estimates.

This means that at some time in the past they had actual figures covering individuals nationwide.

The last time BLS made a benchmark was in the first quarter of 1951 when it got what it considers a complete count on employment and unemployment from social security and unemployment insurance records for workers covered by its survey. BLS is now making a similar check on the first quarter of 1953.

The last time the Census Bureau made a benchmark, or head-by-head count, was when it took the national census in 1950.

WASHINGTON MERRY-GO-ROUND

McCarren Now Telling Spain Which Technicians to Hire

By DREW PEARSON

WASHINGTON—Silver-haired, barrel-chested Senator Pat McCarran of Nevada not only lobbied much of the funds through congress to help Dictator Franco in Spain, but now wants to tell the Spanish government what technicians to hire in building Spanish bases.

The senator took the amazing step of telephoning the Spanish minister of public works, Conde Vallellano, to ask that he use German technicians. As a result of the call, the state department is investigating to see whether McCarran violated the Logan act which prohibits non-diplomats from meddling in the conduct of American foreign affairs.

Three years ago, McCarran was so active in demanding that \$187,000,000 be allocated to Spain that Franco awarded him the grand cross of Isabella. At that time, McCarran even called Herbert Gaston, former president of the Export-Import bank, on the carpet to ask why money advanced to Spain was not being spent faster.

McCarran's recent trans-Atlantic phone call, however, went further than anything else he has done to meddle in Spanish-American affairs. The call was made from the Plaza hotel in New York, and here is the telephone record of what the senator from Nevada said:

WHAT MCCARRAN SAID
It took several hours to put the call through, partly because the Spanish cabinet officer was routed out of bed. Then, over the crackle of trans-Atlantic static, the operator's voice announced: "I have Conde Vallellano on the line. He does not speak English."

"I have an interpreter here," replied McCarran.
"Conde Vallellano is ready now," intoned the operator.

The interpreter then took the receiver and translated McCarran's words.

"As you know, I have always been a champion of Spanish causes in this country," McCarran explained through his interpreter. "I would like to have my mind so clear as to be able within my own conscience to make decisions most advantageous, both to my country and to yours."

"It is a great honor that you should take the trouble to telephone me, and I appreciate your sentiments greatly, as all Spaniards appreciate them," the interpreter translated Vallellano's reply.

"What I would like to bring up is the question of building military bases in Spain," McCarran got down to the point. "I know of various plans which offer great advantages. The one that appeals most to me proposes that wherever necessary, Spanish construction capacity should be supplemented by West German technicians and facilities."

"I personally am of the same opinion as the senator that Germans should be used in the construction of these bases," agreed the Spanish minister of public works. "I am familiar with this idea of using Germans. Many of the details of such a program have already been furnished to me. Of necessity, it must be received by me and by Spaniards with the utmost sympathetic and favorable consideration."

"I wish to receive an opinion from some high Spanish official to guide my thinking," replied McCarran with satisfaction.

"I can state," repeated Vallellano, "that I know of no objection of any kind to such a procedure."

BEHIND THE PHONE CALL
Inside story is that McCarran has been pulling wires both in Washington and Madrid to cut

KIDS SHOW HOW

Ontario Arugs-Observer
Our choice for the "girl of the month" is Diana Rich of the sixth grade at Conklyn school.
In social studies class where students view the current social picture, Diana made an appeal to her classmates on behalf of the March of Dimes.
The students decided, on their own initiative, that they would do something to raise money themselves.
Without adult suggestion they organized two projects: The boys shined shoes downtown on the streets. The girls prepared and sold food in a cooked food sale.
The youngsters raised \$82 for the March of Dimes.
This was effective public service done with a know how that might well be noted by a good many adults.

who will make good this loss?



Salem 12 Years Ago

By BEN MAXWELL

February 9, 1942

A swift spreading, stubborn fire had swept the giant, former French liner Normandie at her pier in the Hudson river.

Oregon civilian defense had a training program for 110,690 workers now enrolled in the organization.

A marker dedicating the site of Belle Bassi, pioneer hamlet near Woodburn, has been unveiled.

Major General Fritz Todt, builder of the Siegfried line, had been killed in an air accident.

Southern Pacific company had begun taking delivery on \$28,000,000 worth of new locomotives and freight cars.

A tour of defense fortifications had shown the Pacific Northwest prepared for any assault by land, sea or air.

County and city blackout ordinances were not applicable to railroads according to Jerrold Owens, defense coordinator.

Harlan Judd, Marion county clerk with reserve officer status, was expecting a summons into active duty.

The nation this day in 1942 had gone on "war time" with all official clocks moved ahead one hour.

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