

past, but with the expanding future of the engineering workers. We must build this union, 100,000 strong, and capable of ensuring that the amazing development of the industry in our country is not the basis for an economic crisis but, on the contrary, provides the conditions for a high living standard for all our members.

But more than that. Precisely because engineering and

heavy industry allied to it is the heart of capitalist economy, and because this union would occupy a key strategic position inside that economy, it must become a weapon not only to wrest better conditions from capitalist society, but, upon the basis of its new strength, to march forward to the final defeat of the "monopoly kings of the metal industry" and to the establishment of Socialism.

## HOAX RENDERS SERVICE TO LITERATURE

KATHARINE SUSANNAH PRICHARD

THERE has been little cause for laughter in the horror and sorrow of these years of war. Two undergraduates of the Sydney University, however, will contribute something to the galaxy of nations wherever the story of the hoax they put over the "Angry Penguins" is told. From London and New York have come echoes of the interest it has aroused in literary circles.

"Angry Penguins" is a magazine which has become the preserve of a clique of exotic pretenders to literary distinction, using national sentiment to camouflage their own particular variety of anarchistic individualism. They protest that the magazine is "purely a forum of the highest literary and art level emerging from this country," and that its policy is to stand for "no brand or branch of culture—neither pseudo-modern nor retrogressive." But whatever the original intention, the magazine has exhaled a decadent aestheticism and the intellectual arrogance of earlier and similar groups in other countries.

One of its editors, Max Harris, writes: "Freud is to the artist what Lenin was to the Soviet Union." Such a remark illustrates the naive and confused mentality of most writers for "Angry Penguins." Ralph Fox in "The Novel and the People" puts the matter in a nutshell when he says: "Psycho-analysis, as developed by Freud, is the apotheosis of the individual, the extreme of intellectual anarchy." Why drag Lenin into such a galaxy? There is no comparison between the illumination of his life work and the obfuscation of Freud's.

Bitter about Freud, exhibitionism in sexual imagery, metaphysics of "the cloud in trousers" type of young man, combined with increasing hostility to the Marxist, Communist, Soviet conceptions of life and culture, have furnished a background for contributions to "Angry Penguins" in prose and verse, usually incoherent and mediocre.

As one commentator remarked: "The eggs in the 'Angry Penguins' basket are often enough added, and it is time someone cracked a few and cried shame."

The lads who called the bluff of "Angry Penguins" editors, and their standard of literary values, were James McAuley and Harold Stewart. One bright afternoon, they concocted some verses from a catalogue and pamphlet on the extermination of mosquitoes which happened to be handy, making a meaningless jumble of high-sounding phrases and obscure allusions look like poetry. They called this amorphous collection of rhythmic lines "The Darkening Ecliptic," invented an author for it, Ern Malley, and dispatched the verses to the editors of "Angry Penguins," with a letter purporting to come from Ern Malley's sister. The letter explained that Ern Malley had died of Graves disease at the age of twenty-five and that his sister had found this poetry among his things. She was sending it to the editors of "Angry Penguins" for an opinion.

Max Harris fell for the poetry of Ern Malley. According to his own account, he "was immediately impressed that here was a poet of tremendous power, working through a disciplined and restrained kind of statement into the deepest wells of human experience." His co-editor, Mr. John Reed, shared this enthusiasm. Moreover, Max Harris linked Ern Malley with another almost unknown Australian poet, also published by "Angry Penguins," to announce: "These two, with their diverse spiritual outlooks, are the two giants of contemporary Australian poetry."

The autumn, 1944, number of "Angry Penguins" was brought out "to commemorate the Australian poet, Ern Malley." Then Mr. McAuley and Mr. Stewart blew the gaff about Ern Malley. They confessed that for some time they had "observed with distaste the gradual decay of meaning and craftsmanship in poetry," and that they had "consciously and deliberately concocted nonsense" to test the standards of "Angry Penguins" editors. McAuley and Stewart claimed that their practical joke was "a serious literary experiment."

It is clear that McAuley and Stewart have rendered a service to Australian literature, and to the literature of English-speaking peoples, by revealing a tendency to lavish extravagant praise on obscure and salacious nonsense masquerading as poetry. They declare that they had no other purpose.

But what is important to those of us who value the basis of realism on which Australian literature has developed, from Purphy and Lawson to the present day, is exposure of the morass into which anarchistic individualism of the "Angry Penguins" variety might have diverted some young people of talent.

Max Harris and John Reed were at one time sympathetic towards Communism and as a result became acquainted with the general principles of Marxism. These they use now as a pretext for criticism and to give a humanitarian flair to the philosophy of irresponsible egotism which they have adopted. Lenin is drawn into the vortex of their mental confusion, with Hegel, Nietzsche and Freud, for the purpose of rationalising an individualism bent on asserting the revolutionary superiority of the intellectual.

Harris quotes Nietzsche: "There is an innocence in lying which is the sign of good faith in a cause." Hitler has said the same thing more bluntly. But Harris, in the course of his article, outdoes both Nietzsche and Hitler. He asserts: "I would go further than Nietzsche and say there is no good faith in a cause without lying. The concern of the economists who have so dominated our interpretive feelings to contemporary history, and in particular the course of this war and the prophecy of the future—the concern of these economists is truth, and truth only. This is proved by the fact that they refuse to lie, to Leninise into terms that translate analysis to life. The reason for the lack of leadership, inspirator and revelation in this war is because politicians, historians, and economists have been motivated not by love and revelation but by egotism. This defines them. Egotism is analytic and truth."

"The innocence of lying requires a renunciation and idealism that the egotism of their integrity will not permit them to make."

What rot! That is one's natural exclamation to such perverse histrionics.

What has this process of reasoning—or lack of it—led the "Angry Penguins"? Not to attacking Fascism and Fascist tendencies in Australia at a time when Fascism has plunged the world into the tragedy of this war, destroyed the independence and cultural treasure of nations, committed crimes of a blood-thirsty violence and cruelty beyond imagination. No. The "Angry Penguins" have entered the lists of those who pave the way for Fascism by

chasing lurid fantasies, escaping from the hard road to human progress down the side tracks of spurious adventures, and worse, by flaunting their hostility to the people and organisation most active to prevent Fascism ever becoming a force in Australia.

Mr. Albert Tucker, abusing Communists in a recent number of "Angry Penguins," writes: "We will have to wait centuries for eugenics and new educational technique to eliminate this animal relic." His diatribes are launched against the Australian Communist Party, "the mental and emotional characteristics of its personnel and leaders," chiefly because the Party refuses to permit any sentimental toleration of fascist tendencies and urges that the work of our artists should be directed against Fascism. The Australian Communist Party seeks to unite art with the people in the struggle for a fuller measure of democracy. It affirms with Gorky that "art is a struggle for or against human progress."

Mr. Tucker, with a typical, cheap sneer at the Negro race, talks of "a nigger in Marx's materialist wood-pile; that article of faith, 'matter is primary'." He says: "After all, who can say that the numerous gods which dot the mythological history of man are not clumsy, intuitive personifications of a super-wave formation? For myself I always did prefer scientifically based opinions." Sophistry and conceit typical of the "Angry Penguins!"

All this when Communist organisation has demonstrated its power in Soviet administration, and in the triumphs of the Red Army! And when honest and well-informed men and women recognise that the purpose of Communist organisation is to protect the individual as part of the community: to give individuals a right to development which will insure for every man and woman not only health, happiness and fulfillment in work and personal relations, but opportunities to serve the perfecting of human material as the highest good of existence. Yet Messrs. Reed, Harris and Tucker insist on the unique importance of spoilt children at a party, and their right to run amuck if they want to. They have failed to understand that genius which does not seek to serve the community, but merely its own aggrandisement, destroys itself. Genius is the spark which we share with humanity, and which must receive fuel from its source, or perish.

Neither Capitalism nor Fascism can give genius anything but the job of a mercenary serving the interests of a privileged class. Community welfare on the other hand demands the protection and fostering of genius. Socialism and Communism offer the only guarantee for the survival of genius as the most precious possession of a people. The attitude of the Soviet Government towards artists and scientists in the U.S.S.R. proves this. It has provided men and women of talent with greater opportunities for freedom of expression than any government has ever done.

That freedom embraces everything which will increase the joy and beauty of life, strengthen noble and heroic conceptions of human relationships, give creative energy to the task of insuring the bases of that life. What is not permitted is freedom to destroy those bases—either by the expressions in art and literature of anarchistic individuals concerned only to air their egocentric illusions which can only confuse and debase the minds of the people, or by any other acts of sabotage which threaten to endanger all that the people have already won by years of heroic organisation, labour and war. This, "Angry Penguins" regard as reducing "art, that fragile bloom of the spirit" to the level of "a peashooter in the political army." The fact of the matter is, nevertheless, that art blooms healthily and vigorously to great incentives; it becomes a pale, fragile thing only in the hot-houses of spiritual degenerates.

The political army of the Soviet Union has no need of, or use for, peashooters. The intellectual artillery of Lenin and Stalin safeguards its movements. Writers and artists of the Soviet Union know that, and that only the best they are capable of as poets, dramatists, and interpreters of the joys and sorrows of the people, is worthy of preservation.

As Gorki pointed out, the culture of the Soviet people is rising at a much higher rate than that of other peoples, and therefore the work of Soviet writers and artists must reach always higher standards to satisfy the hunger of the people for an art and literature which will give always more vivid and exhilarating perceptions of their way of life.

This is something so different from conceptions of "what the people want" in Capitalist countries, that shortsighted critics cannot orient their minds to the aesthetics of a culture which has wider and deeper implications than any they have known.

Art becomes the voice of the people, the crystallisation of their dreams in humanity's struggle across the centuries, the dynamic transformation of myths about super-natural beings to the making of men who will control the forces of nature and themselves become stronger, wiser and more beautiful than primitive imaginings about the gods. Individualism lacks the creative energy of this art.

"The history of the individualist's sterile and hair-splitting distinctions, drawn in his religious and metaphysical speculations, is well-known," Gorky said. "In our own time the futility of these speculative niceties, as well as the complete bankruptcy of the philosophy of individualism, has been clearly and irrefutably exposed. But the individualist still continues his barren quest for the answer to 'the riddle of life.' He seeks it not in the reality of labour, which is developing in every direction at a revolutionary pace, but in the depths of his own ego."

There are so few literary magazines in Australia that it is deplorable one of them should be devoted to revitalising this bankrupt philosophy of individualism and a reactionary nationalism.

But the posturing of "Angry Penguins," as individuals of superior intelligence, while they splutter the incoherent, fantastic, malicious rubbish appearing in recent numbers of their magazine, has overwhelmed them with ridicule and revealed the ineptitude of their activity.

Through this cataclysmic war, and in the dawn of an era of reconstruction requiring clear thought and determined action for a better world, they flutter and flop about like the imitations of men after which they have named themselves.

Is it fair to the birds? After all, penguins don't pretend to be other than they are. They choose isolated rookeries to nest in. But these young men by their antics profess to be concerning themselves with art and literature—the most subtle weapons in our armoury for improving and perfecting human relationships.

Fortunately, the "Angry Penguins" do not represent a trend of any importance in Australian affairs. The Ern Malley hoax has brought them more publicity than they ever enjoyed; but it has not enhanced their prestige. The rising tide of the national and international struggle for realism and sanity to direct plans affecting the future welfare of mankind will sweep past all such "alm, gilt souls," ignoring their futile gestures and megalomania.

Australian communists are guided by the same principles as have guided Russian and Chinese communists, and will continue to guide the communists of the world. We can say, as did the Commander-in-Chief of the Red Army of China, General Chu Teh, in an interview with a correspondent of the "Sydney Morning Herald," recently:

"We are believers in the Marxist and Leninist principles, no matter how we were compelled by circumstances to diverge temporarily in matters of detail. Our main job is to stay on the locomotive of history and guide it in the right direction."

Many able writers and artists in Australia will be slogging that locomotive. A literary hoax may not be a very significant contribution to our war effort, but it has cleared the way for development of modern poetry and prose on a sound basis.