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Surrealism As Propaganda: American Social Surrealist Painters, 1930-1945

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B.A., Fordham University, 1972

THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to examine a number of American painters who combined surrealism and social consciousness in their paintings. These "social surrealists" attempted to join a modern style of art with political and social content in paintings done between the years 1930 and 1945, with a peak of activity from about 1934 to 1940. Peter Blume, James Guy, Walter Quirt, and O. Louis Guglielmi were the chief practicioners of social surrealism. There were a number of other artists whose paintings reflected similar concerns with surrealism and social consciousness, but neither as clearly nor as consistently as those of the four social surrealists.

Social surrealism is examined against the background of the artistic climate of the 1930's in America. During the thirties there was a general trend toward realism and social consciousness among American artists. It was also during the thirties that surrealism first became widely known in America--through books, magazines, and most importantly, exhibitions of the major European surrealists. The emergence at this time of Salvador Dali as one of the most important of the surrealists was crucial in determining the type of surrealism which was to influence American artists, including the social surrealists, during the thirties.

Social surrealist paintings are examined and statements made by the artists are presented in support of the theory that these artists adopted surrealism because they saw it as conducive to the making of effective political and social statements in paint. A case is also made for the importance of the Depression in causing these artists to deal with socially conscious subjects.

The critical reception which greeted the social surrealists is examined and is contrasted to the reactions of left-wing critics of European surrealists. It is seen that radical critics were much more favorable to the American social surrealists. This was because the paintings of the social surrealists were both more political and more consciously controlled than were those of the European surrealists.

Social surrealism was characterized by a rational use of the devices of surrealism, such as juxtaposition and the free association of images. These devices were applied to the political and social issues of the time rather than to personal problems or states of mind. In the forties, as political activism waned and realism was replaced by abstraction as the dominant trend in American art, social surrealism was abandoned and the paintings of the artists involved became less political in content and, for the most part,

increasingly abstract in style.

Although social surrealism was short-lived and did not involve large numbers of artists, it was important because of the attempt to unite modern art and progressive politics.

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SOURCES OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Listed below are books and magazines which were used as sources for illustrations in this paper. Where no source is listed, photographs were obtained directly from the museum or individual owning the work of art.

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Guy, The Camouflage Man in a Landscape, from James Guy, exhibition catalog, Pfeiffer Library, MacMurray College, Jacksonville, Illinois, 1948.

Guy, Walt Whitman: Song of Tomorrow, from James Guy.

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Guglielmi, The Various Spring, from Architectural Record, April 1938.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Between 1930 and 1945, a number of American artists attempted to adapt surrealism to political ends. They employed a surrealist style of painting which was directly concerned with the political and social issues of the time. Their paintings not only reflected these issues but took stands on them as well. One can conveniently label this combination of surrealism and politics social surrealism. Four American painters consistently employed this method of social surrealism--Peter Blume, O. Louis Guglielmi, Walter Quirt, and James Guy. There were many other socially concerned artists who were influenced by surrealism. Their works reflected concerns similar to those of the social surrealists but not as consistently nor as directly.[1]

What distinguished social surrealism from other forms of surrealism was the use of a rational approach to subconscious imagery to make direct political and social statements. The paintings of the European surrealists were rarely directly concerned with politics. Their paintings fall into two main groups--abstract surrealism and veristic surrealism. The abstract surrealists were concerned with

the immediate rendering of their state of mind through automatic processes of painting. Although there was usually some degree of recognizable subject matter in abstract surrealist paintings, the main force of the paintings was derived from the expressive power of line and abstract form. Veristic surrealists, on the other hand, were less automatic and more rationally controlled in their imagery. They rendered recognizable subject matter with meticulous precision; it was in the unexpected combinations of elements that a dream-like quality appeared. Both the veristic and abstract surrealists were reacting to Freud's theories of the importance of the subconscious and the significance of dreams.

The social surrealists were less concerned with dreams and the subconscious. Their method was to apply surrealism to the political and social reality of the visible world. The subconscious was never permitted to completely take over but was always controlled by the conscious mind. The devices of surrealism--juxtaposition, distortion, the freedom to alter reality--were often more important for the social surrealists than the actual use of the free association of the subconscious mind.

Through examination of the paintings involved, the

writings of the artists, the critical reception which greeted their paintings, and the attitude of American leftists toward surrealism, I hope to show that social surrealism was an important attempt in American art to combine modernism and social consciousness.

FOOTNOTE

1. The most important of these artists are briefly discussed in Chapter 10.

CHAPTER 2

American Art in the Nineteen Thirties

The development of social surrealism during the nineteen thirties should be viewed within the context of the general artistic climate of the time. The application of surrealism to the realities of the American social and political scene reflected the general concerns of American artists with the world around them. The harsh realities of the Depression caused many artists to reexamine the problem of how art related to the society as a whole. One of the principal concerns of American artists was that in the process of assimilating European modernist influences, American art had lost touch with the American people. With the results of extreme poverty clearly visible in both city and country, and often directly affecting artists themselves, many painters and sculptors no longer felt comfortable in the isolated position which artists had occupied during the twenties.[1]

This is not to say that all American artists turned to realism in the thirties. On the contrary, the thirties was one of the most diverse and fruitful periods of American art. Those American modernists who had established their reputations during the second and third decades of

the century--artists like John Marin, Joseph Stella, Georgia O'Keeffe, and Arthur Dove--continued to produce vital paintings rooted in the aesthetics of European modernism. That abstraction was still strong in America was evidenced by the founding of the American Abstract Artists in 1936, when the influence of realism was at its height. Some artists who shared many of the social concerns of the realists, Stuart Davis for instance, nevertheless continued to paint in styles derived from cubism and abstraction, although, as in Davis's case, it was often an abstraction derived from the everyday objects and scenes of the American environment.

In spite of the continuing importance of the modernist tradition, the term which best characterizes the mood of American artists during the thirties is realism. What many artists sought was an art that would deal with people and with the aspects of the physical environment which people valued most. Although the new factories and skyscrapers with which the Precisionists had been dealing since the twenties were part of that environment, it was the older, more familiar aspects, both urban and rural, that drew the most attention from artists during the thirties.

This move to realism has often been called American Scene painting. The term "American Scene" is broad enough to

include such diverse subjects as the historical panoramas of Thomas Hart Benton, the burlesque houses portrayed by Reginald Marsh, the often grim isolation of Edward Hopper's New England scenes, and the political satire of William Gropper. Almost every aspect of American life, in every part of the country, was dealt with by artists during the thirties. Small towns and big cities, prosperous Iowa farms and the misery of Alabama sharecroppers, factory workers and housewives, itinerant preachers and strikers--all were represented. A glance through catalogs of the major exhibitions of the period reveals that thousands of American artists were engaged in rendering their immediate surroundings on canvas. The Carnegie Annuals, the Corcoran Biennials, the Annuals of the Art Institute of Chicago, the 1939 New York World's Fair, and a number of exhibitions organized by Holger Cahill at the Museum of Modern Art--the most important of which was "New Horizons in American Art," held in 1936--all demonstrated the importance of the American Scene for artists of the period. It is particularly telling that the Museum of Modern Art, which was the foremost bastion of modernism in America, should have devoted a good deal of attention to Americans painting in relatively traditional styles.

The two most distinctive groups of painters within this realistic trend were the midwest Regionalists and the social realists. The Regionalists, Thomas Hart Benton, Grant Wood and John Steuart Curry, wanted to portray what they saw as being essentially right with American society, both present and past. For the most part, it was not the poverty of the migrants and the desolation of the dustbowl that concerned them, but rather the prosperity of Iowa, Kansas and Missouri farms, the virtues of family life and hard work, and the vibrant history of the United States, particularly the energy of the westward expansion. Benton, the most vocal of the three, was particularly strong in his isolationist and anti-modernist beliefs and was diametrically opposed to the leftist tendencies of many of his fellow realists.

The social realists, on the other hand, were determined to make explicit in their paintings their dissatisfaction with American society. (I should point out that the social realists were rarely consistent in their concern with propaganda. The major part of their works consisted of more or less accurate representations of their surroundings, free from political implications. Thus, even in the work of artists active in left-wing organizations, the number

of paintings which were directly concerned with oppression or revolution were in a minority.) The desolation of the landscape, both urban and rural, strikes, bread lines, the hypocrisy of priests and politicians, the evils of capitalism, the necessity for the unity of the working class and revolution--these were among the subjects dealt with in social realist paintings. Some of the source of American social realism can be found in the socialist realism that was the official style of Soviet art, and more importantly, in the influence of the Mexican muralists, who set a strong example of what could result from the combination of art and politics.

Among the realists there were many artists who employed some type of fantastic imagery, whether derived from surrealism or from such other sources as romanticism and symbolism, which relied on the imagination. In 1943 the Museum of Modern Art held an exhibition entitled "American Realists and Magic Realists" which included many of these artists. Most of them were concerned with commenting on the conditions of American society, although usually in a more indirect and personal way than did the social realists. Peter Blume and Louis Guglielmi were included in this exhibition under the "Magic Realist" heading, but, although their inclusion

was certainly justified, I feel that their use of the imagination differed significantly from the other artists in the exhibition. They were not so much concerned with the transformation of everyday objects into fantastic images of the mind as were the "Magic Realists," such as Ivan Albright for example. Instead, they focused their imaginations on political and social themes which were the concerns of all Americans, rather than on the personal subjects favored by most of the other so-called Magic Realists. (In Blume's case this was more true of his larger paintings than of his smaller works.)

The political concerns of American artists found outlet not only in their paintings but also in the formation of organizations such as the Artists' Union and Artists' Congress, which, because of the large numbers of relatively well organized Communists and fellow travelers who joined them, were strongly influenced by the Communist Party.[2] The Artists' Union was begun in February 1934 as an outgrowth of the Unemployed Artists' Group, which had attempted to gain federal and state employment for artists. The Union was a broad-based organization in line with the popular front policies of the Communist Party, although it was not formally associated with the party. In addition to agitating

for more and better relief programs for artists, the Artists' Union was a forum for debate on matters of both art and politics.[3] The American Artists' Congress was an organization with purposes similar to those of the Union, but seems to have been more directly political; in addition to fighting for artists' rights, the Congress was dedicated to opposing war and fascism. The organization of the John Reed Clubs provided artists with a politically oriented exhibition and meeting space; here the influence of the Communists was especially evident, and strong political stances were expected of club members. Many members of the New York John Reed Club were involved in the publication of the Communist dominated New Masses, the most prominent left-wing journal of the thirties. This journal was especially important to artists because, in addition to carrying many articles on the arts, it also included reproductions of drawings and paintings. Art Front, the only art magazine specifically devoted to radical ideas, was the official organ of the Artists' Union. It was the most important forum for leftist artists and critics such as Stuart Davis, William Gropper, Berenice Abbott, Elizabeth McCausland, and Meyer Schapiro and was one of the most sophisticated art journals of the thirties.[4]

The development of government programs in the arts was not only a result of agitation on the part of the artists, but was instrumental in encouraging artists to unite. The two major government art projects, the Treasury Department's Section of Fine Arts and the more extensive Works Progress Administration's Federal Arts Project, in addition to providing a regular income for many artists, by bringing together large numbers of artists, sometimes to work collectively on mural projects, helped foster a community of ideas and interest among them. The experience of being on relief and receiving a regular salary was new for these artists, and for many of them it prompted an identification with the working class. The government art projects also helped promote the growth of realism by providing exhibition space and a regular income to many artists throughout the country who otherwise would have been unable to support themselves through their art.[5]

Precisely what role the Great Depression played in the rise of realism is difficult to determine. As I shall show later, the Depression was a primary factor in causing the social surrealists to turn to art which they felt would reflect the necessity for social change. It seems clear that the opening years of the Depression signaled a dramatic

upsurge in the number of paintings specifically concerned with the American Scene. In a time of crisis, many artists wanted to feel that they were able to contribute to the solution of society's problems, and this they viewed as impossible so long as art remained isolated from the mainstream of society.

The Artists' Union and Artists' Congress, the John Reed Clubs, and the radical politization of American artists were all manifestations of the same impulse which was the result of the bitter reality of the Depression. The government art projects served to reinforce the impulse to seek new means of expression which would be in tune with the changes in American society of the thirties. For those artists who wanted to deal with social issues but did not want to abandon modernism totally, surrealism, which was just beginning to become known in this country, presented itself as one possible alternative.

FOOTNOTES

1. Some good sources for a general background of the period are:

Oliver W. Larkin, Art and Life in America (New York: Rinehart and Company, 1949).

Mathew Baigell, The American Scene: American Painting of the 1930's (New York: Praeger, 1974).

John I. H. Baur, Revolution and Tradition in Modern American Art (New York: Praeger, 1967).

David Shapiro, Social Realism: Art as a Weapon (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1973).

William C. Agee, The 1930's: Painting and Sculpture in America (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1968).

2. A good discussion of artists' organizations during the thirties and the Communist Party is presented in: Gerald M. Monroe, "The 30's: Art, Ideology and the WPA," Art in America, November-December 1975, pp. 64-67.

Also see: Donald Drew Egbert, Socialism and American Art (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), pp. 85-128.

3. For a discussion of the Artists' Union see: Monroe, "The Artists' Union of New York," Art Journal, V. 32, Fall 1972, pp. 17-20.

4. For a discussion of Art Front see: Monroe, "Art Front," Archives of American Art Journal, no. 3, 1973, pp. 13-19.

5. The following provide valuable information on the federal art projects:

Richard D. MacKenzie, The New Deal for Artists (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973).

Francis O'Connor, ed., Art for the Millions (Greenwich, Conn.: New York Graphic Society, 1973).

_____, Federal Art Patronage: 1933 to 1943 (College Park: University of Maryland Art Gallery, 1966).

_____, Federal Support for the Visual Arts: The New Deal and Now (Greenwich, Conn., 1969).

_____, ed., The New Deal Art Projects (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1972).

CHAPTER 3

Surrealism in the United States in the Thirties.

Although the surrealists had been active in France since about 1919, it was not until the publication of the Manifeste du surréalisme by André Breton in 1924 that surrealism burst with full force upon the European scene. Breton's espousal of dreams and the subconscious as the sources of a more meaningful reality than conscious rationality, coupled with the surrealists' denial of any absolute morality, created a furor in the literary and art worlds. The adamant opposition aroused by surrealism was probably due not so much to the surrealist poems and paintings themselves, as it was to statements such as the following from Breton's Second Manifesto of Surrealism: "The simplest Surrealist act consists of dashing down into the street, pistol in hand, and firing blindly, as fast as you can pull the trigger, into the crowd."[1] It was the public pronouncements and behavior of the surrealists that was at least as responsible as their art for the great deal of publicity they received.

Like the Dadaists before them, the surrealists seemed to be attacking the very foundations of art itself. The Freudian emphasis on sex and violence helped keep surrealism

in the public eye throughout the twenties and thirties. The influence of surrealism was strong enough to attract an artist as established as Picasso, for, although he never officially joined the surrealists, many of Picasso's paintings from the twenties and thirties clearly demonstrate their influence. Other artists connected with surrealism, such as Jean Arp and Max Ernst, had also already established themselves as important artists before becoming involved with the surrealist movement.

The flirtation of Breton and the surrealists with communism also helped keep them in the public eye. Breton himself was a member of the French Communist Party until his expulsion in 1933,[2] and Louis Aragon and Pierre Naville abandoned surrealism for the Communist backed style of socialist realism. The disputes over communism among the surrealists and the reaction of the Communist Party officials to those disputes were often accompanied by vicious accusations and invective prose--qualities which made good copy for the press.[3]

Although surrealism was the most important new art movement in Europe in the twenties, it did not become well known in America until the thirties; but when surrealism finally did reach this country, it was quick to establish

itself as an important new style of art. Publicity about surrealism was widespread during the thirties, and much of it centered on Salvador Dali. One reason for this was Dali's style of painting, which, typified by a photographically accurate rendering of incongruous subjects, appealed to a public which appreciated virtuosity of technique and subject matter which, even if it could not be easily understood, could at least be recognized. But the attention focused on Dali was also due to the fact that the coming of surrealism to America coincided with Dali's emergence as an important new force on the European surrealist scene. A newcomer to surrealism, Dali was the subject of much controversy within European surrealist circles. His emergence as a central figure in surrealism was to be important in determining what type of surrealism would most influence American painters during the thirties. The more abstract surrealist styles of artists such as Miro and Masson were to have to wait until the forties to exercise much influence; for the thirties it was Dali, and to a lesser extent de Chirico, whose names came to mind when surrealism was mentioned.

André Breton regarded Dali as having provided surrealism with new life in the form of his "paranoic-critical method."

Dali himself defined this method as a "spontaneous method of '_irrational knowledge_', based on the critical and systematic objectivication of delirious association and interpretation."[5] Dali hoped to "discredit the world of reality" by using his method to enable the mind to dominate and transform the external world.[6] It was a question of mind over matter, and by rendering matter as realistically as possible, Dali hoped to make its subjection all the more convincing.

Dali's first one-man shows in this country were held in New York at the Julian Levy Gallery in 1933, 1934 and 1935 and at the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford in 1934. As I shall show later, it was about this time that three of the four major figures to be examined here--Guglielmi, Guy and Quirt--began to develop their social surrealist styles. In 1934 Dali was awarded an honorable mention at the Carnegie International for his _Enigmatic Elements in a Landscape_. It was at this same exhibition that Peter Blume's _South of Scranton_ captured the judges' first prize, upstaging Dali in the process. Dali himself visited the United States in 1934, delivering a lecture at the Museum of Modern Art. The quick rise in Dali's artistic stature and popularity, and his knack for attracting publicity, were in-

dicated by two quite different activities of his in 1939: he was commissioned by a New York department store, Bonwit Teller's, to decorate two of their Fifth Avenue windows, and he created a surrealist environment, Dream of Venus, for the New York World's Fair.

Dali's exhibitions were not the first shows of surrealism to be held in the United States; Georgio de Chirico was seen as early as 1927 at the Curt Valentin Gallery in New York and was also shown in 1930 at the Wadsworth Atheneum and in 1936 at the Pierre Matisse Gallery in New York. Other important one-man exhibitions were: 1928, Joan Miró; 1930, Paul Klee; 1932, Max Ernst and Man Ray; 1933, Miró; 1934, Masson and Giacometti; 1935, Miró; 1936 Miró, Magritte and Tanguy.

It was in 1931 at the Wadsworth Atheneum that the first general showing of surrealism in the United States was held; this show contained fifty surrealist works, including paintings by de Chirico, Dali, Ernst, Masson, Miró, and Picasso. Under the direction of Everett Austin, the Wadsworth played a particularly important role in bringing surrealism to this country. The Wadsworth show was followed a year later by an exhibition at the Julian Levy Gallery. In 1930 the Museum of Modern Art had included

the more fantastical of the surrealists in a show of "Painting in Paris" and in 1936 held a large exhibition entitled "Fantastic Art, Dada and Surrealism" which included all of the major European surrealists.[7]

Another indication of the rise of surrealist presence in America during the thirties was the publication of a number of books dealing with the subject. As far as I know, the full text of Breton's manifestos was not available in English during the thirties. His writings seem to have been known, however, at least by critics and others writing on surrealism at the time, and were important elements in discussions of surrealism in the press. The need for writing in English on surrealism began to be met in the mid-thirties. In 1935 Dali's Conquest of the Irrational was published in conjunction with his exhibition at the Julian Levy Gallery,[8] and After Picasso by James Thrall Soby, which contained a large section on surrealism (termed "Superrealism" by Soby), was published in New York.[9] In the same year, A Short Survey of Surrealism by David Gascoyne made its appearance in London.[10] In 1936 there were also three important publications: Breton's What Is Surrealism?, a small collection of essays, was published in English in London;[11] Surrealism, edited by Herbert Read, was also published

in London in conjunction with a large surrealist exhibition;[12] and Julian Levy's Surrealism was published in New York.[13] It is impossible to determine exactly which books were read by what artists and when, but it would seem logical that any artist at all concerned with surrealism would have endeavored to obtain at least some of these publications. James Guy has indicated that although there was not a great deal written by the French surrealists available in translation, he was interested in reading whatever he could obtain.[14]

A second source of much written information on surrealism was the art magazines of the period. In 1932, This Quarter, an English language periodical which was published in Paris, devoted an entire issue to surrealism, including articles by Breton, Dali, Paul Eluard, and Max Ernst.[15] Beginning around 1934 and reaching a peak in 1936 and 1937, frequent appearances of articles dealing with surrealism were seen in art journals such as Studio International, Art News and Art Digest. The French periodical, Cahiers d'Art, which was readily available in the United States, also presented many articles on surrealism.

Despite the degree of activity surrounding surrealism during the thirties, there were never large numbers of

American surrealists. Possibly the general trend away from modernism and the attempts to establish an art which dealt specifically with American subject matter caused many artists to hesitate before completely adopting this new European style; even those artists who did become known as surrealists, such as the social surrealists, were for the most part easily distinguishable from the European originators. The influence of surrealism was widespread, however, and it was felt by large numbers of American artists in varying and often subtle ways. The assimilation of surrealism into Abstract Expressionism during the forties and fifties was to demonstrate that American artists were capable of extracting certain elements from a new style without wholly succumbing to it. At the opposite end of the artistic spectrum, surrealism's influence was visible in advertising, where commercial artists began to employ surrealistic devices in an effort to sell products.[16] John Atherton, for instance, an artist discussed in chapter 10, designed a surrealistic advertising campaign for Rabellon Tablets.

FOOTNOTES

1. André Breton, Manifestoes of Surrealism (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1972), p. 125.
2. Maurice Nadeau, The History of Surrealism (New York: Collier Books, 1967), p. 191.
3. For a discussion of the French surrealists and the Communist Party see Nadeau, pp. 175-182.
4. Breton, What Is Surrealism? (London: Faber and Faber, 1936), pp. 82-83.
5. Ibid., p. 83.
6. Ibid.
7. William S. Rubin, Dada and Surrealist Art (New York: Abrams, 1968).
Rubin, Dada, Surrealism and Their Heritage (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1968).
Julian Levy, Surrealism (New York: The Black Sun Press, 1936).
Werner Haftmann, Painting in the Twentieth Century, vol. 1 (New York: Praeger, 1965).
8. Salvador Dali, Conquest of the Irrational (New York: Julian Levy Gallery, 1935.)
9. James Thrall Soby, After Picasso (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1935).
10. David Gascoyne, A Short Survey of Surrealism (London: Cobden-Sanderson, 1935).
11. Breton, What Is Surrealism? (London: Faber and Faber, 1936).
12. Herbert Read, ed., Surrealism (London: Faber and Faber, 1936, rpt., 1971).
13. Julian Levy, Surrealism (New York: The Black Sun Press, 1936).
14. James Guy, Letter to the author, September 15, 1975.
15. This Quarter, September 1932.
16. New York Times, December 7, 1939, p. 42 and February 12, 1937, p. 43.

CHAPTER 4

Breton: Marxism and Surrealism

One of the most important developments within surrealism during the thirties was the change in Breton's attitude toward politics, particularly the politics of the Communist Party. Breton's efforts to join surrealism with political revolution aroused a great deal of controversy among leftist artists and critics both in France and, more importantly for this study, in the United States. The debate centered on whether or not an art based on the use of dream imagery could be relevant to the class struggle. Was surrealism a valid tool to be used by artists desiring a basic change in the economic, political and social structures? Should surrealism be concerned with propaganda or should it continue to concentrate on freeing men's minds by making them aware of another reality and thus hastening the revolution? In order to understand the debate on these questions it is necessary to examine Breton's beliefs concerning surrealism and politics.

From the first, the surrealists, with Breton as their major spokesman, had declared themselves in favor of revolution, although the revolution with which they were concerned was that of the mind. Nevertheless, as early as 1926, in a pamphlet entitled Légitime Défense, Breton had declared himself, and

surrealism, ready to support a political revolution.[1] Although expelled from the Communist Party in 1933, Breton did not end his support for a communist revolution, and his clearest statements on art and revolution were to come after this date.

In a 1936 essay, "Limits not Frontiers of Surrealism," Breton stated that he fully accepted the Marxian/Hegelian theory of dialectical materialism, including the belief in the "supremacy of matter over thought."[2] In accepting the primacy of the material world, Breton had come full circle from his first manifesto, where he had declared "the omnipotence of dream" and the absence of any rational control as characteristic of surrealism.[3] Breton himself admitted that surrealism had changed its tune; in What is Surrealism?, first published in Brussels in 1934, Breton dated this change in surrealism as early as 1925, stating that it was then that surrealism had entered its "reasoning" phase,[4] a phase characterized by what Robert Goldwater has called "the conscious use of the processes of the unconscious."[5] The methods of surrealism were now seen as having a practical purpose--the liberation of the proletariat. Where previously he had viewed the liberation of the mind and the economic liberation of man as being compatible but not necessarily related,[6] now Breton determined that the liberation of man through a proletarian revolution was a

"primary condition" for surrealism's freeing of the mind.[7]

Breton did not stop at simply espousing his belief in dialectical materialism, but, as evidence of his understanding of, and faith in, dialectics, he attempted to apply them directly to surrealism. He wrote that the purpose of surrealism was "to present interior reality and exterior reality as two elements in the process of unification....This final unification is the supreme aim of surrealism, interior reality and exterior reality being in the present form of society, in contradiction."[8] Breton felt that, like Marxism, surrealism too was capable of exposing contradictions in society and thus hastening the revolution.

Even though he was now fully convinced of the correctness of the theory of dialectical materialism, Breton was still not about to let Communist Party bureaucrats control surrealism. In his discussion of Marxism, Breton pointed out that although economics was the base of society and thus the ultimate determining factor, Marx and Engels had also maintained that the elements of the superstructure, including art, were capable of exerting influence.[9] Surrealism, as part of the superstructure, was useful for the revolution because it had "tended to destroy all the myths about art that for centuries have permitted the ideologic as well as economic exploitation

of painting, sculpture, literature, etc."[10] Breton viewed the destruction of these myths as essential to the liberation of the proletariat. Since surrealism was useful in itself as a revolutionary weapon, it was not necessary to chain it to simplistic notions of art as propaganda. To turn surrealism into a tool controlled by politicians--to ask surrealism to follow a party line--would cause it to lose all of its real revolutionary worth.[11]

By 1935 Breton had arrived at a fairly consistent stand regarding surrealism and politics. Surrealism would lend its support to the proletarian revolution and the Communist Party, but not at the expense of surrealism; surrealism was to retain an identity of its own and not become submerged within the revolution. Surrealist methods would not be dictated by political commissars; any changes that would occur within surrealism would be determined by the surrealists themselves. It is evident that changes had already occurred, the most important being, at least in theory (and surrealist theory was almost solely Breton's province), the abandoning of the belief that the subconscious was superior to the conscious mind in favor of a control of subconscious images by the individual's rationality.

FOOTNOTES

1. Soby, p. 71.
2. In Read, p. 100.
3. Breton, Manifestoes, p. 26.
4. Breton, What Is Surrealism?, p. 51.
5. Robert Goldwater, Primitivism in Modern Art (New York: Vintage Books, 1966), p. 216.
6. Quoted in Levy, p. 56.
7. Breton, What Is Surrealism?, pp. 48-49.
8. Ibid., p. 49.
9. In Read, pp. 100-01.
10. Breton, What Is Surrealism?, pp. 88-89.
11. Ibid., p. 89.

CHAPTER 5

The Reaction of the American Left-Wing Press to Surrealism

The reaction to Breton's theories and to surrealist poetry and painting, especially Dali's work, was widespread and varied in France. The same disputes frequently found their way across the Atlantic, and it was the articles in the American press, especially the left-wing press, with which the artists to be discussed here would more likely have been familiar.

Breton and surrealism had supporters among English-speaking leftists and liberals. (I have chosen to deal only with the left-wing reaction to surrealism, not because criticism in other quarters was not important or perceptive--often it was--but because the left and liberal writers shared at least one presupposition with the social surrealist painters: that there was a great need for social and political change in America. Conservative critics may have opposed surrealism for reasons which would have caused the opposite reaction in the social surrealists.) The English poet and critic Herbert Read was one of the strongest and most influential of the supporters; the publication of a volume of surrealist writings and paintings edited by Read has already been mentioned.[1] In

America, James Thrall Soby, in After Picasso, presented the development of surrealism in a favorable light. Soby provided indirect support for the use of surrealism as an effective means of propaganda when he stated his belief that surrealism was able to be understood by large numbers of people. He pointed out that: "Whereas Cubism is extremely beautiful to an initiated few, Surrealism does seem able to communicate at least part of its message to people without special knowledge of art."[2] Soby believed that this was due to the fact that everyone dreams and therefore has had some personal experience to which the type of imagery employed by surrealism can be related. He pointed out that Dali had been contracted to provide drawings for the popular Hearst newspapers, and that it had been a tabloid which had provided "the most intelligent review of Dali's 1934 exhibition."[3]

Other support for surrealism was to be found in the pages of Art Front. John D. Graham, one of the first to begin spreading the surrealist doctrine in the United States, wrote in the January 1935 issue that: "It [surrealism] is, as all abstract art, truly revolutionary, since it teaches the unconscious mind--by means of transposition--revolutionary methods, thus providing the conscious mind itself with material and necessity for arriving at revolutionary conclusions."[4]

Graham supported surrealism not because it contributed directly to the liberation of the proletariat, but because he saw it as helping to open up the mind to new ways of thought, and he presumed that this would in turn lead to support of political revolution. What other support surrealism had in the left-wing press was along similar lines. A second article in Art Front, written by Grace Clements, herself a painter greatly influenced by surrealism (she is briefly discussed in Chapter 10), expressed the belief that surrealism was valuable for socially conscious artists because surrealist devices such as juxtaposition enabled the painter to "create an entirely new and significant meaning."[5] This support of surrealism was, however, very much in the minority in journals such as Art Front and New Masses. The reasons for negative reactions among left-wing critics varied considerably. The lack of innovative form in surrealism, its irrelevancy to the revolution, its failure to direct itself toward propagandistic ends, its reliance on the subconscious--all were given as reasons for opposing surrealism.

In the February 1935 issue of Art Front, Jerome Klein presented one of the most thoughtful of the leftist reactions to surrealism.[6] He addressed himself directly to Breton's defense of surrealism's relevance to the revolution. Klein criticized Breton for continuing to maintain that the

problems of surrealism were separate from those of social change. He scoffed at the contention that surrealism had entered a rational phase and derided Breton's efforts to apply dialectical principles to surrealism as being an evasion of the real issue. "He [Breton] is willing to resolve any contradiction," Klein wrote, "except that of his clinging to an irreducibly personal, subjective technique to solve a problem he admits to be ultimately social."[7] He went on to criticize Dali and then returned to Breton, countering Breton's contention that surrealism was revolutionary because it destroyed the myths of bourgeois society with the following accusation:

> In actuality, the Surrealists, far from playing a critical, destructive role, have created a new set of illusions in their flight from external reality into phantasy. Their manifestations, in limited editions and private views, have been so many tidbits for a jaded idle upper class. Their manifestations have neither touched the proletariat, which is no great loss, nor furthered the cause bound up with the political fate of the proletariat.[8]

In two reviews in the New Masses of books favorable to surrealism, Jacob Kainen and Isidor Schneider expressed strong revulsion with surrealism. In his review of Soby's After Picasso, Kainen found surrealism to be absurd and Dali's use of "excrement, blood and putrefaction" as the symbols of life to be symptomatic of surrealism's condition.[9]

Reviewing Julian Levy's Surrealism, Isidor Schneider wrote that surrealism was more likely to appeal to fascists than to socialists. He found similarities in the surrealist and fascist belief in the necessity of myths as opposed to "Marxist rationalism." Surrealism appealed to the bourgeoisie, according to Schneider, because the bourgeoisie had "become historically illogical, and is on the side of unreason."[10] He found that surrealism possessed certain qualities that corresponded to characteristics of bourgeois decadence: mysticism, irrationality, eroticism and violence.[11]

Adolf Wolf, in a letter which appeared in the January 1937 issue of Art Front, was extremely exhortative in tone. After stating that he did not want to condemn surrealism, but was attempting "to look at it from a Marxist point of view," Wolf went on:

> Comrade surrealists, your scare-crows frighten nobody; they only scandalize the naive, titillate the blasé and supply material for the collectors of curiosities. Comrade surrealists, come out of the morgues and cemetaries, vacate the dusty cabinet of Dr. Caligari, take the umbrella off the dissecting table and make despair stop cracking her ridiculous skull against that wall of sea shells. Come, come, roll up your folding watches, it's time to wake up and walk out of your somnambulistic trance. Join the ranks of the embattled proletariat. The cohorts of fascism are battering at the gates of culture. There will be time enough in the future to snapshot the subconscious or to conquer the irrational. The need today is to make art a weapon.[12]

Like many other leftists, Wolf saw nothing inherently wrong with surrealism, but felt that the timing was wrong; what he percieved to be surrealism's purely artistic concerns could, he believed, wait until after the revolution.

Surrealism was deemed an important enough topic of discussion by the editors of Art Front so that they devoted the better part of the March 1937 issue to "Surrealism and Reality." The most original of the three articles included under this heading was Samuel Putnam's "Marxism and Surrealism." Putnam emphasized that the materialist theories of Marxism were opposed to what he saw as the idealistic nature of surrealism. According to Putnam, Marx believed that being conditioned thought, not vice versa. The surrealists, Putnam wrote, were opposed in their very essence to Marxism because they were attempting to change the consciousness of the world, and they hoped that this change would then affect the world itself. For Marxists, the necessary changes could take place only if the effort was aimed directly at the real world.[13]

Dali himself contributed to this issue with an article entitled "I Defy Aragon."[14] Dali did not really make the effort here that Breton had made in his writings to reconcile

surrealism and Marxism--Dali was not as concerned as was Breton with being accepted by the communists. Dali's politics have always been confusing and confused; although he had been censured three years earlier by the other surrealists for his interest in fascism[15](today Dali lends his support to Spanish fascism), in this article he expressed his admiration for Lenin while attacking Aragon as an opportunist. Perhaps his admiration for Lenin was due to leadership qualities which Dali perceived Lenin had in common with fascist leaders rather than to Lenin's political beliefs. Dali went on to criticize socialist realism and to point out that even though surrealism had developed in bourgeois countries, it was nevertheless the most advanced form of art in the world and should be adopted by socialists everywhere. To Dali, it made more sense for a socialist society to adopt a progressive art form and infuse it with socialist principles, rather than to try to politicize dead or dying styles of art:

> If surrealism develops and continues its experiments in a socialist society it will occur naturally that the historical, political, and social changes will one day leave their mark, their decisive influence, upon the development and continuation of surrealism, but who can tell, and by what means can one know, how all this shall come about?[16]

"The Man in the Balloon" was a reply to Dali by Clarence Weinstock.[17] After defending Aragon against Dali's attack, Weinstock went on to praise socialist realism as the true reflection in art of dialectical materialism. He criticized Dali's style and stated that even abstract paintings such as those of Léger were more revolutionary because of their formal innovations than was "Dali with his pseudo-revolutionary self-conscious Unconscious framed in a reactionary technique."[18] Weinstock found Dali's paranoic-critical activity to be idealistic and thus counter-revolutionary, and he scoffed at the surrealist belief that the images of an individual's subconscious were relevant to all people.[19] This was not the first time that Weinstock had taken Dali to task in the pages of Art Front; two years earlier he had criticized him for failing to unite his form and content, finding that: "The 'message' does not depend on the excellence of formal qualities; on the other hand the form has no vital relation to the meaning of the objects."[20]

Stuart Davis also found himself dissatisfied with Dali's lack of formal innovation. For Davis, Dali's photographically realistic technique was lacking in any revolutionary quality because it precluded "any intention of change or movement." "In these scenes one looks only backward and

the sun is setting," Davis maintained. "Artists who intend to continue will have to change cars."[21]

In the New Masses, Stephen Alexander took a different tack in criticizing Dali, attacking not his form but his content. The only meaning Alexander professed to be able to find in Dali's paintings was as "reflections of the insane nightmare that life under capitalism has become." He went on:

> Evidently it does not strike him as absurd that an artist, supposedly intelligent, living in a Europe torn to death by a struggle between two classes, should paint dreams and hallucinations of the insane as his idea of "reality." The struggles of the French workers against French imperialism are apparently not real for M. Dali. The tragic and bloody suppression of the workers' revolt in his native Spain, is, I suppose, not real enough. Only dreams are real for M. Dali.[22]

Alexander's reaction was typical of the reception accorded surrealism by most of the leftist critics: the main fault they found with surrealists was their failure to apply their art directly to revolutionary themes. Simple espousal of revolutionary beliefs was not enough so long as the paintings reflected concern only with the individual subconscious. Although some writers found surrealism stylistically vapid, the main concern was with subject matter rather than style. Most writers did not find surrealism to be essentially degenerate and their criticisms did not rule

out the possibility of a positive use of surrealism. An article in the January 1937 Art Front by Charmion van Wiegand[23] stated the problem simply and directly. Van Wiegand took Dali to task for being interested only in reflecting a corrupt and corrupting society, and, like Davis, she found Dali's technique to be reactionary. Van Wiegand, however, did not find surrealism to be totally without value:

> Not all of Surrealism is merely decadent, not all of it corrupt with the festering sores of dying individualism faced with a future collective world. From its evil-smelling, putrefying fertilizer, new shoots of life may spring....Surrealism is contributing new discoveries of the inner life of fantasy by pictorializing the destructive and creative processes of the sub-conscious mind. The art of the future, which will strive for a new humanism on a social basis will inevitably turn its face toward the world of reality again. In doing this it will find uses for the technical inventions of the modern escapists, whether Cubist or Surrealist.[24]

Although she made no mention of any specific artists and gave no indication that the developments which she was hoping for had already begun to take place, I wonder whether van Wiegand was familiar with the paintings of any of the social surrealists. Whether she was or not, by 1937 their attempts to develop the unification of surrealism and social concern that she believed would be constructive were well under way.

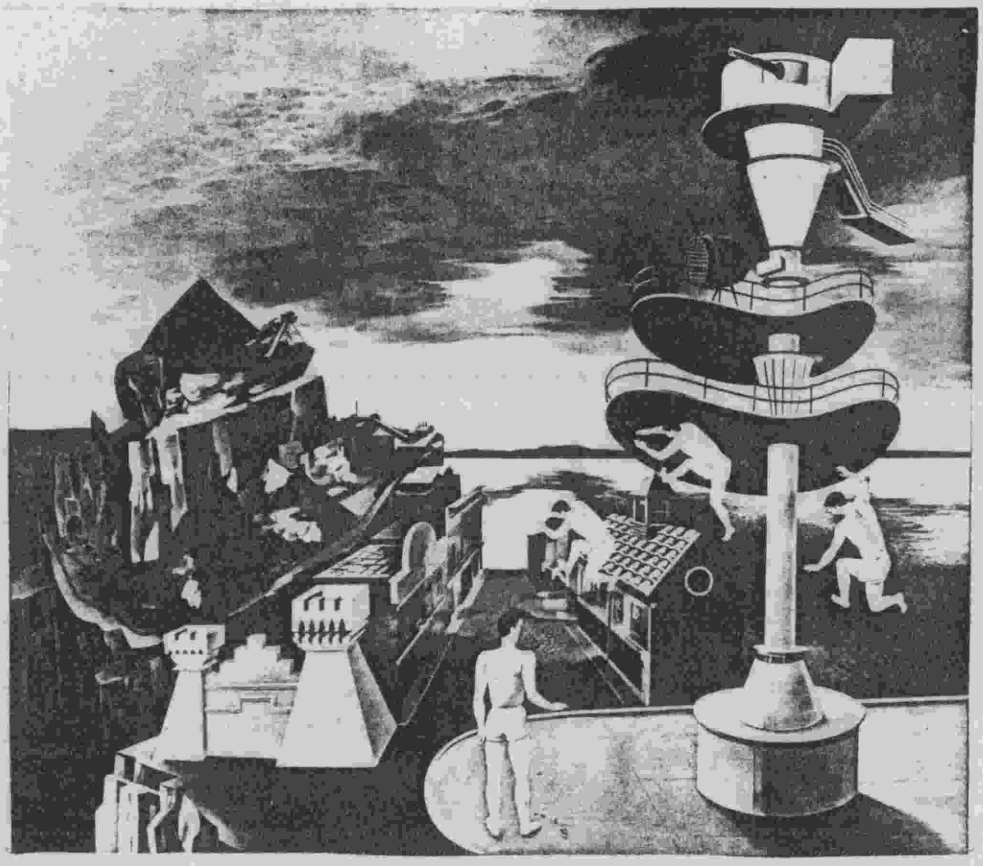
FOOTNOTES

1. Herbert Read, ed., Surrealism (London: Faber and Faber, 1936).
2. Soby, p. 7.
3. Ibid.
4. John D. Graham, "Eight Modes of Modern Painting," Art Front, January 1935, p. 7.
5. Grace Clements, "New Content--New Form," Art Front, March 1936, p. 9.
6. Jerome Klein, "Dada for Propaganda," Art Front, February 1935, pp. 7-8.
7. Ibid., p. 7.
8. Ibid., p. 8.
9. Jacob Kainen, "Dream-World Art," New Masses, November 12, 1935, p. 25.
10. Isidor Schneider, "Shrines of Unreason," New Masses, December 29, 1936, p. 23.
11. Ibid., p. 24.
12. Adolf Wolf, "Jamais!" Art Front, January 1937, p. 18.
13. Samuel Putnam, "Marxism and Surrealism," Art Front, March 1937, pp. 10-12.
14. Salvador Dali, "I Defy Aragon," Art Front, March 1937, pp. 7-8.
15. Rubin, Dada, Surrealism and Their Heritage, p. 210.
16. Dali, pp. 7-8.
17. Clarence Weinstock, "The Man in the Balloon," Art Front, March 1937, pp. 8-10.
18. Ibid., pp. 9-10.
19. Ibid., p. 10.
20. Clarence Weinstock, "A Letter to Salvador Dali," Art Front, February 1935, p. 8.
21. Stuart Davis, "Paintings by Salvador Dali," Art Front, January 1935, p. 7.
22. Stephen Alexander, "Salvador Dali, or Life Is a Nightmare," New Masses, December 11, 1934, p. 28.
23. Charmion van Wiegand, "The Surrealists," Art Front, January 1937, pp. 12-14.
24. Ibid., p. 14.

CHAPTER 6

Peter Blume

The first American surrealist painting to attract widespread attention in the press was Peter Blume's South of Scranton (fig. 1). Although painted in 1931, it was not until it was awarded the grand prize at the 1934 Carnegie International Exhibition that it became one of the best known paintings in the country. The Carnegie International was one of the few exhibitions of its kind in the United States during the thirties, and it had been one of the most prestigious annual exhibitions for some time. For a surrealist painting to win the grand prize was unheard of. Nevertheless, the panel of judges, Alfred Barr of the Museum of Modern Art, Elisabeth Luther Cary of the New York Times, and painter Gifford Beal, selected the potential bombshell even though in the popular poll it had recieved only 22 votes of the approximately 5,000 cast. (Frederick J. Waugh's Tropic Sea was the winner of the popular poll with 1,920 votes.)[1] The popular press, particularly those newspapers located in Pennsylvqnia, was quick to report the "public outcry" over the award. The thing which upset the public most was Blume's free juxtaposition of diverse elements--the artist could neither have seen all of these strange things



1. Peter Blume. South of Scranton.

in the same place nor at the same time.

Not only did journalists puzzle over the meaning of these odd and varied elements, but editorial cartoonists had a field day with the painting, substituting local politicians for Blume's German sailors.[2] The most entertaining of the protests against the award was a letter from a resident of Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania which appeared in the New York Herald Tribune and was reprinted in the Art Digest under the heading "Why Scranton?"

> I live south of Scranton; have lived there all my life; am of mature age; am in possession of all my faculties; believe myself to be of good repute; do not drink greatly to excess, and hope you will believe me, dear editor, when I tell you that I can find no location south of Scranton, as far south as the Mason and Dixon line, that fits the picture.
>
> I know the topography of Pennsylvania; its mountains and rivers; its forests, brooks, water courses, cities, towns and villages--south of Scranton. I have traveled from Manajunk to Mehoopany; from Conshohocken to Cork Lane; have explored the Valley of the Susquehanna from Mocanaqua to the Mehoopany Mountain; have crossed the foothills of the Alleghanies from Catawisso to Catasauqua, and have made a Sabbath Day's journey from Duryea to Duck Pond, even as the ancients did from Dan to Beersheba.
>
> The following are my conclusions:
>
> 1. The place is not in Pennsylvania.
> 2. Investigation south of the Pennsylvania border should be made.
> 3. Why blame Scranton?

The editor of the Art Digest could not resist adding his own contribution: "Mr. P. Lapis Lazuli, noted painter, suggested,

however, that anything might happen 'South of Scranton'--now that Pennsylvania hasgone Democratic."[3]

Most critics, however, were not particularly upset by the painting, but neither were they eager to come to Blume's defense. Edward Alden Jewell, for instance, in reporting the award for the New York Times, simply stated that the painting was "perhaps most conveniently described as a purist essay in the mysterious realm of surrealism."[4]

Blume himself was not reluctant to help clear up the mystery. The Carnegie Magazine published an easily understandable account by Blume of how South of Scranton was conceived. The painting was essentially a free associative record of a trip that the artist had made in his car to Scranton and then south as far as Charleston, South Carolina. The painting was, wrote Blume:

> A mixture of the things I had seen and other things I had dreamed I had seen--the mountains of waste coal around Scranton, the deep quarries like bottomless chasms that seemed to tear the earth apart, the coal breakers that sprawled over the landscape like huge prehistoric monsters, the miniature locomotive that puffed with busy agility around them--all these began to formulate a picture.
>
> To these industrial details I next added the old streets with false-front houses made up of miscellaneous building material and thrown together in the most fantastic style; elaborate Main Streets that grew up overnight and died the following morning. From Charleston I took the broad flat waters of its harbor and the German cruiser "Emden" which came into

> port one day, with its bristling fighting masts and its German sailors whom I watched doing complicated calisthenic exercises on its enormous deck--all making a curious contrast with the atmosphere of the old town....
>
> I moved Scranton into Charleston, and Bethlehem into Scranton, as people do in a dream. The German sailors appeared to lose the purpose of exercising and became, in a sense, like birds soaring through space.[5]

Everything represented was at least derived from something seen, and it was only in the juxtaposition of the various elements and in the transformation of the activity of the sailors that Blume employed surrealist techniques--but this was enough to disturb many people.

Although Blume himself made no political claims for his painting, very specific political content was often read into it by others. It was generally taken to be a negative comment on American society. The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette reported an interpretation of South of Scranton by a local clergyman. He seems to have been sympathetic toward the painting which he saw as being concerned with the lack of spiritual unity in America. He was determined to employ surrealism to move his congregation to do battle with the world's social evils. The pastor's interpretation indicates that he must have been quite liberal in his own views:

> The whole thing seems to reflect a humanitarian experience wherein Blume had seen gold, coal and men existing together in the sort of hideous jumble that made life altogether a meaningless activity under the shadow of a machine gun's rule of iron and bullets....
>
> The battleship reminds us that in an industrial order where capital must be preserved and new markets developed and where it is considered necessary to protect property, huge armaments are developed. As for the men up in the air perhaps they are telling us that life amid such economic and social confusion resolves itself to meaningless activity without form or value.[6]

James Thrall Soby has quoted another Pittsburgh resident, Dr. C. Marshall Muir, who believed that Blume had "experienced the fact that chaos is king, having driven out God."[7] Soby also quoted the Pittsburgh Press's Douglas Naylor as having written: "As to the men in shorts, probably it depicts a psychological supression--that is the way men hope to play around when the New Deal gives them a chance to enjoy life.... It seems reasonable to conclude that the cannon atop the queer turret is symbolic of capitalism."[8] Elsewhere the painting was seen as being concerned with the end of a coal strike, the sailors being miners rejoicing over the terms of the strike settlement.[9]

These interpretations are certainly simplistic and much too literal, but I find them no more absurd than the contention of James Thrall Soby, a respected writer, that South of Scranton "is simply a panoramic travel picture."[10] At least

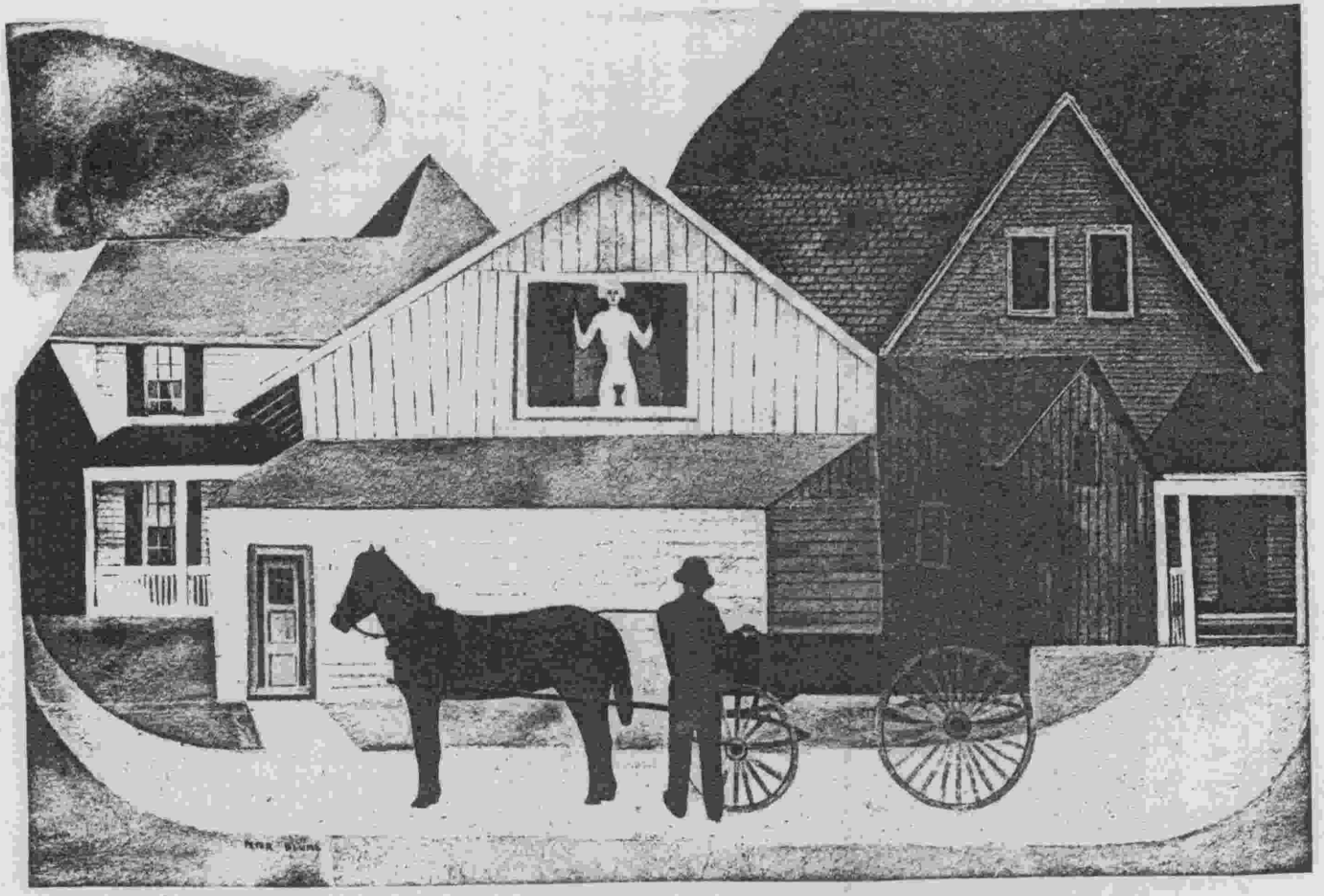
one excuse can be made for the eagerness of these individuals to provide Blume's painting with unintended political meanings: in 1934 people were becoming accustomed to artists' making protest statements through their art, and it was only natural that these novice critics should provide a surrealist painting with a too literal interpretation. They had come to expect such things from artists. Even as recently as 1968, Frank Getlein went so far as to regard the sailors as being robot-like--an interpretation which would seem to be directly contradicted by Blume's statement that the men were meant to be floating like birds.[11]

There is definitely some degree of social commentary though not as strong or explicit as many of Blume's contemporaries believed. There is a clear thematic contrast between the left and right sides of the painting. The left side contains a slag heap, the coal pit, harsh jagged mountains, a drab purple street, a yellow castle-like structure and red and blue hills. The right side finds the joy of the sailors reiterated by the blue calm of the sea, and the buildings on the right side of the street do not have the large false fronts of those on the left. Thus Blume seems to contrast the ugliness of reality in the form of mechanical and wasteful images with the potential for happiness as expressed by the

sailors. Even the evil of the gun in the turret is neutralized by their joy. South of Scranton seems critical of aspects of modern society, especially those which can be related to capitalism, but to interpret the painting as an anti-capitalist tract is not supportable. A few years later however, Blume was to make an equally important painting in which his message would be specific and in which every detail would have a clear meaning. Before looking at this painting an examination of Blume's earlier work is in order.

Blume, Brooklyn-raised son of a Russian immigrant, had worked at a number of odd jobs before being able to make his living by painting. He studied in New York at the Educational Alliance, the Art Students' League and the Beaux Arts Academy, but it was in 1924 when he moved to Greenwich Village and was exposed to modernist and avant-garde ideas that his art began to develop an original direction.[12]

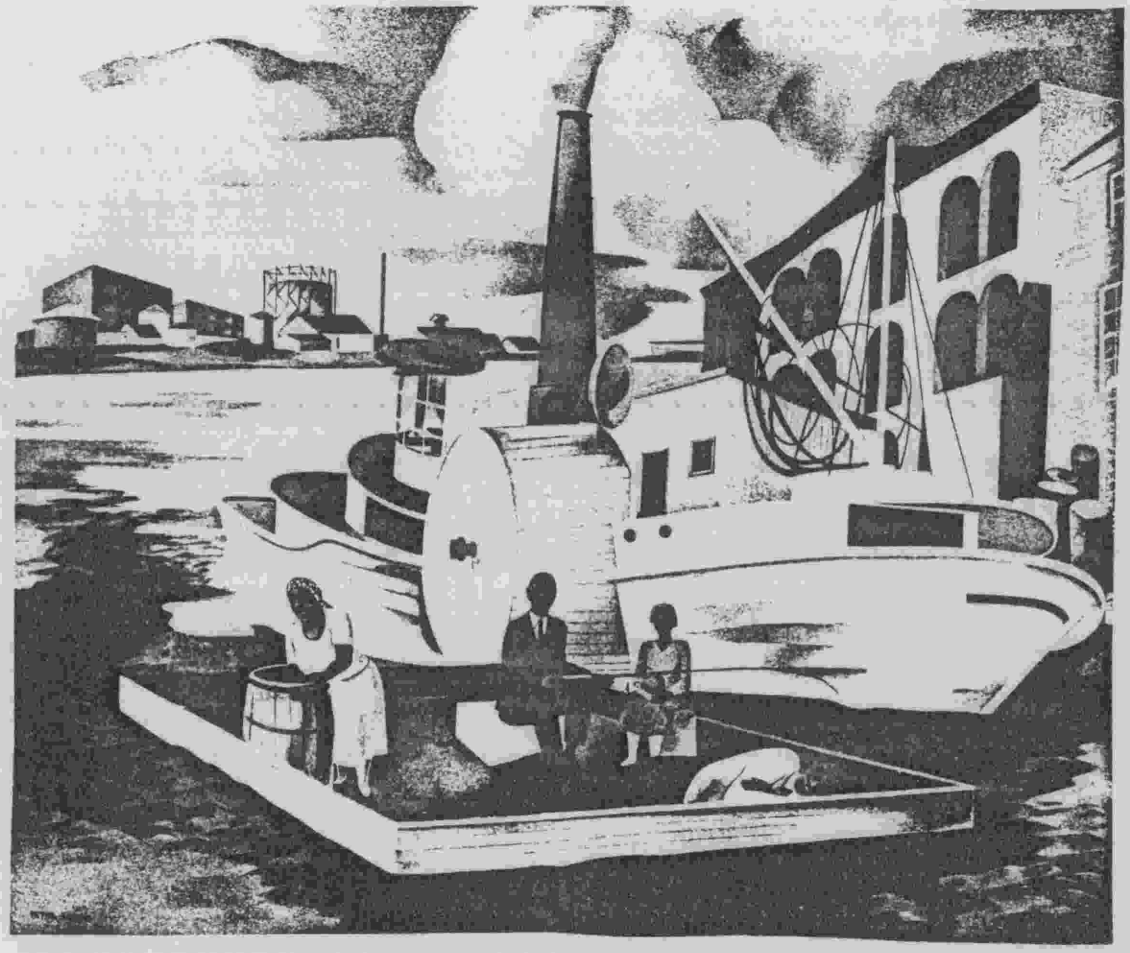
Blume's earliest paintings betray the influence of both the Precisionists and of folk art. New England Barn, 1926 (fig. 2), is characterized by broad flat planes arranged in a cubist influenced interlocking pattern; but the rough handling of the paint and the two-dimensional treatment of the human figures are much more deliberately naive than the style of the Precisionists. Even in this early primitive style there



2. Peter Blume. New England Barn.

is a strong surreal flavor. The nude woman standing in the window is very strange indeed in this New England rural setting. I doubt that Blume would have seen or been influenced by any surrealist paintings at this early date; rather he seems to have had an instinctive interest in the subconscious. It is interesting that Blume's later surrealistic paintings contained none of this explicit sexuality, even though such themes were of tremendous importance for European surrealists.

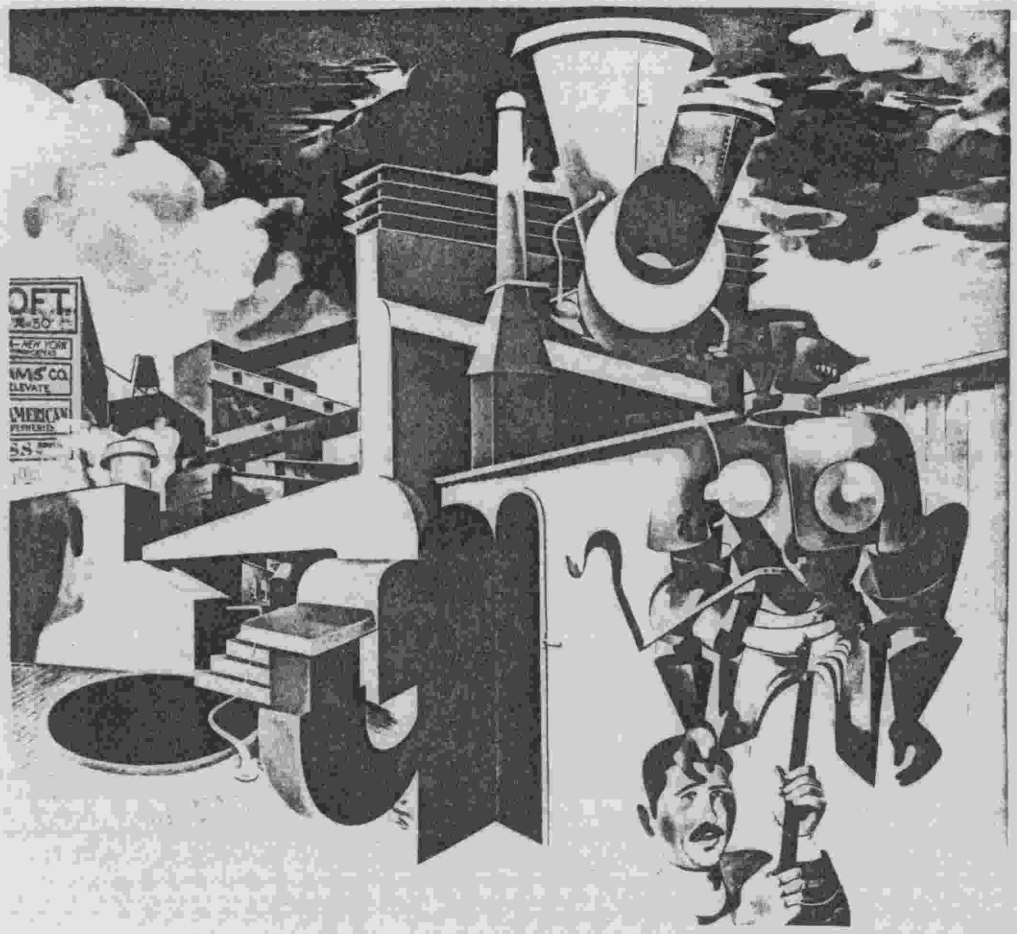
Within a few years, both the sexuality and the primitivism had disappeared from Blume's paintings. It was the paintings of the American Precisionists that became increasingly important for Blume, in terms of both style and subject matter--the latter in his concern with urban imagery. The surrealistic current continued to run in his Precisionist paintings, providing them with a feeling very different from those of Charles Sheeler or the other Precisionists. In The Boat, 1929 (fig. 3), for example, the factories, warehouses and clean white shapes of the boat are contrasted with the four black people in the foreground. Each of the four seems isolated from the others, and, even though two of them are ostensibly engaged in some sort of activity, they remain strangely inactive. The reclining figure in the foreground appears particularly disturbed and disturbing.



3. Peter Blume. The Boat.

Parade, 1930 (fig. 4), was the first of Blume's paintings to receive much attention in the press when it was included in his first one-man show at the Daniel Gallery in 1930. The painting was generally regarded by the critics as interesting, but it did not arouse any great controversy. The critic for Art News described Parade as a "mechanistic, symbolical canvas,"[13] while Lloyd Goodrich, in The Arts, also remarked on the mechanistic aspects of the painting, at the same time expressing his dissatisfaction with the overall composition.[14] R. Flint, in Creative Art, liked the show as a whole,[15] while the critic for the International Studio was generally favorable but did not care for Parade.[16]

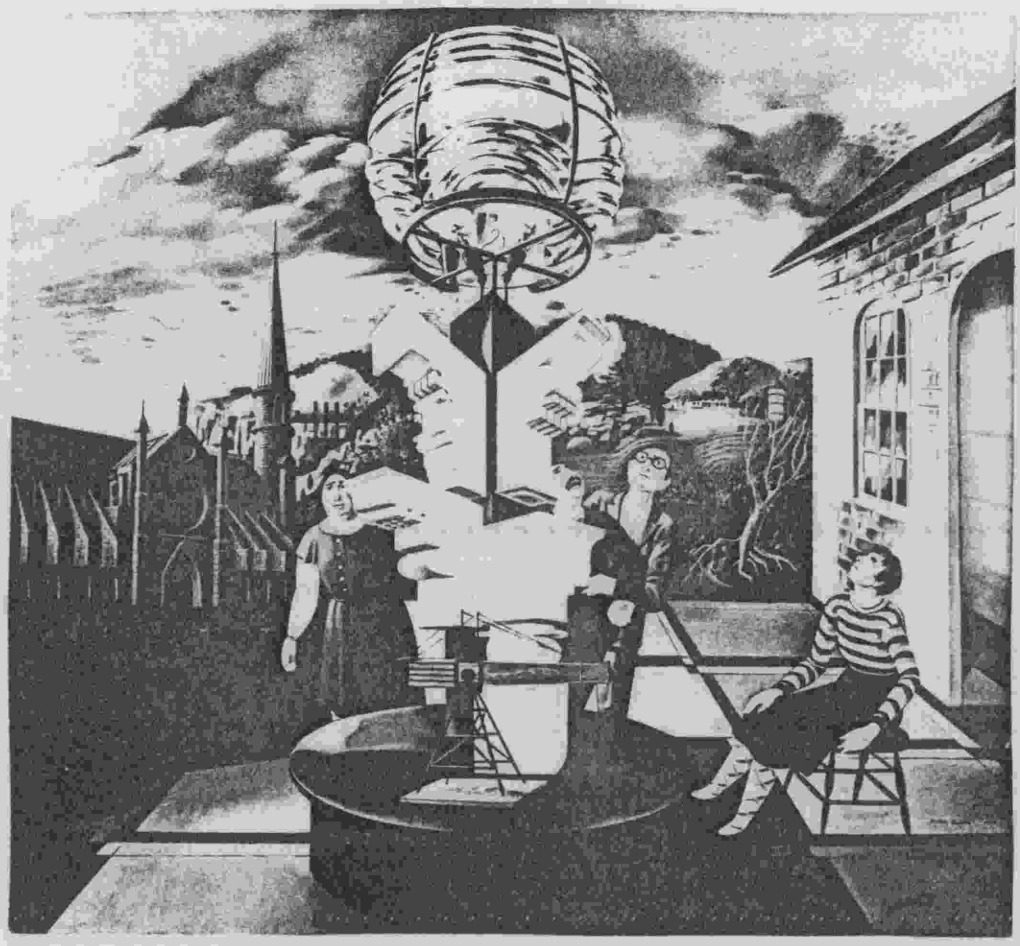
At the time when Parade was being painted, Blume was interested in the forms he found along New York's waterfront, both of the ships and of the industrial environment nearby. He was also spending time in the Metropolitan Museum, sketching the armor collection there.[17] Blume combined these interests in Parade, including a single human figure (actually the writer Malcolm Cowley, a friend of Blume)[18] who holds aloft a suit of armor. Although the painting has much in common with Precisionism--the interest in the urban industrial environment, the smooth accurate rendering of detail--Blume



4. Peter Blume. Parade.

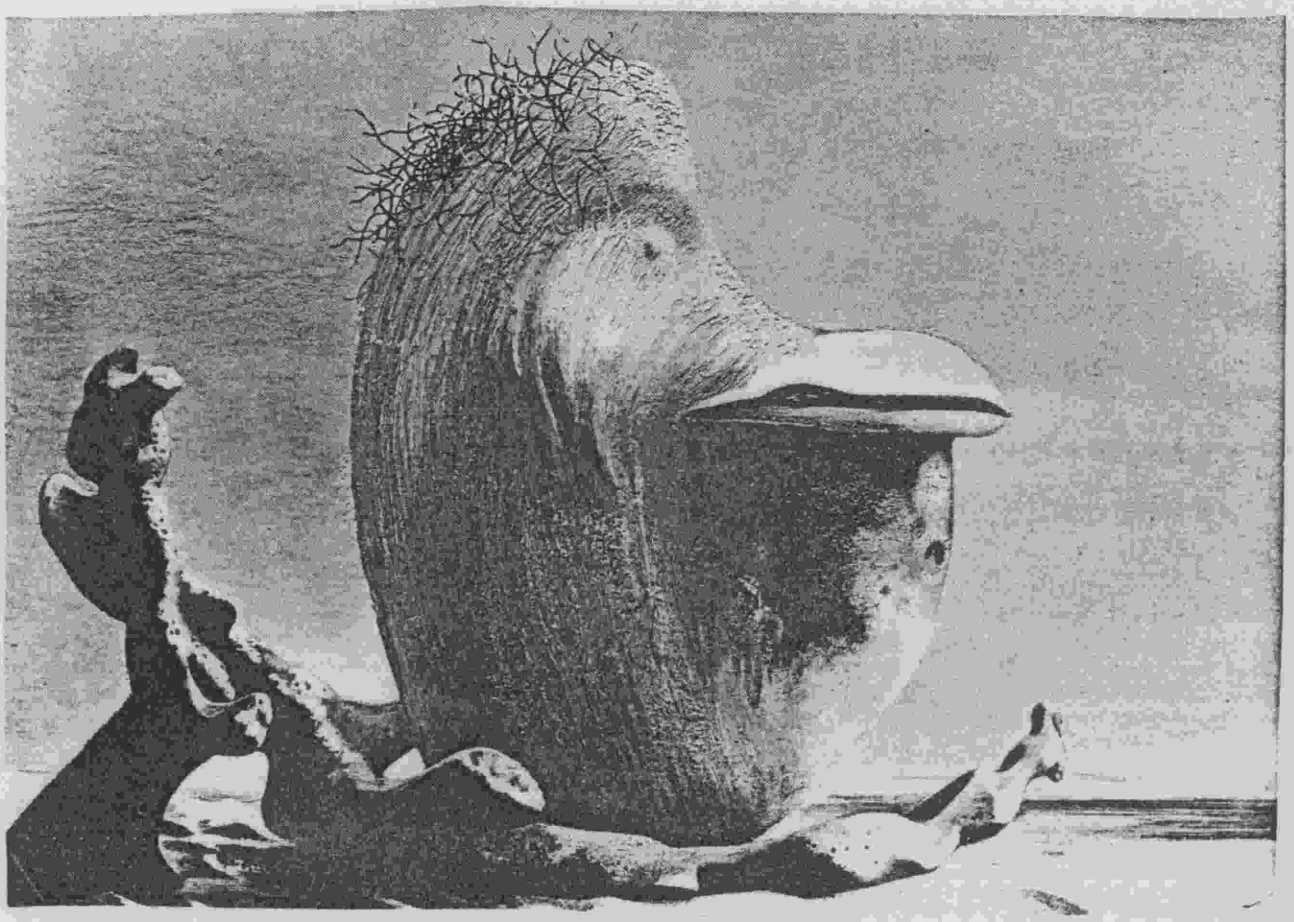
had again combined diverse elements in a disconcerting way. The single parading figure holding the particularly fierce-looking suit of armor provides a jarring note in an otherwise psychologically uneventful painting. The conclusion that Blume was using this figure in order to comment on the industrial environment is inescapable. Whether one interprets the suit of armor as a symbol of war or of the dehumanizing effects of modern industry, it seems evident that Blume intented it to represent the other side of the coin of progress. A study for Parade in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art reveals that Blume had made some changes in the signs on the left side of the composition. In the study, one of the signs reads "Blume's Old Nature Cure," indicating that the artist had a negative view of the urban environment, in contrast to the Connecticut countryside where he had recently settled.

Light of the World (fig. 5), painted in 1932, is another comment on the dehumanization of modern society. This new "Light" seems to have just made a sudden appearance on a surburban patio. It is a symbol of modern technology, serving no useful purpose and supported by anachronistic, elaborately non-functional capitals. This piece of absurdity has eclipsed the old Light of the World, Christ, who is symbolized by the



5. Peter Blume. Light of the World.

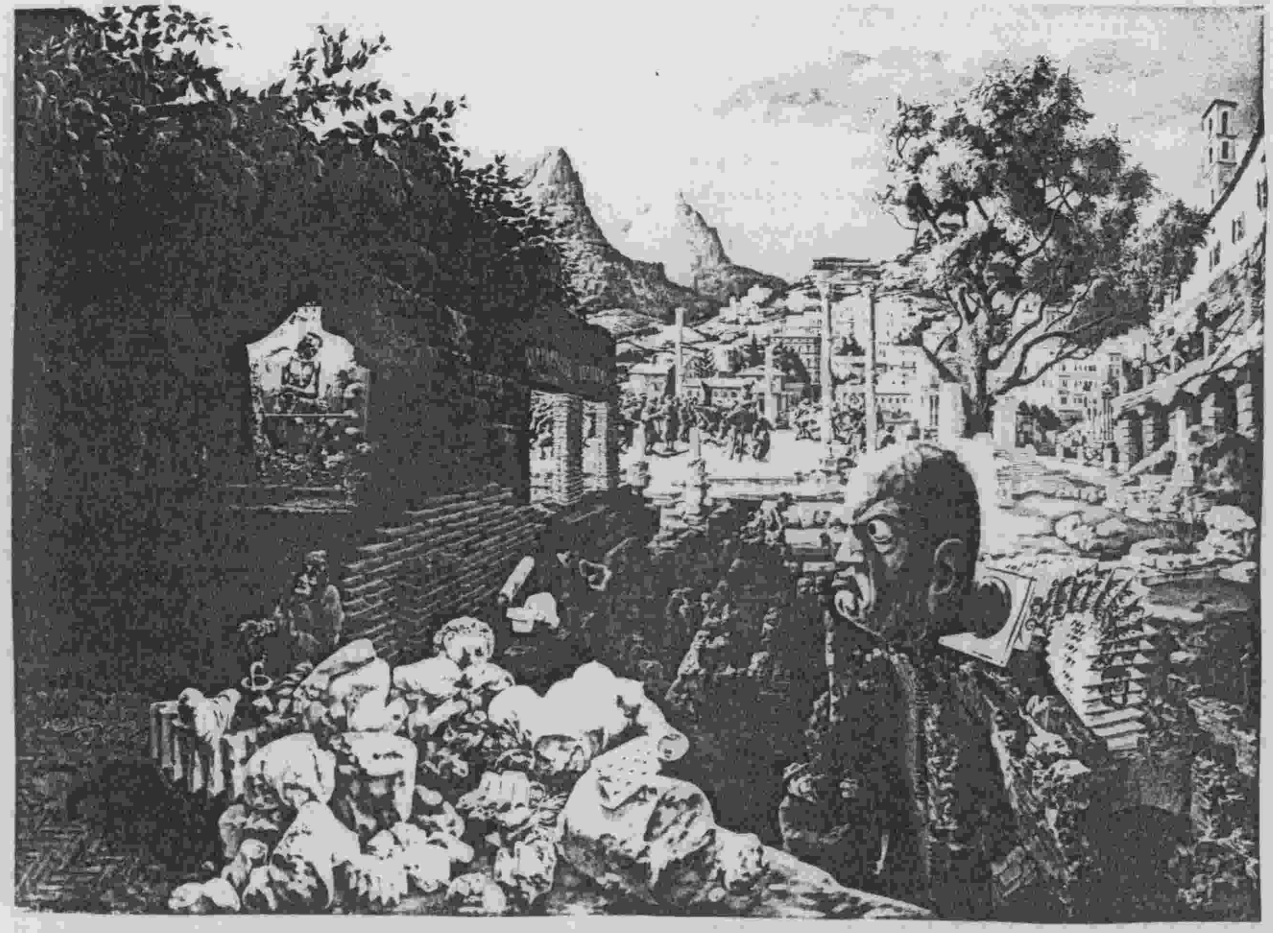
church standing in darkness to the left. The new light does not serve to clarify the situation of man, but only to produce puzzlement; it sheds no light, only darkness. Technology, the new god of man, has not yet succeeded in obliterating the peaceful farm scene in the right background, but to the left a factory is encroaching on the landscape. Blume's imagery was becoming more explicit, and his backgrounds more detailed and specific, foreshadowing what was yet to come in his work. One critic described Light of the World as " the best example we have of a surrealist influence upon contemporary American painting."[19] One puzzling surrealist element in this painting is the anthropomorphic tree at the side of the house. This type of transformation of natural objects was often the subject of Blume's work at this time. In Key West Beach (fig. 6), for instance, some sand and driftwood take on the appearance of a pelican. Blume's interest in applying his imagination to everyday objects is certainly surrealistic in character although not social or political in attitude. It was, however, his major oil paintings of the thirties and forties for which Blume was, and is, best known, and these works, carefully planned and meticulously painted, were concerned with social or political issues. Of these, the one



6. Peter Blume. Key West Beach.

which drew the most attention, and was also the most directly political, was The Eternal City.

Blume had spent three years working on The Eternal City (fig. 7), which at 34 x 47 7/8 inches was considerably smaller than both Parade and South of Scranton, before he felt it was ready for exhibition at the Julian Levy Gallery late in 1937. His ideas for the painting had begun to take shape as early as 1932 during an eight month stay in Italy, mainly in Rome and Florence, which was financed by a Guggenheim Fellowship. The Eternal City consists of a number of vignettes dominated by the presence of the large, grotesque, green, jack-in-the-box head of Mussolini. The painting contrasts the ruins of ancient Rome with the reality of the absurdities of fascism. The Mussolini depicted here is not a terrifying figure, but is almost a laughable one whose anger seems unfocused--it appears as if it might be due to his strange predicament as a papier-mâché dictator. Beneath the green head, amid the catacombs, stand two gloating figures--one a gangster, the other a politician. They are obviously delighted with the dictator they have helped place in power; but at the rear of the catacombs is a sign of hope--the people are beginning to climb out of their dark tombs into the light, toward a scene of rebellion in the background. This scene,



7. Peter Blume. The Eternal City.

inspired by Trotsky's History of the Russian Revolution,[20] shows women crawling under the legs of the horses of the fascist officers, urging the soldiers to rebel, which they are beginning to do. The taunts of a crowd of civilians also encourage revolt. To the right, two monks flee in horror along a balcony, fearing that they will be the next targets of rebellion. On the left side of the painting, in a dark grotto, sits an emaciated figure of Christ, bedecked with cheap trinkets left by worshippers such as the old woman and the seminarian who kneel before him. In front of this scene an old beggar woman sits amidst the ruins of a classical statue, which, if unshattered, would show two lovers embracing. The contrasts between good and evil in this painting are further emphasized by the diagonal division of the painting into areas of light and dark--the cheerful sunny sky and the strong healthy tree affirming Blume's faith in the ability of the rebellious people to depose their paper dictator.

With The Eternal City, for the second time in just a few short years, Blume found himself the center of controversy in the art world. The extreme detail of Blume's technique combined with his direct attack on a foreign dictator caused

a debate over The Eternal City that surpassed that generated by South of Scranton. Although the critical reception of The Eternal City was mixed, there was agreement on at least one point: that Blume's craftsmanship, his mastery of the brush, was impeccable. The center of controversy, in the mainstream art press as well as in the leftist press, lay in whether or not The Eternal City was effective as propaganda.

As far as I know, only one critic, Henry McBride of the New York Sun, disapproved of Blume's propagandistic purpose. McBride thought it an "odd undertaking" that an American artist should choose to employ a Guggenheim Fellowship to become "a political spy."[21]

> The scriptures recommend plucking the beam out of one's own eye before attending to the motes in the orbs of one's neighbors, and heaven knows we have enough things to correct in our own political system without attending to the procedures of the States of which we have, at the most, a hearsay knowledge.[22]

I suspect, however, that McBride would not have been quite so pleased if Blume's painting had actually involved an attack on American politics.

Two other members of the New York art press were dissatisfied with the painting because they found the message lacked force and directness. Emily Genauer of the World Telegram found that Blume's details boiled down to "a com-

paratively simple message and one that has been said with more directness and greater force in countless cartoons appearing in the press and in left-wing publications."[23]

Times critic Edward Alden Jewell wrote that:

> The political aspects of this treatise are not altogether clear. We are left in doubt as to whether the propagandist considers this modern dictator a self-sprung megalomaniac or a figurehead manipulated by social forces, that have taken control of the situation in Italy. If the latter be the case, then it must be confessed that Mr. Blime has not very convincingly projected the social philosophy responsible for such a state of affairs.[24]

Part of Jewell's confusion could have been cleared up had he paid more attention to the figures of the capitalist and the gangster who stand underneath Mussolini; this is certainly not the most sophisticated treatment of "the social philosophy" responsible for fascism, but Blume's purpose in including them as "a symbol of the forces which created fascism"[25] is fairly clear.

There were other critics who were in direct disagreement with their colleagues. The critic for Art News found the painting to be a "mature solution to the modern artist's problem of coordinating propaganda with aesthetics."[26] What was probably the most favorable of the reviews appeared in the liberal magazine, New Republic, in which Kenneth Burke valued the painting because of Blume's combination of sur-

realism and propaganda:

> To label bluntly: we might call "The Eternal City" the painting of a surrealist, turned social propagandist. But one must hasten to modify. It does not trifle with enigmas, as so much of surrealism does. And, as propaganda, it extends its range until a total personality is encompassed; the propagandist element merely takes its place as one function in a broad texture of consciousness, having much more scope and complexity than the artist could possibly include if he conceived of propaganda as a purely utilitarian act.[27]

Whether The Eternal City is as successful as Burke thought is debatable, but the qualities which he ascribed to it were certainly those which Blume must have hoped the painting would convey. (The fact that Burke was a friend of Blume would lend credence to this assumption.) If surrealism could provide the socially conscious painter with a useful means of expression, it would be along the lines described here--as a method by which "propaganda" could take on levels of meaning other than the superficial.

Although an anonymous writer in the Daily Worker had praised Blume's painting as a "powerful indictment of fascism,"[28] the reaction in the left-wing press was generally negative. The New York Post's left-wing critic, Jerome Klein, did not find Blume's depiction of Mussolini to be a significant blow against fascism nor did he find the painting to be aesthetically pleasing. According to Klein, the

green head of Mussolini negated the general good quality of painting.[29] That a critic committed to anti-fascism would object on this ground is surprising. Blume certainly realized the discordant element that the head injected into the painting, but felt that the shock value justified the discomfort. For a painting dealing with fascism to be rendered completely in subtle gradations of pleasing colors would seen out of keeping with the subject matter. Blume admitted that: "It hurt me to paint the head, but no compromise was possible. I felt that in doing this picture the question of harmony was superseded by other considerations."[30] It was "antithesis" and "dissonance" that Blume was after in his rendering and placement of the head.[31] The head itself was not completely Blume's invention; it was probably inspired by a papier-mâché Mussolini he had seen at an exposition in Rome.[32]

It was not the harsh quality of Mussolini's head that displeased Jacob Kainen, writing in the Daily Worker, but rather Blume's "highly finished" technique. Kainen found it surprising that an anti-fascist painting would be done in "such a fantastically detached manner, with the care of a jeweler rather than the passion of a democrat." Kainen emphasized that he did not find socially concerned painting

and extreme realism of detail to be necessarily incompatible, but that The Eternal City was lacking in any "social emotion" and that it exhibited feeling only for method, not for subject matter.[33]

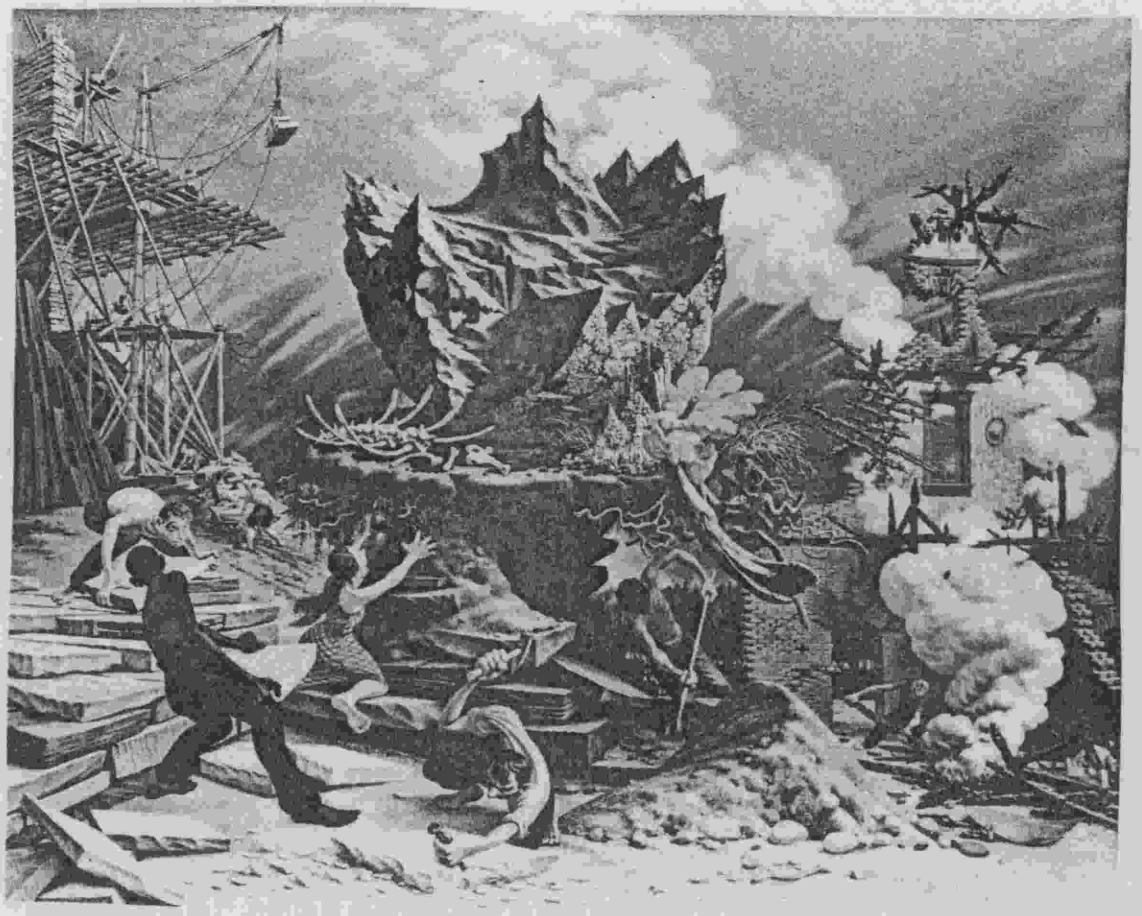
George L. K. Morris, writing in Partisan Review, also took Blume to task for his "Quattrocento" style, finding it unsuited to his subject. Morris pointed out that Blume's style would be very acceptable to fascists, and that by painting in an academic manner, Blume was doing nothing to promote "the genuine contemporary spirit" which fascism feared.[34]

Whether or not they personally liked The Eternal City, a number of left-wing artists and critics were quick to come to the defense of the painting when it was turned down by the hanging committee for the 1939 Corcoran Biennial in Washington. The nine signatories to a telegram sent to the Corcoran accusing the gallery of having rejected the painting on political rather than artistic grounds included Jerome Klein, Stuart Davis and Julian Levy.[35]

Twenty years later, the subject of The Eternal City was to prove no hindrance to its inclusion in a government sponsored exhibition sent to the Soviet Union as representative of twentieth century trends in American art. Art

in America reprinted a review of the exhibition by a Russian academician, Vladimir Kemenov. After attacking the minutely detailed renderings of veristic surrealism as "a mockery of reality, an affront to the human intellect, and the destruction of artistic images," Kemenov went on to single out The Eternal City as "an example of improbable hallucination" and as being characterized by "chaotic absurdity."[36] It is interesting to note that it was reported that the painting was generally disliked by the Moscow public until it was labeled as "anti-fascist."[37]

Although he was active during the next decade producing surreal nature studies and realistic war-time scenes of hospitals among other works, Blume's art did not attract widespread attention again until 1949 when his next major painting, The Rock (fig. 8), completed in the preceding year, was exhibited in New York. Although stylistically continuing the same detailed realism of The Eternal City, The Rock reflected the change in attitude toward politics which had taken place within the American art world since 1937. Rather than deal with a specifically political theme such as fascism or socialism, Blume chose to paint an allegory concerning the "continual process of man's rebuilding out of a devastated world."[38] The rock itself combines elements of construction



8. Peter Blume. The Rock.

and destruction, mediating between the two forces while the people desperately try to rebuild their ravaged world. The dominant note here, more so than in The Eternal City, is one of hope; the energy of the builders impresses us as sufficient to replace the desolation on the right with the foundation of a better world, symbolized on the left by Frank Lloyd Wright's Kaufmann House, seen here under construction. (The Rock was purchased by Edgar Kaufmann before its completion.) That this painting generated very little of the controversy which The Eternal City did is indicative not only of its more general theme, to which no one could be opposed, especially in the years following World War II, but also of Blume's style which, while disconcerting to some in 1937, was familiar by 1949. That Blume's paintings had become easily acceptable is evidenced by his winning, in 1950, for the second time in his career, a first place at the Carnegie International. This time, however, it was not the judges but the museum-goers who awarded Blume their prize. Of other recent winners of the popularity poll at the Carnegie the most progressive had been Thomas Hart Benton in 1945, and of the top ten finishers in 1950 the best known today, other than Blume, is Leon Kroll, hardly a revolutionary painter.[39] Unfortunately, Blume's first place finish at the Carnegie must

be viewed as a sign of stagnation in his work. The Rock is both less innovative and less interesting than was his 1934 prize winner, South of Scranton, and also less skillful in composition and handling. Blume's rendering of human figures was never his strong point, but in The Rock they are reduced to comic book figures, and, despite the seemingly more active and energetic subject, the composition totally lacks any element of dynamism. What Blume had done, as opposed to South of Scranton, was to make his subject matter easily understandable and non-controversial. The Rock tells a story, something which South of Scranton did not do, and it is this aspect of the painting which must have won the favor of the public.

Besides being one of the most written-about American artists of the period, Blume was also one of the quickest to take up pen and paper himself. In addition to writing about art, Blume was also very active in the Artists' Congress and the Artists' Union, and he served on the executive committee of the League of American Artists, which was formed in 1936 by the Artists' Congress.[40] In his writings Blume seems to have been trying to develop a theory which would support art that was relevant to working people; that is, it would convey messages and tell stories, but without abandoning the

advances made by modern styles such as cubism and surrealism.

In an article which appeared in New Republic in 1934 Blume criticized the European surrealists (whom he called Superrealists, a term which was commonly used in the United States at that time) for many of the same reasons that the critics writing in Art Front did:

> The Superrealists...have developed their own way of painting pictures, now pretty sterile. They have lost all the pathological frenzy they began with. There is nothing new or revealing in their arrangements of symbols, no new relationships articulated to support clearer communications.[41]

Blume also criticized abstractionists for their failure to communicate with the public and for being concerned solely with artistic problems. He was even so bold as to tackle Picasso, specifically the Spanish artist's The Painter and his Model, painted in 1928: "Every part is perfectly adjusted and reveals at once its whole mechanism, its buoyant labors and the joy and spontaneity of discovery. Lacking all trace of the elemental human passions, it is the skeleton of a great picture."[42] Blume was not opposed to abstraction as such; on the contrary, he recognized the genuine achievements of abstractionists, but he felt that artists had to go beyond formal concerns and attempt to communicate with those uninitiated into the inner circles of art.[43] As late as 1954 Blume

admitted the influence which modernism had had on his own work and stated his belief that he was still working within the modernist tradition:

> When I started painting in the 20's, I felt that the revolution of modern art emanating from cubism was a crusade to rebuild the fundamental structure of art--its form and color which had been disrupted by naturalism. I felt that upon this new base art could develop again. Later on, by way of dada and surrealism, I saw in the non-naturalistic juxtaposition of pictorial images a correlative with cubism--the possibility of building a new pictorial language which would evoke and communicate ideas as well as plastic sensations. I still consider these two movements the most significant manifestations of our century and I feel that I belong to their main current.[44]

This statement is somewhat ironic, coming six years after the completion of The Rock, a painting in which he all but completely abandoned modernist influences. His work after this period was to lose even the surrealist element of juxtaposition which he still retained in The Rock.

FOOTNOTES

1. James Thrall Soby, "History of a Picture," Saturday Review, April 26, 1947, pp. 30-32.
2. Numerous examples can be found in the Museum of Modern Art's scrapbook on South of Scranton.
3. A. S. Galland, "Why Scranton?" Art Digest, November 15, 1934, p. 10.
4. Edward Alden Jewell, "Peter Blume Wins $1500 Art Award," New York Times, October 19, 1934, p. 21.
5. "'South of Scranton,'" Carnegie Magazine, October 1934, p. 155.
6. "Pastor Views Art Winner as Indicting U. S. System," Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, November 5, 1934.
7. Soby, "History," p. 32.
8. Ibid., p. 31.
9. Source unknown, information obtained from scrapbook in the Museum of Modern Art.
10. Soby, "History," p. 32.
11. Frank Getlein, Peter Blume (New York: Kennedy Galleries, 1968), n. pag.
12. Ibid.
13. "Peter Blume," Art News, February 8, 1930, p. 15.
14. Lloyd Goodrich, "The Daniel Gallery," The Arts, February 1930, p. 416.
15. Ralph Flint, "Around the Galleries," Creative Art, March 1930, supplement 66.
16. "Exhibitions," International Studio, March 1930, p. 74.
17. Getlein.
18. Ibid.
19. Horace Gregory, "An American Show," New Republic, January 11, 1933, p. 243.
20. Soby, "Peter Blume's 'Eternal City,'" The Bulletin of the Museum of Modern Art, April 1943, p. 5.
21. "Image of Italy: The Eternal City," Time, December 6, 1937, p. 65.
22. "Peter Blume Tilts with a Paper Dictator," Art Digest, December 15, 1937, p. 12.
23. Ibid.
24. Jewell, "Re Fascism: Peter Blume Paints an Eternal City," New York Times, November 28, 1937, sec. XI, p. 9.
25. "The Symbol of the Suede Gloves," Daily Worker, January 11, 1938, p. 7.

26. Martha Davidson, "A Single Peter Blume Painting," Art News, November 27, 1937, p. 14.
27. Kenneth Burke, "Growth among the Ruins," New Republic, December 15, 1937, p. 165.
28. "Suede Gloves," p. 7.
29. "Peter Blume Tilts," p. 12.
30. Soby, "Peter Blume's Eternal City," p. 5.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid., pp. 4-5.
33. Jacob Kainen, "Anti-Fascist Painting on Display by Guggenheim Winner," Daily Worker, December 2, 1937, p. 7.
34. George L. K. Morris, "Some Personal Letters to American Artists Recently Exhibiting in New York," Partisan Review, March 1938, pp. 40-41.
35. Peyton Boswell, "Logic Takes a Holiday," Art Digest, April 15, 1939, p. 3.
36. Vladimir Kemenov, "Plus and Minus at the Moscow Show," Art in America, March-April 1960, p. 38.
37. "Freedom on Show," Time, August 17, 1959, p. 68.
38. J. O'Connor, "People's Choice: The Rock," Carnegie Magazine, January 1951, p. 13.
39. Ibid., pp. 13-15.
40. Art Front, March 1936, p. 13.
41. Blume, "After Superrealism," New Republic, October 1934, p. 339.
42. Blume, "Will Abstract Art Survive?" New Republic, April 19, 1939, p. 308.
43. Ibid.
44. Blume, "The Creative Process," Art Digest, January 15, 1954, p. 32.

CHAPTER 7

James Guy

Although no other paintings which I will discuss here were nearly so well known as The Eternal City or South of Scranton (few American paintings were), there were other artists besides Blume who were attempting to combine surrealism with their beliefs that society had to change. Walter Quirt and James Guy were two of these artists. Like Blume, both men were active in the artists' movements of the thirties, including the John Reed Clubs, in which, so far as I know, Blume was not active. Guy from Connecticut and Quirt from Michigan came together in New York during the early thirties. Quirt, the older of the two--about thirty at the time--had received his training in Milwaukee at the Layton School of Art, where he had also been an instructor. Guy, in his early twenties, had been educated in an environment more concerned with modernism; he had been a student at the Hartford Art School when Edward Austin was introducing Americans to surrealism at the Wadsworth Atheneum. According to Guy, he and Quirt were close friends during their early years in New York and were influenced by one another's works, with Guy providing the knowledge of surrealism while Quirt contributed his awareness

of developments on the political and labor scenes.[1] Both artists showed at the John Reed Club and at the Julian Levy Gallery, which was the main outlet for surrealism in New York; only Quirt was given a one-man show by Levy; Guy was included in group shows there.[2] Although the works of both men reflected their political concerns, Guy's paintings were more varied and often less directly applicable to political issues than were Quirt's.

Guy's first one-man show in New York was not held until 1939 at the Boyer Gallery. (He had had an earlier one-man exhibition in 1935 at the Museum Annex in Hartford). I have not seen a very large number of Guy's paintings, even in the form of photographs, and, for the most part, I do not know which paintings were included in this exhibition. A New York Times review indicates that the show was heavily political, concerned with "the threat of war, elevator strikes and other current social and political quotidians:"[3] The Times critic did not feel that Guy's political concerns had been successfully united with his interest in the subconscious, and with this opinion the reviewer for Art News agreed. The Art News critic did emphasize, however, that even though Guy was working in "a Dali motif," he employed "intelligible subject matter derived from the American scene."[4]

The earliest of Guy's paintings which I have seen is Yachting (fig. 9), painted in 1935. This very small painting juxtaposes two scenes: on one side is a summer scene depicting a wealthy businessman who is accompanied by a young woman; he is lounging on a beach belonging to his yacht club. On the other side a fisherman is seen in his boat battling a stormy winter sea. Joining these two scenes in the center is a heroicized fisherman and a young boy. There are no subconscious dream-like elements here, but rather a simple juxtaposition by Guy of the life styles of two different classes. Juxtaposition was, however, a device which Guy had learned from the surrealists. To Guy:

> The surrealist technique offered a form that allowed subject contrasts in easil (sic) painting. The familiar device of a deep receding plane offered a chance to break away from the "one-time" aspect of an easil painting. It was possible to show not only obvious contrasts of rich-and-poor, yesterday-today, the good-and bad, but also the more complex psychological concepts for at that time we were also interested in Freud, analysis, etc.[5]

In Evening of the Ball (fig. 10), painted around 1938, Guy's use of juxtaposition was more complex and his images less immediately understandable. Here Guy felt free to combine various scenes in one continuous space rather than split them into clearly defined sections as in Yachting. The people are less cartoon-like than in Yachting, and one figure, the

9. James Guy. Yachting.

10. James Guy. The Evening of the Ball.

nude in the foreground, seems derived from Picasso's distorted surreal-influenced figures of the twenties; this figure evokes a general mood of despair rather than taking part in any action or story. The reason for the despair of the figure is made explicit on the left side of the painting: here a young man holds the slumped, bleeding body of another man in his lap. The blood is explained by the image which extends from the dead man's head; in this television-like box strikers are shown being gunned down by police outside a factory. In the rear of the painting a woman weeps against a crumbled wall, and on the right is a large jagged rock which also evokes a feeling of grief and despair. In the center stands a tall fashionably dressed woman accompanied by a shadow-like man--these are the people concerned with the ball of the title; they are capable of ignoring the turbulence around them as their attention is focused only on themselves.

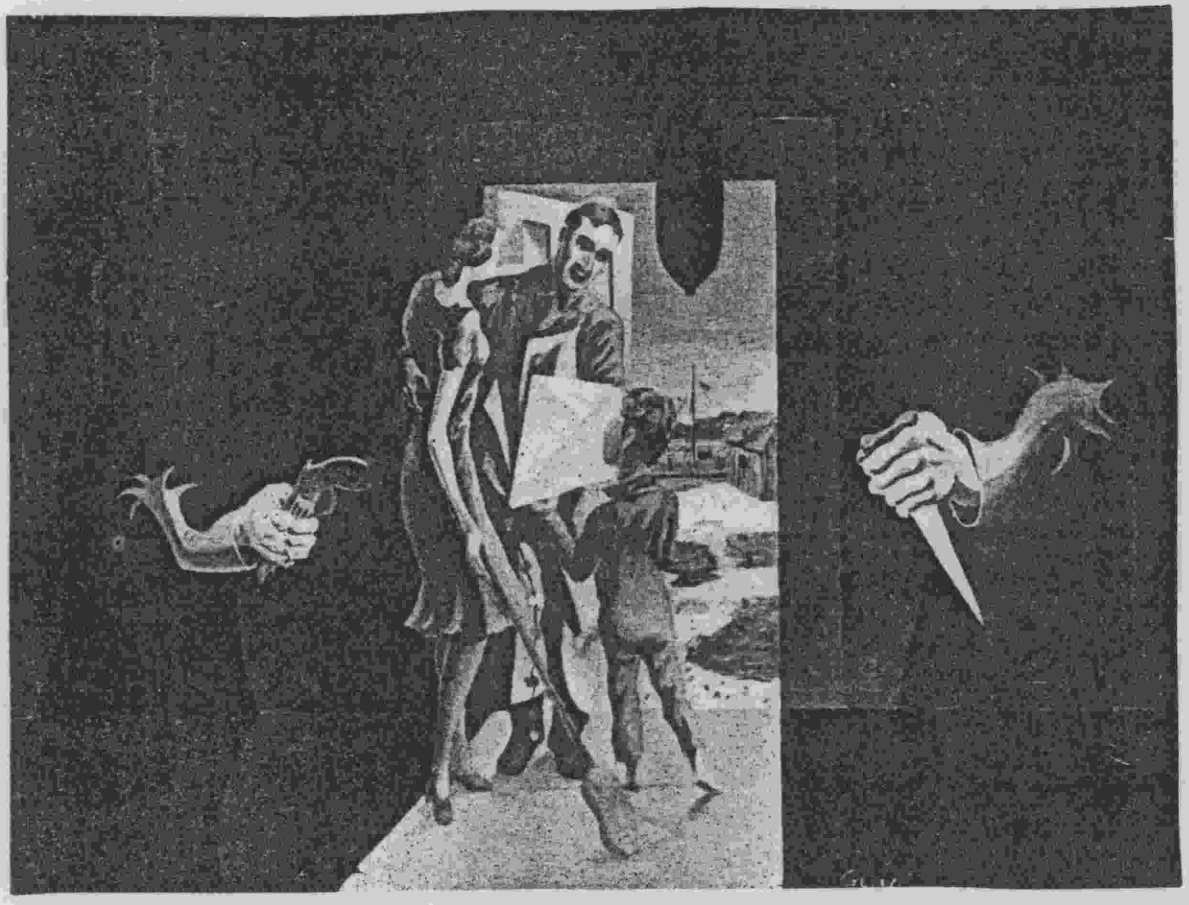
Another painting, which I believe was done about the same time as Evening of the Ball, Double Portrait (fig. 11), is quite a bit simpler in its approach; here a man and a battered automobile stand in a ghost town. The empty town, the barren earth, the despairing man--all evoke a feeling of the destitution of the Depression in the western dust-bowl. Although there is no juxtaposition here, the influence of surrealism

11. James Guy. Double Portrait.

is evident in the distortion of the man and the car, in the empty deserted street--quite removed from de Chirico's Italian towns but nevertheless showing his influence, and in the deep, rapidly receding barren space.

The meaning of Guy's Home Sweet Home (fig. 12) is more puzzling; a poor farmer is greeted at the door of his house by his cheerful wife and son, while in the shadows of the interior lurk two thugs, waiting to assault him with knife and pistol. Possibly a better reproduction than I have seen would reveal some significant characteristic of the shadowy figures, but whoever or whatever they represent, it is clear that for Guy the fate of the poor working man was not a happy one.

With The Graduates and Camouflage Man in a Landscape, Guy's imagery continued to become less specifically political and more general in its social criticism. The theme of The Graduates (fig. 13) seems to be the meaninglessness of education in the contemporary world. The images here cannot be readily explained: a leg pierced by a fountain pen, a huge shoe topped by a balloon, a flaming youth in cap and gown, a man wearing a strange mechanical device on his head. All of these images are expressive of a sense of alienation from the purposes of the society.

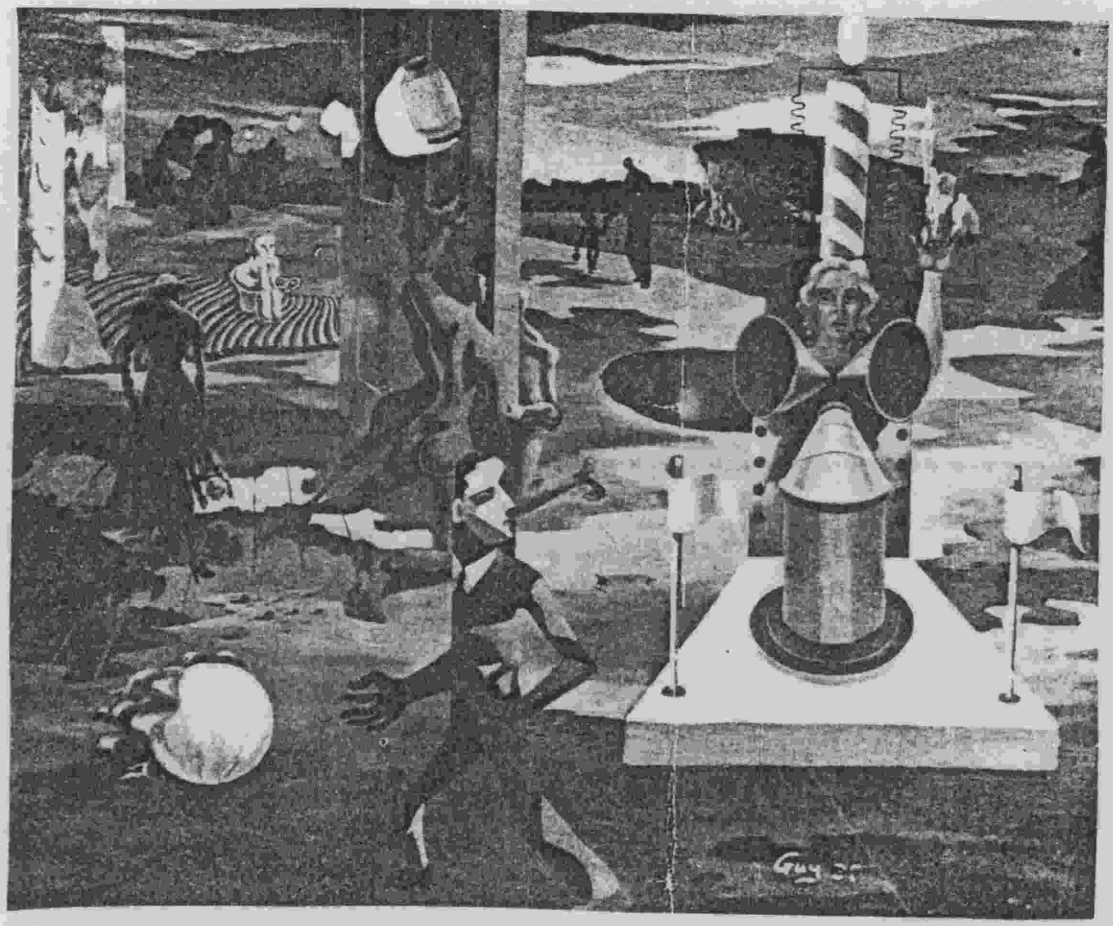


12. James Guy. Home Sweet Home.

13. James Guy. The Graduates.

Camouflage Man in a Landscape, 1938 (fig. 14) is even more puzzling. A pole combining human and mechanical elements is topped by two megaphones; two nude figures peer at one another through a hole in a wall; a tall woman holding a baby by the feet walks into the background; and a man attired in a conservative business suit stalks through the foreground, beginning to vanish in the process. I take this last figure to be the camouflage man of the title, attempting to ignore the forces around him by becoming invisible. This painting seems to be an attack on the complacency of the white-collar American and his refusal to take a stand for or against anything. Whatever the specific meaning of the various figures, they are certainly far more obscure than in Yachting. That there are specific meanings is a presumption on my part; the meanings of European surrealist paintings can seldom be completely explained, and although Guy often provided his surrealist works with definite messages, it is very possible that he had no clear explanation for all of his images. Paintings like Camouflage Man and The Graduates seem extremely dreamlike and may be composed of purely subconscious images, unlike Blume's paintings for instance.

In 1941 Guy had his third one-man show, this time at



14. James Guy. The Camouflage Man in a Landscape.

the Ferargil Galleries in New York. In this show the propagandistic aspects of his work were abandoned for the most part. (The titles of some of the paintings in the exhibition indicate that at least some of them may have retained elements of propaganda. These include The Bomb, Search for the New God, and Defending the Status Quo.[6] In Walt Whitman: Song of Tomorrow, 1940-41 (fig. 15), Guy again used distortion of space to combine diverse images in varying scales; but rather than being a protest against wretched conditions, Song of Tomorrow is evocative of hope for the future. All is peace, plenty and happiness, and Guy's style had changed in that he had abandoned the abstracted, distorted figures of his previous works in favor of a more naturalistic rendering of the human body. The distortion in the scale of the figures in order to create a heroicizing effect is close to that employed by the Mexican muralist, José Clemente Orozco.

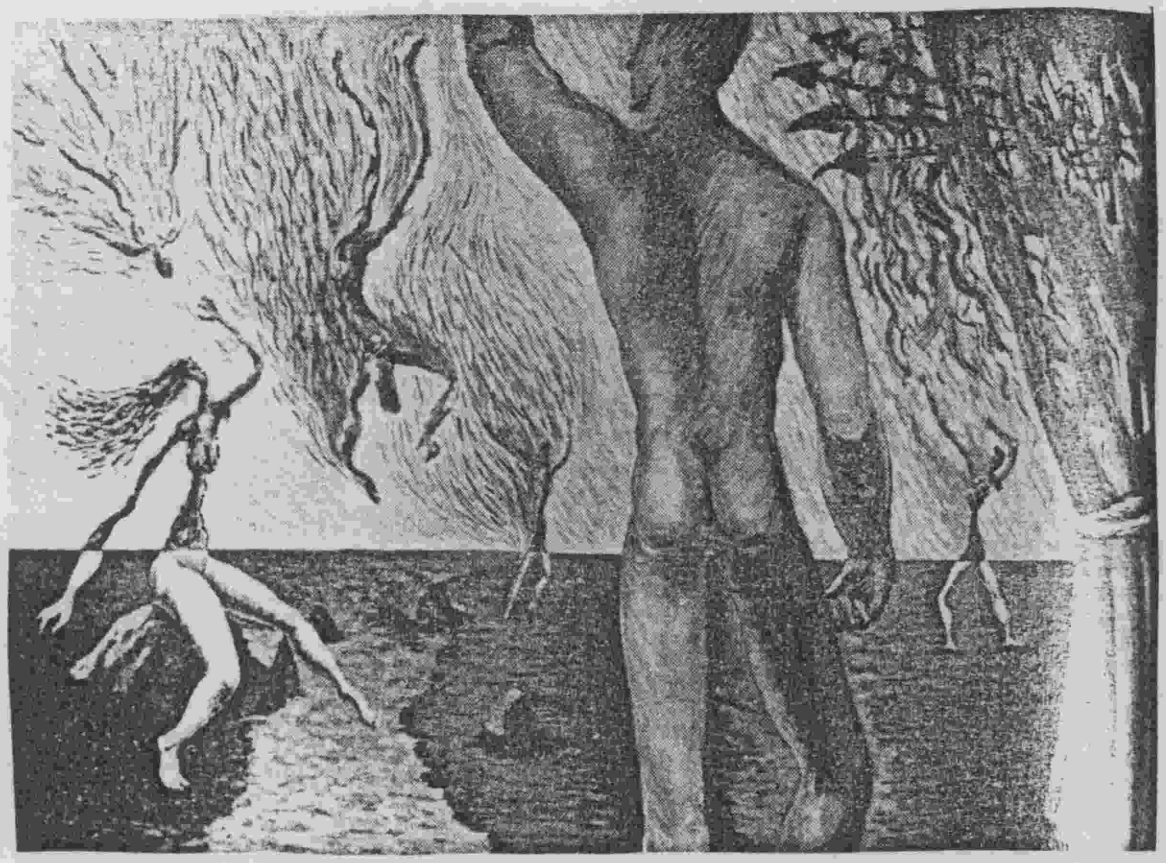
Guy's own statements from this period indicate his change in attitude regarding art and propaganda. He told the Art Digest that sometimes when working on a canvas he would not realize that it had social meaning until he was partially finished, when he would be surprised at the significance of his subject.[7] Guy was now concerned with com-

15. James Guy. Walt Whitman: Song of Tomorrow.

plexity of subject matter rather than with immediately comprehensible messages. He believed that "the subject and construction and pictorial qualities of a painting should be the antithesis of simplicity. It should return to the spectator just as much as he is capable of giving to the painting."[8] At the same time, Guy made it evident that his type of surrealism was not purely subconscious, but retained elements of the conscious control which had been more evident in his earlier works:

> My painting is neither solely consciously or subconsciously conceived, but a mixture of both. I regard the utilization of the subconscious in the same category as the exploitation of abstraction, or the dynamic explosion of emotional discharge. These are mighty elements that may be forged into useful machines or dispensed as health giving drugs, but may also become Frankensteins of destruction and stupefying poisons. Abstraction used purely for its own sake leads to decorative sterility; the subconscious [to] the hit or miss art of the child, emotional fury to the uncontrolled epilepsy of the madman.[9]

A year later, Guy's second show at Ferargil was even less politically oriented. An example is Who Will Stand the Light of Tomorrow (fig. 16), which depicts a number of flaming people in an empty landscape; the nature of the "light of tomorrow" is not even hinted at. The director of the Ferargil Galleries, Albert Duveen, believed that Guy's paintings betrayed no influence of surrealism at this



16. James Guy. Who Will Stand the Light of Tomorrow.

time. In a statement which must have been intended for release to the press, Duveen wrote that Guy's paintings possessed "none of the strident or brooding pathological tonalities of the surrealists nor the sordid intention of their line and composition."[10] Guy himself, in an undated statement written for Ferargil, stated that he did not consider himself a surrealist: "Though my work is referred to as surrealism I do not think it fits in that category as it is conceived and executed with a realistic approach."[11] Although by the early forties Guy and Duveen were eager to deny the influence of surrealism on Guy's art, paintings such as Who Will Stand the Light of Tomorrow are clearly related to surrealism. In fact, it was in the works of this period that Guy seems to have been the most surreal, even if the social aspect of the surrealism had greatly diminished. Guy may have been eager to denigrate the importance of surrealism in his art so that his ideas would seem more original. A much later statement by the artist indicates that he had been very much influenced by surrealism; concerning his work of the thirties, he wrote: "I found the surrealist technique the best means of satisfying my own social and artistic beliefs!"[12]

By his third show at Ferargil, in 1944, any influence

of surrealism or interest in political themes was invisible. The paintings in this show were geometric abstractions, the themes of which were influenced by his war-time work in an airplane factory and the style of which appears heavily indebted to Léger.

FOOTNOTES

1. Guy, Letter to the author, August 1975.
2. Ibid.
3. "Work by Divers Artists," New York Times, May 21, 1939, sec. X, p. 8.
4. D. B., "Rational Variations on a Surrealist Pattern by James Guy," Art News, June 3, 1939, p. 13.
5. Guy, Letter, August 1975.
6. Archives of American Art, Ferargil Galleries papers, microfilm reel no. 790, frame 600.
7. "Surrealist Surprises of Puritan James Guy," Art Digest, February 1, 1941, p. 13.
8. Archives, Ferargil papers, reel 788, frame 1363.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid., frame 1370.
11. Ibid., frame 1368.
12. Guy, Letter, September 15, 1975.

CHAPTER 8

Walter Quirt

The development of Walter Quirt's art was remarkably similar to that of Guy's: from social protest painting showing only slight influence of surrealism, through a more definitely surreal protest art, to more general surrealistic themes, and finally arriving at a very abstracted style, although unlike Guy's later style, it was one in which the influence of surrealism was to remain strong.

Quirt's The Future Belongs to the Workers (fig. 17), which was exhibited at the John Reed Club in 1933, like Guy's Yachting is not really surreal; even the use of juxtaposition is different than in surrealism. Quirt's combination of three different scenes and three different time periods into one landscape setting is closer to the continuous narration used during the Renaissance--in Masaccio's Tribute Money for instance--or to the combination of a number of different incidents into one pictorial space which was commonly used by both Mexican and American muralists. On the left of the painting we see the death of a worker; the center scene shows the worker's funeral; and on the right a group of working people rally around a Soviet flag. The painting, especially the inclusion of the "Hammer and

17. Walter Quirt. The Future Belongs to the Workers.

Sickle," could not have been more in keeping with the Communist Party line. Quirt was obviously committed to a proletarian revolution, and for a number of years his paintings were to demonstrate this clearly. He was usually the most explicit of the social surrealists in the themes of his paintings --his attacks on capitalism were the most direct and the most vehement.

By 1936, the date of his first one-man show, which was held at the Julian Levy Gallery, Quirt's paintings had become much more surrealistic in their method. The catalog for this exhibition included a statement by Jacob Kainen which was a call for a revolutionary art conceived of in broad enough terms to leave room for surrealism. (It is not clear whether Kainen's statement was written specifically for this catalog or whether it first appeared elsewhere and was included by Quirt because it expressed his own beliefs; although Kainen was a friend of Quirt's, there is no specific mention here of the artist.) Kainen wrote:

> Revolutionary art is an ideology, not a method. It can be embodied in anything from the work of a primitive to the work of a highly sophisticated painter. What it must possess, however, is an understanding of the class structure of modern society and the spirit of social revolution. Obviously, this attitude differs according to the psychological makeup of each individual painter.[1]

An announcement for the opening of Quirt's exhibition emphasized his abilities as a painter, claiming that propaganda was not all that was important in his work. It stated that even if the content were ignored, the paintings would retain their value. The announcement went on to say: "Here at last one can fairly judge the value of socially conscious 'propaganda' painting in the work of a competent exponent."[2] However, not everyone agreed as to Quirt's competence. The reviewer for Art News wrote that: "Not only are the people in Quirt's representations impoverished, but the style which shapes them does not spring from artistic wealth."[3]

The method of Morals for Workers,[4] which was included in the Levy show, is similar to that of The Future Belongs to the Workers, but here the number and variety of incidents are greater, space and scale are distorted surrealistically, and many scenes could not possibly have been seen by Quirt but were visualizations of his imagination. There is little organization given to the canvas and one's eyes leap about from scene to scene in a rather haphazard manner. The various scenes also seem to have little thematic unity: a worker with a large clock hung around his neck (a pun on "time waits for no man"?), a haloed figure blessing a man who is preparing to wash ("cleanliness is next to godliness"?),

a poor worker placing a coin in a wooden box ("a penny saved," etc.), a young man reading a book with a picture of Abraham Lincoln looking on, a black convict being driven off by a white man and woman--these are only some of the many incidents which fill the painting.

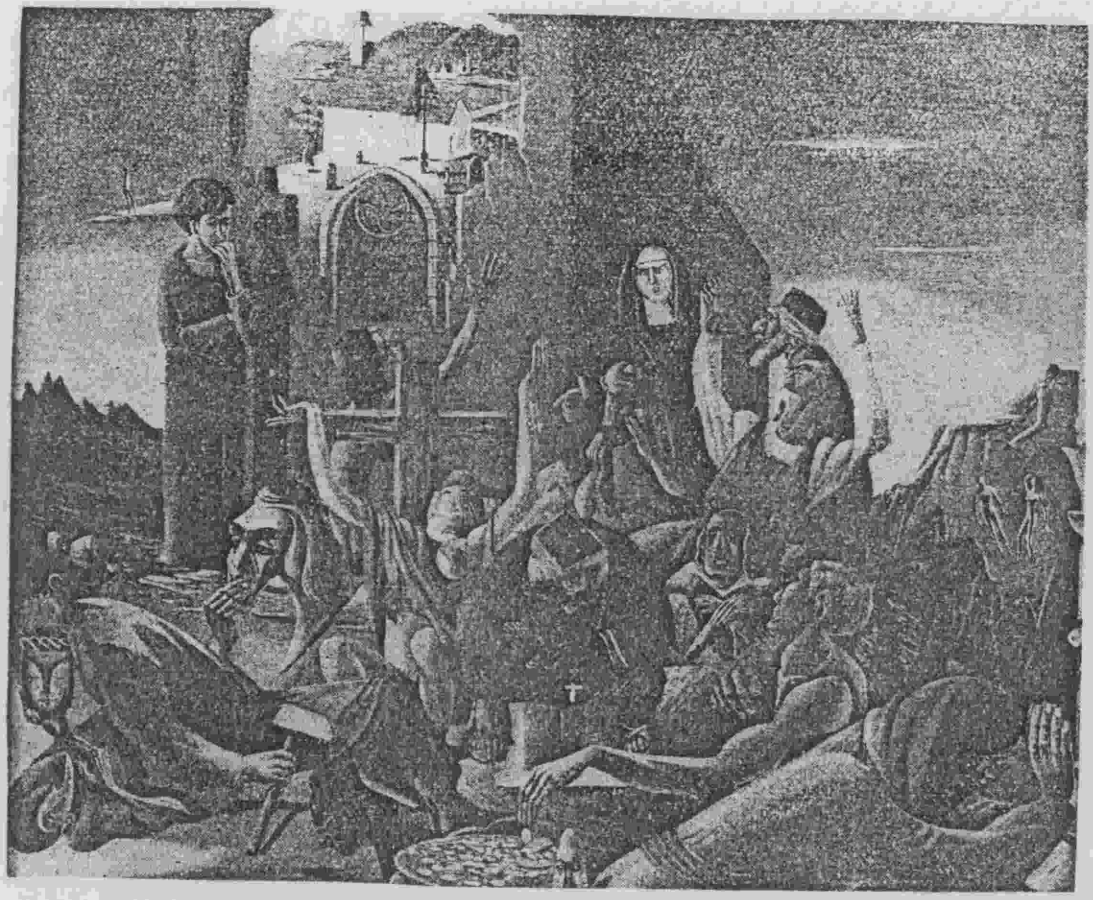
Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread, 1936 (fig. 18), is similar to Morals for Workers in many ways, but is more unified both thematically and compositionally. Quirt's purpose was clearly anti-religious and the title is a satiric one. Quirt had originally given this painting a title which made the message instantly clear--The Terrorization of the Poor through Religion; unfortunately, the title was changed by the Julian Levy Gallery when it was shown there.[5] The poor in this case are multi-racial--black, white and Mexican; they are grouped in a barren desert landscape reminiscent of the American southwest. Some of the figures are seen in positions of prayer and the reclining man in the center clutches a crucifix. Others are weeping, while still others are sunk in deep despair. One man holds the body of a boy in a pietà position, while another individual has hung himself. In the midst of the people is a minister who is exhorting the people to further prayer. In contrast to the general weeping and gnashing of teeth there are three figures who seem ready to defy the heavens--the standing

18. Walter Quirt. Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread.

Mexican on the left and the white man and black woman in the center; the eyes they cast heavenward are full of pride, not humility.

In the sky are eight floating figures; here, I believe, there is a clear division between the four figures on the left and the four on the right. Those to the left appear to be personifications of the hopes held out to the people by the minister; these four are fat and healthy and each one holds something for which those on earth are desperate. The figure on the far left in the top hat holds a money bag, the one next to him a pig, the next, what appears to be a sack of grain, and the last, some shafts of grain. The irony is that they seem to have no intention of delivering their goods to those on earth; instead, they make only false promises. The figures on the right represent the reality of the minister's message--death, disease and starvation. One of them points a finger directly at the minister, placing the blame for instilling in the people the false belief that happiness can come from heaven.

This was not Quirt's only anti-religious painting in the Levy exhibition: Opium of the People (fig. 19) was also included. Some of the other themes with which Quirt's paintings dealt were exploitation of people under capitalism (Instrument of Production), racial hatred (Protection of White Womanhood),

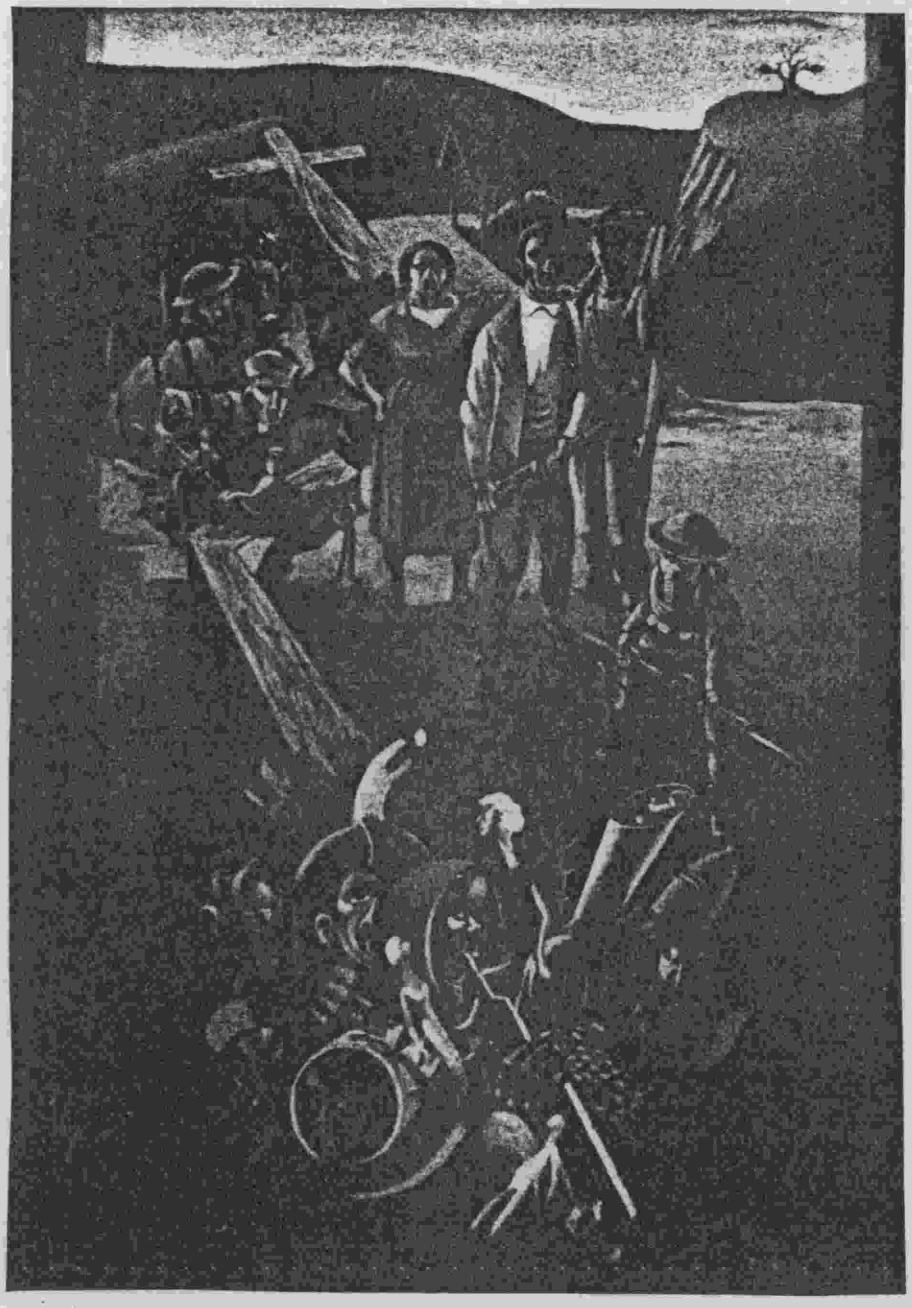


19. Walter Quirt. Opium of the People.

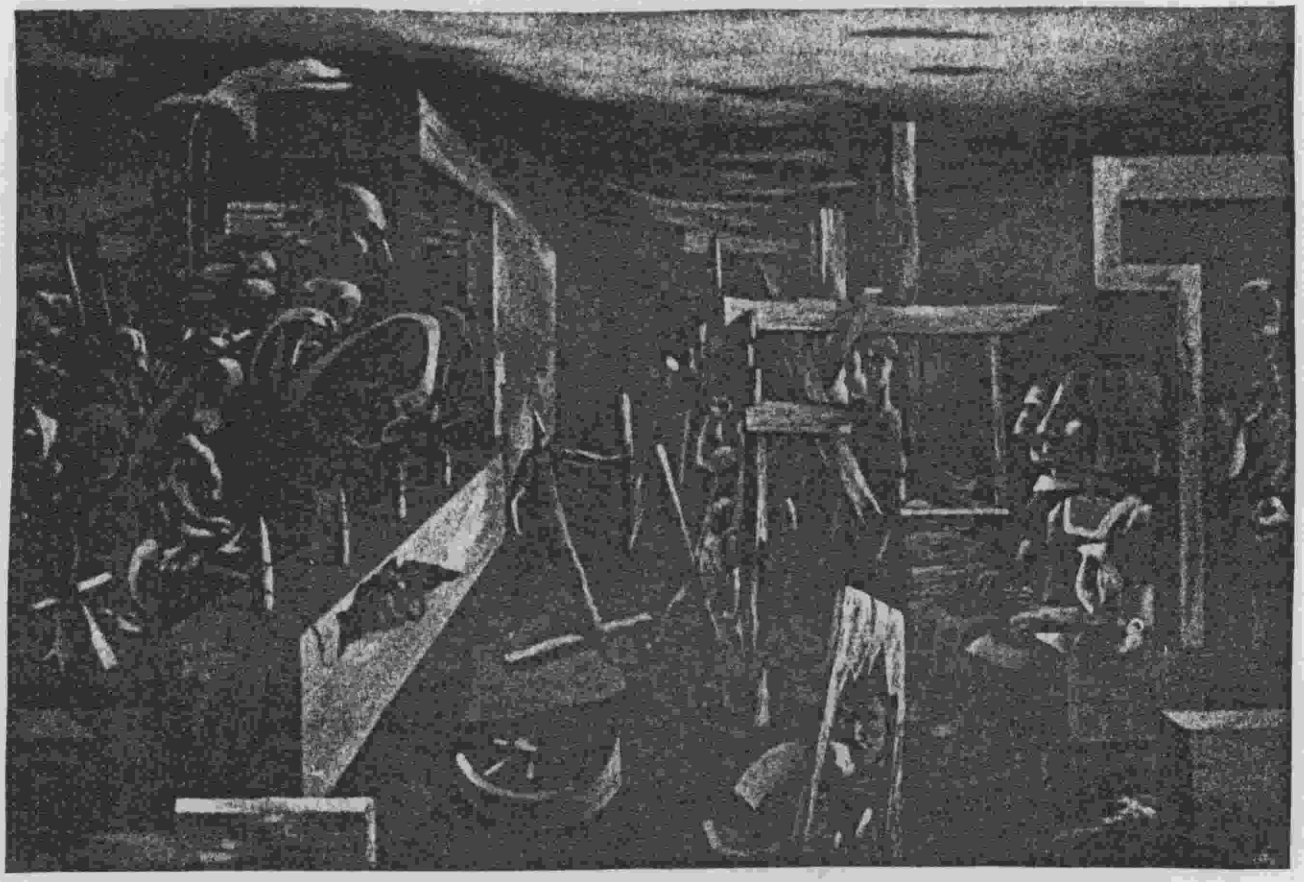
the unreliability of the middle class (Middle Class and the Crisis), and the necessity for the unity of workers (Traditions of May 1st).

The Future Is Ours, 1935 (fig. 20), which was also included in the Levy show, seems to be an attack upon the dehumanization of man in contemporary society. In the foreground there is a jumble of forms, both human and mechanical, including a bomb; various parts of the human body--heads for the most part-- are imprisoned within pipes and a variety of other objects; many of the human figures are doll-like in size. The humans appear trapped by the products of modern industry gone berserk. In the rear stand three working people, two soldiers and a sailor; they appear to be about to free those entrapped by the mechanical forms. A broken cross and felled gallows symbolize their victory over their oppression. Although Quirt's general idea here--the victory of working people over the dehumanizing aspects of capitalism--is clear, some of the details are puzzling. For instance, why are the soldiers in World War I vintage uniforms and why is one of them shrunken in size?

Conflict, 1935 (fig. 21), employs a similar contrast of elements. The men and women of the working class on the right,



20. Walter Quirt. "The Future Is Ours".



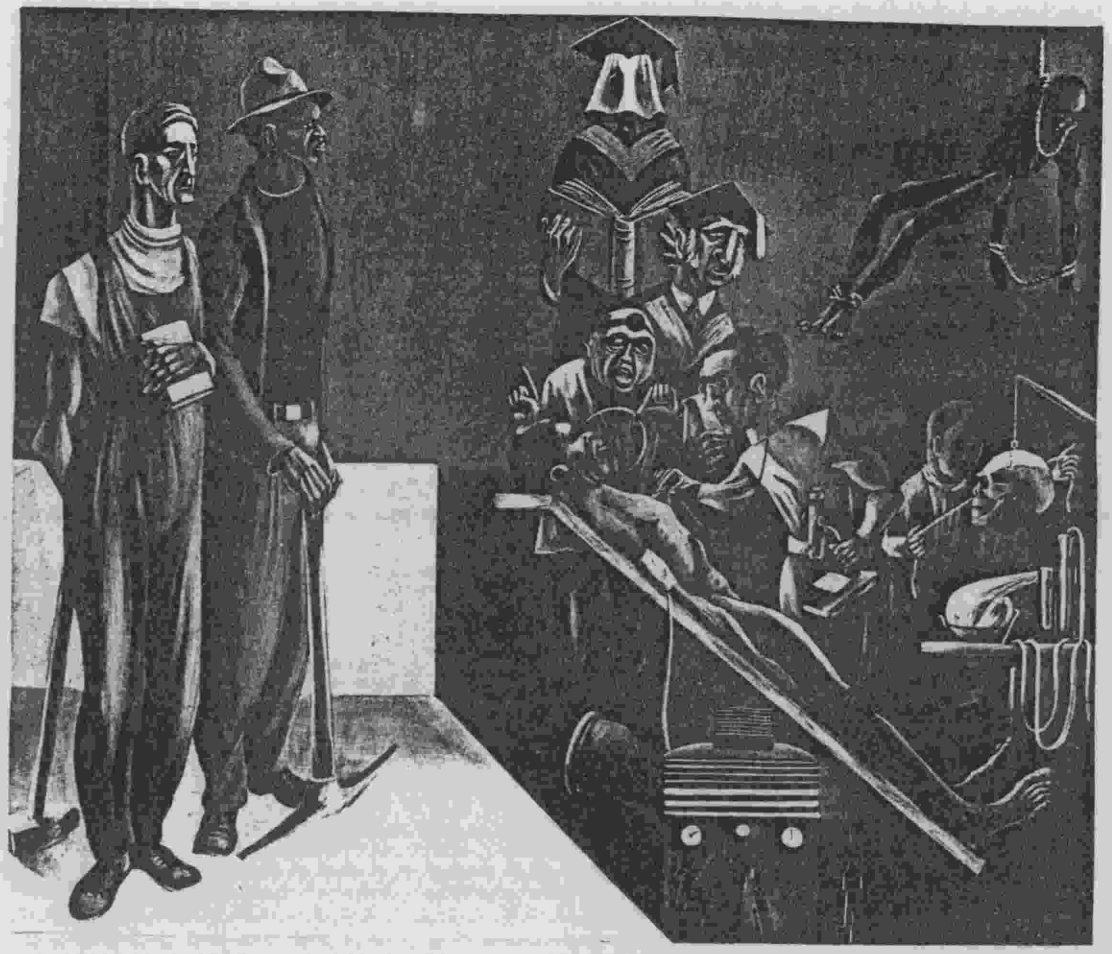
21. Walter Quirt. Conflict.

seen in a variety of positions and attitudes, are confronted by a strange assortment of objects and distorted parts of the human body on the left. This side of the painting, like the foreground of The Future Is Ours, seems to symbolize the destructive aspects of capitalist society which has distorted the humanity of those who live within it. It is interesting that in both Conflict and The Future is Ours, Quirt saved his most surreal technique for the part of the painting which symbolizes the negative aspects of society, while the positive element--the working class--is treated more naturalistically, although distortion, especially of size, occurs here too.

Not all of Quirt's paintings employed such a large number of figures as the ones already discussed; The Burial, 1934 (fig. 22), is much simpler in composition, something necessitated by its extremely small size, 6 3/8 x 7 3/4 inches. Quirt's concern with racial oppression is evident here; a black man lies in a crude wooden coffin, surrounded by black mourners. Floating above the coffin are nine faces, both black and white; these faces express dismay at the fate of the dead man. Quirt does not tell us how this man died, but a good guess might be that he was the victim of some sort of injustice because of his race.

In The Clinic, 1937 (fig. 23), Quirt again dealt with the

22. Walter Quirt. The Burial.



23. Walter Quirt. The Clinic.

oppression of blacks, but here the source of oppression is more specific--it is the attitudes of the medical and scientific professions toward blacks, attempting to establish by pseudo-scientific methods their inferiority, and thus their suitability as subjects for dangerous experiments. As in Conflict and The Future Is Ours, Quirt divided the painting into two conflicting areas. Two workers on the left, one black and one white--the white one clutching a red book--view the humiliations which blacks undergo at the hands of representatives of the medical and scientific professions seen on the right. The complicity of the universities is indicated by the presence of two figures in academic robes, one wearing a blindfold over his head. The lynched black man in the rear, who floats rather than hangs in his noose, serves as an accusation against these professionals. Quirt's intention here may have been to point out the similarities in the attitudes of the supposedly educated and those of the Ku Klux Klan: they are both responsible for lynchings, the Klan directly, the men of science indirectly because they foster beliefs in the inferiority of Negroes.

Quirt's caricature of the university professors is strongly reminiscent of Orozco's attack on university education in his murals at Dartmouth College, completed in 1934. As a so-

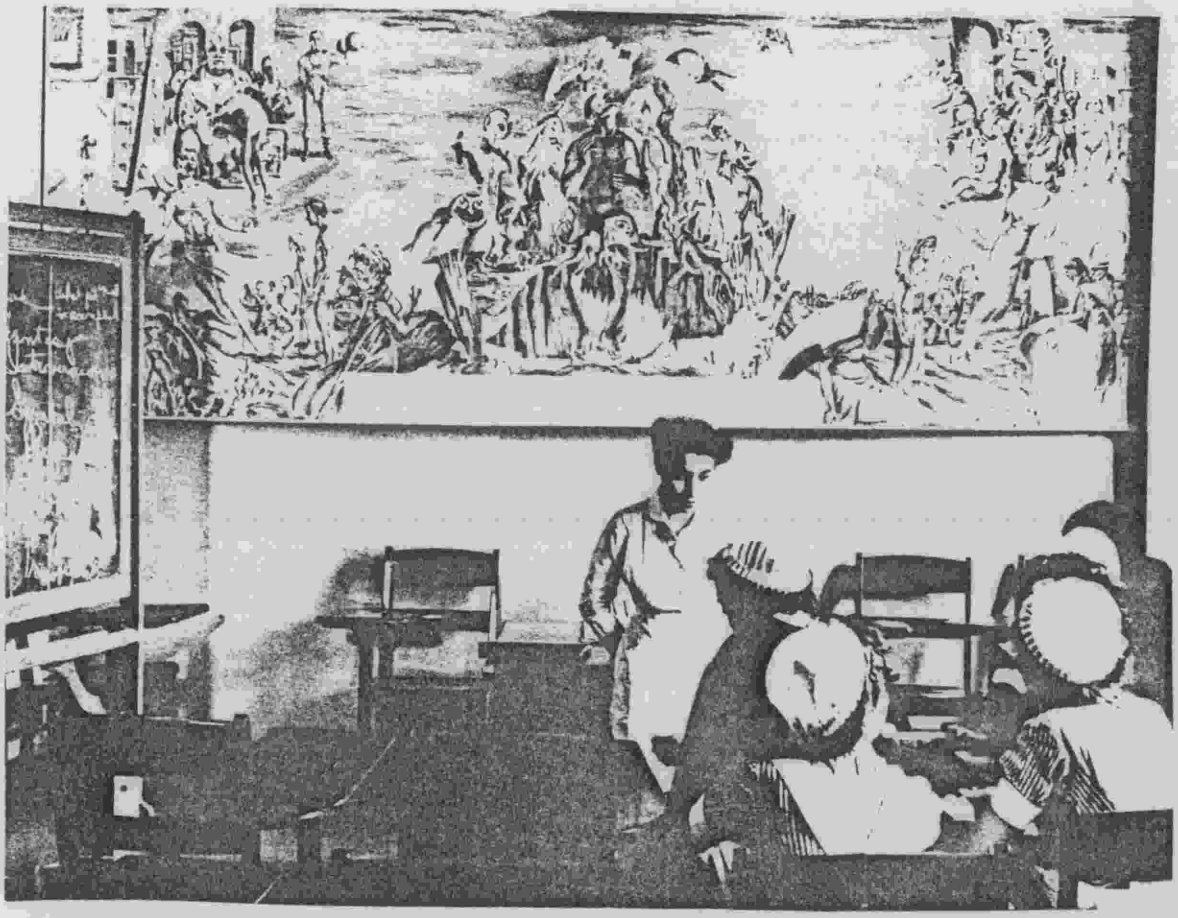
cially conscious artist, Quirt would certainly have been aware of Orozco's work, and one can find other similarities to the Mexican muralist in Quirt's paintings. In Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread, the presence of Latin Americans was probably inspired by an awareness of the Mexican muralists, and a parallel to the broken cross in Conflict can be found in Orozco's Dartmouth murals. Even Quirt's frequent combination of diverse elements into frieze-like paintings bears similarities to methods of the muralists, although his barren landscapes seem more surreal and his paintings lack the dynamism which characterized Orozco's works. Orozco himself approached the surreal in the Dartmouth murals; in the Modern Education and Machine Age sections, he used nightmarish distortion and skeletal figures to express a sense of man's alienation from modern technology--an idea also present in Quirt's The Future Is Ours.

In 1937, while working for the WPA, Quirt painted two surrealistic murals for Bellevue Hospital in New York. The murals were intended for a psychiatry lecture hall and were thus meant for the eyes of doctors and medical students rather than the general public. Quirt chose as his theme The Growth of Medicine from Primitive Times. These panels have since been obliterated (whether painted over or more

permanently destroyed is unknown), and thus I have been able to view only photographic reproductions which do not reveal most of the details. Nevertheless, it can be seen that the murals are quite surreal in style, especially the center of one of the panels (fig. 24), which is inhabited by monsters and demons--meant, I presume, to symbolize the fears of the mind, whether conscious or unconscious. There is only one scene in these murals which I can determine to be concerned with social criticism along the lines of Quirt's other paintings from the same period: on the left side of the panel illustrated in figure 24 there can be seen an obese doctor who is attempting to ignore a group of people desperately requiring medical attention.

Quirt's use of surrealism in this mural is in line with the beliefs expressed in an essay he wrote on mural painting in which he spoke in favor of a style which would not be concerned simply with portraying incidents from everyday life, but which would rely on man's subconscious:

> The first task of a mural is ideological: it must reach many people of various views, differing social concepts, and political outlooks. How to reach these people has been a question answered by our artists more by "doing" than by "thinking." Some artists have retreated from the question by doing the obvious and innocuous thing; other, more socially conscious artists, have assumed that what concerned them would necessarily concern the spectator.



24. Walter Quirt. The Growth of Medicine from Primitive Times.

> The artist who deals in social content would be correct in assuming that what he does interests the spectator, if he could and would put into his mural all his doubts and conflicts, his philosophy and fantasy, all the release that the subject originally gave him. But between the original feeling stimulated by the subject and its final execution there is a tremendous gap, and it is this gap that really contains the vital content. The artist usually consciously censors his work and carefully gives a cut and dried version of a given theme so that there is no possibility of mistaking the content and what the artist personally thought of that content....What he fails to put in are his feeling and doubts. Thus the finished work has clearly written across it the dictum, "Accept me and my sociological views completely, or not at all." This can result in only one thing, blocking the audience from participating in the mural.[6]

The solution to the problem, according to Quirt, was to employ elements of the subconscious, which he believed to contain experiences common to everyone:

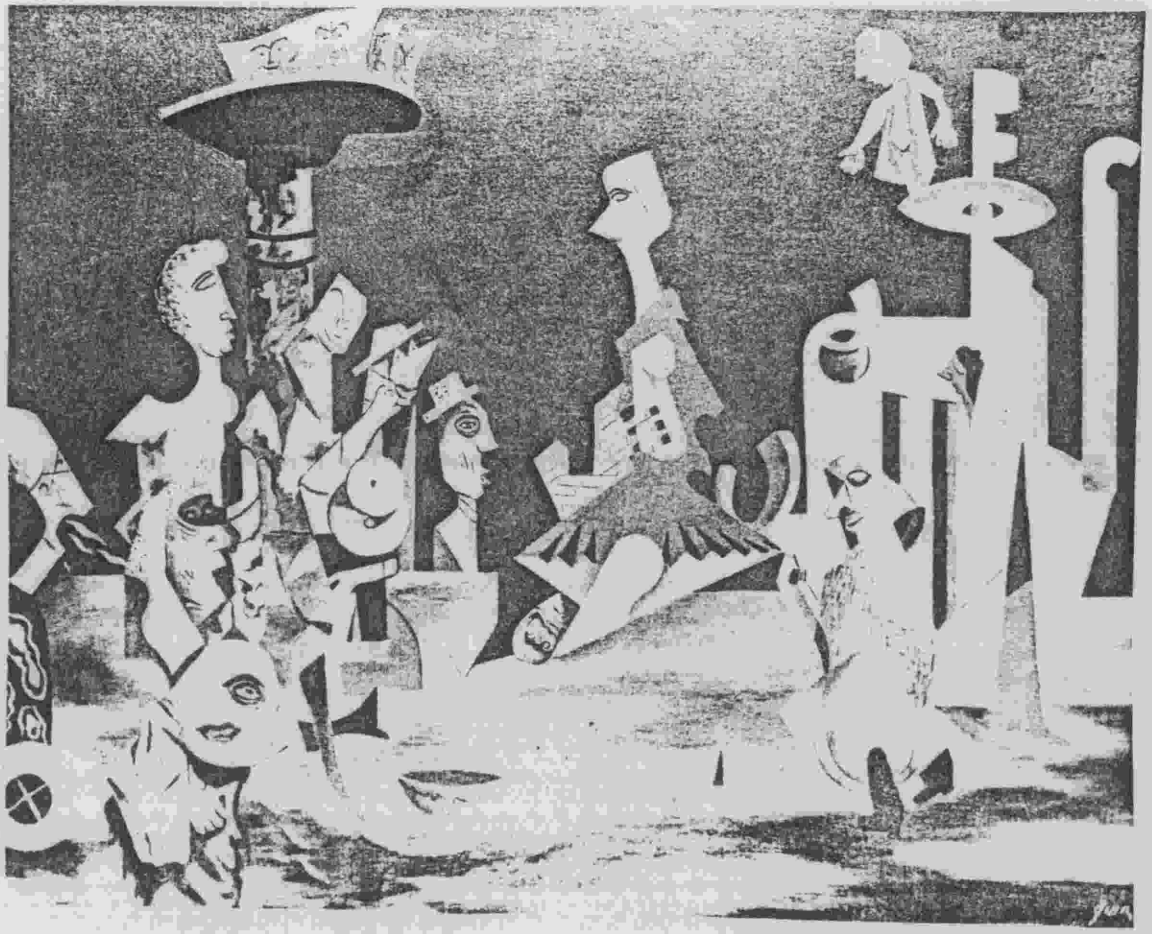
> Thus if we have found that literal documentation of life has little or no effect upon a lay audience and yet that audience is capable of being moved, we were led to the belief that there must be some common denominator in all of us that needs but a special type of exterior impulse to set our emotions into play....
>
> As human beings we all have essentially the same fantasy life. Our biological needs and impulses, our unconscious worlds with their conflicts and desires, our dreams and symbols are common to all even though individually we may hold opposing political or social views that are not harmonious with those of others.
>
> The fact that people generally do have a fantasy life, that this fantasy life constantly demands release, and that our fantasy worlds are all pretty similar offers us the key with which to unlock the emotional responses of people. It is the common denominator of this period in history. Its scope

> is as wide as Man and Man's world, embracing all aspects of life: political, social, economic; the concrete and the abstract. What the artist must learn to do to evoke this response is to learn to release his own fantasies, release them completely and uninhibitedly, free from self-censorship and intellectualization whether they revolve around a factual problem or an imaginary one, for, reiterating the point, art is a language of the emotions.[7]

Whether or not one agrees with Quirt, it must be admitted that his argument is one of the most thoughtful and articulate defenses of surrealism by an American.

Quirt's style began to change rapidly after 1937; like Guy, Quirt became increasingly less specific in his social criticism. His second exhibition at Julian Levy, in 1939, was described by one critic as being characterized by a change from social commentary to Miró-like forms.[8] Obeisance to Poverty (fig. 25), probably painted about this time, shows that Quirt was interested in a geometric abstraction of his forms. The meaning of his figures is obscure, and the title is a necessary clue if one is to realize that the artist was still concerned with social issues.

Quirt again deomonstrated changes in his style at his third one-man show, at the Pinacotheca Gallery in New York in 1942. The critics were quick to note the change in content. The World Telegram critic, probably Emily Genauer,



25. Walter Quirt. Obeisance to Poverty.

wrote that Quirt "is still concerned with the ills of the world," but that "those ills are bigger now than the battle between labor and capital."[9] In the Art News, Doris Brian admired Quirt's skill while being sturck by his optimism concerning the chances of bettering the world's condition.[10] The Art Digest critic also liked the show, commenting on the combination of "wishful thinking" and "social content" in the paintings.[11] The new optimism in Quirt's work was evidenced by titles such as Tranquility of Previous Existence and Perhaps There Is Another World and Another Way to Live. Mutation (fig. 26) is characteristic of Quirt's change in style: the active swirling surface is derived more from the fantastic surrealists like Masson than from Dali. Whatever social message may exist here is well hidden; Quirt had abandoned propaganda for an expressionistic treatment of his fantasies. Quirt himself claimed that he was not an abstractionist, but that he was intent on "finding shapes and forms that are the equivalent of emotions experienced in life."[12] He described one of his paintings, Crucifixion, 1943, as "an accurate picturization of the growth of sadism within American society, painted without moral conclusions."[13] This is a far cry from the stance of Morals for Workers.

26. Walter Quirt. Mutation.

At about this time, the early forties, Quirt wrote a number of essays which were published by the Pinacotheca; they clearly demonstrated the thinking which supported the changes in his art. The views expressed in New Content, New Art Forms could not possibly be those of a Marxist, for Quirt disputed the notion that an artist must be identified with a specific class:

> Substantially, most painters are identified with the overt beliefs of specific sections of society and make such identification either because of mutual interest, or for more mercenary purposes. By means of identification the painter finds an immediate audience and a justification for his work.
>
> The artist of really creative dimension is that artist who needs no class or group identification and, furthermore, has the power to transcend personal compulsions.[14]

As in his earlier essay on mural painting, Quirt expressed his belief that the artist should reflect the experiences of society and not just his own emotions:

> It is only when painting ceases to be a personal therapy to maintain the painter's emotional equilibrium, and selflessly becomes emotional experience taken from society and molded into images through the painter's ability to experience for society, that painting serves a really constructive and dynamic role. Art of this kind is no longer a narrow prejudicial art of immediate values, but becomes a universal and timeless force.[15]

Quirt believed that America was entering "a new emotional period" and that the best artists would reflect and even foretell this change. He still believed in revolutionary

change, but now that change was to be cultural and emotional rather than political. This belief in an emotional revolution was founded in part on his belief in the importance of the subconscious, demonstrating that the influence of surrealism on Quirt was still strong.[16]

At about the same time that he was abandoning his quest for radical political change, Quirt was also expressing his thoughts on the need for new types of attitudes and purposes on the part of artists' organizations. In a 1940 letter to fellow artist Julian Levi, Quirt expressed his concern over the condition of the Artists' Congress, which was in a state of disintegration. Quirt urged that the Congress devote itself to purely artistic matters and abandon the practice of taking stands on political issues. He still saw the Congress as being relevant to problems of the society as a whole, but only indirectly, as reflected in the problems which artists must face in dealing with the structure of society.[17]

In a second essay written for the Pinacotheca, Social Content versus Art in Painting, the views which Quirt expressed can be interpreted as an attack on his own past. He still saw some value in social protest art, but only under special conditions:

> The "social content" painter has a drive which can only reach epochal heights when a social crisis is

> at its sharpest. It is then that a personal urge to destroy receives its most permissible outlet. The social concepts coincide with the personal and the resulting imagery often attains the dimension of lasting art.[18]

For Quirt, the time of social crisis had obviously passed. He found most social protest painting to be too negative, too morbid. Paintings of "militant resistance" terrified rather than inspired and thus would not rouse people to action.[19] That Quirt never acknowledged how well many of his own paintings of just a few years earlier applied to his criticism is annoying and certainly seems less than completely honest.

The most interesting of Quirt's essays was the first, Wake Over Surrealism; in it he again attacked something that had been important to his development as an artist, and again without acknowledging that fact. Quirt distinguished between the original surrealists, whom he saw as having been characterized by "free association," and a second phase of surrealism which was typified by Dali and which involved a "deliberate and conscious illustrating of the neurotic image." While he perceived some value in the methods of the original surrealists, he found the new, more conscious orientation to be "a philosophy of negation recruiting forces for Terror." According to Quirt, Dali's technique was "about as creatively

useful as that of a third rate 16th Century imitator of Leonardo da Vinci," and his subject matter betrayed an obsession with man's destructive tendencies. Dali and those who followed him made no effort to take a constructive view of man, but were simply providing an escape from the realities of the times. But Quirt's most interesting statement was that: "Few Americans went in for surrealism and those who did were abysmally ignorant of its mechanisms and philosophy. At the best they only imitated its mannerism." There is no admission here of guilt on his own part, but as this was written at the time when his style was undergoing drastic change, I think it is fair to interpret this as self-criticism. Quirt's criticisms of Dali as stylistically and socially reactionary were extremely close to those which had appeared in Art Front and elsewhere, except that Quirt's essay was a few years too late; by 1941, Dali's novelty had worn off and American artists, including Quirt, were looking elsewhere for stimulus. At the end of the essay, Quirt indicated where he was now seeking artistic stimulus: he was still trying to develop an art which made use of the subconscious and "free association," but he felt that those artists who had "brought free association into practical use by learning to convert negative energy into positive

results," Picasso, Klee, Miró and others, "had no direct relation to surrealism." Quirt was still employing surrealistic devices but was refusing to admit that it was surrealism, although of a different sort than Dali's veristic variety.[20]

When excerpts from Quirt's essay appeared in the Art Digest under the heading, "Dali a fascist?"[21] they provoked a reply from Louis Guglielmi which was printed in Peyton Boswell's editor's column. Guglielmi did not neglect to accuse Quirt of hypocrisy in his attack on Dali, pointing out the importance of Dali's work for Quirt's paintings. Guglielmi was also annoyed that Dali had been labeled a fascist simply because his art was negative in tone. Guglielmi found this negativism to be symptomatic of a general trend in society which led to fascism, rather than being due to any fascist beliefs held by the artist. However, like Quirt, Guglielmi went on to reject surrealism as a valuable style for the present, relegating it to the past, although he was still working in a style heavily indebted to surrealism: "Surrealism with its free associative methods, abstract irrelevances and preoccupation with trivial whimsies reflected the condition of decay in a bankrupt intellectual period. It is no longer an adequate philosophy."[22]

A letter from Peyton Boswell in the Guglielmi papers in the Archives of American Art reveals that Guglielmi had attempted to withdraw his letter to the Art Digest, but was too late to prevent it from going to press.[23] Possibly he regretted his harsh words about surrealism, remembering that he too was a surrealist. Even if this was the case, there was also another reason for his attempt to halt publication of his first letter: Guglielmi had apparently realized that Boswell's magazine had misrepresented Quirt's views. Quirt had not actually accused Dali of being a fascist--the word "fascism" had appeared only once in Quirt's essay and was certainly not emphasized by him; it was Art Digest which had made it appear as if Quirt had been name-calling. A letter from Quirt to Guglielmi reveals that Guglielmi had also written to Quirt, expressing misgivings over his letter to Art Digest. In the letter to Guglielmi, Quirt wrote that Boswell had misinterpreted his essay, and he expressed the belief that both he and Guglielmi had been taken "for a ride" by Boswell.[24]

FOOTNOTES

1. In catalog of Quirt exhibition at the Julian Levy Gallery, 1936, n. pag.
2. Announcement of 1936 Quirt exhibition at the Julian Levy Gallery, in Quirt file of the Museum of Modern Art.
3. Ann H. Sayre, "Propaganda from a New Surrealist Painter," Art News, February 29, 1936, p. 9.
4. I was unable to obtain a reproduction of this painting for inclusion in this paper.
5. This information was obtained from the file on the painting in the Wadsworth Atheneum.
6. Walter Quirt, "On Mural Painting," Art for the Millions, p. 78.
7. Ibid., p. 81.
8. James W. Lane, "Surrealist Prurience in Quirt's Drawings," Art News, November 4, 1939, p. 12.
9. "Forget About Quirt's Titles and Enjoy his Pictures," New York World Telegram, February 28, 1942.
10. Doris Brian, "Three Fantasists: Masson, Quirt, Margo," Art News, March 1, 1942, p. 29.
11. "Walter Quirt Seeks Another Way of Life," Art Digest, March 1, 1942, p. 17.
12. Edward Alden Jewell, "Among One-Man Shows," New York Times, April 9, 1944, sec. II, p. 7.
13. Sidney Janis, Abstract and Surrealist Art in America, (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1944), p. 112.
14. Quirt, New Content, New Art Forms (New York: The Pinacotheca, n.d.), p. 1.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid., p. 2.
17. Archives of American Art, Julian Levi Papers, reel no. 483, frames 582-85.
18. Quirt, Social Content versus Art in Painting (New York: The Pinacotheca, n.d.), p. 3.
19. Ibid., p. 2.
20. Quirt, Wake Over Surrealism (New York: The Pinacotheca, n.d.).
21. "Dali a fascist?" Art Digest, December 1, 1941, p. 6.
22. Peyton Boswell, "Name Calling," Art Digest, December 15, 1941, p. 3.
23. Archives of American Art, Guglielmi papers, reel N69-119, frame 480.
24. Ibid., frame 502.

CHAPTER 9

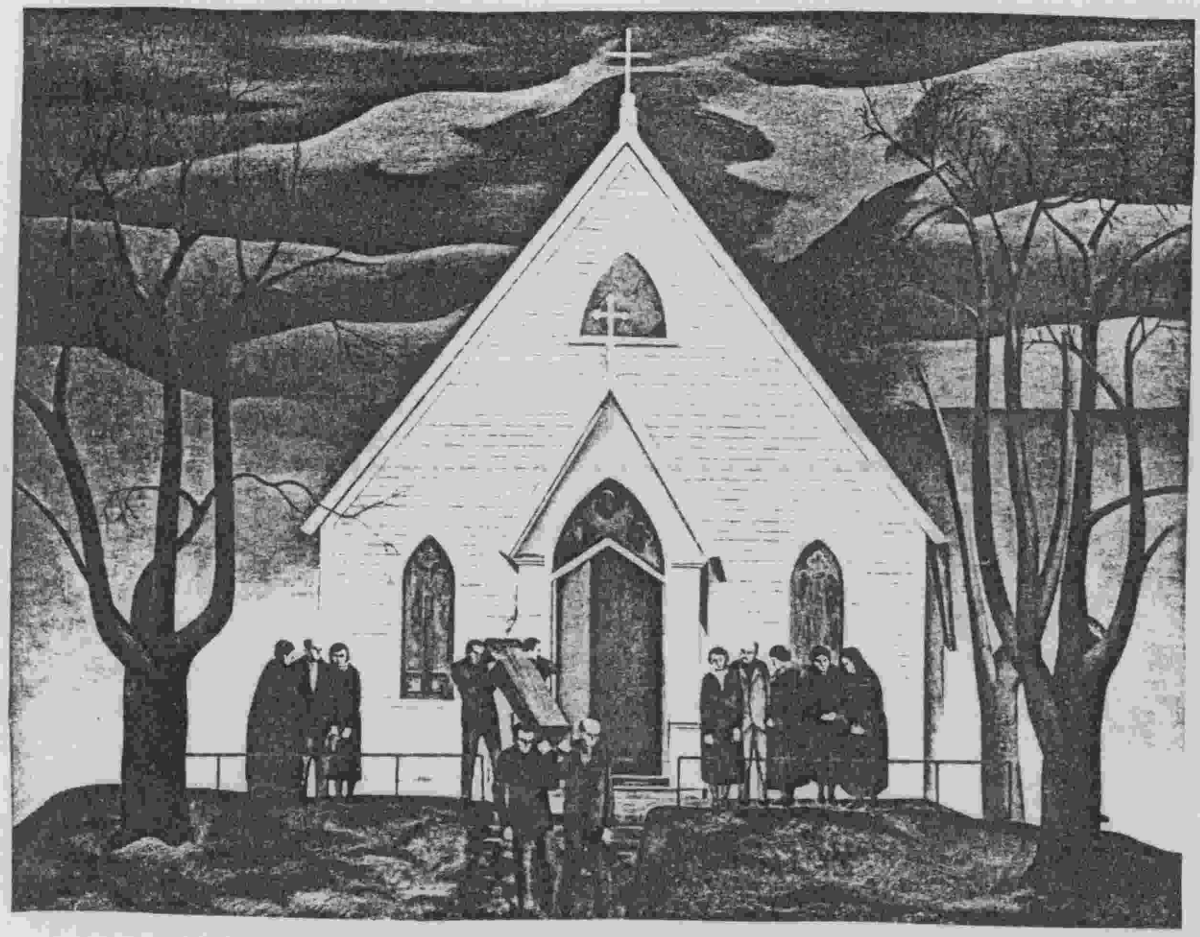
O. Louis Guglielmi

Whatever his feelings toward it were in 1941, an examination of his paintings makes it clear that Guglielmi had been strongly influenced by surrealism and he was usually willing to recognize that influence. Guglielmi was born in Cairo of Italian parents and had lived in various European cities before coming to New York at the age of eight. His youth was spent in the Italian ghetto of East Harlem, and this was to be an important influence on the themes of his paintings. After leaving art school--Guglielmi had studied at the National Academy of Design but had been dissatisfied with the conservative training he received there--he discovered the existence of modernist painting. After a few years of trying to make ends meet with his paintings, he was forced to find other sources of income. A summer at the MacDowell Colony in New Hampshire in 1932 helped inspire him to begin painting seriously again, but, according to Guglielmi, it was the depression which was the most important factor in changing his approach to painting: "The drama of the plight of humanity caught in the law of change was the necessary stimulus. The loneliness of the artist began to dissolve in the understanding of people."[1]

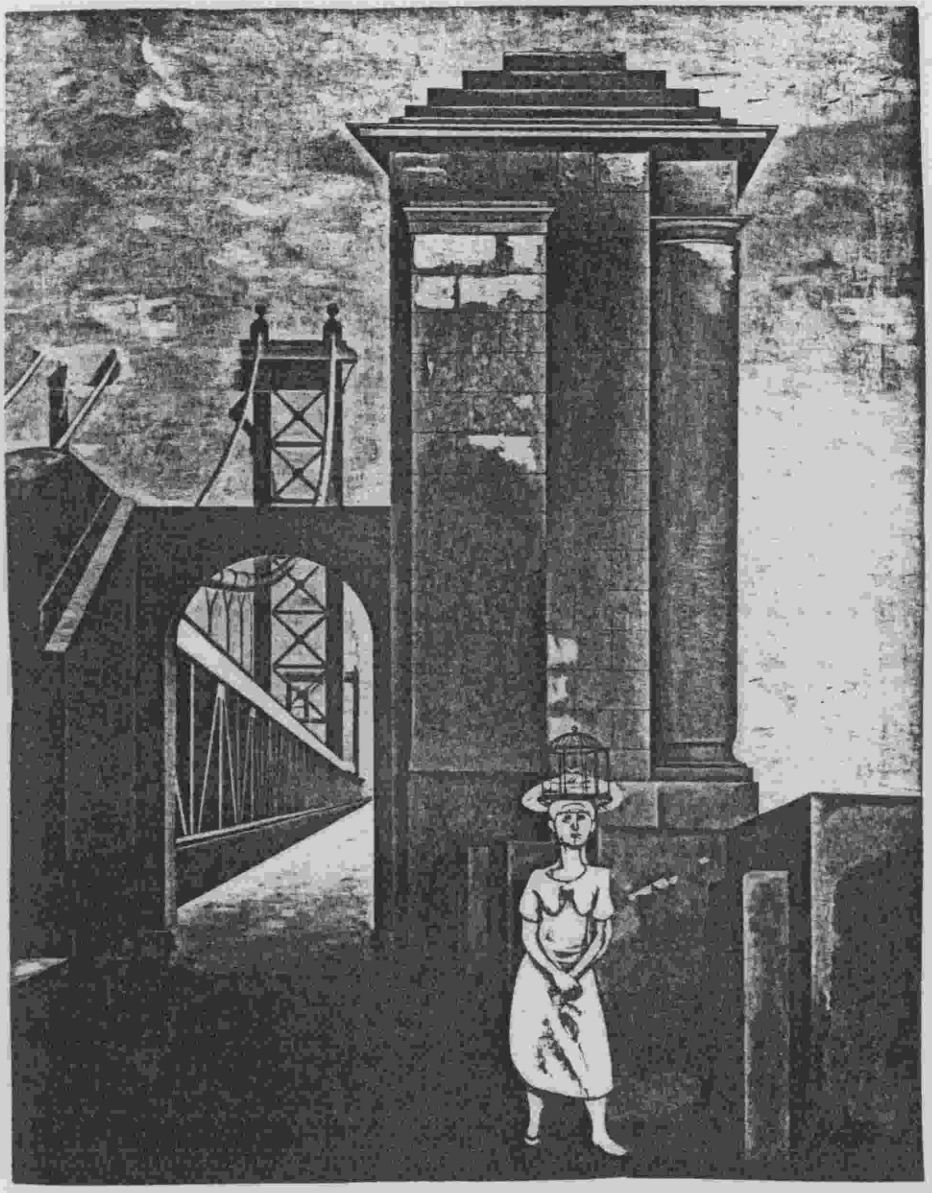
Funeral at Woodford, 1933 (fig. 27) is a good example of the style of Guglielmi's work from about 1932 to 1934. The painting records a funeral procession leaving a small New England church, but, although there is nothing out of place here, there is a strange feeling which is principally provided by the grotesqueness of the trees and clouds.

Deserted Bridge with Figure, 1934 (fig. 28), shows the surreal quality which was present in Funeral at Woodford becoming increasingly important. The only person in the painting is a very strange woman who bears a birdcage on top of her head (a birdbrain?). The bridge, which is the Manhattan Bridge, is empty and foreboding and the tower supporting the cables has partially vanished into the painterly sky. The subject does not seem to carry any social message, but rather to be a reflection of some anxiety on the part of the artist.

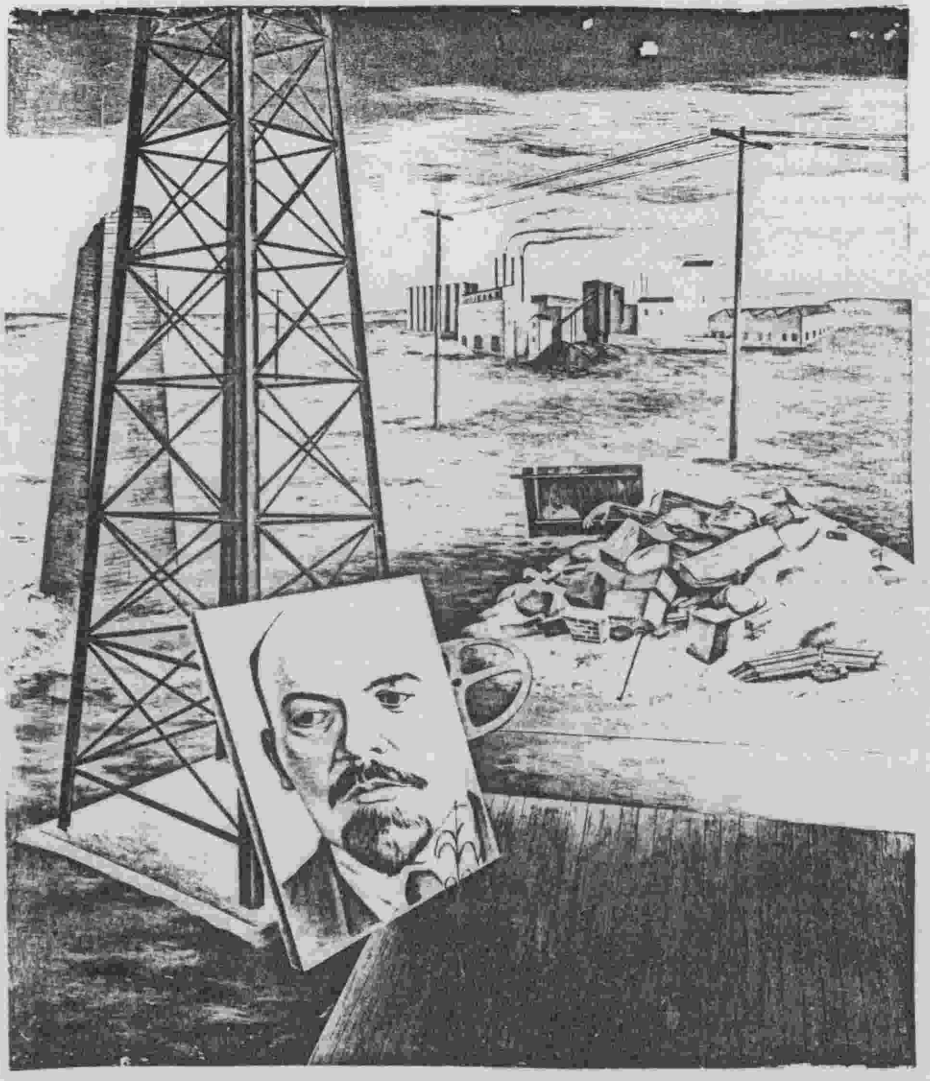
An absence of social or political content was not the case in Phoenix, 1935 (fig. 29). The phoenix in this painting is not the sacred bird of Egyptian myth but is none other than Lenin. A portrait of Lenin stands in the left foreground leaning against a steel tower; in front of it the stalk of a plant grows from a wooden platform--in place of a flower is the picture of Lenin. Behind the steel tower is



27. Louis Guglielmi. Funeral at Woodford.



28. Louis Guglielmi. Deserted Bridge with Figure.



29. Louis Guglielmi. Phoenix.

a brick tower which has partially crumbled. To the right is a pile of rubble from which a skeletal hand and arm emerge. In the background, across an empty landscape, into which a series of telephone poles recedes, stands an industrial complex. The factories here are thriving and, together with the telephone poles and the contrast of the sturdy steel tower with the crumbled brick one, indicate that Guglielmi's attitude was not anti-technology. Instead, he seems to be saying that the use of technology can be either constructive or destructive, that the potentials of technology can be realized through Lenin and communism; if man is to rise from the rubble of capitalism, then he must listen to people such as Lenin, who, although dead, lives on in his writings and in the actions of his followers. Not all of the details in the painting have clear significance: the movie reel behind Lenin for instance, or the inclusion of a bathroom plunger and a "Tydol" can in the pile of rubble. In any case, Guglielmi's belief in the necessity for social change and his admiration for the leader of the Bolshevik Revolution are evident.

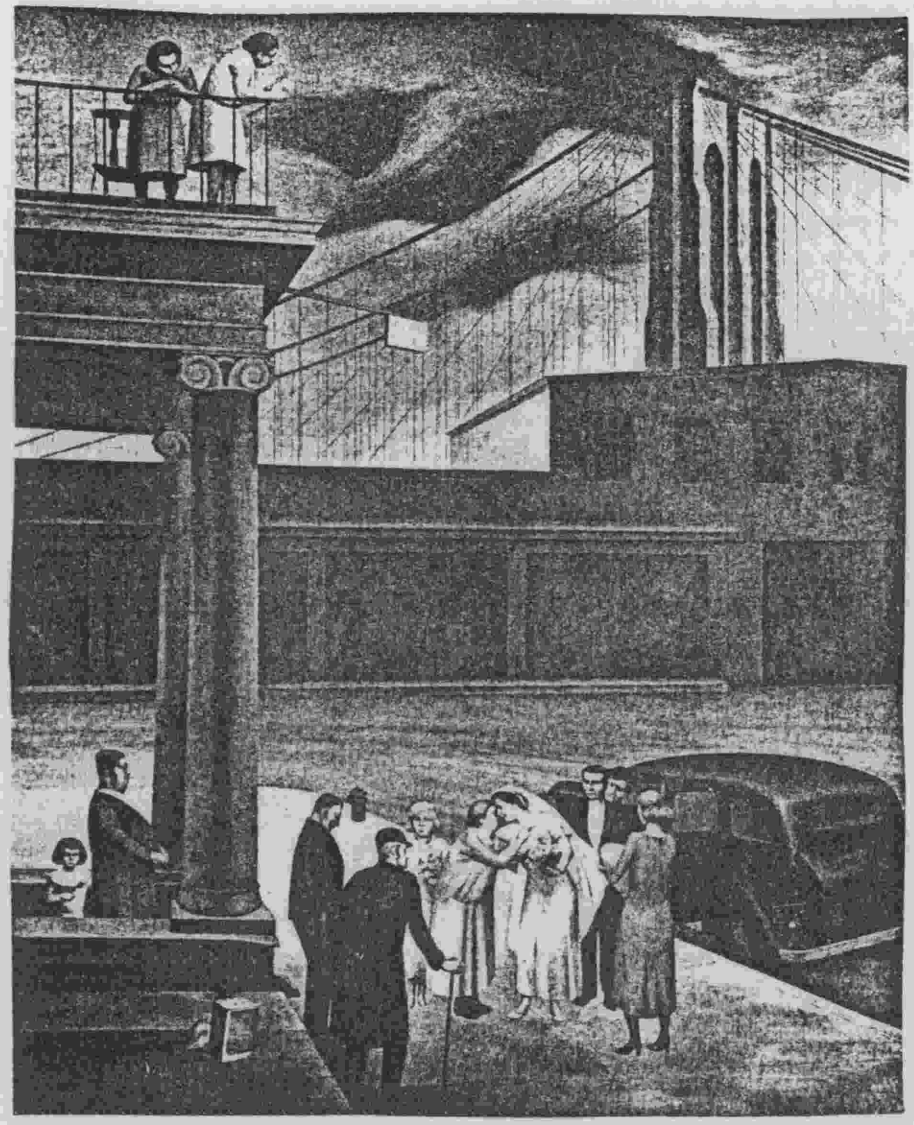
Guglielmi frequently expressed his belief in the necessity for art to have a social function. This was due in part to his anger at the economic injustices of the Depression:

> The early 1930's were coldly sobering years. The artist, a highly sensitive person, found himself helplessly a part of a devastated world. Faced with the terror of the realities of the day, he could no longer justify the shaky theory of individualism and the role of spectator. As with many other creative workers, I reached out for a more positive and objective basis of thought to displace the inadequate destructive negativism that so deeply pervaded all thought and aesthetic production at that time.[2]

Guglielmi's belief in the necessity for social change was also due to personal experiences of poverty and struggle. In a biographical sketch in the Guglielmi papers in the Archives of American Art, which, although written in the third person, seems, because of the very personal tone, to have been the work of the artist himself, it is stated that,"throug[h] periods during which food was a rarity and the subway sometime[s] the place of shelter he came to a decision about the necessity for a social function in art."[3] Guglielmi had even been directly involved in a labor struggle when he had tried to organize a strike while working in a foundry.[4] His statement to a reporter that he was neither a Communist nor was he interested in propaganda, seems to have been stretching the truth somewhat. Although not a member of the Communist Party, it is hard to conclude that the "positive and objective basis of thought" to which he had turned was anything other than Marxism, and paintings such as Phoenix and Memory of the Charles River clearly had propaganda value.

In Memory of the Charles River,[6] 1936, Guglielmi again dealt with specific political figures from the recent past. This time it was Sacco and Vanzetti, the two Italian workers whose execution by the state of Massachusetts had made them a cause célèbre among leftists a decade earlier. On the right side of the painting are two tombstones and the heads of Sacco and Vanzetti sprouting as the flowers of two plants; in the center is the lower half of a man's body; and on the right, a wagon wheel, the symbol of the Rotary Club, leans against a broken column similar to the one in Phoenix. Guglielmi's contrast is between the two martyrs and the destructive sterility of the good citizens who join the Rotary Club--the kind of people who supported the execution of two innocent men. It was their type of mentality against which Guglielmi was protesting--the mentality that also produced what Guglielmi described as a "culture dictated by salesmen and babbits," and "a country of ravished countrysides, of ugly towns with building[s] but no homes. The great American comic strip of conforming faces."[7]

The ugly buildings with which Guglielmi was so disgusted were combined with empty streets and one of his favorite subjects, the Brooklyn Bridge, in Wedding in South Street, 1936



30. Louis Guglielmi. Wedding in South Street.

(fig. 30). The people in the wedding party are working people who are involved in a ceremony which belongs essentially to the upper class--the next day they will have to return to the reality of their surroundings. In paintings like this one Guglielmi was attempting to reestablish his past, "to regain the roots of earlier years and repudiate the upper crust of society."[8]

In The Various Spring, 1937 (fig. 31), Guglielmi was more directly concerned with what he believed to be the poor condition of American housing. Here his subject is the small towns rather than the cities--the repetitiousness of the housing and the sameness of the people. The town contains a drab factory and row housing in which the absence of modern plumbing is indicated by the outhouses in the back yards. The row housing and the factory hint that this may be a company town where the lives of the people are tightly controlled by their employer. A man, too large for the scale of the town, walks down the drab street in which a boy flies his kite. Three identical men climb three maypoles on top of which three identical girls lie amidst identical arrangements of food. On the ledge of the hotel at the right is a flower, which appears to be a lily, threatened by a snake; this contrasts with Guglielmi's use of plants as signs of hope in

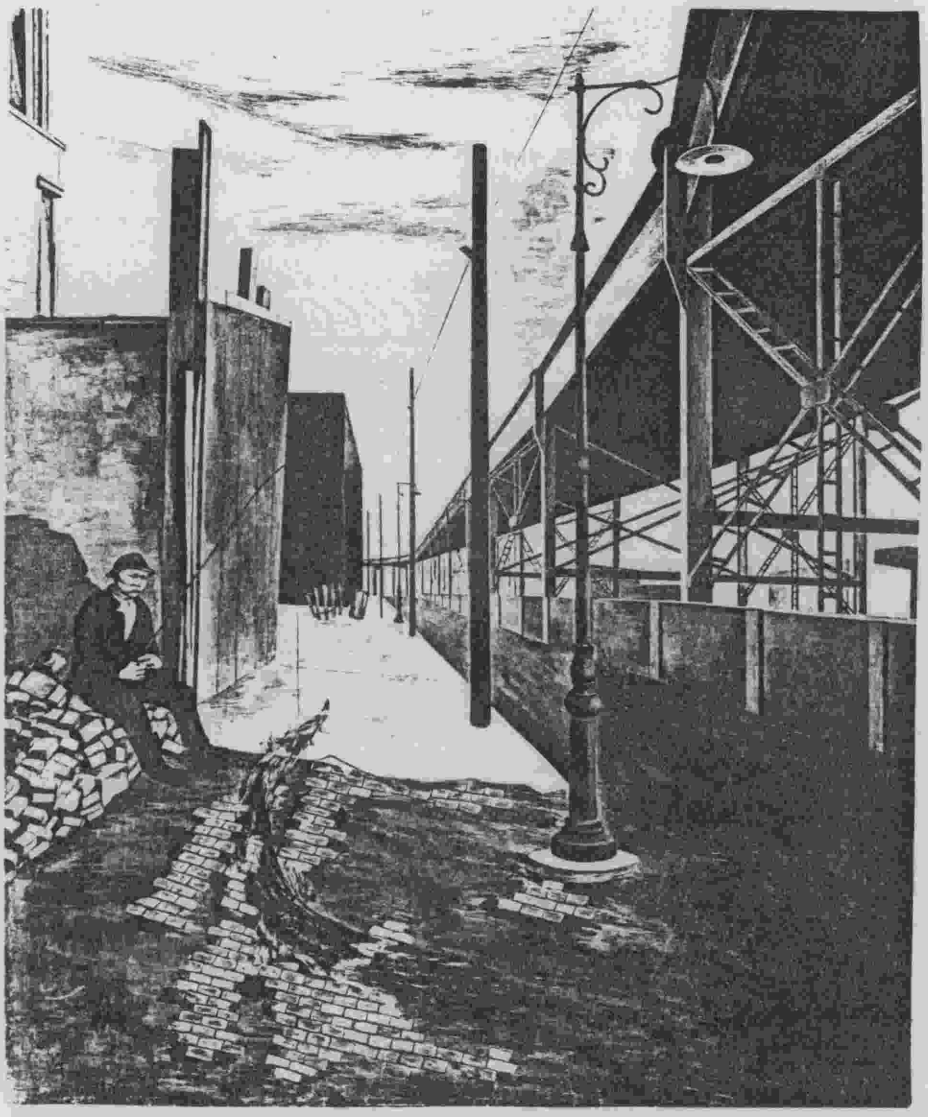
31. Louis Guglielmi. The Various Spring.

conjunction with Lenin and Sacco and Vanzetti. Although some of the symbolism here, especially the men climbing the maypoles, does not seem directly related to housing, the painting was included in an exhibition sponsored by An American Group Inc. entitled "Roofs for 40 Million." This show was "the artists' response to the campaign to eradicate slums and replace them with livable buildings."[9]

In Pilgrims, 1937 (fig. 32), a group of people are seen in a procession in a city street. They all appear dejected and they hold an assortment of objects--oversized candles, a leg which appears to be made of plastic or stone, a heart, sections of a broken column. These new pilgrims offer not food , but parts of their bodies. Whether a comment on the oppressive results of religion or the nature of city life, the result of the painting is very disturbing.

The gloomy tone of Pilgrims is matched in Isaac Walton in Brooklyn (fig. 33), although here there is also a hopeful note. The general ugliness of the city--including the supports for an elevated highway or train, a street light which lacks a bulb, and the dejected appearance of Walton, who is sitting on a pile of bricks--is contrasted to the stream which miraculously springs from the pavement. Even here, in an environment alien to a lover of nature like Walton, a sign of

32. Louis Guglielmi. Pilgrims.



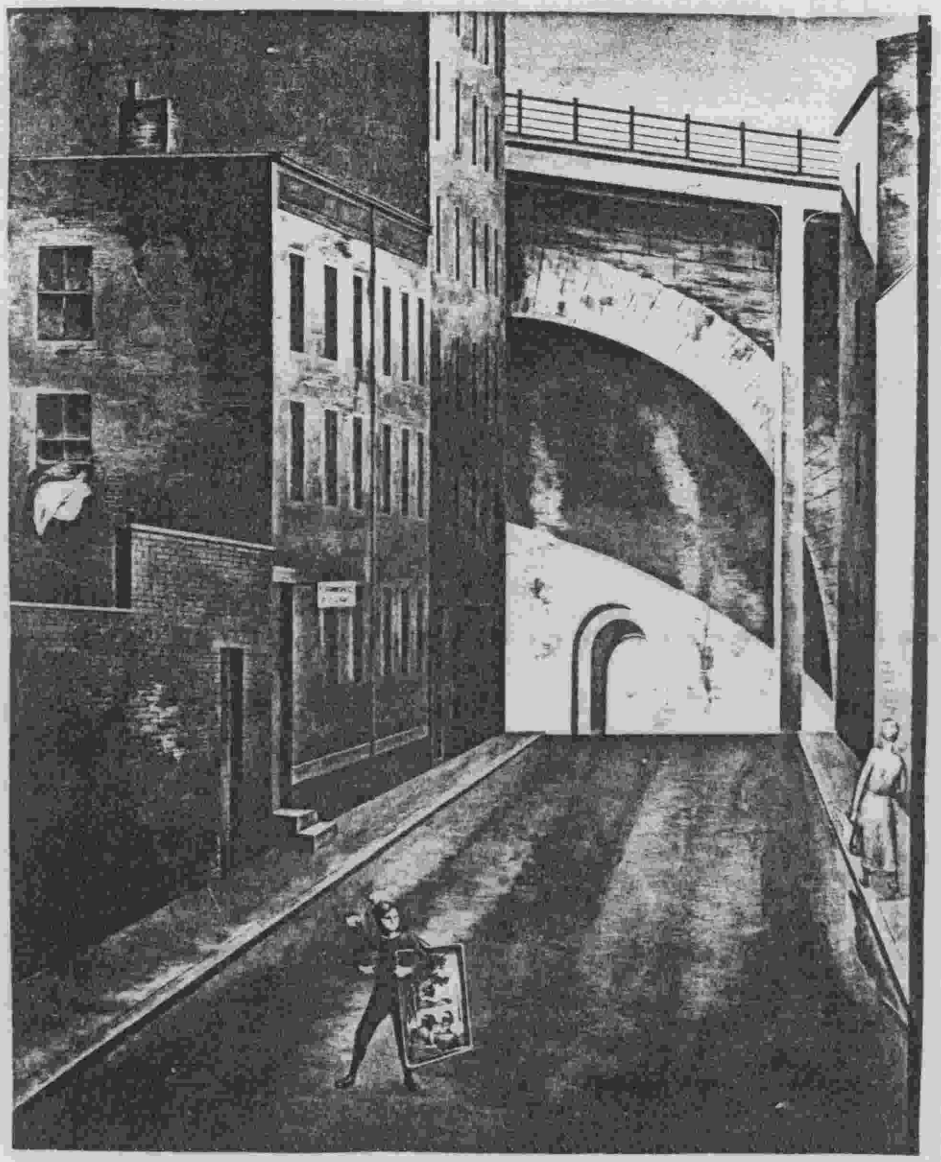
33. Louis Guglielmi. Isaac Walton in Brooklyn.

hope can be found; man can transform even this deterioration if he is determined, or mad, enough.

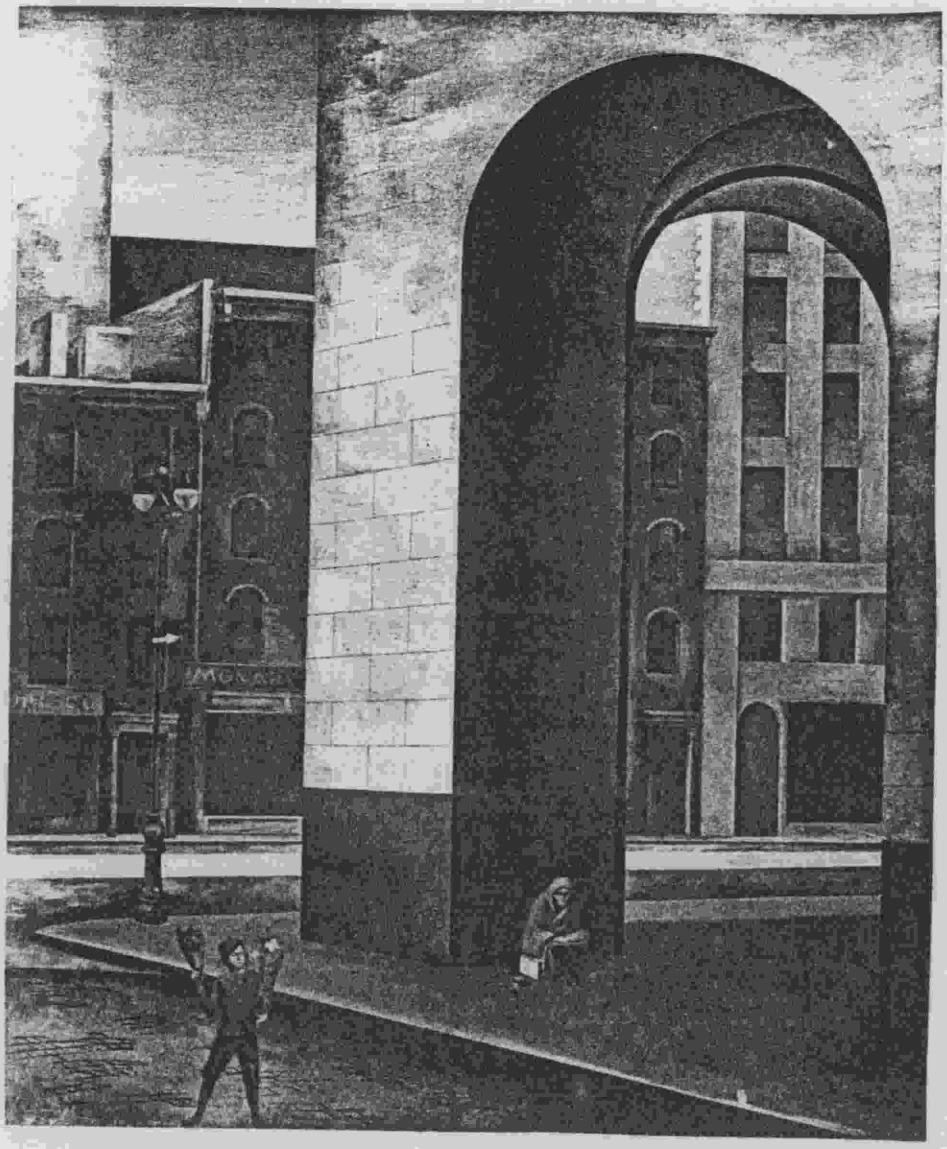
Another note of hope amidst drab emptiness is found in Hague Street (fig. 34). According to Guglielmi, Hague Street was an autobiographical work: "The picture of the boy carrying a flowerpot...[and] a classically lovely painting is the sublimation of an emotion, the suggestion of escape from the horror of living in a mean street under the arched approach of Brooklyn Bridge."[10] Two of the symbols which were present in earlier works are also here: the flowerpot contains two lilies and the painting which he carries includes a broken column. What is more important here than the symbols is the total feeling of the painting, which reflects the loneliness of the environment. In 1944 Guglielmi wrote about his paintings of city streets:

> I like to evoke the feel of a street, the unseen life hidden by blank walls, its bustle and noise, the mystery of a deserted alley. My people may be occaisional figures in a landscape or at times they are symbols of beings struggling in a flight of freedom from a world they helplessly had a part in creating.[11]

Spring Comes to Fourth Avenue (fig. 35), which has been dated 1943 by the Nordness Gallery but which, judging by the style, was probably done closer to 1936, shows the same boy, again carrying the lilies, striding through the empty city. Here the presence of a skeletal old woman sitting against



34. Louis Guglielmi. Hague Street.

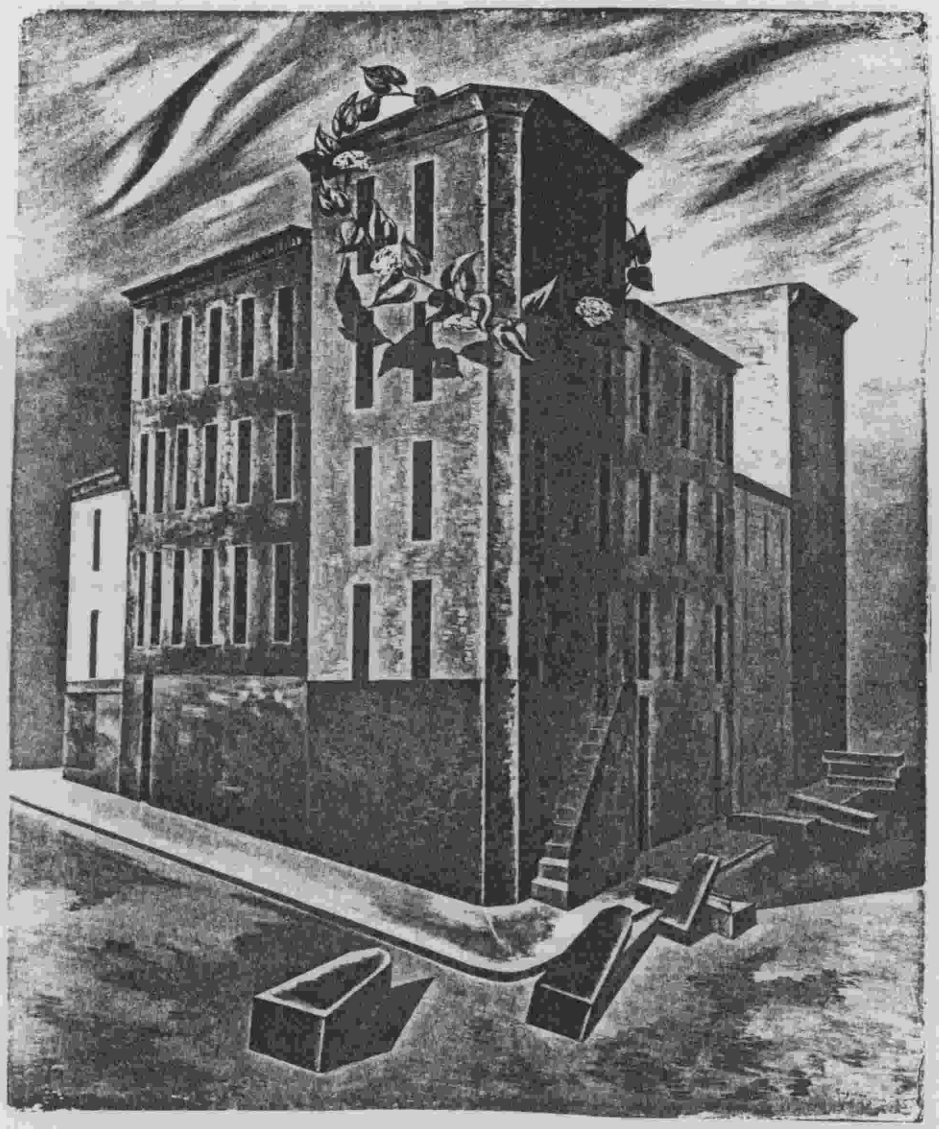


35. Louis Guglielmi. Spring Comes to Fourth Avenue.

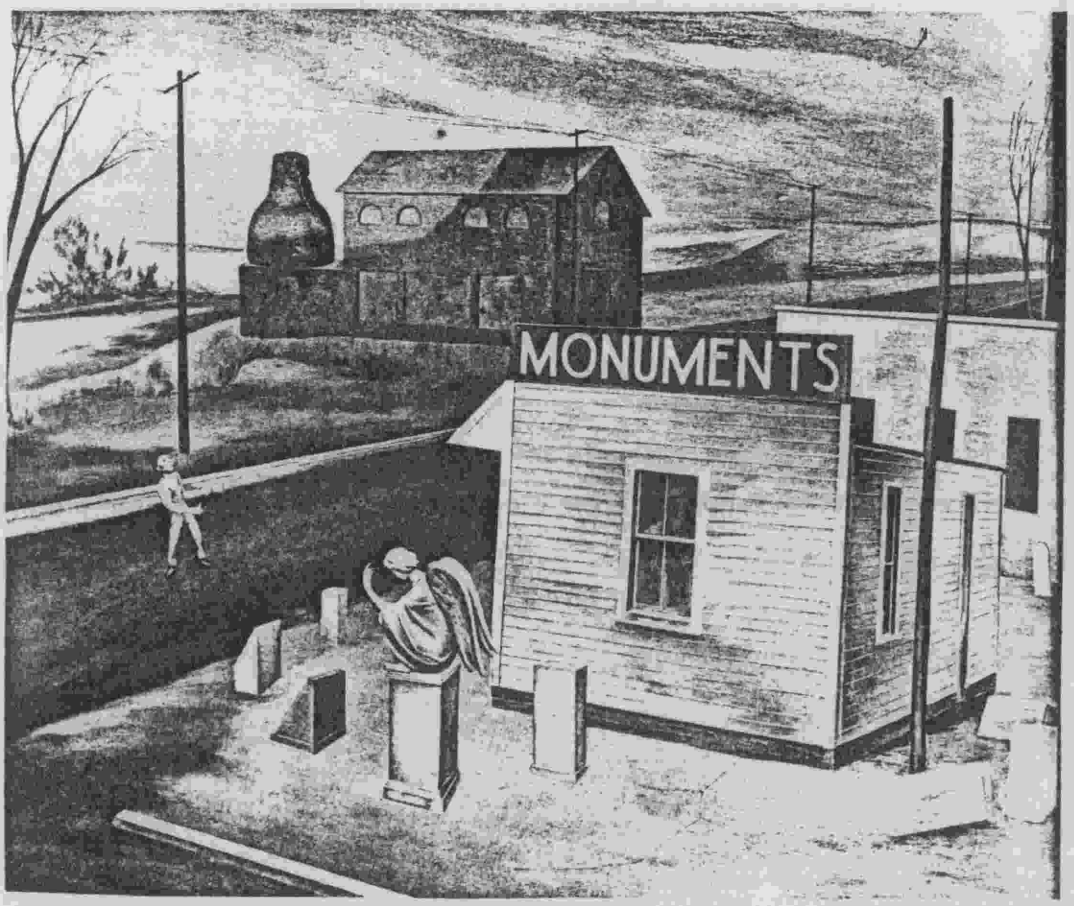
the arch provides a strong image of the destructive aspects of city life.

Another painting of an empty street, One Third of a Nation (fig. 36), contains no indication of Guglielmi's optimism, but is a strong protest against substandard housing. The title refers to Franklin Roosevelt's 1937 inaugural speech in which he stated that one third of America was inadequately clothed, housed and fed. For Guglielmi, the result of these old tenements could only be premature death; not only do the coffins indicate this, but this time Guglielmi's flowers form a funerary wreath which hangs from the corner of the tenements, indicating that the tenements are to be regarded as tombs. The desolation is unalleviated; even the sky forebodes evil and doom. Death is also the theme of Connecticut Autumn (fig. 37), in which a young boy flying a kite is beckoned to by a funerary angel. That the kite-flying youth and the factory are identical to those in The Various Spring hints that Guglielmi may have been placing the blame for premature death on housing conditions, as in One Third of a Nation.

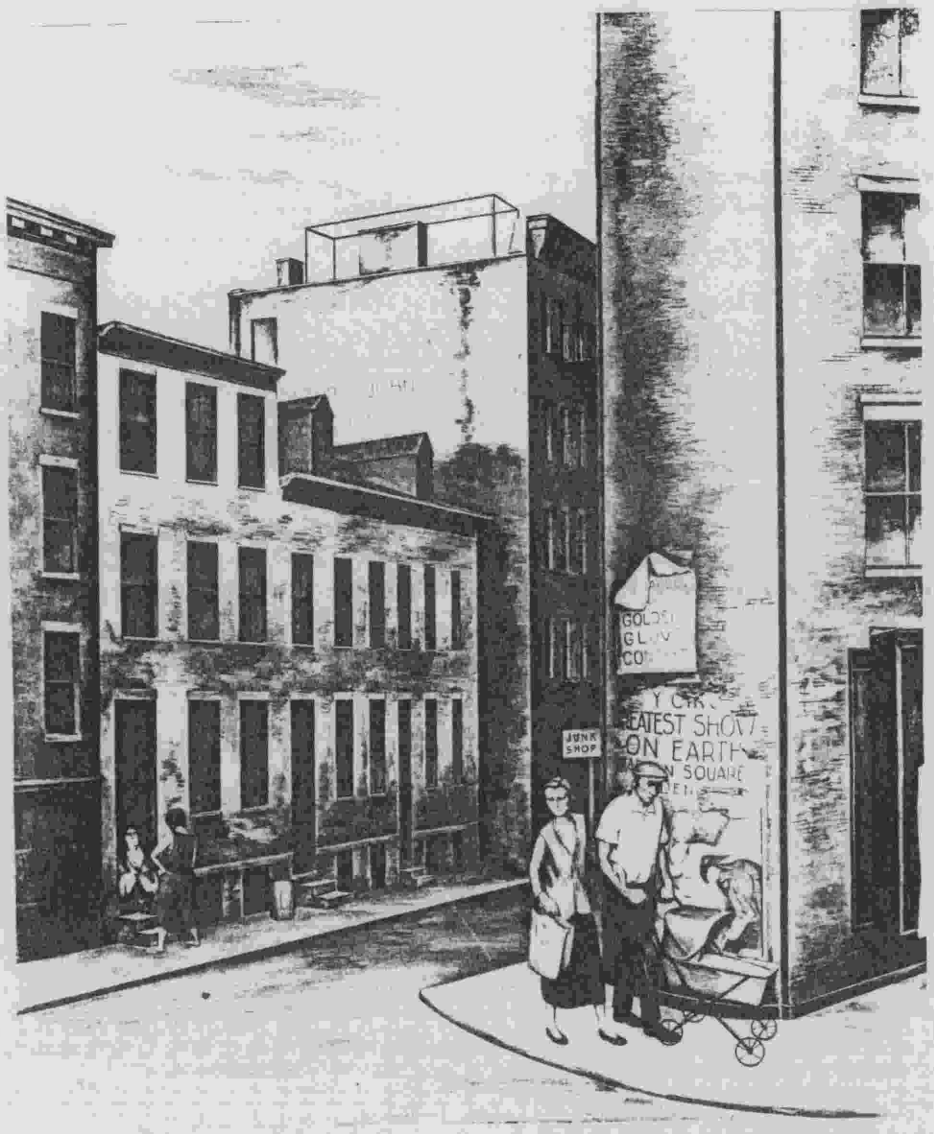
In the mid-thirties Guglielmi produced a number of paintings which protested against conditions in America, but without making direct use of surrealism. View in Chambers Street, 1936 (fig. 38), is an example; the urban environment



36. Louis Guglielmi. _One Third of a Nation_.



37. Louis Guglielmi. Connecticut Autumn.



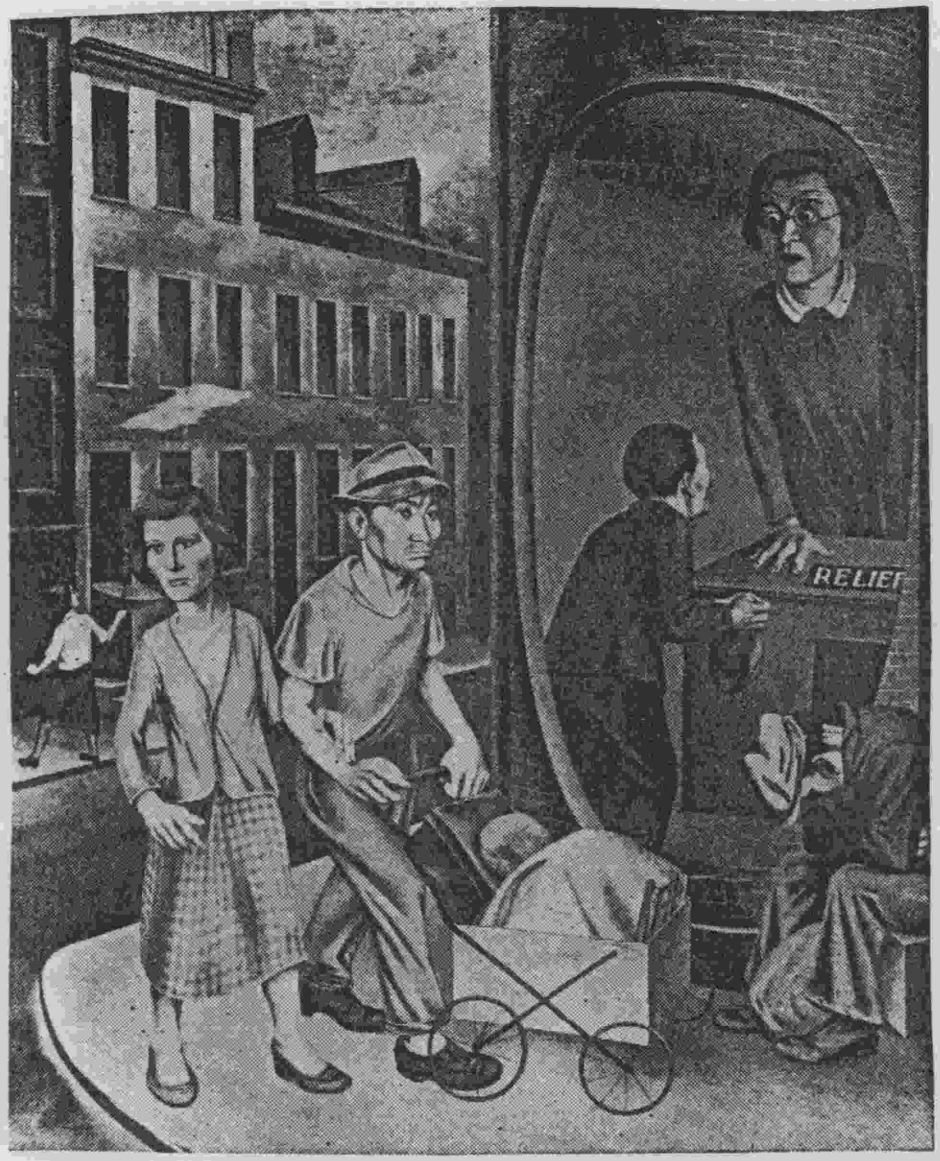
38. Louis Guglielmi. View in Chambers Street.

here is much like that in Hague Street and Fourth Avenue, but there is no boy carrying an improbable painting or flowerpot nor is there a grotesque image of death. There is irony, however, in the advertisement for the Bowery Savings Bank painted on the side of the building; although the bank may "Help John Doe on His Way," it is doubtful that this John Doe has enough to feed his family let alone to save at the Bowery. The posters promoting the circus and the boxing match are also ignored by the family, who are deeply sunk in poverty. If there is anything surreal here it is Guglielmi's use of the empty lifeless street as a reflection of the despair of the mind.

In Sisters of Charity (fig. 39), Guglielmi focused his anger on religious hypocrisy. The two obviously well-fed nuns are seen taking rather than giving; it is those who have vowed to live a life of poverty who make certain that their own stomachs are the first to be filled. The Relief Blues (fig. 40) also betrays little influence of surrealism; it is a recording of the general gloom of a family forced to live on welfare checks. In another painting concerned with the welfare system, The Hungry (fig. 41), Guglielmi attacked the bureaucrats who make the administering of aid to those in need as humiliating as possible. The

39. Louis Guglielmi. Sisters of Charity.

40. Louis Guglielmi. The Relief Blues.



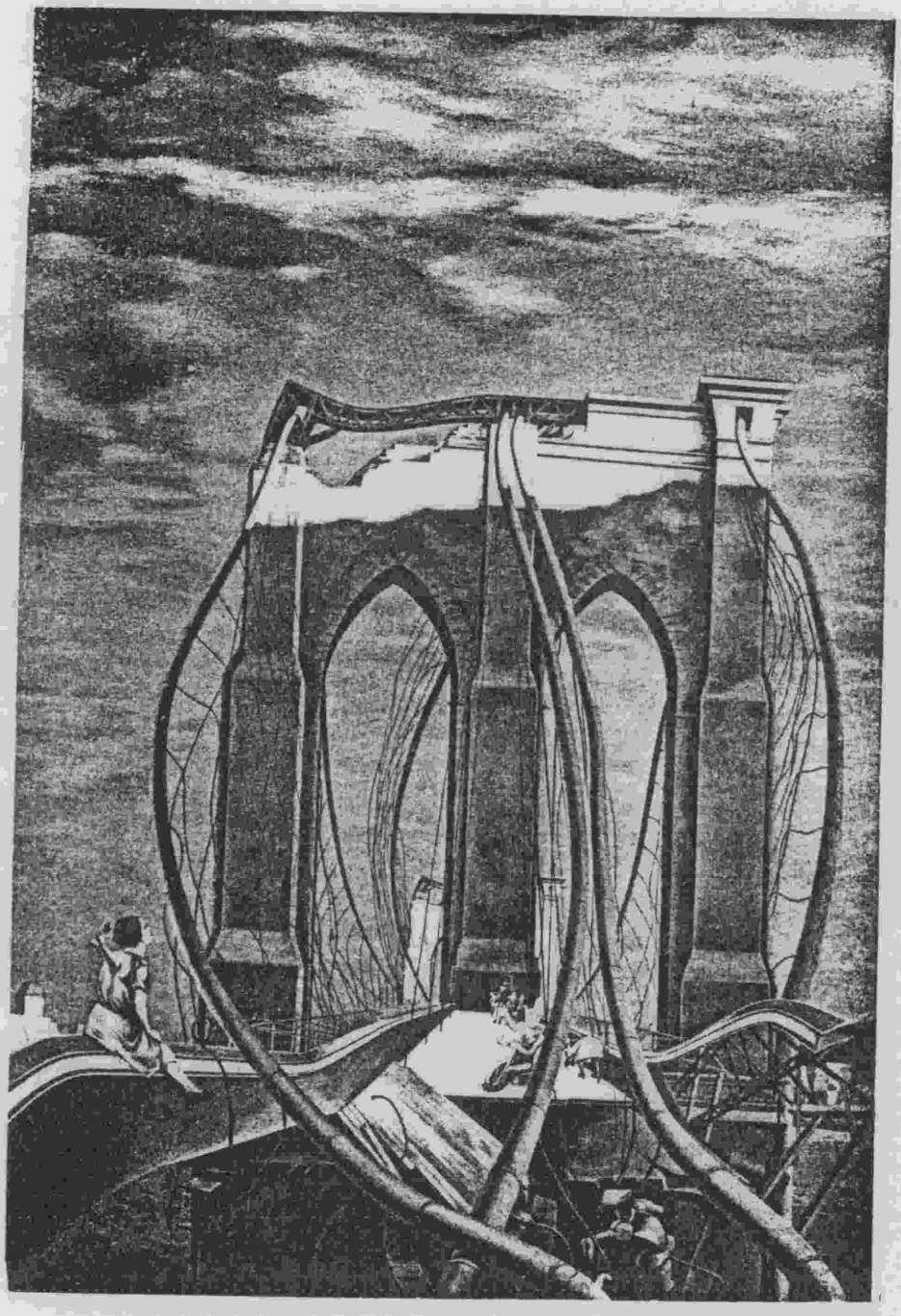
41. Louis Guglielmi. The Hungry.

device employed here of cutting away the building front in order to juxtapose the two scenes can be regarded as surrealistic, and surrealism reasserts itself elsewhere too: in the background a woman carries an umbrella turned upside down, and in the carriage pushed by the couple is, in place of a baby, a bundle which appears as if it contains food. In these paintings the reality of hunger was strong enough so that the artist did not feel that the message had to be reinforced with scenes from his imagination. Guglielmi himself was familiar with the experience of relying on a welfare check for support, but fortunately for him and for other artists, the Federal Arts Project was relatively well run, and the artists were not made to feel that they were receiving charity. Guglielmi had praise for the FAP and compared it favorably to the system of selling paintings through private galleries. He saw the FAP as a means of reaching a larger audience, while the private gallery forced the artist into a "sterile tower of isolation."[12]

> The Project has cleared the path toward a sounder and brighter future. Speaking for myself, I can say that without the financial benefit of the Project, it would have been impossible for me to have continued to work and grow in stature. The collective output of the last year has clearly revealed the enormous amount of young talent that, under less fortunate circumstances, would have been crushed on the wheels of poverty. It is of the greatest importance to the culture of our nation that the

> Project be maintained on a permanent basis, free from the offensive stigma of relief.[13]

In spite of his dissatisfaction with the system of private galleries, Guglielmi, after showing for a number of years in group exhibitions at the Downtown Gallery, was given his first one-man show there in 1938. The gallery's press release for the exhibition stated that: "Guglielmi is a leading exponent of the school of imaginative realism based on a social consciousness. But unlike many of the younger generation he subordinates document to a unified expression in paint."[14] It was in this exhibition that one of the artist's best known and most interesting paintings, Mental Geography (fig. 42), was first shown. With Mental Geography Guglielmi entered his most successful period, both in terms of recognition and as regards his use of surrealism. The use of surrealism here is more complex than in paintings such as Phoenix and Hague Street, and, at the same time, his drawing assumed a harder edge as the influence of Dali became more evident. Mental Geography was Guglielmi's response to the terrors of the Spanish Civil War; it seems to have been a cry for America not to isolate itself from the problems of Europe and a foretelling of the war which was to involve America, although never to reach its shores as visualized here:



42. Louis Guglielmi. Mental Geography.

> In...Mental Geography, painted during the Spanish Civil War, I pictured the destruction after an air raid, the towers bomb-pocked, the cables a mass of twisted debris. I meant to say that an era had ended and that the rivers of Spain flowed to the Atlantic and mixed with our waters as well.[15]

Guglielmi's painting is not a literal representation of how a bombed Brooklyn Bridge would appear, but is a fantastic nightmare in which the stolid structure begins to melt and sway with a life of its own. Images of war are present in the suit of armor in the right foreground (harking back to Blume's Parade) and the woman on the left who has a bomb implanted in her back.

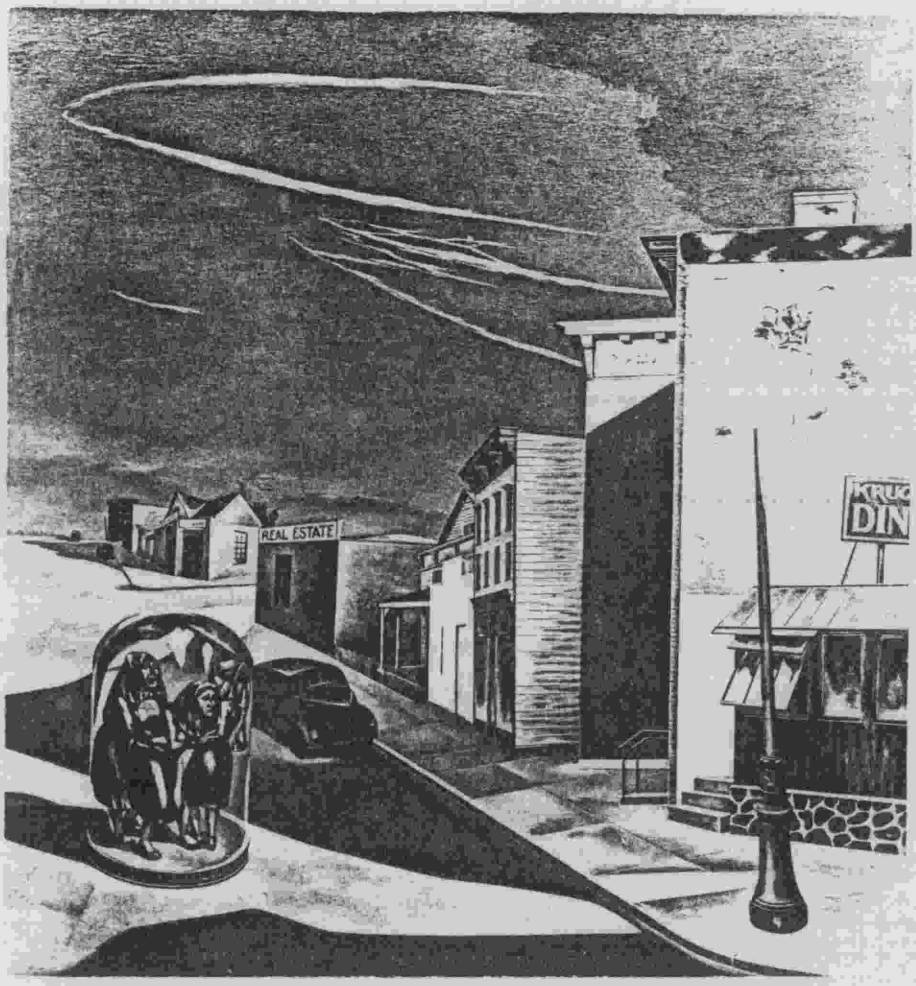
In Mental Geography Guglielmi transformed a symbol of American progress which had frequently been represented by artists and poets into a symbol of fear and destruction. From Whitman's poetry to the paintings of Guglielmi's contemporary, Joseph Stella, the Brooklyn Bridge had been treated as representative of the aspirations and achievements of man. The existence of this tradition makes Mental Geography all the more powerful as a symbol of America's destruction.

The reaction of the critics to Guglielmi's exhibition was generally favorable. The Art Digest stated that the artist was "acutely aware not only of his American environment but also of its social shortcomings," but that, "unlike so many social protesters, [he] has command of his materials."[16]

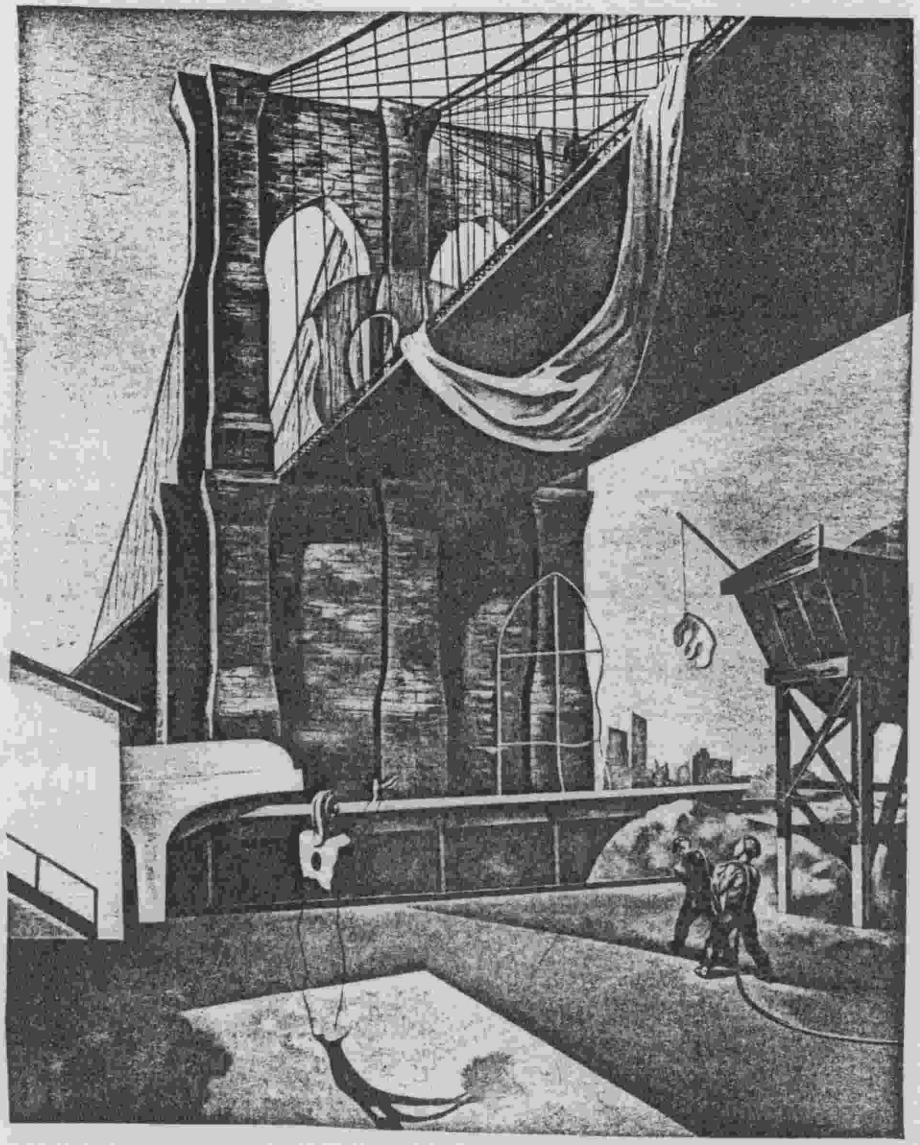
Art News found that, although he was sometimes "obscure,... taken as a whole Guglielmi's work indicates his ability to express himself in terms of satire which hits the mark more often than it misses."[17]

Three years later, in Terror in Brooklyn (fig. 43), Guglielmi was still concerned with premonitions of war, although by this time the war was well underway in Europe. Guglielmi described the painting with the following words: "The fleeting shaft of sun in the dusk of a world; the terror of the three pelvic beatitudes in the test tube of a bell; the street a reflected image of itself. A premonition of war and tragedy."[18] Although Guglielmi's reason for choosing the "three pelvic beatitudes" and his placement of them inside of a glass bell is not clear, the impact of the painting is strong, and the mixture of swords and bones which hangs by the brick wall above the diner makes the cause of their fear evident.

Peter Blume was not the only one of the social surrealists to win a major prize; Guglielmi captured first prize at the Art Institute of Chicago's 1943 Annual Exhibition with The Bridge (fig. 44). Although he again employed the Brooklyn Bridge as his subject, his concern this time was less with social problems and more solely with images of his subconscious. The Bridge is not a protest against war or injustice,



43. Louis Guglielmi. Terror in Brooklyn.



44. Louis Guglielmi. The Bridge.

but seems intended to "contribute to the enhancement of life and ornament the environment with visual dreams,"[19] which Guglielmi believed to be the desire of American painters. He admitted that his painting might not be easily understood by everyone, but he was willing to offer an explanation:

> It has been said that my work requires program notes. There may be some truth in that assertion. The mystification arises in the use that I make of fantasy in an otherwise orderly and objective representation. The method is as old as painting itself. Poets use it and call it metaphor and symbolism. I use it to express an idea, to invoke a mood, or simply for amusement. An instance is the painting I call The Bridge.
>
> I am directly under a bridge spanning a wide river. Great waves of muted sound rumble off in space. My mind's eye sees the huge tower as a musical instrument. A drape hangs from the span. A violin mute rests below the cables. On the ground level a figure, half man, half violin, stands with arms outstreched to a great and noble edifice.[20]

Although he hails the bridge as "a great and noble edifice," Guglielmi paints a drape which hangs from its floor, providing a note of death and gloom. In Hague Street and Wedding in South Street, the bridge also seems ominous in tone. That Guglielmi's imagined violin is mute reinforces the feeling of doom. Guglielmi was not the first to think of the Brooklyn Bridge as a musical instrument. Hart Crane used musical imagery in his poetry about the bridge, in "Proem: To Brooklyn Bridge":

> O harp and altar of the fury fused,
> (How could mere toil align thy choiring strings!)[21]

and in "Atlantis":

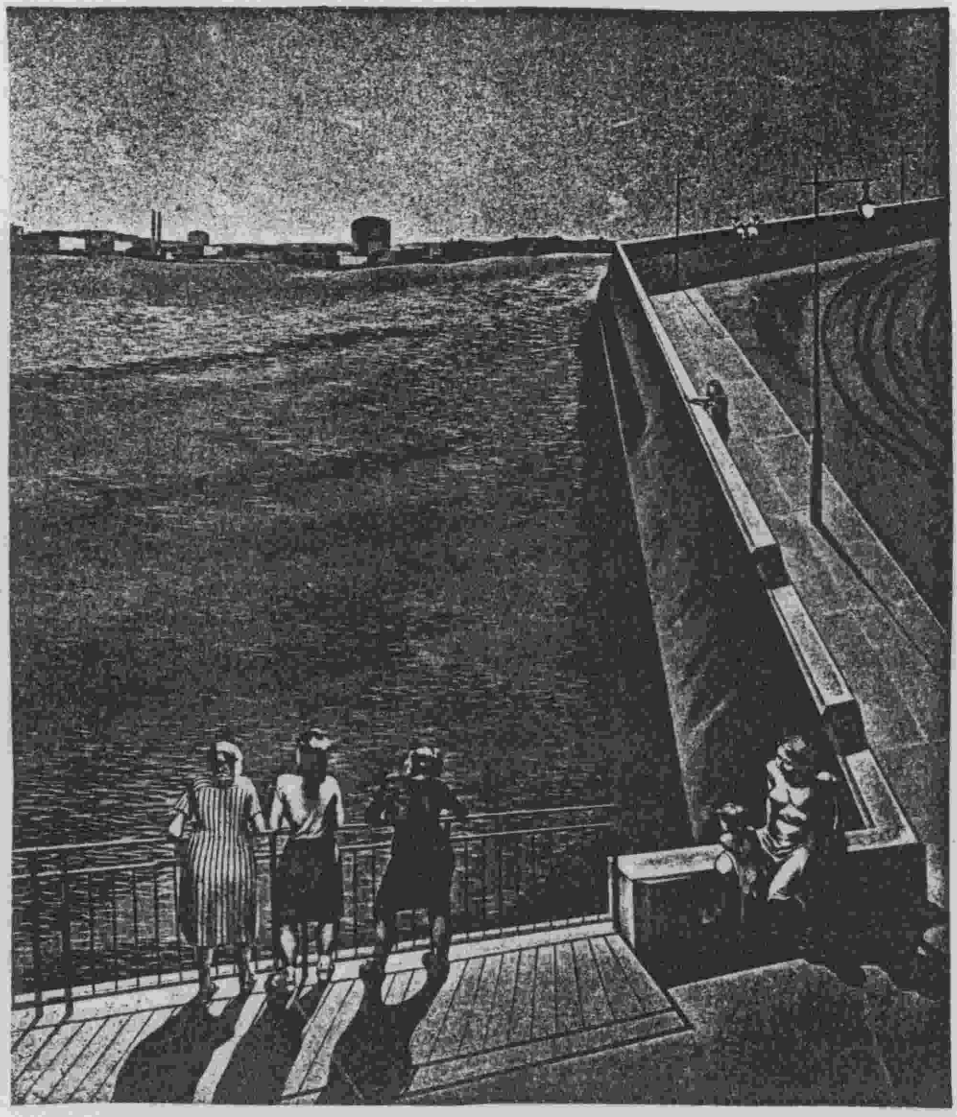
> ...yoking wave
> to kneeling wave, one song devoutly binds--
> The vernal strophe chimes from deathless strings![22]

Unlike Guglielmi, although much of Crane's imagery often dealt explicitly with death, his portrayal of the Brooklyn Bridge was a life-affirming one.

It was not only in The Bridge that Guglielmi seemed less concerned with politics and protest. The River (fig. 45), painted in 1942, also carries no overt message. The surrealism here is found in the distortion of space and the odd isolation of the figures, including one partially clad woman in the foreground. The River also won an award--receiving one of the Carnegie's prizes in 1945. As Guglielmi, like Blume, became less political, he also became more acceptable to both the general public and to the juries of national competitions.

In a statement written for the catalog of the Museum of Modern Art's 1943 exhibition of "American Realists and Magic Realists," Guglielmi emphasized that in his paintings it was the subconscious elements which were crucial:

> I have never used a model. If at times my work becomes surreal, with the use of an added nonexistent object, it is really a valid device to play with poetic suggestion and the haunting use of the metaphor. I thoroughly believe that the inner world of our subjective life is quite as real as the objective.[23]

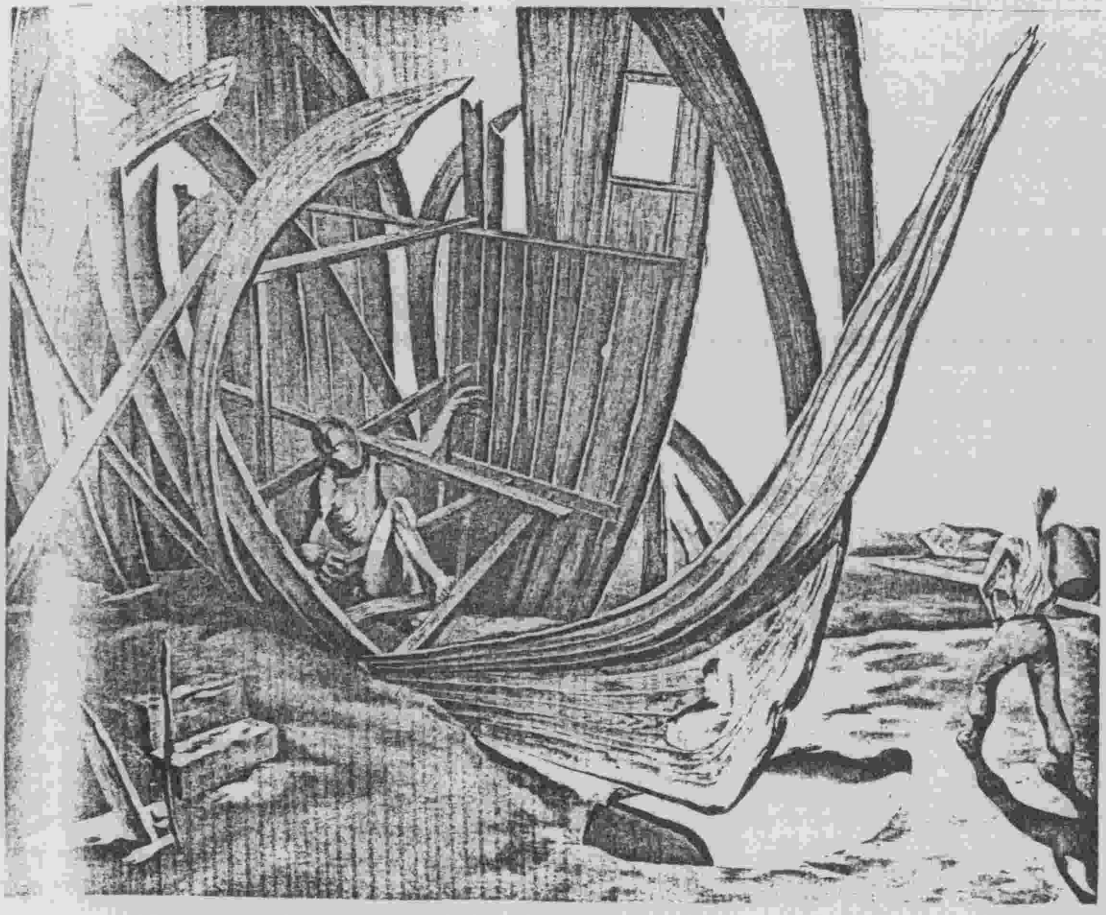


45. Louis Guglielmi. The River.

Elsewhere, Guglielmi wrote that he did not care what label was applied to his painting; he also stated that his work drew on a number of sources--surrealism, expressionism and romanticism, but that his main concern was "to create in each picture an atmosphere and a sense of its own reality."[24] He also revealed that, although he was still concerned with social issues, his attitude was now characterized less by militance and more by reconciliation. He believed that the artist "cannot separate himself" from society and that artists were becoming more accepted and respected by society, a society which he regarded as characterized by an acceptance by the majority of "the benefits of our materialistic life for the betterment of people and a world unity."[25] Odyssey for Moderns, 1943 (fig. 46), was expressive of this optimism which he felt even in the midst of war. Guglielmi had this to say about the meaning of the painting:

> The picture "Odyssey for Moderns" was begun in the early dark months of our travail of the present struggle. A lost people, crawling dream-like through the rotted timbers of a beached hulk, to win the beachhead for tomorrow. The soldier at the right, a segment of the bleached wood of the old world, contemplates the hurricane sun and the distant horizon. That is the suggestive meaning of the picture in a broad sense, and is the result of a persistent dream, caused by anxiety.[26]

Not only had Guglielmi become more general and more optimistic in his themes, but his style was also beginning to change.

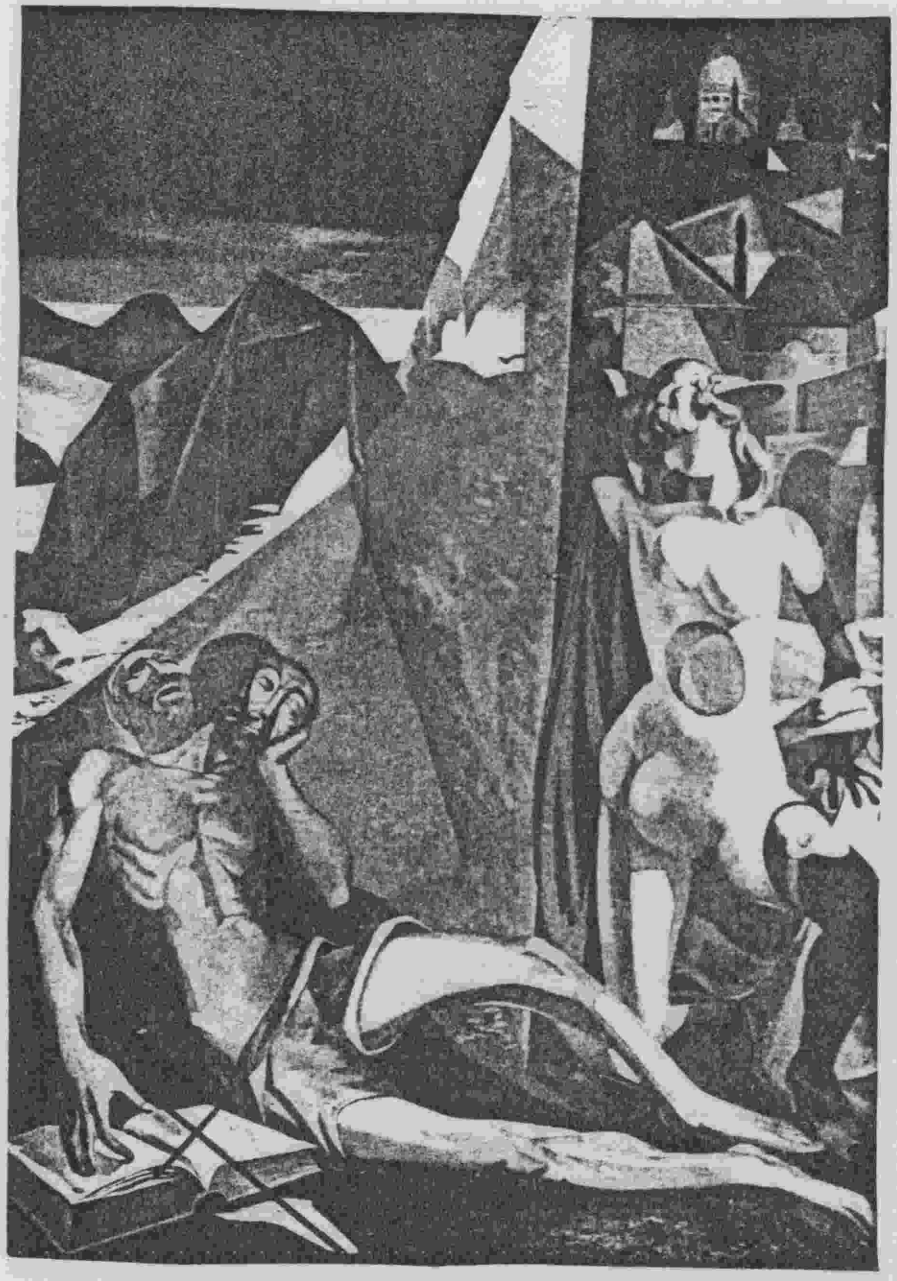


46. Louis Guglielmi. Odyssey for Moderns.

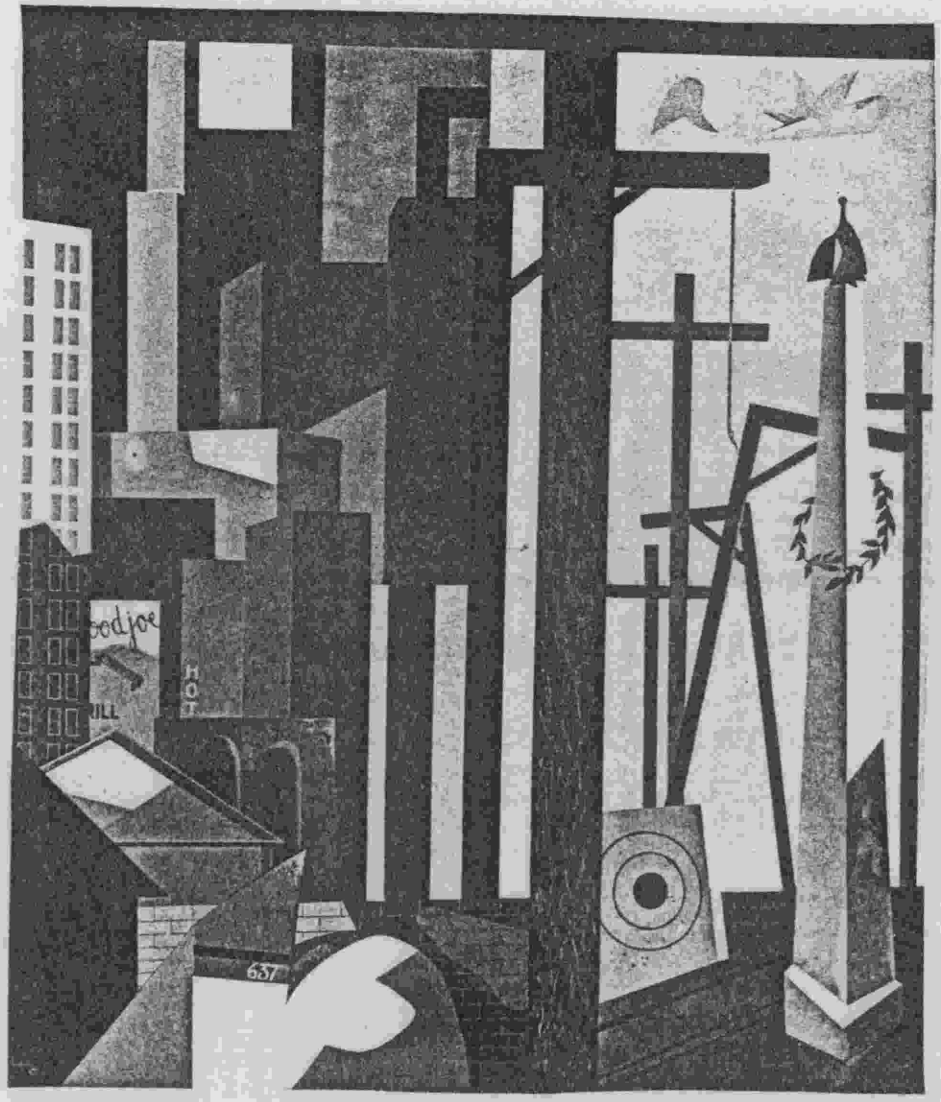
The hard edge of veristic surrealism which he had employed since about 1938 was being abandoned for a more expressionistic abstraction.

The style of The Temptation of St. Anthony (fig. 47), painted in 1946, is far removed from any semblance of realism, but, unlike Odyssey for Moderns, the abstraction is in terms of geometric forms--cubes, cones, etc. Also, there is no element of political or social concern evident here. The choice of subject, however, was not Guglielmi's, but was dictated by a competition in which the painting was entered.[27] In fact, The Temptation of St. Anthony seems to have been done only to keep the pot boiling, as Guglielmi confessed in a letter to his dealer.[28]

Guglielmi's paintings continued to become increasingly abstract, employing bright colors in patterns of interlocking geometric forms which seem strongly influenced by the paintings of Stuart Davis. The colors themselves were indicative of his new attitude: previously his palette had been dark and subdued, often depressing in effect; now he used bright and cheerful tones, reflective of his new optimism and his interest in problems of painting rather than those of politics. Solitudes, 1946 (fig. 48), which was exhibited at his second one-man show, held in 1948, was typical of his new style. Although the



47. Louis Guglielmi. Temptation of St. Anthony.



48. Louis Guglielmi. Solitudes.

inclusion of an obelisk topped by a wreath triggers associations with symbols from previous paintings, including One Third of a Nation, and the gallows further indicates a concern with death, any social commentary that might be intended here is lost amidst the lively interaction of the geometric forms. The critic for Art Digest remarked on the change in Guglielmi's concerns, observing that his combination of "themes of social conscience with surrealism" had given way to "problems of form and organization."[29] The Downtown Gallery's press release for the exhibition also emphasized his new, more lyrical approach:

> More intensely emotional, his painting has become more lyrical and metaphorical, developing from a negative nostalgia into a positive prophetic vision. Emerging from an irrational dream-world, he paints the irrational reality of our world today. While he is as interested in subject matter and especially in human beings, his present statement evolves more from the emotional impact of design and color than from the memory picture. Hence the emphasis is more strongly on painting. The symbols are less specific, more universal. The classical perspective conception has given way to contemporary color-space. The inherent tragedy, the negative sense of destruction and doom and violence, is invariably tempered by a positive, lyric, poetic sublimation, bringing to these mature paintings brilliant contrasts in color, design and mood.[30]

Thus, like Blume, Guy and Quirt, Guglielmi had abandoned any interest in propagandistic aspects of art, and, like Guy and Quirt, he had turned to a more decorative abstraction. By

the end of World War II, the mood in America emphasized an optimistic view of life, and the concerns of artists were with problems of art rather than society.

FOOTNOTES

1. Dorothy C. Miller and Alfred H. Barr Jr., American Realists and Magic Realists (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1943, rpt. 1969), p. 38.
2. Louis Guglielmi, "After the Locusts," Art for the Millions, p. 113.
3. Archives, Guglielmi papers, frame 341.
4. Ibid.
5. Dayton, Ohio News Week, November 28, 1938, in Archives, Downtown Gallery papers, reel ND 63, frame 727.
6. This painting is reproduced in the microfilm of the Downtown Gallery papers in the Archives of American Art.
7. Archives, Guglielmi papers, frame 345.
8. Guglielmi, p. 113.
9. "Artists show housing needs, recommend improvements," Architectural Record, April 1938, p. 76.
10. Guglielmi, p. 113.
11. O. Louis Guglielmi, "I Hope to Sing Again," Magazine of Art, May 1944, p. 175.
12. Guglielmi, "Locusts," pp. 114-115.
13. Ibid., p. 115.
14. Archives, Downtown Gallery papers, frame 631.
15. Guglilmi, "Sing Again," p. 175.
16. "Guglielmi's First," Art Digest, November 15, 1938, p. 20.
17. J. L., "A First New York Show of Guglielmi, Satirist of the American Scene," Art News, November 26, 1938, p. 13.
18. Janis, p. 11.
19. Guglielmi, "Sing Again," p. 175.
20. Ibid.
21. Hart Crane, The Complete Poems of Hart Crane (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1958), p. 4.
22. Ibid., p. 61.
23. Miller, pp. 38-39.
24. Guglielmi, "Sing Again," pp. 175-76.
25. Ibid., p. 177.
26. Grace Pagano, Contemporary American Painting: The Encyclopaedia Britannica Collection (New York: Duell, Sloan, & Pearce, 1945), p. 49.
27. Archives, Guglielmi papers, frame 349.

28. The competition was sponsored by Loew-Lewin Productions. Ten artists, including Dali, Eugene Berman and Paul Delvaux, were invited to enter. Each of the artists received $500 and retained possession of his painting, with the winning painting to be used in the film "Bel Ami." Max Ernst won the competition.

29. Judith Kaye Reed, "Presenting Guglielmi in Solo Exhibition," Art Digest, March 1, 1948, p. 16.

30. Archives, Downtown Gallery papers, frame 628.

CHAPTER 10

Other Artists

There were a number of American artists besides Blume, Guy, Quirt and Guglielmi whose art was touched by both surrealism and social concerns. On occasion some of these artists produced works which can be termed social surrealist, but more often their use of surrealism as social protest was not so direct.

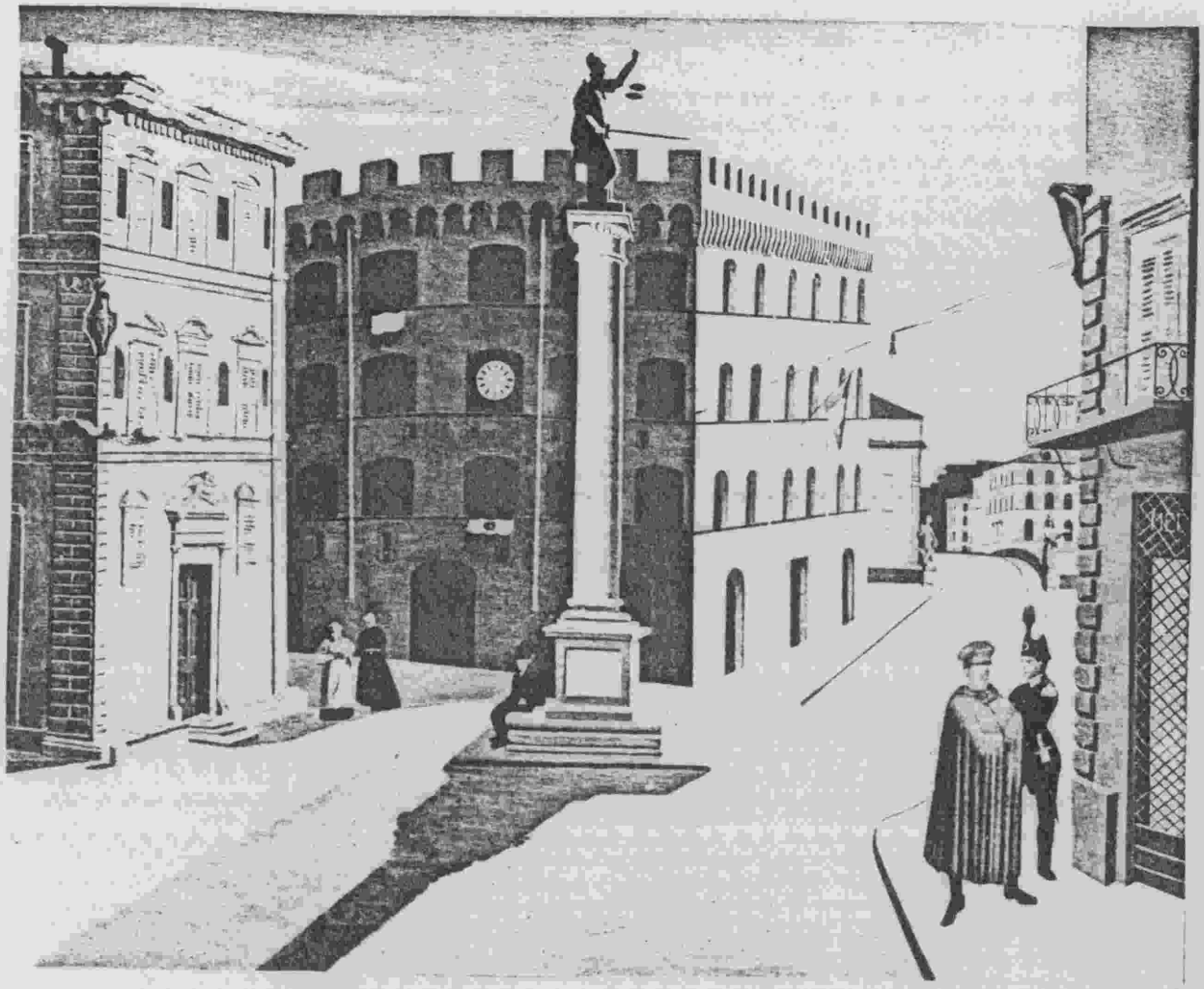
Francis Criss was a painter whose work during the thirties was strongly influenced by both the Precisionists and Stuart Davis. His cityscapes are characterized by muted flat colors, empty streets, and an elimination of most detail. The emptiness of these paintings and the use of rapidly receding streets are reminiscent of de Chirico. Like the social surrealists, Criss was active in leftist art circles; he was a member of the American Artists' Congress, and showed at the John Reed Club and in an exhibition at the ACA Gallery in support of the Spanish Popular Front. He was among the faculty at the American Artists' School, at which Walter Quirt also taught, and in 1939 he organized the Art Students' Guild which was concerned with the "progressive, unorthodox education of the student of art."[1]

Astor Place, 1932 (fig. 49), is typical of much of

49. Francis Criss. Astor Place.

Criss's work during the thirties. Although his concern here was mainly with the formal organization of the canvas, the emptiness of the late afternoon street hints at an interest in surrealism. When Astor Place was exhibited at the Whitney Museum in 1933 it was described in the press as "bordering on surrealism" and as not "actually surrealism [but a] borderline case."[2]

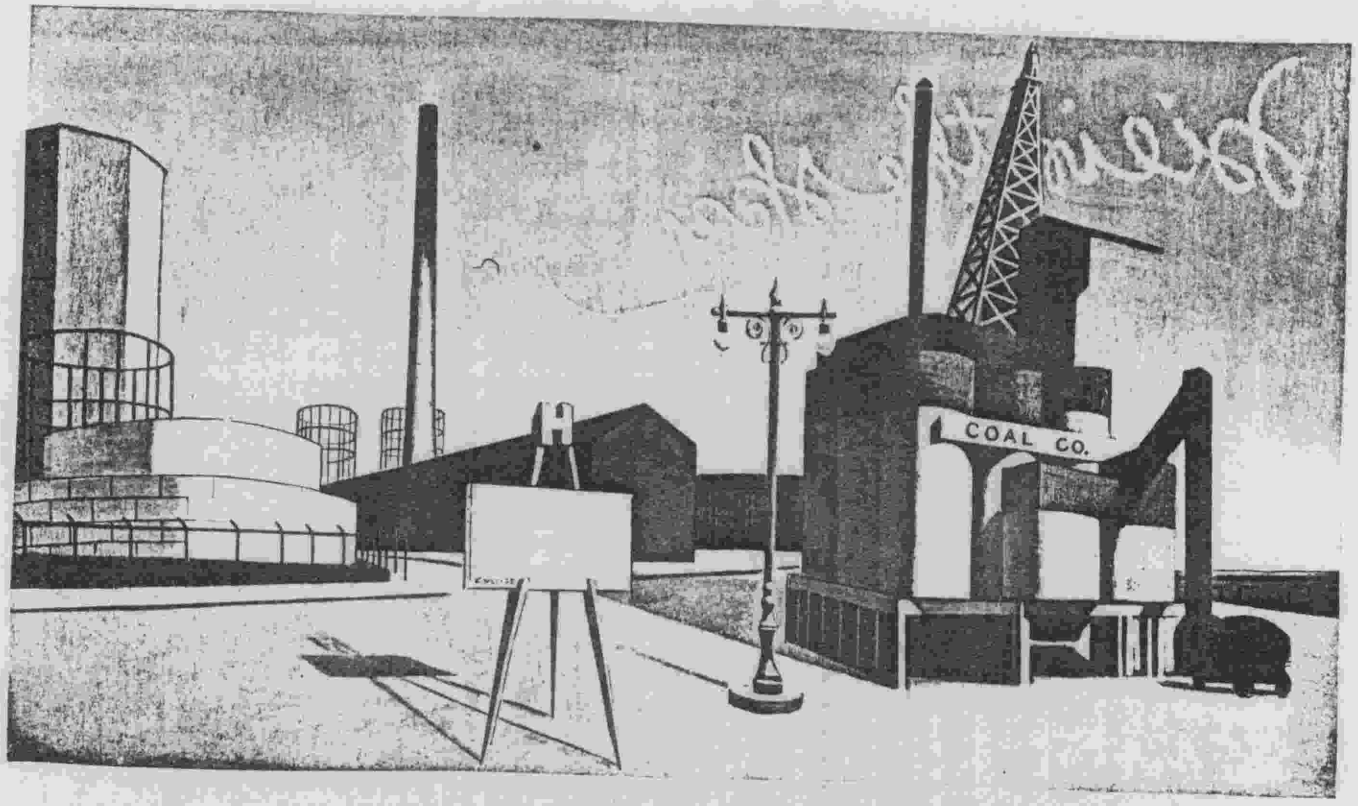
In Fascism, 1935 (fig. 50), Criss demonstrated an interest in both surrealism and social protest. Fascism is similar to Astor Place in the use of an open square from which a street rapidly recedes into the distance at the right, in the time of day--late afternoon--and in the placement of two figures in the right foreground; but the setting here is Florence, not New York. Criss, like Blume, had been disturbed by what he saw while in Italy on a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1934, and, although he painted a number of cheerful scenes of the streets of Florence, particularly of the market place, he obviously felt it necessary to make at least one protest against fascism. The clues that something is amiss in the painting do not strike one immediately, although the long shadow cast by the column provides an ominous feeling. They are not hard to find, however: there is no chain supporting the scales of justice; the clock has no



50. Francis Criss. Fascism.

hands; the people, with the exception of the soldiers, are faceless, and they also cast no shadows, in contrast to the buildings and the column. If one has any doubt that the fascist regime in Italy is the cause of these abnormalities, Criss's title quickly dispels it.

Unfortunately, like Quirt and Guy, Criss is little remembered today, few of his paintings are available in public collections, and few were reproduced in books or periodicals even during the thirties. The microfilm of Criss's papers in the Archives of American Art reproduces photographs of a number of his paintings from the thirties; they seem to be social surrealist in nature, but the images are so hazy that any real description of them is impossible. Titles of other paintings indicate that they may also have been both social and surreal in orientation: Retreat of all Struggle Until Tomorrow, Enigma of the East River, and Bird of Prey. At least one other painting from this period, Pie in the Sky (fig. 51), is surrealist, but the type of surrealism employed here reminds one of Magritte's visual puns rather than stating any political message. The painting includes a canvas, blank save for Criss's signature and a date, which is placed in the middle of an industrial landscape, while in the sky is written, as though seen in a mirror,



51. Francis Criss. Pie in the Sky.

"Pie in the Sky." One could regard Criss's literal and literary interpretation of the cliché as a satiric comment on the promise of industry to bring wealth to mankind; another possibility is that he was more concerned with commenting on the nature of painting itself. In any case, this painting operates on a number of levels of reality, and the result is more enigmatic than in Fascism.

Although in a work like Fascism Criss's aims were identical to those of the social surrealists, most of his work of the period made no direct comment on social or political issues, and he was best known for his more purely decorative work. Also, his style, although representational, differs from the social surrealists in the absence of detail; in fact, Dorothy Miller chose not to include Criss in the Museum of Modern Art's "American Realism and Magic Realism" show because his style was not "meticulous" enough.[3]

In Los Angeles, a group of artists calling themselves "post-surrealists" began to receive some national attention in 1936 when they were given a group exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum. The post-surrealists consisted of Lorser Feitelson, Lucien Labaudt, Knud Merrild, Helen Lundeberg and Grace Clements. Although all were socially concerned surrealists, only Clements seems to have used surrealism to directly

52. Grace Clements. 1936-Figure and Landscape.

question the tenets of American society. From the examples of their work which I have seen, Joseph Solman's assessment in Art Front seems accurate: "Clements is the only one who gives a precise pictorial meaning to her social criticism." He went on to describe her work:

> In her painting, 1936-Figure and Landscape [fig. 52], a pattern of marching soldiers forms a skeleton under a monument to liberty which is bound around with some rope that is committing a lynching.... In others she skilfully adopts elements of cubism and surrealism to express her indignation at the Capitalist program of unemployment, starvation and war.[4]

The leader of the post-surrealists, Lorser Feitelson, distinguished the new movement from surrealism: "This new classicism is distinctly cerebral and intellectual in methods, such as the rational formalism directly opposed to automatic and subconscious recordings of Dali and his surrealist colleagues."[5] Clements, without mentioning post-surrealism by name, wrote in Art Front about the need to go beyond the surrealists:

> Their weakness was their attempt to make an automatic art, uncontrolled by the conscious mind. Their significance was their use of psychological phenomena, especially through their use of associative ideas. We, too, must deal with subjective associative ideas, but ideas of extreme complexity which must be controlled by the head [all italics Clements'] no matter how much fire the heart may contain. It will be a cerebral art rather than an emotional one; that is, an art calculated in its organization. Because we must observe the limitation of our medium, we must convey ideas which can be optically apprehended.

> But most important, we must direct the comprehension of the idea so that our meaning will be precise and clear.[6]

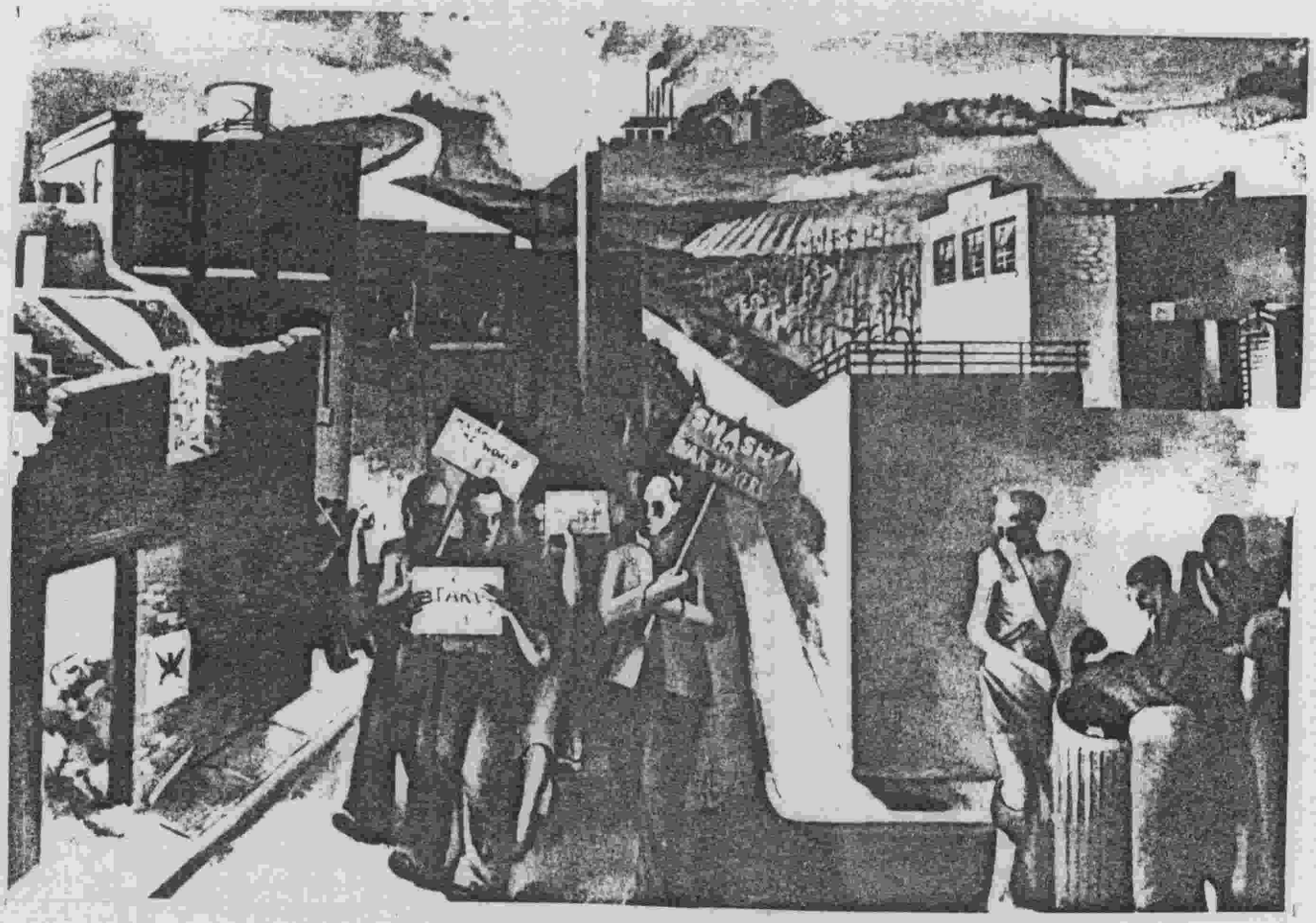
How much knowledge Clements, as a west coast artist, had of the work of the social surrealists, is unknown, but it would have been hard for her to have written a statement of purpose which would have been more in agreement with the aims demonstrated by their paintings.

Another artist who used surrealistic devices in order to criticize American society was Theodore Haupt. He seems to have faded into total obscurity, and I was able to find out almost nothing about him. In 1936, Margaret Duroc, reviewing an exhibition at the John Reed Club, after criticizing Guglielmi and Quirt, found Haupt's painting entitled Imperialism to be "appealing."[7] The painting consists of two large fat birds symbolizing Law and Business, which are engaged in devouring the flesh of their victims. The birds inhabit a landscape which is empty save for some bones which have been picked clean and three classical columns in the background. Imperialism seems far less surreal than most of Guglielmi's or Quirt's paintings--Haupt's satire is actually closer to Thomas Nast than to surrealism, and perhaps this was why Duroc found him the most acceptable of the "surrealists."

Joe Jones's Demonstration, c. 1937 (fig. 53), also made sparing use of surrealism; its influence is evident in the cutaway building and the desolation of the landscape. Demonstration contrasts a group of demonstrators with people rummaging through a garbage can.

Some of Robert Gwathmey's paintings exhibit the influence of surrealism, especially in the use of juxtaposition. In The South (fig. 54), Gwathmey employed surrealism to comment on the brutal oppression of southern Negroes by wealthy whites; the sense of the macabre here as well as the juxtaposition of contrasting elements, and the inclusion of a house represented only by its facade, all seem to have been derived from surrealism.

Although Gwathmey's The South was not painted until the forties, in general the later these surrealist tinged pictures were made, the less surreal and the less political they were. Paintings by Mitchell Siporin and John Atherton are good examples. Siporin's Homeless, c. 1940 (fig. 55), shows a group of destitute people gathered in a destroyed building set in an empty landscape. As in Jones's Demonstration, it is the general feeling of the landscape and the use of the destroyed, cutaway building which provide a feeling of



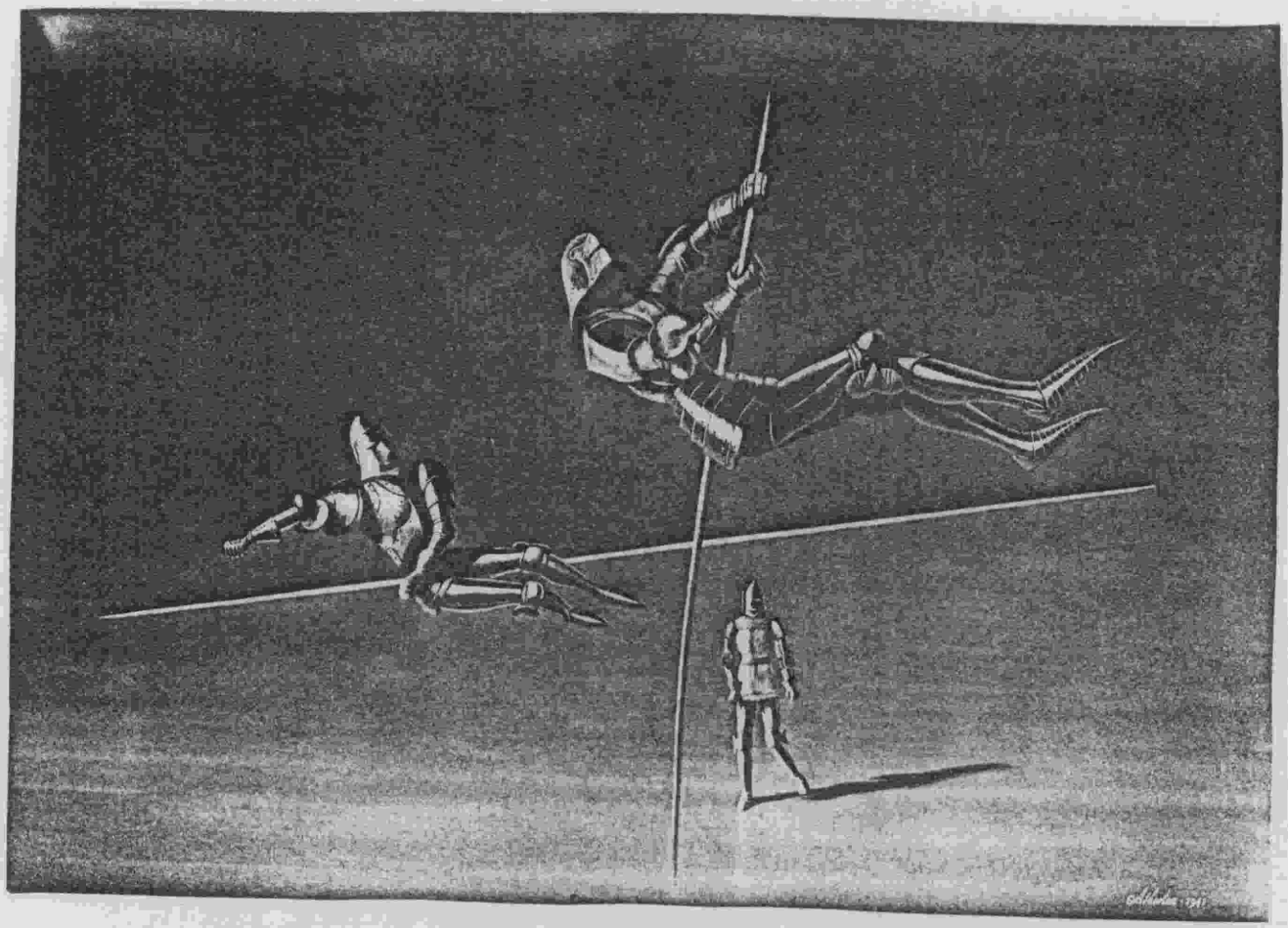
53. Joe Jones. Demonstration.

54. Robert Gwathmey. The South.

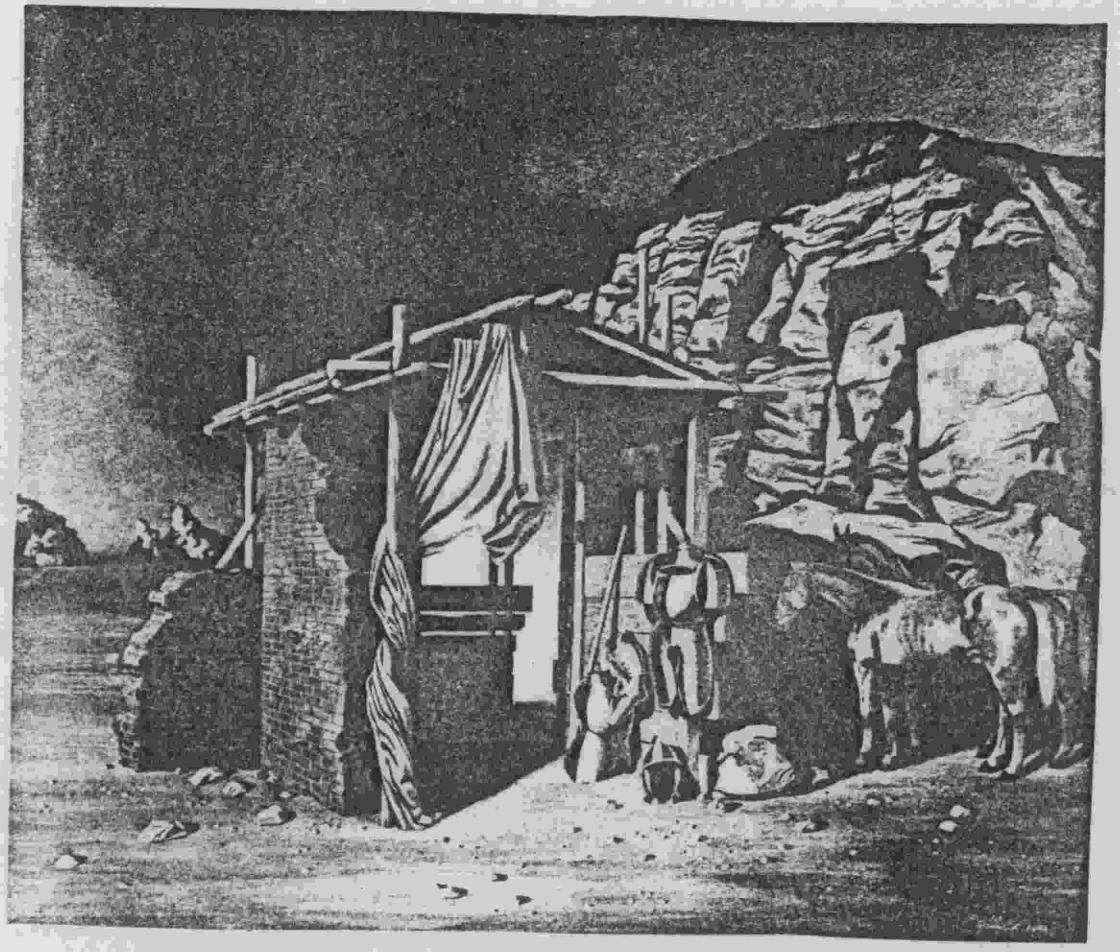
55. Mitchell Siporin. Homeless.

surrealism. Both paintings, although they are not really examples of surrealism, seem to have absorbed some of the techniques of the surrealists by relying on the reactions of the subconscious mind to convey dream-like qualities of unreality.

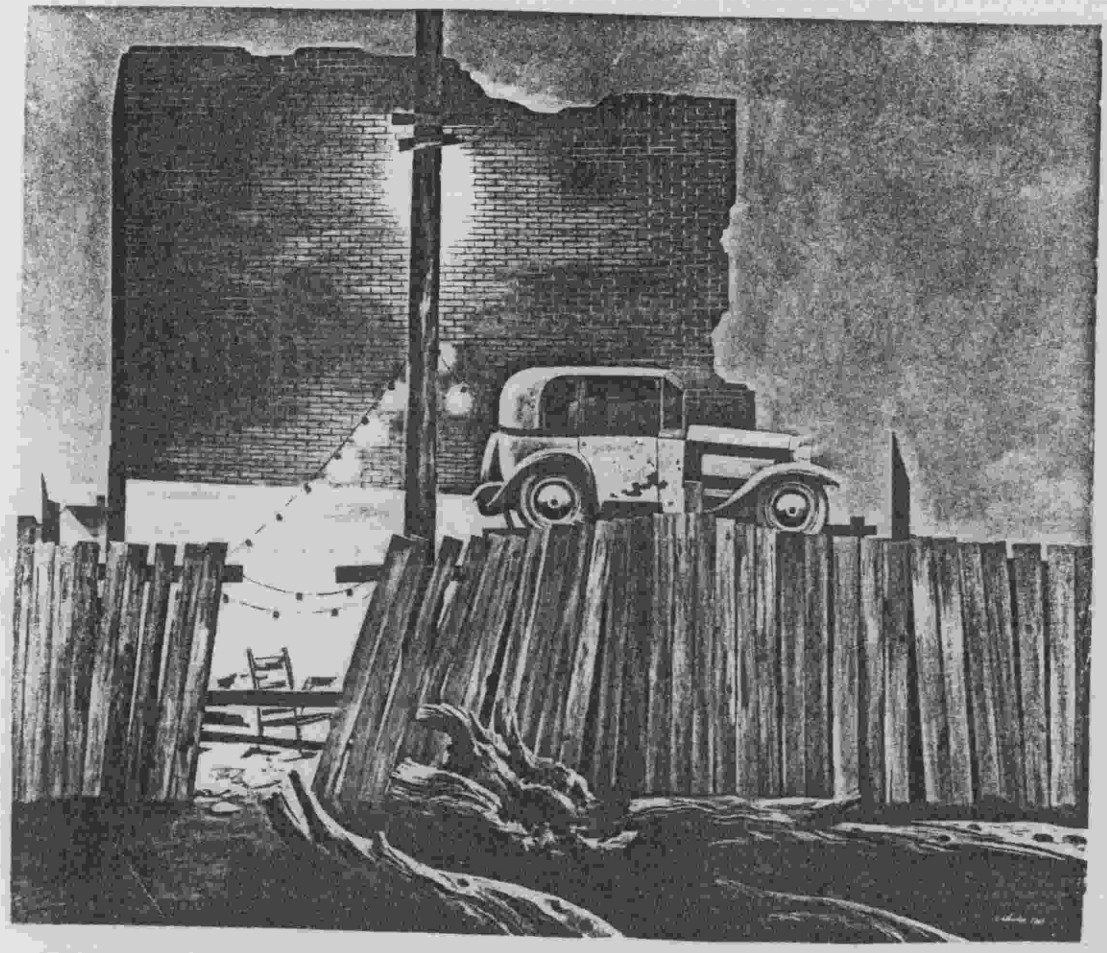
John Atherton was a surrealist painter who does not seem to have been involved in left-wing politics nor to have worked for any of the government art projects. Nevertheless, some of his work demonstrates a concern with social issues, although the war rather than the Depression appears to have been the stimulus in his case. In 1941 he produced a series of works entitled Invasion; the series uses the motif of armor--already seen in the work of the social surrealists--to comment on the futility of war. In Invasion: the Acrobats (fig. 56), there are two pole-vaulting suits of armor in an undefined space; there is not much here to indicate a concern with war. But in Invasion: the Bivouac (fig. 57), two suits of armor and two horses are seen in a landscape illuminated by an eerie light; a partially ruined brick structure is the site of the bivouac. Christmas Eve, 1941 (fig. 58), is more typical of Atherton's work; here it is the lighting and the odd combination of elements which provide a mood of depression to Atherton's straightforward manner of representation.



56. John Atherton. Invasion: the Acrobats.



57. John Atherton. Invasion: the Bivouac.



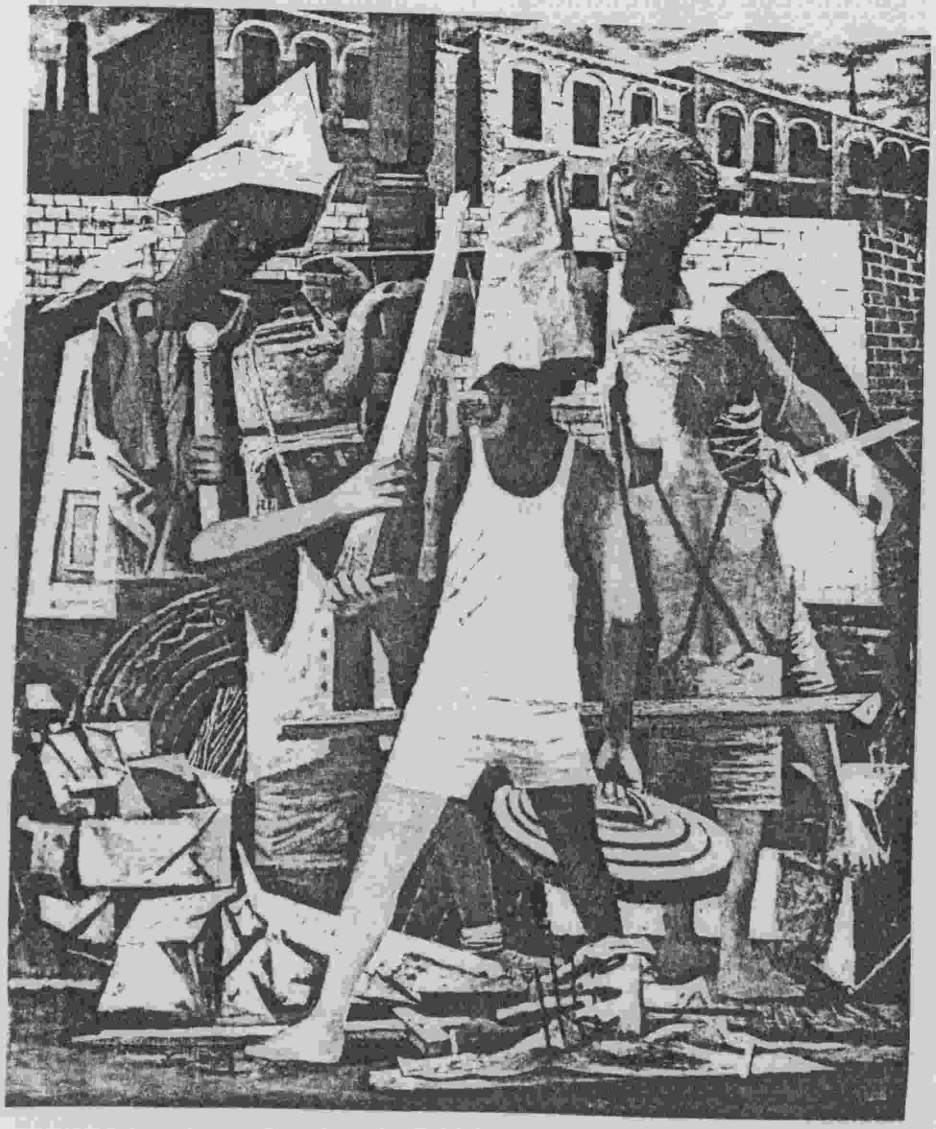
58. John Atherton. Christmas Eve.

Atherton also made use of surrealism in much of his commercial art, such as in a 1943 advertisement for Rabellon Tablets (fig. 59). The technique here is akin to that of the social surrealists, but the purpose is far removed; the ominous shadow cast by the cloud represents a psychological rather than a social danger.

Philip Guston and Ben Shahn were both socially concerned artists, and, like Atherton and Siporin, in the early forties they made use of a surrealistic atmosphere in socially conscious paintings, although again, unlike the work of the social surrealists and of earlier paintings such as Criss's Fascism and Clements' Figure and Landscape, their paintings were not so directly concerned with political protest. Shahn's images were some of the most powerful of the thirties and forties; in a painting like Italian Landscape II, 1944 (fig. 60), which deals with the wartime destruction of Italy, Shahn's method was to represent a real situation in a dream-like manner in order to heighten the psychological effect. Guston also rendered things he had seen in a manner which removes them from their normal situations and causes them to take on a macabre quality. Martial Memory, 1941 (fig. 61), is an example; the children playing soldier were actually seen by the artist, but he painted them, and more

59. John Atherton. "A Little Cloud...Like a Man's Hand".

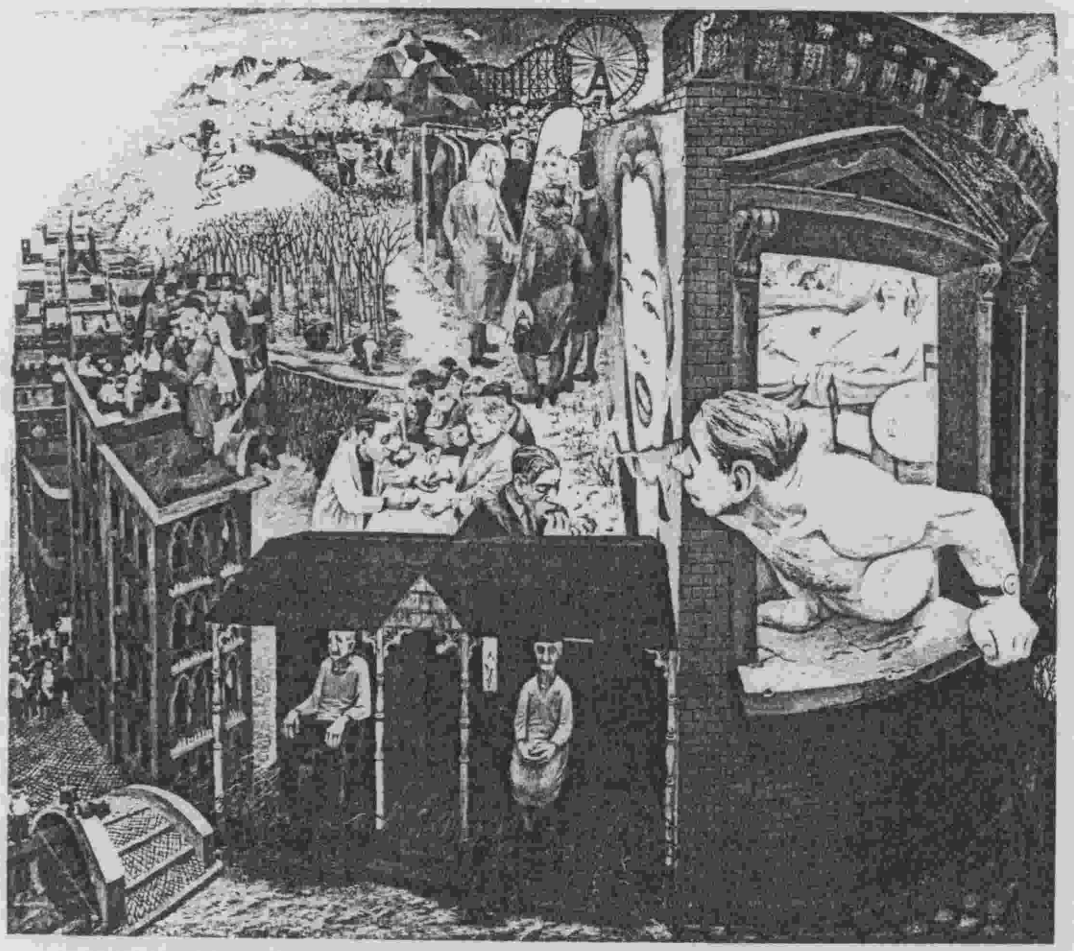
60. Ben Shahn. Italian Landscape II.



61. Philip Guston. Martial Memory.

importantly, their surroundings, in such a way that they become a monstrous parody of war. In later years Guston, along with the other abstract expressionists, was to make use of surrealism in a manner very different from that of the social surrealists.

An artist who seems close to the social surrealists in many of his paintings, but who arrived on the scene much later, was Henry Koerner (born in Vienna, he did not come to the United States until 1939). His paintings did not become known in this country until after World War II, when, as a soldier stationed with the American occupation forces in Germany, he was given a one-man show in Berlin. Whether Koerner ever had any direct contact with the surrealist movement, either in Europe or in the United States, is unknown to me. Not having left Europe until he was 24, and having received his training in Vienna, it is possible that he was more influenced by the artists of the German New Objectivity movement, such as Otto Dix and George Grosz, than by the surrealists. In any case, Koerner's best known painting, Vanity Fair, 1946 (fig. 62), is akin to Blume's Eternal City in its profusion of detail and in the combination of a large number of disparate scenes into a single canvas. Koerner, however, employed more distortion of scale than Blume and



62. Henry Koerner. Vanity Fair.

some of his imagery is very sexual in nature, something seen only in Blume's earliest work. Koerner's images also do not fit together into a rational whole as easily as do Blume's. Vanity Fair is a representation of a world gone mad, of a confused, irrational society, but Koerner did not pin the blame directly on fascism or capitalism, or anything else for that matter. The title of the painting is taken from William Thackeray's novel, the full title of which, Vanity Fair: A Novel without a Hero, may indicate that Koerner felt that society lacked direction and leadership. Koerner said of the painting that it described "how we all live, separated," and that it represented things he had seen in Berlin, London, Vienna, and the United States.[8] Koerner's application of his imagination to visual reality and his free juxtaposition of various scenes relates him to the social surrealists. According to an Art News article of 1948, Koerner considered himself to be a surrealist but believed that the true surrealists were those who operated "within the realm of possibility."[9] By 1951, Koerner's attitude toward the use of the word surrealism had changed; Newsweek reported that he did not like being labeled a surrealist.[10] The critics disagreed as to whether the term was appropriate in Koerner's case. Judith Kaye Reed in the Art Digest wrote

that his paintings were "hardly surreal,"[11] while Stuart Preston in the Art News classified Koerner as a "quasi--surrealist,"[12] and Dorothy Drummond of The Art Digest, found "social comment with a difference" to be an apt description of his work.[13] As recently as 1960, one critic found his work to be "symbolical Social Realism."[14]

In 1939, David Smith, who is better known for his abstract free-standing sculptures, cast a series of medallions entitled Medals for Dishonor which were as socially surreal as anything done by the painters, although his style, due to the nature of his medium, was considerably different. Each of the medallions is critical of a different aspect of contemporary society; Smith employed a fantastic array of images from both the present and the past, from both life and art.

In one of the medallions, Bombing Civilian Populations (fig. 73), Smith's images include a partially skeletal woman, a child impaled on a bomb, a second bomb sitting in a high chair, and a number of misshapen and distorted buildings.

In an article on Smith published in the March 1946 issue of the Magazine of Art, Stanley Meltzoff labeled him a "social surrealist" and went on to define what he meant by the term:

63. David Smith. Bombing Civilian Populations.

> Social surrealism uses surrealist techniques to describe the world at large rather than the painter's ego. It deals with what is obsessive and hallucinating to all, rather than to the artist alone. While the surrealist enigma is total and soluble only in terms of the painter's mind, the enigma of social surrealism results from extreme compression of meaning, and tends to disappear upon analysis.
>
> The French surrealist techniques of transposing objects and contexts, of double image, trompe l'oeil, pictorial punning, and general incongruity, are used by the social surrealists to present the real world more intensely.[15]

Although Meltzoff's definition is a good one, he failed to mention one factor which is crucial to my definition of social surrealism: that is, the direct political and social commentary with which all of the artists I have discussed here have been concerned. Meltzoff's characterizing of social surrealism as making use of surrealism "to present the world more intensely" is quite broad and vague; this could be said about the work of any surrealist or romantic painter, in fact it could be interpreted so as to apply to any artist at all. In listing the artists whom he considered to be social surrealists, Meltzoff named Smith, Blume, Guglielmi, Quirt, Gwathmey, Philip Evergood, William Steig and Boris Artzybasheff, and also included Picasso's Guernica.[16] The works of Steig and Artzybasheff, although influenced by surrealism, contain no political themes but are comments upon the foibles of individuals--thus they fall outside of my definition. Only

a small percentage of the works of Smith and Gwathmey applied surrealism toward social or political ends, while Evergood's distortions seem to have been derived from sources other than surrealism for the most part and imagery related to dreams or the subconscious is almost totally absent from his work. Although Picasso's Guernica may be the European painting closest in feeling to social surrealism, it is stylistically very different, and is, besides, outside the scope of this paper. Thus, as a result of my inclusion of political and social commentary as part of a definition of social surrealism, the number of artists I place within the category is fewer than those mentioned by Meltzoff. It should be emphasized here that Meltzoff's article was concerned with David Smith, and his discussion of social surrealism was an effort to relate Smith's art to general trends of his time, not to establish a definition of an art style. I feel that my emphasis on the political aspects of the art of Blume, Quirt, Guy and Guglielmi is crucial, and an examination of the critical reaction which greeted their paintings tends to support this belief; the main point around which the critics focused their attention was the nature of the social surrealists' representation of political and social ideas. This has already been seen in the reaction to Blume's The Eternal City.

It is now necessary to examine the critical reaction to other social surrealist paintings.

FOOTNOTES

1. Archives of American Art, Francis Criss papers, reel N70-34, frame 7.
2. Ibid., frame 466.
3. Letter from Dorothy Miller to Francis Criss, ibid., frame 164.
4. Joe Solman, "The Post-Surrealists of California," Art Front, June 1936, p. 12.
5. "Postsurrealism, the Supermodern," Literary Digest, July 11, 1936, p. 23.
6. Clements, p. 9.
7. Margaret Duroc, "Critique from the Left," Art Front, January 1936, p. 7.
8. "A Question," Time, January 5, 1948, p. 53.
9. "Spotlight on Koerner," Art News, February 1948, pp. 29, 48.
10. "Private Realist," Newsweek, March 19, 1951, p. 55.
11. Judith Kaye Reed, "Koerner Sans Text," Art Digest, April 1, 1950, p. 14.
12. Stuart Preston, "Henry Koerner," Art News, February 1949, p. 47.
13. Dorothy Drummond, "Accomplishment and Experiment Pace Pennsylvania Academy Annual," Art Digest, February 1, 1949, p. 9.
14. Sidney Tillim, "Henry Koerner," Arts, January 1960, p. 50.
15. Stanley Meltzoff, "David Smith and Social Surrealism," Magazine of Art, March 1946, p. 98.
16. Ibid.

CHAPTER 11

The Critical Reaction to the Social Surrealists

The critical reaction to the social surrealists in the popular press seems to have been about evenly divided as to the success of their paintings as propaganda. Emily Genauer was one of the more positive in her writings; although she had not liked Blume's The Eternal City, she was generally receptive to the other artists. Genauer believed that although Guglielmi's paintings were extremely meticulous in their detail (as were Blume's), he included only those details which were essential to his message. This enabled him to retain "a bigness, a clarity, a serenity" which she compared to de Chirico's work.[1] This overall compositional unity must have been what she found lacking in Blume's painting. Elsewhere she voiced her approval of Quirt, distinguishing his themes from those of most surrealists; she stated that he had "borrowed the idiom of the surrealists, heretofore a medium for expressing the purely personal, irrational workings of the subconscious mind, to say something vital and real and important."[2] Genauer also found that "however potent they [Quirt's paintings] may be in hastening the revolution, they are excellent works of art."[3]

Guglielmi was probably the most favorably reviewed of the social surrealists. The Art Digest found that he had "command of his materials and [could] state his convictions with skill enough to reach the 'man in the street.'"[4] The Art News also found his messages to be strong and clear.[5] To Robert Coates, writing in the New Yorker, Guglielmi, in his reliance on rationality to control the dream-like nature of surrealism, was demonstrating the direction which surrealism should take.[6] A writer for Coronet compared Guglielmi's paintings to those of Quirt and Blume--to the disadvantage of the latter two; he found that even though Guglielmi's "social consciousness" was evident, he did not "call names in paint" as did Quirt, and, unlike Blume, he subordinated "document to paint and message to design."[7]

Quirt was favorably reviewed in the American Magazine of Art by E. M. Benson, who wrote that his "adaptation of a rational Surrealistic approach to socialized subject matter is an important innovation," but doubted that his paintings would cause any reaction among the working class because of their "lugubrious intellectual quality."[8] Most of the reaction to Quirt among the critics in the popular press was more negative than was Benson's, and one might think that this would have been due to Quirt's political content, which was

usually more blatant than that of the other social surrealists. The reasons given by the critics, however, usually concerned the failure of Quirt's art as propaganda, not the fact that it was propaganda. Ann H. Sayre in Art News, for instance, did not find surrealism and propaganda to be compatible:

> To be sure, the subjects are various phases of the class struggle, forced through the filter of an effete and Daliish style. Whatever propagandist power Quirt might attain is vitiated by his wizened language. To marry surrealism to the class struggle is not the way to produce lusty "radical" offspring.[9]

The reviewer for the Philadelphia Record found Quirt's paintings confusing, lacking in force, and akin to "picture puzzles."[10] Edward Alden Jewell of the New York Times was in agreement concerning the confusing nature of Quirt's art; in his opinion, "unless you are determined to receive your social message no matter what obstacles are placed in your path," the paintings would carry no more political force than those of Dali.[11] The Times also found Guy to be confusing, attributing the problem to his eclecticism,[12] while in Art News, Martha Davidson wrote that the anecdotal quality in Guy's paintings got in the way of ideology.[13]

The reaction of left-wing art critics to the social surrealists was generally more favorable. Here again, the principal point of discussion was the value of the paintings

as propaganda and, unlike the popular press critics, for the most part the radical press found that the social surrealists had effectively adapted surrealism to political ends. Whether or not one agrees that the political statements of the social surrealists are clear, it seems surprising that the members of popular press objected to their paintings on this ground. The expectation is that they would have found many of the intended messages objectionable in themselves, whether effective or not. One would expect the left-wing critics to have been more demanding in regard to political messages. Possibly there was an element of hypocrisy on both sides here. The popular press critics may have been reluctant to criticize the politics of the social surrealists for fear of being labeled reactionary and so criticized the clarity of their messages instead. The radicals, on the other hand, may have been eager to lend support to artists who were attempting to combine modernism and politics, and thus may have been willing to overlook formal deficiencies they would have been quick to condemn in paintings less politically oriented.

Margaret Duroc's review of a John Reed Club exhibition in the January 1936 issue of Art Front was the most negative of the criticisms appearing in the left-wing press. Duroc found that Guglielmi's Phoenix failed in the attempt to employ jux-

taposed elements to inspire revolutionary sentiments:

> The picture is probably inspired by the notion of Opposites much used at one time by the Soviet artists and now happily discarded, in which the New and Old were contrasted. It is an adaptation of the Surrealist technique....The picture does not clarify capitalism, nor arouse in the spectator the quick response, "we are the proud builders." As a matter of fact, "We" are not there. The painting is an abstraction, not a chunk of life.[14]

Duroc also found Quirt's contribution to the exhibition to be inadequate as a political statement:

> Quirt is represented by "Nightmare of Capitalism." Here, the application of Surrealism seems a possibly happy one, for Surrealism is certainly the technique of nightmares. But Quirt is actually painting as a Surrealist. How else explain the distortion of the skulls of mangled soldiers into sexual symbols? Or the leering eyes which are not related to any specific feature of capitalism, but possess only the nightmare quality? Surrealism is a false medium for the revolutionary artist. It uses an occult language which needlessly separates the artist from the audience. And the sexual interpretation of the disorders of the present system is certainly to be rejected.[15]

Duroc's belief that every part of the painting should have a literal and specific meaning would, if applied, severely limit the artist's imagination. Most critics, however, were not so demanding.

Louis Lozowick's review of an earlier John Reed Club exhibition found that, although Quirt was "winning a definite place in proletarian art," the meaning of his painting was "confusing."[16] Lozowick must have found Quirt's later

paintings, done after the influence of surrealism became evident, to be even more puzzling. Elizabeth McCausland also found herself confused by social surrealism; in her case the culprit was Guy's Camouflage Man in a Landscape. McCausland, however, did not actually say whether she liked the painting, and her reaction to Criss's Fascism was also noncommittal. She wrote that Criss used "the idiom of surrealism for criticism of social ideas rather than as a channel for automatic painting."[17]

Only three months after Margaret Duroc's criticism of Quirt and Guglielmi appeared in Art Front, Clarence Weinstock wrote a very appreciative article on Quirt for the same periodical. Quirt's images were clear and specific, said Weinstock: "Torment is not merely 'in the air,' a spiritual bane which dries up the rivers. No one expects release by the mysterious touch of a fisher king. Here the enemies are known, the bankers, the generals, the officials of firms." Weinstock felt that Quirt's debt to surrealism was not very significant: "Quirt owes really little beyond suggestion to the surrealists....If he dreams, it is not after an induced reduction of the intelligence, but over manifestos and resolutions."[18] It is hard to imagine anyone dreaming about political proclamations, and Quirt's

imagery seems somewhat broader than Weinstock believed.

Direction was a left-wing cultural magazine which for some reason devoted more space to James Guy than to the other social surrealists. The July-August 1939 issue had the following to say about Guy's first one-man show: "Guy... is one of the few American painters whose work can challenge the maddest of the French surrealists and at the same time bristle with human and political significance."[19] M. Tjader Harris, reviewing Guy's 1944 show at Ferargil, compared the new, more abstract paintings with Guy's previous social surrealist work-- to the advantage of the latter.[20]

Louis Guglielmi was another of the social surrealists who came in for criticism from the left when he abandoned his social protests for abstraction. William Thor Burger in Masses and Mainstream compared a fairly abstract painting in the 1950 Whitney Annual, New York 21, with Guglielmi's earlier work. According to Burger, during the thirties Guglielmi's "content was...clear, his voice harsh and proud"; now he had become "a dry husk of his former self."[21] The magazine of the United Auto Workers, the UAW-CIO Ammunition, also found the content of Guglielmi's early work to be easily understandable. The Ammunition carried a reproduction of Wedding in South Street, painted in 1936, on the cover of

the January 1951 issue. The accompanying article described the painting as "an expression of the moods and the times that produced the UAW-CIO." The writer believed that the painting was still relevant to the union members: "Today it still reveals something that lies inside a factory worker's shirt."[22]

Jerome Klein of the New York Post was generally favorable in his reviews of the **social** surrealists.[23] Although in one review he found that Guglielmi was not always "explicit" enough and thought he decried a "metaphysical kink" in his painting,[24] elsewhere he wrote: "Much as he has in common with the Surrealists, Guglielmi certainly differs from them in his refusal to wallow in the subconscious and his insistence on coping, however circuitously, with malevolent forces external to him."[25] This was not the only instance when Klein dwelt on the difference between the social surrealists and their European counterparts. Elsewhere he wrote that: "Surrealism has been given a new and vital social hearing in the radical enigmas of Guglielmi and Quirt."[26] He also made the specific comparison of Quirt and Dali:

> Though influenced by Dali, Quirt does not share that painter's love for pure putrefaction. The sharp twist of his invention carries with it a note

> of bitter indignation against needless human misery and squalor not to be found in Dali's idyls of disintegration.[27]

Although most of the critics mentioned here are not the same ones whose writings about European surrealism were discussed earlier, they were often writing for the same periodicals and were concerned with the same social problems. It is significant that the social surrealists were much better received than the European surrealists; significant because it was not simply a result of American chauvinism. Rather, the difference in attitude was a result of real differences in the approaches of the artists themselves. The American social surrealists were more easily understandable and less dependent on the subconscious than were artists like Dali, Ernst and Tanguy and they used their paintings to make direct statements on social and political issues. Thus the two main objections which the leftist critics had to European surrealism were not applicable to the work of the American social surrealists. Because the social surrealists concentrated on the material world rather than on an ideal world, they were less susceptible to Marxist accusations of idealism. Their starting point was what the eye saw and what the conscious mind perceived, not what the subconscious imagined.

It is interesting that both Clarence Weinstock and

Jerome Klein wrote articles which dealt harshly with surrealism, but both wrote favorable critiques of the social surrealists; they found that the social surrealists had assimilated aspects of surrealism, but that they had gone beyond surrealism by refusing to completely succumb to the subconscious. Weinstock denigrated the amount of surrealist influence in Quirt's art; possibly he found it necessary to do so in order to justify his favorable reaction. Jacob Kainen was another who found surrealism to be absurd, but who had praise for Quirt and Guglielmi.[28] Both Kainen and Klein did not like Blume's The Eternal City however; Blume's detail was the most painstaking of the social surrealists, and, at least in Kainen's case, this was the reason for his negative reaction.

The writers for journals like Art Front were, of course, eager to lend support to American painters holding political views similar to their own, but the differing reactions to the American social surrealists and the European surrealists does not seem inconsistent. Many of those critical of Breton and Dali had seen some potential value in surrealism and had speculated that good use might someday be made of its methods provided that an approach that relied less on dream imagery and more on political awareness was employed. It was precisely this that the social surrealists were attempt-

ing to do.

FOOTNOTES

1. Emily Genauer, "Guglielmi's Protests Among Gallery Exhibits," New York World Telegram, November 19, 1938, from Archives, Downtown Gallery papers, frame 726.
2. Genauer, "Younger Painters in the East," Parnassus, April 1937, p. 19.
3. Genauer, "Art Instructors Hold Exhibition," New York World Telegram, September 1936, from Archives, Criss papers, frame 754.
4. "Guglielmi's First," Art Digest, November 15, 1938, p. 20.
5. James W. Lane, "The Whitney Annual: U. S. Barometer," Art News, January 13, 1940, p. 10.
6. Robert M. Coates, "The Art Galleries," New Yorker, January 20, 1940, p. 59.
7. H. S., "About O. Louis Guglielmi," Coronet, March 1937, p. 182.
8. E. M. Benson, "Walter Quirt--Socialized Surrealist," American Magazine of Art, April 1936, p. 260.
9. Sayre, p. 9.
10. Philadelphia Record, April 12, 1936, from Archives, Criss papers, frame 756.
11. Jewell, "Paintings of Quirt Recall Dali's Art," New York Times, February 20, 1936, p. 22.
12. "Among the Local Shows," New York Times, February 9, 1941, sec. IX, p. 10.
13. Martha Davidson, "A Regional Congress of Living Artists," Art News, April 24, 1937, p. 10.
14. Duroc, p. 7.
15. Ibid.
16. Louis Lozowick, "John Reed Club Show," New Masses, January 2, 1934, p. 23.
17. Elizabeth McCausland, "Living American Art," Parnassus, May 1939, p. 19.
18. Clarence Weinstock, "Quirt," Art Front, April 1936, p. 13.
19. "Cultural Front," Direction, July-August 1939, p. 21.
20. M. Tjader Harris, "Art Notes," Direction, February-March 1944, p. 23.
21. William Thor Burger, "The Whitney Disaster," Masses and Mainstream, March 1950, p. 90.
22. "Wedding in South Street," UAW-CIO Ammunition, January 1951, p. 2, from Archives, Downtown Gallery papers, frame 648.

23. I obtained the references for some of these reviews from clippings in the Archives of American Art. These clippings do not always include a byline. It is an assumption on my part that Klein was the author, since, to my knowledge, he was the Post's only art critic at this time.

24. Jerome Klein, New York Post, November 19, 1938 (?), from Archives, Downtown Gallery papers, frame 724.

25. New York Post, October 10, 1937, from Archives, Guglielmi papers, frame 227.

26. New York Post, date unknown, ibid., frame 223.

27. Quoted in "Quirt, American Surrealist," Art Digest, March 1, 1936, p. 16.

28. Jacob Kainen, Daily Worker, from Archives, Guglielmi papers, frame 223.

CHAPTER 12

Conclusion

Although during the thirties many American artists abandoned modernism in an effort to make their art more accessible, it was almost inevitable that there would be some socially concerned artists who would remain influenced by the changes wrought by modern art. Artists such as Stuart Davis and Louis Lozowick, for instance, held left-wing political views and also continued to utilize modern developments in their works.

Nevertheless, none of these artists produced paintings which attempted to combine political or social statements with modern techniques. The main current of modernism, and the one reflected in the art of Davis, Lozowick and most other American moderns, was that of cubism and abstraction, and attempts to combine these styles with propaganda have been rare. Picasso's Guernica is one example and El Lissitsky's 1919 poster, Beat the Whites with the Red Wedge, is another. Lissitsky's work was the exception among the modernists in Russia in the years after the revolution; although Malevich, Gabo, Kandinsky and others supported the revolution, they did not turn their art into vehicles for propaganda. The

problem is simple--abstract art is concerned much more with the formal problems of painting and sculpture, little with subjects external to art, and thus does not easily lend itself to propaganda.

When American artists began turning to social protest during the thirties the impact of surrealism was just being felt in the United States. Thus, there was a new alternative presented to American artists, a style of painting which, particularly in the veristic variety typified by Dali, would allow the artist to be modern and yet still be able to utilize recognizable subject matter. All one had to do was to apply the techniques of surrealism to subjects which were not so obscure as were those of the Europeans. Dali's method could be applied to real objects rather than to the images of one's own subconscious, and thus would be understood by a larger number of people. To apply a style derived from the subconscious to images dealing with political and social trends and events, not in a random manner but by using one's own political beliefs as a controlling factor, this was how surrealism was adapted to "practical" ends by the social surrealists. Surrealism was an effective means of expressing the dissatisfaction which many

artists felt during the depression--dissatisfaction with both American society and with the environment, both urban and rural. The disturbing results of surrealist techniques expressed the desolation of both city and country--the land which had seemingly turned against man and the alienating emptiness of the crowded city.

Social surrealism was seldom completely negative; there was usually some element of hope present. The absurdities which were reflected were those of a particular society, not of life itself. When members of the working class were represented, they were treated differently from their oppressors. Quirt's numerous representations of strong, virile workers, the people climbing out of the ruins in The Eternal City, the fisherman in Guy's Yachting, and the young boy who appears in a number of Guglielmi's paintings--all stand in contrast to the realities of their current situations, all indicate a feeling of optimism for the future. Often too, surrealism was used to convey the falseness of the power held by the oppressor. The jack-in-the-box Mussolini in The Eternal City, the distorted figures of Quirt's Conflict and The Future Is Ours, and the lazy businessman of Guy's Yachting--these personifications of oppression and injustice

seem far from invincible. The social surrealists never portrayed visions of a glorious future but hinted at its possibility by demonstrating the impotence of the present power structure. Guglielmi's paintings often do not follow this generalization. Although paintings like Hague Street and Odyssey for Moderns indicate hope in the future, Guglielmi never showed those responsible for current problems, and in some of his strongest paintings--Mental Geography and Terror in Brooklyn, for instance--the anonymity of the source of the disorder contributes to a feeling of helplessness and despair.

Social surrealism was never an organized movement; rather it involved a number of artists who attempted to utilize surrealism in a similar manner and toward similar ends. Quirt and Guy were close friends and influenced one another, but no strong personal connections can be established among the other artists. They must, however, have been aware of one another's work since they were all living around the New York area (Blume in Connecticut, the others in New York for at least most of the thirties) and moved in the same artistic circles.

It is possible that Blume's South of Scranton was an important catalyst in the development of social surrealism.

It made quite a splash in 1934--about the time when Guy, Quirt and Guglielmi all began painting in a social surrealist style. Dali's first one-man shows in America were also held around this time--in 1933 and 34. Although Guy, Guglielmi and Quirt seem to have been aware of surrealism before 1934, I found no evidence to indicate that they had attempted to apply it to social or political themes before that time.[1] Blume certainly began painting surrealistically well before 1934, but his work after that year, particularly The Eternal City, was quite different stylistically from his previous work--a precisionist type of flatness gave way to an extremely minute rendering of detail, possibly due in part to the influence of Dali (although Blume himself cited fifteenth century Italian painting as having been more important for his stylistic development).

What caused these artists to apply surrealism to political ends was clear in their own minds: it was the events of the Depression and their consequent effects upon artists. The social conditions themselves compelled them to focus their attention on society and politics. Blume wrote:

> Many artists today...consider themselves immune to the conditions in society. But as a matter of fact, all their peculiarities, their traditions, their general social outlook, are symptoms of how social conditions have molded them. Changes in the order

> of society have not only affected their style and techniques, but have actually caused them to take sides in the economic struggle and to develop peculiar class prejudices.[2]

According to Blume, it was the Depression which brought the artists down to earth--they now found themselves in the same boat as the lower classes and their "illusions of grandeur" were shattered.[3] Guglielmi's statements concerning how the realities of the Depression, including his own poverty, forced him to alter his art have already been discussed. Quirt also had the personal experience of poverty in the early years of the Depression, before the Federal Arts Project was able to provide assistance.[4] For James Guy, too, it was the Depression which made him aware of problems needing correction:

> Artists, at least young ones, lived in cold water flats in what is now romantically called the East Village, but in those days was just slums. We were surrounded by unemployed demonstrations, familys (sic) being evicted, etc. The only ones who seemed to have the answers were the communists and socialists and not surprisingly artists and writers were forced to become politically minded.[5]

It was to surrealism that Guy turned to find means of expressing his belief in the necessity for change: "I found a surrealist technique the best means of satisfying my own social and artistic beliefs."[6] The lack of material available on Quirt and Guy prevents me from making any statements regarding their class backgrounds and any possible experience

of poverty prior to the Depression. It seems likely, however, that both Guglielmi and Blume had some experience of poverty in their youth, as both came from working class immigrant families. Guglielmi, after arriving in this country at the age of eight, grew up in East Harlem. At an an early age he knew the problems faced by the poor in the cities. (The young boy who appears as a sign of hope amidst urban decay in a number of his paintings seems to represent the artist's own childhood.) Blume was born in Russia, and, like Guglielmi, he arrived in this country as a child--at age five. (It is interesting to note that Blume's father fled Russia for political reasons, but after coming to the United States he abandoned his radical political activities.) Blume grew up in Brooklyn, the son of a garment worker.[7] He worked at a number of odd jobs before turning to painting full time--among the places he worked were a subway newsstand, a jewelry factory and a lithographic workshop.[8] Whatever the class backgrounds of the four artists, their geographic origins were fairly diverse; two native Americans--one from Connecticut and one from Michigan, and two immigrants--an Italian and a Russian.

Barbara Rose's belief that the social surrealists (she

mentions Blume, Guglielmi and Koerner by name) were among those artists who attempted to "escape reality" rather than come to grips with the Depression,[7] is far from accurate. Although they were not social realists, the social surrealists were seriously concerned with the harshness of life during the thirties. This is less true of Blume than of the other artists. Although he was active in left-wing artistic circles, his paintings did not deal directly with poverty or injustice, with the exception of The Eternal City, which had for its subject fascism, a form of oppression not present in the United States. Paintings like Parade and South of Scranton can be interpreted as dealing with social problems, and they sometimes were regarded in that way, particularly South of Scranton, but they were not direct comments on the Depression. The social concern of Blume and the other social surrealists was evidenced by their involvement in artists' organizations such as the Artists' Congress and Union and the John Reed Club. Quirt and Criss also taught at the American Artists' School,[10] the purpose of which was "to make the student conscious of his social and economic environment, and to instruct him in suitable methods for its presentation."[11]

Social surrealism can be viewed as a result of a genuine desire for the best of both art and politics, as an attempt

to be politically progressive without becoming artistically reactionary. The artists involved believed that their paintings could be understood by anyone, not just by those with special training in the arts. One problem was that members of the working class seldom had opportunities to view paintings and thus no chance to express their understanding or lack of it. In addition to new forms and subjects, new methods of exhibition and distribution were also needed. Paintings, even the most radical, were seen and bought by the bourgeoisie, not by working people who individually had no means with which to purchase works of art. There were attempts during the thirties to bring art out of the museums and galleries and to make it more widely available; one such attempt was to hold exhibitions in unusual places such as factories. Much more important, however, was the mural movement.

Mural painting had proved to be effective in Mexico as an art form relevant to, and appreciated by, masses of people. With the coming of the New Deal, American artists hoped that similar results could be obtained in this country. Most of the social surrealists painted murals: Blume did one for the Geneva, New York, Post Office which contained some elements of anthropomorphic surrealism, but which was not political in

content; Quirt's murals for Bellevue Hospital have already been discussed; Guy painted a mural for the Hartford (Connecticut) High School which was concerned with sources of food supply and was surreal in style; Francis Criss also painted a mural, for the Williamsburg Housing Project in New York, but it showed no influence of surrealism. Although Quirt's and Guy's murals were surrealistic, they do not seem to have dealt with social protest, but were concerned with more general themes--medicine and food. If they had been strong political attacks they most likely would not have been acceptable to those who had commissioned them. This was a general problem during the thirties, for unlike the Mexican muralists, who were working under a radical government and thus in harmony with those in power, the more radical of the American muralists had to be careful not to offend federal or local agencies by painting murals which were too strongly socialistic. The Mexican movement was an outgrowth of a general revolution in society, while in America the muralists relied on a government buraucracy, not on the support of the people. It is doubtful that any style of art, including surrealism, could have produced a mural movement in this country which would have been both stimulating visually and appreciated by the average person. Despite the rhetoric of

the artists' organizations, artists were almost as isolated from the mainstream of society as they had been before the Depression, and the artists' organizations never had much importance outside of artistic circles.

Although they had no effective means of reaching working people, the social surrealists were concerned with making their art intellectually accessible to the majority. To do this it was necessary to eschew obscure or refined subjects, and to be clear and rational in their use of juxtaposition. This was reflected in their critical reception which often remarked upon the rational nature of their type of surrealism. Some of the critics, because of this rationalism, were even hesitant to label the paintings surrealist. Howard Devree of the New York Times decided that "imaginative realist" was a more apt description of Guglielmi than surrealist.[12] Nor did he find surrealism to be an appropriate description of Blume's paintings.[13] Robert Coates described Guglielmi's imagery as "managed" and found it to be "less an affair of subconscious symbolism than a simple extension of the original visual concept into its metaphorical relations."[14] Time found Guglielmi's painting to be "a specifically American variant of Surrealism--grotesqueries dependent on rational rather than irrational meaning."[15] Werner Haftmann

has written that although Blume made use of surrealist devices such as "animism, the coupling of things not normally found together, and the combination of incongruous scenes into a coherent image," the result was "less Surrealist than fantastically Romantic."[16]

According to Herbert Read, it is difficult to determine who is a surrealist and who is not, because, as with any movement which places so much emphasis on freedom, one cannot establish strict rules to employ in determining who is part of the movement. According to Read, for all practical purposes the movement consisted of only one man--Breton. It was mainly in Breton's mind that surrealism existed, he wrote the manifestos, and he expelled people from or accepted them into the movement.[17] I do not completely agree with Read; there was a definite surrealist movement in France, even if it was simultaneously both very diverse and yet dominated by one individual. Whether the social surrealists would have fit in with the European surrealists is doubtful. The free exploration of dreams and the subconscious, particularly in the more erotic aspects, was foreign to the Americans, as was the automatic painting employed by many of the Europeans. The paintings of the social surrealists, rather than being recreations or reflections of subconscious states, were usually

combinations of various symbols--symbols which, even when derived from the subconscious or dreams, were always representative of concrete material situations or objects. The social surrealists were too controlled, too rational to have been accepted by Breton and company, despite Breton's assertion that surrealism had entered a more rational phase, an assertion which, whether or not it influenced the development of the social surrealists, could certainly have provided support for their use of surrealism, had they sought such a theoretical basis for their work.

Whether or not this rationalism can be attributed to some aspect of the American character is something which cannot be proven one way or the other. What can be established is that the mood of the thirties demanded a more rational approach and would seem to have been sufficient impetus in itself to cause American surrealists to attempt to deal with problems of the society. Werner Haftmann believes that it was due to the concern of American artists of the thirties with "describing the contemporary scene" that only certain elements of veristic surrealism were taken up even though the abstract aspects of surrealism were certainly known.[18] There have, of course, been other uses made of surrealism in this country, for the most part after the thirties. The abstract

expressionists' use of the subconscious and automatist aspects of surrealism is the best example. Walter Quirt's paintings of the forties and later have much in common with the Abstract Expressionists in their reliance on the more abstract of the surrealists, and, before abandoning surrealism altogether, Guy and Guglielmi came increasingly to rely on subconscious images which were less related to social and political problems.

The fact that the four artists focused on here all abandoned social surrealism at about the same time lends support to the contention that social surrealism was the result of the political and artistic atmosphere of the thirties. Because social surrealism was never an organized movement there could not have been any collective decision on the part of those involved to abandon the style. Nevertheless, in the early forties, Guy, Quirt and Guglielmi all began moving away from the making of direct political statements in their paintings, and by 1946 they were all painting in fairly abstract styles--Guglielmi and Guy employing hard-edged geometric forms, while Quirt's style was looser and more expressionistic. Blume's change is more difficult to pinpoint. The Eternal City was completed in 1937 and his next large canvas, The Rock, not until 1948.

Blume's style had only undergone minor changes during the interval, but his subject matter had become decidedly less concerned with protesting against society's wrongs. The Rock deals less with man's struggle against man and more with his confrontations with nature and the cyclical activities of growth and decay--themes which have been Blume's main concerns ever since.

The disappearance of social surrealism coincided with the general decline of realism in painting, particularly of social realism. The Second World War removed whatever wind was left in the sails of the protestors. Artists, along with many other political activists had come to the conclusion that the revolution was far from imminent. The confusion and about-faces which had become increasingly visible and dramatic in the policies of the supposed revolutionary vanguard caused much disillusionment among all segments of the left. By 1941 the Communist Party had lost almost all of its moral and political effectiveness; it had become obvious that the policies of the party were dictated not by American realities, but by Soviet theories. Many people who had looked to the Communists and the left for a strong moral leadership during the thirties, now, due to disillusionment with the Communists and the atmosphere of McCarthyism, abandoned

politics altogether. In artistic circles the trend was away from advocacy of political change and toward concern with personal transformation.

Concurrent with this shift in emphasis from the outer to the inner world was a sharp change in the nature of the influence exerted by surrealism in America. The Second World War had forced many of Europe's leading artists to emigrate to the United States--among them were surrealists such as Ernst, Tanguy, Masson and Seligmann. It was the art of these surrealists, much more than that of Dali, which was to be significant for developments in American art during the forties and fifties. Where Dali's style easily lent itself to the political interests of the thirties, the more personally expressive style of Masson was the kind of stimulus for which artists of the forties and fifties were searching.

The strengths and weaknesses of the social surrealists were largely those of American leftists in general. A strongly felt desire for change was hindered by a lack of a full understanding of the issues and the concepts with which they were dealing. Many of the paintings of the social surrealists contain strong images, but too often the use of surrealism was rather perfunctorily applied to the subjects. Guglielmi's paintings were often the most successful, possibly

because they dealt with subjects which had strong personal significance for him; he often portrayed his childhood memories of Brooklyn and Manhattan, transforming his own experiences into symbols of universal hope and oppression. In contrast, many of the subjects with which the other social surrealists dealt do not seem to have been deeply felt; paintings such as The Eternal City and Morals for Workers are more illustrations of ideas than ideas in themselves. Formally, social surrealism possessed no innovative qualities, and many of the paintings have a harsh feeling. But it must be kept in mind that these artists, and many other artists of the thirties, were much more interested in conveying a message than in providing a pleasing aesthetic experience. Nevertheless, the attempt of the social surrealists to unite politics and modern art should not be scoffed at. It is a problem which has very rarely been successfully dealt with--and never on a large scale. The problems with which these artists attempted to deal are those which involve the artistic attitudes of the society as a whole, and if progressive art and progressive politics are ever to unite, these problems must be dealt with by large numbers of both artists and non-artists alike.

FOOTNOTES

1. The earliest painting of Guy's which I have seen is dated 1935; Quirt's works prior to 1934 seem to have contained no overt surrealism; and, although Guglielmi's statement in American Realists and Magic Realists indicates that he had an interest in surrealism before 1934, which is the date of the earliest surrealist painting of his that I have seen, it does not seem to have been a social surrealism.
2. Blume, "The Artist Must Choose," First American Artists' Congress (New York, 1936), p. 27.
3. Ibid., p. 29.
4. According to Jacob Kainen in O'Connor, New Deal Art Projects, p. 312.
5. Guy, Letter, August 1975.
6. Guy, Letter, September 15, 1975.
7. Getlein.
8. Lee Nordness, ed., Art USA Now, vol. 1 (New York: Viking Press, 1963), p. 148.
9. Barbara Rose, American Art Since 1900 (New York: Praeger, 1967), p. 129.
10. Genauer, "Art Instructors."
11. "A New Art School," Art Digest, February 15, 1936, p. 26.
12. Howard Devree, "A Reviewer's Notebook," New York Times. November 20, 1938, sec. IX, p. 10.
13. Devree, "Diverse Americans," New York Times, January 9, 1949, sec. II, p. 8.
14. Coates, "The Art Galleries," p. 59.
15. "Rational Grotesqueries," Time, December 5, 1938, p. 38.
16. Haftmann, p. 300.
17. Read, A Concise History of Modern Sculpture (New York: Praeger, 1964), p. 160.
18. Haftmann, p. 300.

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