FUTURE OF THE CENTER

On June 30, Herbert Marshall becomes Professor Emeritus and retires as a full-time faculty member of SIUC, but he will continue as Director of the Center for Soviet and East European Studies in the Performing Arts. This will now be housed at 809 South Forest Street on the SIUC campus in Carbondale, Illinois 62901, from June 30 until further notice. Active negotiations are being pursued for further funding and for full-scale continuation of the Center here or elsewhere. Everyone on our mailing list will be kept informed. All suggestions welcomed! Meanwhile, the Center will continue on a limited basis, as major funding by SIUC will cease.

Professor Marshall will now be available for visiting lectureships from June 30, 1979, on. Following are some of the proposed seminar topics:

1. THE HISTORY, THEORY AND PRACTICE OF THE SOVIET THEATRE with personal reminiscences of its greatest directors and actors: Stanislavsky (Moscow Art Theatre), Meyerhold (Meyerhold Theatres), Tairov (Kamerny Th.), Vakhtangov (Vakhtangov Th.), Okhlopkov (Realistic and Mayakovsky Theatres), Mikhoels (Moscow Yiddish Th.), Cherkassov (Leningrad Drama Th.), Livanov (Moscow Art Th.). Illustrated with slides, film-strips, and records.


To be accompanied with special showings of a selection of the greatest Soviet films (classic and modern).


3. THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF SERGEI EISENSTEIN with personal reminiscences of his classes, lectures, and productions.

Accompanied by showing of all his films.


Film Sense, Film Form and Film Essays by S. Eisenstein. Tr. J. Leyda.


4. THE STANISLAVSKY METHOD OF DIRECTION (as distinct from his method of acting) with practical examples, during the seminar, of the METHOD of directing a chosen play; concentrating on the preparatory work of the Director up to the work on stage.


5. THE HISTORY, THEORY AND PRACTICE OF SOVIET POETRY with personal reminiscences of its leading poets: Pasternak, Asayev, Akhmatova, Okudzjava, Akhmadulina, Yevtushenko, Bokov, Voinesensky, Lukonin, Ryisky, Abashidze, Halkin, Ukkin, etc. With readings of the original (some by the poets themselves) and in the translations of H. Marshall and others.


6. THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TRANSLATING POETRY with examples from Russian and other languages and a comparative study of translations. Participation by the students with their own translations.

All enquiries should go to Professor Herbert Marshall at 809 South Forest Street, Carbondale, IL 62901. Telephone 453–5174 or 549–4569.

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF DENNIS DOBSON

As this Bulletin was being prepared, my life-long friend, my English publisher and editor, Dennis Dobson, died. He died suddenly on his way back from the famous Frankfurt International Book Fair, where he was proudly presenting his latest books. And he could not have wished for a better exit.

My wife, Fredda Brilliant, and I have known and loved Dennis since we first met him at the very beginning of his publishing activities, just after the war. Another dear friend, the famous creator of Photo-Montage, Johnny Hearfield, at my suggestion, had been commissioned by Dennis to design for him, and I was invited to be editor of a new series, The International Library of Cinema and Theatre, under which we published over twenty outstanding books by famous authors such as Eisenstein, Bela Balazs, S. Krakauer, etc.

We were planning also the publication of the Selected Works of Sergei Eisenstein, Volume I being his Autobiography, Volume II, Montage, and Volume III, Non-Indifferent Nature—all now completely translated by myself and a collaborator.

However, the Autobiography has been considerably delayed. The difficulties of its birth were due to the unbounded conscientiousness of Dennis and his wife, Margaret, who insisted on tracking down the final source and proper spelling of any and every name, quotation, or footnote. They would not let a book be published until they were satisfied they had exhausted the corrections. This resulted in my magnum opus Mayakovskiy being one of the most beautiful books they published. And the Autobiography is another example of Dennis’ painstaking supervision, ably and as painstakingly assisted by his wife Margaret, his indefatigable partner in business and in their home of seven children.
To write about such an unusual human being as Dennis is very difficult at such a time, but the obituary in the London Times on October 27, 1978, was a brilliant summing up of this unique human being.

THE SELECTED WORKS OF SERGEI EISENSTEIN

Volume I, the Autobiography of Eisenstein, translated by Herbert Marshall and Tony Wright, will be published at the end of 1979 by Dennis Dobson Ltd.

Volume II, Montage, translated by Herbert Marshall and Roberta Reeder, will be published shortly by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Volume III, Non-Indifferent Nature, by the same translators, is now completed and with the publishers.

PIRASMANI
(The "primitive" painter of Georgia)
by Bulat Okudjavva, authorized translation
by Herbert Marshall

I translate this specially for Bulat, commemorating and welcoming his first visit to the United States. He was a guest of Professor Helen Weil, Chairman of the Slavic Department of the University of California at Irvine, who had been persistently working for years to achieve this end.

Pirosmani is now recognized as one of the great artists of Georgia who died in poverty. A magnificent film has been produced about him by Shengalaya at the Tbilisi Film Studios.

To Nikolai Grituk

What is it happens, tell me,
when we are dreaming dreams,
and the artist Pirosmani
comes out of the wall it seems,
out of those primitive frames,
from all sorts of rustling moods,
and tries to sell his paintings
just for a morsel of food.

Knobby skinny his knees,
his glance apprehensive,
but sleek fat deer peep
out of his paintings pensive.

Marguerita the beautiful
on luscious grass lies stark,
see her bare breasts bountiful
quiver with a birth-mark.

See how the earth's exulting,
dances and sings elate,
Pirosmani paints her portrait,
Marguerita patiently waits.

He loved life unstintingly,
as is plain to view...
but on all the earth
for him
not one bowl of soup.

RUSSIAN ORIGINAL.

ПЕСЕНКА О ХУДОЖНИКЕ ПИРОСМАНИ

Николаю Гритюку

Что происходит с нами,
kогда мы смотрим сны?
Художник Пиросями
выходит из стены, из рамок примитивных, из вской суеты и продает картины за порцию еды. Худы его колении и насторожен взгляд, но сытые олени с картин его глядят, красотка Маргарита в траве густой лежит, а грудь её открыта — там родинка дрожит.

И вся земля ликует, пирует и поет, и он ее рисует и Маргариту ждет.

Он жизнь любил не скучно, как видно по всему... Но не хватило супа на всей земле ему.

TARAS SHEVCHENKO (1814–1861)

The Ukrainian Cultural Centre of Ottawa, Canada, will publish Herbert Marshall's translations of this Ukrainian bard under the editorship of Senator Paul Yuzyk. It will consist of twenty-four poems from his famous Kobzar together with illustrations of the poet's own paintings and drawings. It is not generally realized that Shevchenko was as great a painter as he was a poet. This was, however, made visible by Fredda Brilliant in her monumental statue of Taras Shevchenko, now in the Shevchenko Museum in Kiev, Ukraine. Here he is shown in a painter's smock at work at his easel at the same time as he composes a poem.

This publication was originally commissioned when Marshall was a guest lecturer at Ottawa University by Professor Constantine Bida as then editor-in-chief of the series of
UKRAINIAN ORIGINAL.

Поглянемо, моя доле...
Бач, який широкий,
Та високий та веселий,
Який та глибокий...
Походдимо ж, моя зоре...
Зйдемо на гору,
Спочимо, а тим часом
Твої сестри-зорі,
Безвідь, по вітл небо
Попливуть, засніжать...—
Підйдемо ж, моя сестро,
Дружно свята!
Та нескверними устами
Помолимося богу,
Та й рушимо тихесенько
В далеку дорогу —
Над Летоко безднію,
Та каламутнюю.
Власостови мене, друже,
Славою святою.
14 февраля.

SOLOMON MIKHOEELS (1890-1948)

Herbert Marshall is completing a new book on the history of the Moscow State Jewish Theatre, which began under the artistic directorship of Alexander Granovsky (1917-1928) and then continued under the great actor Solomon Mikhoels (1929-1948) until its liquidation under Stalin in 1949. Mikhoels was assassinated on the personal orders of Stalin, as his (Stalin's) daughter Svetlana Alliluyeva has testified. This was followed by a virtual pogrom of the Soviet Yiddish intelligentsia in 1952.

Marshall was an "assistant-practicing" sent to the Moscow State Jewish Theatre by his teacher Eisenstein in 1935, while still his student at the All Union State Institute of Cinematography. Here he met Mikhoels and Zuskin and saw rehearsals of his masterpiece King Lear. Mikhoels as Lear and Zuskin as the Clown created unsurpassed characterizations in this production. Marshall was interpreter in 1935 for the great English theatre artist Gordon Craig when Craig witnessed this production and cried out: "This is the most ironic moment of my life! I have seen in Russia, produced in the Yiddish language, the most wonderful production of Lear it has been my privilege to witness."

Here is a translation of an extraordinary poem commemorating that same production.

A PURPLE DAY

by Osavi Driz*
Translated by Herbert Marshall
In Memory of Solomon Mikhoels

Purple was the day,
Skies clouded—
fishlike crowding.
Somewhere sounded
motor-cars, tramways.
But here, on Malaya Bronnaya Street,**
reigned a silence profound.
And a strange procession appears of clowns,
yellow-crimson-green,
in the silence
making their way.
The day was downcast and blear.
The clowns bore
on their shoulders
the body
of King
Lear.

They made their way cautiously
as if on a cliff-edge climbing,
clowns magnificent
in their clumsiness triumphant.
For him the silence sobbed
Only jesters' bells throbbed,
jangling,
on the clowns' motley
dangling;
Jingling-jangling,
Jingling-jangling . . . .

Purple was the day.
The sky swam
like a great fish.
No trumpets howled
and no flutes wailed.
Only jesters' bells were sobbing,
throbbing:
jingling-jangling,
jingling-jangling . . . .

Day like night passed.
Torment anguished
the comics' masks!
Look, up above moves
a grey fiddler on the roof.
    . . . Skyward flared
a blue flame of hair!
And the violin sings—
a fish of gold there.
Weep, gold-fish, weep
over the face of the king—
secrets of secrets keep . . .
That old fiddler on the roof
was great Einstein himself.
But the clowns did not hear.
The clowns
bore
on their
shoulders
the body
of King
Lear.

And purple was the day.
Downcast and blear.

1947.

** Where the State Jewish Theatre was situated. Now it is
the Moscow Dramatic Theatre. There is no plaque or com-
memoration of its original use.

RUSSIAN ORIGINAL.

ФИОЛЕТОВЫЙ ДЕНЬ
Памяти Михаила

День был фиолетовый,
Облачное небо —
Рыбь чешуя.

Где-то шумели
Трамвай, машины.
А здесь, на Малой Бронной,
Столик тинни.
И процеловой странич
Желто-красно-зеленой
В тинни
Шли шуты.
Было хмуро и сыро.

Шуты песни
На своих шлячах
Прах
Короля
Лира.

Шли остроожно,
Как по краю пропасти,
В своей торжественной полености
Великолепно шуты.
Мочачком его оплакивали.
Лишь плюхивали
Бубочницы,
Нашивные
На шутовские колпаки:
Дашь-данин,
Дашь-данин . . . .

День был
Фиолетовый.
Пламя небо,
Как большая рыба.
По рыльцам трубы
И то взагивали флейты.

Лишь бубочницы плакали,
Звалаши:
Дашь-данин,
Дашь-данин . . . .

День был как ночь,
Искривая муку
Маску комедию.
Глядишь, там на крыше домика
Покривился медный скрипач.
...И лишилось
Снопе пламя волос.
И запола скрипач —
Золотая рыбка.
Плачь, рыба, плачь.
Над лицом короля — тайной тайны...
Этот старый скрипач
Был великий Эйнштейн.
По шутам не волели этого.
Шуты
Песни
На своих
Шлячах
Прах
Короля
Лира.

А день был фиолетовый.
Было сыро.
PAUL ROBESON—AFTERMATH IV
(see Bulletins 17, 18, 19, and 20)

Further Evidence of PAUL ROBESON’s Awareness of the Stalinist Terror

People all over the world, including Paul, were puzzled and appalled at the sudden complete disappearance of all the leading Soviet Jewish personalities from Soviet life in 1949. This was coupled with a slanderous campaign against Jews under the euphemism of “cosmopolitanism.” Of this, Roy Medvedev, in his monumental history of Stalinism, *Let History Judge*, says: “This anti-Semitic campaign, which recalled the pogroms, aroused sharp protests abroad and disturbed the friends of the Soviet Union. Two leaders of the World Peace Council, Frederic Joliot-Curie and Paul Robeson, were reported to have flown to Moscow to meet with Stalin, but he refused to see them.”

In his poem in memory of Mikhoels’ death, Perets Markish, the Soviet Yiddish poet, compared him to the famous Jewish zaddik (wise man, seer), Rabbi Izokh ben Sarah from Berdichev, and it was a Kaddish in his memory that I translated for Paul to sing. Here it is:

I, Levi Yitzhak ben Sarah from Berdichev, come to Thee with a holy brief for Thy people Israel.
For what hast Thou against Thy people Israel?
And why hast Thou oppressed so Thy people Israel?
For no matter what happens: it is sorrow to the Sons of Israel.

Almighty God! How many peoples on this earth.
Babylonians, Persians, Romans.
The Germans: what say they? Our king is above all kings.
The English: what say they? Our kingdom is above all kingdoms.

But I, Levi Yitzhak ben Sarah from Berdichev, say:
“Praised be the Lord! Praised be his name for evermore!”
Yiskadal ve Iskadash! . . .

And I, Levi Yitzhak ben Sarah from Berdichev, now say:
“Let me not move from this place!
Let me not budge from this spot!
And let there be an end to all our suffering and pain!
Praised be the Lord! Praised be His Name for Evermore!
Iskadal ve Iskadash!”

And there is also an account of Paul Robeson, in Stalin days, singing Yiddish songs at a formal meeting of the Moscow Union of Writers to honour the famous Yiddish author Sholom Aleichem, despite attempts to censor him. And another piece of evidence comes from Jack Kroll: “In 1949 Robeson gave a concert in Warsaw. The Communist regime asked him not to sing any songs in Yiddish (one of the many languages he knew). Robeson ignored the ban and too sang in Yiddish, Polish and Russian just to make sure all the assembled officials from the Soviet bloc understood everything. That was the real Paul Robeson . . . .”

It seems that this is the one Yiddish writer who is “kosher” with the CPSU. His works were amongst the first to be republished after the years of the Stalin terror, and his anniversary is the one date that can be celebrated by anyone without fear of being called Zionists or pro-Israeli seditionists. And many significant poems and writings have used his name for another purpose.

Mikhoels was a dear friend of Paul Robeson, and when Paul sang *The Kaddish of Rabin Ben Sarah*—he had in mind Mikhoels.

These are but other confirmations of the fact that Paul got into trouble with the Stalinist authorities for singing his Yiddish songs. And then later he was to learn the truth of what happened to all his dear Jewish comrades—Mikhoels and Feffer. This was perhaps the last straw that broke the great camel’s back.

A human being so sensitive as Paul could not but react with horror and dismay at the truth of the Stalinist regime of terror, not only against many of his dearest Soviet friends, like Mikhoels, but to millions of those Soviet citizens who loved him so much.

More and more evidence emerges to show that Paul, like all of us, was eventually not only aware of the truth but was profoundly shaken, to the depths of his being, at being so deceived and self-deceived over the ideals we all had worked and struggled and sacrificed for. But we too were equally guilty for compounding the cover-up and helping to perpetuate a Potemkin village of such proportions about the true nature of Communist Party Society.

And the realization of this is what broke Paul’s mighty spirit—and he never wanted to confront the outside world again.

Further evidence of the nature of Paul Robeson Junior’s political campaign was the boycott he had been trying to organize against the black actor Jimmy Earl Jones’ one-man Presentation of Paul Robeson. In reply to Paulie’s accusation that he had “distorted” Robeson, the producer, Don Gregory, said inter alia, that “both he and the playwright had been repeatedly denied access to source material in the Robeson archives.” Paulie denied this, but nevertheless admitted “he doesn’t collaborate with anyone.”

Here he and his politically motivated collaborators, in particular Lloyd Brown, are continuing this kind of “cover-up” over the truth of Paul’s later years. And the producer Gregory also now realizes this, for he said, “If they don’t like it artistically, that’s okay. But they’re talking politically.” And the Reporter-Commentator, Carl Stokes, on WNBZ’S NEWS CENTER 4 (Chicago), revealed that most of the signers of the articles of the Robeson Junior protest against Jimmy Earl Jones’s performance “did not see the play before lending their names to the letter of protest.”

That is typical of the kind of cover-up I have been pointing out in my previous articles. (See my Bulletins No. 17, 18, 19, and 20.)

However, the other side of the coin is the disgraceful behavior of the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce which recently rejected a request from the Screen Actors’ Guild that a star be dedicated to Paul Robeson. When Los Angeles’ Mayor Tom Bradley and others protested, the Chamber said “politics has nothing to do with it—that Robeson just wasn’t a big star.” “How many pictures did he make?” said a Chamber spokesman! “He was not sufficiently famous.”

As Paul’s director, I protest emphatically at this insult to his memory. If ever there was a universally famous artist, it was Paul Robeson. He could and did fill football stadiums throughout the world. Tens of thousands would come just to hear him sing. He made eleven films, including the world-famous *Showboat*, with the even more famous song “Old Man River”; this quite apart from his plays and concerts.

The Chamber of Commerce must be brought into the twentieth century of civil rights and human justice.

As this goes to press (belatedly), I learn that justice has at last been done and Paul Robeson is given his rightful place in the history of American cinema.

Herbert Marshall
