

Abstract

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Title: Anna Seghers and Socialist Realism

Anna Seghers joined the Communist Party in 1928 and soon dedicated her talents to the promulgation of her beliefs. In most of her early works she anticipated the Party's aesthetic doctrine on art, which was proclaimed in 1934 as Socialist Realism. In fact, these early writings represent an intuitive discovery of Socialist Realism. However, when Socialist Realism was declared the official method of the Communist Party, Anna Seghers opposed it, fearing that its rigid implementation would lead to sterility in art. In exile during the Nazi regime and unfettered by Party controls, she produced works of great literary merit. Soon after taking up residence in the Soviet Occupied Zone of Germany, she adopted the Party's method and the result was a decline in the quality of her literary production. This study points out the danger of any dictatorship in the field of human creativity.

ANNA SEGHERS AND SOCIALIST REALISM

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## I. INTRODUCTION

This dissertation examines the influence which the aesthetic dictatorship of the Communist Party, through the imposition of Socialist Realism, has had on the literary production of the German author Anna Seghers.

Anna Seghers, the pen name of Netty Radvanyi (née Reiling), is, since the deaths of Bertolt Brecht and Johannes R. Becher, the dean of East German literature. Born in Mainz in 1900 into an intellectual bourgeois family, she joined the Communist Party in 1928 and has become one of the leading artistic figures in the Communist Party of the German Democratic Republic.

This study considers the literary works as primary. Every published Seghers work has been examined and discussed in the light of its relationship to Socialist Realism. Criticism, especially from Communist sources, is referred to since the views of the Communist Party critics had direct bearing on Anna Seghers' literary development. Her writings which are of a journalistic nature have been considered only when they are pertinent to Socialist Realism.

The dissertation is divided into seven parts, of which the first is this Introduction. In Part Two, Socialist Realism is discussed and an attempt is made to define it. Both Communist and non-Communist views on the subject have been considered in

order to arrive at an objective evaluation. It will become apparent that although based on Marxist-Leninist thought, Socialist Realism was really an invention of Stalin, proclaimed official Party policy in 1934 by Andre Shdanov to keep Soviet artists in check and to ensure their aid in implementing Stalin's programmes. Although Socialist Realism has several constant characteristics — Communist tendency, national flavour (narodnost), typicalness (tipičnost) and the Socialist perspective — it does vary according to time, country and political climate. Furthermore, Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Communist intellectuals like Georg Lukács have regarded the various aspects of Socialist Realism differently. This study interprets Socialist Realism broadly with an eye to the specific requirements and guidelines set down at the time in question.

This writer has distinguished four distinct periods in Anna Seghers' literary career. The first, which is dealt with in Part Three, is that of the early works, those stories and novels written between 1926 and 1932, before Socialist Realism was proclaimed as the method which Communist writers were to follow. The author's steady movement towards the Communist Party, which she joined in 1928, is reflected in her writings of this period. Original versions of as many of the stories as possible have been compared with versions published later in the German Democratic Republic in order to determine whether Seghers has revised her early literary output in order to reflect a higher degree of

Communist tendency than was originally present. This was not found to be so of the early works.

Part Four considers the works produced during the first four years of exile — 1933 to 1937. The shock caused by the Nazi victory affected Anna Seghers' writing. The tone of optimism which characterized the last works of the previous period has given way to resigned pessimism. Her initial reaction to the proclamation of Socialist Realism in 1934 was a turning away from reality and a flight into the world of mythology.

Part Five examines the literary production of the years 1938 to 1946 which Anna Seghers spent in exile in France and Mexico. Central to this examination is the exchange of letters between Georg Lukács and Anna Seghers during 1938-39 in which she voiced her doubts regarding Socialist Realism and defended the artist's right to experiment with form. The Party could exert very little direct influence upon her at this time, a fact reflected in the lack of Socialist Realist works which she produced during this period of the Emigration. What she wrote was not Socialist Realism but it marked the height of her literary career.

Part Six is a discussion of the works which were written from 1947 to 1969, after her return to the Soviet Occupied Zone of Germany. Although she seemed to ignore Socialist Realism for two years after her return, by 1949 she had accepted it. From this time, the tone of her works reflects, with a few minor

exceptions, the Party line of the SED. The lower the quality of her literary offerings sank, the more strident was the Communist tone they took on and the greater the accolades received from the Communist critics.

A detailed examination of Anna Seghers' literary production and its relationship to Socialist Realism shows that the imposition of those rules upon her writing and her eventual acceptance of them led to sterility. Part Seven details the findings of this study which confirm this contention.

## II. ANNA SEGHERS AND SOCIALIST REALISM

### 1. SOCIALIST REALISM

#### a. Origins

Socialist Realism, the official aesthetic doctrine of the Communist Party, originated in the Soviet Union and at the present time is, in some form or other, the dominant and only officially sanctioned theory on the arts in all Communist countries.

It developed out of the Communist interpretation of Hegel's and Marx's theories, was influenced by Friedrich Engels and the nineteenth-century Russian literary critics Belinsky, Dobrolyubov and Chernyshevsky, and especially by Lenin's concept of art's function in society and his "Theory of Reflection." It was made official Party policy by Stalin and Shdanov. Originally a literary theory, it was subsequently applied to all other art forms.

Maxim Gorky is considered to be the first Socialist Realist, not so much because of his theoretical work on the subject, although it is of considerable importance, but primarily because of his novel Mother (1906) and other works such as his play Enemies (1906), which were written before the guidelines for Socialist Realism were set down.



Marxist critics and theorists thus contend that Socialist Realism developed through a complicated process of interaction between theory and practice, although they admit that the theory was often ahead of the practice. So, for example, the Marxist-Leninist theory showed Gorky the creative way, while, on the other hand, Gorky's work then became part of the basis for the theory of Socialist Realism.<sup>1</sup>

Many non-Marxists consider Socialist Realism a product of the "Personality Cult," a mere extension of the Party's propaganda machine, imposed upon writers by Stalin and Shdanov to aid in the brainwashing of the people:

Die stalinistische Literatur: der Sozialistische Realismus, ist . . . nicht als Ausdruck einer Weltanschauung, als geistiges oder ästhetisches Phänomen zu begreifen, sondern in erster Linie als Instrument der Massenbeeinflussung und des psychischen Terrors, als Komponente des gesellschaftlichen Zwangsystems, wie es der Partei- und Staatsapparat, die Planbürokratie, die Massenorganisationen, die Propaganda und die Geheimpolizei auf ihre Weise sind. Niemand hat diese Funktion der Literatur treffender charakterisiert als Stalin. Bei dem Schriftsteller-treffen 1932 in der Villa Gorkis, das der Ausrichtung des literarischen Lebens vorausging, nannte er die Sowjetschriftsteller "Ingenieure der menschlichen Seele."<sup>2</sup>

This opinion was shared to a greater or lesser extent by many of the so-called "revisionists" of the 1950's who were aided in their struggle to reinterpret Socialist Realism by the fact that a definition of Socialist Realism had long proven problematic, even for Communist authorities. Alexander Fadeyev, then General Secretary of the Soviet Writers Union, remarked to Mikhail Sholokov during the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956 that the devil alone knew what Socialist Realism was.<sup>3</sup>

The 1952 East German edition of the Great Soviet Encyclopedia attempts a more precise answer: "Die sowjetische Literatur und Kunst entwickeln sich weiter auf dem Wege des sozialistischen Realismus, dessen von Stalin geprägte Lösung den Sowjetkünstlern die wahrheitsgetreue, historisch-konkrete Darstellung der Wirklichkeit in ihrer revolutionären Entwicklung zur Aufgabe macht."<sup>4</sup>

There is contradictory evidence about the first appearance of the term "Socialist Realism." According to R. N. Carew Hunt, the term appeared for the first time in an editorial in Literaturnaia gazeta on 29 May 1932. He adds in a footnote that Soviet textbooks attribute the coining of the phrase to Stalin in a conversation with a group of writers earlier that year.<sup>5</sup> In his article "Zur Geschichte des Terminus 'Sozialistischer Realismus,'" A. Romanowski reports that this conversation between Stalin and about forty-five writers took place in Gorky's home on 26 October 1932. On this evening, a name for the new

Soviet literature was discussed. Romanowski quotes Stalin as defining it as Socialist Realism. Three days after this meeting, Fadeyev used the term in his address to the Plenum of the Organization Committee of the Soviet Writers Union.<sup>6</sup>

In 1928, a campaign had been launched in conjunction with the introduction of the first Five Year Plan to strengthen the ideological content of the arts. At the Charkov Conference in 1930, art was tied even closer to politics. It was urged that a new proletarian literature be formed outside the Soviet Union, although the dictatorship of the proletariat had yet to be established there. The creator of this new proletarian literature, so said Johannes R. Becher, must not be guided by an unclear, emotional feeling for the proletariat, but rather by his study of Marxism-Leninism, which had taught him the importance of the proletariat as a factor determining history.<sup>7</sup> In other words, socialist and utopian socialist literature was to be replaced by Socialist Realism. Stalin's resolution that art be "national in form and socialist in content" was adopted<sup>8</sup> and it was agreed that in the future, art must be under the firm control of the Party.

By a decree of the Central Committee on 23 April 1932, the loose Union of Proletarian Writers was replaced by the monolithic Union of Soviet Writers. This procedure was repeated in the centralization of other forms of art. Up to this time, the term "Socialist Realism" had not been officially mentioned, but

it soon became a catchword for the now unified literary movement which was firmly in the grip of the Communist Party.<sup>9</sup>

At the First Allunions Congress of Soviet Writers held in Moscow in 1934, Socialist Realism was declared the official Party theory on aesthetics by Andre Shdanov. Until his death some twenty years later, Shdanov, the watchdog of the arts in the Soviet Union, assured the supremacy of the narrowly defined Stalinist version of Socialist Realism in Soviet culture.

This unusual interest in the arts (and in science) demonstrated by Communist political figures is justified in Stalin's theory that art and science are part of what he called the superstructure of Soviet society. Therefore, they are no longer an individual matter but concern the whole of society, and especially the guardian of society, the Communist Party. They are determined by class. Each class has its own art and science — hence the division into "bourgeois" and "proletarian" art and science. Because they are regarded as weapons in the class struggle and must be used to achieve its ends — the victory over other classes and the building of socialism — they must have their basis in the philosophy of that struggle: historical and dialectical materialism. Only firm Party control can assure strict adherence to this philosophy.<sup>10</sup>

b. Partiynost

The idea that art could serve as a useful weapon in the

class struggle was outlined in Lenin's article "Party Organisation and Party Literature," which first appeared in Novaya Zhizn on 13 November 1905, just before the outbreak of the 1905 revolution. Although sometimes questioned as being not universally applicable because of the special conditions under which it was written, it still serves as the official Party view on the function of literature in society:

What is this principle of party literature? It is not simply that, for the socialist proletariat, literature cannot be a means of enriching individuals or groups; it cannot, in fact, be an individual undertaking, independent of the common cause of the proletariat. Down with non-partisan writers! Down with literary supermen! Literature must become part of the common cause of the proletariat, "a cog and a screw" of one single great Social-Democratic mechanism set in motion by the entire politically-conscious vanguard of the entire working class. Literature must become a component of organised, planned and integrated Social-Democratic Party work. <sup>11</sup>

Objectivity in literature is thus negated. Literature is only of value insofar as it serves the aims of the class struggle. Neutrality in this struggle is just as unacceptable a position for a writer as it would be for a soldier.

Lenin went on to detail how this integration of literature

into the Social-Democratic mechanism was to be achieved:

Newspapers must become the organs of the various party organisations, and their writers must by all means become members of these organisations. Publishing and distributing centres, bookshops and reading-rooms, libraries and similar establishments.— must all be under party control. The organised socialist proletariat must keep an eye on all this work, supervise it in its entirety, and, from beginning to end, without any exception, infuse into it the life-stream of the living proletarian cause . . . 12

In a draft resolution on proletarian culture, written on 8 October 1920, Lenin reiterated his standpoint:

All educational work in the Soviet Republic of workers and peasants, in the field of political education in general and in the field of art in particular, should be imbued with the spirit of the class struggle being waged by the proletariat for the successful achievement of the aims of its dictatorship, i.e., the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, the abolition of classes, and the elimination of all forms of exploitation of man by man. 13

Although Lenin's ideas on art did not represent a carefully worked out system, they found a positive reception among those who came after him.

Lenin's insistence on socialist tendency in art is supposedly based on the theory of Marx and Engels that a work of art is determined by the class of its creator. A close look at Engels' remarks on literature indicates substantial differences between him and Lenin. In a letter to the English author Margaret Harkness, Engels stated that the more an author's opinions are concealed, the better for the work of art. In his opinion, realism could prevail despite the author's personal views and intentions. He cited the example of Balzac. Despite his royalist sympathies, Balzac gives a picture of France's aristocracy, doomed to downfall because of its decadence.

Daß Balzac so gezwungen wurde, gegen seine eigenen Klassensympathien und politischen Vorurteile zu handeln, daß er die Notwendigkeit des Untergangs seiner geliebten Adligen sah und sie als Menschen schilderte, die kein besseres Schicksal verdienen; und daß er die wirklichen Menschen der Zukunft dort sah, wo sie in der damaligen Zeit allein zu finden waren — das betrachte ich als einen der größten Triumphe des Realismus und als einen der großartigsten Züge des alten Balzac.<sup>14</sup>

Engels approved of a limited tendency in literature. In a letter to Minna Kautsky, he stated:

Ich bin keineswegs Gegner der Tendenzpoesie als solcher. . . . Aber ich meine, die Tendenz muß aus

der Situation und Handlung selbst hervorspringen, ohne daß ausdrücklich darauf hingewiesen wird, und der Dichter ist nicht genötigt, die geschichtliche zukünftige Lösung der gesellschaftlichen Konflikte, die er schildert, dem Leser in die Hand zu geben.<sup>15</sup>

In his article "Tendenz oder Parteilichkeit?" (1932), Georg Lukács differentiates between the two terms — the first, used by Engels, is taken from the bourgeois vocabulary and has bourgeois connotations; Parteilichkeit, the German word used to translate partiynost, is considered a higher term by Lukács and a prerequisite for realism: ". . . die richtige dialektische Abbildung und schriftstellerische Gestaltung der Wirklichkeit setzt die Parteilichkeit des Schriftstellers voraus."<sup>16</sup> This Parteilichkeit, which must take up the cause of the proletariat, does not conflict with the objective representation of reality, since Marxist reality is parteilich. Therefore, Lukács defines it as "Parteilichkeit der Objektivität":

Wenn Engels klar und entschieden für die Tendenz in der Literatur Stellung nimmt, so meint er stets — wie nach ihm Lenin — diese Parteilichkeit der Objektivität und lehnt jede subjektiv hineingetragene, subjektiv "anmontierte" Tendenz aufs entschiedenste ab . . .<sup>17</sup>

Lukács' equation of Engels' ideas with those of Lenin was criticized as revisionist by Marxist orthodoxy, which considers



Lenin's opinions on party literature an important further development of Engels' standpoint.<sup>18</sup> Lukács never really accepted Leninist Parteilichkeit — one of the many reasons for his endless conflicts with the Party.

c. Narodnost

Lenin believed that proletarian art must have a real connection with the masses, with their life, work and struggle. Art must become the possession of the people. In other words, it must be "folksy" — a rough translation of the term narodnost. He voiced this opinion in a conversation with Clara Zetkin:

Art belongs to the people. Its roots should be deeply implanted in the very thick of the labouring masses. It should be understood and loved by these masses. It must unite and elevate their feelings, thoughts and will. It must stir to activity and develop the art instincts within them. Should we serve exquisite sweet cake to a small minority while the worker and peasant masses are in need of black bread?<sup>19</sup>

That this "black bread" art all too often sacrificed quality in its need to appeal to the masses and please the Party should surprise no one. Lenin's dream of the worker-writer was revived in the GDR at the Bitterfeld Conference of 1959. With the

motto, "Greif zur Feder, Kumpel, die sozialistische National-literatur braucht dich!" the SED urged workers and farmers to achieve works of socialist art of high quality. Up to now no notable achievement has come out of this movement, although Marxist critics are dutifully doing their best to find some.

d. Tipičnost

Bound up with the principles of partijnost and narodnost is tipičnost — the typical. Socialist Realists adopted Engels' definition of realism, "the accurate depiction of typical characters under typical circumstances";<sup>20</sup> however, their concept of realism owes its particular identity to Lenin, who elaborated on Engels' definition. According to Lenin, the typical characters are predestined by their circumstances, i.e., their social position, to act in a certain way. Their actions are therefore not regarded as individual, but rather as the predetermined result of given social conditions. The room for individuality which Engels had stressed ("... jeder ist ein Typus, aber auch zugleich ein bestimmter Einzelmensch, ein 'Dieser,' wie der alte Hegel sich ausdrückt, und so muß es sein.")<sup>21</sup> was narrowed down considerably. This led to a stylized, distorted depiction of reality, which was criticized by Johannes R. Becher:

Man kann auch das Typische so übersteigern, daß es seinen typischen Charakter abstreift und von dem ursprünglich Typischen kein Hauch mehr zu verspüren

ist. Eine leere stilisierte Formel erhebt sich über dem Grab des Typischen, aber nicht lange wird solch ein Gerippe Bestand haben. Auch in der Kunst gehört nicht den Totengräbern die Zukunft.<sup>22</sup>

The Marxist-Leninist use of words such as objectivity and reality can only be understood in the light of the meaning given to them in Lenin's "Theory of Reflection" ("Abbild-Theorie"). This theory, which affirms the ability of human consciousness to reflect the world which exists outside and independent of it ("Human thought is able, by virtue of its nature, to communicate to us absolute truth, which is a sum of relative truths, and this it does." — Lenin),<sup>23</sup> is the corner-stone of the Marxist-Leninist aesthetic theory. According to Lenin, truth can be perceived only through a constant observation of the outside world, which involves a continuous struggle for deeper recognition of the economic, social and historical laws which, for the Dialectical Materialist, govern every phase of life. This observation then leads to abstract thought and also to artistic reproduction of reality, based on the knowledge acquired. But the practical and theoretical value of this knowledge depends on the extent to which the laws of the objective world are reflected correctly in the artist's work. Only those works which give as adequate and perfect a reflection of reality as is possible help to increase our scientific knowledge of the world.

Hence the importance of material conditions and the class struggle for art.<sup>24</sup> An artist who disregards these fundamental laws does not create works of realism; indeed, his work is useless and even dangerous, since it is based on falsehood, or at least on a false understanding of reality.<sup>25</sup>

Marxist-Leninists stress that their concept of realism has nothing to do with a photographic reproduction of reality. They remind one that Lenin defended man's right to dream. They admit, however, that artistic fantasy must be limited. If a work of art does not help the masses to grasp the real essence of reality (N.B., Marxist-Leninist reality), then it must be condemned.

#### e. Critical Realism

Fortunately for future generations of writers and readers, the great works of the past were not all doomed to oblivion. Lenin had been of the opinion that a proletarian culture could only develop from the foundations laid by previous cultures. He had rejected the tabula rasa of some members of the Proletcult, who wanted to create a new proletarian culture overnight by abolishing everything existing in the arts and reinventing it all from scratch:

Marxism has won its historic significance as the ideology of the revolutionary proletariat because, far from rejecting the most valuable achievements of

the bourgeois epoch, it has, on the contrary, assimilated and refashioned everything of value in the more than two thousand years of the development of human thought and culture. Only further work on this basis and in this direction, inspired by the practical experience of the proletarian dictatorship as the final stage in the struggle against every form of exploitation, can be recognised as the development of a genuine proletarian culture.<sup>26</sup>

In the field of literature, the most valuable achievements of bourgeois culture were the works of the "Critical Realists." Critical, or Bourgeois, Realism, as it is sometimes called, is a Marxist-Leninist term used to classify those realistic works whose authors are considered "progressive," but who either wrote before the time of Socialist Realism (the "classical" realists such as Balzac, Hardy, Dickens, Pushkin and Tolstoi), or who were contemporaries of Socialist Realism but lacked the socialist perspective (Upton Sinclair, Thomas and Heinrich Mann). Critical Realism endeared itself to the Communists by demasking the evils of capitalist society. It was through the left-wing Russian literary critics, Belinsky, Dobrolyubov and Chernyshevsky, as well as Marx and Engels, that these possible allies came to Lenin's attention. Chernyshevsky's dissertation, On the Aesthetic Relations of Art to Reality (1855) is considered to incorporate the aesthetic theory of Critical Realism, while his

novel What is to be done? (1863) is regarded as a model of Russian Critical Realism. Belinsky and Dobrolyubov did not discuss aesthetic problems systematically, as did Chernyshevsky. However, their work in defence of realism (Belinsky's studies of Pushkin and Dobrolyubov's essay "What is Oblomovism?" [1859]) and their opposition to Czarism (best exemplified by Belinsky's letter to Gogol of 1847) won them a special place in the hearts of Russian revolutionaries and the respect of Lenin.

Socialist Realism is considered a further, "higher" development of early Critical Realism. The attitude of the Socialist Realists towards their retarded half-brothers, the contemporary Critical Realists, varies according to the political climate. A warm point in this relationship was the anti-Fascist Popular Front, proclaimed in 1935.

The difference between Socialist and Critical Realism, as we have noted, is primarily one of perspective.

Die sowjetischen Künstler sind in der Lage, die Tendenz der Entwicklung darzustellen, einen Blick in die Zukunft zu werfen und die Perspektive der gesellschaftlichen Entwicklung zu zeichnen, weil sie sich die fortschrittlichste Weltanschauung — die des Marxismus-Leninismus — angeeignet haben. Das bereichert ihr künstlerisches Schaffen, macht es zielstrebig und zutiefst wahr und läßt sie die treibenden Kräfte der revolutionären Entwicklung aufzeigen. Die

Möglichkeit, in die Zukunft zu blicken — das, was man revolutionäre Romantik nennt — ist eines der charakteristischen Merkmale der im Zeichen des sozialistischen Realismus stehenden Kunst. Aber das ist nicht jene revolutionäre Romantik, wie sie in einer Reihe von Werken großer Künstler der Vergangenheit zu finden ist, die in ihrem Schaffen gegen die düstere Wirklichkeit protestierten und von einer besseren Zukunft träumten. Es ist die reale Entwicklungsperspektive, die in der Lehre von Marx, Engels, Lenin und Stalin wissenschaftlich begründet ist und durch die Praxis des sozialistischen Aufbaus im ersten Sowjetstaat der Welt, der sich auf dem Weg zum Kommunismus befindet, bestätigt wird.<sup>27</sup>

f. The "Positive Hero"

In the figure of the hero, the difference between Socialist and Critical Realism can be seen. The hero in Critical Realism is often at odds with society. He tends to be an alienated, passive figure (Hans Ca storp, Tonio Kröger). Often he is the victim of historical and social circumstances (Effi Briest). Unable to change society, he often retreats into himself. Socialist Realism rejects the traditional Judaic-Christian idea that man is helpless, a victim of original sin, but it does not accept the Romantics' tenet that man is automatically attracted

to that which is good. Historical circumstances can either ennoble man and bring the good in him to the forefront or they can impede this process. According to Marxism-Leninism, the Communist Revolution and the resulting social order have given man back his place at the centre of the universe. Instead of being a victim of circumstances, he is now master of them. Thus the perspective of Socialist Realism is one of optimism.

Man is at the centre of Socialist Realism:

Von Realismus sprechen wir nur dann, wenn das Kunstwerk den Gesetzen der spezifisch künstlerischen Widerspiegelung von Wirklichkeit folgt. Diese Gesetze besagen u.a., daß allgemeiner Gegenstand der Dichtung nicht die Wirklichkeit schlechthin ist, sondern einzig die Wirklichkeit in bezug auf den Menschen. 28

This man at the centre is usually a worker. This is another point of difference with Critical Realism, where the worker, if he appeared at all, was usually a secondary figure, since Critical Realism was mainly a literature of the middle class.

The hero in Socialist Realism, called the "positive hero," is fully integrated into the working masses and is actively engaged in the battle to change society. The main characteristic of the positive hero, says Heinz Plavius in his article "Der positive Held im sozialistischen Realismus und der neue Charakter der Arbeit," is to change himself as his environment changes. His working morality should be reflected in his personal



morality, since work is no longer separate from life. "Das Bild des kommunistischen Menschen wird von seinem Verhältnis zur Arbeit bestimmt."<sup>29</sup> He is the antithesis of the Critical Realist hero. The passivity of the latter has given way to activity; alienation has been replaced by integration; the Critical Realist hero was reflective; whereas thinking is not one of the strong points of his Socialist Realist counterpart. Far from taking refuge in individualism, the positive hero despises it. With his level head and his clear, confident look, he tends to bear a striking resemblance to most of his fellow positive heroes. Little wonder, since, according to Lenin's "Theory of Reflection," the individual characteristics of a hero together with his attitude must reflect the character and the attitude of the social stratum to which he belongs.<sup>30</sup>

The depiction of this new man, "steeled in the fire of the socialist revolution,"<sup>31</sup> is the main task of Socialist Realism. For this purpose, various guidelines were set down for writers.<sup>32</sup> Engels had once criticized Minna Kautsky for letting the principle dominate the character of one of her heroes, but his warning, "Es ist . . . immer schlimm, wenn der Dichter für seinen eignen Helden schwärmt . . .,"<sup>33</sup> was not heeded by the Socialist Realists. Indeed, even if an author wished to humanize his hero by endowing him with a few faults, he could not without incurring disapproval. In his article "Der positive Held und sein Widersacher," Gerhard Branster states: "Die

Forderung nach dem positiven Helden mit 'Schwächen' ist . . . die ins Ästhetische transponierte Diffamierung des konsequenten Aufbaus des Sozialismus." 34

#### g. Socialist Realism since Stalin's Death

The origin of the term "realism" is one of the many aspects of Socialist Realist theory which has been debated in the Soviet Union and the satellite countries since the "Thaw" set in after Stalin's death. We will not go into this discussion in detail, but will only attempt to cover some of the main points.

During the Shdanov era, art had been divided into two opposing camps: realism and anti-realism. This concept was based on Lenin's ideas as set forth in Materialism and Empiriocriticism. Lenin regarded the history of philosophy as the history of the struggle between materialism and idealism. This thesis was extended by Shdanov to the history of art, so that the development of art was seen as a battle between realism and anti-realism. All art, regardless of style or epoch, was placed in one of the two categories. This oversimplification was challenged by many intellectuals during the second "Thaw," which followed Khrushchev's secret speech to the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956, a time when the cultural and political atmosphere seemed not inhospitable to change.

The case was put that realism was only one of several

aesthetic categories. Its origins were seen by some to extend back to the Renaissance; others dated its existence from the early or mid-nineteenth century. Realism was defined by some critics as a method which could be present to a greater or lesser degree in non-realistic works of art; others termed it a style. 35

The most important aspect of the literary discussion which followed Khrushchev's speech to the Twentieth Party Congress was, however, by no means the dating of the origins of realism. The exposure of Stalin, the resulting cultural "Thaw" at home and the official proclamation of the policy of peaceful co-existence in foreign affairs encouraged intellectuals in the Soviet Union and its satellites to believe that a new era, which had been anticipated since Stalin's death, was indeed dawning. De-stalinization combined with the shock of the Hungarian Revolution and the role played in it by Hungarian Communist intellectuals to give impetus to a movement to free Socialist Realism from the rigidity and dogmatism which had characterized it, except for a loosening up during the war years, under Stalin's regime.

The Twentieth Party Congress saw an unusually open criticism of the Party's influence in the arts and sciences. The grand old man of Socialist Realism, Mikhail Sholokov, stated that in twenty years a thousand writers had produced little over ten good books and that hundreds of Soviet writers were leading

unproductive existences because they had nothing to write about.<sup>36</sup>

The "Thaw" had made clear, even to the blindest Stalinists, that the ruthless pressing of art into the Party mould had been an experiment doomed to failure. What had come out of the mould for twenty years was no longer art, and all the praise heaped on it by dutiful critics could convince no one that it was. Georg Lukács concluded: "Die Fortführung dessen, was in der Stalinzeit als sozialistischer Realismus gelobt und ausgezeichnet wurde, wäre hoffnungslos."<sup>37</sup> However, although the Party relaxed standards in style and subject matter, Khrushchev was quick to announce that there would be no coexistence in the realm of ideology, to which literature still belonged. In an article in Kommunist written in 1957, he declared that the concepts of partiynost and narodnost were not to be thwarted. He reiterated the traditional Marxist-Leninist and Stalinist view that literature and art played an important role in the ideological work of the Party and in Communist education; that Socialist Realism assured limitless possibilities for the creation of works suitable for such purposes; that the Party would wage a bitter struggle against the intrusion of foreign ideologies into Soviet art and science. He also referred to the press as one of the main ideological weapons.<sup>38</sup> Thus, just as under Stalin, art was to remain under the supervision of the Party and exist only to serve its interests.

Although the situation in the Soviet Union and the satellite countries has surely improved since the death of Stalin, the Communist writer would seem to be subject to the same dictates now as he was under the cultural dictatorship of Shdanov. In reality, the climate is a fluctuating one, as can be seen in the case of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, whose novel One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich was published in 1962, thanks to the personal intervention of Khrushchev, and is presently being withdrawn from library circulation inside Russia, according to its author. <sup>39</sup>

As long as publishing houses, newspapers and magazines remain under the firm control of the Party and as long as the Party subscribes to the theory of Socialist Realism, all officially published literature emanating from the Soviet Union and the satellite countries will be Socialist Realist in nature.

## 2. ANNA SEGHERS' EARLY WORKS 1926-1932

### a. Introduction

In regarding Anna Seghers' early works, those which were written between the years 1926 and 1932, Marxist critics have tended to single out three examples, Aufstand der Fischer von St. Barbara, "Bauern von Hruschowo" and Die Gefährten, as worthy of notice, while virtually ignoring the author's remaining literary production of this period.

The attention given to Aufstand der Fischer von St. Barbara, for which she was awarded the Kleist Prize in 1928, is surely merited. Yet it is strange that thirty years had to pass before the short story "Grubetsch," which was also cited in the award, as well as two other stories, "Auf dem Weg zur amerikanischen Botschaft" and "Die Ziegler," were presented to the reading public of East Germany. They were finally included in the enlarged Bienenstock edition of Seghers' stories in 1963, having been passed over in the 1951 edition. "Die Wellblech-Hütte," published in 1929, has never been republished.

When one considers that these early stories give important clues to the development of the writer and also possess varying degrees of literary merit, their neglect by both East German critics and publishers must be questioned. This may be due to the desire of Marxist critics to view Anna Seghers as a writer

who had always been a Socialist Realist, even before the doctrine of Socialist Realism had been formulated and proclaimed official Party policy on the arts. The impression generally prevalent in Marxist criticism is that Anna Seghers differs from the other leading figures of German Socialist Realism in that she did not come from Expressionism to Socialist Realism, but rather that she developed from "imperfect" to "perfect" Socialist Realism. Ignoring a story such as "Grubetsch," which has little relation to Socialist Realism, in an evaluation of her early works would certainly facilitate the creation of such an impression. In his introduction to Die Erzählerin Anna Seghers 1926-1932 (East Berlin: Rütten and Loening, 1965), the Marxist critic Friedrich Albrecht points out this inaccuracy in Seghers criticism:

Wurde von den marxistischen Kritikern, die sich zwischen 1930 und 1935 mit dem Schaffen der Dichterin beschäftigten, die Problematik eines weltanschaulichen und künstlerischen Übergangsprozesses, in dessen Verlauf die Autorin den Weg vom Bürgertum zur Arbeiterklasse fand, noch klar erkannt, so geriet dieser Aspekt in den nach 1945 entstandenen Untersuchungen weitgehend aus dem Blickfeld. Paul Rilla, der Verfasser der ersten umfassenderen Studie über das erzählerische Werk Anna Seghers', stellte 1950 eine These auf, die seitdem in zahlreichen Aufsätzen wiederkehrte und auch heute noch verbreitet ist: er nimmt bereits Anna Seghers' Anfänge uneingeschränkt für die

sozialistische Literatur in Anspruch und setzt ihre Entwicklung in diesem Sinne von der Bechers und Brechts ab . . . Rilla konnte zu dieser Auffassung nur gelangen, weil er Grubetsch, Die Ziegler, Die Wellblech-Hütte übersah und von Aufstand der Fischer von St. Barbara, der ersten Buchveröffentlichung der Dichterin, ausging.<sup>1</sup>

Albrecht is referring specifically to two passages in Rilla's essay "Die Erzählerin Anna Seghers":

Aber daß die Bücher der Anna Seghers bereits ganz jenseits einer bürgerlichen Kritik stehen, daß in ihnen das sich wehrende Alte nicht kritisiert, sondern bereits ganz überblickt wird vom Standpunkt des sich formierenden Neuen, und daß es die Grundsätze sozialistischen Denkens sind, die als künstlerische Wahrheit wiederkehren, um das erzählerische Vermögen breit und fruchtbar zu machen: hierin ist beschlossen der neue historische Ort, den dieses Werk (mit einigen anderen der deutschen literarischen Entwicklung) einnimmt.<sup>2</sup>

And elsewhere:

. . . die Erzählerin ist von den Reizungen der spätbürgerlichen Literaturanarchie nicht mehr berührt worden und berührt sie nicht. Von Becher bis Brecht: hier kulminiert ein ganzer Literaturvorgang, indem er sich im Sozialen über sich selbst verständigt. Anna Seghers, die mehr als fünfzehn Jahre nach Bechers



Anfängen und sechs Jahre nach Brechts erstem Auftreten ein literarischer Name ist, muß den Literaturvorgang nicht mehr als Selbstverständigungsprozeß anhängig machen . . . <sup>3</sup>

In her review of the Luchterhand edition of the first volume of Seghers' stories, the West German critic Sabine Brandt points out that both "Grubetsch" and "Die Ziegler" have been ignored by the SED critics. This she attributes to their lack of ideological content: "Beide bieten Impressionen aus dem Arme-Leute-Milieu, Stimmungsskizzen voll Trauer und Mitleiden, jedoch ohne jede Andeutung eines politisch interpretierbaren Standpunktes." <sup>4</sup>

Miss Brandt's view is upheld when one considers the initial Communist reaction to the volume Auf dem Wege zur amerikanischen Botschaft expressed in an unsigned review in Die rote Fahne (14, No. 21, 1931). Of the entire collection, the reviewer says:

Besonderes an diesem Buch ist das Wie. Darin liegt zugleich seine Schwäche begründet. Es ist wertvoll, nützlich, wenn aus den neuen Inhalten der Klasse neue Gestaltungsmöglichkeiten entstehen. Der umgekehrte Weg ist falsch. Hier liegt das Hauptgewicht auf ästhetischen Problemen. Dem zulieb wird viel vom Idealen geopfert. Oft glaubt man, eine Sache wurde nicht gesagt, damit man sie weiß, sondern damit gehört wird, wie sie gesagt wird. Die Durchdringung

von Form und Inhalt kann in unserem Sinne erst verwirklicht werden, wenn in allem Schaffen des Künstlers ein unerschütterliches Grundmotiv wirkt: der revolutionäre Wille. [Italics in the original]

Referring specifically to "Grubetsch" and "Die Ziegler," the reviewer continues:

Diese beiden Erzählungen sind wie alles, was die Genossin Anna Seghers schreibt, von einer tiefen dichterischen Kraft durchdrungen. Wirklich durchblutet sind diese Menschen, ihr Leben wird gegenständig, ihr Atem fühlbar. Nackt, grau und verwest ist da ein Stück Trostlosigkeit und Ver-nichtung gestaltet, das quälend zum Erlebnis wird.

Gelähmt, in müder Skepsis kehrt man sich ab, lange belastet noch der Dämmer die Nebelhaftigkeit von Menschen und Dingen. . . . Da ist nichts, was dem Arbeiter nahe sein könnte. Auch keinen Intellektuellen wird es fördern. Welche Aufgabe haben Bücher sonst?

In a different vein, the anonymous reviewer of Die Linkskurve, having praised "Bauern von Hruschowo," criticized the three other stories in the volume Auf dem Wege zur amerikanischen Botschaft:

Es sind artistische Studien, Dokumente hohen Könnens — aber gleichsam Gletscherlandschaften, gefrorene,

Kristall gewordene Abbilder irgendeiner "Wirklichkeit," denen doch das kreisende Blut fehlt und die darum trotz ihrer minutiösen Tatsachenschilderung unwirklich, fantastisch, fast gespensterhaft wirken.<sup>5</sup>

Whatever their point of departure, one thing is certain, Marxist critics did not care for the stories in Auf dem Wege zur amerikanischen Botschaft, except for "Bauern von Hruschowo." However, Friedrich Albrecht's comments, together with the somewhat brief criticism devoted to the stories by Inge Diersen in Seghers-Studien (East Berlin: Rütten and Loening, 1965), would seem to indicate a willingness on the part of present-day Marxist criticism to finally consider the whole body of Seghers' oeuvre.

The fact that the picture of Anna Seghers' total literary output is also distorted in West Germany, although in a different manner, is not germane to this dissertation, interesting though it may be.<sup>6</sup> In our attempt to analyze the relationship of Anna Seghers to Socialist Realism, however, it is necessary to examine the reverse relationship — that of Socialist Realism to Anna Seghers. As will later become apparent, the judgement of her work by the Party authorities was not without influence upon it. In the light of this, the author herself may have been in some way responsible for the incomplete view of her early works which persisted until recently. She may have preferred to allow these stories to be forgotten.

b. "Grubetsch"

The short story "Grubetsch" was probably written in 1926, thus it is the earliest Seghers story which can be located.<sup>7</sup> It appeared in the Frankfurter Zeitung in installments from 10 March to 23 March 1927. "Grubetsch" was included in the Kleist Prize citation of 1928.

Set in a working-class milieu, the story deals with the inhabitants of a group of houses which look out onto the same back courtyard. It relates how their lives are changed through contact with a mysterious man named Grubetsch. Grubetsch is the central figure in the story, which begins with his arrival in the courtyard and ends with his murder in Munk's bar in the cellar, off the courtyard. During his absences from the courtyard, the narrative is interrupted.

The courtyard is not merely the focal point from which all action emanates, it is endowed with symbolic meaning:

Wenn die Laterne am eisernen Arm über der Kellertür ein anderes Licht in sich getragen hätte als einen niedergebrannten Gasstrumpf, sie würde doch nur die Pfütze im gerissenen Holzpflaster beleuchtet haben, einen geworfenen Pantoffel und einen Haufen verfaulten Äpfel. Wie ein Grubenlicht in der Tiefe zeigte sie den Weg dem Regen, der dünn und unablässig in diesen Schacht herunterregnete.<sup>8</sup>

The courtyard represents confinement, as underlined here by the comparison with a mine shaft. Yet, dull though the courtyard may be, it must be more attractive than what passes for life behind the walls which contain it, for the inhabitants constantly look to it to relieve their monotony. Into this atmosphere enters Grubetsch.

He provides some excitement for the courtyard frequenters, perhaps because his life is so different from theirs. He lives on a raft in the summer, in the winter in the cellar near Munk's bar. He has no dependants, no responsibilities. But this alone does not account for the mysterious influence he exerts over these people. Anna Seghers summed up this story in these words: ". . . Ein böser Hof, und in dem Hof ein Mann, der es versteht, die geheimen Wünsche der Menschen nach Zugrundegehen zu erraten und jedem in seiner Weise zu erfüllen." <sup>9</sup> Grubetsch is a demonic personality, a sort of Pied Piper, yet, as the author herself says, he is successful because of the environment of the courtyard — "ein böser Hof" — where even unhappiness is preferable to boredom. This thought is expressed by Anna at the beginning of the story: "Was ist das, ein Unglück? dachte Anna. Ist es wie der Hof dort unten und wie das Zimmer dort hinten? Oder gibt es auch noch andere Unglücke, rote, glühende, leuchtende Unglücke? Ach, wenn ich so eins haben könnte!" (p. 7). Grubetsch is the harbinger of disaster and, as such, is welcomed by the people: "'Der Grubetsch ist wieder da,' sagte Marie, die Frau, 'jetzt wird es wieder ein Unglück geben'" (p. 6).

Perhaps because he is fulfilling their secret wishes for destruction, Grubetsch's victims do not resent him. He took Sebald with him on the raft one summer. Sebald returned, ". . . verwildert und verlüdert, verlumpt und verlottert . . ." (p. 8), soon to die of the venereal disease he had contracted on the trip. Far from resenting Grubetsch, he avowed: "Nicht jeder hat so ein Glück, den Sommer über mit Grubetsch auf einem Floß zu sein" (p. 9).

Grubetsch is endowed with magical qualities and the story thus bears resemblance to later Seghers stories of mythological content — "Sagen von Artemis," "Das Argonautenschiff" and "Die schönsten Sagen vom Räuber Woynok." These magical qualities are clearly revealed in the Katherina episode, when from a hiding place Grubetsch watches the girl who loves him literally waste away while waiting for him. His ability to disguise himself so that Katherina does not recognize him when she meets him and to remain concealed for many months as he watches her indicate that he is no ordinary mortal. Grubetsch also stands beyond the usual ethical definition of good and evil. He is not immoral, simply amoral. This amorality of the hero is doubtless a factor in the disapproval with which the story has met among Marxist critics (as well as among those of the Weimar Republic).<sup>10</sup> At times Grubetsch feels pity for Katherina, and even suffers with her, but stronger than his pity is his fascination with her suffering:

Tag und Nacht lieg ich vor der Tür, so dünn ist sie vom Warten. Immer möcht ich hinein, ihr Hälschen und ihre Arme, alles ist ganz voll Warten, möchte schon drin liegen, kaum kann ich's aushalten, aber auch

das ist gut, so zu sehen, wie sie wartet. Immer sitzt sie am Tisch, schaut nach der Tür, zuckt zusammen, rennt mal ans Fenster. Einmal legte sie die Hände vor, weint, jetzt kann ich's schon nicht mehr aushalten, aber auch das ist gut, zu sehen, wie sie wartet. Immer sitzt sie am Tisch, schaut nach der Tür, zuckt mal zusammen, rennt mal ans Fenster. Ich kann es kaum ansehen, laut muß ich rufen, aber nein, nichts rufe ich, weh tut's, aber gut ist's, auch so zu sehen, wie sie wartet. Einmal kommt sie die Treppe herauf, ich hinunter, niemand kennt mich, ganz klein und alt mache ich mich. Wie der Schnee so weiß ist sie. Möchte ihre Brust anrühren, aber nicht anrühren, das ist auch gut. Jetzt ist schon Winter, dünn ist sie wie ein Strich. Weinen sehe ich sie, das Blut weint sie sich aus. Das kann ich nicht aushalten, ich muß wohl hereinkommen. Aber so zuhören, das ist auch gut, fast so gut wie die Liebe selber. Krank wird sie und kränker. Könnt ich doch hineingehen. Aber ich kann nicht. . . . Immer lauter hustet sie, immer weniger wird sie, im Frühjahr war's aus. Schrecklich war das, und doch war's gut, beinah so gut wie Hochzeit (p. 30, *Italics* K.V.A.).

The above-quoted passage also demonstrates that in this early story the unmistakable Seghers style with its economy of words on the one hand and luxurious repetition of details on

phrases on the other, indicated here by italics, is already formed.

Typical too of Seghers' later works is the proletarian setting of the story as well as the figure of the girl, Anna, unfulfilled and yearning for something different in life. Even Grubetsch, with his inexplicable power over people, bears some resemblance to Seghers' later heroes.

Although the milieu is proletarian, to consider the story a work of socialist literature in the broad sense is a false interpretation. The social conditions of the characters are not central to the story (one could easily imagine Grubetsch doing his damage among a group of bored suburban matrons). What Grubetsch deals in are hopes, and these are not a privilege of the poor. It is the moral, not the material poverty of the people which leads them to follow Grubetsch. It is clear that Anna Seghers is writing a legend. The isolation of the courtyard from the outside world adds to the saga-like quality of the story and puts it beyond the realm of realism. Realistic details are present, but these pertain only to the courtyard and never to the social conditions of the times. For example, it is never explained why the men in the courtyard are almost without exception out of work.

What is so striking in this early work is the total negation of hope. All the people who follow Grubetsch are destroyed, yet



Grubetsch's murder by Paul is not a victory of good over evil, but rather, as Inge Diersen points out, the triumph of mediocrity over the extraordinary.<sup>11</sup> That Grubetsch represents the extraordinary is underlined by the author at the end of the story, when, after enumerating the events that happened in the courtyard after Grubetsch's death, she comments: "Aber das waren gewöhnliche Liebschaften, gewöhnliche Tode" (p. 65).

The total disillusionment which emanates from this story could be attributed to the break-up for Anna Seghers of the world in which she had been raised, the humanistic classical German tradition. It is quite possible that "Grubetsch" represents her zero point, the time during which her shattered ideals had not yet been replaced by that which was to fill the void, Communism.

c. "Die Ziegler"

"Die Ziegler," written during the years 1927 to 1928 and first published in 1930 in a volume of short stories entitled Auf dem Wege zur amerikanischen Botschaft und andere Erzählungen, concerns the downfall of a petit bourgeois family. Ziegler Senior is the proprietor of a small knitting business, which at one time employed six people. As the story begins, only his daughter Marie still works for him. Soon he moves the workshop into the family flat and rents out the shop. Eventually there are no more orders and the Zieglers are soon reduced, through no fault of their own, to complete poverty.

The decline of the Zieglers is gradual, not sudden as in "Grubetsch." The story encompasses a time span of about two years. During that time, the lot of the family steadily worsens. They seem to be squeezed out of existence, as, forced by poverty to rent out more and more of their flat, they are pushed ever closer together:

Der kleine Junge wurde so still und flach wie ein abgefallenes Blatt.

. . . . .

Marie lag viel auf der Bank, als verbrauche sie dadurch weniger Platz als im Stehen und Gehen.<sup>12</sup>

As hunger becomes part of their lives, the elder son is caught stealing bread and is sent to a reform school, creating a painful scandal for the family, which cares more for the bourgeois ideal of respectability than, it seems, for the child. The father dies slowly of a fatal disease. The mother's health is undermined by what can be understood either as a miscarriage or a self-induced abortion. The pretty daughter, Anna, remains engaged to her prosperous suitor, but it seems unlikely that he will ever marry her. The youngest child stays the pale, meek little boy he has always been. No hope is held out that he will escape the fate of the Zieglers, which is eventual extermination. The story ends with the death of Marie, the plain daughter who has tried to keep the family going by carrying on the little work left in the knitting business.

If the central theme in "Grubetsch" is change through contact with the unusual, then the theme of "Die Ziegler" is inability to change in the face of changing social conditions.

Despite his worsening economic situation, old Ziegler still clings to the conventions of the petite bourgeoisie. He lives in mortal terror that his last presentable clothes will wear out:

Er pflegte bald nur sonntags auszugehen, wenn alle die Seinen gingen. Dann zog er seinen guten schwarzen Anzug an, wunderbar unversehrt im blanken Sonnenlicht wie das Sommerfell eines Tieres. Er fürchtete sehr, daß sich sein guter grauer Werktagsanzug abschaben möchte, wie sich der braune abgeschabt hatte, dann mußte er zu diesem schwarzen Sonntagsanzug vorrücken. Er gewöhnte sich daran, still auf dem Sofa zu sitzen. Dann kam es ihm vor, die kleinen abgewetzten Stellen, die nur ihm bekannt waren, heilten langsam. Das zarte graue Gewebe gehörte immer enger zu seinem eigenen Fleisch. Er fing an, es zu betrachten, wie einer die krank gewordene Haut betrachtete, entdeckte, daß es nicht nur aus schwarzem und grauem Garn bestand, sondern heimlich von einem gelben Fädchen durchmustert war, das immer am schnellsten riß (p. 99).

Ziegler's preoccupation with his clothes symbolizes his clinging to a social class to which he no longer belongs. His bankrupt status has robbed him of his membership in the middle class. Yet he refuses to identify with the unemployed proletarians

whose lot is similar to his own:

Niemand auf der Welt . . . konnte ihn zwingen, sich hier auf dem offenen Heumarkt anzustellen, in diesem Trupp Blau- und Graujacken. Sie waren frech und laut. Sie traten von einem Fuß auf den anderen; als ob es gar nichts zu bedeuten hätte, hier zu warten, drückten sie sich vorher und nachher auf ihrem Platz herum. Da mußte einer schon ganz gegerbt sein mit Schande, wenn er es ertrug, hier unter freiem Himmel für sein Geld anzustehen. (p. 88)

The inability of the Zieglers to change is further underlined by the way in which the children are described. As Inge Diersen points out, they do not change physically during the time which the story covers. Marie is the same thin, unattractive girl when she dies as when the story begins; there is no mention of her undergoing any of the emotional or physical changes which adolescence brings. Her little brother gives the impression of being a spindly-legged five-year-old throughout: "Selbst seine Beine blieben zart und dünn, als wollten sie das enge Samthöschen nicht kränken" (p. 96). Even for the vivacious Anna time stands still.<sup>13</sup>

The only member of the Ziegler family who changes is the older brother. He has left the family circle and has thereby found his way to the outside world. He becomes a worker in another city after being released from reform school and it is

hinted that he has found a meaningful life among the proletariat: "Er dachte an fremde Städte, an seine Gefährten, an seine Arbeit, an Aufmärsche, Versammlungen, Fahnen, Knüppel, Hunger und Plätze schwarz von Menschen" (p. 107). He could offer Marie escape from her deadly environment, but he remains insensitive to her need.

In "Selbstanzeige," written in 1931, Anna Seghers stated that "Die Ziegler" was one of her two favourite stories in the volume Auf dem Wege zur amerikanischen Botschaft und andere Erzählungen. The essence of the story she summed up as follows: ". . . Der Hunger des Kleinbürgers, seine vollkommene sinnlose Einsamkeit."<sup>14</sup> Ziegler Senior can find no help from his fellow small businessmen like Matthäus nor can he find a common bond with the unemployed proletarians, and so he dies in "senseless isolation." But the real isolation of the Zieglers is not from their own or any other class but from each other. They go through the motions of being a family, in that they do what bourgeois families are expected to do, such as going for Sunday walks together, but these remain merely motions devoid of feeling. This is clearly shown in the episode, when the father takes his youngest son for a walk:

Er wollte Menschen treffen, er wollte gesehen werden mit seinem kleinen Sohn, schwarz gekleidet, ruhig und gütig. Er legte den Arm um das Kind und erklärte ihm die Dampfer, die Dorfer und Berge. Der Kleine sah aber gar nicht in die Luft, sondern immer in sein Ge-

sicht. Er wollte aber nicht sein Gesicht von zwei Augen bewacht haben, wie Hunde ein Haus bewachen. Er ließ den Kleinen stehen. Er trat in die Kneipe ein, setzte sich. (p.96)

The little boy has not acted in the way which his father pictured, so his father quickly loses interest in him. The older brother's attitude toward Marie is similar; he despises her because she is ugly. He therefore does not care to penetrate the isolation around her.

There is an alternate saviour for Marie, who tries more than her own family to bring her out of her self-contained world — the girl in the red cap. This mysterious figure, an old school-mate, meets Marie at intervals during the two years and invites her to join herself and her friends. Marie always declines. When she sees the girl in the street in the last scene and tries to call out to her, it is too late: "Das Mädchen stutzte und blieb stehen. Es sah sich nach allen Seiten verwundert um; denn der Platz war leer. Es zuckte mit den Achseln und ging schnell weiter, weil es Marie nicht sehen konnte, die flach auf dem Pflaster lag" (p. 119).

The power which prevents Marie from following the girl was portrayed in an earlier encounter as evil:

. . . wie man in einem Sumpf versinkt, zog eine schreckliche, unbekannte gewaltige Kraft Marie von ihrem Platz, von diesem Mädchen weg: Noch hielten

sich ihre Hände, noch ihre Fingerspitzen, noch ihre Augen, es war um so viel stärker, als dieses Mädchen war, es zog Marie die Gasse hinunter, auf den offenen Platz. (p. 94)

One can therefore assume that the girl herself represents a positive force.

There is no reason to see in the girl with the red cap the symbol of the Communist Party.<sup>15</sup> On the contrary, from the way in which she is described, she would seem to be a member of the middle class, certainly better off than the Zieglers at any rate. The girl represents at best escape for Marie from the environment which she must leave in order to survive. Marie knows that she is trapped: "Die Tage waren rundherum fest geschlossen, sie hatten vielleicht irgendwo einen Spalt, durch den man heraus durfte, wenn man was vorzeigte. Anna zeigte ihr schönes Gesicht und wurde durchgelassen" (p. 76). An unknown force, however, prevents Marie from reaching out to those who could help her.

The question remains: is it the bourgeois milieu which Marie must leave in order to find a new life, or is it simply the Ziegler family? Her older brother found satisfaction in joining the proletariat. If that were the story's message, then why is the girl in the red cap, who is middle class, represented as a possible means of salvation? It would seem that Marie must join some group to escape her fate. The problem is one of isolation versus integration, not bourgeoisie versus proletariat.

Anna Seghers is critical of the middle-class values on which the Zieglers set so much store, but her criticism is hardly scathing. The Zieglers are figures meriting pity, not scorn. "Die Ziegler" is not a work of Critical Realism; indeed, it is not realistic. The forces which keep Marie Ziegler from following the girl in the red cap, and, for that matter, the girl herself and her circle as an obscure symbol of salvation, are too mystical to warrant the applying of the label "Critical Realism" to the story.

d. "Die Wellblech-Hütte"

"Die Wellblech-Hütte," subtitled "Bruchstücke einer Erzählung," was published in 1929 in an anthology entitled 24 neue deutsche Erzähler, edited by Hermann Kesten. It has never been republished. Literary criticism, both pre- and post-war, East and West German, seems to be ignorant of its existence, the exception being Friedrich Albrecht, in whose Seghers interpretation, Die Erzählerin Anna Seghers 1926-1932, the story assumes a central role.

The story is composed of two self-contained parts, each of which serves to complement the other. The location is the southwestern United States. The time is the late nineteenth or early twentieth century.

L., a revolutionary who has been sentenced to deportation<sup>16</sup>, must serve out his term in a hut in the desert with only one



prisoner for company, the mulatto Brekoly. L. proposes a program of mutual instruction. L. will teach Brekoly politics and Brekoly will give him Spanish lessons.<sup>17</sup> Brekoly does not reject the plan, but shows little interest. L. suffers from depression in his isolation. He begins to hate Brekoly, whose odour revolts him. He takes to sleeping outside the hut. Brekoly guesses L.'s reason, and the gap between the two men widens. A storm brings L.'s nerves to the breaking point; he attacks Brekoly. Later — in his shame — he runs out into the desert to die, but the attempt fails. L. continues to suffer from being cut off from the world, but he remains unable to find his way to his companion. Brekoly's serious illness fills him at first with joy when he contemplates being rid of this man. But Brekoly needs L. to care for him. Again L. tries to escape his conflict by running out into the desert. He experiences a change of heart, however, and returns to nurse the sick man. Brekoly, faced with the prospect of his approaching death and responding to L.'s transformation, takes up their lessons again. He recovers, but is soon taken to another place of banishment. As he leaves, he clings to L., saying: "Ich will bei dir bleiben. In meinem ganzen Leben ist es nur hier gut gewesen."<sup>18</sup>

The first part of the story ends here. The action resumes many years later. L. and Brekoly meet again. L. has continued his political work. Brekoly has joined the Party (presumably the same one to which L. belongs). The two men discuss their work like old comrades. There is no sign of the former antipathy

between them. Brekoly brings L. home to meet his wife. L. soon regrets having come; the courtyard at Brekoly's elicits the same response in him that Brekoly once did — he is nauseated by the odour of the milling people. Suddenly he undergoes a change: "Seine Wünsche kehrten sich plötzlich um: nicht fortgehen müssen, nicht allein sein, für immer hierbleiben. Er wünschte sich hierzubleiben wie Brekoly hierblieb, so lange, bis er jeden Laut im Grunde des Hofes verstanden hatte, jedes Gesicht und jede Arbeit" (p.166).

The central theme of the story is the gap between two individuals which must be bridged before there can be a working or coming together. More specifically, the problem is one of racial prejudice. A more detailed study of the two characters is necessary for an understanding of this problem.

We learn little of L.'s background except that he has devoted his life to a revolutionary movement. This has caused his banishment to the desert. The identity of the movement is not revealed, but it is probable that it is of a revolutionary socialist nature. L.'s life seems to be completely taken up by this cause. Nowhere is it mentioned that he has a family, a job, friends outside the Party or any other normal human connections. Friedrich Albrecht assumes that L. has a leading position in the movement, since he is named only by initial.<sup>19</sup>

L. remains a conscientious revolutionary in exile, although he is hampered in his efforts by isolation. Proof of this is his

desire to educate Brekoly: "Brekoly sollte nicht mit ihm umsonst unter einem Dach liegen. Vielleicht kam er nie aus dem Sand, aber Brekoly kam heraus. Das war nicht viel, was er tun konnte, aber doch genug. Er war froh" (p.149). Because of his growing antipathy toward Brekoly, his pedagogical efforts fail. What is the reason for this hostility on L.'s part? To answer this question, we must first say a further word about Brekoly.

"Er hieß Brekoly. Er kam aus dem Süden. Von einer gelben Mutter. Er war eigentlich ein Politischer, wegen Raub verurteilt. Er war bei dem Streik in . . . gewesen, bei der Plunderung ergriffen. Er war auf acht Jahre deportiert, war aber krank und hoffte früher davon zu kommen" (p.149). Brekoly has thus much in common with L. except for one important aspect — he is part Negro.<sup>20</sup> L. did not reject Brekoly immediately because of his racial origins. His first reaction was neutral: "Angeboten wird mir noch einmal in diesem Körper die menschliche Gemeinschaft" (p. 149). However, soon Brekoly begins to irritate him. The characteristics which displease L. most are those commonly attributed to Negroes: a childishness and lack of seriousness which expresses itself in sudden, unmotivated laughter; the constant drumming on objects; singing to oneself. Above all there is the smell which white people have always contended Negroes possess. This smell is presented as the cause, but is more a symbol, of L.'s hatred for Brekoly. Brekoly's smell is symbolic of his negritude.

L.'s hostility is countered by Brekoly, who is not pre-disposed to trust white men in any event: "Brekoly lachelte. Besser als seine Hautfarbe verriet das Lächeln seine Herkunft. In diesem Lächeln war keine Heiterkeit, kein Vertrauen. Wie ein Wirt das Tor aufmacht, so öffnete Brekoly hoflich und mißtrauisch die Pforten seines Angesichtes" (p. 150). Any budding confidence between the two men is destroyed when L. decides to sleep outside the hut. Brekoly knows the reason and reacts by erasing all the words written on the walls of the hut. Now their hostility is in the open: "Fest waren ihre Blicke vor Verachtung. Er verachtete Brekoly, wie Brekoly ihn. Er verachtete Brekolys Trägheit, wie Brekoly seine Kraft, er verachtete Brekolys Blut, wie Brekoly das seinige" (p. 154; Italics K.V.A.).

L. realizes that his pedagogical plans will come to naught under these circumstances: "Er wird schlechter von mir weggehen, als er gekommen ist . . . ich muß neu mit ihm anfangen" (p. 154).

L.'s problem is two-fold. He wishes to be an effective teacher, but cannot until he overcomes his prejudice. In addition, L. is in need of human companionship. From the beginning, it is indicated that separation from society, especially the society of his fellow political activists, is painful for him: "Mit jedem Schritt in den Sand wurden die Fäden, die ihn noch mit den Seinen verknüpften, straffer und straffer gespannt, um bald zu reißen. Dann wird er ganz allein sein" (p. 146). He

needs Brekoly, just as Brekoly needs him. They are in the end brought together by the thought of death. L. conquers his prejudice, albeit incompletely, not through his ideological convictions, but through simple humanity. He takes care of the sick man, and by this humanitarian act, finds the gap bridged. Thus, although the story has political overtones, its message is essentially humanistic.

Friedrich Albrecht notes that the two men are of differing social origins, have opposing philosophies of life, a different level of education and political development in addition to their varying racial backgrounds. These factors he stresses:

". . . weil der Irrtum ausgeschlossen werden muß, die Problematik sei auf einen dieser Faktoren allein, etwa auf die verschiedene Rassezugehörigkeit, zurückzuführen."<sup>21</sup> It is true that all these differences do not make a common understanding easier to reach. One cannot ignore the fact, however, that whenever L. manifests his dislike of Brekoly, it is in connection with his race, for which the odour, which is mentioned in every instance of conflict, is symbolic. The "süßlicher Geruch" is a leitmotif which accompanies every outburst of L.'s hostility. An example is the incident preceding the fight already mentioned:

Brekoly sagte ganz lustig: "Wir wollen essen." Er stand schwankend auf, holte Teller, Konservenbüchse. "Mach auf!" Als L. daran herumstocherte, sagte Brekoly: "Der Rand muß zwischen dem Hebel und der Schraube sein." Er nahm es ihm aus der Hand. Sie

setzten sich. Ein süßlicher Geruch erfüllte die Hütte, jeder Bissen schmeckte danach, jeder Atemzug. L. hörte mit dem Essen auf und spielte mit dem Konservenöffner. ". . . wenn man ihn einem genau an der Schläfe ansetzt." (p. 156)

Here Brekoly has done nothing to incite the murderous dream of L. except to exist. If one chooses to ignore the racial question there is no reason for the hostility between L. and Brekoly.

Friedrich Albrecht finds that the addition of the second part adds nothing to the story and robs it of its self-containment, thus giving it fragmentary form.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, the second part seems to repudiate the developments of the first part and throws the whole story into confusion, from which it is saved by an artificial and thus unconvincing ending. While it serves to illuminate the influence L. had on Brekoly, the second part belies the conversion L. seemed to have undergone.

In the years following Brekoly's release, L.'s instruction has had a profound effect on him: "Seit man ihn von L. getrennt hatte — Brekolys Zeitangaben bezogen sich stets auf diese Trennung von L. — hatte er immer versucht zu lesen und dazuzulernen. In C. war er zur Partei gekommen. Die letzten Jahre waren die übliche Kette von Schwierigkeit, Hunger, Hetze und Arbeit" (p. 164).

L., however, has not shaken off his old prejudice. The courtyard of Brekoly's house which is filled with Negroes (this is

not stated, but it could hardly have been possible for Brekoly (to live in a white or mixed neighbourhood) has the same smell which once filled the hut: "Über dem Hof lag in dicken Schwaden ein fetter süßer Geruch" (p. 165). L. wishes to flee, but suddenly a change comes over him and he desires to stay. Only now has L. succeeded in overcoming his feeling of revulsion toward Negroes: "Der Geruch war da, fremd, aber nicht unerträglich" (p. 166). Now he is free to work among these people, which is his immediate wish.

This ending is, however, unsatisfactory. L.'s final overcoming of his anti-Negro feeling, which at the beginning of the second part seemed no longer a problem, is unconvincing. He has struggled with this problem during his confinement with Brekoly, seemingly without success. Now, suddenly, while watching the milling ~~through~~ in the courtyard, his old disgust miraculously leaves him. No doubt the author could find no satisfactory solution to L.'s conflict, since it is a conflict which no class-conscious revolutionary should have had in the first place — thus the "miraculous" ending.

Like the action in "Grubetsch," events in "Die Wellblech-Hütte" unfold in an atmosphere removed from the outside world. Not only is the hut geographically isolated, but no mention is made of conditions of work; guards are noted but not described. The author has endeavoured to give her story a concrete geographical setting, but names like Edwardstown, Temherry,

Lakleitz, Darkville, East River, New Boston and Wheatly sound artificial to anyone knowledgeable about the United States.

The initial tone of the story differs from earlier Seghers works. The first half of the first part details L.'s journey to the hut in a concise manner, by means of which the action is moved along at a fast clip. There is little room for description; however, realistic details in the form of times and place names abound. Nevertheless, a temporal definition such as "Montag auf Dienstag" (p. 143) has little relevance if the reader does not know the month or even approximate year. Likewise, the names of towns which do not or could not exist only serve to give a superficial aura of reality which is dispersed upon closer examination.<sup>23</sup> The narrative tone changes when L. arrives at his final destination. Events are then seen through his eyes (rarely through Brekoly's), although the third person narrator is retained. The real arena of action for the rest of the story is the human psyche. Subordinate to this, however, is a second plane on which the story moves, depicting the battle of man against the elements: the heat of the desert, the storms, the isolation and the inability to escape. These factors all have psychological ramifications, so the two levels can almost be considered one.

Albrecht places "Die Wellblech-Hütte" chronologically between "Die Ziegler" and "Auf dem Wege zur amerikanischen Botschaft," for although the fragment was published in 1929 it most probably



was written before that. This writer, disputing Albrecht's contention (expounded in Die Erzählerin Anna Seghers, pp. 121-123) that "Auf dem Wege zur amerikanischen Botschaft" preceded Aufstand der Fischer von St. Barbara, places the origin of "Die Wellblech-Hütte" between "Die Ziegler" and the Kleist Prize winning story. There are several reasons for this. The fragment must have been written after "Die Ziegler" since it shows movement away from the passive proletariat ("Grubetsch") and the petite bourgeoisie ("Die Ziegler") to the revolutionary proletariat, which is to be her main subject from now on. It nevertheless is close in time to the two early stories (the action is set in a vacuum, like that of "Grubetsch"; this was avoided in later works). The unsuccessful treatment of the teacher-student motif, which played an effective role in Aufstand der Fischer von St. Barbara, would suggest that the fragment represents an initial working-out of this theme.

The flaw in the story, and the reason it remained a fragment, lies in the choice of the subject matter. The depiction of racial prejudice in a revolutionary proletarian leader drew Anna Seghers into a quagmire out of which no way could be found. If she represented this prejudice as being a remnant of bourgeois thinking, then her hero was no longer a bona fide proletarian. She must have known that the American workers' movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had little interest in helping the Negro and indeed discriminated against him as viciously as did the capitalist establishment. To attribute this

to American racism would, however, weaken the Communist argument that the workers' struggle in all countries is dedicated to the same ideals. Having found no satisfactory solution, Anna Seghers simply left the story, and the subject, never to return to it.

"Die Wellblech-Hütte" marks another step towards Socialist Realism in that it depicts for the first time men who are directly involved in the revolutionary struggle of the working masses. On the other hand, it is not primarily a political work. As is often the case in Seghers' works, a problem which is political on the surface, here education as a type of political activity, is changed to become an ethical problem (racial prejudice), which has only a humanitarian solution (caring for one's brother). As in "Grubetsch" and "Die Ziegler," Seghers' concern for the oppressed of the world seems more an outgrowth of her own humanitarian world view and less a result of the teachings of the Communist Party.

e. Aufstand der Fischer von St. Barbara

In an effort to better their living conditions, the fishermen of St. Barbara go out on strike against the shipping firm, in whose employ they are. Despite the help of an outside strike leader and the sabotage act of one of their young men, as well as the general heroism and solidarity of the fishermen and their families, the strike is broken when troops are brought in and the fishermen are forced to go back to work at the old terms. This

is in brief the substance of Aufstand der Fischer von St. Barbara (1928), Anna Seghers' first published book which earned her the Kleist Prize.

Both the locale and the time in which the story is set are indefinite. St. Barbara is an enclave somewhere on Europe's North Atlantic coast, perhaps in Brittany.<sup>24</sup> The time is the last half of the nineteenth or the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>25</sup>

Although both geographical and historical backgrounds are vague, the economic origins of the strike are presented in detail. The fishermen depend for their livelihood upon a percentage paid them by the shipping firm for the main catch. The coastal fishing to which they turn out of season is not enough to support them, but simply a way of keeping occupied. Their earnings are not enough to keep their families from semistarvation during the winter, so, encouraged by the successful uprising in neighbouring Port Sebastian, the men of St. Barbara make ready to strike.

At the beginning of October, Hull, the leader of the successful uprising in Port Sebastian, arrives in St. Barbara. He is immediately trusted by the fishermen who know him by reputation. He calls together a meeting of all the fishermen in the area, where a three-point program is agreed upon.

A week later, Hull, accompanied by Andreas Bruyn, a young

man from St. Barbara, goes to St. Elnor and St. Blé to encourage the men of these villages to hold to the agreement. These events, which cover a time span of two weeks, comprise approximately half the book.

Christmas and the New Year come and go and Hull has decided to spend the entire winter in St. Barbara. Shortly after Easter the strike begins. It is set off by the attack on young Bredel, the son of the firm's owner. The next day, the fishermen elect three representatives to present their terms to the employer. One of the men is arrested. The enraged fisherfolk attack the firm's office and vandalize it. Hull calls for a meeting of all the fishermen in the area for Whitsunday.

Meanwhile, the effects of the strike are beginning to be felt in St. Barbara. Suffering from malnutrition, the children become diseased. The neighbouring villages give in but the men of St. Barbara hold firm. In a confrontation with the police, the fisherman Kedannek is killed. Despite their resolve, one ship, the Marie Farère, leaves from St. Barbara. Andreas sabotages the ship and is one of the few to survive the ensuing shipwreck. He seeks refuge in the cliffs. Hull leaves St. Barbara in an effort to escape the soldiers who are looking for him, and then unexpectedly returns and is arrested. Andreas too returns to the village and dies fleeing from the soldiers. The uprising is quelled and the fishermen go out to sea having gained no monetary advantage. The story closes with the departure of the strikebreaking ship, Marie Farère.

The main figures are Hull, Andreas Bruyn, Kedennek, his wife Marie and the prostitute Marie. The secondary figures are not sufficiently developed to warrant a discussion of their characters.

Hull is perhaps the least convincing character in the story. Of his background nothing more is revealed than that he has seen a lot of the world and was instrumental in the successful April uprising in Port Sebastian. As a result, he is being sought by the police. It is never mentioned to what party he belongs or with what organization he works. He would seem to be affiliated with no group, for his independence is frequently mentioned: "Hull war ruhig und sorglos. Niemand konnte ihm etwas anhaben. Er konnte bleiben und fortgehen, wie er wollte."<sup>26</sup> He comes to St. Barbara as a strike leader. He never has to explain why he is there, the fishermen simply accept him. Hull seems to possess a demonic power, much like that of Grubetsch: "Er brauchte nur in die Hände zu klatschen, dann sprang der Aufstand aus ihm heraus, auf die Stadt, aus der Stadt über die Küste, vielleicht über die Grenze" (p. 25).

Hull has, however, undergone a change since the events in Port Sebastian: "Er war auch entsetzlich müde, seit den Apriltagen von Port Sebastian war er immer unterwegs, immer auf dem Sprung, er machte sich nichts draus, nur machte ein Tag so müd, wie früher zehn" (p. 23). This fatigue is not only physical, but also mental. From the time of his arrival in St. Barbara, Hull

is obsessed with the idea of leaving. This inner conflict occupies much of his time: "Hull fiel es auf einmal schwer aufs Herz, daß er gekommen war. Es gab auf der Welt viele warme lustige Winkel, alle standen ihm offen, warum war er nicht abgefahren, warum saß er hier?" (p. 11).

Wie einfach war alles. Er konnte auch jetzt noch weggehen. Niemand hatte ihn erkannt. Kein Mensch wußte noch, daß er Hull aus Sebastian war. Wenn sie es nachher erfuhren, dachten sie vielleicht, das sei eine Schande. Vielleicht war es auch wirklich eine Schande. Aber der Dampfer, der ihn hergebracht hatte, brachte ihn am Morgen wieder zurück. Von der Margaretinsel aus gingen jeden Tag ein Dutzend Dampfer nach allen möglichen Häfen. Gewiß war es eine Schande. Aber drüben würde die Sonne die Schande zusammenschmelzen. (p. 13)

Yet he cannot bring himself to go; what holds him is doubtless the fear of disgrace.

The idea of flight is gradually replaced by a determination to stay. Soon after his arrival we read: ". . . er wollte mindestens noch einen Monat bleiben" (p. 36). A week after the first meeting, Desak, the innkeeper, advises Hull to leave immediately, since there will only be one steamer a week in the future. Hull considers his suggestion, "Vielleicht geh ich mal" (p. 46). However, when Marie mentions she has heard of his departure, he replies: "Da wird nichts draus" (p. 47). By New

Years he has decided to stay for the whole winter. This decision is not reached through consequent thought, but rather through vacillation: "Hull hatte den nächsten Postdampfer benutzen wollen, dann den übernächsten. Er war immer noch da. Jetzt beschloß er den ganzen Winter über zu bleiben" (p. 60). Why he is staying is not clear. The strike is not to take place until the spring. Staying in St. Barbara over the winter, from whence he could not escape if the soldiers came looking for him, makes little sense even to Hull himself: "Hull dachte: Wie mich das festhält, immer hier in der Bucht, immer in diesem Loch, jetzt schon Monate. . . . Wenn er bis morgen wartete, kam er niemals fort, niemals, das konnte er nicht verstehen, das ging nicht" (p. 85). Thereupon he asks Andreas to take him across in his boat; but again he shrinks from taking the final step: "Hull dachte, was habe ich da für einen Unsinn geschwätzt. Er hatte Lust, sich an Andreas Arm festzuhalten, am Tisch, an den Wänden, damit ihn niemand wegreißen könnte. — Wer hat das nur eben im Dunkeln gesagt, dachte er, daß ich weg wollte" (p. 86). When Kedennek offers to take him to the neighbouring island, Hull replies: "Laß nur, ich fahre doch nicht, das hat noch Zeit, fahr ein andermal" (p. 86). Hull's attachment to St. Barbara is never explained. We are simply told ". . . er konnte nicht weg von seinem Pünktchen Küste" (p. 100).

When he finally does leave St. Barbara to escape the soldiers, his joy and relief at leaving quickly turn to sadness:

"Auf einmal wurde Hull frohlich. Eine solche Freude war das, die einem schon im ersten Aufblitzen bis in die Fingerspitzen heiß machte. . . . Auf einmal war alle Freude aus seinem Herzen weg, nur Enttäuschung war drin" (p. 116). Hull's reluctance to leave St. Barbara and his sadness when he finally does go may be attributable to his fear of being alone. "As long as he is in St. Barbara, he has people to whom he belongs. On the island he learns of the sabotage of the Marie Farère and feels ". . . nicht nur Kummer, sondern Gram. Er war nicht dort. Er ging durch die Straßen, vielleicht konnte er Andreas begegnen hier oder woanders. Aber er wußte genau, daß er ihn nie mehr sehen konnte. Er mußte allein unter diesen unzähligen Menschen weitergehen" (p. 120).

He decides to go back to St. Barbara, which means almost certain death, and is arrested by the soldiers. Why Hull goes back when the strike is beyond the point of being saved is puzzling, but then Hull's actions have never been very easy to understand. Hull is a man who acts more on impulse than on logic — he need only clap his hands and revolution springs up.

Both Hull's reluctance to leave St. Barbara in the face of danger and his return there which can only be termed suicidal are reminiscent of the actions of other Seghers characters. Fate seems here to be the appropriate word. Just as the people in "Grubetsch" are drawn toward their destruction, just as Marie Ziegler is incapable of reaching out to those who could help her,



so Hull is mysteriously tied to the inextricable village St. Barbara which is his destiny. Attempts to give logical explanations for his actions prove futile.<sup>27</sup>

Hull cannot be considered a positive hero in the Marxist sense. It is clear from the beginning that he is waging class warfare for egocentric reasons. His battle with the Bredel shipping firm is simply a reflection of his own inner conflict. After the heady success of the April days in Port Sebastian, he decided himself to carry the struggle to St. Barbara:

Das mußte schon alles lange her sein, keine Monate, sondern Jahre. Auch er mußte damals anders gewesen sein, damals war er noch fröhlich, das war gut, wenn man lustig war, dann ging einem alles von der Hand . . . damals war ihm auch der Gedanke gekommen, nicht herausschlüpfen, sondern gerade erst recht her nach St. Barbara. (p. 25)

It is clear that his decision is prompted not by cool reflection, but rather is a spur-of-the-moment whim. Anna Seghers connects here two motifs, that of joy and successful activity. The one is essential to the other. Hull feels no longer bound by his original decision, because he does not have the joy with which to carry it out: "Jetzt hatte sich alles verändert, jetzt konnte es doch keine Schande mehr sein, wegzugehen, was konnte er denn für diesen Gedanken von gestern, wo er jetzt anders war, anders und nicht mehr fröhlich" (p.25). Hull's whimsical, spontaneous

actions are the antithesis of those of a positive hero, who follows orders, is consequent and not dependent on moods.

As a leader, Hull is largely ineffectual. He leads the uprising only in the beginning. He calls the first meeting together and makes a trip to the neighbouring villages to keep the men together. During the time from November to Whitsunday, however, he does nothing to prepare for the strike. When it should begin, he does not call it, but waits for some incident to unleash it. The incident is the attack on young Bredel:

Hull hatte nicht nur die letzten zehn Minuten, sondern die letzten Wochen gewartet. Es war unmöglich, länger zu warten. Hull hatte den jungen Bredel eintreten sehen. Nyk war nachgekommen, er war einen Schritt näher gekommen, hatte den Arm gehoben, Hull hatte gewußt, jetzt kommt es, dann ist es geschehen, Hull fühlte Erleichterung, ausgelassene Freude. Hull stand auf und ging unters Licht. Er sagte: "Packt an!" (p. 66)

This rather cowardly act, the beating of Bredel by a group of men, detracts from the dignity of the strike. From the Marxist viewpoint, it smacks of spontaneity and anarchism.

Once the strike starts with a crowd gathering and shouting their demands, Hull feels that he should lead the action, but reluctance overcomes him: "Hull kam der Gedanke, daß er jetzt etwas unternehmen müsse. Er erschrak. Jetzt wäre er lieber

unter den vielen geblieben, unbeachtet" (p. 68). He conquers his reticence and addresses the crowd, having climbed on the back of the fisherman Nyk:

Hull begann zu reden. Er sagte, was er schon auf der Versammlung gesagt hatte: Beieinander bleiben, kein Schiff herauslassen. Die Leute hörten ihn vollkommen schweigend an. Es war ihr einziger Wunsch, eben diese Worte zu hören. Auch Hull hatte keinen andren Wunsch, als immer dieselben Worte zu wiederholen. Hulls Stimme war nicht so dröhnend, wie zum Beispiel Kedenneks Stimme. Sie versetzte aber jeden, der sie anhörte, in Erregung, erweckte in jedem etwas wie Hoffnung. Sogar in Hull selbst erweckte der Klang seiner eigenen Stimme etwas wie Hoffnung. Es kam ihm vor, als stünde er drunten unter den vielen Menschen und betrachtete erregt jenen Menschen, der auf Nyks Schultern geklettert war, berauscht und sorglos, ohne an das Ende zu denken. (p. 69)

The above-quoted passage suggests two things about Hull. There is something of the demagogue in him. Not only the crowd, but even Hull himself, is taken in by what he says, although it is nothing new or unusual. His ability to separate himself from his own role and observe himself hints at schizophrenia. This is reinforced by his extremes of mood — he swings from elation to depression without any apparent reason; his inability to reach a decision; the illogical rashness of the decisions he does make;

his preoccupation with death. All these symptoms point to the fact that Hull is a sick man. As such he is useless to the fishermen in their struggle. He urges them to continue the strike when it can only lead to starvation and defeat. He elects martyrdom rather than to continue the battle at another time and another place. One gets the impression that Hull's private battle is best served by his being captured.<sup>28</sup>

Socialist Realists have found in the figure of Andreas a more satisfying portrait of the revolutionary hero. Andreas is an orphan who has come to live with the Kedenneks. The harshness of life which he constantly observes around him has made him a potential revolutionary: "Andreas dachte, seine Kinder würden mal anders aussehen, keine Zwei-Brocken-Bohnen-Tarifkinder. Es kam ihm einfach vor, alles zu ändern. Er brauchte nur die Hände an den Mund zu legen, alle zusammenbrüllen" (p. 34). Andreas shows the same spontaneity as Hull, which is considered anarchistic by Marxists.

In Hull Andreas sees his mentor. This is but one of many such relationships which recur throughout Seghers' writings. Andreas feels from the beginning that he belongs where the action is: ". . . vom Markt her kam ein unbekannter Lärm, er horchte, was das wohl sein mochte. Er ahnte, was drunten vorging. Er war beinah verzweifelt. Er war also nicht von allem Anfang an dabei gewesen, gerade er nicht, der am meisten dazugehörte" (p. 71). He soon surpasses Hull in revolutionary activity. He undertakes the

sabotaging of the Marie Farère on his own, having thought the consequences through. Instead of the immediate death with which he had reckoned, Andreas has met another fate — he has become a pariah:

Andreas wußte genau, Marie Kedennek verstand alles, was er gesagt hatte, sie war ja keine Schlappe, Blöde; vielleicht hätte sie's genau so gemacht an seiner Stelle. Aber mit ihrer Liebe zu ihm war's vorbei. So einen, wie ihn, liebte man nicht mehr. Von so einem, wie er, rückten die vier Wände der Hütte weg, weg die Teller auf dem Tisch. . . . Schrecklich, daß gerade ihm das geschehen mußte. Er war immer so fröhlich gewesen, und war es vielleicht auch jetzt noch. Er hatte gern gepfiffen und gelacht, er hatte auch gemerkt, wenn er lachte, kam immer was Weiches in die Gesichter; er hatte auch selbst gern sein Lachen gehört und unmäßig in die Länge gedehnt. . . . Jetzt hatte niemand mehr Lust nach ihm, das war hart. (pp. 110-11)

The motif of joy, which was associated with Hull, appears also in reference to Andreas. Here too it is connected with the spontaneity motif and with revolutionary work. Both aspects are present in the description of Andreas' death:

Andreas hörte nochmal "Halt!", er rannte noch schneller, er hörte auch einen Knall, das war wie ein Händeklatschen: Weiter — er rannte — Andreas war schon umgefallen, hatte sich schon überkugelt, war in den

Steinen hängengeblieben, das Gesicht unkenntlich zerschlagen, — aber etwas in ihm rannte noch immer weiter, rannte und rannte und zerstob, schließlich nach allen Richtungen in die Luft in unbeschreiblicher Freude und Leichtigkeit. (p. 131)

Anna Seghers glorifies Andreas' death in an almost religious manner. The image evoked in the last lines is one of the soul being liberated from the body and joining the universal soul. Adding to the mysticism of the death scene is the final revelation which the boy experiences just before he dies: ". . . erst jetzt im Rennen fiel ihm alles wieder ein. Hull hatte Unrecht gehabt: er war gar nicht so besonders jung, er kannte schon alles, den Tod seiner Mutter, Kedenneks Tod, das Meer und die Kameraden, Mariens braune um die seinen verschlungenen Glieder; was war noch groß zu erwarten?" (pp. 130-31).

In his article "Das Beispiel. Anna Seghers zum 60. Geburtstag," Wolfgang Joho called Aufstand der Fischer von St. Barbara an optimistic tragedy.<sup>29</sup> This applies not only to this story but to most of her works which date from her joining the Communist Party. Death in a Seghers story is not to be mourned. Her heroes are martyrs who experience a "moment of truth" before they die. .

Such a figure is Kedennek, Andreas' uncle. The taciturn fisherman has long been discontented with his own and his fellows' lot and has his own ideas of how to right things, but he

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immediately gives Hull all prerogatives of leadership. Indeed, he has anticipated Hull's arrival like one of the faithful awaiting the Messiah: "Manche haben gesagt, daß er kommt . . . und manche haben gesagt, daß er nicht kommt, jetzt ist er also gekommen" (p. 20). Kedennek has put everything on the uprising, but his death during a confrontation between the fishermen and the soldiers is still a futile and almost unbelievable gesture, for a gesture it remains. No one seems spurred on by it, the uprising does not gain by it. Kedennek is simply another martyr for the cause. His death, accompanied by the "moment of truth," is mystically glorified like that of his nephew:

Sein ganzes Leben hatte Kedennek nur Segel und Motore, Fang und Tarife gedacht, aber während dieser acht Meter hatte er endlich Zeit gehabt, an alles Mögliche zu denken. In seinen Kopf waren alle Gedanken eingezogen, die zu empfangen der Kopf eines Menschen geschaffen ist. Er dachte auch an Gott, nicht wie man an etwas denkt, das es nicht gibt, sondern an etwas, das einen verlassen hat." (p. 96)

Anna Seghers' characters give up their lives willingly and senselessly. It is totally unrealistic to believe that Kedennek, a mature man who is accustomed to the harsh realities of life and on whom his wife and several children depend, would so thoughtlessly throw his life away. It is equally unbelievable that Andreas, a boy who is full of the joy of living, would feel that there was nothing left for him to experience. Only a fanatic,

who felt that he was best serving his cause in this way, would seek out and greet death in such a manner. There is no mention that these people subscribe to any doctrine which would explain their actions.

It is strange that Anna Seghers is less than interested in her female characters. They are mostly stereotypes, falling into three categories: the proletarian woman, prematurely aged by child-bearing and hard work; the young girl, unfulfilled and yearning for something she cannot define; the whore with a heart of gold. Even in the selection of names, she attempts little variety. Most Seghers women are named Anna, Marie or Katherina. Women take a secondary role in the class struggle. They may assist the men, but never do they perform acts of central importance.

Marie Kedennek belongs to the first type of Seghers female characters. Repeatedly it is stressed that her hard life has made her old before her time: "Auch Kedenneks Frau hatte mal in ihrer Haube etwas Besseres zusammengebunden als ein spitzes Kinn und ein paar Backenknochen, es war gar nicht mal so lange her, da hatte auch sie einen Schoß und eine Brust gehabt" (p. 27). "Hull hatte sich immer gedacht, Marie Kedennek sei eine alte Frau, ihr Haar sei grau, es war aber reich und braun" (p. 93). Life has also made her bitter. She is prone to hatred, as her attitude toward Hull shows. She is envious: "Katarina Nehr war noch jung, saftig und nicht so ausgemergelt wie die andre;



deshalb hatte Marie Kedennek sie auch nie leiden können" (p. 80).

This woman is capable of love, however. She is a good mother and she loves her nephew Andreas more than her own children (p. 108). She is brave. When her husband is brought in dead, she helps lay the body on the bed, finishes her chores and lies down beside him, taking the disaster in a most resigned fashion.

The prostitute Marie is important primarily because of the interaction between her and Hull. He is bent on possessing her, and this may account in part for his reluctance to leave St. Barbara. Hull's personality is also revealed through his relationship to her: "Auf einmal dachte er, daß das alles, seine unsinnige Lust nach diesem häßlichen, dünnen Mädchen, seine Eier, sich alles genau zu merken, nichts anderes als die Todesangst selbst war, von der er manchmal hatte sprechen hören" (p. 9). From the description of Marie just quoted, one can see that she brings to her profession none of the usual gifts. Nor does she have the prostitute's business sense. She accepts, and even feeds, men who can't pay her and refuses some, like young Bredel, who could pay well. Marie is not conscious of class or revolution. She is guided by her own wishes. She is not without courage. It is she who comes to warn Hull that the soldiers are after him. She also brings food to Andreas' hiding place at no small risk to herself. She is motivated in these actions by kindness. Her interest in the strike seems minimal. When the soldiers attack her, she is puzzled: "Marie wußte nicht, warum

diese Kedelschen Soldaten auf einmal und gerade jetzt und alle miteinander eine solche Wut auf ihren mageren, lumpigen Körper hatten" (p. 124). Marie manages to preserve a curious innocence about her, even in death: "Sie drehte ihren Kopf nach ihm um, ihre Beine waren noch gegen den Leib gezogen, aber das gelbe Tuch hatte sie an sich gedrückt, wie eine Mutter ihr Kind" (p. 125). The comparison made is to a mother, but, clutching the yellow scarf she prizes above everything, Marie appears more like a child.

Despite the deaths of three of the five main characters (and, we can assume, the imminent death of a fourth, Hull) and the total failure of the uprising, the story is optimistic. This note is struck at the beginning:

Der Aufstand der Fischer von St. Barbara endete mit der verspäteten Ausfahrt zu den Bedingungen der vergangenen vier Jahre. Man kann sagen, daß der Aufstand eigentlich schon zu Ende war, bevor Hull nach Port Sebastian eingeliefert wurde und Andreas auf der Flucht durch die Klippen umkam. Der Präfekt reiste ab, nachdem er in die Hauptstadt berichtet hatte, daß die Ruhe an der Bucht wiederhergestellt sei. St. Barbara sah jetzt wirklich aus, wie es jeden Sommer aussah. Aber längst, nachdem die Soldaten zurückgezogen, die Fischer auf der See waren, saß der Aufstand noch auf dem leeren, weißen, sommerlich kühlen Marktplatz und dachte ruhig

an die Seinigen, die er geboren, aufgezogen, gepflegt und behütet hatte für das, was für sie am besten war. (p. 7)

This opening paragraph is extraordinary in several ways. The narrator's point of view, which is here omniscient, is different from that used throughout the story. The reader is informed of the outcome of the uprising and the fate of the main characters, thus removing all suspense from the tale. It is not the fate of the main figures which the author considers of prime importance, but rather the fate of the uprising, and it sits invisible on the marketplace, thinking of those it has created. This reversal of roles—the people did not create the uprising, it created them—explains why the uprising cannot be destroyed. It will create other people and go on—thus the optimism of the story.

Paul Rilla considers the picture of the uprising sitting on the marketplace thinking of its own the leitmotif of Anna Seghers' works:

Denn was immer sie zu berichten hat, so wird es der Bericht von Kämpfen sein, die trüchtig gehen mit einer Entscheidung, welche unabhängig ist von den Scheintriumphen der alten Gewalt. Ein niedergeschlagener Aufruhr ist die Gewähr der besseren revolutionären Aktion von morgen. Eine gelungene wirtschaftliche Erpressung an den Besitzlosen ist die Gewähr der reiferen revolutionären Einsicht in den korrumpier-

enden Mechanismus der Besitzlosigkeit. Die Lethargie, das Paktieren in den eigenen proletarischen Reihen ist die Gewähr der wachsameren und beweglicheren proletarischen Taktik. Das heroische Opfer des einzelnen ist die Gewähr des zu weckenden Heroismus der Massen. Und alles zusammen findet in den Exzessen der taumelnden Zeit die Gewähr, daß sich der Abgrund längst geöffnet hat, in den eine Gesellschaft, deren Rechtsanspruch nur noch ein historisches Unrecht ist, hinabtaumeln wird.

Nichts geschieht für sich allein: das ist die epische Botschaft aller Bücher der Anna Seghers.<sup>30</sup>

In Aufstand der Fischer von St. Barbara, Anna Seghers puts her pen once more where her heart is, on the side of the poor and the oppressed. The story was published in the year she joined the Communist Party. As the guidelines for Socialist Realism were not yet set down, it is pointless to criticize the story as a work of Socialist Realism.

The Communist press praised the tendency of the story, but found it unsatisfactory in its description of the strike:

Seghers' Buch hat große Qualitäten. Das Leben und Fühlen der Fischer ist wirklich gestaltet. Die Mängel sollen nicht verschwiegen werden. Eine gewisse, man möchte fast sagen weibliche Verschwommenheit in der Darstellung des Kampfes und seiner Organisation. Der

Meister des Kampfes, Hull, fällt geradezu vom Himmel. Von einer Verbindung mit den sozialen Kämpfen im Lande ist nichts zu merken. Die Fischer sind zu primitiv, ihr Führer zu neurasthenisch geschildert. Im ganzen aber doch eine hervorragende Darstellung sozialer Not. 31

It is interesting to note that the reviewer in the Rote Fahne guessed Seghers' secret. Aufstand der Fischer von St. Barbara was published only under the name Seghers, and it was presumed that this Seghers was a man. The liberal press did not have such fine antennae. Distracted by Anna Seghers' prose, which is hard and concise, the reviewer of the Berliner Tageblatt called the book ". . . so männlich, wie ein Buch nur sein kann." 32

Marxist criticism of the book has hardly changed since 1928: the action is too isolated; there is no connection with the international class struggle; the leader does not always act in the best interest of the class struggle; his political affiliation is never mentioned; fate plays too great a role; the uprising is not planned, but rather is spontaneous.

The story represents, however, an important step forward in Anna Seghers' development as a Communist writer. It is her first attempt to depict an event specifically connected with the class struggle. The figure of Hull, despite its imperfections, is the prototype of the revolutionary leader, the "positive hero" of her later works, just as Andreas is the prototype of the young

revolutionary. Sympathy for the poor and the downtrodden, which manifested itself in "Grubetsch" and "Die Ziegler" has evolved into a tendentious championing of the working class and their struggle. Above all, the story is the first Seghers work to contain the socialist perspective of optimism.

With this first published book, Anna Seghers captured the Kleist Prize and the literary limelight. The controversy which flared up when Hans Henny Jahnn awarded her the prize centred around the tendency of the story. In a scathing review which damned both the tendency and the style, Arno Schirokauer said: "Die Prosa ist unbrauchbar. Die Sprache zeichnet nicht, bezeichnet nicht. Es kommt ihr nicht auf Genauigkeit und Pragnanz an; sie setzt Tupfen; sie entladt sich stoßweise . . . sie haut mit dumpfer Emotion, und sie trifft nicht."<sup>33</sup> Schirokauer claimed that she was given the prize for dealing "Neue Sachlichkeit," the literary category to which the book was assigned, the coup de grace. His opinions are of course his own, and, as such, cannot be quibbled with, but his claim that the story was written between 1922 and 1924 is certainly false, since a brief look at "Grubetsch" and "Die Ziegler," both of which were written after those dates, shows a progression of style and political commitment from these two stories to Aufstand der Fischer von St. Barbara.

Replying to Schirokauer in his article "Rechenschaft Kleistpreis 1928," Hans Henny Jahnn stated that almost all modern liter-

ature had a tendency and that the young German literature was left-wing and radical. He defended Aufstand der Fischer:

Mein Urteil über die "Fischer": Ein gutes Buch mit knapper und sehr deutlicher Sprache, in dem auch die geringste Figur Leben gewinnt. In dem die Tendenz schwächer ist als die Kraft des Menschlichen. Es ist ein Daseinsvorgang in fast metaphysischer Verklärung. Das nenne ich Kunst. Darüber hinaus: Die Darstellungsart wirbt sogar bei fast Herzlosen für die Tendenz. (Ganz Herzlose sind nicht zu umwerben.)<sup>34</sup>

f. "Auf dem Wege zur amerikanischen Botschaft"

This story was first published in the fall of 1930 in the volume of the same name together with "Grubetsch" and "Die Ziegler," which have already been discussed, and "Bauern von Hruschowo." The 1963 Bienenstock edition of Seghers' stories sets its date of origin as 1929/30, after Aufstand der Fischer von St. Barbara.

The plot can be briefly summarized as follows: A clerk from the country comes to a capital city, probably Paris,<sup>35</sup> on a vacation; at the train station he is drawn into a protest march on behalf of the Italian-American anarchists Sacco and Vanzetti; he finds himself in a row with three other people, referred to only as "der Mann," "die Frau," and "der Kleine"; as the demonstration reaches the American Embassy, the stranger is cut down by a

police bullet; the march, however, has reached its destination.

The theme of the story is solidarity. This is the second time the author has chosen an event connected with the class struggle as a literary subject and the first time that such an event has a concrete historical basis. The action takes place in August 1927. From the cry of the paper seller: "Man hat sie wieder ins Totenhaus gebracht!"<sup>36</sup> it can be surmised that the march takes place on the day before the execution. However, since the execution was put off at least once, the exact date cannot be determined.<sup>37</sup>

"Was geht in einer Viererreihe während einer Demonstration vor? Was begibt sich mit diesen vier verschiedenen, einander völlig fremden Menschen?"<sup>38</sup> This is what Anna Seghers set out to show. The thoughts and characters of the four in the row are revealed through the stream-of-consciousness technique throughout the story. Their differing attitudes in respect to the march are contrasted at the beginning. The newspaper vendor's cry "Man hat sie wieder ins Totenhaus gebracht!" unleashes a chain of reflection in each person's mind.

The person called simply "der Mann" is an old, embittered worker, who has lost his son in an accident. He does not seem sympathetic to the two men who are about to die. Indeed, his motivation for joining the march is suspect: "Von wegen dauern. Die beiden Jungens. Kein Hahn kräht nach einem" (p. 123). The



news that they have been brought back to the death house begins a process of identification in his mind between the fate of his son and that of Sacco and Vanzetti:

Man hat sie ins Totenhaus gebracht. Aus. Schluß.  
Es ist doch Schluß, die Weiber begreifen das nicht,  
man möchte Schluß machen, aber die Weiber heulen.  
Ein kleines gerieftes Totenhauschen aus Wellblech,  
zwischen zwei Schienenstrangen auf dem Westbahnhof.  
Er drängt sich durch die Proleten, aber seine Arme  
sind wie Papier. . . . Ihm, dem Vater, soll man nichts  
weismachen, er arbeitet lange genug auf dem Westbahn-  
hof. Zwei Puffer und dazwischen ein Pfannkuchen. Er  
weiß, was unter der Decke ist. Er reißt die leidige  
Decke weg. Er weiß nicht, was er denken soll. (p.127)

Gradually he is drawn into the spirit of the demonstration. He begins to sing and continues even when the others have stopped:

Nur der mürrische Mann sang noch weiter, weil er gar  
nicht merkte, daß er allein sang. Er sang mit voller,  
ja, reiner Stimme, weil es ihm guttat, den ganzen Zug  
entlang. . . . Er hörte erst bei der letzten Zeile  
auf, glaubte, die anderen hätten mit ihm aufgehört  
und brauchte sich nicht zu schämen. Seine Mundwinkel  
krümmten sich wieder, sein Gesicht überzog sich mit  
einem Reif von Mürrisckheit. (p. 135)

In the final scene before the American Embassy, the man who was cynical about the march at the outset is transformed through

its success: "Aus dem Gesicht des Mannes fiel die Mürrischkeit wie Mörtel herunter. Es war unmöglich, daß es im ganzen Haus auch nur einen Winkel gab, in dem man sie nicht rufen hörte" (p. 146). There is no indication, however, that this change is anything but momentary.

The second person in the row falls into the "proletarian woman" category. She is a pitiful figure, worn out with child-bearing and the struggle to keep alive. Of her the man thinks: ". . . An der ist auch nicht mehr viel zu holen, die ist genauso ausgefegt wie meine zu Haus" (p. 123).

The newspaper vendor's cry turns her mind too to personal tragedy:

Man hat sie ins Totenhaus gebracht. Es stinkt nach Chloroform und Äther. Drei, vier starke Männer in weißen Kitteln versuchen umsonst, das Blut aufzuhalten, das geduldig und langsam aus einem herausfließt, aber für Männer gibt es andere Tode. Pauls Gesicht war ganz in die Länge gezogen. Er war noch immer braun verbrannt und doch ganz bleich, wie gelbe Blätter. Aus dem Dunkeln wenden die beiden ihre Gesichter, übermäßig in die Länge gezogene, gelbliche Zwillingsgesichter. Sie graulte sich, bezwang sich und sah sie fest an. (p. 127)

The woman's hard life has affected her mind. She cannot

quite remember what Sacco and Vanzetti have done: "Sie dachte und dachte, aber sie kam jetzt nicht drauf, was mit den beiden war, was die zwei getan hatten, von denen man immerzu sprach, und fragen ging nicht. Sie grübelte nach, dann fiel es ihr ein. Sie war ganz erleichtert. Jetzt fiel es ihr endlich ein, daß die beiden gar nichts getan hatten, nichts Großes und nichts Kleines, sondern einfach unschuldig waren" (p. 126). Such simplistic thinking is hardly motivation enough to bring one to march in a demonstration. Anna Seghers weakens the theme of solidarity by introducing characters into the story who seem to be in the march more by accident than design.

Of the four marchers described, only the man called "der Kleine" would appear to know what he is doing in the demonstration. He approaches what Socialist Realism later called the "positive hero." Albrecht considers him to be a prototype of later, similar Seghers characters.<sup>39</sup> He is recognized by another man in the crowd and the short exchange which follows indicates that he is not new to this type of political activity: "'Bist auch da, Kleiner.' — 'Immer!'" (p. 126). But he finds his minor role in the class struggle often frustrating and envies the two condemned men:

Man hat sie wieder ins Totenhaus gebracht. Es ist eng und dunkel, der Boden unter ihnen steinhart. Sie haben gar keinen Speichel mehr im Mund. Die stecken Mattendrin, die wissen, woran sie sind, haben sich

morgens nicht umsonst losgerissen. Aus dem Dunkel drehen die beiden ihre weißen, glänzend feuchten Gesichter zu ihm hin. Schmerzend und widerstrebend ziehen sich alle Gedanken in seinem Kopf in dem einen Wunsch zusammen, an ihrer Stelle zu sein . . .

(pp. 126-27)

This little man acts precisely as a class-conscious worker should when he is being hauled away by the police: "Er hob sein rundes braunes Gesicht gegen die Fenster und prägte sein Lächeln für immer den Knaben ein, die ihn neugierig und eifersüchtig betrachteten" (p. 144). The imparting of some of the joy and courage of the class struggle to the younger generation is a frequent motif in Seghers' works. The boys envy the little man as he envied Sacco and Vanzetti. "Der Kleine" is the positive worker figure in the story. Yet he is hardly the central figure. Herein lies one of the weaknesses in "Auf dem Wege zur amerikanischen Botschaft" from the Marxist point of view.

The only non-proletarian in the row is the stranger, who is the main character, although his death does not interrupt or in any way affect the march. Yet the story begins with him, more attention is given to his thoughts and his death is the most significant event of the story.

Despite his desire to see the city which he has so long dreamed of visiting, the stranger is swept into the march like a somnambulist. In the opening lines of the story, he stresses his

wish for non-involvement: "In dieser fremden Stadt will ich ganz anders sein. Ich werde nie mehr hierher zurückkommen, aber diese eine Woche will ich für mich haben. Was ich in dieser Stadt mache, das zählt nicht mit, das gilt gar nichts, sowenig wie etwas gilt, was man im Schlaf macht" (p. 121). Perhaps unwittingly, the author has here touched on an important aspect of the story, the dream atmosphere.

Once he is in the procession, the stranger rationalizes his action: "Das will ich mal tun für die beiden Jungens, denn die dauern mich" (p. 122). He wishes to leave the procession and observe it from the sidelines, but is unable to: ". . . die anderen dauerten ihn, die drei in seiner Reihe, die dann ohne ihn waren" (p. 124). This explanation has to be understood symbolically. The other three in his row barely deign to speak to him and would hardly miss him. But if he left, the row would be incomplete. This feeling of solidarity would be believable in a worker, conditioned by strikes and demonstrations to the need for solidarity, but not in a seemingly apolitical clerk from the country.

The stranger's death during the demonstration is similar to that of Herbert Melzer in Die Entscheidung. However, whereas Melzer dies at the moment when he has finally found his way to a meaningful life, i.e., to the Communist Party, the stranger dies without having found any answers to life (indeed it is not shown that he was asking any questions). Melzer's death can be inter-

preted as a martyrdom for his cause; the stranger is a mere casualty in someone else's war. He is an ideological bystander.

He has sympathy with the convicted men. He neither envies them, as does the little man, nor does he identify with them, as do the other two in his row. He simply wants to help them:

Man hat sie wieder ins Totenhaus gebracht. Das tut man vierundzwanzig Stunden vorher. Sie waren schon mal drin und sind wieder herausgekommen. Er tut für sie, was er kann. Er ist allein in der Stadt, und niemand hindert ihn. . . . Sie wenden ihm aus dem Dunkel ihre weißen Gesichter zu, ihm, dem Fremden, dem Neuankömmling. In ihrem Kopf winden und krümmen sich die Gedanken, was er für sie tun kann. (pp. 127-28; Italics K.V.A.)

The word "Neuankömmling" in the above-quoted passage has a double meaning. The stranger is newly arrived in the city, but he is also new to political action. Yet the moment of his conversion has not been intellectually prepared. A mysterious force has drawn him into the demonstration and continues to exert a pull on him until he dies an almost mystical death: "Als wäre er hier geboren, schlug die Stadt über ihm zusammen, Beine und Röcke, Himmel und Häuser" (p. 144).

Marcel Reich-Ranicki believes that "Auf dem Wege zur amerikanischen Botschaft" should be interpreted biographically. He sees in Anna Seghers' espousal of the Communist Party doctrines

an emotional and not a rational basis, which is reflected in her writings:

In fast allem, was sie geschrieben hat, spürt man etwas Unheimliches und Sprunghaftes, immer dominiert das Emotionale . . .

Vorwiegend emotional ist auch von Anfang an ihre Beziehung zur Kommunistischen Partei und ihrer Lehre. Ein Brecht oder ein Becher sahen im Kommunismus ein philosophisches System, eine soziologische Theorie, ein politisches Programm. . . . Für die junge Anna Seghers hingegen handelte es sich nicht so sehr um eine Frage des Intellekts, als vielmehr des Glaubens und des Gefühls, des Vertrauens und der Hingabe, der Gefolgschaft, der Treue und schließlich der Horigkeit. Wie der Held der Geschichte Auf dem Wege zur amerikanischen Botschaft ließ auch sie sich vor allem von ihrer Intuition leiten. Sie fand im Kommunismus, was sie seit ihrer frühen Jugend inbrünstig gesucht hatte: nicht eine soziologische und politische Lehre, nicht ein gedankliches System, sondern eine atheistische Religion. Anna Seghers ist nicht Rationalistin, sondern Fideistin — und fideistisch ist das geistige Fundament ihres Werks, zumal ihre Konzeption des Helden.

Jener Mann, den die Teilnahme an einem politischen Demonstrationszug in einen Rausch versetzt, der som-

nambul mitmarschiert, ekstatisch mitschreit und sich völlig sinnlos opfern will, ist der Prototyp vieler späterer Gestalten der Anna Seghers. Sie zeigt am liebsten einfache Menschen, die wenig denken und viel fühlen, die nie zweifeln, hingegen immer zu Opfern bereit sind. Oft stehen sie unter einem äußeren oder inneren Zwang und können ihre Umwelt, da sie zwischen Traum und Wirklichkeit schweben, nur undeutlich erkennen. 40

Although Reich-Ranicki's opinions are generally discounted by Marxist critics because of his political views, there is basic agreement with him on this story. Inge Diersen remarks on the dream-like atmosphere of the story and notes that the inability of the stranger to leave the demonstration is a typical dream situation. 41 According to her, the fault lies here in the fact that the use of the inner monologue or stream-of-consciousness technique has become dominant over the content. "Die Verselbstständigung bewirkt, daß die inneren Vorgänge der Menschen, der Strom ihrer Emotionen wie ein Alptraum über dem Ganzen liegt, daß ihr bewußtes Denken und Empfinden erdrückt wird und sich eine Atmosphäre von schicksalhafterm Zwang ausbreitet." 42 But almost all of Seghers' heroes operate in an atmosphere of fatalistic compulsion. We have already noted Marie's inability to follow the girl in the red cap in "Die Ziegler," Grubetsch's fatal attraction for people and Hull's unnecessary and inexplicable return to St.



Barbara. There will be other occasions to observe similar behaviour of Seghers characters. Anna Seghers heroes are not rationally motivated. They act on emotional impulse and are driven to their fates by a mysterious destiny. This fatalism has disturbed many critics. In his article "Anna Seghers" in the Berliner Tageblatt und Handelszeitung (10 July 1931), Ernst Glaeser remarks: "Angesichts dieser Welt können ihre Menschen nur sterben, nicht leben. Sie sind nicht schlecht. Sie sind hilflos — deshalb gehen sie unter."

Inge Diersen blamed the story's inadequacies on the stream-of-consciousness technique used. This is justified in two ways from the Marxist viewpoint. Firstly, the inner monologues, which are piled up one on top of the other, give the story a lyrical more than a realistic tone — this despite the imperfect tense employed, which distances the reader from the subject matter. Secondly, James Joyce, under whose influence the author stood at the time of writing "Auf dem Wege zur amerikanischen Botschaft," was condemned as decadent by Socialist Realism. Paul Rilla acknowledges and then rationalizes this "negative" influence: "Anna Seghers verzichtete nicht darauf, in ihre Kunst auch diese verräterischen Reflexe einer psychologischen Untergrundbewegung aufzunehmen, doch die in der Literatur von sich gehende dämonische Wendung der bürgerlichen Dinge erkannte sie in der Wirklichkeit als die stumpfe Brutalität des bürgerlichen Terrors!"<sup>43</sup> As will later be shown, Anna Seghers experimented eagerly with

form and defended, albeit unsuccessfully, the artist's right to do so against the conformist guidelines of Socialist Realism.

g. "Bauern von Hruschowo"

"Bauern von Hruschowo" is the fourth story included in the volume Auf dem Wege zur amerikanischen Botschaft, published in 1930. Its date of origin is 1929 or 1929/30.<sup>44</sup>

Written one or perhaps two years after Aufstand der Fischer von St. Barbara, it treats the same theme, the rebellion of a village against oppression. The Hruschowo uprising, unlike that of St. Barbara, succeeds because it receives the support of the Communist Party. "Bauern von Hruschowo" marks a further step in Anna Seghers' development as a Communist writer, since it possesses a historical perspective and Marxist-Leninist tendency, both of which were lacking in Aufstand der Fischer.

In two concisely written pages (if one takes the 1963 Bienenstock edition as a text), the writer gives the history of Hruschowo, a village in the Carpathian mountains, from the earliest times to the First World War. The inhabitants cleared the woods and drove back the wolves: "Die Wölfe zogen sich zurück, weniger vor den Kugeln als vor dem Holzschlag und dem Knirschen der Sagen und allen Tönen der menschlichen Gemeinschaft . . . die Menschen hatten besser zusammengehalten und waren ihnen überlegen."<sup>45</sup> The theme of solidarity is introduced

at the outset of the story. After taking part in the revolt of the Hungarians against the Habsburgs, the people of Hruschowo were punished by having their woods taken over by the crown. Deprived of their livelihood, they eked out miserable existences. In the First World War, their men were sent ". . . möglichst weit weg, auf ganz entlegene Kriegsschauplätze . . ." <sup>46</sup> (p. 116).

The actual story, which covers a time span of two years, begins with the return of Woytschuk from the war, just as his baby has been born. He has brought back something more than ". . . Läuse im Pelz" (p. 117): class consciousness. As he sees his child, he thinks: "Dieser Korb voll Leben gehörte zu ihm, war von seiner Klasse" (p. 117; Italics K.V.A.). This is the first time Anna Seghers has mentioned the word "Klasse" in her fictional works, and it is an indication of her growing proximity to what was to be defined as Socialist Realism. <sup>47</sup>

Woytschuk goes into the woods to cut a tree for a cradle. This defiance of authority unleashes a rebellion, as others follow his example. Change comes over Hruschowo. This is described in three different instances. When Woytschuk is cutting the tree, an old man comes to ask him whether it is allowed. Woytschuk just laughs:

In Woytschuks Augen sah der Alte alles in allem: den Wald, wie er war, braune und grüne Falten der Berge, abgerissene Wolken, einen roten Tupfen, das Dorf. Seine Blicke tauchten tief in diesen Augenwald. Er lag nah

und greifbar unter Woytschuks Brauen. Der Alte drehte sein Gesicht von Woytschuks Gesicht weg gegen den Berg. Der Wald war verändert. (p. 118)

Anna Seghers sometimes portrays things as having the characteristics of the people connected with them — the "wicked" courtyard in "Grubetsch," for example. The forest has not changed; men are going to change life in the forest. But Seghers prefers to mysticize the process, thus imparting a legendary aura to the story. This synthesis of reality and romanticism is a recurring feature in Seghers' works. She admitted that she was often torn between the two: "Vor mir waren zwei Linien: über das zu schreiben, was mich heute bewegt, oder den Farbenreichtum einer Phantasieerfindung wiederzugeben. Ich wünschte das eine und das andere zu vereinen, aber ich wußte nicht wie."<sup>48</sup> In the second instance, change is not explained; it is simply felt by a young boy when his older brother comes home from the war: "Unter seinen ausgebreiteten Armen entwich durch die offene Tür in einem Zug die aufgespeicherte Luft mit Seufzern der Mutter, dem Wimmern der kleinen Kinder, dem kranken Blöcken des Kälbchens, alle abgestandene Langweile des Hungers. Der Kleine . . . wunderte sich nicht, daß alles anders war. Er wartete nur noch auf mehr" (pp. 118-19). This last sentence typifies the atmosphere which the homecoming of the soldiers has created. The people are waiting for something to happen. What they expect is explained further on: "Die Soldaten wußten Bescheid: Die Welt wird ganz anders. In Rußland gibt es einen Lenin, die Erde wird den Herren wegge-

nommen. Wald und Feld wird den Bauern gegeben" (p. 119). The background of the story is thus set. It is the example of Russia, of which the men have heard at the front, which gives the peasants of Hruschowo hope that their lot will be improved.

After a year, the peasants still put their hope in Lenin, who, in their simple minds, will come riding through and right things: "Lenin hat sich endlich auf ein Pferd gesetzt und reitet. Er wird nicht mehr lange zusehen, die Herren haben Angst bekommen" (p. 121). But instead of Lenin, their next visitors are delegates from the new Czechoslovak government who demand payment for the wood which has been cut. Woytschuk tears up the document they show him. When a government official comes a month later to drive away the villagers' animals, he is beaten up. A fight between villagers and police ensues in which young Ruschtschuk is killed. As in Aufstand der Fischer von St. Barbara, other villages give in to the government's terms, but Hruschowo stands firm: "In Hruschowo gab es keine solche Wenn-und-Aber Bauern. Ihr Entschluß war durch und durch hart. An keiner Stelle hatte ein junges Weib ein Loch hineingeheult, ein Endchen weichgebettelt" (p. 123). Contrary to St. Barbara, where some of the villagers broke the strike: "Das ganze Dorf hatte mit seinen Leibern die Mulden zugestopft" (p. 124).

Anna Seghers has glorified solidarity before in "Auf dem Wege zur amerikanischen Botschaft," but the solidarity of the villagers of Hruschowo is of a different magnitude. This

solidarity is not that of individuals, who make their individual decisions to stick with the group, but that of the mass. The mass is the real hero here; individuals such as Woytschuk and the Ruschtschuks are only rarely singled out as occasional carriers of the action. In going over from individual to collective action, Anna Seghers has taken a step nearer to Socialist Realism. It may be noted, however, that this discovery of the collective is not often repeated in her later works.<sup>49</sup>

Hruschowo is besieged and Woytschuk goes to Uschhorad to inform the Communist Party, which sends a man to investigate the situation on the spot. Villagers are being shot or detained. Suddenly the soldiers are recalled. The Party has been mobilizing support all over Czechoslovakia for Hruschowo and the central government, not wishing to create a problem so early in its life, has backed down. The government submits a new proposal whereby the woods will be leased to the peasants in perpetuity, and the rent now due will be forgotten. Woytschuk signs. This is not a victory, but a compromise. However, the ending is optimistic, for the peasants have won a moral victory. From the Marxist viewpoint, the ending is correct, for a communist enclave could not exist within a capitalist state.

At the end of the story, the narrative perspective suddenly changes: "Diese Geschichte habe ich vor vielen Jahren erzählen hören vom Sekretär der Partei im Bezirk Karpatenrußland" (p. 129). In the original version of the story ("Bauern von Hruschowo,"

Auf dem Wege zur amerikanischen Botschaft und andere Erzählungen [Berlin: Kiepenheuer, 1930]), and the reprint in Europäische Revue (6, 1930), p. 916, the text reads: "Diese Geschichte habe ich erzählen hören vom Sekretär der Tschechischen Partei im Bezirk Karpatho-Rußland." The omission of "Tschechischen" was probably an attempt to avoid the troublesome question of national minorities in Russian-occupied territories in Eastern Europe.

This is the only one of the many text changes in "Bauern von Hruschowo" which may be observed in a careful scrutiny of the 1930 version of the story in Europäische Revue and the Bienenstock edition which may have been effected for political reasons. This is the first Seghers story to evidence text changes for reasons other than concern over stylistics. A line-by-line examination of the Kiepenheuer edition of "Grubetsch," "Die Ziegler," and "Auf dem Wege zur amerikanischen Botschaft" with the 1963 Luchterhand edition of those stories, which does not differ from the East German Bienenstock versions, shows but a few minor stylistic changes. 50

The postscript, be it true or not, adds an air of authenticity to the story without breaking the form. Unfortunately, one cannot say the same of the second additional comment. This tells how Woytschuk came to ask the Party Secretary for money to go to Russia; with the small amount he received, he bought a scythe and worked his way there: "Hinter sich die nackte braune Erde, vor sich die Ernte, erwähnte er seinen Weg nach Rußland, wo er hin-

kam" (p. 129). This anecdote, which does not belong to the story of the Hruschowo uprising, reminds one of the many Socialist Realist novels written during the Stálinist era, where the sun, usually rising and always red, cast a light of forced optimism on the ending. Inge Diersen (Seghers-Studien, pp. 115-16) finds the anecdote provides the story with a didactic and tendentious ending which is not in accordance with the rest of the work. It also singles out Woytschuk from the rest of the villagers, which was not done before. Furthermore, she objects to the ending as no motivation was given for this decision.

"Bauern von Hruschowo" is the first of Anna Seghers' literary works in which Marxist-Leninist tendency dominates. This is evidenced by the vocabulary: here we find words such as "class" (p. 117), "Lenin" (p. 119, p. 121) and "party" (p. 124, p. 127) mentioned for the first time in a story. Whereas in previous works a definite sympathy for the oppressed had been manifested, Anna Seghers now comes out clearly on the side of the Communist Party as the only organization capable of solving their problems. Russia is portrayed as a model for the class struggle and as the spiritual homeland of all workers and peasants, in keeping with the Party line. Historical perspective is thus present in two forms — in the example of Russia and in the timeless struggle of the Carpathian peasants.

The story's chief deficiency, according to Marxist critics, is that the decision of the peasants to fight, their apparent



knowledge of and trust in the Communist Party is not explained and motivated, but simply recorded. This is especially true of the central figure, Woytschuk. As Inge Diersen notes in Seghers-Studien (pp. 111-12), the intellectual process of making a decision for the Communist Party is simplified and becomes mechanical. In this way, the uprising in Hruschowo has something of the spontaneous quality which the revolt in St. Barbara had. This anti-intellectual attitude towards the class struggle on the part of the author was recognized by Mrs. Diersen (pp. 16-17):

Es mag als Widerspruch erscheinen, daß ein Mensch, der den Weg zum Proletariat in erster Linie durch geistig-weltanschauliche Auseinandersetzungen gefunden hat, dazu neigt, den bewußten, theoretisch-weltanschaulichen Faktor nicht zu überschätzen — wie es beispielsweise Brecht in der Periode der Lehrstücke tut —, sondern ihn zu unterschätzen.

This disregard of the intellectual factor in making a decision for the Communist Party would seem to strengthen Marcel Reich-Ranicki's contention that Anna Seghers' own decision was made on an emotional basis. The validity of this assumption is reinforced by a study of her later works.

Despite the deficiencies which Marxist critics find with "Bauern von Hruschowo," it shows definite anticipation of Socialist Realism, being a far more "communistic" work than her earlier stories.

h. Die Gefährten

Die Gefährten (1932) is Anna Seghers' first novel and, at the same time, her first truly Communist work. All the characters are either Party members or stand very close to the Communist Party. Perhaps needled by the criticism that her previous accounts of revolutionary activity had been too isolated in their conception and too far removed from concrete historical events, she attempts here to depict the class struggle on an international scale. Her intentions in writing Die Gefährten were set down in "Selbstanzeige": "Wenn man schreibt, muß man so schreiben, daß man hinter der Verzweiflung die Möglichkeit und hinter dem Untergang den Ausweg spürt. Ich hoffe, daß es mir gelingen wird, in dem Roman, an dem ich jetzt arbeite, diesen Ausweg klar aufzuzeigen." 51

In keeping with her stated intention of showing the possibility behind the despair and the way out beyond the downfall, she takes as the historical setting the decade following the First World War which saw the collapse of the first wave of Communist uprisings. Except in Russia, Communism suffered defeats in Europe and often various forms of Fascism emerged victorious. Anna Seghers is not concerned here with the actions of Communists in battle, but rather with their adjustment to new circumstances after the initial battle has been lost. For this reason she purposely ignores the events of the early 1920's in Germany which could have given her characters a chance to join in active struggle.

"Alles war zu Ende." <sup>52</sup> In the first sentence, the theme of the novel is set. The Soviet Republic in Hungary has been overthrown and, in the wake of reprisals, thousands of refugees stream across Europe. Anna Seghers met many of these emigrants in Germany and in 1925 married one of them, Laszlo Radvanyi, a Hungarian writer and sociologist and a member of the Communist Party. It is very probable that the middle-class student Netty Reiling was brought nearer to the Party through contact with such refugees and especially through her husband's influence. Although we cannot call Die Gefährten an autobiographical work — Seghers is seldom autobiographical in the strict sense of the word, two notable exceptions being Transit and "Ausflug der toten Mädchen" — it was doubtless inspired by conversations with émigrés. In the foreword to the second edition she writes:

Wir horchten erregt ihren Berichten, die damals vielen in Deutschland wie Greuelmärchen erschienen oder wie Vorkommnisse, die unvorstellbar in Mitteleuropa waren. Der weiße Terror hatte die erste Welle der Emigration durch unseren Erdteil gespült. Und seine Zeugen, erschöpft von dem Erlebten, doch ungebrochen und kühn, uns überlegen an Erfahrungen, auch an Opferbereitschaft im Großen und Hilfsbereitschaft im Kleinen, waren für uns wirkliche, nicht beschriebene Helden. Wir waren um so feinhöriger, als Deutschland selbst noch von Aufständen zerwühlt war, von den Spärtakuskämpfen bis zu den Hamburger Barrikaden. (pp. 6-7)

Anna Seghers has chosen five main settings for her story: Hungary, Poland, Italy, Bulgaria and China. Although the novel form is well suited to the author's purpose, that of giving a panorama of the class struggle during some of its darker moments, Die Gefährten is, in reality, a series of separate stories strung together on one thread, that of a common political ideology. This peculiarity of Seghers' novel form will be remarked on again in Die Toten Bleiben jung and Die Entscheidung. There is no central plot, but rather six parallel plots revolving around main characters. The "Polish" plot is centred around Janek; its setting is various towns and prisons in Poland. The "Bulgarian" plot has the revolutionary Dudoff as its main figure, with two peasants, Stojanoff and Dimoff, playing important secondary roles; the locations are different villages in the Prutka mountains, a jail in Sophia, Paris and Moscow. The "Hungarian" plot splits from the beginning into three separate ones: the Bordoni-Pali plot, whose setting moves from Budapest to Bologna, a mining town in France, Paris, Brussels and Russia; the Steiner plot, set in Budapest, Vienna and a German university town; the Bato plot, situated in Budapest, Vienna and Berlin. The "Chinese" plot revolves around two brothers, Liau Han-tschi and Liau Yen-kai, and follows them in London, Berlin, Moscow and various places in China.

Although almost all the plots have some locations in common, there is interaction only between the Bato and Steiner plots.

The action thus runs on parallel levels and the various strands of the plot are never tied together.

The following table enumerates scene and plot changes sequentially. It gives an illustration of the complexity of the novel's structure.

DIE GEFÄHRTEN

Chapter	Plot	Scene	Main Characters
PART ONE			
1, I	Hungarian	Hungary - a village	villagers and officers
1, II	Hungarian	the same	Faludi, Böhm
1, III	Hungarian	Budapest	Böhm
1, IV	Hungarian	Budapest - a prison	Böhm
1, V	Hungarian	en route from Budapest to Vienna	Faludi, Steiner
1, VI	Hungarian	Budapest	Pali, Jozsi
1, VII	Hungarian	Hungarian-Czech border	Kovacs
2, I	Hungarian	Hungary - a prison	Kovacs
2, II	Bordoni-Pali	Bologna	Bordoni, Pali
2, III	Bato, Steiner	Vienna	Bato, Faludi, Böhm, Steiner
2, IV	Polish	Poland	Janek and family
2, V	Polish	Polish-Russian front	Solonjenko and others

Chapter	Plot	Scene	Main Characters
2, VI	unspecified	Carpathian mountains	peasants and workers
3, I	Hungarian	Carpathian mountains	Faludi
3, II	Steiner	German university town	Steiner
3, III	Bordoni-Pali	Bologna	Bordonis, Pali
3, IV	Bato	Berlin	Bato and family
3, V	Polish	Poland - a prison	Janek, Solonjenko

PART TWO

4, I	Polish	Poland	Janek and family
4, II	Bordoni-Pali	France - mining town	Pali, Jozsi
4, III	Bato	Berlin	Bato and family
4, IV	Bulgarian	Bulgaria - near Marjakoy	Dudoff
5, I	Bulgarian	Bulgaria - village in the Prutka mountains Sophia - a prison	Dimoff, Stoyanoff, Dudoff
5, II	Steiner	German university town	Steiner
5, III	Chinese	London - Limehouse	Liau Han-tschi
5, IV	Polish	Poland - Lodz	Janek, Anka
6, I	Polish	Poland - a prison	Janek
6, II	Chinese	Berlin	Liau Han-tschi
6, III	Bordoni-Pali	Paris	Bordonis, Pali
6, IV	Bulgarian	Bulgaria - village; prison	Stojanoff and wife; Dudoff

Chapter	Plot	Scene	Main Characters
6, V	Bato	Berlin	Bato, Böhm
7, I	Hungarian	Berlin	Böhm, Faludi
7, II	Polish	Poland - a prison	Dumbrowski, Janek
7, III	Chinese	Berlin	Liau Yen-kai
7, IV	Steiner	German university town	Steiner
7, V	Bulgarian	Bulgaria	Stojanoff and wife, Dimoff
8, I	Bulgarian	Paris	Dudoff
8, II	Bordoni-Pali	Paris	Bordonis, Pali
8, III	Chinese	Berlin; Moscow	Liau Han-tschi, Liau Yen-kai
8, IV	Bato	Berlin	Bato, Böhm, Faludi
8, V	Polish	Poland	Mrs. Dumbrowski, Anka, Janek
9, I	Polish	Poland; Moscow	Mrs. Dumbrowski, Janek
9, II	Chinese	at sea; Singapore; Canton	Liau Han-tschi, Dr. Tsen
9, III	Bordoni-Pali	Paris	Bordonis, Pali
9, IV	Bulgarian	Bulgaria; Moscow	Simoff, Stojanoff's wife; Dudoff
9, V	Steiner	German university town	Steiner
10, I	Bato, Steiner	German university town	Bato, Steiner
10, II	Polish	Poland	Mrs. Dumbrowski, Janek

Chapter	Plot	Scene	Main Characters
10, III	Bordoni-Pali	Brussels	Bordonis
10, IV	Bulgarian	Bulgaria; Russia	Dimoff, Stojanoffs; Dudoff
10, V	Chinese	China	Liau Yen-kai
11, I	Chinese	China	Liau Yen-kai
11, II	Bordoni-Pali	Brussels	Mrs. Bordoni, Pali
11, III	Bulgarian	Bulgaria	Dimoff, Andreas
11, IV	Polish	Poland - a prison	Janek, Labiak

The scene changes 52 times, or every 3.5 pages (if one takes the 1959 paperback edition published by Aufbau Verlag as a model). Thirty-nine times the story switches over from one plot to another. The time span covered in the novel is roughly from 1919 to 1930 or 1931. The book is composed of two parts, divided into eleven chapters. Part One, including Chapters One to Three, covers the time from the summer of 1919 ("An einem Augusttag war es . . ." p. 9) to the fall of 1920. Part Two begins in the winter of 1924 ("Winter 1924. Janek, vier Jahre Gefängnis hinter sich . . ." p. 50) and ends in 1930 or 1931. The action is described chronologically. Dates can be deduced from historical events which are mentioned.

The various plots may be divided into two main groups: those in which the characters work underground in their own countries



(the Polish plot) and those in which émigrés figure (the Hungarian plots, i.e., the Steiner, Bato and Bordoni-Pali plots). The Chinese and Bulgarian plots are a combination of the two types.

The plots may also be divided according to the identity of their main characters. The Polish, Bulgarian and Bordoni-Pali plots are concerned with workers, the Steiner, Bato and Chinese plots with intellectuals.

Since the novel concerns itself with the problem of how Communists cope with life during the dark periods of the class struggle, it is necessary to analyze some of the characters in order to arrive at an understanding of the work.

Janek, a Polish dyer, smuggles flyers into a factory, is arrested and sent to prison. Here his real political education begins under the tutelage of a fellow prisoner, Solonjenko. Once he has begun to acquire a knowledge of the class struggle, Janek's life is determined for him. He will continue his work, both in and out of prison.

Upon his release, he and his bride, Anka, go to Lodz to help organize a strike. Janek is again arrested and sentenced to five years. Janek's sole conflict during this time is between his devotion to the Party and his love for his family. The Party wins out, however. In Moscow, during one of his brief respites from prison, Janek ponders this problem: "Vielleicht ist es überhaupt

ganz falsch für mich . . . , mich so an einen einzelnen Menschen zu knüpfen. . . . Für solche wie mich ist es schlecht, sich an einzelne zu hängen" (p. 145). Janek realizes that normal family life and the emotions which belong to it are impossible for people like him: instead of receiving the feeling of warmth and belonging from the family unit, men like Janek obtain this from the comradeship of fellow revolutionaries. More clearly than with Hull and Andreas, where the joy motif was only lightly touched upon, Janek's case shows that political activity, even if it is confined only to discussions and group learning in prison, is the key to true happiness. Isolation from his comrades plunges Janek into depression; when he is with them, he finds prison life almost preferable to life outside. The joy which personal relationships bring is not the same as that found in political activity. When Janek sees Anka after a long separation, we read: "Es war gar keine unmaßige Freude, eine sanfte 'Alles ist in Ordnung'-Freude" (p. 146).

The conflict between duty to the Party and duty to one's family is a central theme in Die Gefährten. One can see autobiographical elements here. Anna Seghers had been married seven years when the novel was published and had had two children. With the storm clouds gathering on the political horizon of Germany, she was probably pondering her own responsibilities to her young family and to her political convictions.

Janek undergoes a distinct development during the eleven

years of his life which the novel describes. He began as a student of Solonjenko. At the end of the novel, he is a teacher. In conscious imitation of Solonjenko, Janek puts his hand on the head of a young prisoner, Labiak: "Janek begriff Labiaks Gedanken. Er konnte im Augenblick nichts anderes für ihn tun, als was Solonjenko damals für ihn getan hatte. Er legte seine Hand auf Labiaks Kopf, glatter, fester Kegelkopf. Labiak wußte noch nicht, ahnte aber, daß die gleiche Kraft schon in ihm selbst drin war, während Janeks Hand noch auf seinem Kopf lag" (p. 193).

This "laying on of hands," a gesture which has religious connotations, symbolizes the teacher-pupil relationship, which we have already encountered in Aufstand der Fischer. This theme has here undergone an evolution. No longer does the teacher-pupil motif signify an impulsive, brief relationship, as it did in the case of Hull and Andreas. Rather, it denotes a hard and serious study, the pursuit of which leads to an understanding of the class struggle and to correct action on behalf of the Party. It symbolizes as well the immortality of the Communist ideal, which is passed on from one generation to another, as seen here in the trio Solonjenko-Janek-Labiak. By closing the novel with this act, Seghers gives to it a perspective of optimism.

A discussion of all the plots in the novel is beyond the scope of this dissertation. However, a brief look at one of the plots concerning the plight of the intellectual in exile would be beneficent.

Dr. Steiner is a middle-class intellectual, a supporter of Bela Kun's Communist government, who must flee when the government falls. He is the converse of Seghers' impulsive heroes, since he premeditates his actions. His penchant for thinking proves his undoing as a Communist. He confesses his doubts to an old school-mate, Bato: "Auf was warte ich eigentlich? Was ist das eigentlich für ein Ding, Weltrevolution? Abgesehen von dem Brot, das wir alle genug haben werden — wird der Weg zwischen Leben und Sterben gangbarer sein . . . wird der Tag geringfügiger sein und werde ich weniger allein sein?" (p. 34). Steiner's questions cannot be answered by Marxist doctrine, not only because they are of an existentialist nature, but because Steiner is a loner, seeking his own salvation, and Marxism has no answers for those who turn their backs on the community.

Steiner envies Bato his belief and the comfort it brings: "Ja, solchen Menschen wie euch geht es gut! Geht in die Partei, und dann habt ihr, was gewöhnlich dem Menschen im allgemeinen fehlt, Anschluß, Geborgenheit. Eine einfache Antwort" (p. 164). It is not émigré life which has shaken Steiner's belief in Communism, but rather his intellectuality, which makes simplistic solutions unacceptable to him: "Eine einfache Antwort auf alle Fragen bereit haben. — Aber alles Lebbare auf der Welt hat hundert Seiten, hundert Möglichkeiten, hundert Lösungen . . ." (p. 164).

The final sequence of the Steiner plot breaks the time boundaries of the novel. The narrative changes tense and projects

several years into the future. Steiner will once again be drawn to the train station of the German university town in which he has found asylum, the symbol of his restlessness, and will realize that nothing prevents him from returning to Hungary. He will hesitate and finally go home to his wife. Steiner's story ends on a note of pessimistic resignation: "Vorbei waren die Möglichkeiten, er war alt geworden" (p. 168).

How well did the author succeed in realizing her declared intention of showing the possibility behind the despair and the way out behind the defeat? All the plots, except the one centering around Steiner, have positive, optimistic, if somewhat contrived endings. Yet very few cases of genuine despair are presented. Janek's conflict between his duty to the Party and his duty to his family is typical of the conflicts the characters in the novel experience. One could hardly call Janek despairing. Steiner experiences despair, but that does not stem directly from the defeat of the cause he supported, but rather from his own intellectuality.

The lack of complexity in the characters, indicated by the absence of conflicts, is the main weakness of the novel. This is doubtless due in part to the form chosen, which is of necessity fragmentary and unable to provide an in-depth picture of each person's mental attitude.

The Communist critic Gerhard Wieland has two main objections concerning Die Gefährten. He sees the main political deficiency

of the novel in the passive role given to the emigration. The second fault he finds is that the causes of the battle the heroes are engaged in are not explained. These deficiencies Wieland sees as stemming from the form:

Auch hier wie überall zeigt sich das unlösliche Verflochtensein von Form und Inhalt. Form und Sprache von Anna Seghers in diesem Roman sind wohl geeignet, kurze Episoden zu schildern, sind geeignet, wie ein wundervolles leuchtendes Rankenwerk sich um die Ereignisse des Klassenkampfes zu schlingen und ihn in winzigen Bruchstücken aufleuchten zu lassen, doch sie sind nicht geeignet, große geschichtliche politische Geschehnisse oder den Kampf aktiver Helden des Klassenkampfes in ihrem Wesenskern zu schildern. Dies geschah nirgends in dem Roman und konnte nicht geschehen. Mit den Segher'schen Formmitteln, die noch nicht ganz frei von expressionistischen Resten sind, mit bunt nebeneinander gesetzten Farbtupfen und einer knappen andeutenden Sprache konnte dies nicht dargestellt werden. 53

Die Gefährten shows a higher degree of Communist tendency than "Bauern von Hruschowo." All the leading characters are either members of the Party or work closely with it. In this point, Anna Seghers was doubtlessly inspired by her attendance at the Charkov Conference of 1930, where speakers, among them her

fellow countryman, Johannes R. Becher, called for the creation of a new socialist literature in countries where socialism had not yet triumphed.

Die Gefährten is set in concrete historical locations. As in "Bauern von Hruschowo," Russia is again the Mecca towards which Communists turn for inspiration and refuge. Although the internationalism of the Party is stressed, each plot is set at least partially in its own national surroundings, thus anticipating the desire for national flavour (narodnost) soon to be demanded by Socialist Realism. Despite the tone of defeat which is set at the beginning, the novel is suffused with an optimism that Communism will eventually triumph, which is the so-called "socialist historical perspective." Positive heroes abound. Thus, Anna Seghers can be seen to be moving towards Socialist Realism of her own accord in all respects except one — form. Seeking to bear witness to her faith by giving a panoramic view of her fellow Communists in exile and underground, Anna Seghers broke the form of the traditional novel and created a novel of fragments. She was doubtless influenced in this by the U.S.A. trilogy of John Dos Passos, which she had long admired and defended before Marxist critics. But the fragmented form and the terse, illuminative style precluded any detailed study of political and economic factors which underlie the action. In her next novel, Der Kopflohn, she will attempt to remedy this by concentrating on sociological and economic aspects.

i. "Der Führerschein," "Die Stoppuhr" and other works inspired by China

Since childhood, Anna Seghers had been fascinated with China, its people and its art.<sup>54</sup> At the university, she pursued Chinese studies along with art history, history and philology. A group of minor works, dating from the early thirties, indicates that her interest in China had not waned, but rather had increased, due no doubt to the political events happening there. The anecdote "Die Stoppuhr" (1933), the longer radio sketch of the same name, the anecdote "Der Führerschein" (1932), the short documentary report "1. Mai: Yan schuhpou," published in Die Rote Fahne (No. 94, 1932) and written with a Chinese friend named Schü-Yin<sup>55</sup>, and the story "Der Last-Berg" (Die Rote Fahne, 1 December 1933, p. 7)<sup>56</sup>, together with the Chinese plot of Die Gefahrten (1932) all attest to that interest. According to reports in Die Rote Fahne (9, 1933), she was also planning a book on the life of a Chinese woman.<sup>57</sup>

Both "Die Stoppuhr" and "Der Führerschein" are set in contemporary China. The first anecdote deals with an event during the Civil War. Chiang Kai-Chek was trying to reconquer the "red" provinces with the help of foreign — in this case, German — officers. One officer prides himself on having trained these "primitive" people "nach preußischem Vorbild"<sup>58</sup>, having drilled them with a stop-watch. When the time comes for them to go into battle, they turn with stop-watch precision and join the peasant



forces of the Red Army. The version written for radio is more detailed than the anecdote, but the message and plot are essentially the same.

"Der Führerschein" is set in Shanghai during the Japanese occupation.<sup>59</sup> A Chinese chauffeur is taken prisoner. Instead of being executed, he is ordered at gun-point to drive some Japanese officials. Drive them, he does — to a watery grave: "Bei der Wendung am Brückenkopf begriff der Chauffeur Wu Pei-li, was jetzt von ihm verlangt wurde. Er drehte das Steuer, und er fuhr das Auto mit den zwei Generalstäblern und ihrer Ordonnanz und den zwei Zivilpersonen und sich selbst in einem Kühnen, dem Gedächtnis des Volkes für immer eingebrannten Bogen in den Fluß."<sup>60</sup>

In the original version ("Der Führerschein" [Die Linkskurve, 4, No. 6, 1932], p.25), the word "Volk" was replaced by "Masse" — thus, the Communist tendency is more apparent in the first version. The anecdote was completely rewritten before being published in the 1963 Bienenstock collection of Seghers' stories. The Bienenstock version is much more compact than was the original and is therefore a more successful execution of the anecdotal form. Except for the above-mentioned example, there is no change in the tendency of the story. Thus, one cannot attribute the changes to political reasons.

"Die Stoppuhr" deals with a mass decision, "Der Führerschein" with an individual one, yet both decisions are for the same thing — resistance to an oppressor.

In the short form of the anecdote, Anna Seghers is extremely effective. However, a comparison of the early and later versions of "Der Führerschein" shows that she had not attained the pithiness of style in the 1930's which characterizes her later anecdotes. Nevertheless, in the two sentences quoted above, which do not differ substantially in the original version, she has achieved more than in some of her novels. She has described an action, the decision behind that action and the results of it, both on those immediately affected and on others.

All the small works which have a Chinese setting evidence strong political tendency. In "Die Stoppuhr" and "1. Mai: Yan schuhpou," which is really a journalistic work more than a literary one, this tendency is Communist. In the original version of "Der Führerschein," the word "Masse" changes the tendency from nationalist to Communist. "Der Last-Berg," which shows sympathy with the poor, hints at the causes of their misery and therefore may be considered a Communist work also.

#### j. Summary

A chronological study of Anna Seghers' early works, those written between 1926 and 1932, reveals a steady movement towards the Communist Party which she joined in 1928. This is manifested in her literary works by a progressive acceptance of the criteria by which the Communist Party judged literature, which were formulated in 1934 as the principle of Socialist Realism.

"Grubetsch" (1926) and "Die Ziegler" (1927/28) show a definite sympathy with the poor and the oppressed. In "Grubetsch" these people are portrayed as giving in to a destructive and demonic force in an effort to escape the drabness of proletarian existence. "Die Ziegler" depicts a petit bourgeois family which faces extinction because it is trapped in a doomed class. Whereas "Grubetsch" shows no way out for its characters and ends on a note of total disillusionment, "Die Ziegler" hints that hope lies in alliance with the proletariat, the class of the future. Both stories show mystic and expressionistic tendencies, and a fascination with decadence. As a result, they are not considered realistic by Communist critics.

In "Die Wellblech-Hütte" (1928), Seghers abandons the passive proletariat and the declining middle class for the revolutionary proletariat which would occupy her attention in most future works. Nevertheless, the tendency is humanistic rather than communistic.

Aufstand der Fischer von St. Barbara (1928) shows workers attempting to improve their lot through concerted action. The story possesses a socialist tendency and is pervaded by an air of optimism. Two of the principal characters are prototypes of the "positive hero," although both act too spontaneously to be called Communists. Mysticism, fatalism and anarchism are the main faults in this story from the Communist viewpoint. The action is too isolated since there is no mention of the general class struggle.

"Auf dem Wege zur amerikanischen Botschaft" (1929/30) is a glorification of solidarity. Communist critics find fault chiefly with the form. The stream-of-consciousness technique, copied from James Joyce, dominates and thus the content is obscured and the atmosphere is lyrical rather than realistic. Again, the hero operates under a fatalistic compulsion. The tendency can hardly be criticized, although it is still a socialistic not a Communist tendency.

"Bauern von Hruschowo" (1929/30) shows a definite effort to correct the deficiencies found in her previous works. This is a Communist work, since the Party plays an active role in helping the peasants of Hruschowo in their rebellion. Thus, it succeeds where the uprising in St. Barbara failed. Solidarity is again glorified as in "Auf dem Wege zur amerikanischen Botschaft" but this time it is the solidarity of the mass. The change from individual to collective action is a step towards Socialist Realism. The story is set in a concrete historical and geographical setting, which was not the case in Aufstand der Fischer von St. Barbara. It manifests a socialist perspective and stresses the leadership role of the Communist Party and of Russia. The only fault found by Communist criticism is that the decision for the Party is not motivated but simply recorded.

In Die Gefährten (1932), all main characters are either Party members or work closely with the Party, thus this novel exhibits the highest degree of Communist tendency to date. Although the

internationalism of the Party is stressed, each plot is set at least partially in its own native setting, anticipating the demand for national flavour (narodnost) later required by Socialist Realism. Despite the tone of defeat set at the beginning of the novel, optimism, which stems from a socialist historical perspective, prevails. Many of the characters could be considered positive heroes. The only objection to Die Gefährten recorded by Communist critics is the lack of social and economic background which prompted the political actions of the characters. This is seen by one critic as a logical outgrowth of the form, which is fragmentary.

The short works which are written on Chinese themes show strong Communist tendency. These communistic parables could be considered perfect examples of Socialist Realism in miniature.

Thus, it may be said that in the early works from "Grubetsch" (1926), to Die Gefährten (1932) and "Die Stoppuhr" (1933) Anna Seghers moved towards Socialist Realism of her own accord in all respects except one — form. During the next period, which coincides with the years of emigration, the conflict between experiment in form and adherence to the aesthetic tenets of the Communist Party will take on even greater proportions as the crisis becomes intensified by the formulation of the rules of Socialist Realism and the Party's demand that Communist writers comply with these rules.

3. THE EMIGRATION 1933-37 .

a. Der Kopflohn

Der Kopflohn is the first work of Anna Seghers to be published and, we may assume, to be written during her forced stay outside her native country. The period immediately following Hitler's accession to power was a time of despair and self-criticism for German Communists; much of this is evident from the book.

After being arrested by the Gestapo in 1933, Anna Seghers was able to escape to France with her family. She wrote Der Kopflohn in Paris. The novel was published the same year by Querido in Amsterdam.

The scene of the novel is a small village in her native Rheinhessen. The time is that immediately preceding the Reichstag elections. The book is an attempt to answer the question of why the German Communists suffered such a humiliating defeat in 1933. In its intention the novel is therefore similar to Die Rettung (1937), which examines the political attitudes of the urban proletariat in Germany before Hitler's takeover.

Der Kopflohn, subtitled Roman aus einem deutschen Dorf im Spätsommer 1932, is one of the first novels in German socialist literature to have a rural setting and to deal with the problems facing the peasant population, despite the fact that the central

figure is a member of the urban proletariat.

The plot can be briefly summarized: A young worker, Johann Schulz, has stabbed a policeman during a hunger march in Leipzig; he flees the city and seeks refuge at the home of a distant relative, who takes him on as a farm hand during the harvest. Several neighbouring farmers see the "wanted" poster offering a reward of 500 Marks for information leading to Johann's capture, but for various reasons they do not denounce him; he is finally arrested, having been betrayed by the one man whom he had considered a friend and potential ally, the farm labourer Kößlin.

Inge Diersen points out quite correctly that the plot has Novella-like characteristics.<sup>1</sup> The action is prompted by an extraordinary event, the murder of a policeman. This writer finds it difficult, however, to agree with Mrs. Diersen on just what makes this event extraordinary:

Zur außerordentlichen Begebenheit wird der Vorfall erst dadurch, daß Johann Schulz, seine Tat und deren Folgen mit einer sozialen Umgebung konfrontiert werden, für die fast unvorstellbar ist, was in proletarischen Kreisen praktisch jedem passieren könnte: im Handgemenge einer Demonstration, die von der Polizei auseinandergetrieben wird, einen anderen Menschen zu töten, ohne daß Lust oder Wille zu töten dabei waren. Was im Dorfmilieu als Folge etwa einer Prügelei auf dem Tanzboden nichts gar so Besonderes

wäre, ist als Folge einer Demonstration — denn was ist das: eine Demonstration? — kaum vorstellbar.

Mrs. Diersen believes that the policeman's murder by itself is not an unusual event, but becomes one only when the hero is confronted with a new environment where his deed is not understood. There is little reason to suspect, however, that Johann's fate would have been any different had he remained in the city. Doubtless he would have eventually been denounced by someone seeing his picture for the reward money, or perhaps by someone who did not consider the killing of a policeman a justifiable or excusable act under any circumstances. A fellow worker, upon seeing the "wanted" poster would likely have the same impulse as the farm labourer Kößlin, namely to go to someone in authority and report his information without reflecting on the guilt or innocence of the person concerned.

Although the novel begins with Johann's arrival at the village and ends with his departure, the plot is not centralized. Various sub-plots concerning the daily lives of the villagers take precedence over the main plot. These sub-plots, however, are for the most part connected with the Kopflohn motif. Those which do not touch on the central motif serve to elaborate on the second story which the author is telling, that of the social and economic misery which is barbarizing the inhabitants and pushing them into the arms of National Socialism.



Since Socialist Realism would be proclaimed official Party doctrine a year after the publication of Der Kopflohn, the question of whether the novel conforms to its dictates is not applicable. Der Kopflohn is, however, a work of socialist literature, possessing a Communist tendency. This tendency is weaker than in Die Gefahrten. The Communists in Der Kopflohn are vaguely sketched figures, as is the hero, whom Marcel Reich-Ranicki describes as "ein junger, ebenso impulsiver wie hilfloser deutscher Arbeiter"<sup>3</sup> — hardly a positive hero.

Both the Communists and the hero take second place in the narrative to the villagers. It is the misery of their lives and their resulting brutalization which forms the social content of the novel and gives an insight into the question of why the rural population of Germany embraced National Socialism.

Mrs. Diersen notes that the social structure of the Rheinhessen area does not reflect the typical national conditions at that time, since there is no Junker class, nor are there big land owners and few wealthy farmers. Hence there are almost no agricultural workers, making the aspect of exploitation harder to depict.<sup>4</sup> This lack of a typical setting is a weak point in the novel in the view of Marxist critics.

All the farmers, even those who have more land and livestock than their neighbours, are poor. Some of them owe money for farm machinery to the Castrizius firm (the name Castrizius will occur

again in Anna Seghers' works as a symbol of capitalist exploitation). Because of the poor economic situation, they are falling behind in their payments and their machinery is being repossessed. The writer does not take advantage of this to give a portrait of a capitalist businessman who is exploiting the farmers. The owner of this firm, who is not called Castrizius but Baum, is barely described. He is hardly a big capitalist, not even owning the house in which his offices are situated. In like manner, the two Jewish traders, through whom the farmers arrange their business dealings, are portrayed sympathetically. Of course, to conform to the clichéd anti-semitic treatment of Jewish characters would smack of Nazism.<sup>5</sup>

In their common need, the farmers are not driven together, rather each seems to delight in his neighbour's misfortunes. The farmers are divided into two groups, those who are better off and correspond roughly to the Russian Kulaks, and those who are very poor. Merz, Kunkel and Konrad Bastian belong to the first group. They are described in most unsympathetic terms.

Christian Kunkel is the group-leader of the village S.A. His character, although only roughly sketched, is totally devoid of positive aspects. Together with the Nazi meeting where he was allowed to deliver a brief speech, the greatest day in his life was that of his father's funeral, when he realized that he was head of the house, and that the whole family must henceforth work for him. He joins the Nazi movement because he feels it will

benefit him: "Denn Kunkel war vor allem ein Mensch, der fragte, was ihm nützlich sei." <sup>6</sup> It is significant that Kunkel is the only farmer in the area who employs a farm hand, although he is not as well off as Merz: "Es kam ihm zustatten, daß es auf seinem Boden nur solche gab, die für ihn arbeiteten, keine, für die er arbeitete" (p. 23). He even treats members of his own family as hired help. Kunkel is a "type" in Engels' sense of the word. He has the employer-exploiter mentality and his every act is consistent with this. Kunkel is typical of the opportunistic little man who joined the Nazi Party because it promised them that they could keep what they had and perhaps gain a little more.

Merz is the richest farmer in the village. Although sceptical of the Nazis at first, he later urges his son to join the S.A. for reasons of expediency: "Ich hab kein großes Behagen dabei, aber grad deshalb, grade weil ich kein großes Behagen hab, mein ich, es ist besser, man ist dabei und kann den andern auf die Finger gucken" (p. 133).

Konrad Bastian is also lacking in humane characteristics. He has mistreated his younger brother, Andreas. He proceeds to marry off his daughter against her wishes. His secret fear is that he may lose his place of honour beside Merz in the tavern.

As a group, the poorer farmers are not better people than their wealthier neighbours. Two of them are indeed much greater scoundrels than Merz, Kunkel and Bastian.

Schüchlin has married a weak-minded slattern on the understanding that his sons will inherit his father-in-law's land. His mistreatment of his wife drives the pitiful creature to suicide. After her death, his guilt feelings erase from his memory the fact that he had desired and tried to engineer her death. At times it seems as if the author wishes to excuse him; he is such a hard working man, driven by such a terrible need: "So trug Schüchlin wie zwei übereinandergestülpte Hüte einen doppelten Ruf: er war ein Satan und ein Schinder, er war ein ordnungsliebender, geschickter Bauer von großem Fleiß und tadelloser Gesundheit" (p. 35). But when Schüchlin takes advantage of his neighbour, Andreas Bastian, by appropriating the latter's pump with his recently acquired inheritance, his villainous character is fully revealed.

The Nazi Zillich, who is to reappear in Das siebte Kreuz and in the story "Das Ende," is introduced for the first time in Der Kopflahn. Using Zillich as an example, Anna Seghers attempts to trace the genesis of the Nazi torturers and murderers whom the world was to regard with horror for years to come. It is a credit to her that already in 1933 she understood the circumstances and attitudes which produced a Zillich before his actions were widely known.

Zillich is a small farmer, burdened with cares, debts and a too-large family. In this he differs little from the other farmers in the novel. But he is more choleric and wishes to

express his rage at his situation in some approved form. He felt himself free for the first time when he was a soldier. The Nazis will provide him with a uniform and an outlet for his anger, as well as promise him a better future. His reasons for joining the Nazi Party represent the thinking of many of his contemporaries:

Ich will euch sagen: Der Zillich ist unter die Nazis gegangen, weil es so nicht weitergeht. Er ist unter die Nazis gegangen, weil er vier Kinder zu Hause hat und kein sattes, und weil es so nicht weitergeht. Weil er ein deutscher Bauer ist, der Zillich, und weil sie sein Land verschandelt haben. . . .

Und wenn ihr wollt, daß nicht der Jud euren Verdienst frißt, sondern eure Nachkommenschaft, und daß eure Schulden weggenommen werden, und daß ihr zu Land kommt, und daß ihr zu Vieh kommt, und daß ihr zu Werkzeug kommt, und daß eure Kinder vorankommen, dann sorgt, daß ihr das Hemd ankriegt, das der Zillich am Leib hat. Ja, dieses Hemd. (p. 92)

Although Zillich is only a marginal figure in the story — he is not an inhabitant of the village and is brought into the action by virtue of his being the local SA Sturmführer — his is perhaps the most brilliant portrait in the novel. It must have seemed so too to the author, for she followed the destiny of this man in two other works. Anna Seghers was criticized from all sides for the portrayal of her heroes. She is infinitely better

at portraying villains. But a true villain Zillich is not. He has much more of the frustrated religious fanatic than the dispassionate evil-doer about him. His reaction to Johann when the latter is arrested attests to this:

Sein Gesicht brannte, als hätte er endlich den Feind entdeckt, der sein Elend verschuldete. . . . Zillich hielt Johann mit seinen Armen umklammert, als wollte er seine Beute nicht loslassen. Er hatte ihn, er war heiß und lebendig. . . . Zillich sah nicht, aber er spürte, daß dieser fremde Mann endlich aufgerissen war. Er hatte ihn nie zuvor gesehen, sein Gesicht war ihm unbekannt, er hatte es zerschlagen, bevor er es erblickt hatte. Doch war er diesem Mann auf den Grund gekommen. Er spürte das fremde Blut an seiner Hand mit ungeheurer Erleichterung wie einen eigenen Aderlaß. Sein Unglück war draußen, für diesen Augenblick wenigstens. (pp. 169-170)

When Zillich goes home, he experiences the disappointment of finding that taking his blind revenge on Johann has not bettered his situation, which is caused by economic factors:

Als er seinen eigenen Hof betrat und den ganzen Schwarm seiner Kinder streitend und schreiend über dem umgestürzten Karren erblickte, als er die Stube betrat, in der die Frau grade die Teller richtete, da packte ihn eine gewaltige Enttäuschung, als hätte er

erwartet, am Abend eines solchen Festtags alles anders vorzufinden. Statt dessen schienen ihm über diesen Tag seine Kinder noch viel zerfetzter und abgerissener geworden, seine Frau noch viel älter, das Brot, das sie ihm gleich darauf vorsetzte, noch viel härter. (p.171)

Zillich is also a "type" in the Engelian sense. He represents the "wildgewordener Kleinbürger" who allied himself with the Nazis and became their henchman out of bitterness with his own lot in life. Instead of turning on his real enemies and oppressors, he unleashes his hatred on scapegoats — Communists and Jews. Because Zillich is so fully developed as a character, he transcends the Nazi "type" usually found in Socialist Realist literature and is a totally believable person.

Two of the poor farmers give hope that there is some power to resist the Nazis lying dormant in the village (and, by analogy, in the German people). Andreas Bastian and Algeier are both cautious, gruff men, capable of being politically independent up to a point.

Andreas Bastian sets himself apart from the indifference and cruelty of the villagers. He has over-extended himself financially to buy a pump for the farm so that his delicate daughter, Dora, will not have to carry water from the well. At first he resents Johann, but he soon realizes that the need of this young

man is even greater than his own:

Bastian wunderte sich. Er hatte immer geglaubt, nur die Alten seien erschöpft. Er konnte sich aus jungen Jahren an keine Erschöpfung erinnern, wie er sie heute verstand: eine Faust von oben, die seinen Körper auspreßte. Oder zwei Fäuste, die ihn auswangen. Er begriff nicht, wodurch etwas Junges so erschöpft war. Er sagte: "Wenn es Euch nicht eilt, von mir aus kannst du die Nacht hierbleiben."

‡ (pp. 9-10)

Bastian is exhausted by life's struggle and therefore tends to be passive. He does not ask Johann why he has come to his house because he is "too tired" to question the boy. When he finds out that the lad he has been harbouring is a murderer, he quite understandably fears the consequences. Yet one feels he might have let the boy stay even if he had known the truth.

Bastian resents the pressure put on him to vote Nazi and on election day goes through several ruses to avoid voting. This one can take as a protest against all political parties or against the Nazis in particular. His refusal to vote provides a faint glimmer of hope that when the time comes, he will resist the Nazis, if not actively, then at least in a passive fashion.

Algeier is a man cut from the same cloth as Bastian, taciturn, modest, kind and decent, and plagued with debts. He too, unlike most of the villagers, has a feeling for his children,



especially for his daughter, whose dismissal from her job precipitates the crisis over the centrifuge payments. This prompts Algeier to go to town where he sees the "wanted" poster of Johann. Instantaneously he is bowled over by the tremendous sum offered. His first impulse is to shout that he has the man. As all the others would later do, he thinks it over and worries about someone else taking the reward away from him. He considers going to Merz with his findings, then remembers how Merz had refused him the use of a farm machine and how Konrad Bastian had agreed to lend him one for payment. Suddenly a sort of class consciousness becomes galvanized in Algeier: "Algeier hatte nichts übrig für die Roten. Er hatte für niemand was übrig. Sie hatten ihm bis jetzt nichts gebracht. Ihm brachte niemand was. Eins aber war sicher: daß dem alten Merz alles Rote mehr zuwider war als Pest und Cholera, mehr als hunderttausend Kunkels" (p. 66).

Two of the people who don't denounce Johann, Algeier and Napthal, are motivated by a loathing to give their enemies, who are also Johann's enemies, satisfaction. This is hardly sufficient motivation to offset the attractiveness of the lucrative reward (it is made very clear that all who see the poster are astounded by the size of the sum offered). Anna Seghers seems here to be thinking of the Communist axiom that common enemies make allies. She is anticipating the Volksfront literature called for in 1935 by Stalin.

Algeier's reaction, as the wretched hero is being dragged off

to meet his fate, provides an optimistic ending for the novel: "Er ließ die Hacke fallen und zog hastig den Hut ab, als ob man einen Toten oder einen Täufling an ihm vorbeitrag" (p. 174). The certain death of the hero is coupled with the idea that what he represents has the future of a newly baptized baby. Algeier, albeit unconsciously, recognizes Johann's significance. By his action he shows respect, but for the man or the cause? Will Algeier be an ally when the struggle against the Nazis comes? The question is again left open.

The Communists in the novel are described in a positive manner, but they are shadowy figures to whom little attention is paid. Since they live in the neighbouring town and have little connection with the village, they remain on the periphery of the narrative. The Communists are linked to the main action chiefly through Johann, whose involvement with them must remain minimal since he is compelled to stay inactive.

The ineffectiveness of the Communists among the farmers is stressed. Marxists accept this as typical of the situation in Germany at this time where the Party concentrated in the urban centres: "Denn kennzeichnend für die Situation im Dorf, für die Weilerbach, wo Johann Schulz Unterschlupf findet, stellvertretend steht, ist, daß es keinen einzigen Kommunisten gibt, daß die Kommunistische Partei nicht herankommt. Der nächste Kommunist wohnt in dem entfernteren Dorf Botzenbach." <sup>7</sup> The Communists complain to Johann that they rarely get into the country. They have

only one car, whereas the Nazis have three. The SA is successful in preventing them from speaking to the farmers, as the scene where Ibst is dragged from the car by Zillich shows.

The Communists are martyr figures. Ibst has an eye poked out by Zillich. He later dies from the injuries sustained when he is pulled from the car. We have learned little about him, however; thus his fate arouses less emotion than it would warrant. Rendel is a more fully developed character than Ibst. His coolness in avoiding a bloodbath between the Communists and the SA mark him as a well-disciplined Party worker. He is attacked in his home by Zillich and the SA Sturm and is forced to go into hiding, leaving his wife to pass out propaganda leaflets and make speeches. Frau Rendel is a fearless proletarian woman and a devoted Party worker. The presentation of positive Communist figures loses much by the fact that she remains a minor personage, described only in the briefest terms. Despite the admiration they arouse in their few appearances, the impact of the Rendels on the reader is negligible. An indication of this is the fact that Rendel's name is constantly misspelled as Brendel in the textbook on Anna Seghers used in GDR schools! <sup>8</sup>

The underdevelopment of the Communist figures must be construed as a fault from the Marxist literary standpoint. The weak portrait of the hero is a technical imperfection by any standard. Inge Diersen believes that this is a result of his function: "Der Held des Buches bleibt, gemessen an den tragenden Nebenfiguren,

eigentümlich blaß. Die Ursache dafür ist, daß er nur eine auslösende Funktion hat und auch die nur, soweit es um die Durchführung des Kopflohn-Motivs geht. Für eine Reihe wichtiger Nebenhandlungen und Nebenfiguren fungiert er einzig als 'Aufhänger' . . . "9

Johann cannot be interpreted as an archetype of the positive hero which the Communist Party was soon to demand of its writers. The fact that he is not a Communist has little to do with this, although it does seem odd that he does not apply for membership in a party to whose ideals he is so drawn. The act which precipitated his flight, the stabbing of a policeman, cannot be considered as the act of a positive hero. A good Communist acts only when the Party commands and in the interest of the Party. Johann's action was a wild, undisciplined lashing out. His visit to Rendel to see whether he could be of use to the Party is a mere gesture, as Inge Diersen points out<sup>10</sup>, since he must remain quiet to protect himself. He has lost his usefulness to the Party and indeed to the cause of anti-Fascism by his impulsiveness.

Johann is too incompletely described to be a viable novel hero. It is never mentioned, for instance, whether he considers himself guilty of murder. His love affair with Marie Algeier does not reveal any new sides to his character. He vaguely wishes he could have a wife and children, but realizes that this is impossible. His liaison with Marie remains superficial. He

forgets her existence the moment he is with his Communist friends in town.

Johann walks blindly into disaster, like so many Seghers heroes. As soon as he has seen the poster, together with Kößlin, he knows the time of decision is upon him: "Er dachte: gleich zu Wolf — sinnlos. Er dachte: Heim zu Bastian — sinnlos. Er dachte: Sofort abfahren — richtig" (p. 163). He then proceeds to do what he has just recognized as senseless. He sets off to Bastian's with Kößlin, ostensibly because Kößlin wants to talk to him and Johann feels that this man must be made to understand him: "Er muß mich aber verstehen, dachte Johann, muß, muß mich verstehen. Sonst kann's schlimm werden" (p. 163). This is unconvincing, since the two men could well have stood and talked.

As if in a dream, Johann goes back to the village and walks into a trap of whose existence he cannot be ignorant.<sup>11</sup> It is a senseless act. Johann — like Hull, Andreas, and the stranger in "Auf dem Wege zur amerikanischen Botschaft" — is guided by a mysterious destiny. His martyrdom awaits him and he knowingly rushes to it.

As the hero of a novel, Johann is unsatisfactory and unconvincing. Since he undergoes no development throughout the story, he is essentially a Novella hero.

Kößlin, who betrays Johann, is a more interesting figure. Anna Seghers shows through Kößlin what unemployment can do to a

man. Kößlin wants to work so desperately that he is content to earn only bed and board. He is a convinced Nazi — a result of his desire for a job: "Kößlin wäre auch mit dem Teufel gegangen, wenn er ihm erlaubt hätte, in der Hölle Holz zu hacken" (p. 50).

Kößlin accepts the difference which separates master from servant. He accepts Kunkel's being head of the village SA although it had been his effort that created the group.

Kößlin is closer to Johann than anyone else in the village. The two men are drawn together, despite their differing political philosophies. Yet it is Kößlin who betrays Johann. He does not do this for personal gain (he refuses the reward money), but rather out of a sense of obedience to his superiors in the Nazi Party.

Inge Diersen finds the tragic involvement of many Germans with the Nazis reflected in Kößlin, who, acting out of basically honourable motives, brings guilt on himself through ignorance of the true state of affairs: "Damit ist in der Figur des Kößlin eine Form des Schuldigwerdens vorgezeichnet, die nach der faschistischen Machtergreifung und vor allem im zweiten Weltkrieg zur millionenfachen Einzelschuld innerhalb des Nationalschicksals wird." 12

Kößlin therefore represents a type:

Gerade durch die Schuldverstrickung wird mit der Figur

○ Kößlins ein Typus vorgezeichnet, der in der deutschen

Nationalliteratur nach 1945 bis zur unmittelbaren Gegenwart hin immer wiederkehrt: der Typus eines Helden, dem die Entscheidung gegen den Faschismus und für Demokratie und Sozialismus nicht nur durch Erziehung und Gewohnheit, durch seine allgemeine Mitschuld an der nationalen Katastrophe und der durch Deutschland bewirkten Zerstörung Europas erschwert wird, sondern der durch individuell faßbare Schuld belastet ist.<sup>13</sup>

In Der Kopflohn, Anna Seghers attempts to explain why the Communists made so little impact on the rural population of Germany and why they were powerless to prevent Hitler's takeover. She shows the misery which the inflation caused among the farmers and how they turned to the Nazis in the hope of getting food, jobs and a better standard of living. She illustrates how difficult it was for the few Communists, who were mainly in the towns, to reach, not to mention convert, the peasants, who were conservative by nature. She portrays various types of people who joined the Nazi Party and in so doing makes the phenomenon of Nazism more understandable.

In answering the question of why the Nazis won so easily over their opponents and why the Communists made such a poor showing, Anna Seghers does not take into account the most significant factor which augmented the Nazis' strength and their opponents' weakness — namely, that the Communists had joined the Nazis in

discrediting the Social Democratic government; in this way the Nazis had little trouble in disposing of all their opponents. By ignoring this fact, which, as a loyal Party member she had to overlook, she is unable to give a truthful answer to the question she has posed. Der Kopflohn is therefore an apology, not an analysis.

As stated before, Der Kopflohn cannot be judged by the criteria of Socialist Realism, which were formulated after its publication. It is interesting to observe, however, that the author instinctively avoids here conforming to the rules which were to be laid down. The Communists in the novel are minor, if positive, characters. The hero is weakly drawn and bears little resemblance to the "positive hero" type. The most interesting figures are the villains, especially the involuntary villain, Koßlin. It will be seen that even after the rules for Socialist Realism were postulated, Anna Seghers repeated this same treatment of characters in later novels.

On the other side of the balance sheet: A few characters conform to the Marxist idea of the typical; however, the setting does not. A socialist tendency is present; but the tendency in Der Kopflohn is a far cry from the heroic Communism of Die Gefährten. The ending has a forced optimism, for which the book gives little foundation.

On the whole, the atmosphere of Der Kopflohn is tinged with melancholy and pessimism. The landscape descriptions evoke an air



of wistful nostalgia, reminding one of Anna Seghers' words as she addressed the First International Writers' Congress in Paris in 1935: "Doch wer in unseren Fabriken gearbeitet, auf unseren Straßen demonstriert, in unserer Sprache gekämpft hat, der wäre kein Mensch, wenn er sein Land nicht liebte." 14

b. "Der letzte Weg des Koloman Wallisch"

In February 1934 there was an unsuccessful uprising of the left in Austria against the regime of Chancellor Dollfuß. Anna Seghers went to that country soon after the revolt had been put down. The short story "Der letzte Weg des Koloman Wallisch" and the novel Der Weg durch den Februar were inspired by her journey.

The short story was her first fictional presentation of the February events. It traces one historical incident of the uprising. In the middle of February, after the revolt had failed in Obersteiermark, Koloman Wallisch, the Hungarian-born Social Democratic mayor of Bruck, together with his wife and about four hundred followers, began a trek from Bruck over the mountains to Fronleiten trying to escape from government soldiers. Betrayed by one of his own men, Wallisch was captured and hanged in the town of Loeben.

Ten weeks after the execution, Anna Seghers followed Wallisch's route on foot, talking with people who were for and against him, in an effort to understand this enigmatic man who had been called

a Communist by those to the right and an anti-Bolshevik by those to the left of him.

The time between the experience and its setting down was short, for the story must have been written immediately upon her return to Paris, since it was published in Neue deutsche Blätter in July, 1934.<sup>15</sup>

The story is written in chronicle form, in the first person and the present tense, except when events concerning Wallisch's journey are referred to. The narrator is identified only as a woman<sup>16</sup>, a Communist<sup>17</sup>, and perhaps a German<sup>18</sup>. The story consists of a series of smoothly connected individual scenes from the narrator's journey, interspersed with scenes from Wallisch's.

Conflicting opinions about Wallisch, juxtaposed without comment, serve to illuminate the character of the man as well as the political views of those speaking. Two travelling salesmen in the train attest to Wallisch's courage: "Was man dem Mann lassen muß: Courage hat er beim Sterben gehabt" (p. 159). A wood dealer angrily retorts: "Sollen s' nicht mal Courage gehabt haben beim Sterben, wo s' die anderen zum Sterben gehetzt haben, so 'n Hetzer, wie das gewesen ist, so 'n Kommunist, wie das gewesen ist, so 'n Bolschewik, wie das war" (p. 159). Following this judgement of Wallisch as a Communist is a conversation the narrator reports having had that morning with her Communist friends in Graz: "'Hyänen der Arbeiterbewegung' — das schrieb

der Wallisch gegen uns, hieß es in dieser Küche, wie der Bund der Freunde des Neuen Rußland seine letzte Versammlung in Graz gehabt hat. Was das für ein Kommunistenfresser gewesen ist, der Wallisch, ein Antibolschewik" (p. 159). Wallisch's own words justify the opinion of the Graz Communists. Yet in the eyes of the wood dealer, he has acted like a Communist. Both opinions are therefore shown to be based on truth. The author has set herself the task of reconciling the conflicting facts and views concerning this man.

In the town of Bruck, an opponent believes: "'Das Ideal einer Ratediktatur schwebte ihm vor, wie er sie in Ungarn erlebt hatte und wie er sie im Jahre siebenundzwanzig in Bruck aufrichten wollte,' glaubte der Staatsanwalt. (Aber was glaubte Wallisch?)" (p. 161). This comment casts doubt upon the accuracy of the lawyer's statement that Wallisch wished for a Communist regime.

An unemployed youth criticizes Wallisch's refusal to strike first: "Wir haben ihm zugesetzt das ganze Jahr über, wir haben ihm zugesetzt, daß er losschlagen soll, aber er wollte kein Blut vergießen. Blut is dann doch vergossen worden, zur Unzeit, und falsches Blut" (p. 162). Wallisch was, in the light of this statement, not a man who wished to gain power through violent means. The boy's next words indicate that he believes Wallisch to have been honestly devoted to his cause: "Was er jetzt tät, der Wallisch, wenn er mehr gehabt hätte als sein Leben, ob er in

Brünn säße mit den anderen, ob er von Brünn aus auch packeln tät?  
Ich glaub nicht. Von uns ist doch viel drin gewesen in dem  
Mann" (p. 162).

Further along Wallisch's route, the narrator stops to chat  
with a caretaker and his wife, who offer her wine and some views  
on Wallisch; they call him "der Hetzer von Steiermark" (p. 165).  
Their remarks have to be taken in the context of their situation,  
for they work for a wealthy man. A gendarme who is also present  
remarks on the Socialist's courage, but condemns him: "Ich war  
selbst dabeigestanden in Leoben, wie sie ihn an den Galgen ge-  
hangt haben. Courage hat er gehabt . . . obwohl es doch gegen  
mich und unsereins gegangen ist. Herrgott, wo der die Courage  
hergenommen hat. . . . So ein Sadist, wie das war, der Wallisch,  
ein rechter Bolschewik" (pp. 165-66). His remarks are put in per-  
spective by his next outburst, which shows him to be a Nazi at  
heart: "Muß doch großartig beim Hitler in Deutschland sein, na  
kolossal muß das in Deutschland bei Hitler sein. Pst, verraten  
S' mich nicht, daß ich das gesagt hab, 'n uniformierter Mann"  
(p. 166).

At another stop, the narrator learns why Wallisch was popu-  
lar with the farmers:

Wodurch der Wallisch Anhang bei den Bauern hatte?  
Durch das Pachtschutzgesetz. Das Weideland um Bruck  
herum ist seit langem zum großen Teil Gemeindeland.  
Der Wallisch hat damals das Pachtschutzgesetz gemacht

und nie dran rütteln lassen. Der Pächter konnte nicht vom Boden vertrieben werden, die festgesetzte Pacht konnte nicht erhöht werden. Er war der reine Anwalt, der Wallisch. Bist du zu ihm gekommen, hast du ihn um Rat gefragt, an allen Fingern hat er die Paragraphen abgezahlt. Solche Paragraphen hat er gewußt — für den armen Mann, daß man ihm nicht ans Fell kann. Jetzt werden sie wohl die Gesetze durchreißen, in denen es noch solche Paragraphen hat. (pp. 167-68)

This hardly is the picture of a man who incited people to rebel against authority. Rather it vindicates the unemployed boy's opinion that Wallisch believed in changing society through peaceful, legal means.

In Leoben, various people tell the narrator about Wallisch's last days. She visits his grave, on which one may not put flowers for fear of fourteen days' imprisonment; but flowers are there, buttercups, which have been trampled. In a café in Leoben, the debate over Wallisch continues. It is not clear who or how many the conversants are. Two conflicting views on Wallisch are expressed: that he was a compromiser, and that he was a brave and sincere fighter in the class struggle:

"War aber doch ein Packler. Wenn er auch hat bluten müssen, ist doch immer so gewesen, daß man hat Pakte mit seinem Blut unterschrieben."

"Daß ihr so über einen Toten sprecht," sagt einer, "das sieht euch wieder ganz ähnlich, euch. Wißt ihr

denn überhaupt, wer das war, der Wallisch? Ganz von klein auf hat er gekämpft, zuerst als Maurerlehrling daheim und dann im Bauarbeiterverband, ein Bursch, blutjung. In Triest vor dem Krieg hat er gekämpft bei dem großen Bauarbeiterstreik, in Szegedin war er Parteisekretär, und in Räteungarn hat er gekämpft. Ah, ihr wißt ja nichts." (p. 172)

The answer to the riddle of Wallisch is given in the words of the last speaker:

Halt, so tot ist er denn doch wieder nicht, der Wallisch, so tot und begraben ist er denn doch wieder nicht, der Wallisch, so ein ganz toter, daß man nicht mehr mit ihm soll streiten können, daß man nicht mehr herausuchen soll können, wo er gekämpft hat und wo er gepackelt hat, wo er falsch ist und wo er richtig ist. Das weiß ich auch ohne dich, daß der Mann Fleisch war vom Fleisch der Arbeiterklasse, das man gequält hat; daß es unser Hals war, den man gewürgt hat, und auf unserem Hals sind rote Flecke. Und deshalb, weil es so ist und weil wir wissen, daß es so ist, deshalb ist der Mann nicht tot und heilig, sondern mit Fehlern und lebendig. (pp. 172-73)

Hence there is a grain of truth in all the opinions about Wallisch. Being human, he had many sides, some of which were contradictory. Nonetheless, he is shown to have been a great man.

The story also reveals much about the political atmosphere in Austria at that time. In Bruck, people smile as the streets are cleared of swastikas: "Man braucht nicht mehr zu fragen, das sieht man in vielen Provinzstädten, sie kehren die papierenen Hakenkreuze zusammen, die sie am Vorabend gestreut haben" (p. 160). From the unemployed boy, the narrator learns how some people have drifted into the Nazi movement:

Die Nazis? Da hat's bei uns 'n paar Sorten, die jetzt zu ihnen überspringen, da hat's bei uns 'n paar dumme Lausbuben, die auch bei uns nichts Gescheites waren, Turner sind's zum Beispiel, und gehen hin, weil's Turnhallen gibt bei den Nazis. Und unsere sind geschlossen worden. Und die Nazis lassen sie auf ihren Barren schwingen. Andre denken, wenn's losgeht, egal mit wem, nur dem Dollfuß 'n paar zurück auf den Kopf. Als ob nicht die Nazis morgens zum Schein die Gefängnisse aufmachen täten und abends im Ernst dieselben wieder reinsperren. (p. 163)

Other socialists have become radicalized by the failure of the uprising: "Was bei uns der Kern war, das ist nach links gerückt" (p. 163).

People are curious about conditions in Germany. A man in a restaurant asks: "Wie ist es in Deutschland? Man hört solche und solche. Einer war dort, der sagt, dort geht es haargenau nach der Bibel zu wie überall: Wer da hat, dem wird gegeben, wer

da nichts hat, dem wird genommen" (p. 164). There are some who already worship Hitler, like the gendarme mentioned above. Others, like the farmer on the Hochanger, are more cautious:

Ich laß mir aber nicht die Augen vollblinzeln. Was hat man mir nicht alles von Italien erzählt! Da bin ich voriges Jahr selbst runtergestiegen nach Italien. Den ersten Tagen hab ich niemanden gefunden, der mir hat wollen Auskunft geben. Dann hab ich einen gefunden, der hat mich bei der Hand genommen . . . Ich laß mir kein X für ein U vormachen. Ich spare mir mein Geld, nächstes Jahr geh ich nach Deutschland. Da guck ich nicht hin, wo sie mir meinen Kopf hindrehen, da dreh ich selbst meinen Kopf. (p. 169)

There are signs of the battle to come between conflicting ideologies: "Die endlose, heiße Straße nach dem Friedhof ist hier und dort mit Hakenkreuzen gestempelt. Hammer und Sichel zeigen sich auf den Bretterzäunen und Häuserrücken. Von diesen Tagen an trifft man sie dichter und dichter auf den Bretterzäunen, Waldwegen und Landstraßen" (p. 171). Also described is a gesture of resistance to Fascism when the streets of Leoben are strewn with nails to prevent the passage of an Italian official's car.

No direct parallel is drawn between events in Germany and those in Austria, yet it is implied. The various parties were quite different in the two countries, especially the Social Democrats who in Germany had formed the government and were identified



with the forces of authority which had called in Noske to put down rioting workers, whereas in Austria they had formed the opposition to the right-wing government. The Austrian Social Democratic Party had also achieved much for the proletariat, such as the Gemeindehäuser, and therefore could not be as roundly condemned as could their German counterparts. Nevertheless, the increased activity of the Nazis, the radicalization of some of the left and the "wait and see" attitude of the country population remind one of the German developments. The procrastination of the Austrian Social Democrats, which caused their ultimate defeat, is reminiscent of the hesitation of the Communists in Germany, something to which the author doubtless did not wish to allude.

"Der letzte Weg des Koloman Wallisch" is not a work of Socialist Realism. The hero is not a Communist. He is not presented in a totally positive fashion since his faults and his virtues are equally stressed. Above all, he has been shown not to have acted in the best interests of the proletariat and thus could never be considered a positive hero. Anna Seghers has sought to recreate the character of an historical personage and she has succeeded in presenting a realistic and believable portrait. Inge Diersen finds the choice of Wallisch correct, in that he is representative of the leftist Austrian leaders:

Klassenbewußtsein, Kampfbereitschaft, Heroismus, aber auch verhängnisvolles Vertrauen zu teilweise ver-

räterischen Führungskräften und ein daraus resultierender Mangel an eigener Initiative — das macht Wallisch, den Mann in führender Position, zum historischen Repräsentanten sowohl der Größe wie der Schwäche des österreichischen Proletariats dieser Jahre und deshalb besonders geeignet zum Helden eines Reportageberichts über die Februarereignisse des Jahres 1934.<sup>19</sup>

The tendency, which is subtly communistic, emanates out of the selection of the material and does not take the form of judgments which the narrator makes about the events. Indeed, the narrator stands completely in the background. Lacking biographical data, one would suppose she was a fictional figure. The identification of the narrator as a Communist increases the objectivity of the story, since the reader can judge the presentation of the material in light of this.

The realism of the work stems from the fact that it is a report of a historical event seen through the eyes of actual witnesses although moulded into a literary form. The socio-political background, confined to the Austrian rural class, is unfolded through conversations and observations.

Thus, "Der letzte Weg des Koloman Wallisch" is both realistic and socialistic without being a work of Socialist Realism.

A comparison of the earliest version of "Der letzte Weg des Koloman Wallisch" published in Neue deutsche Blätter (1, No. 10 [1933/34]) with the 1963 Bienenstock edition shows that Anna Seghers did effect some changes in the story for political reasons. The sentence "Ihre Hoffnung war noch, mit den Waffen in der Hand über die Grenze nach Jugoslawien." <sup>20</sup> is omitted in the later version of the story. This has obvious political connotations, since the subject of Yugoslavia was taboo even after Stalin's death.

The assassination of the Italian Fascist, Gio, is not directly attributed to Communists in the later edition: "Gio, von Marxisten im Stadtrat von Bologna ermordet" (Seghers, "Wallisch" [Neue deutsche Blätter, p. 595]) becomes "Gio, von Antifaschisten im Stadtrat von Bologna getötet" (Seghers, "Wallisch" [Bienenstock, p. 172]).

The Communist tendency is stronger in the later version. For example: "Mit Nageln sind die Landstraßen gespickt für diese Gäste . . ." (Neue deutsche Blätter, p. 595) reads "Das Volk hat die Landstraßen mit Nageln gespickt für diese Gäste . . ." (Bienenstock, p. 172).

Sentences which could be construed as critical of contemporary Communist regimes have been omitted. The Neue deutsche Blätter edition contains the sentence "Tot ist die Demokratie, ja, tot und abgewürgt, und mit den Schuhen draufgetreten, und soll

auch nicht mehr hochkommen" (p. 595). This is left out in the Bienenstock version.

These changes, the first we have noted in Seghers' work which are not for stylistic but rather political reasons, prove that the author was later willing to tailor her early, pre-Socialist Realism works to the dictates of this method in order to please Party authorities.

c. Der Weg durch den Februar

This novel is a semi-documentary report of the rebellion against the Dollfuß regime in 1934. Alexander Abusch recalls how Anna Seghers went to Austria to see the situation for herself:

Anna Seghers begab sich im Jahre 1934, wenige Wochen nach den Ereignissen des Februar, aus ihrer Pariser Emigration nach Osterreich, um — bevor sie schrieb — selber den Weg durch den Februar nachzugehen: in Wien und Graz und im osterreichischen Bergland. Ich war damals in Paris und erinnere mich, wie sich die Dichterin zu dieser Reise entschloß, die für sie persönlich kein geringes Wagnis war. Als sie wiederkehrte, erfüllt vom unmittelbaren Eindruck der Ereignisse und ihrer noch sichtbaren Spuren, ging sie sofort ans Werk.

Diese Entstehungsgeschichte mag erklären, warum das Buch fast mehr eine erzählende Reportage, mehr ein Reportageroman als eigentlich ein Roman geworden ist.

Die Autorin, die sonst in ihren anderen Büchern einen so großen Wert auf eine straffe Fabel legt, versuchte in diesem Buch, durch eine kunstvolle Verknüpfung einzelner Handlungen und Gespräche von Menschen aus verschiedenen Klassen, dem Leser ein Gesamtbild des Februar 1934 zu geben. Sie wollte, wie sie selbst sagt, in den Handlungen der Menschen das Wesen und das Gesetz der Ereignisse zeigen. Charakteristisch für ihre Schaffensmethode ist, daß sie selber den Weg durch den Februar ging, um Menschen und Orte eines ihr fremden Landes zu hören, ihre Atmosphäre zu spüren, Begebenheiten nachzuerleben.<sup>21</sup>

Although the novel is based on historical events and has many of the characteristics of a documentary, it is clearly a work of fiction. Unlike the story "Der letzte Weg des Koloman Wallisch," no effort is made here either through the use of a first-person narrator or employment of the present tense or constant reference to historically verifiable facts to make the reader believe that the characters are real people who have actually lived through the occurrences described. Thus the use of the term "semi-documentary," above.

The novel was published in 1935 in Russia (Seghers, Der Weg durch den Februar: Roman, Moscow/Leningrad: Verlagsgenossenschaft ausländischer Arbeiter in der UdSSR, 1935) and in Paris

(Seehers, Der Weg durch den Februar: Roman, Paris: Editions du Carrefour, 1935). It shows signs of having been written in haste. Marcel Reich-Ranicki calls it "completely chaotic." 22 The time between the occurrence of the events, her recreating them and setting them down is, as in the case of Der Kopflohn and "Der letzte Weg des Koloman Wallisch," very short, less than a year. The time covered in the novel extends from the end of 1933 to mid-April of 1934.

The theme is the uprising itself. One could almost call it the main figure, although it is not personified as in Aufstand der Fischer von St. Barbara. The plot is composed of several strands which run parallel to each other but rarely come together, being connected only by the fact that each portrays some facet of the revolt. This structure is the same as the one used in Die Gefährten. The author will employ the same technique in Die Toten bleiben jung. Anna Seehers does not attempt to give a cross-section of Austrian society. The only middle-class figures are Dr. Bildt, a Social Democrat, and Karlinger, a Christian Socialist. Both are involved in the workers' movement (although in different ways) and are therefore not representative of the middle class. No one from the governing or upper class is depicted, although government figures loom in the background.

The action takes place in Linz, Graz, Styria, the mountains near Bruck and in various working-class areas in Vienna — the

Karl-Marx-Hof, Floridsdorf and Ottakring — the historical settings of the uprising.

The novel is divided into six chapters which in turn are subdivided. The division into subchapters enables the author to describe events which are taking place simultaneously in different locations. For example: Chapter 1, subchapter I takes place in Styria; in 1, II the setting is Vienna; in 1, III the mountains near Bruck; in 1, IV Graz; in 1, V the Karl-Marx-Hof in Vienna. Only once does the scene shift to a different locale within a subchapter. This occurs in Chapter 6, I when the story moves from Styria to Linz and back.<sup>23</sup> The structure is imaginative, if confusing. "Kuhn in formaler Hinsicht (wenn auch völlig mißlungen) ist der Weg durch den Februar — hier ließ sich die experimentierende Autorin vom Film und von der Fotomontage anregen und versuchte es bisweilen mit der Simultaneität. Teile dieses Romans erwecken den Eindruck, als handle es sich um ein Filmdrehbuch."<sup>24</sup>

To each locale belongs a separate plot, at the centre of which stands a main figure or group of figures as in Die Gefährten. In Graz, the central personage is the homeless, unemployed youth Willaschek; in Linz, it is the Communist Aigner; in the Karl-Marx-Hof plot, the Social Democrat Riedl and his young protégé Fritz dominate the action; the second Viennese story revolves around Matthias and Kroytner; in Styria, the Schutzbund functionary Johst is the main figure (although the novel begins with the

Fischer-Nuß story, this is really a subplot). Removed from the working-class milieu, which is central to the novel, are the peasant couple in the mountains, who take in Wallisch and his people, and the Christian Socialist, Dr. Karlinger. They may be regarded as figuring in subplots, which have only indirectly to do with the main theme. The various strands of the plot which concern the workers form a unity, although there is but one direct connection between any two, namely Aigner's meeting with Fritz when the former is called to Vienna. Here is another parallel with Die Gefährten, where only the Bato and Steiner plots actually touched each other. In addition, there are three episodes which have little or no connection with the rest of the narrative and are self-contained: the arrest and death of the Gemeinderat Wollner of Floridsdorf; the tale of the setting up of a machine gun in the living room of a worker's wife, which was separately published by Anna Seghers under the title "Aufstellen eines Maschinengewehrs im Wohnzimmer der Frau Kamptschik"; and an inconsequential episode concerning two Schutzbund members. The first two, which will be briefly discussed here, have almost Novelle form.<sup>25</sup>

The Wollner story has the function of providing historical background. It was arrests such as this of Social Democratic leaders which precipitated the uprising of 1934. Wöllner's fate has also an importance for the plot, for if he gave away certain information, he would cause the arrest of one of the novel's main figures, Matthias.



The Frau Kamptschik episode shows the awakening of class consciousness in a woman who had hitherto been more concerned with her four walls and the neat furniture within them than with matters of the outside world. A complete change of values takes place as she sacrifices her linen and other household treasures to aid Schutzbund members in setting up a machine gun in her living room. Finally she even gives her child to a neighbour for safe keeping and stays behind during the bombardment to make coffee for the combatants.

Anna Seghers is at her best in the short form. The story of Frau Kamptschik is a gem, clear and lucid amid the confusion of the rest of the novel.

The Social Democratic workers are shown to be every bit as courageous and as devoted to the interests of their class as are the Communists. This differs from the usual portrayal of the Social Democrats in Communist literature. There are several reasons for this. As we have already noted in our discussion of "Der letzte Weg des Koloman Wallisch," the Social Democrats in Austria had had much more success in making real improvements for their people than in Germany. The situation of the Social Democrats vis à vis the Communists was quite different in Austria and Germany. In Germany the Social Democrats had formed the government and had, at times, allied themselves with right-wing elements. In Austria, however, the Social Democrats were in the same position as the Communists; both were opposed to the right-

wing, pro-clerical and pro-Mussolini regime of Chancellor Dollfuß. Because of this, the Social Democratic Schutzbund was outlawed on 1 April 1933 and the Social Democrats were forced to organize illegally. These factors, plus the bitter experience of 1933 in Germany when the working class had been divided, thus facilitating Hitler's rise to power, allow Anna Seghers to portray the Social Democrats in a more sympathetic fashion than was heretofore usual in socialist literature. This foreshadows the attitude of Communist writers towards the Social Democrats during the Volksfront period.

Whereas the Social Democratic workers are positively portrayed, the villains in the novel — apart from Dollfuß, the clergy, the Heimwehr and business interests — are the Social Democratic leaders, who hesitate to give the order to arms until it is too late. Their thinking is capsuled in the fictional conversation between Wallisch and a worker:

Da hat der Melchior Senzer gesagt: "Wann schlagen wir los, Genosse Wallisch?" Da hat der Wallisch gesagt: "Wenn's für die Arbeiterklasse nützlich ist." Da hat der Senzer gesagt: "Der Arbeiterklasse ist es längst nützlich." Da hat der Wallisch ihn angesehen, so, und hat gesagt: "Sie hat immer noch viel zu verlieren." Da war's still, da habens alle hingehört, und da hat der Melchior Senzer giftig in die Stille reingesagt, dem Wallisch ins Gesicht: "Alles ist schon hin, einen

Dreck hat sie zu verlieren."

Da hat der Wallisch den Melchior Senzer soo angesehen und hat gesagt, ganz ruhig: "Seit wann ist dein Blut denn Dreck?" Da haben alle stillgeschwiegen, auch der Melchior Senzer.<sup>26</sup>

Except for this conversation and Wallisch's brief appearance at a farm house in the mountains, a scene mentioned in "Der letzte Weg des Koloman Wallisch," no member of the Social Democratic leadership appears in the novel. Representing them, but scaled down to the level of the workers, is the Party functionary, Riedl. Riedl is conscientious and class-conscious. He is proud of the Party and capable of transmitting his ideas to those who matter, the young, as exemplified by Fritz: "Riedl begann aus ihm einen jungen Genossen zu machen, klassenbewußt, unprahlerisch, ohne Phrasen" (p. 213). Riedl has, however, the same faults as the Social Democratic leaders, whose apologist he is. In a discussion, Riedl echoes Wallisch's words: "Denn für die Genossen in der Parteileitung ist die Verantwortung groß, Blut vergießen zu müssen. Für sie wär das eine große Versündigung vor der ganzen Arbeiterklasse, unnutz Blut zu vergießen" (p. 249). When the men in his factory want to strike to protest the wave of arrests which has begun, Riedl opposes them because the Party leaders have declared themselves against the strike. The Social Democrats were not a closely disciplined Party, as were the Communists. Had Riedl been a Communist, his attitude would have been

completely understandable; as it is, he shows inability to act on his own.

When the general strike is prematurely begun by the electrical workers, Riedl again resists with a pedantry which could be termed sabotage, as he prevents the distribution of guns. Riedl's attitude is summed up in his words upon hearing that the strike has started: "Halt, wart, bleib doch" (p. 284). When the time for pitched battle comes, Riedl fights bravely. But his unrealistic, scrupulous observance of the rules is reflected once more in the thick of the fighting when a tank is seen approaching: "'Es gibt gar keine Tanks!' Riedl horchte auf seine gute eigene Stimme: 'Die sind im Vertrag verboten.' Der Erdboden zitterte in ihn hinein. Sein Herz wurde schon kalt, es witterte schon etwas. Er hörte sich selbst, stimmlos, inwendig: Verboten" (p. 315).

After the uprising, many people have lost faith in the Social Democrats. Fritz tells Riedl: "Das ist alles nicht mehr, wie's war. Der Karl-Marx-Hof, der ist zwar nicht eingestürzt, der hat's überstanden. Aber unser Glaube an die Partei, Riedl, der ist eingestürzt" (p. 385). He reproaches Riedl and the Party for not having taught its followers the important things, for not having prepared them for prison, fighting, illegal work and death" (p. 389). Fritz is now speaking like a Communist, which he has become as a result of his disillusionment with the outcome of the uprising.

The teacher-student motif, which we have noted in many of Seghers' previous stories, manifests itself here in the Riedl-Fritz relationship. Again, as has been so often the case, the student surpasses the teacher in revolutionary fervour.

Was the fault of the Social Democratic leaders in Austria in 1934 the same as the error the Communists in Germany had committed in 1933? Was it in both cases simply a question of having put off the moment of confrontation too long? The Social Democrats had too much faith in their opponents' desire to honour agreements. The Communists in Germany had underestimated the Nazis in a similar way. However, Anna Seghers wishes to lessen the parallel by placing the blame elsewhere. Fritz praises to Aigner the courage of Social Democratic leaders like Wallisch during the uprising and the bravery of men like Riedl afterwards. Aigner answers: "Mut . . . dazu muß man wissen, was notwendig ist für seine Klasse und für sich selbst. Dafür muß man dann alles einsetzen. Aber wenn man sich jahrelang gesträubt hat gegen das Notwendige, dann kann man es nicht in einem Tag gutmachen, auch wenn man an diesem Tag sein Leben hundertmal einsetzt" (p. 402).

From the Communist point of view, the Social Democrats in Austria were not evil men, only misled. First they were seduced into thinking that their enemies would act honourably; thus they were unprepared for the massacre of their followers which occurred on 14 February 1934 and became guilty of not protecting their own. Secondly, they were misled into thinking that Fabianism and not

Leninism was the answer to the problems of the working class. Thus, ignorance and naiveté, not ill will, are behind their crimes. This is not explained in the novel. As is so often the case with Anna Seghers, the reader must draw these conclusions for himself.

Disillusioned by the "betrayal" of their leaders and the catastrophe in which the uprising has ended, the Social Democrats react in various ways. Kroytner seeks death, when he kills a Heimwehr soldier who is standing with three comrades: "Kroytner spürte, unendlich erleichtert, wie sich der Feind über ihn warf. Endlich, glaubte er, zerkrachte die Erde, als sein Schädel zerkrachte" (p. 360). Having no orders for further action, Kroytner lashes out in suicidal despair, so that something, anything, will happen.

A more positive result of the February fiasco, from the Communist viewpoint, was the radicalization of some of the Social Democrats, represented in the novel by Fritz and Aigner's brother-in-law, who had hardly spoken to Aigner since the latter left the Social Democrats for the Communists. After the uprising, they meet. Aigner's brother-in-law has been in Brünn and has heard the excuses given by the Party leaders in exile. He is now on his way to Moscow.

In Martha Johst's kitchen, two visitors speak of the increasing role of Moscow in the minds of Austrian workers: "Obrecht

sagte vor sich hin: 'Rußland. Viele reißen sich dafür die Beine aus, viele hassen es wie den Teufel, viele sind sich nicht einig darüber. Aber einmal am Tag mindestens denkt, glaub ich, jeder daran'" (p. 383).

This stress on the turning towards Russia as a model for the class struggle is the most significant positive aspect of the novel from a Communist viewpoint. The role of the Communists is more clearly defined than in Der Kopflohn or "Der letzte Weg des Koloman Wallisch." Although little space is devoted to either Aigner, the main figure of the Linz plot, or to Mittellexer, who would at first seem to be the principal figure in the Graz story, the man who soon overshadows Mittellexer, the worker Willaschek, exemplifies the strength the Communist Party gives to its members, even in defeat. Willaschek's strength is contrasted with the weakness of the Social Democrats, who are on trial with him for the murder of a policeman. Whereas they try to make a good impression on the court and are let off with light sentences, Willaschek uses his trial to put forward his political ideals. During the trial, Willaschek is slipped a piece of paper on which is written: "Nicht jeder ist ein Dimitroff, aber jeder kann von ihm lernen . . . Die Angeklagten von heute werden die Richter von morgen sein" (p. 414). His despondency leaves him: "Nichts hatte aufgehört für ihn, alles fing heute abend erst für ihn an" (p. 415). When sentence is passed, Willaschek calls out: "Wir werden die Richter von morgen sein" (p. 416). As he goes to his cell, his

thoughts are most unusual for a man who has just been sentenced to twelve years in prison:

Willaschek ging zwischen zwei Wachtposten den Korridor hinunter. Er ärgerte sich, weil er nicht laut genug gerufen hatte. Sonst war er ruhig. In diesem Augenblick hatte das Urteil für seine Schultern kein Gewicht. Vielleicht wird noch oft, vielleicht schon heute nacht ein neuer Anfall von Verzweiflung sein Herz erschüttern. Jetzt aber war er froh. Ruhig und unverwirrbar, wie die Allerstärksten durch das Leben gehen, ging er von der Gerichtssaaltür bis zur Haupttreppe. Jetzt stehen sie unter den Kastanien herum . . . sie gedenken seiner, beim Heimweg, beim Abendessen und morgen bei der Arbeit. Er kennt die Seinen, und die Seinen kennen ihn. (p. 417)

On this note of optimism, the book ends.

Der Weg durch den Februar is the only novel of Anna Seghers to deal with a single historical event with almost journalistic exactness. At the beginning of the novel, she explains what she has set out to do: "In diesem Buch sind die österreichischen Ereignisse in Romanform gestaltet. Manche Vorgänge sind verdichtet worden; man suche auch nicht nach den Namen der Personen und Straßen. Doch unverändert dargestellt sind die Handlungen der Menschen, in denen sich ihr Wesen und das Gesetz der Ereignisse gezeigt hat" (p. 176). This foreword manifests the historical de-



terminism of the Communists. But Anna Seghers has not tampered here with the historical facts, nor has she ignored any significant aspects which would put the Communist Party in a bad light, as she did in Der Kopflohn. In reading a fictionalized account of the February uprising as seen by the American, John Gunther, The Lost City (Harper and Row: New York, Evanston and London, 1964), which was published some thirty years later than Seghers' novel, one is amazed at the similarity in the details, as well as the light in which the events are seen.

In general, Communist critics received the book well, despite the use of stylistic innovations such as the photomontage technique which recalls the U.S.A. trilogy of John Dos Passos. It is not considered Socialist Realism, although it exhibits many characteristics of that school of writing. The optimism of the book is stronger than in Der Kopflohn; there are positive heroes; the connection of the struggle in Austria with the general class conflict is underlined through parallels drawn with the situation in Germany, but falls short of the attempt in Die Gefährten to show the universality of the class struggle; the role of reactionary forces, such as the Catholic Church, and of "false prophets," such as the Christian Socialists, which contributed to the division of the working class and impaired their ability to resist Nazism are portrayed. The main fault found with the novel is the weak depiction of the Communist figures. Inge Diersen notes also that the particular problems of the intellectuals and the reasons

the middle class embraced Fascism are not discussed.<sup>27</sup> From the historical viewpoint, another weakness would be the fact that the true enemy of the working class — Nazism — is hardly mentioned, while the government, the Church and the Social Democratic leaders are portrayed as the real villains.

Paul Killa considers the importance of Der Weg durch den Februar, as of Der Kopflohn, lies in the fact that it is a preliminary work, which prepared the way for later, better books:

Beide Bücher sind wichtig, aber sie sind Vorübungen.

Im Kopflohn die Soziologie des Dorfes, das von der faschistischen Infektion erreicht wird; im Weg durch den Februar die verwirrenden Fakten eines historischen Vorgangs, aus dem in der Handlungen der Menschen "das Gesetz der Ereignisse" hervortritt: beides führt zum Siebten Kreuz und von dort zu dem letzten großen Zeitroman der Dichterin, der die ganze Epoche in sich zusammenfaßt.<sup>28</sup>

d. The Pause between Der Weg durch den Februar and Die Rettung

Anna Seohers had been present at the Charkov Conference in 1930 when an art. that was nationalist in form and socialist in content had been called for. The effect which this had on her writing was seen almost immediately in Die Gefährten. She was not in the audience of the First Union Congress of Soviet Writers in 1934 when A. Shdanov announced the decline of bourgeois literature

and the adoption of Socialist Realism as the fundamental method of Soviet literature.

Shdanov declared that the main heroes of Soviet literature were the active builders of the new life: workers, collective farmers, Party functionaries, economists, engineers, members of the Komsomol and Pioneer groups; that Soviet literature was filled with enthusiasm and heroism; that it was optimistic, not out of some animalistic "inner" feeling, but because it was the literature of the rising and only progressive class, the proletariat; it was strong because it served a new cause, the cause of the building up of Socialism. He reminded the writers that Stalin had called them "engineers of the human soul" and enumerated the duties this name brought with it: to know life in order to present it in artistic works in a true fashion, not in a scholastic, dead manner, not simply as "objective reality," but rather as reality in its revolutionary development; thereby the truthful and historically concrete artistic presentation must be combined with the task of ideologically educating and reshaping the working people in the spirit of Socialism. This was the method of Socialist Realism in literature and literary criticism. He further stated that Soviet literature did not fear the reproach of being called tendentious. He affirmed that it was tendentious because during the era of the class struggle there could be no literature which was apolitical, which did not have a tendency and which stood above the classes.

To be an "engineer of the human soul" meant to stand with both feet on the ground of real life and, as a result, to break with the old type of romanticism, which presented to the reader a nonexistent life and nonexistent heroes and let him into a world of Utopia. For the Soviet writer, only a "revolutionary romanticism" was acceptable. Writers, he further stated, must know the technique of literary creativity, selecting only that which was best from previous eras. Writers were urged to create works of high ideological and artistic content, to be active in reshaping the consciousness of people in the spirit of Socialism and to stand in the front ranks in the battle for the classless society. Shdanov affirmed his belief that the few foreign Comrades who were in attendance would form the core of a mighty army of proletarian writers who would create the proletarian world revolution abroad. 29

Because of the haste with which Der Weg durch den Februar was written, it is doubtful that this declaration had much influence on it. Only after publishing this novel did Anna Seghers seem to stop and reflect on the implications which this proclamation had for her work. This theory would seem to be borne out by the fact that Communist criticism of Anna Seghers' works pauses at this point and picks up some two years later with the publication of Die Rettung (1937).<sup>30</sup> This is an awkward period for Seghers critics. The prolific writer published only one anecdote and two stories, which are often considered as having been conceived be-

fore this time because of their romantic nature<sup>31</sup>, from 1935 to 1937. One can only speculate upon what caused this caesura in her creativity. Life in emigration had doubtless something to do with it, but one wonders whether there was not a direct connection between the setting down of the rules of Socialist Realism and the break in her writing pattern.

e. "Das Viereck"

This anecdote is the only socialist work written between 1935 and 1937 and merits discussion here by virtue of that fact. It concerns a child who was taken to relatives in the country after her father had been arrested. Upon returning home many months later, she finds her house totally changed — except for a square on the wall — the mark left by a picture of Thälmann, which has been removed. The child goes to school; Christmas and Easter pass; her mother, obviously not a Communist, is happy that her daughter is like all the other children. But Marie remembers the picture that created the square on the wall and yearns to find Albrecht, a comrade of her father's: "Ihr Vater war tot. Aber Marie dachte: Dieser Albrecht ist sicher lebendig, ich will suchen, bis ich ihn finde. Sie sah immer wieder über den weißgedeckten Tisch an den Gesichtern von Mutter und Gästen vorbei auf das Viereck an der Wand."<sup>32</sup>

"Das Viereck" is a work of Socialist Realism in form and in content. It bears great similarity to "Der Führerschein" and

"Die Stoppuhr," which have already been discussed. In the short form of the anecdote, the author has little difficulty in adhering to the artistic tenets of the Communist Party. In this genre there is no possibility for development of characters or for experimentation in form. Her crisp, precise style is well suited to the anecdote. This fact, combined with the aforementioned ones, make Anna Seghers' anecdotes such as this one miniature masterpieces of Socialist Realism.

f. "Die schönsten Sagen vom Räuber Woynok"

This story, like "Sagen von Artemis," was first published in the 1951/53 Bienenstock edition of Seghers' stories, where the date 1936 was attributed to it. Set in the Prutka mountains of Bulgaria, as was the Bulgarian plot of Die Gefährten, it takes place at any time from the Middle Ages to the early twentieth century. The time covered in the narrative is roughly three years.

The plot can be briefly summarized as follows: Grushek, who leads a band of forty robbers, meets the young, solitary robber Woynok one spring day and tells him that should he ever be in need, he can count on him and his band. He also tells Woynok where he will winter. Woynok is caught in a blizzard the following winter and stumbles, half-frozen, into Grushek's camp where he is well-treated. But the camp displeases Woynok and he soon leaves. The next spring, Woynok is brought a message by Grushek's

dog. The band is trapped by soldiers and Gruschek, reminding Woynok of the aid he had given him, asks for help. Woynok resents this reminder and does not wish to go to the rescue but finally he does. He ties a slow match to the dog's tail and sends it into the camp. The soldiers scatter, thinking they have been set upon by devils. Gruschek asks the younger man to lead the band, which he reluctantly does. Finally Woynok decides to destroy the robbers. He traps them in a fire in a narrow gorge. Most escape, however, because Gruschek orders them to stand on each other's shoulders; thus, the ones at the top can get out of the chasm. Woynok is not killed for his treachery but is banned from Gruschek's sight. A year later, the robbers hear that he has died an ignoble death. New snares have been set by hunters and Woynok catches his foot in one. When villagers find him, they beat him to death. He silently appears by the band's fire one night. His body is found the next day by the robbers who bury it.

That the story is a legend is indicated already in the title. The saga-like quality is further reinforced by the lack of a historical setting and by the way in which deeds are ascribed to Woynok. They are not described but simply reported, thus increasing the distance between the narrator and the related events: "Alles, was Woynok in diesem Sommer tat, ist so oft erzählt worden, daß man es nicht wiederholen muß: Wie er den Fährmann auf dem Paritzkafluß überlistete, wie er, als Gast verkleidet, in die Hochzeit des reichen Bauern auf Marjetze Upra einbrach, wie

er das Kloster von St. Ignaz in Brand steckte . . ." <sup>33</sup> This change in narrative technique is reminiscent of the way in which Dudoff's exploits were related in Die Gefährten.

Woynok is very different from Dudoff and most other Seghers heroes, however — because he is an outsider. He cannot tolerate human contact. He feels only sadness during the feasting and singing at the robbers' campfire. Kindness leaves him cold; he resents those who aid them and tries to destroy those he has guided for a year. But his solitary existence is shown to be less successful than the solidarity of the robbers. When they are trapped in the burning gorge, some can survive because others sacrifice themselves, whereas Woynok cannot free himself from the trap alone. Only after death does he realize his mistake and seek the company of others: "Einen Augenblick lang über dem Feuer entstand ein Leben, jung und verlockend, das reinste Räuberleben, kuhn und glücklich. Woynok dauerte dieses Leben, das rasch zu Ende ging mit dem stürmischen Lied und mit dem übermäßig geschürten Feuer" (pp. 155-56).

The theme of the story is the conflict between the individual who isolates himself voluntarily and the group which demands his adherence. Woynok tries to destroy the robbers to preserve his right to be alone. But in attempting to destroy the community, he strengthens it, for Gruschek sends the weakest members, whom he has been wanting to replace, to their deaths and saves the stronger ones. The choice of a theme is of biographical



importance at a time when Anna Seghers was struggling with her loyalty to the Party over the question of Socialist Realism, while she was isolated from the main stream of her national literature in exile. Isolation, both voluntary and non-voluntary, must have occupied her thoughts more at this time than ever before. This is proof enough that the story is not a working-out of a conception of the earlier "Grubetsch" period.

Woynok has, however, much in common with Grubetsch. He is a force for evil, but he is not evil; rather, he is amoral. He does not act out of hatred or anger, at least these emotions are not recorded. Like Grubetsch he has superhuman powers which enable him to do fantastic things. These exploits make him a legendary figure among the people in the area. He also possesses a mysterious charisma which makes his victims not resent him. The robbers he had tried to kill mourn his death.

The story has been largely ignored by Communist criticism, for, despite its collectivist message, it cannot be considered acceptable to Socialist Realists because of its phantastical nature.

g. "Sagen von Artemis";

Like "Die schönsten Sagen vom Räuber Woynok," "Sagen von Artemis" (1937) is plainly a myth and, as a result, is passed over by Communist critics. The time and place are not defined.

The action takes place in a rural tavern; more details are not available.

Several people are gathered one evening; one by one they come to speak of how they have seen the goddess Artemis; at the end of the story-telling, it becomes obvious to all that the young maid who has been listening to the tales is the goddess herself.

The theme of "Sagen von Artemis" is the same as that of "Grubetsch" — change through contact with the unusual. As in "Grubetsch," this change is usually of a negative nature. An old hunter tells how he accidentally killed a boy after both had seen the goddess and was then shunned by society. Another hunter left his fiancée and his farm after following the goddess into the woods. A watchman fell in love with her when she was washing clothes by a stream. He kept proposing to her until, unnoticed by him, his life had passed. He dies at her feet upon recognizing her. A one-eyed man tells how he met her in what were once his native woods. When he bemoaned the fact that the woods were gone, she angrily retorted that her power was not broken and that the trees would return:

Ich sagte: "Aber wenn eines Tages aller Wald weg ist . . ." Sie äffte mir nach: "Aller Wald, aller Wald. Davor fürchtet ihr euch, das denkt ihr euch aus, wenn ihr die Geduld verliert. Denn die Geduld verlieren, das heißt doch, sich heimlich fürchten, es . . ."

könnte einem auch abhanden kommen . . . Nimm ruhig das Schlimmste an, was du für das Schlimmste hältst. Nimm ruhig an, aller Wald sei weg, es gäbe auf Erden keinen Wald mehr. Was kann mir das schon ausmachen? Wenn es irgendwo einen Mann gibt, der den Kopf in die Hände stützt und nachdenkt, was das gewesen sein mag, Wald, wovon ihm irgendein alter Mann erzählt hat, früher hätte es das noch gegeben. Und er stützt den Kopf in die Hände, und er steckt die Finger in die Ohren — dann leuchte ich ebenso auf, dann ist meine Macht ebenso ungebrochen wie zu der Zeit, als die ganze Erde von einer Wildnis bedeckt war, die noch keine Axt berührt hatte." 34

This is a message of hope which has direct reference to Anna Seghers' situation in exile. The powers which appear to rule have only limited scope. Above them there are greater forces which will prevail.

Even though misfortune befalls those who have seen Artemis, they do not regret it. Like the old hunter, they feel that the experience has been worthwhile: "Da fragte ich mich, ob es nicht doch besser gewesen wäre, ich hätte sie nie gesehen. . . . Auf einmal, wie es so still um mich war und still auch in meinem Kopf, da wußte ich, daß ich um nichts in der Welt mit irgend jemand tauschen wollte" (p. 176). Here is a parallel with Grubetsch, whose victims also do not resent him, and with the robber Woynok.

"Sagen von Artemis" affirms once again what Anna Seghers has revealed about her belief in destiny, or the gods, if one will. They are not evil, although they may bring evil. Rather, they are amoral and they are eternal.

It is interesting to note that during the two years after Socialist Realism was proclaimed the basic method of Communist literature, Anna Seghers escaped into a world of mythology (with the brief exception of "Das Viereck"), and returned to the technique and theme of "Grubetsch." This reminds one of Heinrich Mann, who during this time sought refuge in the world of medieval France and wrote Die Jugend des Königs Henri Quatre (1935): Mann sought solace in another era when he could no longer bear to contemplate his own. So Anna Seghers fled from the present and its shocking events and took refuge in a mythological world. But the escape was not complete. During this time she was working on the novel Die Rettung, which brought her back to recent history, the class struggle and Socialist Realism.

#### h. Prozeß der Jeanne d'Arc zu Rouen 1431

Anna Seghers' only dramatic work was originally conceived of as a Hörspiel and first appeared in print in 1937 in Internationale Literatur: Deutsche Blätter (5, 1937). It was performed on the stage in the 1950's by the "Berliner Ensemble." The story of Joan of Arc is related from a Communist viewpoint. The battle between the English and the French is portrayed as a national war

of liberation. Joan's mysterious voices are given a Marxist explanation — they are voices from the people. Thus, Joan is transformed from a medieval mystic into a proletarian heroine, closely connected with the people, not God.

i. Die Rettung

Die Rettung was first published in Amsterdam in 1937 by Querido Verlag. In Der Kopflohn, Anna Seghers examined how the Nazis achieved power among the rural population of Germany. Die Rettung is thematically a pendant to that novel, describing the victory of Hitler's party among the urban proletariat. Individual destinies in the novel are therefore representative of larger, national destinies.

The setting is a coal mining town in the eastern part of Germany.<sup>35</sup> Characteristic of Anna Seghers' attention to technical detail was the journey she made to Borinage in Belgium to gather background material for the novel. The story begins with a mine disaster. Seven men are trapped in the bowels of the earth. After eight days they are rescued. Above ground, another ordeal awaits them. As in most of her works, Seghers here depicts the fate of little men, the insignificant ones of the earth. This time it is unemployment which is destroying them. Unemployment, which works like a disease to lame the minds and spirits of its victims, is one of the central themes of the novel. The other is the decision, the political decision which each German had

eventually to make during the tumultuous years in which the novel is set — 1929 to 1933.

The story centers around the kitchen of the Bentsch family, where neighbours come for conversation and advice. The Bentsch kitchen and the Findlinger Street in which the Bentschs live is the microcosm of working-class Germany. Occasionally, outside areas are drawn into the story by having various Findlinger Street inhabitants visit their friends and relatives in nearby towns, but the action is localized chiefly in this one small area.

The novel is divided into three parts of unequal length. The first, short part deals with the mine disaster; the second describes the lives of the Findlinger Street residents and especially illuminates the destiny of Katharina, Bentsch's stepdaughter; the third introduces a new main character, Lorenz.

In structure, Die Rettung is unlike any of Segher's previous works. It contains neither the Joycean stream-of-consciousness technique of "Auf dem Wege zur amerikanischen Botschaft," nor the Dos Passos - inspired parallel plots of Die Gefährten, nor the Novelle-like plots of Der Kopflohn, nor the photo-montage technique of Der Weg durch den Februar. With its traditional narrative form, it is the first in a series of longer novels (Das siebte Kreuz, Die Toten bleiben jung) which attempt to analyze contemporary German history. <sup>36</sup>

In a foreword to the novel written in 1947, the author says:

"Die Rettung stellt eine Epoche dar, die wir alle als 'Krise' in böser Erinnerung haben. Die Menschen sind Menschen der Krisenzeit, ihre Leiden sind Leiden der Krisenzeit, ihre Liebschaften sind Liebschaften der Krisenzeit."<sup>37</sup> The central figure in the story is the coal miner Bentsch, who has saved his fellow miners who were trapped underground by rationing their few supplies and boosting their morale. Bentsch becomes a hero after the rescue, but, like most of his fellow workers, he is soon thrown out of his job when the mine closes down. He settles down to a life of idle boredom. In the kitchen, Bentsch sits uselessly building a model of a cathedral out of matchsticks while his wife and step-daughter help supplement the unemployment insurance by working as charwomen. Doubtless the Depression was hard on all types and classes of people. But the men who had to sit idle while their wives managed to earn a little money as domestics must have been among those hardest hit, deprived as they were of their role as head of the house and therewith of their manhood.

Bentsch accepts his lot calmly. He does not seek any political solutions as do his upstairs neighbours, the Kobalts, who join the Nazi Party and have work and food provided for them. Nor does he follow his friend Janausch, who is a Communist. Bentsch is an unlikely hero for a novel written by a Communist. Indeed, Marxist critics deny he is a hero.<sup>38</sup> A convinced Christian, although a rare church-goer, he is more involved in his own life than in politics. He feels that by being moral and

leading a good family life he is doing his part. Bentsch is in reality more bourgeois than proletarian.

The humiliation and boredom which are the results of unemployment gradually change Bentsch. He develops an affection for a young worker, Lorenz, who has chosen the heroic miner as his model. After losing his job, Lorenz comes to live with the Bentschs. Soon he realizes that his "hero" can no longer teach him anything, but is himself in need of instruction. Lorenz falls under the influence of the Communist Albert and goes to live with him at the Jahauschs'. He begins to treat Bentsch with contempt but the older man continues to be fascinated by some magical pull the youth exerts on him. The Bentsch-Lorenz relationship is a variation of the teacher-student motif which recurs in so many of Seghers' works. As with Hull and Andreas, Lorenz soon outstrips his mentor. The motif is expanded as Lorenz then becomes a teacher of Bentsch's son Franz.

Bentsch has taken little or no interest in politics throughout his life. He has not even voted in the Reichstag elections. Only after the Nazis have taken over does he make a decision. His son Franz has hidden some Communist handbills which the Nazis were looking for. Bentsch and the boy distribute them one night. This act forces Bentsch to go underground, we are led to believe into emigration. This late decision constitutes Bentsch's second rescue. Again he has risen from the darkness. "Sein Leben ging nicht stracks zu Ende, sondern fing fast von vorn an" (p. 501).



This sentence, reminiscent of that which was said of Willaschek in Der Weg durch den Februar ("Nichts hatte aufgehört für ihn, alles fing heute abend erst für ihn an")<sup>39</sup>, indicates that Bentsch has passed into the Seghers pantheon of Communist heroes. The ground has been prepared for Bentsch's conversion. His upright, moral character and his affection for Lorenz both would seem to lead him to make the "right" decision when the chips are down. Yet his action and the note of optimism which accompanies it seem out of place in the context of the novel. It is inconceivable that Bentsch should abandon his family to join a battle which he has heretofore ignored. It is equally inconceivable that Ursula Bentsch, who has fought so bitterly to keep her family together, to the extent of turning out her daughter by her first marriage, should accept this decision of her husband without a murmur. Further, the tone of optimism at the end which is engendered by the positive action of the Bentsch children, who have up to now been quite unremarkable, does not fit the quiet, resigned pessimism of the rest of the novel.

In her foreword to the Russian edition of Die Rettung (1939), Anna Seghers wrote: "In diesem Buch werden hauptsächlich Menschen mit mangelndem Bewußtsein gezeichnet, Menschen, die noch nicht von unserer Weltanschauung, der Welt unserer Ideen durchdrungen oder davon kaum berührt sind . . . In ihnen stecken die besten Kräfte des Volkes, aber sie sind nicht geweckt, sie werden nicht genutzt."<sup>40</sup> Such a person is Katharina, Bentsch's stepdaughter.

She reminds one of Anna in "Grubetsch," the young girl longing for something to happen in her life. Katharina is so self-effacing that her presence is hardly noted by others. She is determined to earn her own living in these hard times and is proud of her three jobs as a cleaning lady. There are signs that Katharina would have made the "right" political decision, for she is strongly attracted to the two young people who come to her Aunt Emilie's house selling Communist literature. But Katharina has no chance to develop her political ideas, for she dies tragically of the after-effects of an abortion. Her final words indicate her vain search for something to hold onto: "Liebster, den ich gar nicht sehr liebe und der mich gar nicht sehr liebt. Erstgebürner Sohn, der nie geboren wurde. Gott im Himmel, den es gar nicht gibt. Nehmt euch an meiner lieben Tochter Katharina" (p. 243).

The third main figure in the novel, Lorenz, is also in search of a meaning to life. He finds his answer in the Communist Party. Bentsch can by no means be considered a positive hero in the Marxist sense. Can Lorenz be? His doubts about Communist doctrine do not detract from his ability to be a good Communist. Bentsch points this out: "Du wirst nie davon abgehen, dein ganzes Leben nicht. Sogar wenn du selbst meinst, daß du davon abgegangen bist. Ich weiß das besser als du, sogar, wenn du meinst, daß du genug davon hast, sogar, wenn du mal drauf fluchst. Du wirst immer dabei bleiben. Du bist so" (p. 470). Lorenz also acts

rashly and thus endangers his own safety and his usefulness to the Party. This too is presented in an understanding light through the eyes of an older Party official:

Er begriff, daß dieser Bursche besessen war und im Begriff, in etwas Sinploses hineinzurennen. Selbst wenn er jetzt noch einmal auf ihn einredete, selbst wenn die Bilder von der Wand herunter geredet hätten, sie hätten diesen Burschen von seinem Wahnsinn nicht abbringen können. Dieser Wahnsinn war eben zu sehr vermischt mit dem Sinnvollsten, was es überhaupt gab. Und er kam aus einem Irrtum, dem die Besten unterliegen; dem Irrtum über die Zeit. Sie können den wahren Abstand nicht ertragen. Sie können und können es nicht fassen, daß der klare, deutliche, leuchtende Gipfel noch immer so weit weg ist, daß man sich die Füße noch blutig laufen, daß man sich noch verirren, daß man noch abstürzen oder erfrieren kann.  
(pp. 462-63)

Lorenz' return to Bentsch's while he is running from the police could be compared to Andreas' suicidal return to St. Barbara and to Johann Schulz' fatal going back to his relatives, for the police are sure to look for him at Bentsch's, where he had lived for a year. Yet whereas Andreas and Johann had no reason for their actions, Lorenz came back to Bentsch to square things with his old friend. He is thus not motivated by a self-destruct-

tion wish nor is he guided by a fatal destiny as are the other two. 41

Lorenz is at times hardly a likable fellow. He is ungrateful to Bentsch. He disrupts the family, taking what he wants and then leaving without so much as a thank you. Yet he is the closest to a positive hero of all the characters in the novel. He is both a good Party worker and a good teacher as is evidenced by his influence on Franz and on Bentsch.

Except for Lorenz, the other Communists in the novel are minor characters (one cannot consider Bentsch a Communist, since the moment of his conversion comes only at the end). Albert, the nephew of Janusch, is a shadowy figure. His only clearly delineated characteristic is his intolerance of other views. Janusch is a more interesting person. He has suffered terrible tragedy when a homeless man he and his wife were sheltering killed himself and his wife and the two Janusch boys by turning on the gas. Janusch's deep belief in solidarity is shown by his comment after the disaster: "Man mußte ihn doch wieder aufnehmen" (p. 158). Janusch's role is too small, however, to consider him a positive hero.

More attention is paid to the men who sit on the fence, refusing to join any side. Chief among these figures is Sadovski, Katharina's lover, who throughout the novel seems interested only in girls. He is one of those Anna Seghers referred to in her 1939

foreword to the Russian edition of the novel. In him lie the best powers of the people, but they are unawakened. After the Nazis have taken over, Sadovski refuses to have anything to do with their sympathizers, but he does not progress beyond this point.

This portrait of the German working class would not be complete without representatives of those who joined the Nazis, whether for a job (the Kobalts), for food and free beer (Mahlzahn), out of youthful impetuosity (Andreas), or simply in the hope that something would finally happen. Katharina's Aunt Emilie voices the reasons and the rationalizations of the latter group:

Ich bin wie erlöst. . . . Ich meine, man spürt das doch jetzt, daß es wieder aufwärts geht. Einer muß es doch mal schaffen. Warum soll der's nicht schaffen? . . . da ist mir dann in dem großen Saal bei all der Musik richtig ein Licht aufgegangen. Gleich auf dem Heimweg hab ich dem Paul gesagt, es muß doch was dran sein. Wenn die Trommeln trommeln, wird's einem kalt auf dem Rücken. Wir passen da eben besser hin. Und Paul war doch im Krieg und hat das Eiserne Erster, und so eine Blonde wie meine Lisbeth, das paßt doch alles zusammen" (pp. 479-80).

Die Rettung is Anna Seghers' first large work. She has been able to follow the development of the characters in greater detail than in previous, shorter works. This attention to detail

has given rise to criticism from Communist reviewers, to whom psychological observation is an anathema. Klara Blum finds many of the characters memorable, but adds:

Es ist ihre Schwache, daß sie diese ihre herrlichen von Wahrheit und Eigenart strotzenden Schöpfungen dem Leser so zerfasert, in unzählige psychologische Einzelheiten zergliedert vorführt, daß er vor lauter Bäumen den Wald nicht mehr sieht und durch all die Mosaiksteinchen, Fasern, Haare — oft gespaltenen Haare — hindurch nur mühselig und mit schmerzenden Augen die Umrisse großer und plastischer Persönlichkeiten erkennt.<sup>42</sup>

The weakness of the book to the Communist critics is the book's strength in Western eyes. The novel deals with the effects of unemployment on the human spirit. The change which this produces is a gradual one and must be shown in its slow development. We are shown the once active and respected Bentsch sitting in his kitchen, making a cathedral out of matchsticks — a sight which his daughter Marie cannot bear to look upon — growing more phlegmatic each day, becoming a burden to where he had been a provider for his family. We see this once proud man travelling to another town to become a godfather to a child whose parents he does not know and who do not welcome him, simply for a hot meal. We see him meekly accepting scornful treatment at the unemployment insurance office. Finally, we see him in his despair turning to action he could have never before contemplated. All this is

described in a tone of quiet resignation which flows into pessimism. The language is Seghers' usual clipped, sparse prose.

The parts of the novel which have to do with Communism, however, break the unity of the novel. The perspective of optimism is ill-becoming as well as historically unwarranted. But the Communist perspective does not dominate the book. What does dominate is the penetrating study of what unemployment does to the human being and how the Depression drove German workers to seek radical and often barbaric solutions to remedy their state.

Die Rettung is not a work of Socialist Realism. For that, the role of the Communists and the Communist perspective are too limited. Instead of describing the battle of the working class against Fascism, Anna Seghers unfolds a perceptive psychological analysis of poor people caught in the grip of the Depression. She thus depicted reality as she found it and not the wished-for reality of the Communist Party. In the words of the West German critic Sabine Brandt: "Der Autorin war hier zugestoßen, was Friedrich Engels den 'Triumph des Realismus' nannte."<sup>43</sup>

Politically, Die Rettung contains another serious failing. At the Seventeenth Party Conference of the Communist Party in 1934, Stalin had blamed the victory of Fascism in Germany on the treachery of the Social Democratic Party and the weakness of the bourgeoisie. Anna Seghers does not point to either of these facts in her analysis of the situation.

Dieser Doppelcharakter kommt im Roman "Die Rettung" nicht voll zum Ausdruck: Der Sieg des Faschismus in Deutschland spiegelt sich vor allem als "Zeichen der Schwäche der Arbeiterklasse," weniger aber als "Zeichen der Schwäche der Bourgeoisie," als Zeichen ihrer Auswecliosiokeit auf den "Boden einer friedlichen Außenpolitik," die sie zwingt, "zur Politik des Krieges zu greifen." Ebenowenig tritt der Sieg des Faschismus in Deutschland hervor als "Ergebnis der Verratereien an der Arbeiterklasse seitens der Sozialdemokratie," die "dem Faschismus den Weg ebnete."<sup>44</sup>

On the other side of the balance sheet, it must be noted that here again no mention is made of the Communist-Nazi pact which inhibited the Communists in working against the Nazis and contributed greatly to the much talked-about split in the working class which was held partially responsible for Hitler's easy takeover.

In Die Rettung one can see the conflict between Seghers the writer and Seghers the Party member. Sabine Brandt contends that the novel demonstrates ". . . sozusagen in nuce Glanz und Elend ihres Künstlertums."<sup>45</sup> She has not been able to write a made-to-order account of the years from 1929 to 1933 which would have been acceptable to the Party. Yet into a novel which convincingly describes the destruction of the human soul wrought by unemployment she injects the forced optimism of a Communist perspective



which breaks the unity of the novel. This conflict between artist and believer is to flare up again one year later in the exchange of letters with Georg Lukács, the famous Seghers-Lukács debate on Socialist Realism.

j. Summary

An examination of Anna Seghers' works during her first four years of exile indicates that she busied herself at this time with three types of literary endeavours. First there are the works which deal with the Nazis' rise to power in Germany (Der Kopflohn, Die Rettung); second there is the historical reconstruction of the events in Austria in 1934 ("Der letzte Weg des Koloman Wallisch," Der Weg durch den Februar); third there is the escape into mythology ("Die schönsten Sagen vom Rauber Woyhok," "Sagen von Artemis").

Der Kopflohn (1933), the only work in this period which was written before the definition of Socialist Realism, does not anticipate many of the criteria which were soon to be demanded of Communist writers. The Communists are minor figures, far less interesting than the "villains," the hero is not a "positive hero," the tendency, although communistic, is mildly stated, the optimism at the end of the novel is forced and barely peeks through the clouds of melancholy which overshadow the entire work.

"Der letzte Weg des Koloman Wallisch" (1934) is a report about a historical figure. It shows no influence of Socialist

Realism, except for the slight Communist tendency which has been present in most of Seghers' works since her entry into the Party.

Der Weg durch den Februar (1934) deals with the Austrian uprising of 1934 in a fictional manner. Again, the role of the Communists is a minor one and there are stylistic innovations which are unacceptable to Socialist Realism. For reasons before mentioned, it is quite probable that the proclamation of Socialist Realism had little effect on either Austrian-inspired work.

The works between 1934 and 1937 (i.e., between Der Weg durch den Februar and Die Rettung) show a flight from reality on the part of the writer. During this time she had occasion to contemplate the implications which the decree of Shdanov held for her work but she seemed to choose to ignore them. Except for the anecdote "Das Viereck" (1935), no work conforming to the criteria of Socialist Realism was produced during this time. Instead, she escaped into the world of mythology with the stories "Die schönsten Sagen vom Räuber woynok" (1935) and "Sagen von Artemis" (1937). Despite the message of solidarity contained in the first, both stories are unacceptable to Socialist Realists because of their fantastical nature.

Die Rettung (1937) clearly shows the conflict between the artist and the Party member, as Anna Seghers attempts to give a

pessimistic story an optimistic ending by means of a miraculous conversion. Yet the overriding tone of the work remains melancholy, a reflection of the writer's low spirits during these dark days.

Die Rettung conforms less to the rules of Socialist Realism than does Die Gefährten, which was written before these guidelines were set down. The earlier work had only one serious failing from the Marxist viewpoint — its experimental form. Die Rettung does not indulge in form experiments but strays from orthodoxy in other respects. Chief among these is its psychological study of the characters. Anna Seghers has often mentioned her admiration of Dostoevsky. The psychological perception manifested in Die Rettung is doubtless due in part to the influence of the great Russian. Here is another area of difference with the literary bureaucrats who downgraded the work of this genius as decadent and nihilist.

One must draw the conclusion that the proclamation of the aesthetic doctrine of Socialist Realism disturbed Anna Seghers, who in some of her works had come close to its realization. At first, rather than give up her artistic integrity, she chose to ignore it. When she finally forced herself to come to grips with it, the result was an uncomfortable mixture of artistic creation and bureaucratic ordinance, which indicates the spiritual malaise the writer was experiencing.

#### 4. THE EMIGRATION 1938-46

##### a. The Debate with Georg Lukács

The Nazi victory of 1933 was a shattering experience for Communists and prompted much soul-searching in an attempt to discover where it had all gone wrong. This introspection was also indulged in by Communist writers and critics. The discussion about literary methodology which began in 1933 and which reached its high point in the 1938-39 exchange of letters between Georg Lukács and Anna Seghers can be considered as resulting in great part from this sobering experience.

The theme of the Seghers-Lukács discussion is ostensibly Lukács' essay "Es geht um den Realismus," published in 1938, but the subject matter is really the 1934 Soviet Writers Congress and the 1935 Brussels meeting of the Communist Party of Germany. The Soviet Writers Congress had heard the proclamation of Socialist Realism as the official Party method of literature. In the ensuing debate, writers such as Proust, Joyce and Dos Passos were damned as bourgeois decadents, and similar experiments in form were forbidden. In 1935, the KPD, meeting in Brussels, had adopted the Volksfront announced earlier that year by Stalin. Georg Lukács undertook to adapt the new political line in his literary criticism. He decided that even the left-wing writers had grown too far apart from the people and condemned Expressionism and the avantgardism of writers like Joyce and Dos Passos, while

praising the realism of Thomas and Heinrich Mann, Gorky and Romain Rolland. He advanced the thesis that realism was the most useful method for writers at this time:

Zu Joyce oder zu anderen Vertretern der "avantgardistischen" Literatur führt nur eine ganz enge Pforte; man muß einen bestimmten "Kniff heraushaben," um überhaupt zu verstehen, was dort gespielt wird. Und während bei dem großen Realismus der leichtere Zugang auch eine reiche menschliche Ausbeute ergibt, können die breiten Massen des Volkes aus der "avantgardistischen" Literatur nichts lernen. Gerade weil in dieser Literatur die Wirklichkeit, das Leben fehlt, zwingt sie (politisch gesprochen: sektiererisch) ihren Lesern eine enge und subjektivistische Auffassung vom Leben auf, während der Realismus durch seine gestaltete Fülle Antwort auf die vom Leser selbst gestellten Fragen gibt — Antworten des Lebens auf Fragen, die das Leben selbst gestellt hat! Das schwer erkämpfbare Verständnis für die Kunst der "Avantgarde" gibt dagegen so subjektivistische, verzerrte und entstellte Stimmungsnachklänge der Wirklichkeit, daß der Mann aus dem Volke sie niemals in die Sprache seiner eigenen Lebenserfahrungen zurückübersetzen kann.<sup>1</sup>

Anna Seghers agreed in theory with Socialist Realism — indeed she had adopted important aspects of it, especially Communist

tendency, before its formulation. But she was opposed to the forbidding of experimentation by writers and the condemnation of Joyce and Dos Passos who had influenced her own work. In a letter dated 28 June 1938, she stated her objections to Lukács' ideas. She complained that too many Communist writers who were in full possession of the method of realism had succeeded in giving lifeless portraits of life ("Sie hatten es fertigebracht, die Welt ganz zu entzaubern" <sup>2</sup>). She maintained that experiments were necessary, especially in times of upheaval: "Solche Krisenzeiten sind in der Kunstgeschichte von jeher gekennzeichnet durch jahe Stilbrüche, durch Experimente, durch sonderbare Mischformen . . ." <sup>3</sup>. She argued: "Selbst der realistischste Künstler hat gewissermaßen seine 'abstrakten Perioden,' und er muß sie haben." <sup>4</sup> Drawing on her vast knowledge of art history, she gave numerous examples to back up her contention.

She defended Dos Passos, saying he had enriched the literature of his time with new material: "Um Fetzen von Stoffen? Gut, aber immerhin solche Fetzen wie die Geschichte von dem arbeitslosen Liebespaar, das, von den Docks vertrieben, von der Wirtin gekündigt, in New York keinen Platz findet, um sich niederzulegen. Oder das Begräbnis des Unbekannten Soldaten, das ja für sich eine Dichtung ist." <sup>5</sup>

She pointed out that Romain Rolland and Thomas Mann grew up in different times than the writers Lukács was criticizing and added: ". . . auch wenn Shakespeare, Homer, Cervantes aufer-

ständen, — sie könnten den neuen Schriftstellern die Unmittelbarkeit ihrer Grunderlebnisse nicht schenken. Sie könnten ihnen höchstens zeigen, durch welche Methode aus ihren Grunderlebnissen ewige Kunstwerke geworden sind." <sup>6</sup>

In a letter dated February 1939, she rejected Lukács' demand that the artist must depict the whole reality, the totality of society:

Was hatten wir denn für "Spiegel" im Krieg und kurz nach dem Krieg, als wir aufwuchsen? Sie spiegelten entweder eine vergangene Welt fremder Grunderlebnisse, denen wir damals unter der Wucht unserer eigenen nicht gerecht werden konnten, oder sie spiegelten die Gesellschaft verzerrt, als Vexierspiegel. (Ich nehme das Wort auf, obwohl die Kunst ja nicht "spiegelt.") Wir hatten keinen deutschen Barbusse, keinen deutschen Romain Rolland. Wir können uns heute ungefähr erklären, warum nicht. Uns waren aber Splitterchen, die irgendeinen Bruchteil unserer eigenen Welt aufrichtig spiegelten, lieber als alle Scheinspiegel. Ich nehme wieder das Wort Splitter, obwohl es etwas Zerbrochenes ausdrückt, was aber gar nicht stimmt. Es ist ja nicht die Rede davon, daß da etwas Neues zu Bruch ging, es fing ja erst etwas an, was auch jetzt noch nicht abgeschlossen ist: die Gestaltung der neuen Grunderlebnisse, die Kunst unserer Epoche. <sup>7</sup>

Lukács is a strange opponent for Anna Seghers in this debate. He himself had often departed from the Party line. Here in this discussion he defended it strictly. He had become more orthodox in his ideas and had even repudiated his own "reactionary" works, because he felt that a life-and-death struggle with Fascism was approaching and there was no room for individualism at such a time. Lukács' opinions were never identical with Stalin's policies on art. Lukács wished for an integrated universal picture of the world in the tradition of the Humanists, while Stalin cynically used art to further his own political aims. What Socialist Realism later produced disillusioned Lukács completely.

Another ironical aspect of this discussion is that Anna Seghers stood closer to Socialist Realism than did Lukács, as Jürgen Rühle points out: "Denn der Seghersche Avantgardismus war wie der Sozialistische Realismus kommunistische Tendenzliteratur, trotz der kritischen Vorbehalte auf beiden Seiten verband sie das gemeinsame Gestaltungsprinzip, die Parteilichkeit." <sup>8</sup>

The point of view of both participants is understandable. Lukács is worried that the anti-Fascist forces may not present a united front when the time for battle comes. Furthermore, he is nostalgic for the integrated world of the nineteenth century and unaware that it cannot be reproduced in the fragmented twentieth century. Seghers, for her part, is concerned with what these new restrictions will do to art and artists. As a writer, she had



always felt close to the non-classical tradition of Dostoevsky, Kleist, Büchner, and the Expressionists. Up to Die Rettung, all her major works had been concerned with form experiments. She intervened here both for the freedom of the artist and more specifically for her own personal creative freedom.

b. Das siebte Kreuz

German literature of the Emigration tended to deal with the following themes: the underground battle in Germany, the Spanish Civil War and the origins of Nazism. One of the outstanding books in the first category is Anna Seghers' Das siebte Kreuz.

First published in the United States in English in 1942, it was an overnight success, selling 600,000 copies in that country alone. America paid the novel its highest tribute — it was filmed in Hollywood under the direction of Fred Zinnemann with Spencer Tracy in the leading role. But the popularity of this, Anna Seghers' fifth novel, did not remain limited to the English-speaking world. After the war, Germans began to read it avidly and in 1947 it was awarded the Buchner Prize of the city of Darmstadt. It is one of the most widely read novels in the German Democratic Republic and is a part of the school curriculum. The reasons for the international appeal of this work will be discussed later in this study.

Anna Seghers worked on the novel from 1937 to 1940. During these years, her life was affected both directly and indirectly

by world events. She was living in exile in France; the Civil War in Spain ended in the defeat of the Republic; the Stalinist purges reached their high point in the Moscow trials which shook the Communist world and led to the disappearance of Russian writers such as Isaak Babel and Boris Pilniak; Hitler took Austria and Czechoslovakia; in August 1939 Communists, and, one might assume, especially the members of the KPD, were stunned by the Hitler-Stalin pact; Poland fell to the Germans; France interned German émigrés, among them Anna Seghers' husband. Just after the novel was completed, the author had to flee Paris with her two children before the advancing German armies, whereby the manuscript was temporarily lost.<sup>9</sup>

All the while, anti-Fascist writers were carrying on the battle against Hitler in the pages of reviews like Aufbau, Deutsche Blätter, Internationale Literatur, Maß und Wert, Neue deutsche Blätter, Das Neue Tage-Buch, Die Neue Weltbühne, Die Sammlung and Das Wort. It was in the Moscow-based periodicals Das Wort and Internationale Literatur that the first chapters of Das siebte Kreuz saw the light of day.

The plot of the novel can be briefly summarized as follows: Seven prisoners break out of the concentration camp Westhofen; seven plane trees are left standing in the camp to which the recaptured men will be secured as an example to the other inmates. Within four days, six of the men have either been recaptured or are dead, but the seventh, Georg Heisler, remains at large; he is

able to leave Germany because several people are willing to risk their lives to aid him. The empty seventh cross is a sign that the police state is not omnipotent.

Anna Seghers has allowed herself a play with number symbolism. The novel is divided into seven chapters, which are further subdivided as the scene shifts from one locale to another. The time span covered is seven days. It is doubtful, however, that the choice of the number seven, so significant to mystics, contains any hermetic message.

The form is that of the Rahmenerzählung. In the first chapter an anonymous narrator, one of the prisoners at Westhofen, describes the scene in the camp after the former Camp Commander Fahrenberg has been replaced as a result of the escape. The seven trees are taken down and used for firewood. In the last part of the seventh chapter, scarcely a page long, the narrator returns to the same scene in the barracks and reveals what Georg's escape has meant to the inmates. Throughout the rest of the novel, a third-person, omniscient narrative tone prevails.

The novel concerns itself primarily with the fate of Georg Heisler. Of the other escapees, only the Communist Wallau warrants attention. Fullgrabe and Aldinger appear briefly. Belloni, Beutler and Pelzer are merely mentioned.

Heisler's flight from Westhofen enables quick changes of scene characteristic of Seghers' writing. Scene piles upon scene

in a photomontage technique reminiscent of Der Weg durch den Februar. Parallel to the fast-moving exterior action is the psychological plot development, which is revealed through the use of inner monologue. Thus the novel has some similarity to "Auf dem Wege zur amerikanischen Botschaft," although the stream-of-consciousness technique does not dominate the exterior action as it did in that early story. Indeed, its use often accelerates the pace of the unfolding tale. Verbs fall away, sentences are pared down to the utmost brevity as the action quickens:

Georg lag draußen unter dem graublauen Himmel in einer Ackerfurche. Ungefähr hundert Meter von ihm entfernt lief die Chaussee nach Oppenheim. Nur jetzt nicht steckenbleiben. Zu Abend in der Stadt sein. Stadt, das war die Hohle mit ihren Schlupfwinkeln, ihren gewundenen Gängen. Sein ursprünglicher Plan. Bis zur Nacht nach Frankfurt, gleich hinaus zu Leni. Einmal bei Leni, war ihm das Weitere einfach erschienen. Anderthalb Stunden Eisenbahnfahrt zwischen Sterben und Leben mußten überwindbar sein. War nicht bis jetzt alles glatt gegangen? Wunderglatt, planmäßig? Nur war er ungefähr drei Stunden zu spät dran.<sup>10</sup>

The locale is Anna Seghers' home, the Rhine-Main area in and around the city of Höchst. This was also the setting of Der Kopflohn and several names mentioned recall that novel.<sup>11</sup> The golden autumn atmosphere of her native countryside pervades the

novel. Paul Rilla calls Das siebte Kreuz a "Heimatroman" because of the loving manner in which the surroundings are described.<sup>12</sup> Several times the narrative pauses to reflect upon the Rhine-Main landscape:

Das ist das Land, von dem es heißt, daß die Geschosse des letzten Krieges jeweils die Geschosse des vorletzten aus der Erde wühlten. Diese Hügel sind keine Gebirge. Jedes Kind kann sonntags zu Kaffee und Streuselkuchen seine Verwandten im jenseitigen Dorf besuchen und zum Abendlaute zurück sein. Doch diese Hügelkette war der lange Rand der Welt — jenseits begann die Wildnis, das unbekannte Land. Diese Hügel entlang zogen die Römer den Limes. So viele Geschlechter waren verblutet, seitdem sie die Sonnenaltäre der Kelten hier auf den Hügeln verbrannt hatten, so viele Kämpfe durchgekämpft, daß sie jetzt glauben konnten, die besitzbare Welt sei endgültig umzaunt und gerodet. Aber nicht den Adler und nicht das Kreuz hat die Stadt dort unten im Wappen behalten, sondern das keltische Sonnenrad, die Sonne, die Marnets Äpfel reift. Hier lagerten die Legionen und mit ihnen alle Götter der Welt, städtische und bäuerliche, Judengott und Christengott, Astarte und Isis, Mithras und Orpheus. . . . Bei der Mündung liegt Mainz. Das stellte dem Heiligen Römischen Reich die Erzkanzler.

Und das flache Land zwischen Mainz und Worms, das ganze Ufer war bedeckt von den Zeltlagern der Kaiserwahlen. Jedes Jahr geschah etwas Neues in diesem Land und jedes Jahr dasselbe: daß die Äpfel reiften und der Wein bei einer sanften vernebelten Sonne und den Mühen und Sorgen der Menschen. Denn den Wein brauchten alle für alles, die Bischöfe und Grundbesitzer, um ihren Kaiser zu wählen, die Mönche und Ritter, um ihre Orden zu gründen, die Kreuzfahrer, um Juden zu verbrennen, vierhundert auf einmal auf dem Platz in Mainz, der noch heute der Brand heißt, die geistlichen und weltlichen Kurfürsten, als das Heilige Reich zerfallen war, aber die Feste der Großen lustig wie nie wurden, die Jakobiner, um die Freiheitsbaume zu umtanzen. (pp. 12-13)

During the bitter years of exile Anna Seghers, like Thomas and Heinrich Mann and Lion Furchtwanger, turned, albeit only at brief intervals, to the world of history, of mythology. This picture of the land which had endured thousands of years while different armies fought over it, while different potentates ruled it, is at once humanistic and optimistic. This historical perspective indicates that "this too will pass."

The flight from the camp is a vehicle by means of which the main character is brought into contact with many elements of German society, thus providing a panorama of life during the early

years of Hitler's regime. Ordinary people are shown going about their daily tasks. Scenes such as the argument of the two women over whether it is best to iron clothes wet or dry (p. 38) represent realism of the highest order and were recognized as such by Communist critics, despite the fact that they did not help to show Hitler's Germany as a hell-hole, but rather as a place where life went on as usual.<sup>13</sup> Realistic description of surroundings has always been Anna Seghers' forte. Marcel Reich-Ranicki remarks: "Wie in ihren ersten Erzählungen überzeugt Anna Seghers auch in den Romanen der dreißiger Jahre vor allem dann, wenn sie Sinneswahrnehmungen wiedergibt und mit Streiflichtern physische Reaktionen erkennbar macht, wenn sie Details, die in der Regel nebensächlich scheinen, zu realistischen Milieuschilderungen zusammenfügt und die Atmosphäre vergegenwärtigt."<sup>14</sup> Perhaps nowhere has she been more successful in this than in Das siebte Kreuz. This book seems written more in sadness than in anger and as such, it is more truthful about life in Hitler's Germany than the author's political convictions might have otherwise allowed her to be.

The plot moves on three different and at times interconnecting levels. There is first the concentration camp at Westhofen, out of which the men have escaped and where news of their capture is anxiously awaited. To this plot level belong the figures of Fahrenberg, Bunsen, Zillich, whom we already know from Der Kopflohn, the recaptured prisoners, as well as the nameless inmates for whose benefit the spectacle of the seven crosses is

being put on. The second plot level has no single geographical location. It is comprised of the figures whom Georg encounters on his escape route: Dr. Lowenstein, a Jewish physician who treats his wounded hand, Madame Marelli who outfits him; Liesel and Paul Röder and their aunt; Fiedler, Paul's colleague; Dr. and Mrs. Kreß. In addition, there are numerous other people whom Georg briefly encounters. The third level concerns those who never meet Georg, but who, at the news of his escape, are moved to try to help him: his friend Franz Marnet, the latter's friend Hermann and the girl whom both Franz and Georg loved and whom Georg married, Elli. The second plot level has interaction with the third through Hermann who arranges Georg's escape with Fiedler. There is a fourth nucleus of figures which could be considered an offshoot of the Franz Marnet plot — the shepherd, Ernst, and those who interact with him. However, so much attention is focused on this group, specifically on Ernst, that this plot becomes independent. Since it has nothing to do with Georg's escape, it can only be considered as providing background colour. Consequently, it disturbs the unity of the story.

Marxist criticism tends to regard the novel as a glorification of proletarian solidarity:

In der Tat ist der Inhalt des Buches so beschaffen, daß er sich eng an die Thematik der Gefährten anschließt. Was sich auf den vielen Schauplätzen abspielte, hat sich auf dem deutschen Schauplatz



zusammengezogen. . . . Aber zugleich wird das Thema höhergeführt. Nicht nur ist die proletarische Solidarität die Ursache, daß die Flucht gelingt, sondern die gelungene Flucht ist auch die Ursache, daß die proletarische Solidarität sich etwas zutraut.<sup>15</sup>

Georg is helped by workers and Communists — Hermann, Fiedler, Franz Marnet. (In Marnet's case the motive of friendship cannot be overlooked.) Others are simply anti-Fascist (the Jewish doctor), or politically neutral (Madame Marelli, Elli). One man who risks a great deal, Dr. Kreß, is by no means a proletarian. Marxist critics stress proletarian solidarity with regard to Paul Röder: "Besonders ausführlich und mit größter Eindringlichkeit schildert Anna Seghers das Wiedererwachen der proletarischen Solidarität an dem einfachen Arbeiter Paul Röder . . ." <sup>16</sup> However, it is clear that Paul acts out of friendship. He feels a sense of belonging with those of his fellow workers who also help Georg, but this is a result of his actions and not the moving force behind them.

Western critics are likely to concur with Marcel Reich-Ranicki that the people who help Georg are acting out of conscience. "Der durch das siebente Kreuz im Konzentrationslager Westhofen symbolisierte Widerstand gegen den Terrorstaat hat also nicht eigentlich politische Motive, er entspringt vielmehr moralischen Kategorien." <sup>17</sup> Reich-Ranicki believes that it is personal

integrity and not a pat political solution which Anna Seghers is holding up as an ideal in this work and he quotes the last sentence of the novel as its motto: "Wir fühlten alle, wie tief und furchtbar die äußeren Mächte in den Menschen hineingreifen können, bis in sein Innerstes, aber wir fühlten auch, daß es im Innersten etwas gab, was unangreifbar war und unverletzbar." 18

This writer sees both conscience and political conviction as motivating those who help Georg Heisler. Proletarian solidarity doubtless is the moving force behind the actions of Hermann and Fiedler. In the case of Greta Fiedler, aiding in Georg's escape has renewed her fighting spirit and her hope:

Die alte Dünkelheit, in deren Schutz man Plakate geklebt hatte, Parolen auf Bretterwände gemalt, Handzettel unter die Türen gesteckt. Wenn sie jemand heute mittag gefragt hatte nach dem Stand der Arbeit, nach der Aussicht des Kampfes, sie hätte genau wie ihr Mann mit den Achseln gezuckt. Jetzt hatte sie nichts Besonderes erlebt als einen nutzlosen Gang zu einer weinenden Frau, aber sie war wieder eingestellt in ihr altes Leben, und auf einmal war alles möglich, und zwar rasch, weil es plötzlich auch an ihr lag, alles zu beschleunigen. (pp. 273)

On the other hand, it is clear that many who help Georg are motivated by humanitarian reasons.

The tendency of the book is therefore a mixture of humanism,

anti-Fascism and Communism. This is not surprising when one considers that for Anna Seghers, humanity had always been synonymous with taking the part of the oppressed and the suffering, and this, since her entry into the Party, had been identical with Communism. But the Communist Party of the 1930's no longer accepted simple calls for humanity from its writers. Rather it required a complete socialist world-picture in the form of Socialist Realism. Anna Seghers had protested against this in her letters to Georg Lukács, but Das siebte Kreuz shows she was trying to make a compromise with the Party.

The character of Georg reveals further the dichotomy of the author's relationship to Socialist Realism at this time. "In Georg Heisler gestaltet Anna Seghers einen erfahrenen, ideologisch gefestigten, mit den Methoden des Feindes vertrauten un-  
beugsamen Kämpfer, dem alle Versuche der Faschisten, ihn zum Umfallen zu bringen, nichts anhaben können."<sup>19</sup> Thus is Georg viewed by an East German critic. Most Marxist critics consider Georg Heisler a positive hero, fitting the description set down by Socialist Realism. This judgement by Fritz Böttger is representative of that segment of opinion:

Heisler ist ein ideologisch klarer und gefestigter Kommunist, einer, der durch seine Charakterstärke ein Beispiel gibt und andere mitreißt. Von einem entlassenen Häftling, der ihn im Lager kennengelernt hat, wird er folgendermaßen gekennzeichnet: "An ihm haben

die uns zeigen wollen, wie man einen baumstarken Kerl eins, zwei, drei umlegt. Aber das Gegenteil passierte. Sie haben uns nur gezeigt, daß es nichts gibt, was seinesgleichen umlegt." 20

Heisler is doubtless a personality of great strength who can withstand terrible punishment; through this, as well as through his successful flight, he encouraged his fellow inmates. But in what proportion is this due to his ideological persuasion? The fact is well established that Georg was and still is a devoted Communist, although the word is never used in connection with him. But this seems merely incidental to the situation in which he finds himself. He is driven by the instinct to survive and this alone is shown to motivate his actions.

Georg is indeed an unlikely hero, socialist or otherwise. He has been a bit of a rough diamond in his youth. He stole his best friend's girl, then abandoned her and their child. Although he is attracted to and professes Communist beliefs, his behaviour is really anti-social. Hardly the stuff positive heroes are made of!

Regarding the question of the hero in Das siebte Kreuz, Anna Seghers wrote in a letter to some school children, dated 20 March 1961:

Im allgemeinen finde ich, daß man nicht an Worten, an Ausdrücken, an Schulbeispielen kleben darf. Zum Beispiel "Held." Positiver Held. Negativer Held. Im

Grunde genommen ist Held in der deutschen Sprache immer etwas Helles. Etwas Positives.

Das wichtigste ist aber, daß man weiß: Die Schriftsteller arbeiten nicht nach literaturhistorischen Begriffen. Die literaturhistorischen Begriffe (die beim Lernen und Lehren gut und notwendig sein können) sind erst nach den Büchern der Schriftsteller gebildet worden. . . .

Weiß Gott, wie ich Das siebte Kreuz schrieb, habe ich von all den Begriffen, die heute jedes Schulkind lernt, keine blasse Ahnung gehabt.

Die wichtigste Person in dem Buch, die handlungsmäßig wichtigste, ist wahrscheinlich Georg . . . denn ein Kreuz bleibt leer, an das er gebunden werden sollte. Er wurde gerettet durch eigene Kraft und die Hilfe seiner Genossen und tapferer Antifaschisten. Insofern ist er "der Held." Er ist aber vielleicht im täglichen Leben nicht so toll, toll, toll positiv, was dem Leser ja auch nicht verheimlicht wurde. . . . Insofern ist Wallau sicher mehr "positiver Held." Das geht auch aus dem Roman hervor. Nicht nach der greifbaren Fabel, nicht nach der Struktur der Handlung ist er die Hauptperson, er bewirkt aber Kraft und Idee auch in Georg . . .<sup>21</sup>

The author is being somewhat coy when she disavows knowledge of the terms "which every school child now learns." The criteria

for Socialist Realism had been set down in the 1930's. Although in exile, Anna Seghers was sufficiently in contact with other Party members to be aware of the demands the Party made on its writers. What is more likely is that, being aware of these demands, she chose to ignore them at the time of writing Das siebte Kreuz. She has often reiterated that she does not care for literary labels nor does she tailor her works to fit them. It will become apparent that she was only able to maintain this independent stand as long as she lived in countries which were not ruled by the Communist Party.

Marxist criticism is by no means unanimous in the view of Georg as a positive hero. Whereas Klaus Jarmatz praises Das siebte Kreuz as marking a new milestone in the presentation of the positive hero,<sup>22</sup> and adds that he is also in this case a representative of the revolutionary workers' movement and of the German nation,<sup>23</sup> Alexander Abusch finds him inadequate as a hero:

Dieses Unangreifbare und Unverletzbares im Innersten des Menschen und Kämpfers zeigt sich in diesem Roman in seinem eigentlich großen Helden, der nicht identisch ist mit dem Haupthelden der durchgehenden Handlung. Der noch größere Held, der bei Verhör und Folter unerschütterlich schweigt, ist der Parteifunktionär Ernst Wallau, ein Funktionär aus Thälmanns Partei, der — in einer Nebenhandlung — mit seinem schweigenden Sterben die Kraft des inneren Sieges über seine Peiniger ausstrahlt.<sup>24</sup>

The fact that Abusch must look to a minor figure for a positive hero shows how shaky is the question of the positive hero in Das siebte Kreuz.

Georg gains the reader's interest and sympathy because he is being hunted down like a wild animal. His being a Communist and a worker neither add nor detract from that interest and sympathy — they are merely incidental. The terror he is fleeing from is Fascist-inspired, but it could as well be that of any other autocratic system. Jurgen Ruhle notes that certain features of the all-encompassing police net in which Georg is trapped have only existed in Germany since the creation of the GDR,<sup>25</sup> an ironic prophetic vision of the author which serves to prove our point.

Contrary to previous Seghers heroes, Georg does not rush headlong into a vainglorious death but wants to preserve his life at all costs. He even considers murdering an innocent foreigner who has given him a lift in order to gain possession of the man's papers and car. His reasons for wanting to live are those common to every living being. Nothing is said of living in order to continue the battle against Fascism. F. Bottoer's assumption that ". . . die tragende Idee [ist], den Widerstand gegen den faschistischen Terror fortzusetzen. . ." <sup>26</sup> has no basis in fact.

Georg bears a closer resemblance to the bourgeois hero of Critical Realism than to the positive hero of Socialist Realism. He is like the outsider of the modern Western novel. He does not

merely feel himself alienated from society. He has been declared an outlaw by a society which will destroy him if it can.

Georg Lukács finds flaws in the Socialist Realist execution of the novel:

An Bildhaftigkeit der einzelnen Situationen, an innerer Wahrheit der dargestellten Menschen beider Lager hat Anna Seehers Außerordentliches geleistet. Und doch kommt sie oft nicht über die Schilderung sinnlicher oder psychologischer Zuständlichkeiten hinaus, in denen sich freilich ihre ungewöhnliche Energie der Vergegenwärtigung plastisch zeigt. Das tiefe Warum des Kampfes, das Herauswachsen seines gesellschaftlich-geschichtlichen Sinnes aus individuellen Erlebnissen, Zusammenhängen, Konflikten lebendiger Einzelmenschen bleibt auch hier von einem — dichterisch allerdings hochwertigen — Schleier verhüllt. <sup>27</sup>

The West German critic Sabine Brandt agrees with him, criticizing the parallel plots and political excursions which have nothing to do with the main story. Having already determined the discrepancy between humanity and doctrine which we have mentioned above, she continues:

Der Bruch zwischen Humanität und Doktrin im "Siebten Kreuz" äußert sich nicht nur in der Konzeption, im Auseinanderfallen von Fabel und kommunistischem



Hintergrund. Er zeigt sich auch in der Sprache. Das Buch ist durchsetzt mit stilistischen Fehlleistungen und Ungenauigkeiten im Ausdruck, mit deklamatorischen Partien und betulichen Idyllen. Nur in der Fluchtfabel beweist die Seghers ihre alte Sprachqualität, ihre charakteristische Art, schmucklose, spröde Sätze zu Bildern von großer Eindringlichkeit zu fügen.

She goes on to say that the oppressed proletarians whom Anna Seghers had championed are now depicted as "spießige Kleinbürger."

Der kühle Hochmut, mit dem die Seghers die Wohnküchengenrebilder zeichnet, ist eine Absage an den kleinen Mann, der in seiner Schwäche die Partei im Stich gelassen hat — aber wohl auch eine Reaktion ihres schlechten Gewissens, denn die Genossin Seghers wußte nur zu gut, daß es in Wirklichkeit die Partei war, die 1933 und 1939 ihre Getreuen im Stich ließ.<sup>28</sup>

None of these weak points is acknowledged by Marxist criticism, which considers Das siebte Kreuz the best Seghers work up to 1950. The novel is read in the tenth school year in the GDR. An excerpt from H. Barnasch's article of 1954 in Deutschunterricht, a periodical for school teachers, on how the novel is to be presented to the children, sheds light on a possible reason for the acclaim with which the work was greeted in East Germany after the war:

Angesichts der gefährlichen Entwicklung, die Westdeutschland unter dem Druck der amerikanischen

Imperialisten zum Faschismus eingeschlagen hat, muß heute das erzieherische Ziel bei der Behandlung des Romans Das siebte Kreuz auf folgendes gerichtet sein: Auch heute sind viele deutsche Menschen in Westdeutschland erneuert der Gefahr der faschistischen Propaganda ausgesetzt. Jeder Schuler muß in dieser Frage entschieden und in sich gefestigt sein. Deshalb muß der Lehrer den jungen Menschen, denen das nazistische Terrorsystem nicht durch eigenes Erleben bewußt geworden ist, klar und eindringlich die große Gefahr, die unser Vaterland heute wieder bedroht, vor Augen halten. Die Gewißheit des Sieges der Arbeiterklasse in ganz Deutschland muß ihnen zur inneren Überzeugung werden. Von diesen Forderungen ausgehend, sind die Schwerpunkte jeder inhaltlichen Betrachtung unseres Romans zu bestimmen.<sup>29</sup>

Das siebte Kreuz was a world-famous novel, one which the new East German culture could claim as its own, and one which readily lent itself to the new anti-Fascist cause. The reasons for the novel's success in America stem partially from the fact that just before it appeared, America had entered the war against Germany on the side of the USSR and anti-Fascist sentiment was high. The novel's universal appeal is due in part to its mixture of anti-Fascist, humanist and Communist tendencies. Thus readers of many political persuasions could consider it as supporting their own point of view.

Das siebte Kreuz shows signs of the conflict which Anna Seghers experienced with regard to Socialist Realism. At the time of writing the novel, she was caught between the desire to write as she wished and the need to please the Party critics. Without abandoning the avant-garde techniques which she had developed in earlier works — photomontage and inner monologue — she settled on a compromise between the two. The result was a certain break in style, theme and tendency, which, while it does not detract from the pleasure the work affords, is an artistic failing.

c. "Die drei Bäume"

These three anecdotes were first published in Freies Deutschland (6, 1945). They were later included in both Bienenstock collections of Seghers works, where the date 1940 was assigned to them. As the title indicates, all have to do with trees. The first anecdote recounts how wood cutters in the Argonnes forest cut down a tree and found inside it the remains of a knight of Charles the Bold of Burgundy who had evidently sought refuge there from the soldiers of Louis XI and had been unable to escape.

"Der Baum des Jessias" tells how the prophet fearlessly led his people into battle and, after they had been decimated, was so afraid for his life that he hid in a cedar. When woodsmen came to cut down the tree, he hesitated to show himself until he was rendered in two by a saw.

The third story concerns the Greek hero Odysseus. He has returned home to his wife after years of wandering, has killed Penelope's suitors, yet she still doubts that this man is her husband. To convince her, he recounts how he had left a tree in the centre of the land he had cleared for their home, the stump of which he had made into a bed.

These three anecdotes, in which a tree is depicted as the refuge and eventual grave in two instances and a marriage bed in the third, represent a return to mythology, to the world of sagas and eternal things which seems to be a necessary refuge for Anna Seghers intermittently throughout her life, even as the tree is a refuge. She recognizes all too well the danger of remaining too long in this haven, as the first two stories show.

d. "Das Obdach"

This short story was included in the volume entitled Ausflug der toten Mädchen und andere Erzählungen (East Berlin: Aufbau, 1948) and has been reprinted in most collections of Seghers' stories since.

Set in Nazi-occupied Paris in September 1940, it tells of a French woman who shelters the son of a German arrested by the Nazis. She explains to her husband that the boy is the son of her cousin. The husband, once a good socialist but numbed by unemployment and the disaster of the Occupation, takes an instant dislike

to the child. As conditions under the Germans become more and more intolerable, he bemoans the fact that there is no way to resist the Nazis. He recalls the story of the arrested German and his son, which his wife had begun to tell him. He declares that had he been able to shelter the boy, he would have taken better care of him than of his own children and than this son of his wife's relative. Only then does he learn whom he has been harbouring.

The story is an example of Socialist Realism. The time and setting are accurately defined. The theme is proletarian solidarity, which is awakened in the woman at the sight of the boy and what he stands for. "Die Meunier war bisher eine Mutter gewesen wie alle Mutter: Schlange stehen, aus nichts etwas, aus etwas viel machen, Heimarbeit zu der Hausarbeit übernehmen, das alles war selbstverständlich. Jetzt, unter dem Blick des Jungen, wuchs mit gewaltigem Maß das Selbstverständliche, und mit dem Maß ihre Kraft." 30

The awakening of resistance which has been lying dormant is shown in the father. At first he wants nothing to do with the boy. He believes the Germans to be omnipotent and resistance to be useless. Only when the German forces become intolerable, when the conditions under which the French must live and work become insupportable, does he favour action. His change of heart is the turning point of the story.

In a letter to a reader, dated Berlin, 18 March 1968, Anna Seghers gives her opinions on Meunier:

Meunier hat viele kleinbürgerliche Züge, er hat aber auch klassenbewußte Züge. Sonst konnte er, der Kleinbürger, nicht auf einmal klassenbewußt werden.

Ich möchte zu dem Erlebnis der Familie Meunier folgendes sagen: Zuerst ist Meunier vielleicht nur ein Mitläufer. Er kann die Deutschen nicht leiden, die ihm alles wegfüttern und sich breitmachen in seiner Wirtschaft und so weiter . . . Darum ist der Vergleich berechtigt mit dem Riesen Christophorus, der immer dem stärksten Herrn diente, bis er zuletzt dem Teufel selbst dient. Zuerst würde auch Meunier allen starken Herren, auch den Deutschen, gehorchen. Dann kommt eine Zeit, in der er nicht nur für sich selbst, sondern für seinesgleichen mitfühlt. . . .

Die Wandlung dieses Meunier ist der Gipfelpunkt der Geschichte. Sie wäre nicht der Gipfelpunkt, wenn Meunier einfach ein Kleinbürger bliebe.<sup>31</sup>

The boy is a young positive hero. He is determined not to return to Germany and his Nazi relatives. He is true to the beliefs for which his mother has died and his father been imprisoned.

Anna Seghers disagrees with the assigning of the term "hero" to any one character in the story. In a letter to a spokesman for

a collective at the Leipziger Arbeiter-und-Bauern-Fakultät, dated Berlin, 28 October 1957, she gives her reasons:

Was heißt denn in dieser kleinen und unwichtigen Geschichte "Held" oder "tragende Person der Handlung"? Die Handlung wird getragen von dem verräteren, unglücklichen, mit Absicht von den Machthabern in Zweifel und Verzweiflung gesturzten französischen Volk. Dabei entsteht selbstverständlich Solidarität zwischen den von den Machthabern ins Unglück Gesturzten, in diesem Fall zwischen Franzosen und Deutschen. Herr Meunier oder Frau Meunier oder der Emigrantenjunge oder die Nutte, die sich dem Deutschen aufs Knie setzt, oder ich weiß nicht, wer sonst noch, die sind weder erstrangig noch zweitrangig, sondern sie spielen alle mit bei dem Bericht des Volkes. <sup>32</sup>

The story ends on a note of optimism, seen from the socialist perspective. The Nazis have been thwarted in one instance through the courage of Mme. Meunier. Thus they are not invincible.

The narrative tone changes at the end to the first person: "Ich habe diese Geschichte erzählen hören in meinem Hotel im XIV. Arrondissement von jener Annette, die dort ihren Dienst genommen hatte, weil es ihr auf der alten Stelle nicht mehr geheuer war" (p. 206). This literary device, which was used in "Bauern von Hruschowo," serves to underline the authenticity of the story. It is fictional, since Anna Seghers was out of Paris when the

German came. It weakens the pointed ending which the revelation of the boy's true identity provided. But this was doubtless the writer's intention, since emphasis is shifted from the boy and the Meuniers to the French people as a collective. This is then a typical episode from the Occupation, not the individual story of a child.

e. Transit

France, which had become a centre of German literature and a haven for German émigrés of all walks of life after 1933, changed its attitude toward these people after war broke out. Overnight they became enemy aliens and were interned in concentration camps on the Loire and in the Pyrenees. Those who escaped internment flocked to ports like Marseilles, where they hoped to avoid the German armies by finding transportation abroad. However, one could only stay in Marseilles if one had a visa for another country. In addition, one had to have transit visas for Spain and Portugal.

Ein Visum für Amerika, Australien, Afrika oder ein anderes überseeisches Land war . . . nur sinnvoll in Verbindung mit einem Durchreisevisum für Spanien und Portugal, da die Schiffe nach Übersee, von wenigen Ausnahmen abgesehen, von Lissabon ausliefen. Das spanische Durchreisevisum wurde den Emigranten jedoch nur dann gewährt, wenn sie eine französische Ausreise-



Erlaubnis besaßen. Da die Vichy-Regierung auf Wunsch Hitlers wiederholt deutsche Emigranten an das Dritte Reich auslieferte . . . versuchten viele Emigranten . . . ohne die erforderlichen Papiere illegal die Pyrenäen zu überqueren. <sup>33</sup>

Anna Seghers was among these emigrants who flocked to the French seaport in the hope of gaining passage on a ship away from what was fast becoming Hitler's Europe. She had her two children with her and her husband had to be freed first from the detention camp, Verenet, where he was being held.

Safe in Mexico, after a trip via Martinique, the Dominican Republic and the United States, while recuperating from a near-fatal car accident, she wrote the novel Transit, which is set in the Kafkaesque atmosphere from which she had only recently escaped.

A German mechanic, whose name we never learn, but who sometimes calls himself Seidler,<sup>34</sup> tells his story to another refugee while sitting in a café in Marseilles.

In 1937, he escaped from a German concentration camp, where punching an SA man in the face had landed him. He swam the Rhine and reached France. Here he was interned when the war broke out. As the German armies approached, he and several others escaped from the camp. He made his way to Paris, where a French family gave him shelter. Through a chance meeting with the writer, Paul

Strobel, who had been interned with him, he became involved in the fate of a German writer, Weidel, who had committed suicide in Paris. The narrator gained possession of Weidel's suitcase, which contained an unfinished manuscript and two letters --one from his wife, telling him that she was leaving France with another man, and one from the Mexican consulate, informing him that a visa and travel money were waiting for him. All attempts to surrender the suitcase to the Mexican consulate so that it might be sent on to the next of kin remain futile.

To avoid the Germans, the narrator went to unoccupied France, where he obtained false papers under the name of Seidler. He then proceeded to Marseilles, where he quickly learned that only those who intended to go on further might stay in the city. Although he had no intention of leaving Marseilles, he did not object when, at the Mexican Consulate, during another attempt to rid himself of Weidel's belongings, he was mistaken for the writer and was given the dead man's papers.

He has formed two important attachments in the city—to the little son of Georg Binnet's Negro mistress, <sup>35</sup> and to Marie, the mistress of the doctor who is treating the child. Marie is also Weidel's wife. She has regretted her former decision and sent her husband a letter asking him to flee France with her (the letter "Seidler" was asked to deliver). She is now looking for her husband all over Marseilles, since she has heard that he has been to the Mexican Consulate. The narrator becomes obsessed with the

idea of getting the doctor out of the way so that he might have the woman to himself. He manages to find him a place on a ship to Cran, but then gives the passage to a former fellow internee, Heinz. By pretending he is Weidel, the narrator manages to get Marie's papers in order. He intends to keep her with him in Marseilles, but when the French police threaten to intern him if he does not book passage, he decides to go with her and the doctor to Mexico. Miraculously, he comes into possession of a ticket. When he learns that Marie loves him but still feels tied to her husband, whose death she refuses to believe in, he returns the ticket. Marie and the doctor sail on the Montreal. The narrator goes to work on a farm in the south of France. He later hears that the Montreal has been sunk.

Parts of the novel were published in Freies Deutschland in 1943 (Anna Seghers, "Vor dem mexikanischen Konsulat [Freies Deutschland, II, 7 June 1943]), p. 9; Anna Seghers, "Tod in Paris" [Freies Deutschland, II, 12 November 1943], pp. 23-25).

The novel was first published in its entirety in Mexico in the same year (Anna Seghers, Transit [Mexico: Ed. El Libro libre, 1943]). Like Das siebte Kreuz, it was also published in English (Anna Seghers, Transit [New York: Little, Brown, 1944]). In 1948, a German version came out in West Germany (Anna Seghers, Transit [Konstanz: Weller, 1948]). Aufbau Verlag included it in their edition of Seghers' collected works in 1951. Transit was reprinted in East Germany in 1953 by Verlag der Nation.

No mention is made of these first two editions in most East German Seghers bibliographies, which tend to ignore any edition of her works between 1937 and 1946, the year when she returned to Germany. Communist criticism of the work is scarce, confined mainly to Paul Rilla's review which termed the novel "ein Meisterwerk konzentrierter erzählerischer Prosa."<sup>36</sup> Other critics simply ignore it<sup>37</sup>, or dismiss it because of a lack of social relevance:

Etwas ungewöhnlich und für die Schriftstellerin nicht typisch erscheint uns . . . ihr Roman Transit (1944). Die an dramatischen Ereignissen reiche Wirklichkeit Frankreichs in der Periode der faschistischen Okkupation dient hier leider lediglich als — noch dazu blaß gezeichneter — Hintergrund für eine Liebesgeschichte. Die sozialen Probleme sind in diesem Roman auf den zweiten Platz gedrängt.<sup>38</sup>

Still others blatantly distort the content and meaning of the novel.<sup>39</sup>

What is it about Transit that leaves Marxist critics embarrassingly silent? What does Transit depict?

The novel describes a jungle of consulates, shipping offices and police stations through which the refugees must pass in order to obtain a piece of paper which states that they may stay in order that they may leave. Human existence has been reduced to

a piece of paper, as the chaos, which is France, takes on a new order — bureaucracy:

Eine unermüdliche Schar von Beamten war Tag und Nacht unterwegs wie Hundefänger, um verdächtige Menschen aus den durchziehenden Haufen herauszufangen, sie in Stadtgefängnisse einzusperren, woraus sie dann in ein Lager verschleppt wurden, sofern das Losegeld nicht zur Stelle war oder ein fuchsschlauer Rechtsgelehrter, der bisweilen seinen unmaßigen Lohn für die Befreiung mit dem Hundefänger selbst teilte. Daher gebardeten sich die Menschen, zumal die ausländischen, um ihre Pässe und ihre Papiere wie um ihr Seelenheil. Ich begann sehr zu staunen, wie diese Übrigkeiten, inmitten des vollkommenen Zusammenbruchs, immer langwierigere Prozeduren erfanden, um die Menschen, über deren Gefühle sie schlechterdings jede Macht verloren hatten, einzuordnen, zu registrieren, zu stempeln. Man hätte ebensogut bei der großen Völkerwanderung jeden Vandalen, jeden Goten, jeden Hunnen, jeden Langobarden registrieren können. <sup>40</sup>

The indignities suffered by people who have nothing left to lose but their dignity are detailed:

Sie kennen ja selbst die Rue Stanislas Lorein. Sie haben ja selbst bei Regen und Schnee in der seltsamsten Menschenschlange gewartet, die in diesem furchtbaren

brotarmen Winter um Nahrung anstand, ich meine um die Vorbedingung der Nahrung, das Recht, sie an diesem Ort zu verzehren. Da warteten tschechische Prestataires und polnische, die völlig überflüssig geworden waren, man brauchte sie nicht einmal mehr als Kanonenfutter, man hatte sich ja mit dem Feind verglichen, zerlumptes Volk, das seine nutzlosen Waffen an einem Ort niedergelegt hatte, an dem es nicht zuständig war. Alle diese Heerscharen, die zufällig noch ein wenig am Leben geblieben waren oder sich nur so stellten, sollten unbedingt registriert werden. (p. 76)

This process often plunged the refugee into an absurd situation, as the old Czech choirmaster, who dies as he is about to receive his final papers, explains to the newly arrived narrator:

Junger Mensch! Sie kommen hierher fast ohne Gepäck, allein, ohne Ziel. Sie haben noch nicht einmal ein Visum. Sie machen sich keine Gedanken, daß selbst der Präfekt Sie keineswegs wohnen läßt, wenn Sie nicht einmal ein Visum haben. Nun, nehmen wir an, durch irgendeinen Glücksfall, durch eigene Kraft, was selten, aber immerhin vorkommt, vielleicht auch durch eine Freundeshand, die sich Ihnen aus dem Dunkel, will sagen, über den Ozean, entgegenstreckt, wenn Sie sie am wenigsten erwarten, vielleicht durch die Vorsehung

selbst, vielleicht durch ein Komitee, erhalten Sie ein Visum. Da sind Sie einen Augenblick glücklich. Doch sehr rasch merken Sie, daß damit gar nichts getan ist. Sie haben ein Ziel — das ist wenig. Das hat jeder. Sie können nicht bloß durch den Willen, bloß durch die Stratosphäre in jenes Land kommen. Sie fahren durch Meere, durch Zwischenländer. Sie brauchen ein Transit. Das braucht Ihren Scharfsinn. Ihre Zeit. Sie ahnen noch nicht, wieviel Zeit! . . . Jetzt gilt es, den Konsuln klarzumachen, daß es Ihnen ernst ist, daß Sie keiner von jenen Burschen sind, die an den Orten festbleiben wollen, die nur zum Durchfahren da sind. Und dafür gibt es Beweise, jeder Konsul verlangt sie. Nun nehmen wir einmal den Glücksfall an, der ein Wunder ist, wenn man bedenkt, wie viele abfahren wollen auf wie wenig Schiffen, Ihr Schiffplatz als solcher, die Fahrt als solche sei gesichert. . . . Doch glauben Sie ja nicht, mein Sohn, daß damit Ihr Transit schon sicher ist, und selbst, wenn es sicher wäre! Inzwischen ist so viel Zeit vergangen, daß wieder das erste, das Hauptziel entschunden ist. Dein Visum ist abgelaufen, und wie auch das Transit notwendig war, es ist wieder gar nichts ohne das Visum, und so immer weiter, immer weiter, immer weiter. (pp. 32-33)

A parallel between the plight of the refugees and that of Kafka's heroes is hard to miss. Paul Rilla is only one of the critics who have expounded on this point:

Das Merkwürdige an dem Buch nun ist seine Verwandtschaft mit der erzählerischen Alpdruckwelt Franz [sic] Kafkas. Ja, es ist dieselbe Unentrinnbarkeit eines Alpdruckzwangs, hinter dem dieselben Instanzen einer allmächtigen Sinnlosigkeit walten. Und die Kunst, mit der die präzise Funktion dieses tödlichen Apparates beglaubigt wird, ist von der gleichen unheimlichen Genauigkeit. Aber merkwürdiger als die Verwandtschaft ist der Unterschied. Kafka verwandelt die Realität in einen Alpdruck. Anna Seghers verwandelt den Alpdruck in eine Realität. Kafka unterliegt einem Traumzwang, in welchem er eine Welt, die er in Frage stellt, mit vergeblichen Fragen bestürmt. Anna Seghers unterliegt einem Wirklichkeitszwang, in welchem sie die Frage nach einer sozialen Situation stellt, die den Sinn menschlicher Institutionen zum Unsinn verkehrt. Die erzählerische Vision Franz Kafkas verwandelt die Stadt Prag in eine überhelle und überscharfe Traumlandschaft, durchzogen von den Schluchten des Unterbewußtseins. Die erzählerische Vision der Anna Seghers beläßt die Stadt Marseille ihre volle Realität, wenn sie sie mit den Schluchten dieser ruhelosen Wanderschaft durchzieht,



der Wanderschaft nach dem Visum. Nicht das Unterbewußtsein treibt sein unkontrollierbares Spiel, vielmehr gerade das wachste Bewußtsein schaltet sich als Kontrollinstanz ein. Was es kontrolliert, sind die Vorgänge eines sozialen Terrors, der nicht im Unerforschlichen beschlossen ist. Denn die allmächtige Sinnlosigkeit, wie sie hier waltet, ist ein Teil der Gewalt, die immer gegen den Menschensinn verstoßen muß. Der bürokratische Terror ist der bürgerliche Terror. <sup>41</sup>

This last sentence will surely bring a smile to the lips of anyone who has had to deal with Communist bureaucrats! Rilla's analysis is interesting because he, doubtless with the best intentions in the world, is trying to fend off much of the criticism which he knew had been or would be levelled at the novel.

His initial statements are quite indisputable. There is a strong similarity between Transit and the works of Kafka; in both the atmosphere is nightmarish and the situation the characters find themselves in absurd. The difference lies in the authors' intentions: Kafka uses reality as clothing for his metaphysical parables, whereas Anna Seghers is describing a reality which exists, but out of which a metaphor for human existence can be deduced. She does not, as Rilla insists, try to look for the social meaning behind the situation. Her enquiries are of an existentialist and not of a sociological nature.

Incorrect too, this writer finds, is Rilla's assertion that while Kafka's Prague is a dream landscape, Seghers' Marseilles is realistically depicted. True, the surrealist elements which one finds in Kafka are missing. Nevertheless, the description of Marseilles takes on the tone of the novel's theme — it is the Marseilles of cafés, where people sit waiting for their destinies to be decided by some capricious, unknown power, a Marseilles cut off from the real world where reason prevails. As we have said before, Anna Seghers turns to the world of history and mythology when the present becomes incomprehensible. Her Marseilles, like her Rhine-Main area in Das siebte Kreuz, is a mythological landscape, populated by ghosts:

Auf einmal fand ich all das Geschwätz nicht mehr ekelhaft, sondern großartig. Es war uraltes Hafengeschwätz, so alt wie der Alte Hafen selbst und noch älter. Wunderbarer, uralter Hafentratsch, der nie verstummt ist, solange es ein Mittelländisches Meer gegeben hat, phönizischer Klatsch und kretischer, griechischer Tratsch und romischer, niemals waren die Tratscher alle geworden, die banne waren um ihre Schiffsplätze und um ihre Gelder, auf der Flucht vor allen wirklichen und eingebildeten Schrecken der Erde.  
(p. 60)

Der Mont Vertoux hatte sich dicht gefüllt. In vielen Sprachen schlug sein Geschwätz in mein Ohr: von Schiffen, die nie mehr abgehen würden, von angekommenen,

gescheiterten und gekaperten Schiffen, von Menschen, die in die Dienste der Engländer gehen wollten und in die Dienste de Gaulles, von Menschen die wieder ins Lager zurück mußten, vielleicht auf Jahre . . . Uraltet frisches Hafengeschwätz, phönizisches und griechisches, kretisches und jüdisches, etruskisches und römisches.  
(p. 181)

This historic view, which is not the historic perspective of Socialist Realism but rather that of humanism, is interwoven throughout the novel and indeed throughout the whole of Seghers' works, especially those of the exile years.

In their efforts to incorporate the whole Anna Seghers into Socialist Realism, Marxist critics have never been able to successfully come to grips with Transit. The figure of the hero has presented them with special problems. The narrator, whom we shall call Seidler for want of his real name, is certainly at first glance the most passive hero the author has ever created. He is the antithesis of the positive hero of Socialist Realism. He does not belong to a political party, for that he is too individualistic: "Er fragte mich, ob ich einer Partei angehöre. Ich erwiderte nein, ich sei auch ohne Partei damals in Deutschland ins KZ geraten, weil ich mir auch ohne Partei manche Schweinerei nicht gefallen ließ" (p. 14). He feels that his life is being wasted: "Mein Leben geht ganz daneben" (p. 55). This feeling is especially strong in the presence of Heinz, the Communist fellow

prisoner whom he helps to escape to Oran. He admires Heinz's conviction and wishes to meet him again and ask him questions, but when the time for the meeting comes, he does not show up. Something more important has come between. That something is his love, or rather passion, for Marie. From the time he sees her, his every action is directed towards winning her. Previously he had acted only to ensure he would be left in peace in Marseilles. He has no desire to escape, to begin a new life. He wants to remain in order to see how everything will turn out. He is the eternal spectator: "Ich konnte stundenlang die weiße Häuserfront auf der anderen Seite des Alten Hafens betrachten hinter den Rahmen der Fischerboote unter dem Abendhimmel. Ich konnte auch stundenlang zusehen, wie der Koch den Teig schlug und knetete, wie seine Arme hineintauchten in das Feuer, auf das man frisches Holz warf" (p. 44).

His most frequent feeling is boredom, the endless boredom of waiting which pervades the whole novel: "Ich folgte ihm nach aus purer Langeweile" (p. 79); "Ich trat danach in das nächste Café — was sollte ich sonst auch tun?" (p. 81). It is because the narrator seems so passive that the ending is at first glance unconvincing. This ending is made much of by Marxist criticism and one could suspect that it was furnished to give them something palatable to find in the novel. The hero has gone to work on Marcel Binnet's farm and he tells his listener:

So gibt mir denn diese Familie, gibt mir dieses

Volk bis auf weiteres Obdach. Ich helfe beim Säen und Entraupen. Wenn die Nazis uns auch noch hier überfallen, dann werden sie mich vielleicht mit den Söhnen der Familie Zwangsarbeit machen lassen oder irgendwohin deportieren. Was sie trifft, wird auch mich treffen. Die Nazis werden mich keinesfalls mehr als ihren Landsmann erkennen. Ich will jetzt Gutes und Böses hier mit meinen Leuten teilen, Zuflucht und Verfolgung. Ich werde, sobald es zum Widerstand kommt, mit Marcel eine Knarre nehmen. Selbst wenn man mich dann zusammenknallt, kommt es mir vor, man könne mich nicht restlos zum Sterben bringen. Es kommt mir vor, ich kenne das Land zu gut, seine Arbeit und seine Menschen, seine Berge und seine Pfirsiche und seine Trauben. Wenn man auf einem vertrauten Boden verblutet, wächst etwas dort von einem weiter wie von den Sträuchern und Bäumen, die man zu roden versucht. (p. 185)

This seems at first an extraordinary statement from a man who had never shown the least desire to fight the Nazis. Communist critics greet this as a show of proletarian solidarity, the seeds of which they see sown by the socialist family Binnet and the influence of Heinz.

1 Leaving aside the question of proletarian solidarity for the moment, let us determine whether the ending is convincing. If

one understands Seidler's attitude as passive, then it would appear artificial and would seem to be a back-tracking to the Party line which has otherwise been ignored throughout the book. If, however, one interprets the hero's attitude differently, then the ending can be regarded as a consequent carrying out of his original intentions.

Seidler never exhibited any desire to leave France: "Ich würde aber auch niemals abfahren" (p. 33), he thinks to himself as he listens to the Czech choirmaster. What on the surface is a passive attitude, is in reality a struggle to keep from being drawn into the stream of panicky émigrés: "Ich fürchtete mich beim Zusehen, ich könnte in diesem Strom hineingeraten, ich, der ich mich noch am Leben fühlte, durchaus zum Bleiben gewillt. . ." (p. 75). He regards the efforts of the refugees as futile: ". . . Unsinn, Unsinn, Unsinn war dieser Kraftaufwand, um eine brennende Stadt mit einer anderen brennenden Stadt zu vertauschen, das Umsteigen von einem Rettungsboot auf das andere, auf dem bodenlosen Meer" (p. 84). The safety they reach is often shown to be illusory—the Montreal sinks. Seidler believes he will survive by outlasting the storm, not by fleeing it:

Vor meinen Augen strömte sie an, mit ihren zerrissenen Fahnen aller Nationen und Glauben, die Vorhut der Flüchtlinge. Sie hatten ganz Europa durchflüchtet, doch jetzt vor dem schmalen, blauen

Wasser, das unschuldig zwischen den Häusern glitzerte, war ihre Weisheit zu Ende. Denn keine Schiffe, nur eine schwache Hoffnung auf Schiffe bedeuteten die mit Kreide notierten Namen, die auch immer sofort ausgelöscht wurden, weil irgendeine Meerenge vermint oder eine neue Küste beschossen würde. Schon rückte der Tod immer dichter nach mit seiner noch immer unversehrten, knarrenden Hakenkreuzfahne. Mir aber, vielleicht weil ich ihm schon einmal begegnet war und ihn überholt hatte, mir schien es, auch er, der Tod, sei seinerseits auf der Flucht. Wer aber war ihm auf den Fersen? Mir schien es, ich brauchte nur Zeit zum Warten, und ich könne auch ihn überleben. — (p. 47)

The narrator goes through the whole process of visas and ship's passanes partially to help Marie, since he is — on paper — her husband, and partially in order to be left alone, so that he might stay to see the end of the chaos, for the chaos is shown to be a result of Nazism and not the condition of mankind in general.

He is capable of action, like the writer Weidel, whose piece on the massacre of Republicans resulted in his name being put on the Spanish government's blacklist: "Nur wenig, ein paar Zeilen in einem Anfall von Eingreifenmüssen, so wie es bei mir auch nur ein Faustschlag gewesen war in das Gesicht irgendeines SA-Lümmels. In dieser Beziehung gab es sogar zwischen uns beiden eine gewisse Ähnlichkeit. Ein jähes Eingreifenmüssen in einem Nur-eben-dahin-

Leben" (p. 140). It is this "Eingreifenmüssen" which prompts his final actions and allows him to know the course he will take should the Nazis come.

Although the hero's final decision could be reconciled with the Communist ideology, the motives for it are individual rather than political. His longing for a home, which is expressed throughout the novel, doubtless played an important role in his not leaving France. No Party line solution is called for here. The author is simply saying that it is better to stand and fight evil than to run from it.

Transit marks the high point in Anna Seghers' literary achievement. More unified in conception than Das siebte Kreuz and more consummate in its execution, the novel ranks with the best examples of German exile literature.

Perhaps it is only a coincidence that this work manifests the least Communist influence since the stories "Grubetsch" and "Die Ziegler" which were written before her entry into the Party. Shaken by political events, especially the Hitler-Stalin pact, left to her own devices during the disorder of the Emigration and temporarily out of contact with those who might have influenced her, Anna Seghers wrote of her own experiences in a straightforward manner. In searching for an answer to the absurdity of the situation in which the émigrés found themselves, she returned to her humanistic background which had formed her thinking before



Communism. She also found herself intellectually in new company:

Problemstellung und Atmosphäre rücken Transit in die unmittelbare Nachbarschaft des französischen Existentialismus. Hieraus erklärt sich auch die Affinität zu Kafka. Aber bald fand Anna Seghers ihr Gleichgewicht wieder. . . . Die weitere Entwicklung der Ereignisse im Zweiten Weltkrieg und der jetzt wieder wirksame Einfluß der Genossen — in Mexico entstand ein wichtiges Zentrum der kommunistischen Schriftsteller im Exil — halfen Anna Seghers, die existentialistische Abweichung schnell zu überwinden. 42

Transit is strong proof that without Party discipline, Anna Seghers would not have become a Socialist Realist at all. She would have probably continued to advance Communist ideas in her works, but, unfettered by the bonds of Socialist Realism, she might have given German literature more works of the artistic quality of Transit, a height which she never again reached. One can only agree with this opinion of Sabine Brandt:

Angesichts dieser an Kafka erinnernden Ballade vom reduzierten Leben läßt sich erst recht ermessen, wieviel gestalterische Meisterschaft, welche sensible Beherrschung der Sprache Anna Seghers inzwischen ihrer Partei zum Opfer gebracht hat. Es ist wahrhaftig zum Weinen, vergleicht man die Faszination, die von

"Transit" ausgeht, mit den Zeugnissen ihrer künstlerischen Selbstverstümmelung, die in der Sowjetzone preisgekrönt wurden.<sup>43</sup>

f. "Der Ausflug der toten Mädchen"

This Novelle was first published in 1946 in the volume Der Ausflug der toten Mädchen und andere Erzählungen (New York: Aurora Verlag, 1946), together with "Post ins gelobte Land" and "Das Ende." It was reprinted in 1948 in the volume Der Ausflug der toten Mädchen und andere Erzählungen (Berlin: Aufbau, 1948) and in 1950 (. . . Aurora Bucherei). It has been included in the first and second Bienenstock editions of Seghers' stories and in the West German Luchterhand edition.

Written in 1943<sup>44</sup> in Mexico, the Novelle is unique in Seghers' works because of the autobiographical element. Not only is there a first-person narrator, this narrator is Anna Seghers herself.<sup>45</sup> The writer is in a Mexican village. She had just recovered from a serious illness (in real life her car accident). Suddenly she hears her childhood name — Netty. She sees her two best school friends swinging in what suddenly has become a green landscape. She is on a school outing with her classmates. The time is before the First World War. The narrator is dreaming, and yet she is in full possession of knowledge of the past and the present:

Auf jedem Ende der Schaukel ritt ein Mädchen, meine zwei besten Schulfreundinnen. Leni stemmte sich

kräftig mit ihren großen Füßen ab, die in eckigen Knopfschuhen steckten. Mir fiel ein, daß sie immer die Schuhe eines älteren Bruders erbt. Der Bruder war freilich schon im Herbst 1914 im ersten Weltkrieg gefallen. Ich wunderte mich zugleich, wieso man Lenis Gesicht gar keine Spur von den grimmigen Vorfällen anmerkte, die ihr Leben verdorben hatten. Ihr Gesicht war so glatt und blank wie ein frischer Apfel, und nicht der geringste Rest war darin, nicht die geringste Narbe von den Schlänen, die ihr die Gestapo bei der Verhaftung versetzt hatte, als sie sich weigerte, über ihren Mann auszusagen.<sup>45</sup>

The narrator knows what has happened to each of the girls and their teachers. All of the fifteen women have died and, directly or indirectly, their deaths are attributable to the Third Reich. What is important, however, is not their deaths, but the manner in which they conducted themselves vis-à-vis the Hitler dictatorship. All aspects of the political spectrum are represented. The two central figures, Leni and Marianne, the writer's best friends, are at opposing ends of the scale. Leni was engaged in underground work against Hitler together with her husband. Marianne's husband, an SS man, had them arrested. Marianne did nothing to help Leni's child, when neighbours wanted to send it to relatives rather than have it go to a Nazi orphanage. It is made clear that Marianne would not necessarily have turned her back on her old

friend had life treated her differently. Marianne's first fiancé, Otto, would have never condoned it:

Dann hätte sich Marianne auch später nie geweigert, für Lenis Kind zu sorgen. Otto Fresenius hätte vielleicht schon vorher Mittel gefunden, der Leni zur Flucht zu verhelfen. Er hätte wahrscheinlich dem zarten schönen Gesicht seiner Frau Marianne nach und nach einen solchen Zug von Rechtlichkeit, von gemeinsam geachteter Menschenwürde eingeprägt, der sie dann verhindert hätte ihre Schulfreundin zu verleugnen.

(p. 221)

But Otto died in 1914 in France and Marianne married a very different type of man. Marianne was not predestined to evil, but she did not have sufficient strength to withstand it, as did her friend Gerda, who committed suicide when her husband flew the swastika flag outside their home.

The First World War, Hitler, the Second World War — the trials which Anna Seghers' generation had to face were particularly difficult. Yet some acquitted themselves well — Liese Möbius and the teacher Fräulein Mees held fast to their religion and their principles. Others, like Nora and Marianne, abandoned both friends and ideals. Those who were Jewish — Sophie Meier and Fräulein Sichel — had no chance to make a decision. But all die in the end, for bombs do not differentiate between the guilty and the innocent.

The story lists a variety of ways in which one can conduct oneself in the face of a phenomenon like Nazism. Thus, the theme is similar to Das siebte Kreuz and Transit. The girls and their teachers are seen in a double perspective, first as chums on an outing, and then as each others' victims and executioners. But Anna Senhers is not concerned with giving a picture of the psychological development which leads some people to accept Nazism while others reject it. It is not private destinies which occupy her here but rather ". . . daß die Schicksale der Knaben und Mädchen zusammen das Schicksal der Heimat, das Schicksal des Volkes ausmachen . . ." (pp. 222-23). This story tries to answer the question of the guilt of the German people and finds that the answer is different in each individual case.

In form, the story does not comply with the dictates of Socialist Realism, although Alexander Abusch, for one, has nothing against the choice of the dream-like narrative technique which mixes past and present: ". . . weil sie damit auf gedrängtem Raum ein repräsentatives Bild vieler Schichten des deutschen Volkes in ihrer Schuld und Bewährung während der Zeit des Faschismus geben konnte."<sup>47</sup> G. Snamenskaja, on the other hand, criticizes the "mystische Tönen" of the story and the fact that the author does not say why the girls did not turn out differently.<sup>48</sup> Most of the girls who rejected Nazism did so for religious reasons and none is shown to be a Communist; therefore, the tendency of the story is not Socialist Realist. Like Transit,

the Novelle is written more in sadness than in anger. It hammers home no Party line; its only message is humanity. Marianne is not criticized so much for her membership in the Nazi Party as she is for having refused to help the child of a friend.

In Briefe ihrer Freunde, this Novelle is mentioned by many of Anna Senhers' Communist friends as being among their favourites in her work. In truth, it is so popular, that the East German critics have for the most part felt obliged to justify her use of unorthodox stylistic methods and contented themselves with interpreting the subject matter from a Marxist standpoint.<sup>49</sup>

g. "Post ins nelobte Land"

Written in 1943 in Mexico, this story follows the fate of a Jewish family from the pogroms in Poland at the end of the nineteenth century to the Nazi invasion of France.

Having lost his young wife in the pogrom, Nathan Levi goes with his in-laws and his little son to Vienna, Silesia and finally Paris in search of a new life. In France, the son Jakob grows up to become a distinguished eye doctor. After Dr. Jacques Levi has married and presented his father with a grandchild, the old man decides to end his days in Palestine.

In the promised land, he lives only for his son's letters. He does not know that the sender has died, leaving a stack of letters behind which his wife regularly posts. As the Germans

approach Paris, Mme. Levi flees to the south with her child. The boy is wounded and she is prevented from continuing her escape to Algeria. Caught by the Nazis, she and the boy are transported to a camp.

Friends who have reached Algeria send the last letter which the widow gave them. They decide to compose a letter to the old man when they hear of his daughter-in-law's disappearance. But Nathan Levi has already died before the letter reaches him. The other occupants of the old people's home read it, since these letters from a dead man have become an important part of their lives, a connection with life.

The story defies any incorporation into Socialist Realism. Probably for this reason, the East German publishers omitted it from the edition of Seghers' collected works which was published between 1951 and 1953.

Set in a Jewish milieu, the story — in the opinion of Marcel Reich-Ranicki — ". . . fällt durch religiös-mystische Akzente auf . . ." <sup>50</sup> It marks the furthest point which Anna Seghers strayed from Socialist Realism and from Communist tendency during the time of emigration. Again her sympathies for the oppressed of the world are manifested. It would seem that she wanted to create in this work a small monument to Judaism in memory of the millions of Jews who were suffering at the hands of her compatriots. Communism is not even suggested as a way out of their oppression,

rather religion and family ties are shown to be, if not a solution, nevertheless a solace in times of trouble.

h. "Das Ende"

In "Das Ende" we again meet Zillich, the farmer turned SS man and executioner who figured in Der Kopflohn and Das siebte Kreuz. The story was written in Mexico in 1945, shortly after the war ended. It is the third story published in the volume Der Ausflug der toten Mädchen und andere Erzählungen (New York: Aurora, 1947). It was reprinted in the East German editions of that volume as well as in a bilingual edition with the French translation by Jeanne Stern published by Weller in 1948. It has been included in both Bienenstock editions as well as in Luchterhand's selection of Seghers' stories.

The war has ended and Zillich is back on his farm, feeling betrayed and bored. An engineer, Volpert, who was an inmate in the concentration camp where Zillich last was posted, comes by chance to the farm. He recognizes Zillich, but before he can act, Zillich disappears. He suspects that Volpert recognized him. Now begins Zillich's aimless wandering. The hunter has become the hunted. He tries to fade into anonymity in the bustle of big towns, in factories, in a remote sand quarry. Everywhere he is convinced that someone has guessed his secret. Along his way, he meets a strange little man who calls himself first Niemand and then Freitag. Tired of running, Zillich decides to go home, but



he cannot stay. Freitag pops up suddenly at the place where Zillich has sought refuge after leaving his home a second time. He has known Zillich's identity all along. Fearing Freitag will inform the authorities, Zillich hangs himself.

The tendency of the story is anti-Fascist but not socialist. The reasons for Zillich's adoption of Nazism and his subsequent inhuman behaviour are shown to be purely a result of his nature, which is authoritarian and cruel (the author did explain Zillich's motives for joining the SS in Der Kopflohn and probably did not deem it necessary to go into them again). Zillich is a man without a conscience, as is shown in the conversation with a remorse-stricken soldier who has shot civilians:

"Warum hab ich gar nicht mehr nachgedacht? Angeleert, geschossen. Warum hab ich nicht dem höheren Befehl gehorcht? War er denn verstummt? War ich taub?" — "Was denn für ein höherer Befehl?" fragte Zillich. "Es hat doch damals bei euch noch keine Gegenbefehle gegeben. An deinen Leutnant war sicher zuerst der höhere Befehl ergangen." — "Verstehst du denn nicht? — Der wahre, der innere. Die innere Stimme, die nie im Menschen verstummt. In dir nicht, in mir nicht, das weißt du doch." — "Ich weiß, ich weiß. Wie ich verwundet war, sogar ziemlich schwer von einem Granatsplitter, da hab ich das auch gekannt, wie das ist. Eine innere Stimme. Das legt sich dann, wenn sich das

Wundfieber lent. Sobald man gesund ist, hört es auf." 51

This conversation reveals Zillich to be so stupid that it somewhat weakens the story. To depict the members of the SS as congenital morons is to oversimplify the problem.

The reasons for the evil which Nazism brought are hinted at only briefly. The foreman Hänisch says to Volpert: "Du mußt dich natürlich freuen, wenn man den Lumpen aufhängt. . . . Natürlich, das Böse schlechthin wird dadurch noch nicht erledigt, du kannst ja den Satan selbst nicht erledigen. Man müßte zuerst die alte häßliche Welt ganz erledigen" (pp. 280-90). This is a glimmer of socialist perspective, but it is never again mentioned.

The evil which Zillich and those like him have wrought is seen as a moral and ethical problem, and this in turn is viewed in a traditional, non-Marxist way. The scenes in the ruined church and the pastor's sermon serve to reinforce this.

The figure of Peter Niemand-Freitag adds to the religious-mystical aspect of the story. This is no ordinary man. He seems, even from his description, straight out of a fairy-tale. Like an avenging angel, he follows Zillich, whispering frightening things into his ear until he drives him to suicide. This daemonic figure is in sharp contrast to the realism of the rest of the work.

Despite the realistic elements and the anti-Fascist tendency,

"Das Ende" cannot be considered a work of Socialist Realism. It has too many religious and mystical aspects to warrant that definition.

i. "Die Saboteure"

This Novelle was written in 1946, one year before Anna Seghers returned to Germany. Like "Das Ende" and the later written "Vierzig Jahre der Margarete Wolf" (1958), it continues where Das siebte Kreuz left off.

Die Novelle ist das Resultat vieler bitterer Gedanken, die sich die Schriftstellerin gemacht hat, und einer tiefen kritischen Analyse der jüngsten Vergangenheit des deutschen Volkes. Anna Seghers antwortet hier auf die Frage — Was weiter, wie wird sich der Kampf entfalten? — die am Ende ihres Romans Das siebte Kreuz erklang. Sie bemüht sich, zu erklären, warum in Deutschland aus den einzelnen Funken nicht die Flamme einer mächtigen Widerstandsbewegung emporloderte. 52

The story is divided into three parts. At the beginning of the first part, the outline of the entire plot is given. The rest of the Novelle is an examination of the motives that lead to the action and the fates of the men involved in that action.

The first sentence describes the unusual event around which the Novelle revolves in a manner reminiscent of Kleist: "Im

Frühjahr 1943, in einem Abschnitt der ukrainischen Front, als der Befehl an die deutschen Soldaten ausging, das Dorf Sakoje zurückzuerobern, versagten ein paar Handgranaten bei dem Sturm auf das Gehöft, das die Schlüsselstellung war." <sup>53</sup> The sabotage is traced to a factory in Griesheim on the Main. The Gestapo determines that the duds were made on 22 June 1941, the day Germany went to war with the Soviet Union. The guilt of three men is determined — Hermann Schulz, Franz Farnet, and Paul Bohland. Two of the guilty men are out of reach of the authorities — Paul Bohland has been killed in the war and Farnet is reported missing at Stalingrad. Hermann Schulz is arrested and executed. "Womit die Gestapo noch einmal vor Toresschluß bewies, daß ihre Mühlen immer weiter so emsig, so haargenau mahlten wie die des entbehrlich gewordenen, längst abgesetzten Herrgotts, genauso gründlich, genauso fein" (p. 42). This statement is ironical, as the further developments of the story show.

The narrator then goes back to the events which lead to the sabotage. Hermann and Franz have been at loggerheads since they both helped Georn Heisler escape. The day Russia and Germany go to war, however, they speak on the way to the munitions factory where they both <sup>are</sup> employed. Cycling side by side, they plan sabotage. The hand-grenades which they produce will be useless. They are joined by Hermann's friend, Paul Bohland. Although the sabotage is not discovered due to the co-operation of Dr. Kreß, also a figure out of Das siebte Kreuz, who is a chief engineer at the

factory, the efforts of the three men fail because others who have promised to join them do not. One of the biggest disappointments is Bentsch, whom we met in Die Rettung. He refuses to join because he considers the sabotage action too isolated and not well enough planned. After this initial failure, the three men give up their plan.

Part Two begins about two years later. Paul is working in another department of the factory; Franz is reported missing at Stalingrad. Hermann and Paul decide to take up underground work again. A new ally is found in the war amputee Schranz. Amid difficulties of whom to trust, a group of ten to twelve men is formed, including the once reluctant Bentsch. They distribute handbills and engage in other anti-Nazi activity. The engineer Kreis also offers his help which is cautiously accepted by Hermann, the leader of the cell.

Paul is called to arms and is killed. Hermann is arrested by the Gestapo. Fearing that the secrets of his group will be torn from him, he steels himself for the interrogation. He is relieved to find out that the Gestapo are only interested in the hand-grenade sabotage of two years ago: "Als hätten beide zusammen ein gemeinsames Maß zur Verfügung von Triumph und Bestürzung, wurde das Gesicht des einarmigen Beamten verständnisloser und und unsicherer, je triumphierender Hermanns Gesicht wurde" (p. 87).

Part Three takes place after the end of the war. Franz is a Russian prisoner and will soon be sent home. Spengler, who had been a part of the original sabotage action, comes back to find Paul and Hermann dead. From Marie Schulz he learns that the enmity between Franz and Hermann was only pretended, so that no one might guess their connection when the time came to act. Marie also confesses that she had known all along of Hermann's activity, but had not let him know this in order to ease his mind.

The Novelle concerns itself with the question of why resistance in Germany did not spread among a greater part of the population, why individual acts of resistance remained isolated in the Nazi homeland while other countries fielded a well-organized movement against the Nazis. The answers given in the official textbook of Anna Seghers are unconvincing: the terror of the Nazi organization and the isolation and division of resistance groups.<sup>54</sup> These also apply to other countries. Seghers gives in the Novelle one important reason — most people who would have resisted waited too long for the right moment. For the Communists, this moment was when Germany and Russia went to war. But this was not necessarily the correct time for non-Communists. Again, the split in the working class is seen to be the reason for the success of the Nazis. Another factor is explained by Dr. Krieb, when people saw the war ending, they wanted to survive the Nazi regime and were happy to leave foreign soldiers to give it the coup de grâce.

"Die Saboteure" is a work of Socialist Realism. The war with Russia is shown to be the moving force behind the acts of sabotage which are carried out by Communists. Since the story is set in Western Germany, the end of the war is shown to be a disappointment for the Germans who had hoped for a new life:

Die Leute sahen den fremden Soldaten manchmal verächtlich nach und manchmal gleichgültig, manchmal hoffnungsvoll und manchmal enttäuscht. Die enttäuscht waren, hatten sich die Befreiung anders vorgestellt. Sie hatten sich vorgestellt, man könnte die Freiheit wie eine Fahne auf einer eroberten Stadt hissen; sie konnten dadurch schlechterdings von allem befreit sein, was sie quälte; nicht nur von dem Druck der letzten zwölf Jahre, auch von dem Druck ihrer dreißig Lebensjahre, von dem Druck von hundert, von tausend Jahren. Sie hatten nicht damit gerechnet, daß ihnen die Befreiung nur etwas Last abnahm, so daß sie einmal aufatmen konnten und ihre Arme recken, damit es weiterging auf dem unerlässlich schweren Weg. (pp. 92-93)

9 All the participants involved in the sabotage act, and those who later take part in anti-Nazi activities, are heroic: Franz Barnet and his wife Lotte, who has already lost her first husband to the Gestapo; Hermann and Marie Schulz; Paul; Schranz; Spengler. Even Dr. Kreß, who is never quite trusted because he is not a proletarian, experiences a transformation after he has played his

part: "Ich werde euch beide heute abend wiedersehen, dachte Kreß. Ihr werdet mich wiedersehen und werdet nicht merken, daß der, den ihr heute begrüßt, ein anderer ist als der, den ihr gestern begrüßt habt" (p. 53).

The Novelle has Communist tendency. It also has a Socialist Realist setting — only those details dealing with work, living conditions and the resistance to the Nazis are described. Most of the characters are "positive heroes."

"Die Saboteure" forms a bridge between the two periods, the Emigration and the GDR years, because of its Socialist Realist nature. It is almost as though the author were giving a peace offering to the East German authorities and repudiating her previous works in order to be taken back into the fold.

#### j. Summary

Anna Seghers' writing during the last part of her time spent in the Emigration reflects both a striving to come to grips with and an unwillingness to accept the doctrine of Socialist Realism.

She had voiced her doubts concerning Socialist Realism in an exchange of letters with Georg Lukács in the years 1938-39. What she objected to was not the insistence on Communist tendency in literature; this principle she had adopted long before it was demanded. Rather, she feared that forbidding experimentation would lead to dull, lifeless literature. She believed that every age



demanded its own works of art and these could only be achieved through a trial-and-error process by the artists themselves.

Her first work published in this period, Das siebte Kreuz, reflects a conflict between the artist's natural instinct to be independent and the Party member's feeling of duty. She kept firm on the question of the right to experiment with form, using some of the condemned avant-garde techniques which she had previously employed. But the conflict is evident in the break in tendency, style and theme. In trying to please everyone a little, she created a work full of disunity, but nevertheless of considerable merit.

The second novel of this period, Transit, close to the French existentialists and Franz Kafka, marks the high point of Seghers' artistry. Perhaps coincidentally, it is far removed from the tenets of Socialist Realism, so far removed, in fact, that most Marxist critics have chosen to ignore it rather than try and incorporate it into Socialist Realism.

Most of the short stories and Novellen of this time betray signs of a return to mysticism and mythology which are not entirely absent in the novels either. "Die drei Bäume" has a mythological theme; "Der Ausflug der toten Mädchen" has a political and ethical motif but a dream-like setting; "Post ins gelobte Land" combined mysticism and Judaism; "Das Ende," which has a realistic setting, has magical aspects which remind one of

"Grubetsch" and "Räuber Woynok." Only "Das Obdach" and "Die Saboteure" are works of Socialist Realism.

One can therefore conclude that, during this time, Anna Seghers chose to and was able to go her own way artistically, apart from occasional efforts to please the Party and aid in the battle against fascism in the form of "Das Obdach" and articles written for Freies Deutschland which we have not considered here. Her artistic high point was reached when she allowed herself to write unconfined by any Party dictates.

"Die Saboteure," written almost on the eve of her departure for the East Zone, is perhaps not so much an acceptance of Socialist Realism as an attempt to gain the approval of Party officials and create a favourable climate for her return. Nevertheless, it is of great symbolic significance, for it is just this desire to gain favour which will mark and sometimes mar the later works of Anna Seghers, those written during her residence in East Germany.

5. THE GDR YEARS — 1947 TO THE PRESENT

a. Introduction

In 1947, Anna Seghers came back to Germany. She explained why she chose to settle in the Soviet Occupied Zone in a speech delivered before the Fourth German Writers' Congress in 1956:

Ich fuhr in die Ostzone, weil ich sicher war, daß dort meine Arbeit, gerade die Arbeit, zu der ich befähigt bin, in dem Kampf gebraucht und begrüßt würde, der um die neue Gesellschaft und um jeden einzelnen Menschen vor sich ging. . . . Es geht dabei um die Freiheit des Schriftstellers und seine Verantwortung.

Hier bin ich frei, denn ich schrieb und schreibe, was ich will, auf Grund meiner Fähigkeiten und meiner Erfahrungen. . . . Und mein Staat, der mit mir einen Standpunkt und eine Richtungslinie einnimmt, hilft meinen Büchern. . . .

Ich war also sicher, daß ich hier die Freiheit finde, die sich ein Schriftsteller wünscht. Aber zugleich war ich genötigt, in viel höherem Maß, als ich es bis jetzt erfahren hatte, mir Rechenschaft abzulegen, ob und wie mein Buch auf Menschen wirkt.<sup>1</sup>

Although this statement was probably meant sincerely, it has its ironic aspects, for we shall see that the freedom of which Anna Seghers speaks is different from that normally associated

with artistic creation. This artistic freedom, which she had enjoyed more or less unrestrictedly during the Emigration, was the price she had to pay for acceptance into the new East German society.

During the year she returned to Germany, Anna Seghers produced no new literary works. The following year, however, 1948, saw an artistic activity devoted to themes which were worked out in the Emigration or even before. The only new work published in 1948 was a report about her trip to the Soviet Union in 1930 — Sowjetmenschen: Lebensbeschreibungen nach ihren Berichten (East Berlin: Kultur und Fortschritt, 1948).

Three stories which originated in this year, "Das Argonautenschiff," "Die Hochzeit von Haiti" and "Wiedereinführung der Sklaverei in Guadeloupe" have exotic settings: the first mythological and the latter two Caribbean.

b. "Das Argonautenschiff"

This story describes the return of Jason to his native city after countless years of wandering. For him nothing has changed. He sees life as a series of repeated actions, although others seem to think what is happening to them is unique and important: "Ein blutjunges Mädchen, das zu Recht oder zu Unrecht als die Tochter des Wirtes galt, hatte hier von jeher vorzüglich die Gäste bedient. Ihre Ohrringe hatten geklimpert. Ein eifersüchtiger

Bräutigam hatte ihr Gebaren verfolgt wie dieser da, der ihn finster betrachtete." 2

Jason has various encounters with people in the city. Through contact with him, their lives are changed for good or for evil. Here the theme of "Grubetsch" is revived: Ordinary people, yearning for escape from their daily misery, are changed by contact with the unusual.

Jason meets the old guardian of the sacred wood from whence the materials had come to build the Argo. The ship went down despite the help of the goddess Pallas Athena. Jason sees the prow of his ship hanging on a tree branch. He recalls how the oracle had said that he and his ship would go down together, despite intervention of the goddess. He had believed this: "Stärker als Menschen und Götter, höher als beide, hoch über allem war das Schicksal" (p. 15). Jason believed he had escaped his fate when, after obtaining the Golden Fleece, he found that his ship had not waited for him and he was forced to take another. But lying under the prow of the Argo in the holy wood he keeps his rendez-vous with fate. A storm breaks the ropes which support the ship's prow and it crashes down upon Jason, destroying itself and him as the oracle had foretold.

The theme of the story is that destiny is all powerful. Jason had long eluded his fate and indeed ceased to believe in it. However, it catches up with him when he least expects it. He

dies, not for a better world as do the heroes of Socialist Realism, but so that destiny will be fulfilled.

As we have mentioned, "Das Argonautenschiff" is in part a return to the theme of "Grubetsch." The story also bears resemblance to the other stories of mythological content, set as it is in a timeless context with emphasis placed on the repetition of the same events throughout eternity. "Das Argonautenschiff" represents another turning away by Anna Seghers from the present and the class struggle to the world of saga and mythology, that timeless world where destiny rules men's lives.

This concept is the antithesis of the thinking behind Socialist Realism which affirms man's ability to influence his fate and so the outcome of the class struggle. The return to saga and myth on the part of Anna Seghers indicates the difficulty she experienced in working within the confines of Socialist Realism at this time in her life.

c. "Die Hochzeit von Haiti"

In a letter to a student of German literature, dated 28 February 1963, Anna Seghers explained that the initial inspiration for her Karibische Geschichten came during her brief stay on the island of Santo Domingo as she was en route from France to Mexico. The impressions she formed were taken in by her subconscious, for this was no study trip like the voyage to Austria

in 1934: ". . . [ich] war . . . damals viel zu müde, um meine Umgebung zu studieren. Ich nahm auch in San Domingo nur wahr, was ich zufällig sah: die kleine Kolonialstadt, Reste von spanischem Barock, moderne Villen am Ufer, dahinter erbärmliche Hütten." <sup>3</sup>

This experience was to lead to later studies:

Ich sah San Domingo nicht wieder. Doch später, in Mexico, erhielt ich Bücher von Haiti und San Domingo. Ich machte mir die Geschichte der Insel klar, die ich mit meinen Augen gesehen hatte. Ich las in englischer Sprache die Biographie des Negers Toussaint Louverture, der einer der bedeutendsten Menschen ist, die sich in der Zeit der Französischen Revolution entwickelt haben. . . .

Nun erfuhr ich aus diesen Büchern, die ich begierig las, verschiedene Tatsachen, die ich zuerst in der Novelle "Die Hochzeit von Haiti" verwertete. . . .

Ich hatte wahrscheinlich gleich die Absicht, drei Antillen-Novellen zu schreiben. Dazu war ich nach meiner Rückkehr entschlossen. Ich dachte viel an die Länder und Inseln, die ich verlassen hatte. Sie wurden mir deutlich in der Erinnerung. Was ich gesehen hatte, ergänzte sich durch das, was ich aus Büchern erfahren hatte.

Zuerst schrieb ich in Berlin und Paris "Die Hochzeit von Haiti."<sup>4</sup>

The Novelle, written in 1948, is set in Haiti during the time of the French Revolution. Michael Nathan, who had been left behind in Paris to learn the jeweller's trade, rejoins his family in Haiti. He brings not only the family's remaining wealth with him, but also Jacobean ideas. In Paris he frequented a society dedicated to the liberation of the blacks. He is disappointed to find that the whites in Haiti have so little regard for their slaves. His disappointment turns to sorrow when he finds that his fellow Jews, who are treated as second-class citizens on the island, share the opinions of the white landowners: "Jetzt, wo so viel von den Burgerrechten die Rede ist, will sie zwar jede Gruppe fur sich, aber um Gottes willen nicht fur alle."<sup>5</sup> This selfishness is also manifested by the mulattos who agitate in Paris for their own rights but oppose the freeing of Negro slaves which would be to their own social and economic detriment. Rebellion breaks out in Haiti and slaves take to the hills to fight. Among those who flee is Pierre Simon, the coachman of a certain M. Antoine. Calling himself Toussaint Louverture, he becomes the leader of the freedom fighters. Toussaint is a religious and noble-minded man. He hates neither the whites who have enslaved his race, nor the mulattos who seek to keep their darker brothers down. Horrified by the execution of King Louis in France, he offers the services of his small army to the Spanish rulers on the other half of the island, but seeing their false faith, he soon switches his support to the sorely pressed Republican government which is unpopular in Haiti. Michael Nathan



helps Toussaint to set down his offer of help in words. After a long struggle, Toussaint emerges as ruler of the country.

Anna Seghers' research into Haiti's history had drawn her attention to Toussaint Louverture, and it is really his story she is telling, although the central figure would appear to be the young jeweller who is also based on a historical character: "Es ist keine Erfindung, sondern historisch, daß Toussaint den Sohn seines jüdischen Juweliers als Sekretär anstellte. Dieser ging in der schwersten Zeit mit ihm in den Urwald."<sup>6</sup>

Michael has a child by Margot, a Negro slave girl. Thus, the title "Hochzeit von Haiti" does not refer, as is first indicated, to the marriage of the daughter of the wealthy French landowner Evremont, but rather to the union of Margot and Michael, and so symbolically the fusion of the black and white races on Haiti.<sup>7</sup>

Napoleon's accession to power proves Toussaint's undoing. Napoleon ". . . hatte schon längst beiläufig geäußert, daß er auf den Schultern von Negern Epauletten nicht dulden wollte" (p. 181). Troops are sent from France. Although decimated by yellow fever and met with courageous resistance on the part of the natives, they eventually triumph. Toussaint is imprisoned and transported to France. Michael joins his family in London, having lost his wife and daughter through the plague. Both he and Toussaint die shortly thereafter.

The suppression of liberty on the island is accompanied by

economic decline:

Die Insel war gänzlich verrottet. An reiche Plantagen, an blühenden Handel war nie mehr zu denken. Wenn einmal in manchen Köpfen der Traum gespuht hatte, Haiti könnte einem Staatsmann, sei es Toussaint, sei es Napoleon, zum Stützpunkt werden für wirkliche und mutmaßliche Weltherrschaftspläne, so waren die Träume bald versiegt mit dem Glanz und dem Reichtum der Insel. Napoleon hielt die Welt durch andere Pläne in Atem. Da war es besser, die ohnedies verkommene Insel sich selbst zu überlassen, statt zuviel Kraft an sie zu vergeuden. Sie blieb dadurch unabhängig. Zwar nicht, wie es Toussaint geplant hatte, frei und stark unter den freien und starken Republiken der Epoche. Sie war verarmt, ausgelaugt, wirtschaftlich abhängig von den reichen Ländern der Welt. Sie blieb aber ein Negerstaat. (p. 190)

"Die Hochzeit von Haiti," one of Anna Seghers' most moving stories, is marked not by a Communist tendency, but rather by a passionate championing of the oppressed which harks back to her earliest literary works. Based on fact, it evidences an historical perspective which is not distorted by a "socialist" one. As the above-quoted paragraph shows, little hope is held out that Haiti will better its situation, thus the ending is hardly optimistic. Moreover, since the story centres around a central

figure — Toussaint — the struggle for the freedom of Haiti is seen as his battle, not that of the masses. This is not in accordance with the theories of Socialist Realism. The deaths of the two principals at the end serve to underline the pessimism which is alleviated only slightly by the observation that Haiti did remain a Negro republic, some small consolation for its past and present suffering.

It can, of course, be argued that the Novelle contains a warning against political compromise; that Toussaint failed in his bid to keep Haiti free because he was deceived by the propaganda of the French Revolution which under Napoleon turned its back on the original ideals and embraced bourgeois imperialism; that he was deluded by Christian morality and ethics. This is the interpretation given in the official GDR textbook on Seghers<sup>8</sup>, one which goes beyond what is in the actual Novelle. The author preaches no political ideas here, but rather non-partisan humanity. The figure of Toussaint, which she so eloquently evokes, transcends all ideology.

d. "Die Wiedereinführung der Sklaverei in Guadeloupe"

This Novelle, written in the same year as "Die Hochzeit von Haiti," owes its inspiration to the same sources. After visiting the area (she had been on Martinique, but not Guadeloupe), the author pursued historical studies, aided by friends such as the Député for Martinique and Guadeloupe, the French poet Aimé Césaire.<sup>9</sup>

The historical period is the same as in "Die Hochzeit von Haiti." Again the author chose to illuminate an episode from the racial and class struggle of the French West Indies — the re-introduction of slavery on Guadeloupe by Napoleon.

The Novelle is more fragmented in form than the first in the Caribbean trilogy, being divided into fifteen chapters (as opposed to four in the Haitian work), all of which are separated from each other by lapses in time, some brief ("Die Neger sprachen am nächsten Tag . . ." <sup>10</sup>), others longer ("Seit diesen Ereignissen waren viele Jahre vergangen," p.246). The lack of cohesiveness is further intensified by the large number of characters. The chief heroes are the Negro Jean Rohan and the mulatto Beŕenger. In addition, numerous other historical personages appear, as well as many fictional characters. The result is a conglomeration of stories which breaks the genre of the Novelle and strains the reader's patience. The Novelle is in reality a historical novel of the French Antilles in embryonic form.

The deficiencies in form stem from difficulties in content. Anna Seghers was not confronted here with a single historical figure of overpowering dimensions as was the case in the Haitian Novelle. Rather, the opposition to the restoration of slavery on Guadeloupe — a far less glorious battle than that waged in Haiti, one which never got off the ground, in fact — was led by several men, all of lesser stature than the unique Toussaint.

Thus, the qualitative difference in the two works stems firstly from their variance in form — "Hochzeit" has a centralized plot with few figures, whereas "Wiedereinführung" possesses multiple plots with many figures. Secondly, the portrayal of the main characters is inferior in the second work. Whereas Toussaint is depicted as a brilliant and complex man, which he doubtless was in real life, Beauvais, Rohan and Berenger are slogan-spouting activists straight out of the most mediocre Socialist Realist fiction. Rohan riding around the island urging the natives to return to their work is an early nineteenth-century prototype of the Agitprop activist of the early days of the Russian Revolution. Beauvais' conflict between his love for his fiancée in France and his commitment to the abolition of slavery could have rendered him interesting. But his renunciation of love for idealism is insignificant, since he dies soon afterwards. In the same manner, Berenger's blowing up of the fort in the face of the victorious French army is little more than a suicidal gesture and reminds one of the senseless death of the stranger in "Auf dem Wege zur amerikanischen Botschaft." The author cannot be criticized for adding melodrama to the story, however, since Berenger did in fact blow himself and the fort up. Yet her choice of such a hero is curious, close as he is to the heroes of her early works and removed from the ideals of Socialist Realism.

Anna Seghers' sympathy with the Negro people is indisputable.

Yet here, as in her early fragment, "Die Wellblech-Hütte," she seems uncomfortable with her subject. In "Wiedereinführung," she chooses to idealize the Negro rather than portray him realistically. No one in the story is really black. The face of the Negress Manon ". . . sah im Mondlicht versilbert aus" (p.192). The face of Beranger, the mulatto commandant, ". . . schimmerte . . . wie polierte Bronze" (p.192). His wife, Lucianne, is thus described: "An Haut und Haaren war sie aus Gold" (p.200). This colour and metal symbolism evokes the worth, purity and perhaps strength and beauty of the characters, but it negates their Negro identity. Anna Seghers' temerity reminds one more of the guilt-ridden white bourgeois who must find euphemisms to describe the Negro than of the Communist whose conscience is clear since he disavows any responsibility for injustices of the past. Once again, the reader is reminded of the author's bourgeois origins.

"Die Wiedereinführung der Sklaverei in Guadeloupe" and "Die Hochzeit von Haiti" are both based on Caribbean history, specifically that era having to do with the struggle for black liberation which coincided with the French Revolution. From a Communist viewpoint, this is part of the class struggle. In both stories, those aspects of the Revolution which are seen by the Communist Party to have been progressive are praised, whereas Napoleon is blamed for the betrayal of these ideals. In both stories the economic source of the conflict is elucidated. Yet neither can be said to be a work of Socialist Realism. This is doubtless due

to the fact that the historical facts could not be contorted so as to provide an optimistic perspective where there was none.

e. Die Toten bleiben jung

In his article "Die nationale Bedeutung der zeitgenössischen sozialistischen Literatur" Klaus Hermsdorf distinguishes four periods in socialist literature in Germany since 1945: from 1945 to 1949 (the foundation of the GDR); 1949 to 1952 (the Second Party Conference of the SED); 1952 to 1957 (Culture Conference of 1957); and the period from 1957 to the present, i.e. 1961. More roughly sketched, he defines two distinct periods: 1945 to 1949, and 1949 to the present, i.e. 1961. The first he terms the anti-Fascist period, the second the period of the building of Socialism in the GDR. 11

One of the leading books of the first period is Anna Seghers' Die Toten bleiben jung. Composed in Mexico, the novel was re-written after her return to the GDR and published in 1949. Hence it is not a work of the Emigration in its final form but one of the GDR period. It is her first attempt to use the formal methods of Socialist Realism in a novel.

Like Willi Bredel's trilogy Verwandte und Bekannte, it is an attempt to trace the origins of Fascism. Thus, in theme it is close to "Ausflug der toten Mädchen" — but only in theme. Hermsdorf considers the novel characteristic of this first

period of German socialist literature: "In diesem Roman Anna Seghers' . . . wurde tatsächlich Gerichtstag über die Nation gehalten." <sup>12</sup>

Anna Seghers felt that there was a need for this type of book, as she explained in her speech to the Fourth German Writer's Congress (1955):

Sofort nach dem Kriege begannen hier unsere besten Freunde, sowjetische und deutsche, in Schulen und Kursen und nächtelangen Privatgesprächen, die geschichtliche Entwicklung in Deutschland und in anderen Ländern zu erklären, die Ursachen von Krieg und Frieden. Doch nicht nur der Lehrer, auch der Schriftsteller muß mit den Mitteln seines Berufes den Menschen klarmachen, warum, wodurch und wozu die Jugend, verführt und gezwungen, für den Faschismus in den Krieg zog; er muß uns begreiflich machen, wie die Vernebelung vor sich ging: stufenweise und so geschickt wie eine Fabrik oder eine Festung künstlich im Krieg vernebelt wird. <sup>13</sup>

The story begins in 1918 with the execution of a Spartakist by three officers and a soldier and ends in 1945 with the death of his son at the hands of one of the officers. Between these two deeds, a panorama of history is spun out for seven hundred pages. At the centre of the story are the murdered man's executioners and his girl friend. Thus, the novel is composed of five biographical stories which are independent of one another (although



three concerning the officers have interplay), but bound together by the thread of the murder.

The composition technique used is that of Die Gefährten, Der Weg durch den Februar and, to a lesser extent, Das siebte Kreuz: different destinies which seem often totally unconnected with one another are related in an interwoven fashion.

Inge Diersen comments on the similarity of the composition technique used in Die Toten bleiben jung and Die Entscheidung. Both novels present a situation where most of the characters are present. In Die Toten bleiben jung it is Erwin's execution, in Die Entscheidung the Spanish experience of Lohse, Hagen and Melzer. Mrs. Diersen finds that the author has forged a second set of links between the Novelle-like strands of the plots in both novels:

. . . In "Die Toten bleiben jung" sowohl wie in "Die Entscheidung" stehen die Handlungsvorgänge in engster Beziehung zum gleichzeitigen Welt- und nationalgeschichtlichen Geschehen. Durch die sich daraus ergebende Gemeinsamkeit zeitgeschichtlicher Problemstellungen werden Vorgänge in den einzelnen Handlungskomplexen miteinander verknüpft, die von der individuellen Fabel her eine nur lockere oder gar keine Verbindung aufweisen.<sup>14</sup>

The deployment of so many characters, which we have com-

mented upon in Die Gefährten, Der Weg durch den Februar and Das siebte Kreuz, is still modelled on the works of Dos Passos. The use of the Novelle technique where so many characters are involved is not as satisfying in Die Toten bleiben jung as it was in Das siebte Kreuz to at least one Communist critic. F. O. Weiskopf calls for a discussion of the Novelle technique in Anna Seghers' novels and suggests the following topic:

Bei einer solchen Diskussion könnte zum Beispiel untersucht werden, warum und wieso die Anlage des "Siebten Kreuzes" als eine Art Novellenkranz dem Stoff vollkommen entspricht und infolgedessen den Roman mit einem zusätzlichen Zauber umgibt, während in einem anderen Werk ("Die Toten bleiben jung") die novellistische Komposition, insbesondere die Verknüpfung aller Stränge der Fabel durch den Fall des gleich zu Beginn der Handlung getöteten Soldaten Erwin, dazu führt, daß der Romanbau hier und da etwas bruchig erscheint und daß manche Bezüge zwischen Menschen und zwischen Begebenheiten konstruiert wirken.<sup>15</sup>

As we shall see at the end of the discussion of this novel, the construction seems at times forced because of the point which the author is trying to make. Thus, it is the tendency and not the Novelle structure per se which leads to the chief weakness of the novel.

At this point, an analysis of the characters in the novel is

appropriate. At first glance, the "reactionary" characters seem to be personified political clichés. One of the officers, a Baltic nobleman, joins the SS; another, a Prussian aristocrat, becomes a mercenary soldier; still another, a Rhineland industrialist, supports Hitler financially from the earliest days. Yet a closer look reveals that these characters are not mere stereotypes.

Klemm is the least developed of the right-wing figures, as he dies early in the book. It is he who orders the execution of the Spartakist on most cold-blooded grounds. His car has broken down and he wishes to commandeer the one which is transporting the prisoner. Not wishing to delay himself by delivering the man to the authorities, he orders him killed. Klemm's indifference to human life manifests itself in peace time as well. Casually he plots to divorce his wife and deprive her of her son in order to marry a woman more suitable to his life style. Klemm joins other Rhineland industrialists in supporting Hitler from the outset.

Klemm's destiny is inextricably involved with that of his chauffeur and former adjutant, Becker. Becker has saved Klemm's life during the war and is devoted to him with medieval servility in peace. He gladly performs illegal acts for the right-wing organization to which Klemm belongs. But servant turns on master when Klemm, pushed by his new bride, decides to fire the chauffeur whose information has gained him the divorce. Blind with rage at this ingratitude, Becker drives himself and his employer into

the Rhine in an act reminiscent of "Der Führerschein."

Belonging to the Klemm plot are his wife, Leonore, a passive, shadowy figure and their son Helmut, who through the influence of his paternal relatives becomes a despicable little Hitler Youth and, finally, an inhuman SS man. The son is much like the father. He kills, not out of lust or vengeance, but simply for convenience' sake. Helmut von Klemm is undoubtedly the most hateful figure in the whole novel, yet the detailed description of his development from hero-worshipping orphan to SS "Übermensch" is a fascinating and believable account of the perversion of the human soul through false ideology.

The main fault of Wenzlow, Leonore's brother, is that he is a military man, raised in a family with old Prussian military traditions, and thus unsuited to any other life. He does not reflect upon orders given him, which is why he shoots Erwin when his brother-in-law gives the command. He joins the Freikorps less out of a sense of hatred for the left-wingers who want to destroy his way of life than out of a sense of duty to the established order. Because he can do nothing other than soldiering, he goes to China as an officer in Chiang Kai-shek's army:

Er wäre von sich aus nie auf ein Mittel verfallen, von seinem Weg abzubiegen. Er hatte von sich aus keine Begabung, keine Reiselust, keine Flucht von Ideen, es sei denn das geheime Grauen vor der im Nichts zer-rinnenden Zukunft. Jetzt bot sich ein solcher Ausweg,

als gäbe es eine geheimnisvolle Macht, die den gemessenen, nicht mehr junglingshaften Wenzlow an einem versteckten Zipfel packte.<sup>16</sup>

He is initially against the Nazis, but later feels that their ideology will strengthen the demoralized German army. His narrowness is manifested in his letters from China, which betray a great deal of Prussian arrogance. Yet he is not prepared for the way in which foreign captives are treated during the war by the SS. The things Helmut Klemm reveals to him in their conversation at the Russian front appal him, but he is afraid to show his feelings, an act of cowardice which he later regrets. He orders the execution of Hans Geschke in the last days of the war for the same reason that he put a bullet through his own head — because it is the duty of a Prussian officer.

Wenzlow is a limited man, but hardly an evil one. His devotion to his Aunt Amalie and to his black-sheep daughter reveal the depth of feeling of which he is capable.

Anna Seghers' characterization of Wenzlow and his family is strongly criticized by E. Knipowitsch in his article "Lehren der Geschichte" in Neue Welt (23, 1950). Having reminded the reader that Wenzlow's life has been no better than that of the other murders of Erwin, he continues:

Und doch werden Wenzlow, seine Familie, sein Leben und sein Tod in einem ganz anderen Licht gezeigt, als die

Geschicke der übrigen Mörder. Mehr noch: die Tante und Erzieherin Wenzlows, das alte adelige Fräulein Amalie, erscheint — trotz einiger grotesker innerer und äußerer Züge — am Schluß des Romans fast als Symbol der Nation oder wenigstens als Symbol einiger der Nation eigenen wertvollen Züge.

Wie erklärt sich das? Was ist der Grund für den offensichtlichen Irrtum der großen und revolutionären Künstlerin? Anna Seghers steht nicht allein da. Offenbar ist die Legende von der "Volksverbundenheit" des landlosen und landarmen preußischen Adels, von dem "Demokratismus" der Tradition Friedrichs II. überaus zählebig, wenn sich ihr Einfluß selbst auf die fortschrittliche Intelligenz auswirkt . . .

Der Traditions- und Wurzellosigkeit des Kapitalisten von internationalem Schlage Klemm und des Landknechts Lieven stellt Anna Seghers Wenzlow entgegen, dessen . . . einziger Besitz in seinem alten Namen besteht. . . .

Somit geht Anna Seghers bei der Charakteristik Wenzlows nicht von der historisch-objektiven Erkenntnis des reaktionären Wesens des besitzenden oder auch des besitzlosen preußischen Junkertums aus, sondern von den subjektiven und illusorischen Empfindungen eines Adelligen. Das aber kann keineswegs die Grundlage für

eine realistische Darstellung der Wirklichkeit bilden. (pp. 121-22)

One figure which puts the Wenzlow family in a more positive light, the daughter Anneliese, is not mentioned by Knipowitsch. Anneliese von Wenzlow is a figure of hope among the "reactionary" characters. At first a fervent HJ member, she begins to doubt Nazism as she comes under the influence of her school pastor. He is sent to concentration camp, but Anneliese, an embarrassment to her family, persists in her questioning. Upon hearing the conversation of two Communists in a train, she seeks one of them out in order to learn more. Her rejection of Hitlerism, which began on religious grounds, has led her to Communism.

Probably the most interesting personality in the novel, and surely the most evil, although amoral would be a better word, is the Baltic nobleman, Ernst von Lieven. Paul Rilla finds himself forced to admit this: "Durchläuft man nämlich von dieser Figur her das übrige Romanpersonal, so wird man finden, daß die Interessantheit in dem Maße abnimmt, wie die Personen an positiver gesellschaftlicher Bestimmung zunehmen." 17.

Lieven is a total cynic. He coldly seduces, then leaves women, often ruining their lives in the process (one of his victims is Leonore Klemm). Although he does not believe in Nazism, he joins the Party, which he uses as he serves it. Initially he is a liaison man between the military and the Nazis. Soon he

joins the SS. During the war he is heavily implicated in the extermination camps.

Another side of his character is revealed in his relationship to his proud, cold cousin Elizabeth. Elizabeth has only one desire in life, to return to her family estate near Riga. Her motivation in this is not a craving for wealth, power or social position, but simply a soul-destroying homesickness. To attain this goal, she marries Lieven. He is oddly touched by this strange girl, a sentiment which would seem at first totally foreign to him. Inge Diersen interprets Lieven's remark: "Sehen Sie, Kamerad, da drüben die paar Birken in den Kiefern. Sieht in der Sonne wie Schneeflecke aus" (p.12), as being a revelation of his character. "Lievens Charakter wird in diesen zwei knappen Sätzen in der für ihn typischen Ideologie der Identität von Ästhetizismus und Barbarei präzise umrissen. Mit ihm tritt ein Typus des imperialistischen Militaristen auf, dessen ideologische Wurzeln nicht direkt im Preußentum, sondern in der Nietzsche-Tradition liegen."<sup>18</sup> This is an observant remark and explains in part Lieven's affection for Elizabeth.

In Lieven, as in Klemm and Wenzlow, Anna Seghers set out to portray a type. But the type soon fascinated her and became a person. So as not to mar the characterization of the main figures, the wild Nazi ravings are left to minor ones, such as Lütgens.



Most Communist critics agree that the reactionary characters have their positive aspects. This is especially true of the women — Leonore Klemm, Anneliese von Wenzlow and Elizabeth von Lieven, whose death is portrayed as a tragedy. Inge Diersen sees them as being trapped in their class position and thus unable to realize their potential.<sup>19</sup> This may be true of the above-mentioned women, but it cannot be said of the grande dame who dominates so many of the characters. Tante Amalie disdains Hitler because he offends her aristocratic sensibilities, yet her perception is keener than that of most workers, whose judgement is supposed to be founded on firmer basis: "Ich habe dem Mann ja nie recht getraut, eurem Führer. Der Mann hat mir nie recht gefallen; er ist ein Mann von schlechter Rasse. Er, der soviel Wesens aus der Rasse macht, er ist ein Mann von schlechter Erziehung und von üblen Gewohnheiten. Er ist ein Mann ohne Verlässlichkeit und ohne Glauben" (p.661).

On the reactionary side, but of a different class than the characters previously discussed, is the farmer Nadler. He was escorting the prisoner Erwin when the murder occurred. Nadler has no redeeming qualities. Cruel to his wife, indifferent to his children, he shirks his farm work and longs for the time when he can be a soldier again. This is the only life he feels is worthwhile. He is very much like Zillich. Both men have a lust for power and a need to obey a superior. Nadler is a hero-worshipper. His first idol, Captain Degenhardt, is soon replaced by Freiherr

von Ziesen, a local Stahlhelm leader. Nadler loses his admiration for Ziesen when he hears Goebbels speak: "Nadler glich jenem Riesen im Märchen, der immer dem Stärksten dienen will und immer von einem starken Herrn zu dem noch stärkeren übergeht, vor dem sich der vorherige Herr duckt" (p.231).

Nadler joins the SA where his savage tendencies are put to use. His death at the hands of a French soldier (he is shot in the back while taking a shower) is a just fate.

"Im Hintergrund von Nadlers Landsknechtstum steht seine kleinbäuerliche Misere, seine Hingabe an den Militarismus ist Flucht, Scheinausweg aus der Klassensituation." <sup>20</sup> This judgement by Inge Diersen is only partly correct. Nadler finds his life miserable and colourless and is drawn to situations where he can shine in uniform. But if he lived in a classless society, there is no reason to think that he would be any different. Nadler dislikes work, he wants to be better than his fellows, he is bellicose by nature. He would be a destructive element even in the most just of societies.

Having dealt with the "reactionary" figures, we can ascertain that, although the author sought to depict the origins of Nazism by describing different types of Germans who allowed it to flourish, these types more often than not became fully developed human portraits which weakened the tendency of the novel.

The "progressive" characters are generally less interesting than their right-wing counterparts. Erwin, who is murdered at the outset of the story, is more a symbol than a character. Nevertheless, in the short description of him, most of the traits of the positive hero are present. In the trenches he has become a convinced Communist: ". . . sein echtes Leben hatte genau genommen im Dezember 1916 begonnen. Damals war ihm das erste Flugblatt im Schutzengraben in die Hände gefallen. . . . Als er das Flugblatt in seine Uniform steckte, da wußte er, endlich hatte ihn der gefunden, den er unruhig und unbewußt suchte" (pp. 7-8). He has participated in revolutionary activity with his friend Martin. When his time comes to die, he faces death defiantly: "Ihr könnt jetzt Schluß mit mir machen. Ihr kommt aber auch noch dran" (p. 12).

Tamara Motyljowa remarks that in almost every major work of Anna Seghers there is a psychological leitmotif, a certain situation or object which reappears throughout the story and which is connected with certain feelings of the main characters. In Die Rettung, it is the anniversary of the rescue of the miners, in Das siebte Kreuz, the cross itself. In Die Toten bleiben jung, the figure of Erwin fulfills this function.<sup>21</sup> Erwin lives on in the memory of Marie, in the person of his son and in the subconscious of his murderers. He is the thread which ties all the plot strands together.

Determined to bear and keep Erwin's child, Marie marries the widower Geschke and brings her son up with his children. Marie is

a hard-working proletarian woman who understands nothing of politics. Her life is devoted to her son. She does not dare to participate in anti-Nazi activity for fear that she will not be present to welcome her son back at the end of the war. Late in the war she realizes that acts of sabotage may help to bring her son home sooner. One may admire Marie for her constancy (she has never forgotten Erwin, of whose fate she is ignorant), her determination and her industry. Yet somehow she never comes alive as do the women of the opposite camp.

Her husband, Geschke, is more interesting because of his inner conflict. A Social Democrat, he marches in the funeral procession for Rosa Luxemburg and bears arms during the general strike. But he argues violently with his Communist neighbour Triebel about politics. Geschke changes his attitude towards Communism when the Nazis come to power, but it is too late. Geschke's problem is that he can no longer believe anything. "Und das war die Wurzel seines Leides; er glaubte an nichts mehr" (p.356). Towards the end of the war, Geschke contemplates sabotage, but is killed in a bombing attack before he can act.

Anna Seghers uses Geschke to illustrate the Communist contention that it was the followers of the Social Democrats who trusted in their false leaders and precipitated the split in the working class which opened the door for the Nazis. The fight with Triebel is symbolic of this split between working men: "Dieses Motiv der langjährigen, hartnäckigen Feindschaft zweier Klassen-

genossen zieht sich durch mehrere Kapitel des Romans. Die gegenseitige Entfremdung zweier ehrlicher Proletarier, die keine gemeinsame Sprache bei der Abwehr des Faschismus finden können, wird von Anna Seghers als Ausdruck der historischen Tragödie der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung dargestellt." <sup>22</sup> Marxist critics are happy to be able to find a Party line interpretation for this part of the novel: "Wer ist der Hauptschuldige an der langjährigen Spaltung innerhalb der deutschen Arbeiterklasse? In künstlerischer Logik entfaltet Anna Seghers die deutliche Antwort auf diese Frage: die Führung der Sozialdemokratie." <sup>23</sup>

Since Marie's son Hans cannot receive the "correct" political education at home, he must look for it elsewhere. A rather construed twist in the plot effects this. Marie recognizes Martin, Erwin's friend, many years later. She sends her son to find out where he lives. Hans becomes fascinated with the man and takes to visiting him, although he is unaware of his connection with his real father. So the ideological bond between father and son is provided by Martin. This leads the story to the boundaries of mysticism. Martin is too weakly drawn to be the positive hero which Communist critics seek in the novel. His appearances are few, but his influence on Hans is proportionately all the greater. Yet Martin seems more a tired-out fighter than a barricade stormer, as his monologue with the dead Erwin reveals: "Die Menschen sind alle tot, auf die wir damals bauten. Die Luxemburg, Liebknecht, Jogisches, alle tot. . . . Die großen Feuer sind ausgebrannt; die

großen Stimmen erloschen; das Reich fällt ihnen glatt in den Schoß" (pp. 266-67). Knipowitsch finds this monologue of Martin's melancholy. He deplores the lack of activity and optimism in the depiction of Communist figures:

Bilder von dem in die Zukunft gerichteten politischen Kampf — das läßt der Roman von Anna Seghers vermissen.

Ebenso entbehren die aufopferungsvollen Taten der von der Verfasserin beschriebenen kommunistischen Helden der Aktivität, der "agitatorischen Kraft".

Der Tod des Kommunisten Lämmle im Gestapokerker, der Tod Bergers, der beim Ankleben von Flugschriften verhaftet wurde, werden als ein Akt passiven, stummen, stoischen Heldentums hingestellt. Aber für die besten Söhne der deutschen Arbeiterklasse ist ein ganz anderes Verhalten unter der Folter und auf der Richtstätte charakteristisch.<sup>24</sup>

Hans was doubtlessly intended as a positive hero, a reincarnation of his father, but the characterization fails. What does emerge is a fascinating study of how a young German Communist conducted himself when faced with the prospect of serving in Hitler's army and fighting the Soviet Union. Hans joined the Hitler Youth with the intention of acting as a fifth columnist. With a few others, he puts up Communist posters and engages in other small acts of resistance. His chance to fight Fascism

comes when Martin asks him to go to Spain with him, but he declines, saying that his place is in Germany. "Wenn ich hier bleibe, dann wird mein Leben auch richtig verwertet. Zu mir haben unsere Freunde gesagt: Wir brauchen dich. Sie haben gesagt: Gerade dich" (p. 475). Hans is inducted and first serves on the Western front. When war breaks out with Russia, he has to fight those whose beliefs he shares. To his amazement, he shoots Russian soldiers:

Er hatte Sichel und Hammer erkannt, und er hatte trotzdem geschossen. Das Zeichen, auf das er von Klein auf an unzähligen Orten der Stadt gestoßen war, im Haus, auf der Straße, auf Bahnen, auf Schulheften, auf Ruß gemalt und auf Schnee. Er hatte aber darauf geschossen. Weil alle darauf geschossen hatten. Warum hatten alle geschossen? . . . Wie kann man verraten, wenn man es vorher weiß? Warum war er, gerade er; der eine? Es half ihm nichts, daß ein paar Millionen dabei waren. Ob Dutzende, ob Millionen, gerade er ~~der~~ der eine. (p. 568)

He contemplates deserting to the partisans, but is dissuaded by his friend Zimmering who believes that they should wait for the better moment: "Wir haben aber viel mehr zu tun. Wir müssen viel mehr dazu bringen, nicht nur uns zwei" (p. 571). Zimmering is killed before the right moment comes.

In the meantime, Hans becomes guilty of war crimes along

with other German soldiers. The memory of a young woman whose child he gave over to an officer, to be killed haunts him: "Warum hatte er gehorcht? Weil er damals noch nicht gewußt hatte, was mit dem Kind geschah? Und wenn er es vorher gewußt hätte? Wahrscheinlich wußte jeder nur einen Bruchteil von aller Gemeinheit. Man müßte, um zu der ganzen Gemeinheit zu kommen, die Bruchteile alle zusammentun. So konnte ein jeder sagen: Ich habe das Kind nur dem Nächsten gereicht" (p. 642).

When Hans finally decides in the last days of the war to defect to the Russians (an act which could hardly be construed as important, since the outcome of the war had been decided), he is caught along with five others. The officer who orders his execution is Wenzlow, the man who had killed his father. Wenzlow recognizes his father in him:

Sie hatten ihn umgelegt und verscharrt. Wie aber war er jung geblieben. Wahrscheinlich waren längst alle tot, die damals mitgemacht hatten. Er selbst, er fühlte die Last des Lebens untragbar, schwerer als ein Greis. Doch dieser Bursche vorhin, der zweite von rechts, der hatte den Kopf zurückgeworfen wie ein junges Pferd. Der Tod schien ihm nichts anzuhaben. Sie waren ihm über die Brust gegangen, die Noske und Lichtschlag, die Kapp und die Lüttwitz. Wie aber war er jung geblieben! Die Nazis hatten gerade ihm den Himmel auf Erden versprochen, er hatte sich aber nichts



vormachen lassen. In allen Mühlen hatten sie ihn zermahlen, seine Knochen hatten geknirscht; sie hatten ihn in den Krieg geführt, von Schlacht zu Schlacht; er hatte sich aber nicht totschießen lassen; er war jung geblieben. Auch jetzt, wo alles verloren war, war er bereit, noch einmal alles auf eine Karte zu setzen. (p.697)

It is to achieve this rather contrived ending that the author has pressed her material into a sometimes artificial mould. The ending, however, is surpassed by the epilogue in artificiality. Hans' girl friend Emmi is expecting a child. The cycle is about to be repeated. This final note is unacceptable even to most Communist critics, reducing as it does the immortality of the class struggle to a matter of biological reproduction.<sup>25</sup>

The main fault found with the work by Communist critics is that the "positive" figures are too weakly drawn and pale in comparison with the "negative" ones. Tamara Motyljowa finds not one "progressive" figure among the novel's main characters. "Das fortschrittliche demokratische Lager wird in dem Roman hauptsächlich von Gestalten zweiter und dritter Bedeutung vertreten, obwohl die Menschen dieses Lagers bei der Wichtigkeit, die sie für das Leben des Volkes haben, ein Recht darauf hatten, die Aufmerksamkeit der Verfasserin viel mehr zu beanspruchen."<sup>26</sup>

Other Communist criticism had to do with the author's portrayal of the historical reality of the times. Inge Diersen regrets that the connection of the "Monopolbourgeoisie" with the

military cast plays a smaller role in the novel than it did in actuality, although this aspect of German history is satisfactorily detailed in Klemm's and Lieven's dealings with their associates for Western taste. Mrs. Diersen also finds that the composition of the novel does not reflect well enough the actual dialectic of class relations: ". . . die Handlungsführung tendiert zu einem mechanischen Nebeneinander, die volle Kontinuität der Wechselbeziehungen zwischen den Klassen erscheint nicht durchgehend als tragendes Element der Fabel." 27

Nevertheless, the novel was greeted with enthusiasm in East Germany and Russia. Tamara Motyljowa called it ". . . ein bedeutendes Ereignis in der Entwicklung nicht nur der deutschen, sondern auch der internationalen fortschrittlichen Literatur." 28 West German criticism generally views the novel as a literary disaster.

Die Toten bleiben jung represents an attempt on the part of Anna Seghers to trace the origins of Nazism and sing the immortality of the Communist movement using the artistic methods prescribed by Socialist Realism. Because of the necessity of taking the Communist view of history into consideration, it is not always a historically realistic account. The realism of the novel is also marred by the categorization of the characters into types, for types know no conflict. In her speech before the Fourth Writers' Congress, Anna Seghers said on this subject:

Keine packende Fabel ist denkbar ohne Konflikte. Alle

Bücher, die Menschen packen, packen sie durch die Fabeln, durch die Konflikte, auf denen die Fabeln beruhen. . . . Nur im Konflikt kann der dargestellte einzelne Mensch seinen Charakter enthüllen, alle seine privaten und gesellschaftlichen Beziehungen. Im Konflikt zeigt es sich, für was er sich entscheidet, und warum er es tut. Im Konflikt zeigt sich erst die Perspektive, vor der er und wir stehen. ~~Und der~~ Autor, indem er diese dem Leser klarmacht, zeigt seine Parteilichkeit.<sup>29</sup>

It is this lack of conflict which makes most of the characters in Die Toten bleiben jung rather sterile. However, in typecasting her characters, Anna Seghers conformed to the dictates of Socialist Realism.

Nevertheless, a break in the Socialist Realist execution of the novel becomes apparent when the rightist characters take on a certain fascination. This involuntary breathing of life into characters which are supposed to remain types shows that Anna Seghers was still more of an artist than a Party puppet at the time of writing Die Toten bleiben jung.

f. "Die Rückkehr"

This Novelle was first published in 1953 in the two-volume Bienenstock edition of Seghers' collected stories, where the date 1949 was given to it. It is a variation on the theme of "Das Ende"

and the later story Der Mann und sein Name (1952).

Werner Funk, a German soldier, returns home to wife and children after being released from a Russian POW camp. His family lives in what is now the Russian Zone of Occupation. Funk has had enough of politics and goes to West Germany, where he feels he will be left in peace by the authorities. He finds work and plans to send for his family.

Despite the comfort and freedom which life in the West affords, Funk is disappointed. His sense of class consciousness is revived as he is nauseated to find strikes broken by force and old Nazis in leading positions. He returns to the Soviet Zone for good to participate in the building of a new society.

Despite its theme, which is Socialist Realist, the story has never gained popularity in East Germany, perhaps because of an overdose of tendency, which leaves its characters and their conflicts lifeless. The spokesmen of life in the West, for example, are either war criminals, relatives of SS men or war mongers. Naturally, such people can do little to influence the proletarian Funk. The tone of the story may be deduced from the passage describing the hero's feelings as he leaves West Berlin after a visit: "Als Funk nach diesem Besuch über den Potsdamer Platz ging, war ihm zumute, als trüge er Siebenmeilenstiefel. Hinter der gegenüberliegenden Häuserwand begann eine andere Welt, die sich bis zum Stillen Ozean erstreckte, eine Welt mit neuen Lebens-

gesetzen und neuen Zielen und Plänen. Sie war glasklar und zugleich geheimnisvoll wie die Zukunft. . . . Was hinter ihm lag, war schon am Vermodern."<sup>30</sup> This passage, besides betraying the unfair and schematic categorization of the "good East" versus the "bad West" which pervades the story, provides evidence of two important aspects of Socialist Realism which are present in this work. The first is the depiction of Communism as an international movement which is evoked here in the picture of the new world which stretches from the Potsdamer Platz to the Pacific Ocean. The second, and perhaps more important, element is the portrayal of Communism as the way of the future, which is usually referred to as the presentation of the historical or socialist perspective. The bright future runs through the story like a leitmotif: Funk's daughter refuses to leave her school in the East because only there can she learn about the future; Funk wonders what the future of his children will be in the West and is told that by then there will have been another war; finally, he returns to the socialist part of Germany because there the future is being built whereas the capitalist part is recreating the past. The depiction of the future is considered new material won for literature by the method of Socialist Realism: "Wo unsere Kunst zuruckbleibt, eng, schematisch und blaß wird, ist daran nicht die Methode schuld, die im Gegenteil von dem Künstler verlangt, das Leben in seiner ganzen Vielfalt und Tiefe zu zeigen. Er ist nicht beschränkt worden, im Gegenteil, ein gewaltiges Element ist dazugekommen: die Entwicklung in die Zukunft."<sup>31</sup> It appears, however, that Anna Seghers

did not fully succeed this time in portraying the development of the new life. Of "Die Rückkehr," Tamara Motyljowa writes: "Die inneren Triebfedern der Entwicklung des demokratischen Deutschland sind nur undeutlich, gewissermaßen angedeutet. Und das neue Leben entsteht aus dieser Erzählung von Anna Seghers leider weniger vollständig, als man es sehen möchte." 32

Early post-war socialist literature in Germany was generally occupied with three main themes: the turning away from Fascism, the decision for Socialism, which was accompanied by conflicts and doubts; the acceptance of new responsibilities to the new society. "Die Rückkehr" details all these stages and may therefore be considered a bridge between Die Toten bleiben jung, which is concerned with the origins of Fascism, and the later works which deal with the responsibilities of building Socialism in the GDR.

Although the story is listed by Wolfgang Joho as among her most important later works, together with Die Rettung, Das siebte Kreuz, Die Toten bleiben jung, Der Mann und sein Name and Die Entscheidung<sup>33</sup>, it remained largely ignored in both East and West Germany. The reason for this, which we have already mentioned, is also given by Jürgen Rühle. Recalling that after writing Die Toten bleiben jung, Anna Seghers returned to her Novella-like techniques which had previously been used with such success, he concludes: "Die Schriftstellerin irrte sich aber, wenn sie glaubte, durch einen Sprung in der Methode, einen Rückgriff auf

die novellistische Gestaltungsweise, der von ihr gefürchteten 'scholastischen Schreibart' entgehen zu können. Der Pferdefuß blieb: die kommunistische Parteilichkeit." 34

9. Die Linie

This "Pferdefuß" is the dominating aspect of the next work to be considered, Die Linie, a collection of three stories published in 1950 (Die Linie: Drei Erzählungen [East Berlin: Aufbau, 1950]), all three were probably written in 1949.

The setting of the first story, "Überbringung des neuen Programms an das Sudkomitee," is China during the Civil War. A messenger is sent from the Central Committee to bring the new programme to the Committee of the Communist Party in the southern "red" provinces. Only with great difficulty and after a long voyage does he reach his destination. He learns that the new programme which he is bringing the committee is identical to the one they have devised in their isolation.

In "Die Kastanien," Gilbert hears about the Hitler-Stalin pact in a French jail. His cellmate, Dupont, loses faith in the Party despite Gilbert's efforts to explain the sense of the pact to him. Gilbert, who has previously shown no literary talent, begins to write letters justifying Moscow's position. These letters, destined for the Party leadership, are not smuggled out of prison but are given to the prison director by the false Dupont. The

director becomes convinced that Gilbert is receiving information from the outside, since he is using Stalin's very language. One phrase in particular seems to bear this out: "Soll Stalin jetzt für andere die Kastanien aus dem Feuer holen?"<sup>35</sup> But it is only much later, on a prison ship bound for Africa, that Gilbert has the opportunity to read Stalin's words.

"Die gerechte Verteilung" is set against the backdrop of Russia in 1928. A commission goes to the Volga area to deliver the decisions of the Fifteenth Party Congress. Kusmin, a native of that region, accompanies it. He visits his mother and stepfather and learns that the latter has had trouble with others in the Kolchos over the question of proper distribution of the profits. The stepfather insisted that first the costs be considered and then each person be rewarded according to the amount of work he had done. This is also the decision which the Party has come to, the commission reveals. Further, it is the method advised by Karl Marx, but the stepfather had never read Marx.

The three stories have a common theme: "Es handelt von der Linie der kommunistischen Parteien, die es vermag, den Angehörigen einer solchen Partei in einer gegebenen Situation das entscheidende Kettenglied in die Hand zu geben, 'das die ganze übrige Kette nach sich zieht.'"<sup>36</sup> This is a quotation from Stalin and it is Stalin to whom Anna Seghers dedicated the first edition of Die Linie (this dedication was omitted in the 1960 edition). The stories are



a glorification of Stalinist thought and are peppered with quotations from the great leader.

The conflict in each story is a result of the isolation of Party members who are responsible for the working out of the Party line. In each instance, they choose the right path, guided by Communist ideology. Stalin's phrase, "Wieder ist das Selbstverständliche das politisch Richtige gewesen," quoted in one of the stories, is seen by H. Ihering to be the theme of all the stories.<sup>37</sup> Thus, the Chinese messenger did not need to deliver his news about the change in agricultural policy. The Party line had guided the committee to the right answer. In the same manner, the French Communist, Gilbert, knows what is happening in the outside world despite his isolation in prison:

. . . er kennt die Voraussetzungen des deutsch-sowjetischen Nichtangriffpaktess vom Jahre 1939 so genau, daß er in der Gefängniszelle Stalins Formulierung von den "Kastanien, die die Sowjetunion nicht für andere aus dem Feuer holen würde" gebraucht, eine Formulierung, die er offensichtlich nicht kennen kann und durch deren Äußerung die Gefängnisleitung auf eine falsche Fährte gelockt wird.<sup>38</sup>

And the Soviet peasant takes measures which are in accord with Marxist theory, although he has not read Marx. "Die Praxis des gesellschaftlichen Handelns selbst ist die Probe auf die Richtigkeit des Marxismus-Leninismus."<sup>39</sup>

Communist criticism of the stories confines itself mainly to

comments on their political aspect. Although M. Jelenski finds "Die gerechte Verteilung" ". . . konstruiert und nicht der Wirklichkeit abgelauscht. . .,"<sup>40</sup> a judgement which applies to the other two as well, most critics content themselves with statements such as this one in the official GDR Seghers textbook: "Diese Erzählungen erschienen vor der 2. Parteikonferenz der Sozialistischen Einheitspartei Deutschlands; sie unterstützten die Partei bei der Erziehung ihrer Mitglieder im Geiste des Marxismus-Leninismus."<sup>41</sup>

Die Linie indicates the lengths to which Anna Seghers was willing to go in abandoning her artistic principles, which she had upheld in theory and practice during the Emigration, in order to please the SED bosses. These stories represent the high point of Communist tendency in Seghers' works, as well as the low point of artistic creativity.

#### h. "Friedensgeschichten"

These six short stories written between July and October of 1950 are vignettes of life in the newly formed German Democratic Republic.

"Das Urteil" describes how a dissatisfied farm worker, Franz Müller, leaves the German Democratic Republic to find a better life in the West. In West Berlin, the authorities offer him fantastic sums of money if he will agree to serve five years in

Vietnam. He tells them he is fed up with their wars and goes home. There he is happy to find that conditions seem improved and that the prosecution which he had expected because of his complaining attitude and his flight will not materialize.

Lest anyone take this story as true criticism of life in the GDR, the author explains the grounds for Müller's dissatisfaction in the first paragraph: "Ein Landarbeiter namens Franz Müller im Dorfe L. war mit sich selbst uneins und mit den Zeitläuften, mit seinem Dorf, mit seiner Arbeit, mit der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik. Er wußte nicht, daß er im Grunde auf sich selbst wütend war." 42

The portrayal of the authorities in West Berlin solely as recruiters of mercenaries is biased. However, a bit of realism does creep into the story. Müller leaves the East Zone primarily because he fears recrimination for his negative attitude. The fact that he is not tried is the basis for the happy ending, while being an inadvertent indictment of the harsh conditions that persisted during this time in the GDR.

In "Die Umsiedlerin," a refugee woman is badly treated by the farmers with whom she is quartered but achieves a somewhat better life because she gets assistance from the Communist Party.

"Der Traktorist" relates how a man who loses a leg when his tractor runs over a grenade is given new hope at the thought that

the authorities might give him an artificial limb so that he can go on working. His desire to continue his labours on land which is not his own gives new inspiration to hitherto sceptical farmers.

In "Der Kesselflicker," Franz Bardusch, who has lost a leg in the war, travels around as an itinerant tinker in a dog cart decorated with a peace dove. His relationship to the people he meets, his knowledge of whom is gleaned from the pots he mends, his love for his dog, as well as his feeling for the landscape he traverses give the story an idyllic air. The political overtones mar this. Franz is constantly asked by his clients, who seem badly infected with the Cold War virus, whether another war is coming. His denials lead them to consider him a peace symbol.

The protagonist of "Der Landvermesser" is an old surveyor, who, although he works for the new government, cannot come to terms with it. He secretly dreams of the days when his former master, a count, possessed all the land that is now being divided up between the peasants. The surveyor is described at the outset as being a lonely and somewhat odd fellow, so it is not surprising that he nurtures these ideas.

Perhaps the most blatantly propagandistic of all the stories is "Das Erntedankfest." A formerly bitter, taciturn refugee to whom the government has given land and a new life wishes to express his thanks, but cannot find the words. At the harvest

festival, he appears in rags, pulling a cart filled with rubbish, upon which hangs a sign, "Das verdanke ich Hitler und seinem Krieg!" His wife follows him, well-dressed, sitting on a wagon piled high with corn, upon which hangs a sign, "Das verdanke ich der Sowjetunion und der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik!" (p.73). This incident is also related in "Entstehung des neuen Menschen," a rambling collection of anecdotes about the "new person" in the GDR which was written to glorify the first Five Year Plan.

All of the "Friedensgeschichten" describe rural situations in the newly formed German Democratic Republic. The message of the stories is implied in their title — working for socialism is working for peace. Discomforts must be cheerfully borne, for they pale beside the horror of atomic war. Anna Seghers was very active at this time in the peace movement. Already in 1949 she had worked on a committee for the first World Peace Congress. In 1952 she addressed the Peace Congress in Vienna. Most of her speeches made in the early fifties reflect this concern. Unfortunately, they also reflect the hysteria of the Cold War years, a tone which creeps into these stories.

The Party critics like Klaus Hermsdorf, were satisfied, however: "Anna Seghers' 'Friedensgeschichten' . . . sind Beispiele für die humanistische Parteinahme der sozialistischen Literatur zu den bewegenden Problemen der Zeit." <sup>43</sup>

i. Die Kinder

This volume, published in 1951 by Aufbau Verlag, contains three stories, "Die verlorenen Sohne," "Das Obdach," which has already been discussed in this dissertation, and "Die Tochter der Delegierten." The stories are located in different countries — China, France, Poland — but the theme is the same: even the children of Communists must undergo hardship and suffering. Their childhood is not carefree, but often a precarious time of preparation for the coming struggle.

"Die verlorenen Sohne" are two little Chinese boys whose father, a revolutionary leader, cannot take care of them. They are brought up by a doctor who shares their father's ideals. When he dies, the children fall into the hands of reactionaries. Only the elder one survives and his trials have formed him into a hardened fighter of whom his father, when he finally is reunited with him, can be proud.

Poland under Pilsudski is the setting for "Die Tochter der Delegierten." The widow Felka has been chosen as a delegate to the Union Congress in Moscow. She must travel there illegally, since the Communist Party is outlawed. Her eleven-year-old daughter, Jozia, stays at home by herself, hiding so that the neighbours will not discover that the mother has gone away alone. The child is lonely. To combat this, she follows her mother's trip in her thoughts. She dreams of Liebknecht and Luxemburg and

the flag which flies in the USSR but which is forbidden in Poland. "Wenn sie nur hätte mitfahren können! Es gab aber viele Kinder, kleine Chinesen und Neger, die warteten jetzt wie sie in Stuben, in Höhlen, in Schiffen. Im Grunde genommen war ihr Alleinsein kein rechtes Alleinsein."<sup>44</sup> This quotation illustrates the didactic, infantile tone in which the story is written. Although this account was written about children and not for them, it resembles a propagandistic primer.

Die Kinder, like Die Linie and "Friedensgeschichten," is a work of Socialist Realism. The stories may seem trite and even embarrassingly poorly written to the Western reader, but their Communist tendency and the positiveness of their little heroes has endeared them to East German critics and perhaps even to the East German reading public.

J. Der Bienenstock: Ausgewählte Erzählungen in zwei Bänden

In 1951, the first volume of a two-volume edition of Anna Seghers' stories was published by Aufbau Verlag. The title, Der Bienenstock, was taken from a house in Southern France where the author had lived.

The collection begins and ends with a Rahmenerzählung, a traditional method of tying the various works together. Traditional too is the appearance of the author at the end as chronicler. (This was abandoned in the 1963 edition.)

The selection is a mixed assortment of Novellen, short stories and fairy tales. There are some significant omissions, such as "Grubetsch" and "Die Ziegler." Aufstand der Fischer was probably left out for reasons of length. Thus, the first story in the chronological arrangement is "Bauern von Hruschowo," leading the reader to believe that Seghers began her literary career as a Socialist Realist. This false impression is further nurtured by the omission of "Auf dem Wege zur amerikanischen Botschaft," a work whose political tendency had been praised but whose style was in sharp contrast to the dictates of Socialist Realism.

Not every work in the Bienenstock collection is Socialist Realist in form and content (although such stories dominate the second volume). The fairy stories and myths are represented by "Die schönste Sage vom Räuber Woynok," "Sagen von Artemis," and "Die drei Bäume." Nor did the editors claim to have included all of Seghers' short works. Nevertheless, one gets the distinct feeling that the short narrative works of the author have been so selected and arranged as to give a slanted history of her literary development.

This misleading impression was remedied in the 1963 three-volume Bienenstock edition which includes "Grubetsch," "Die Ziegler," and "Auf dem Wege zur amerikanischen Botschaft." This new edition reflects the increasing willingness of Communist critics to consider Seghers' work in its entirety.



k. Crisanta

The heroine of this story, which was published in 1951 (Crisanta. Mexikanische Novelle [Leipzig: Insel, 1951]), is a sixteen-year-old Mexican orphan. Brought up by a kind foster family, Crisanta knows nothing of her origins. Only one memory of her earliest childhood remains — of a safe, protected place which she remembers as blue.

She goes to Mexico City to work in a tortilleria, takes a lover and begins to learn to read at evening school. But Crisanta is too slow and shy. She leaves the school and soon loses the interest of her lover, Miguel, who is a class-conscious young worker. He deserts her and she becomes a whore. She finally returns to her foster home, pregnant and penniless. One day, as she is sitting on the ground with her child, hawking oranges, a sudden gust of wind causes her to put her head under her rebozo, the shawl in which Mexican women carry their babies: "Auf einmal fiel ihr der Ort wieder ein, an dem sie als Kind gewesen war. Das unvergleichliche, unbegreifliche tiefe und dunkle Blau. Das war der Rebozo, das Umschlagtuch der Frau González gewesen, und was dahinter strömte, ihr Volk!"<sup>45</sup>

The rebozo is much used in Mexican literature as a symbol of Indianism. Its use here as the Novelle motif heightens the national element in the story. But the picture of the Mexican people streaming behind the rebozo of Senora González is out of place in

this account of a simple, dull girl whose political sentiments never are awakened, even by her politically aware lover.

Crisanta is a vignette of typical Mexican life among the poor. Fiestas and colourful market scenes are vividly described. Attention is also paid to details about economic and social factors influencing the lives of the people. Thus, the story conforms to the demands of Socialist Realism in that it has both narodnost and tipičnost. The tendency is anti-clerical, anti-capitalist and socialistic, but not really Communist. Nowhere is mention made of Russia or the Communist Party. Although former Mexican governments are criticized, the present government (presumably that of President Cardenas) is presented positively.

The failing of the work from a Socialist Realist standpoint is its lack of a positive figure. Crisanta is a weak, simple, unlucky girl. Her lover, Miguel, has some of the attributes of a positive worker figure, but his callous treatment of Crisanta loses him the reader's sympathy. The González family are kind people but totally politically unaware and could not be considered "positive" from a Communist viewpoint. This feature of the work undoubtedly contributed to its cool reception in East Germany. Both Crisanta and the later written "Das wirkliche Blau," another Mexican-inspired story, received very little notice in the GDR.

Anna Seghers would seem to be trying to make up for the story's lack of Communist tendency at the end by tacking on the ill-fitting

ending. Despite this artistic blemish, Crisanta is an interesting work whose best feature is its rich evocation of the vivid and colourful Mexican scene.

1. Der Mann und sein Name

At the Second Party Conference<sup>o</sup> of the SED, Walter Ulbricht called for works of literature created in the spirit of Socialist Realism, in which the new man, the activist, was to be depicted. In the story Der Mann und sein Name (Berlin: Aufbau, 1952), Anna Seghers traces the development of a former SS man to worker and activist. It is her first lengthy treatment of reality in the GDR and was widely acclaimed there. Alexander Abusch's judgement is representative of East German reaction to the story: "Diese Erzählung, die besonders in ihrem schönen Mittelteil den ganzen Zauber der literarischen Meisterschaft Anna Seghers' offenbart, ist wie eine endlich errungene Selbstverständigung der Dichterin im Übergang zu der Gestaltung des Neuen."<sup>46</sup>

Walter Retzlow joins the SS in the last years of the war. When the Third Reich stands in ruins, he takes the name of Heinz Brenner, a dead resistance fighter, in order to cover his tracks. A double life now begins for him. As Heinz Brenner, he is respected in the factory where he has found work. As Walter Retzlow, he is engaged in anti-government activities with his former colleagues. He joins the SED, initially to prevent his

double life from being discovered, but soon comes to believe in its ideals. He finally confesses his treachery and is tried. The courts find him innocent, but he is expelled from the Party. Renzlow must start again from the beginning to build up the trust and confidence he once enjoyed.

East German criticism of the story has confined itself mainly to stylistic questions. Anna Seghers' brief, spare style had manifested itself as early as in Aufstand der Fischer. In "Bauern von Hruschowo" she told the story of three generations of peasants in a few hurried pages. This tendency to reduce the narrative to the bare essentials is accentuated in Der Mann und sein Name, sometimes to the point that the story is almost incomprehensible:

Als ein wesentliches Hauptmerkmal des Stils von Anna Seghers fällt die Konzentration und Verdichtung auf. Es gibt hier keinen überflüssigen Satz, kaum ein unwichtiges Wort. . . . In der Novelle "Der Mann und sein Name" geht die Raffung teilweise so weit, daß für den, der nicht mitzudenken, mitzuarbeiten und intensiv zu lesen vermag, die Erzählung den Eindruck eines Gerüstes, ja einer bloßen Konstruktion macht, die erst ausgefüllt werden muß.<sup>47</sup>

The Russian critic, Tamara Motyljowa, also finds fault with the sketchiness of the story:

Die ganze Erzählung ist in der für Anna Seghers

kennzeichnenden knappen, lakonischen Weise geschrieben. Jede Zeile, jedes Detail ist vollkommen am Platz und voll tiefen Inhalts.

Doch eine so betont lakonische Form hat auch ihre Gefahren. Manchmal ist die Knappheit der Erzählung auf die Spitze getrieben, und das führt zu fragmentarischen, unvollständigen Gedankengängen.

Von vielen Personen — und zuweilen grade den positiven — wird zu wenig und nur flüchtig ausgesagt. Die Verfasserin deutet vieles nur kurz an, gibt da eine Skizze, wo man ein großangelegtes Gemälde sehen möchte. Und dies hat zur Folge, daß die Schilderung der neuen deutschen Wirklichkeit in einem bestimmten Maße dürftig erscheint.<sup>48</sup>

In the discussion of Der Mann und sein Name which was carried on in the pages of the East German weekly Sonntag, Paul Wiens claimed that the story's main defect stemmed from a discrepancy between form and content and suggested that the proper treatment for such a broad subject was the novel form. Annemarie Auer disagreed with him: "Es ist schön, etwas Wesentliches vom Menschen unserer Tage in so einfachen klaren Linien abgebildet zu sehen. Da ist nirgends Verarmung, Schematismus; denn alle wesentlichen realen Vorgänge spielen sich in ihrer Zwiespältigkeit auch im Helden selbst ab. Alles Wichtige tritt plastisch hervor. Und das sittlich und historisch Richtige behält recht."<sup>49</sup>

A more serious defect than the brief style is the fact that most of the story is simply unconvincing. Renzlow/Brenner does not really acknowledge his mistakes; thus, his rehabilitation is without substance. The secondary characters lack credence, since they remain fuzzy, indistinct figures.

Der Mann und sein Name is Anna Seghers' first major treatment of GDR life. This fact, coupled with the strident pro-Communist tendency which the work proclaims, is the basis for the praise and excitement it generated in East German literary circles:

"Der Mann und sein Name" gemahnt an die Notwendigkeit ständiger Wachsamkeit gegenüber den tückischen Ränken der Feinde, gemahnt daran, welche große Arbeit noch zu leisten ist, um die Hinterlassenschaft des Krieges und des Faschismus nicht nur in der Volkswirtschaft, sondern auch im Bewußtsein der Menschen restlos auszu- tilgen. Und gleichzeitig ist aus der Erzählung deutlich der siegreiche Vormarsch des neuen Lebens herauszuspüren, das alle Hindernisse auf seinem Weg hinwegräumt. 50

m. Der erste Schritt

The final story included in Der Bienenstock (1951 and 1953), Der erste Schritt, was published separately in 1953 by Aufbau Verlag. It was written in 1952. It is subtitled "Erzählung," but its form is closer to that of the classical Novelle cycle, hence it resembles a twentieth-century Decameron.

After an international congress, a group of delegates gathers for an informal discussion. Each tells how he or she has come to join the international peace movement.

In a letter to a reader, dated 13 January 1961, Anna Seghers states that some of the stories were told her by acquaintances. "Hendryk," in particular, was a friend with whom she had stayed in Spain during the Civil War. He was later shot by the Germans.<sup>51</sup>

Comparison with Die Gefährten is unavoidable, as Jürgen Rühle remarks:

. . . hier wie dort eine übernationale Gemeinschaft von Kämpfern, die, dem Kommunismus verschworen, gegen die kapitalistische Welt zu Felde ziehen. Doch vermag diese Erzählung nicht zu überzeugen, nicht zu erschüttern. Entzieht man ihr ihre ideologische Stütze, die schematische Teilung der Welt in ein kommunistisches Friedenslager und ein Lager monopolkapitalistischer Kriegshetzer, so schrumpfen die Helden zu kleinen kommunistischen Flugblatt-Verteilern zusammen, Helfershelfer eines Systems, unter dessen Terror die legitimen Nachfolger der Gefährten verbluten: die antikommunistischen Freiheitskämpfer in den Ostblockstaaten.<sup>52</sup>

Just as Seghers' story is tendentious in the extreme, so is Rühle's criticism. This is symptomatic of what has happened to

Anna Seghers and, indeed, to German literature since the end of the Second World War. Books written in one part of Germany are rarely reviewed objectively in the other part because of the tendentious content or simply the ideological differences between reviewer and reviewee.

With the exception perhaps of her Karibische Geschichten, Anna Seghers' literary output since her return to East Germany has been condemned in the West and lauded in the East, often undeservedly in both cases. The author of Transit and Das siebte Kreuz has been transformed from a German writer into an East German writer. How much of this is due to her own decision will become apparent in the course of the further examination of her oeuvre.

Between 1953 and 1958, Anna Seghers published nothing new. She was working on Die Entscheidung and plagued by illness during this time; nevertheless, it is a long silence for so prolific a writer.

#### n. Brot und Salz

The silence was broken with the appearance of this collection of three stories, "Brot und Salz," "Vierzig Jahre der Margarete Wolf" and "Die Saboteure," which was written in 1946 and has already been discussed in this dissertation.

"Vierzig Jahre der Margarete Wolf" (1958) is a continuation



of Das siebte Kreuz, as was "Das Ende." The heroine is Wallau's sister, an experienced fighter for Communism. She adds some hitherto unknown details to Wallau's story and draws a parallel between the battles of the twenties, the Hitler years and the present efforts of the SED. She tells the narrator of her many relatives who took part in these struggles: of her husband and brother who died in concentration camps, of her own and her sister-in-law's arrests, of her child who died from the cold because her husband had lost his job for political reasons, of her nephews who were sent to Nazi foster homes. Modestly she concludes:

So was Besonderes war's ja nicht, mit den Sachen verglichen, die jetzt auf der Welt passieren, hier in unserem Betrieb und in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik und in der Sowjetunion und in China und mit dem kleinen russischen Mond, der um die Erde rumjagt. Aber in manchen Sachen steckt doch auch etwas von uns drin. Wir haben doch ausgehalten, wir haben nicht lockergelassen. 53

The story may be named for Wallau's sister, but it is Wallau himself who stands at the centre of the narrative. Anna Seghers is obviously doing some repair work on Das siebte Kreuz. Communist critics had felt that Ernst Wallau, the only possible positive hero, had gotten short shrift in that novel. Now they have been presented with what they had demanded: Wallau's history

as a dedicated Communist, one of the founders of the KPD, in fact; his trials and tortures; and his long-lasting effect on others, especially on his two little sons who were put into Nazi reform schools but remained true to the teachings of their father, even up to the present day, where they are continuing the fight for Communism in West Germany.

"Vierzig Jahre der Margaret Wolf" was received in the GDR in the spirit in which it was offered. It was immediately put on the curriculum in GDR schools. During the school year 1958/59, it was to be read in the tenth grade of the Mittel- and Oberschulen after Das siebte Kreuz. The teachers were warned about the difficulties their students would have with the language and were told to concentrate on the figure of Ernst Wallau to gain the students' interest and to fill the students with the fighting optimism of Margaret Wolf.<sup>54</sup> Because the story is told by a simple working woman, it was deemed especially useful:

Diese kleine Erzählung kann bei geschickter Darbietung und Auswertung eine große Hilfe sein für die sozialistische Erziehung unserer Schüler. Der Deutschlehrer hat hier eine gute Möglichkeit, von der Literatur her zu unterstützen, was am "Unterrichtstag in der Produktion" an Erziehungsarbeit geleistet werden muß: Unsere Jugendlichen sollen die Arbeit im sozialistischen Betrieb kennen- und schätzenlernen, sie sollen Hochachtung empfinden vor den Menschen, welche die

materiellen Güter unserer Gesellschaft produzieren, sie sollen ein engeres Verhältnis zur Arbeiterklasse gewinnen.<sup>55</sup>

It is obvious what prompted Anna Seghers to write this epilogue to Das siebte Kreuz. It is equally clear that even if her heart was in her task, her artistic talents refused to co-operate. This writer can only agree with Marcel Reich-Ranicki's observations: "Alles wird nämlich nur registriert und mitgeteilt, nichts hingegen wird gestaltet. . . . Die . . . Geschichte kann nicht einmal als eine schlechte Erzählung bezeichnet werden, denn Anna Seghers hat sich damit begnügt, den politischen Fragebogen einer Familie Wolf auszufüllen."<sup>56</sup>

At the other end of the political spectrum, Wolfgang Joho, who had praised the style of Der Mann und sein Name, which even many Communist critics thought too sparse, lauded "Vierzig Jahre der Margarete Wolf": "Diese ganz knappe, ganz einfache, fast schon puritanisch sich jedes Beiwerks enthaltende Geschichte ist ein Hoheslied [sic] auf die anonymen Kämpfer der deutschen Arbeiterklasse. Sie konnte und durfte vielleicht in keiner anderen Form geschrieben werden."<sup>57</sup> He praises Seghers' ability to leave out that which is not essential and relate only the most germane points. The author discussed this herself in a speech to the First German Writers' congress (4 - 10 October 1947). At that time she affirmed her belief that the writer did not possess the freedom to say everything, but only that which was necessary to make reality

understood.<sup>58</sup> This statement, besides having far-reaching political implications, also held artistic connotations for her.

In "Brot und Salz," subtitled "Nach ungarischen Begebenheiten" (1958), so much is left out that no recognizable reality is evoked. The story is set in Hungary in the fall of 1956. The Hungarian uprising was a difficult subject to tackle, and one would have to give Anna Seghers much credit if she had attempted to do so.

Omitted, however, are the street battles in Budapest; omitted the Russian tanks which invaded Hungary. The story concentrates on one episode, which must be fictional. Some peasants have revolted against the government and hanged the local Party secretary. Their liberation attempt fails when the former landowner comes back from exile and tries to get back his estate. He is driven away by the peasants.

"Es war mir sehr darum zu tun, schnell eine Erzählung zu schreiben, aus der die Menschen hier im Lande besser verstehen konnten, worum es ging," wrote Anna Seghers to a Hungarian student concerning this story.<sup>59</sup> This haste may account for the confused, hurried style. The many characters, who remain merely names, overburden the story, break the genre and frustrate the reader. Throughout most of the story it is difficult to understand what, if anything, is happening. The attempt to enlighten GDR citizens would have failed, even if "Brot und Salz" had contained a believable explanation.

Anna Seghers' ties with Hungary are as old as her ties with Communism. She married the Hungarian sociologist Laszlo Radvanyi in 1925 and through him had found her way to the Communist Party. One of her oldest and closest friends was Georg Lukács, with whom she had disagreed in the early thirties on the question of Socialist Realism, finding his view too narrow. Now he became a minister in the "renegade" government of Imre Nagy. The thought of old and respected comrades turning away from Moscow, committing the most serious of Communist crimes — sectarianism — must have shocked Seghers profoundly. Her reaction seems to have been a fanatic acceptance of Communist orthodoxy in the face of this threatening reform movement. In the light of this, one can understand the absolutist dialectic of her later works.

o. Die Entscheidung

Speaking at the first "Kulturtag der Sozialistischen Einheitspartei" in 1948 on the development of East German literature, Otto Grotewohl said: "So wird im Schaffen unserer Künstler die heroische Poesie der Arbeit immer mehr zum Inhalt ihrer Werke werden. Sie werden nicht nur den heldenhaften Kämpfer an der Front gegen Faschismus und Reaktion darstellen, sondern auch den nicht minder heldenhaften Kämpfer am Hochofen oder in der Grube, auf dem Felde oder im Laboratorium." 60

Some eleven years later, Anna Seghers responded to this call with her long-awaited "magnum opus" about life in the GDR, written

from 1957 to 1959. In an interview published under the title "Über ihre Schaffensmethode," she states that she had begun work on it in 1954, but became ill and started almost from scratch in 1957.<sup>61</sup> Die Entscheidung may be regarded as a continuation of Die Toten bleiben jung, since it takes up chronologically where that novel left off and some of the same characters reappear.

The critics in the German Democratic Republic immediately acclaimed it a masterpiece of Socialist Realism. In his review, "Anna Seghers, 'Die Entscheidung'" (Der Bibliothekar [13, no. 9, 1959], p. 994), H. W. Baum says:

Zweifelloos handelt es sich um eines der politisch und künstlerisch bedeutendsten Werke unserer Gegenwartsliteratur. Auf jedem Schauplatz der Handlung charakterisiert Seghers Menschen und Situationen, in denen die moralische Stärke der Volksmassen zum Ausdruck kommt. Die Gruppierung der handelnden Personen und auch die Proportionen in den einzelnen Handlungszügen selbst widerspiegeln das Typische und Wesentliche der gesellschaftlichen Struktur des jeweiligen Schauplatzes. Sie geben Auskunft über die Klassen- und Machtverhältnisse und über Formen und Inhalt des Klassenkampfes.

In a similarly enthusiastic vein, Klaus-Hermsdorf states: Anna Seghers' episches Meisterwerk "Die Entscheidung" stellt eine neue Qualität im sozialistischen Roman

gerade durch die realistische Bewältigung der nationalen Thematik dar . . . [es] setzt einen neuen Maßstab für die künstlerische Bewältigung der nationalen Problematik, er beweist die nationale Bedeutung der sozialistischen Literatur ebenso, wie er ihre nationale Aufgabe unseren Schriftstellern vor Augen stellt.<sup>62</sup>

Criticism from other Socialist countries was equally positive: "Sowohl in dem tiefen Eindringen in die Psyche der Menschen als auch in dem breiten Erfassen des Lebens übertrifft der Roman 'Die Entscheidung' bei weitem alle früheren Werke von Schriftstellern der DDR über die Gegenwart," declared Tamara Motyljowa, the noted Russian critic.<sup>63</sup> It is not surprising that the author was awarded the Nationalpreis erster Klasse for the novel the year it came out.

Anna Seghers defined her intentions in writing the novel:

Mir war die Hauptsache zu zeigen, wie in unserer Zeit der Bruch, der die Welt in zwei Lager spaltet, auf alle, selbst die privatesten, selbst die intimsten Teile unseres Lebens einwirkt: Liebe, Ehe, Beruf sind so wenig von der großen Entscheidung ausgenommen wie Politik oder Wirtschaft. Keiner kann sich entziehen, jeder wird vor die Frage gestellt: Für wen, gegen wen bist du? — Das wollte ich an verschiedenen Menschenschicksalen zeigen.<sup>64</sup>

That the author sees the world dialectically would seem to be merely a natural outgrowth of her Marxist beliefs. It is the acuteness of this dialectic — those who fail to make the right decision, i.e. for Socialism, must die — which seems uncharacteristic of her. This absolutist attitude cannot be understood in the light of Das siebte Kreuz or Transit, for her position as a writer had changed with the advent of Communism in one half of her native land, with her resettlement there, with her acceptance of the Cold War Party line. It is the author of Die Linie, not of Transit, who is speaking here. As we have mentioned ~~in~~ our discussion of "Brot und Salz," the shock of the Hungarian uprising drove her even closer to Communist orthodoxy.

The portrayal of a world divided into two camps necessitated a division of the plot. In Transit and Das siebte Kreuz, one plot was used; in Die Toten bleiben jung, parallel plots. In Die Entscheidung, Anna Seghers' tendency towards the episodic, which has often been remarked upon in this dissertation, is intensified as the plot shifts from the steel mill in Kossin (the actual plot centre) to the U.S.A., France, Mexico and West Germany. East German critics, as well as the author herself, have defended this loose plot structure, which could be termed chaotic: ". . . dieser Handlungsführung liegt das Bestreben von Anna Seghers zugrunde, welthistorische Zusammenhänge auch dadurch aufzudecken, indem sie dazu beiträgt, 'das Gefühl zu entwickeln, mit wieviel Ländern man zusammenhängt, auch wenn man sich gar nicht von der Stelle bewegt.'" 65



The novel is divided into ten chapters. There are forty-two other subdivisions. As there is no single plot, there is no central hero, but rather a complex of figures belonging to each of the plots.

The time span covered in Die Entscheidung is four years, from 1947 to 1951. During this period, the Russian Occupied Zone became the German Democratic Republic, the "Two Year Plan" was implemented and the first "Five Year Plan" introduced. In the other part of Germany, the Federal Republic was established and the first signs of the Wirtschaftswunder began to manifest themselves. It was Anna Seghers' intention to give as detailed and accurate a picture of life in the two Germanies as possible. She worked with graphs and tables, ascertaining as she wrote matters like the fine points of rationing in certain years.<sup>66</sup>

The technique of inner monologue, used so effectively in Transit and Das siebte Kreuz, has been abandoned in favour of an omniscient third-person narrator. The author reports "objectively" what the characters think: "Dabei, dachte Robert, müßte der Günter froh sein, daß die Ella den Heiner nimmt und ihm ein Halt ist. Von ihren früheren Liebschaften abgesehen, die sie nicht mehr hat, seit sie mit dem Heiner geht, ist die Ella ein ganz vorzügliches Weib. So schön, so geschäftig, so hilfsbereit. Was will, denn der Günter Schanz? Sie ist auch politisch in Ordnung."<sup>67</sup>

The main plot revolves around the battle for a steel mill.

By setting her novel in a steel mill, Anna Seghers had followed the lead of writers like Eduard Claudius, the author of Menschen an unserer Seite, who took literature to the factories in order to describe the new workers who were building the GDR and about and for whom the new literature was being written. When Christa Wolf asked the author if she had chosen the setting because at that time the steel industry was the most important branch of East German economic production, she answered:

Nein. Nicht bewußt. Ein Stahlwerk macht einen Eindruck wie das Meer und das Hochgebirge, nur daß es der Mensch ist, der hier die Macht hat. Man sieht dort eine große Kraftentfaltung; der Mensch, der das Feuer bändigt, wirkt mächtig. Der ganze Vorgang ist so real, daß er schon wieder märchenhaft wirkt, er zeigt Wildes und Gezähmtes zugleich. Ein Martinofen ist mit nichts zu vergleichen. . . . Wir müssen aus unserem eigenen Gefühl das Verhältnis des Menschen zur Technik, zur Maschine, darstellen! 68

The workers of Kossin fight to keep the former owner, Bentheim, and the NATO powers, chiefly the United States and the Federal Republic, from destroying what they have built up from the ruins. When Western agents succeed through bribery, blackmail and trickery, in persuading most of the administrative and technical staff to flee to the West, the blow to production is counteracted by the workers who engage in a competition under the guidance of the Party functionaries.

Die Entscheidung resembles what most Western critics consider to be the typical Soviet novel: "The unfailing ingredients are a plot that involves some form of labor competition or struggle between the good of Soviet forces and the evils of bourgeois survivals, a two-dimensional superman or superwoman as hero or heroine, and the local Party secretary as the *deus ex machina* who sets all things right at the end. And the inevitable moral is 'The Communist Party knows best.'" <sup>59</sup>

The division of the world into two camps is reflected in the two main groups of figures in the novel. They are miles apart, not only geographically and ideologically but also socially. The main characters in the "Eastern" plot of the novel are workers (Robert Lohse, Thomas Helger, Lene Nohl, Ella Busch, Lisa Zech, whose simple names reflect their simple, good characters); Party functionaries (Richard Hagen, Waldstein, and Martin from Die Toten bleiben jung); and, on the fringe, intellectuals who help and often hinder East German reconstruction (Toms, Berndt, Büttner, Riedel, Rentmair). Except for Herbert Melzer, Katharina and Helen Wilcox, the characters of the "Western" plot are even more stereotyped than were the junkers and industrialists in Die Toten bleiben jung. Walter Jens calls them "Bilderbuchkapitalisten, Tintenlemuren und wilhelminische[n] Schatten," <sup>70</sup> while Jürgen Rühle remarks:

In der Tat gelang es der Seghers in diesem Buch, den Vorwurf zu entkräften, den die Partei gegen Die Toten bleiben jung erhoben hatte, daß ihr nämlich die

Reaktionäre interessanter gerieten als die Kommunisten. Diesmal sind die negativen Figuren, die Kapitalisten, Junker, Militärs und Kriegshetzer, genauso fade und langweilig wie die positiven Helden, allesamt sind sie nach dem Strich der Parteilinie gebürstet.<sup>71</sup>

Since the characters number over eighty, any in-depth discussion of most of them is beyond the scope of this dissertation. Most, however, are connected in one way or another with the three veterans of the Spanish Civil War, Lohse, Melzer and Hagen. It is the Spanish experience, which predates the time in which the novel is set, which ties the various plot strands together.

Richard Hagen appears only at the beginning and the end of the novel. He is a childhood friend of Robert Lohse, but made his decision for Communism earlier than Robert. Only when the two found each other again in Spain did they realize that they had travelled the same ideological road, albeit separately. They lose track of each other again until Richard comes to Kossin shortly after the war to speak to the workers there. Then little mention is made of him until he appears at the end as ". . . deus ex machina — , um mit kundiger Hand ordnend in das komplizierte Geschehen einzugreifen."<sup>72</sup> Richard is the positive Party functionary, a figure often found in Socialist Realist literature. His forerunner in Seghers' work is Ernst Wallau of Das siebte Kreuz. However, like Wallau (and Waldstein, Vogt and Martin, other Party

functionaries who appear in Die Entscheidung), too little attention is paid him. He is dwarfed by Robert Lohse, although he is the positive hero. This fact is deplored by most East German critics, who have offered various suggestions on how his role could have been expanded. Dietrich Allert suggests: "Der Melzerhandlung entsprechend hätte Anna Seghers Richard Hagen in die sowjetische Emigration führen oder ihn später auf internationale Beratungen und Konferenzen der sozialistischen Länder schicken können." 73

Richard shares some characteristics with figures like Hull of Aufstand der Fischer. He too inspires blind trust: "Sein Blick war zupackend, warm, wie früher. Robert hatte sich oft gewünscht, ihn auf sich zu fühlen, als konnte dann alles in Ordnung kommen, was ihn beunruhigt hatte" (p.72). But Richard Hagen differs from Hull in that he is a disciplined Communist, whereas the hero of Aufstand der Fischer showed anarchistic tendencies and had no party affiliation. This change in Anna Seghers' heroes has already been discussed. Beginning with Die Gefährten, they trade their anarchistic features for Communist ones.

Herbert Melzer, the second Spanish Civil War veteran, went to America, where he became a fairly successful magazine writer. He is sent to Germany on an assignment, where his growing political consciousness, which had been dormant in the United States, leads him to his death in a demonstration. Melzer leaves behind him a novel about the Spanish Civil War which he had decided to finish

in the way he felt proper, despite the objections of his American publisher. (The criticism levelled at Melzer's novel is more like that writers in Communist countries have to contend with. He is accused of ending the story too pessimistically with the death of the nurse, Celia.)

The author stated her conception of the Melzer plot:

An der Melzer-Handlung war mir auch folgendes wichtig: die drei Spanienkämpfer Richard Hagen, Robert Lohse und Herbert Melzer sind zuerst zusammen. Sie werden getrennt, ihr Leben spielt in verschiedenen Ländern und Situationen. Herbert, der in die ungünstigste Umgebung kommt, kann doch nicht aufhören, an die beiden anderen zu denken. Er glaubt, sie seien tot. In der Wirklichkeit sind die zwei am Leben und arbeiten, er aber wird zugrunde gehen.<sup>74</sup>

The symbolism of that is impossible to overlook! Melzer's life has to end in this fashion because he has delayed too long in making his decision for Communism. In this time of East-West dialectic, of either-or, there is no place for fence-sitters.

Of the three central figures, it is Robert Lohse who dominates the book, although calling him the "hero" might not perhaps be justified. Annemarie Auer judges him in the following manner: "Positiv zweifelsohne, ein Mensch, der sich bewährt, fehlt ihm doch viel, um 'Held' zu sein. Lohse ist von jener Art, die Schwankungen und Anfechtungen ausgesetzt ist."<sup>75</sup> Lohse's problem

is his feeling of inadequacy, not one of decision, for this he reached during the Nazi time. He wants to help rebuild his country, but he is not qualified for his job, nor can he meet new demands made on him. The author illuminates the problem: "Bei Lohse . . . hat mich ein Thema besonders interessiert, das ich in diesem Buch vielleicht noch gar nicht genug herausgearbeitet habe. . . . Ich meine das Verhältnis zwischen den Fähigkeiten eines Menschen und seinen Leistungen. Das erscheint mir ein wichtiges Thema in unserer Zeit." Lohse's problem is thus put into greater context: "Ob sich ein Mensch entwickeln kann nach seinem Talent und seinen Fähigkeiten oder ob er daran gehindert wird und dauernd zurückgestoßen, das ist ein wichtiger Maßstab für die Gesellschaftsordnung, in der der Mensch lebt." 76

Robert encourages others to make the right decisions. Ella Busch takes an important job in the lightbulb factory, Lisa Zech goes to acting school, Lene Nohl takes the post of brigade leader in the lightbulb factory and then leaves her husband, who is an American agent, at Robert's urging. Most important, perhaps, Robert helps the orphan Thomas Helger to find a place for himself in the new environment. Robert's friendship with Thomas has parallels in other Seghers works. Robert is the teacher who is eventually surpassed by his pupil.

Anna Seghers has had many passive heroes in her works. The active hero often is a minor figure. Robert remains passive throughout most of the novel because of his lack of confidence.

He is far less active and vital than the Party functionaries, Hagen, Waldstein and Martin. He is only able to encourage people, whereas they are able to inspire them. When the Party decides to give Robert the proper schooling so that he can continue his work with young apprentices, he finds his way to an active life. "Mit der Auffassung vom Helden in der Literatur des sozialistischen Realismus ist das Problem seiner Aktivität verbunden. Robert Lohse ist gerade deshalb als literarische Gestalt interessant, weil Anna Seghers mit ihr den Entwicklungsprozeß aufdeckt, in dem Robert Lohse zu einer Aktivität findet, wie sie dem Aufbau des Sozialismus entspricht." 77

Robert is a person who derives strength from a group. He lost his contact to Richard Hagen and like-minded friends. Then he became a problem child, joined the Nazis and was headed for a bad end when the sight of his old teacher being humiliated by Nazi toughs shocked him into reflecting on his own actions. Robert wants to go in the right direction, but he needs the help of others. Thus, he does not fit the Communist definition of a positive hero. The author herself, although she has defended the ideals of Socialist Realism, has rejected this term: "Ich kann den ganzen Ausdruck 'positiver Held' nicht besonders gut leiden, denn ich kann nicht recht verstehen, was damit gemeint ist. Ein Held ist in der deutschen Sprache offenbar etwas anderes, und ein positiver Held ist noch eine Überhöhung von Held. Unter Held sehe ich so etwas unter Ritterhelm und solche Sachen." 78



This statement is quite consistent with what Anna Seghers has said before on the subject. She adopted Socialist Realism after initial resistance because she wished to serve her Party. The fact that she has not written all her novels and stories with its rules constantly in the forefront of her mind is not surprising, for she has always approached art intuitively. Terminology has never interested her.

Two motifs are present in Die Entscheidung which are associated with the political message of the novel. The first is the joy motif which has been present in Anna Seghers' works since "Grubetsch" and Aufstand der Fischer: "Robert dachte . . . Man kann ohne Freude nicht leben" (p.464). Joy, in Robert's case as in Hull's, was connected both with love and work. The "light" motif is associated with the fight for Socialism. Waldstein's look is "wie ein Lichtschweif" (p.38); Robert finds Richard's letter "wie ein Lichtchen, dem man sich nähert" (p.69); Celia, the Spanish nurse, ". . . nutzte das schmale Licht, das jeden Tag kurz auf dem Felsspalt lag, auf Fleisch, und Blut, auf Verbandfetzen, auf Augen, in denen das Licht der Welt gesammelt war" (p.34). Light is not only mentioned in connection with the people who fight for Socialism. Robert also looked to Nazism for light. Explaining to Richard why he joined the Nazis, he said: "Wie es daheim bei uns war, das weißt du. Grau in Grau. Ich hatte solche rasende Lust in mir, auf ein helleres, besseres Leben" (p.37). Generally in literature, light is symbolic of hope. This hope can be pro-

vided by any belief, Seghers would seem to be saying.

It is not surprising that a mammoth work like Die Entscheidung is rich in small Novelle-like plots which have little to do with the main action. As F. C. Weiskopf remarks in "Die Erzählerin Anna Seghers" (Literarische Streifzüge [East Berlin, 1956], p.142), ". . . auch als Romanautorin ist sie im Grunde immer Erzählerin, wendet sie mit Vorliebe Novellentechnik an."

The Mexican plot has little to do with the main story, serving only to show the Americans as recruiters of former Nazis for their own purposes. The Meunier plot, located in Paris, serves to bring Herbert Melzer closer to his decision for Communism. The most interesting Novelle plot concerns the engineer Riedl and his wife Katharina.

Katharina has stayed in West Germany because her Roman Catholic convictions have led her to regard the system in East Germany as godless. Finally, as she is about to give birth to a child, she sets out on foot over the border, only to die as she reaches the other side. The circumstances of her departure are mysterious. Why did she make the dangerous journey on foot in her condition when she could have travelled legally and in comfort? The author does not answer this question in the novel, but when asked in an interview, she stated: "Wenn Katharina gedankenlos, vergnügt über die Grenze hüpfte — wer weiß, ob sie dadurch Menschen so helfen konnte, wie sie es jetzt vielleicht tut? Ich meine, die

Gestalt in einem Buch muß selbst nicht unbedingt optimistisch sein, um Optimismus, um richtige Handlungen beim Leser zu erzeugen." <sup>79</sup> Katharina, like Herbert Melzer, dies an exemplary death as punishment for having delayed her decision too long.

A third character meets a fate similar to Katharina's and Herbert Melzer's. The engineer Rentmair is responsible, although personally blameless, for an accident in the mill. He has no confidence that the State Security Police will clear him, so he commits suicide. Although innocent, he must die, for he has doubted the wisdom of one of the organs of the State.

Clearly, these are exemplary stories. Doubt and hesitation are punishable by death. Strangely enough, Robert Lohse, who has committed worse crimes in joining the Nazi Party, is not dealt the same severe justice. Similarly, the Fascist industrialists in the West reap not punishment but rewards for their wickedness. This severe justice is something Communism reserves for its own.


The technocrats of East Germany come off very badly in the novel. Professor Berndt and Büttner desert to the West, Rentmair commits suicide, Riedl is guilty of vacillation which leads to his wife's death, and Toms, the other engineer who stays on with Riedl, is not to be trusted since he has come from England. This attitude towards the technical intelligentsia and foreign converts is in opposition to the official Communist Party policy, making the author guilty of sectarianism, as Sabine Brandt points out in "Die

Entscheidung der Anna Seghers: Ein Roman als Purgatorium" in Der Monat (12, No. 139, 1959/60), p. 78.

The description of the geographical settings contributes to the realism of the novel: "Der Teil der kleinen Stadt, in dem Robert Lohse wohnte und arbeitete, lag zwischen dem Fluß und einer Hugelkette, dem letzten niedrigen Ausläufer eines Mittelgebirges. Das Fabrikgelände lag schon am Rand der Ebene, die im Nebel öde aussah, wie unbewohnt" (p.19; italics K.V.A.). Descriptions of East German landscapes are generally sober, detailed, accurate, often overflowing into a socio-political commentary: "Die Kirchtürme einzelner Dörfer verrieten nichts von der Erregung, die auch hier mit der Wintersaat keimte: Der Besitz der Gutsherren war unter die armen Bauern verteilt worden und unter Landarbeiter und Umsiedler. Was zu den Bentheim-Werken gehört hatte, hieß jetzt nach der Stadt Kossin-Werk" (p.19).

Descriptions of the West, on the other hand, often contain phantastic-lyrical elements:

Der Herbst zieht von der Elbe zum Rhein. Hier ruht er sich aus. Er läßt sich Zeit, als sei er zu träge geworden, um auch nur den letzten Altweiberfaden zu zerreißen. Den Bäumen läßt er Zeit, sich in allen Farben auszuglühen, und den Blättern zum Schweben, als könnten sie sich dabei überlegen, ob sie lieber in das Geäst, ihre Heimat, zurückkehren möchten oder sich endgültig dem Boden überlassen. Er wickelt die



Weinberge in weichen, goldschimmernden  
Nebel ein. Es ist, als sei vor ihm nichts ge-  
schehen, und nach ihm geschehe nichts mehr, ihm  
gehöre dieses Land, wie dem Sommer der Süden ge-  
gort. (p.51; italics K.V.A.)

In two of the three passages cited above, fog is mentioned. In the description of the East German landscape, fog renders the factory grounds ". . . ode . . . wie unbewohnt." In the West German passage, the vineyards are enveloped in ". . . weichen, goldschimmernden Nebel." This effect is retained, probably unconsciously, by the author throughout the book. The West is seen as a land of warmth and colour, whereas the East is cool and dark.

According to at least one East German critic, this "attraction" of the West is carried over into the description of action. Annemarie Auer defines the scenes set in the West as "plastisch" and "einprägsam," while terming those set in the East "blasser."<sup>80</sup> Indeed, life in the West is beguilingly described, although repeatedly condemned as superficial and reactionary, whereas the East is a barren landscape of smelter furnaces and ruins where life has few comforts. Communist critics have not, for the most part, objected to this negative portrait of socialist life. Sabine Brandt comments: "Diese Zeichnung vom Leben im kommunistischen Staat erinnert eher an die Anklageliteratur der Revisionisten als an den Sozialistischen Realismus, als dessen meisterhafte Verwirk-

lichung das Buch doch gerühmt wird. Zuweilen möchte man glauben, Anna Seghers habe sich an Marek Hlasko orientiert." 81

Anna Seghers anticipated such criticism:

Manche Freunde werden unsicher bei der Arbeit, weil sie den Vorwurf befürchten, sie hätten die dunklen und negativen Teile der Wirklichkeit allzu betont, auf Kosten des Hellen und Zukunftsvollen. Dieser Vorwurf ist richtig, wenn ihnen die Entwicklungslinie verloren ging, und sie es nicht verstanden haben, diese durch alle Widersprüche hindurch klarzumachen. Dann bleibt der Leser im Negativen hängen. Aber der Vorwurf ist falsch und hemmend, wenn ein Autor die Widersprüche gezeigt hat, damit sie überwunden werden. Wir tun gerade unseren besten Menschen einen schlechten Dienst, wenn wir ihre Lebensarbeit leicht wie ein Kinderspiel darstellen durch Verschweigen aller inneren und äußeren Konflikte. 82

Nevertheless, it is impossible to avoid the impression that the author portrays Communism as something the individual must atone for, whereas sinful Capitalism rewards its followers.

If the representation of the West is attractive, it is certainly also tendentious. The purpose of the secondary plots situated in West Germany, the United States and Mexico is to depict the activity of the enemies of the Kossiners.

The expansion of the novel to include West German life has been extensively dealt with by East German critics and has been unanimously approved of. In her article "Vom Schönen in unserem Leben Verkündend," Marianne Lange wrote:

Wie schön ihr weitgespannter Roman Die Toten bleiben jung, umfasst auch Die Entscheidung als einziger Gegenwartsroman das ganze Deutschland. Und es ist ihr damit auch möglich geworden, den ganzen Prozeß der gesellschaftlichen Entwicklung in beiden Teilen Deutschlands einzubeziehen und die erfolgreiche Lösung des Grundwiderspruchs in unserem Teil Deutschlands und ihre Ausstrahlung auf die Westzone deutlich zu machen. Von diesem Standpunkt aus verdient es dieser Roman, ein Meilenstein in der Entwicklung unserer sozialistischen Literatur genannt zu werden.<sup>83</sup>

Hella Dietz also commends the author for allowing the structure of her novel to mirror the structure of Germany, thus inviting comparison between the two systems:

Das Leben in Kossin erscheint als der historische Wertmaßstab, an dem das Leben im anderen Teil Deutschlands, in dem die alten reaktionären Kräfte an der Macht geblieben sind, gemessen wird. Die Autorin hat mit dieser Seite ihrer Romanstruktur einen Weg gefunden, wie die spezifisch nationale Situation in Deutschland, die durch das Nebenein-

ander zweier Gesellschaftssysteme auf dem Boden einer Nation gekennzeichnet ist, im epischen Werk erfaßt werden kann.<sup>84</sup>

The comparison is, of course, only valid if one accepts the author's representation of the West as typical. It is distorted, to say the least. Since the early fifties, Anna Seghers has portrayed the globe as divided in simplistic fashion into the peace-loving Communist and the war-mongering Capitalist spheres. Die Entscheidung shows no evidence of a more rational world view.

For the first time in her works, Anna Seghers introduces her readers to the United States, a country which she does not know and is thus less qualified to portray than France or Mexico, where she had lived. As a result, the American scenes are stiff and artificial. However, it is not really American life which is being reflected here but rather the foreign policy of the United States, not even the official foreign policy at that, but that of some éminence grise akin to the C.I.A. as seen through the eyes of Pankow. The U.S. is depicted as the successor to Nazi Germany. Its Secret Service men comb the Mexican jungles and the European POW and DP camps for Nazi criminals whom they school in sabotage and send to the Soviet Occupied Zone of Germany to destroy what is being built up there. Washington's envoys in West Germany aid industrialists who are former war criminals in reconstructing their armament factories.



No one would deny that such antics are common on both sides of the ideological watershed, but to portray this as typical of American life is preposterous. If the F.B.I. and the C.I.A. give the tone in America, then where, in fairness' sake, are the K.G.B., the N.K.V.D. and the East German security forces? Unfortunately, the American and many of the West German scenes are straight out of a second-rate spy story.

The Cold War atmosphere weighs heavily on the novel. An old lady sees tanks in the streets of a West German town and asks: "'Wollen die noch unsere Trummer zerquetschen?' — 'Nicht unsere Trummer,' sagte einer, 'sondern Rußland.' — 'Und unterwegs meine Kinder in Halberstadt,' sagte die alte Frau" (pp.452-53). This awkward tendentiousness only detracts from the credibility of the work, based as it is on some of the most naive policy of the Communist Party. A prime example of this is the Russian Commissar Petrow's outline of the purpose of the Marshall Plan:

Wir haben Hitler besiegt . . . wir haben die Kriegsverbrecher enteignet. Als wir die Enteignung beendet hatten . . . hat der Herr Marshall, der Außenminister der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika, einen Plan aufgestellt. Sechzehn Regierungen haben ihn unterschrieben, diesen Plan, denn er verspricht ihnen Hilfe. Nicht ihren Völkern, sondern den Direktoren und Unternehmern. Und vor allem den eigenen, drüben in den USA. Was sie alles daheim nicht verkaufen konnten, müssen

die Länder in Europa ihnen abnehmen, aber zuvor bekommen die Lieferanten die Ware in Dollar bezahlt. Sie machen die Kriegsverbrecher wieder gesund, die wir enteignet haben. (p.169)

Petrow's explanation is similar to Anna Seghers' comments on the Marshall Plan made almost ten years earlier:

Die Arbeiter Frankreichs lebten vor dem Krieg leichter als die vieler anderer Völker Europas auf ihrer gesunden und fruchtbaren Erde. Jetzt soll ihr Land den Überschuß fremder Waren schlucken, für die es keinen Bedarf hat. Sie antworten mit Streiks auf alle Versuche, ihren Lebensstandard noch mehr zu senken.

.....

Der eiserne Vorhang im Westen wird immer dichter, je mehr Eisen dort in den alten Fabriken geschmiedet wird. Die Straßen sehen in Paris nach und nach so hell und bunt wie im Frieden aus. Der bloße Anblick der vollen Geschäfte befriedigt die aber kaum, die sich mit ihrem Lohn davon nichts oder wenig kaufen können.

In Warschau betrachten die Menschen ohne Argwohn und ohne Gier und ohne den Vorgeschmack von Arbeitslosigkeit und von Krieg die ungewohnt vollen Läden in ihren Ruinen. Zu Füßen der Baugerüste, in ihrem bittersüßlichen Staub, blinken die langentbehrten

Stärke, Wasche und Kleider und Silber und Kuchen, erreichbar durch einen Lohn, der ihrer Arbeit und ihren Fähigkeiten entspricht.<sup>85</sup>

This passage has been quoted at such length because it is of special significance. It is plausible that immediately after the war, the author believed the Communist Party line concerning the Marshall Plan; that it had been designed solely to further the evil purposes of the U.S.A. and that it would hinder the European nations it was professing to help. To maintain this fiction ten years later, when she had had the opportunity to visit the West and see for herself the rise in the standard of living there simply means that she had become willing to parrot blatant falsehoods because they were Party dogma.

Anna Seghers had always advocated Communism because she believed in it. She had described adverse and unjust social and economic conditions in her literary works which had indeed existed. No one can doubt the injustices rampant in Nazi Germany, in the French West Indies during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries or in Horthy's Hungary. But never has she so distorted reality as she does in the references to the West in Die Entscheidung. This marks a new, fanatical acceptance of reality as the Communist Party describes it, even though it all too often conflicts with what the author knows to be true.

"Ich habe den Sozialismus nicht erfunden. Er ist vorhanden,

in der Wirklichkeit. Da ich selbst den Sozialismus wünsche, drücke ich aus, indem ich die Wirklichkeit richtig schildere, was zum Sozialismus drängt. Ich drücke aus, was die Menschen dazu bringt, dem Sozialismus zu helfen, und was andere dazu bringt, ihn zu hemmen." 86

In Die Entscheidung, the writer makes a good effort at describing the emotions which prompt the workers in Kossin to build up Socialism. Her attempt at revealing the motives of those who wish to destroy that system is not convincing. This is one of the great weaknesses in the novel. Instead of presenting a true dialectic between East and West, she has resorted to the "Scheinkonflikt" she so deplored in contemporary Socialist literature. 87

Predictably, criticism of Die Entscheidung is divided into two opposing camps. In the West, it was totally condemned; in the East, unreservedly praised. The West German critic, Jürgen Rühle, considers the novel a quasi-religious confession, the fervency of which was precipitated by contemporary political events: In Literatur und Revolution (Munich: Knauer, 1960), pp. 200-01, he states:

Der Roman ist theologisch zu deuten. Alle drei Opfer sind unschuldig im Sinne der Vernunft. Aber weil sie nicht blind der Partei vertrauen, weil sie eben der Vernunft folgten und dem Gewissen, sind sie auf falsche Positionen im Klassenkampf geraten, und da schlägt das Schicksal, der Weltgeist, zu. . . . Sie wurden irre im

Glauben und können nur durch den Tod entschuldigt werden. Einer metaphysischen Schuld unterworfen, sterben sie einen metaphysischen Tod.

Die Nutzenanwendung liegt auf der Hand: Der Mord an den Revolutionsministern Nagy, Maleter und Losonczy, die Verurteilung der ungarischen Schriftsteller und der mitteldeutschen Philosophen, ihres eigenen Verlegers Walter Janka, die Verfemung des Greisen Lukács — das sind terroristische Akte, deren irdische Gerechtigkeit Anna Seghers nicht einsehen kann. Doch anders als die drei Sünder ihres Buches, flüchtet sich die Seghers in den Stunden des Zweifels und der Verzweiflung an den Busen einer höheren Instanz, in den Schoß der neuen Kirche.

In the same vein, Sabine Brandt writes in "Die Entscheidung der Anna Seghers":

Mit einem manischen Drang zur Hingabe bekennt sich die Seghers zu den Greueln des Kommunismus. Sie spricht ganz offen vom Wüten der Roten Armee beim Einmarsch 1945 . . . Es wird nichts beschönigt und alles gebilligt. In der "Entscheidung" erscheint der Kommunismus als eine furchtbare Gottheit, von der niemand ein sozialistisches Kanaan erwarten kann, der man dennoch blind gehorchen muß, die Opfer verlangt. Auf dem Altar dieser Gottheit bietet sich die Seghers als Sühneopfer dar. <sup>88</sup>

Die Entscheidung marks Anna Seghers' complete acceptance of Socialist Realism as she understood it. She tries to give in the novel an all-encompassing analysis of the social and political development of Germany during the years from 1949 to 1951, and attempts to set this in the context of European and world events. Her point of view is totally communistic. "Parteilichkeit und Ausdrucksform gehören in unserem Beruf zusammen," she had declared a few years prior to writing the novel.<sup>89</sup>

Despite its obvious shortcomings when measured with the yardstick of Socialist Realism — the confusing number of characters, the lack of a positive hero, the dark and sombre description of life in East Germany, her unorthodox attitude towards the technical intelligentsia — the novel received nothing but praise from Communist critics.

One is reminded of the words of Johannes R. Becher: "Nichts ist entehrender für einen Schriftsteller, als daß sein Werk nicht ernst genommen wird . . . Nicht ernst genommen aber wird ein Werk, wenn ihm eine 'Würdigung' zuteil wird, aber keine Kritik."<sup>90</sup>

p. "Das Licht auf den Galgen"

This Novelle has its origins in the research which Anna Seghers pursued in connection with the two other Karibische Geschichten. It describes the attempts of the French Republic to organize a Negro liberation movement on the English island of Jamaica

immediately after the French Revolution. Three Frenchmen, posing as émigrés, are sent as agents of the new Republic to Jamaica to arrange the coup. Contacts are made with trustworthy and determined Negroes and mulattos. When the news comes that Napoleon Bonaparte has seized power, the leader of the trio, Debuissou, decides that the uprising must be postponed until further orders come from Paris. His junior, Sasportas, refuses to abandon the Negroes who are ready to revolt. Before they can take action, both men are arrested. Debuissou saves his life by revealing all he knows, but Sasportas refuses to betray the organizers and is executed. The third agent, Galloudec, escapes to Cuba, where he dies of fever, but not before he has told a seaman of Sasportas' bravery and Debuissou's treachery. This man then brings Galloudec's report to M. Antoine in Paris who had originally signed the agents' orders.

The story is in the form of a Rahmenerzählung. The beginning (Chapters I - III) and end (Chapter XIV) of the story are set in Paris. The actual tale (Chapters IV - XII) unfolds as the sailor, Malbec, recounts to M. Antoine how he came to be in possession of the letter. The actual narrator, however, is not Malbec, but an omniscient third-person narrator.

The major weakness in the Novelle is the portrayal of Debuissou. The author has tried to prepare the foundations for his treachery by showing his weakening of purpose even before the change in government in France. Debuissou, a native Jamaican of

French-English parentage and heir to an estate on the island, suddenly feels that his place is among those of his own class — the Jamaican plantation owners. This apparently unmotivated change in a previously dedicated revolutionary is unsatisfying.

As in the other two Antilles Novellen, the sympathy of the author is with the oppressed Negroes. They are, however, not the real heroes of the story, although there are some outstanding figures among them. Rather, it is the representatives of the French Revolution, principally Sasportas, who are the central figures. The tendency of the work is socialist and revolutionary. This Novelle is the closest one of the Antilles trilogy to what could be termed historical Socialist Realism.

The optimistic perspective at the end bears witness to this. Galoudec happens to be in a boat where he can see the gallows from which Sasportas is to be hanged. "Es war ihm zumute, als leuchte ein Licht von der Spitze des Galgens zu ihm herüber."<sup>91</sup> The "light" symbolism, which we have remarked upon in connection with Die Entscheidung, reappears here in the title and the ending. The optimistic perspective, however, is forced, since it depends on this symbolism and does not emanate from the story itself.

g. Die Kraft der Schwachen

This volume of nine stories, published by Aufbau Verlag in 1965 and Luchterhand Verlag in 1966, represents a return to the



author's favourite subject — the "little people" which she had so convincingly portrayed since "Die Ziegler" and "Grubetsch." In an interview with Gunter Caspar ("Von den Unheroischen: Gespräch mit Anna Seghers" [Sonntag, 9, 1 March 1964], p. 15), she declared:

Ich erzähle von ganz unheroischen Menschen, von scheinbar unheroischen, von ganz unauffälligen Menschen, die vielleicht schwach oder schwächlich wirken. Aber durch bestimmte geistige und seelische Kräfte werden sie wirksam, in gewissen Momenten, wenn es darauf ankommt, tun sie etwas ganz Stärkes, manchmal zeigen sie, daß sie, obwohl sie schwach sind, obwohl sie schwach scheinen, eine große Kraft haben. Sie widerstehen, sie widersetzen sich, und ihre Weigerung übt dann große Wirkung aus.

Although all were written after her return to the GDR, only one story has its setting there. Others take place in France, Nazi Germany and Russia — or in exotic climes.

In "Agathe Schweigert," the heroine is the mousy proprietress of a notions shop. Her uneventful life is changed when she decides to set off in search of her son, who is in Spain with the International Brigade. She follows him there, making herself useful to the anti-Franco forces by sewing and tending the sick. After her son's death in battle, she crosses back to France with the surviving Republicans. Passage to South America is arranged for her by a comrade of her son and she willingly accompanies her new-found friends into exile.

The narrator breaks in at this point to recount how she met Agathe Schweigert in 1941 on a West Indian island: "Ich weiß nicht, ob sie noch lebt. Hier steht, was sich von ihr weiß." 92 This personal testimony was intended to add credibility to the story. It does not, however, erase the impression that the Agathe Schweigert the reader has come to know would not have acted in the way the author has described. Having learned that her son was dead, she would have returned to Algesheim and her shop. She had always been a non-political woman. The rise to power of the Nazis, for example, had only elicited one regret in her:

Es war ihr leid, daß sie nicht immerzu bis ins kleinste den Ratschlägen ihrer Mutter gefolgt war. Dann hätte sie sich eine Kiste mit Borten und Litzen und Tressen und Garnen aufbewahrt, die sie als unverwertbar zum Teil verschuldet hatte. Wieviel weißes Zeug, sooar weißes Band war von einem Tag zum andern verlangt worden — in den Schulen hatten die Lehrerinnen aus den Fahnen die gelben Streifen herausgeschnitten und durch weiße ersetzt. (p.13)

Nowhere in the story is it indicated that she has undergone a political conversion.

The above-cited quotation shows that Anna Seghers has lost none of her ability to describe the lives of little people and, by means of minute details, the important changes in world events. Yet the story suffers, because the main character is forced to act in an untypical way. An Agathe Schweigert who quietly returned to

Germany might be believable, but she would not be a fitting heroine for a Socialist Realist work of fiction.

"Ihre Kunst ist vor allem psychologische Gestaltung,"<sup>93</sup> said Tamara Motyljowa of the author. This applies to Seghers at her best. But in "Agathe Schweigert," she disregarded the rules of motivation. What she did create, though, is a moving tribute to motherhood. As a mother whose devotion leads her to follow her son into a foreign war, Agathe Schweigert is totally believable. "So preist Anna Seghers in dieser Dichtung nicht Politik, Klassenkampf oder Revolution, sondern die Metaphysierung der Mutterlichkeit."<sup>94</sup>

In "Susi," a German girl falls in love with a French soldier at the end of World War I. She goes with him to France, expecting to be married. But he already has a wife. Nevertheless, Susi sticks by him until his premature death. She then marries his Communist friend.

The story is related by a first person narrator who knew Susi as a child and who appears at the end, seeking sanctuary from the Germans in Susi's home. One is reminded of "Der Ausflug der toten Mädchen," where the author related the tragic fates of a group of her schoolmates. "Susi" is not as imposing as that story. It is smaller in scope and Susi's fate is not tragic, simply sad. Nevertheless, this tale of love and loyalty removed from political considerations possesses a quiet charm all its own.

Similar in plot to "Susi" is "Das Schilfrohr." Marta Emrich is left alone during the Second World War on the family farm near Berlin. One day, a refugee from the Nazis turns up in her garden. She hides him in the cellar and, when soldiers come to search for him, she suggests he hide in the water, using a reed to breathe through. Steiner, the refugee, and Marta live happily as man and wife during the last days of the war. Then he leaves, returning once with some Russian officers and then with a girl. Marta tries in vain to find him in Berlin. Badly treated by her brother who has returned home, her only interest is the Party meetings for the peasants. Here she meets a refugee whom she marries. After her marriage, she again hears from Steiner. He is in Dusseldorf.

In both stories a woman loves a man, loses him and then marries a less-loved but politically more reliable one. The political tone is stronger in "Das Schilfrohr." Marta's hiding Steiner is a political act, though she may not regard it as such. His desertion of her is paralleled by his desertion of his former ideals. The story is marred by a lack of unity. It is a rambling account of Marta's life and has no real conclusion. It also suffers from trite, tired language: "Sie würde bald seine Frau und seinem Kind eine gute Mutter. Sie lebten friedlich, einer Meinung, was die äußere Welt betraf und ihre eigene Arbeit und ihre kleine Familie." 95

"Darum, dachte sie, ist er so hart und so trocken, und sie nahm seine Hand. Da war sein Lächeln gut. Sie wurden bald Mann

und Frau. Ihr eigenes kleines Zimmer war einigermaßen regenfest." <sup>96</sup> Another dull marriage, described in the same fatigued terms, this time in the story "Das Duell," the only one set in the GDR and certainly the worst in the collection.

The title refers to the battle between two educators — the progressive Karl Botcher and the reactionary Professor Winkelfried. The battleground is the minds of four workers who are trying to make up their lack of education in special courses. Winkelfried, the director of the institute, considers the men unqualified and wants them to leave his school. Botcher, a school inspector, tutors them at night, straining his health and his private life (he is supposed to be on vacation with his girl friend). Botcher triumphs, the men pass their examinations and can go on to better jobs.

Thirteen years later, one of the men thinks of Botcher and tries to look him up. He finds that he has died, presumably from overwork.

"Das Duell" conforms most closely to the methods of Socialist Realism of all the stories in the collection. Typically, Winkelfried has a Nazi past, while Botcher was sent to concentration camp during the Hitler era. The fact that Winkelfried was not demasked and punished for his Nazi activities and his obstructive tactics is indicative of the softening attitude in the GDR during the 1960's. The sentimental ending, where the wife tells

her visitor how her husband died, is suffused with the proper note of optimism by the presence of the little son. It is indicative of the Socialist Realist nature of the story as well as its awkwardness.

"Der Prophet" is reminiscent in tone and setting of Die Gefährten. Stephan, a young Communist journalist, has to flee Horthy Hungary. For years he drifts all over Europe, writing for party newspapers. He is arrested by the Gestapo in Paris and is sent to a camp in Germany. The commandant has such a high regard for the accuracy of Stephan's political predictions that he asks him to write an outline of what Europe will look like in three years. Displeased with the report, the commandant has the prophet executed. His death, however, is not without meaning: "Doch der Gefangene, dem er sich anvertraut hatte, als er noch einmal vor der Niederschrift seiner Gedanken in die Baracke zurückgebracht worden war, sorgte dafür, daß einer dem andren sein Lebensende erzählte." <sup>97</sup>

In his review of Die Kraft der Schwachen, Friedrich Albrecht claims that the model for Stephan was the Hungarian revolutionary, Gyula Alparis who died in Sachsenhausen. He also has some criticism of the story: "Die Arbeit hinterläßt . . . keinen geschlossenen Eindruck. Sie schwankt zwischen biographischer Skizze und durchgeformter Erzählung. Die Komposition erscheint unausgereift, die sprachliche Gestaltung gleitet streckenweise aus der angestrebten Schlichtheit, die an anderen Stellen des Bandes so

eindrucksvoll zur Geltung kommt, in eine gesucht wirkende Einfachheit, zum Teil in einen Tonfall unangemessener Naivität ab." <sup>98</sup>

"Wiedersehen" tells of a simple woman, not unlike Agathe Schweigert and Marta Emrich, whose example gives heart to others. It details the different meetings during the war between a Russian peasant woman and a Russian friend of the narrator. Despite having lost contact with her husband and having to flee with her children, one of whom is shot by the Germans, Pelageja Wassiljewna manages to aid others, even taking care of someone else's child. The two principals meet again by chance after the war. The old woman is astonished when the man tells her that her courage and the death of her son were as heroic and important as the sacrifices of the soldiers in the field. This story is all the more touching because the author has avoided the sentimentality which marred, for example, "Das Duell."

The remaining three tales all have exotic settings. "Der Führer" has as its location Ethiopia after the Italian conquest. A native boy leads three Italian geologists to their deaths in the wilderness at the cost of his own life. The story has mystical overtones, for the youth is really an angel of death: "Der Junge war wirklich beinah vollkommen. Ein Schimmer Gold aus der Haut heraus, aus dem Haar, aus den Augen." <sup>99</sup> The language departs from the economy of the other stories and becomes almost vulgar in its extravagance: "Die Luft war rotgold geworden und grüngold in ihrem Untergangsdunst" (p.42). In the next paragraph we read:

"Der Dunst war todgrau und todviolett" (p.42). After the boy has led the Italians into an impasse and is about to die, we read: "Es glühte noch einmal auf in Goldrot und Goldgrün und Violett, in Haß und Verzweiflung und auch in Triumph" (p.51). In destroying the symbolism of colour, the author seems to be moving away from simple, allegorical style towards a fusion of more complex reality. Indeed, there are many undertones in the narrative which suggest a complex of motives and emotions which are not spelled out. The fascination which almost borders on infatuation of one of the neologists for the boy is but one of these. "Der Führer" is potentially a more interesting work than a superficial reading would indicate. The author has not elaborated on the various implied themes, however, being content to merely hint at them.

"Tuomas beschenkt die Halbinsel Sorsa" is set in some northern clime in the distant past. An itinerant peddler, Tuomas, discovers a type of grain which will germinate during the winter and can be harvested in the spring. He goes back to his impoverished village and tries out the seed. When his success is apparent, he leaves forever with his small son, having provided the community with a better standard of living.

Some of Seghers' old mastery as a story-teller is evoked in this mythical tale, which echoes "Die schönsten Sagen vom Räuber Woynok" and "Sagen von Artemis," but it does not engage the reader's attention as do these stories.



In "Die Heimkehr des verlorenen Volkes," a tribe flees to avoid subjugation by the conquering Spaniards. They lose their civilized ways as they hide for generations in the jungle. Centuries later, they are contacted by agents of the Mexican government. Their leaders are persuaded to go to Mexico City to see President Cardenas.<sup>100</sup> They are relocated on the Pacific Coast, but demand that they be given back their old lands in Yucatan. This the sympathetic government does.

The story was probably suggested by the Lacandon people, a "lost tribe" who were found living primitively in the Mexican jungle. The setting is the Yucatan peninsula, as one can infer from the references to pyramids and the position of the sea. This is perhaps the most successful story in the collection, totally without political tendency, excepting the pretty compliment to President Cardenas.

In recounting the lives of poor, downtrodden but brave individuals in Die Kraft der Schwachen, Anna Seghers has written in the tradition of her literary production of the twenties, thirties and forties. Nowhere, except in "Das Duell," the only story which could be considered Socialist Realism, is the strident tone of optimism present which characterized Die Linie, "Friedensgeschichten," Der erste Schritt and other Socialist Realist stories of the 1950's. Marcel Reich-Ranicki, who usually finds political overtones in Seghers' post-exile writings, declared: "Wenn der Erzählungsband etwas verkundet, dann nur — wie einst im 'Siebten

Kreuz' — den Glauben an die Redlichkeit und Rechtschaffenheit des einzelnen, an seine unzerstörbaren herzlichen Gefühle." 101

r. Das wirkliche Blau

This Novelle about Mexico was first published in 1967 (Seghers, Das wirkliche Blau: Eine Geschichte aus Mexico [East Berlin: Aufbau, 1967]).

It details the long search of the Mexican potter, Benito, for a rare blue dye. The form of the Novelle is broken as Benito undergoes a change of character, when he is forced to fight for his rights during his quest. The East German critic Werner Neubert in his article "Novellistisches Meisterwerk" (Neue deutsche Literatur, 15, No. 9 [1967], p. 68) views Benito's struggle as analogous to the battle for socialism:

Die mystische blaue Blume der deutschen Romantik . . . ist bei Anna Seghers . . . in das leuchtende Farbsymbol realer menschlicher Bemühungen und Bestimmungen transponiert. In der Unvergleichlichkeit dieser Farbe erscheint die Unverlierbarkeit der humanistischen Bestimmung unseres Daseins, die nur im Kampf, nicht in der Kontemplation oder Beharrung, immer wieder neu verteidigt und gewonnen werden kann.

In actuality, the story shows little influence of Socialist Realism, for the Romantic tendencies dominate. For this reason, it

was positively but quietly received by East German critics, provoking nothing of the attention which was accorded stories like Der Mann und sein Name.

s. Das Vertrauen

Das Vertrauen, a direct continuation of Die Entscheidung, is considered by most Marxist critics to be the third book in an unplanned trilogy which began with Die Toten bleiben jung.<sup>102</sup> Its appearance in 1969 was greeted with enthusiastic applause in the Eastern part of Germany and almost unanimous censure in the Western part, an all-too-familiar pattern where Anna Seghers' recent books are concerned.

The scene is once again the Kossin steel factory, although, as in Die Entscheidung, the plot reaches out to encompass West Germany, the United States and, briefly, Mexico. The time span depicted is roughly a twelve-month period from mid-1952 to mid-1953, although via flashbacks the Spanish Civil War is evoked.

The years 1952 and 1953 saw great upheavals in the Communist world: in 1952, the beginnings of dissent with Shdanov's cultural policies were heard in Russia; the Slansky trial took place in Prague; the Kremlin doctors were arrested in 1953 on suspicion of murdering Shdanov; Stalin died, and his death was followed by the rehabilitation of some political prisoners, including the recently imprisoned doctors; Beria was executed; on 17 June 1953, East German workers revolted; some intellectuals, among them Bertolt

Brecht, demonstrated sympathy for them.

Das Vertrauen is an attempt to come to terms with these events in print. It is both a courageous and dissatisfying effort — courageous because the post-decision period which Seghers chose to term that of "trust" or "confidence" is certainly one of the darkest in the history of the German Democratic Republic; dissatisfying because the important questions posed are never really answered.

Like Die Entscheidung, Das Vertrauen has many characters: forty-seven are listed at the beginning of the book, yet there are actually many more. Most appeared in Die Entscheidung, making Das Vertrauen incomprehensible to anyone not familiar with the earlier work. Additional difficulties for the reader are the exhaustive descriptions accorded characters who never reappear: "Die Sekretärin Ingrid Obermeier — sie war mit dem Ingenieur Obermeier aus dem Elbwerk verheiratet, alle Prüfungen hatte sie mit 'Sehr gut' bestanden, Stenographie, Schreibmaschine, Russisch, auch Simultanübersetzung, im Fernstudium lernte sie Englisch — bot Richard ein paar Fachzeitschriften an."<sup>103</sup> Mrs. Obermeier is never again mentioned! In addition to being a piece of bad writing, it is also an unnecessary overburdening of the already confused reader.

A comparison of this model secretary with the office help in an American firm shows that the tendency which marked Die

Entscheidung is also present in its sequel: "Verschiedene Büroangestellte gingen herein und hinaus, geschmeidige, gutgekleidete; durch das, was sie sagten, oder auch durch ihr Äußeres bemühten sie sich, Barclay für sich zu gewinnen" (p.223). As in the earlier novel, a person is judged according to his attitude towards Communism. There are negative groups of characters in the East (those workers who demonstrate against the government on June 17) and in the West (practically everybody, but at the head of the list are the Bentheims and their associates who are conspiring to replace the system in the GDR with a reactionary one); there is a positive group (those workers who defend their factories from the strikers, and all Party officials); lastly, there is a group of people who vacillate between positive and negative, between East and West (the Berndts, Helen Wilcox).

Four "brackets" which tie the novel together can be distinguished. The first is the "Vertrauen" theme, which is introduced at the beginning through Riedl. At first glance, one asks oneself why the author chose to open the sequel to Die Entscheidung with the story of Riedl, who does not figure as a major character in either novel. Riedl is on a business trip to West Germany and stops by where his late wife had lived. He blames himself for her death: "Ich bin dreimal zu Katharina gefahren, um sie abzuholen. Sie hat sich dreimal geweigert. Das heißt, ich hab dreimal versagt. An nichts hab ich fest genug geglaubt, um sie richtig davon zu überzeugen. Sonst wär's ihr klargeworden, daß sie mitkommen

müßte" (p. 8). Here, the two themes of decision and trust are personified by the Riedls. Katharina died because she did not make her decision for Socialism in time; Riedl was responsible, too, for her death because he lacked the confidence in the system necessary to convince her.

Now Riedl has developed enough confidence in Socialism. When he is asked by the West German Greibisch about the trials in the East Block countries, he neatly avoids the question and accuses the West Germans of worse actions: "Erlauben Sie mal, Herr Greibisch, Sie sind erstaunt, daß man abrechnet mit ein paar Menschen, die ihren Staat beklauen und verraten. Und Sie sind gar nicht erstaunt . . . daß man bei euch zum Beispiel in Essen am hellen Tag auf anständige brave Junnens schießt, den Philipp Muller abknallt, darüber sind Sie gar nicht erstaunt" (p. 19).

This tone continues throughout the book, as questions about the darker days of the Communist Party are asked, but no real effort is made to answer them. Those who are disposed of in the East are guilty: "warum hätte man sie verurteilen sollen, wenn sie unschuldig waren? Weshalb?" (p. 19). Those who are involved in riots in the West (a crime in the East) are martyrs and heroes.

Riedl is again confronted with his decision when he meets, in West Germany, Bechtler, who fled from Kossin:

Bechtler mit seinen frechen Augen, mit seinem orange-farbenen Schal war ja ein Stück des Lebens, das er

verändern wollte. Was sonst? Um dessentwillen er in Kossin blieb, weil es ihm wichtiger dünkte als alles andere. Das Wichtigste in seinem Leben. Das Zweitwichtigste wird aber darum nicht kleiner. Es bleibt nach wie vor ungläublich wichtig. So ist es nun einmal auf Erden. Das Zweitwichtigste spürt man nämlich andauernd, das Wichtigste spürt man richtig nur bei der Entscheidung. (pp.25-26)

In the discussion entitled "Das Motiv Vertrauen," one of the participants, Dr. Dieter Schlenstedt, interprets the above. Cf "das Zweitwichtigste" he says: ". . . es sind die steten Schritte im Alltag, die tägliche Leistung, die kleinen Verfehlungen, Freuden, Ärgernisse. Beides nun gibt das Buch in seiner Dialektik: Alltag und Grundentscheidung, eines bedingt das andere, beides bedingt sich gegenseitig." 104

The decision for Socialism is the first step. This theme was treated in Die Entscheidung. In Das Vertrauen, those who have made their decision are measured in terms of how they carry on the daily task of living up to it.

This is illustrated in the story of Thomas Helger, who has replaced Robert Lohse as the main figure in the novel. Thomas is the most promising young worker in Kossin. He is on the executive of the F.D.J. By taking night-school courses, he has so furthered himself that he is sure to be sent back to school by the Party.

He has formed a liaison with Lina Sachse, a dedicated Stalinist. But an old acquaintance appears who changes Thomas' future. Pimi, a girl who had been in the band of young scavengers to which Thomas had belonged at the end of the war, invites him to go camping with her. He agrees. She then persuades him to visit West Berlin, where he meets her friends who turn out to be a ring of shop-lifters. Pimi is arrested by the West Berlin police and she implicates Thomas. Although cleared of all wrongdoing by the courts, Thomas loses his position in the F.D.J., his chance to be sent back to school, his girl and the esteem of his colleagues. Thomas rehabilitates himself by his actions on 17 June and finds happiness with Toni Enders. He has not recovered all his rash act cost him, but he is on his way to a successful life.

The theme of trust is touched upon in many relationships. Of Ulsperger and the Russian Koschnewnikow it is said: "Ulsperger erfuhr erst hinterher, wie oft und wann und wo Koschewnikow für ihn gebürgt hatte in jener Zeit, in der Vertrauen einem Leben einblasen konnte und Mißtrauen ein Leben zerstören" (p.308). The time referred to here is that of the Stalinist purges in Russia, when Ulsperger was imprisoned, an event which will be discussed more fully later. The relationship of the child Else Noll to the engineer Toms is also built on trust: "Das Kind hatte ihm beim erstenmal kalt in die Augen gesehen, mit einem Stich Haß, obwohl es ihn nicht kannte, warnend. . . . Toms' Blick war fest und ruhig geblieben, bis sich Elses Gesicht veränderte. Es erweichte sich.



Eine Hoffnung kam darin auf. Ein schmales Vertrauen" (p.397).

Most often, the theme is simply implied. If Professor Berndt had had more confidence in the Communist Party, he would not have had to flee Kossin and would not be in lonely exile in Mexico. Had the East German workers had more trust in their Party, they would not have been led astray by a few agitators and joined the uprising.

Ironically, the atmosphere in East Germany is built on anything but trust. The author shows this quite frankly, as in the incident when Ulsperger and Richard Hagen meet two women who are discussing suspicious actions of their relatives. Ulsperger tells him to write down their suspicions and keep him informed. This brings Richard to reflect on his mistrust of Janausch. During the trip back to Kossin, the two men travel in the same car, leaving Richard's chauffeur, Witt, to muse over his doubts concerning Riedl and whether he should tell Richard about them.

The climax of the novel and the second "bracket" is the uprising of 17 June. How people react on this day is the test of the strength of their decision for Socialism and of their confidence in the Party. The revolt is experienced directly in the book through the eyes of the Kossiners and indirectly all over the world through reflections of other characters.

In Kossin, the rebels are, for the most part, workers who have demonstrated a negative attitude towards the Socialist

system — the ever-complaining Janausch, the disillusioned Heiner Schanz, the western-oriented Heinz Kohler and the agent provocateur Weber. Other workers battle the strikers to keep the factory running.

Ella Busch, who has been ordered by her husband, Heiner Schanz, to guide some of his friends out of Kossin when the trouble erupts, must pay for her mate's treachery with her life. Realizing what the strangers have in mind, she decides to foil them. Accompanying her decision is the "joy motif" which has been associated with the fight for Socialism in Seghers' works since Aufstand der Fischer: "Vom Kanalweg ab hatte Ella nicht mehr an das Kind gedacht, das sie erwartete . . . Sie fühlte sich gleichmütig, jung, stark und freudebegehrend. Weil man nicht leben kann ohne Freude" (p. 333). Ella stands in the long tradition of Seghers' female characters — Frau Kamptschik, Mrs. Dumbrowski of Die Gefährten and Mme. Meunier in "Das Obdach" — who opt for Socialism when a choice has to be made between that and their families, and in doing so, find happiness.

Another woman who surprisingly belongs in this category is Dora Berndt. After her husband has defected to the West, an act into which he was tricked by the wily Büttner, he refuses to cooperate with the C.I.A. man Meier and tell him about the Kossin works. For this reason, he is considered untrustworthy by the Bentheim concern and is sent first to America, then to Mexico, to work for the Stanton Engineering Company. Dora refuses to accompany her

husband. She longs to return to Kossin. Her attitude towards her husband and towards Kossin are difficult to understand. It has never been mentioned that she had any attachment to Socialism. Yet their marriage breaks down when they move to West Germany.

Dora is brought closer to her husband by the news of the uprising in East Germany. When she receives his telegram asking for details of it, she finds:

Der Bruch war also doch noch kein vollständiger Bruch, es gab noch Fäden, die spannten und schmerzten. Dora begriff, daß Berndt vor allem wissen wollte, was in der Fabrik geschah, deren Chef er gewesen war. Er war also auch von dort noch nicht vollständig fort. Nicht vollständig von ihr fort, nicht vollständig von dort fort. . . .

Berndt wurde nie loskommen von den Jahren, die er dort gelebt und gearbeitet hatte. Deshalb würde Dora nicht von Berndt loskommen, weil sie gebunden blieben an ein und dasselbe. (pp.363-64)

The primacy of work over all human ties might be the basis of the Communist ethic, but when applied to people like the Berndts, who can hardly be considered Communists, it is unrealistic and unconvincing. The whole Berndt episode suffers because it is reported from an East German point of view. "Man hat ihn nicht nach Siberien geschickt, wovor es ihm graute. Man hat ihn nach Monterrey geschickt" (p.283). This equation of the power of the Bentheim

company with that of the Secret Police in the GDR is naive and misleading. The whole crisis into which the Berndt family is plunged is artificially constructed.

The Buttners, formerly a model couple, also seem headed for marital breakdown due to the negative influence of life in the West. It is a weakness of the novel that life in the West is painted in black terms contrasting with the puritanical white of the East, which, despite the author's efforts, comes out grey.

The West German reaction to the uprising, seen through the eyes of the Bentheims, is one of Schadenfreude. The elder Bentheim, still hoping to regain his lost factory in the East, prays for American military intervention. Castricius, who is cleverer, knows that the Americans will not risk war with Russia over this incident.

Out of character are the thoughts of Eugen Bentheim when he hears the news: "Mein Vater hat recht behalten. Nein, ich hab's nicht für möglich gehalten. Ich bin sozusagen enttäuscht. Verückt. Ich bin noch immer nicht gewohnt an diese Deutschen. Ihre Einfälle sind manchmal so ganz sinnlos. Ich sollte von Herzen froh sein, weil sie auf die Russen nicht hören. Weil sie absolut nicht zu haben sind für die Opfer, die man von ihnen verlangt für die ferne Zukunft" (pp.357-58). Eugen Bentheim is presented as a capitalist with good points. In his youth he was a socialist and still knows it is the true ideology, but greed forces him to follow

in his father's footsteps: "Darüber sollte ich froh sein. Denn dadurch kommen all die Siebensachen hinter der Elbe jetzt wieder an uns zurück, nicht bloß an meinen Vater, auch an mich" (p. 358). But Eugen lacks the cynicism for this masquerade. This effort to relieve the black-white dichotomy of the East-West dialectic fails because it is too naive.

The portrait of West German life is unsuccessful because the characters are flat — the bad ones have only one motivating passion, greed (Eugen Bentheim, Helga Buttner, Wolfgang Buttner), or revenge (Bentheim Senior). Some are just purely evil (Helmut von Klemm). The "good" ones are simply miserable (Dora and her husband, Helen Wilcox).

The uprising is depicted as a battle of worker against worker. The role of the Russians is ignored. Much of the blame is put on outside agitators. When old Enders asks why his fellow worker Janausch turned against him, his wife replies: "Er hat dich gar nicht selbst niedergeschlagen, das war ein anderer, dem warst du fremd, es hat auch gar nicht Janausch selbst auf der Ella getrampelt. Die das taten, denen war Ella fremd" (p. 381). It is never explained where these mysterious people came from or who they were, dissatisfied East Germans or West German agents.

One of the Kossiners who participates actively in the revolt is Heinz Köhler. "From the beginning he was regarded as a dangerous person by Lina, Thomas' activist girl friend. He has a

father and brother in the West and told Toni Enders he intended to join them. His attitude towards the GDR is negative: "Das ist kein Leben, dieses Gehetze, Stunde für Stunde, Tag für Tag, Woche für Woche. Wir nennen es mit dem richtigen Namen: Antreiben. Ihr gebt ihm schöne Namen. Technisch begründete Arbeitsnormen. Planung. Sparsamkeit. Wir streiken, weil wir es Ausbeutung nennen" (p.328). This valid criticism is dismissed as misguided thinking due to Köhler's political immaturity.

When Heinz is arrested after 17 June, Thomas blames himself for not talking more with his friend. Those who do not help with the building of Socialism are the responsibilities of the others. This theme of responsibility is connected with the theme of trust. Just as Riedl is guilty of not persuading Katharina to come to the East, so Thomas is at fault for not convincing Heinz of the rightness of the system. Socialism, if properly explained, will be embraced by all.

Much of the blame for the uprising falls on the shoulders of small Party functionaries like Richard Hagen, whose role in Das Vertrauen is larger than it was in Die Entscheidung. Richard knows that he has failed to convince the workers of the necessity of the new production norms against which they are rebelling. "Du warst den Menschen nicht nah genug. Du hast nicht genug gewußt. Von den Menschen nicht und auch nicht von ihrer Arbeit" (p.388). Richard vows to take a correspondence course to help him in his work.

The real reasons behind the revolt are mentioned — the low standard of living, the lack of consumer goods and the high production norms. Yet all are explained away according to official Party policy. East Germany must demand sacrifices of its citizens in order to build Socialism and erase the war guilt. When Richard compares the life of a West German worker with that of his counterpart east of the Elbe, Ulsperger blames the difference on the war:

. . . ein gut Teil dieser Kumpels, von denen du mir berichtest, sie seien unzufrieden, weil sie sich zum Beispiel noch immer keine Möbel kaufen können, die haben in der Sowjetunion soviel verbrannte Erde hinter sich gelassen . . . daß man ein ungeteiltes Deutschland mindestens dreimal hineinstecken konnte. Jetzt müssen die sich ein bißchen anstrengen, ohne Möbel, ohne neue Anzüge, sie sollen die vorgeschriebenen Normen erreichen, ohne Bentheims amerikanische Investitionen. . . . Die Sowjets müssen jetzt selbst aufbauen. Die können nicht ihr ganzes Geld in unseren jungen Staat hineinstecken . . ." (pp.293-94)

This is a tacit admission that the Marshall Plan had its desired results in west Germany. But again the suggestion is there that the East Germans must suffer for Socialism, while the West Germans are rewarded for their evil capitalistic ways.

A second historical event which acts as a "bracket" in tying the story together is Stalin's death. Party members like Richard

Hagen are overcome with sorrow, whereas some workers, among them Janausch, feel that too much fuss is being made over an old man. Richard is horrified: "Es ist nicht Stalins Tod allein, der mich bedrückt, sondern alles, was durch seinen Tod ans Tageslicht kommt" (p.134). Richard means the indifference towards the Russian leader which had been hidden during his life. But his comment is prophetic, for much comes to light after Stalin's death which shakes the foundations of Communism.

The foreign reaction to the dictator's demise is shown through Professor Berndt. He is on a ship en route to New York when the news comes. "Die Todesbotschaft hatte ihn gepackt wie eine eiserne und eisige Krallen . . ." (p.142). He defends Stalin before a fellow passenger who compared him to Hitler, saying that he "made war" . . . for was ganz anderes. Für eine andere Zukunft. Für unsere Kinder . . ." (p.143). This feeble, emotional argument is typical of the defences of Stalin which appear throughout the novel. Questions are asked, but no answers are given. Either the subject is changed or some simplistic Party cliché is offered by way of retort.

The treatment of Stalinism, which has been termed "obscene" by one Western critic<sup>105</sup>, centers around Lina Sachse. Having lost her parents during the war, she transferred much of her feelings to the father figure whose picture hangs in her room. She tells Thomas: "Manchmal denke ich, er auf dem Bild weiß alles von uns, und siehst du, jetzt ist alles in Ordnung" (p.40). There must,



have been many people who entertained such feelings for Stalin, hence the portrayal of Lina is justified and realistic. One cannot escape the impression, however, that the author is projecting herself into the discussion, as in the scene when Thomas first looks at the picture: "Linas Bild sah er sich aufmerksam von nahem an, und Stalin sah ihn aufmerksam von nahem an. Er sah nicht gewaltig aus, sondern einfach, mit ruhigen klugen Augen. Er hielt ein Lächeln zurück, nicht aus Hochmut, sondern aus Spaß an dem jungen Menschen, der ihn verwundert betrachtete" (p. 37). It is quite obvious that the spell which Stalin once exercised over Anna Seohers has not diminished any with the "Thaw." Indeed, she has never renounced Stalinism. She still seems to regard the dictator as she did when she wrote in 1953: "Jetzt ist's dir zumute, als stunde alles still. Denn die gewaltigste aller Bewegungen, der Herzschlag Stalins, hat aufgehört." 106

After Stalin's death, the Kremlin doctors who had been imprisoned on suspicion of murdering Shdanov (in the book it is intimated that it was Stalin's life which was endangered) are released. This news is greeted with puzzlement, as this conversation between some anonymous Kossiners shows:

Einer sagte: "Man hat der Ärztin, die die Bosewichter entdeckt hat, den Orden genommen." — "Vollständig richtig. Die hat behauptet, die wären schuldig, um sich 'nen Orden zu verdienen." — "Warum hat man ihr denn geglaubt?" — "Wenn Stalin nicht tot

wäre, wären jetzt all die Ärzte tot." — "Waren die denn Juden, die Ärzte?" — "Du meinst, jemand sei gegen die, so ähnlich wie bei dem Hitler?" — "Ach Quatsch, man hätte ihnen dann nicht den Stalin zur Behandlung überlassen." — "Versteh ich auch nicht. Ich sag's offen, da tapp ich im dunkeln."

"Und was soll das heißen?" sagte ein hoher Dürrer . . . "Die sozialistische Gesetzlichkeit sei nicht befolgt worden bei dem Verhör?" Einer lachte. "Na, Daumenschrauben." — "Quatsch. Ich sag's euch offen, da tapp ich im dunkeln." (p.148)

The fact that this matter is never discussed in a more serious fashion is an insult to the reader's intelligence and a shirking of the truth on the part of the author. She chose to bring up the question; thus, it is her responsibility to attempt some honest answer, not to dismiss or obscure the issue.

Thomas is troubled by the problem of the Kremlin doctors and goes to Lina for answers. She believes the case closed since the injustice has been righted. When he mentions the matter of undue process, suggesting that the doctors may have been pressured into confessing, she retorts: "Ich hab dir angemerkt, daß du so was denkst. Ich hatte dir freilich nie, nie, Thomas, solche Gedanken zugetraut" (p.149). He realizes that to question Stalin's wisdom is to erode the foundation on which Lina's life is based: "Es wurde ihm klar: Lina hat sich bereits dieselbe Frage gestellt,

Und sie kann sie nicht ertragen. Auf ihn aber machte die Sache mit Stalins Ärzten größeren Eindruck als Stalins Tod, vielleicht weil sie ihm rätselhaft blieb wie auch Lina's Verhalten" (p. 150). After this episode, Lina seldom appears in the novel. The author does not show how she has coped with life after her idol has fallen. But the reader is certain that Stalinism has destroyed Lina Sachse.

Thomas approaches his old teacher, Waldstein, with his doubts:

"Sao doch, Genosse Waldstein, was hältst du von diesem Ärzteprozeß? Ich meine von diesem Orden, den man nach Stalins Tod der Ärztin wieder wegnahm?

.....

Er erwiderte: "Sie hat sich geirrt aus Übereifer. Aus Angst um Stalins Leben."

"Ja aber, der Orden! Und daß man ihn abnahm?"

"Sie war vielleicht außerdem," sagte Waldstein, "vielleicht hauptsächlich eine Person, die andre Menschen leicht beschuldigt. Die gibt es in Hüll und Füll.

.....

Im Schuldfinden, Denunzieren liegt auch was Faschistisches. Es war in Blüte in der Nazizeit."

(pp. 248-49)

The emphasis here is placed on a laughably minor point, the medal, not the terrible injustice done and the implications it has. The question is further obscured by changing the historical facts, connecting the doctors with Stalin instead of with Shdanov's death. Waldstein answers obliquely, putting all the blame on the woman doctor and finishing with a tirade against the Nazis.

The author's attitude to the discrepancies between Communist thought and practice are revealed in a conversation between Ulsperger and Richard Hanen. Richard had always envied the other man, who had been in Russia during the war: "Stalins Schatten, so ungeheuer, so mächtig, lag immer auf ihm, ich war weit von ihm weg" (p.291). But Ulsperger's Russian experience was not so pleasant, for he was unjustly imprisoned there. Richard asks whether Beria was to blame for this (Beria is held at fault for many things in the novel, including the East German uprising). Ulsperger brushes aside the question: "Laß . . . Jetzt gibt es andre Sachen, ganz andre Probleme" (p.439). Ulsperger never mentioned his experience, thinking it would not help the building of Socialism: "Denk du mal nach, was hätte sich denn für dich geändert, wenn du's gewußt hättest, daß dort mal ein Ulsperger schuldlos eingesperrt wurde? Hättest du jetzt im Juni etwas anderes getan? Nein, du hättest nichts anderes getan. Und in Hitlerdeutschland? Erst recht nicht. Und in Spanien, gegen Franco . . .? Nein, nichts anderes. Also" (p.439).

To concur with an East German critic, Anna Seghers demands that her readers and her characters think in historical terms. The Party's mistakes are to be overlooked, for they are insignificant compared to what is at stake in the class struggle.<sup>107</sup>

The last "bracket" in the novel is the book by Herbert Melzer which is finally published in East Germany. This not only connects most of the characters but also forms a link with the previous novel, Die Entscheidung. It also serves to fill gaps in the main characters' knowledge. In reading the book, Robert Lohse learns for the first time of Celia's death. Herbert's book is a mirror in which Robert Lohse sees himself reflected. He is disappointed that Melzer had him die before a firing squad instead of allowing him to develop further. Robert's wife finds out that her husband has not always been the model socialist she had believed him to be: "Ich hab immer gemeint, du wärst viel besser gewesen" (p.443).

In his article "Vertrauensfrage," Heinz Plavius declares the book a vote of confidence in the socialist society and praises it as a masterpiece of Socialist Realism.<sup>108</sup> Sigrid Bock compares it to War and Peace and claims that it achieves a higher degree of realism than real life: ". . . Im Roman Das Vertrauen rauscht und knistert die Wirklichkeit 'viel stärker als die wirkliche Wirklichkeit' . . . Denn die Real-Welt ist nun, durch das Hineinnehmen in eine fiktive Romanwelt, für den Leser durchschaubar geworden."<sup>109</sup>

Western critics have thoroughly panned the book. They criticize the propagandizing tone, the poverty of the language, the distorted depiction of the events on 17 June, the infantile level of discussions on important questions. Most reviewers agree with Franz Schonauer, who called it the worst novel to come out of the GDR in a long time.<sup>110</sup>

In a speech to the International Meeting of Writers in 1965, Anna Seghers gave her reasons for settling in the GDR:

Man fragt mich oft, warum ich nach dem Krieg in diesen Teil Deutschlands fuhr, der damals die Sowjetzone war, und nicht in meine Heimat an den Rhein. Darauf antworte ich: weil ich hier die Resonanz haben kann, die sich ein Schriftsteller wunscht. Weil hier ein enger Zusammenhang besteht zwischen dem geschriebenen Wort und dem Leben. Weil ich hier ausdrucken kann, wozu ich gelebt habe.<sup>111</sup>

Das Vertrauen is a tragically ironic footnote to this statement, her life and her literary achievement.

#### t. Summary

During the year following her return to the Soviet Zone of Germany, Anna Seghers produced no works of a Socialist Realist nature, if one excepts her report on her 1930 trip to the Soviet Union. Rather, she turned to mythical and exotic settings. "Das

"Argonautenschiff" (1948) has as its theme all-powerful destiny — an idea which is in direct opposition to Communist thought. "Die Hochzeit von Haiti" (1948) and "Wiedereinführung der Sklaverei in Guadeloupe" (1948) both are set in the West Indies during the French Revolution. They champion the cause of the oppressed like the early stories "Grubetsch" and "Die Ziegler" and manifest a historical but not a Socialist perspective.

Die Toten bleiben jung (1949) is the first attempt by the author to apply the rules of Socialist Realism to the novel form. It traces the roots of Fascism and portrays the class struggle in Germany from the Spartakus uprising to the end of World War II. A break in the Socialist Realist execution of the work is evident when the "reactionary" figures take on life of their own and become much more interesting than the "positive" ones. The novel relies on a mystical-biological factor for its optimistic ending, which is contrary to the tenets of Socialist Realism.

The story "Die Rückkehr" (1949) forms a bridge between Die Toten bleiben jung and the later novels since it encompasses all three themes of early post-war Socialist literature: turning away from Fascism, acceptance of Socialism and the building of the Socialist state. It is purely Socialist Realist, dividing the world along absolute ideological lines. Two important features which it includes are the portrayal of Communism as an international movement and as the way of the future. It is not a well

written story and aroused less enthusiasm in the GDR than its political tendency would warrant.

The high point in Anna Seghers' acceptance of Stalinist Socialist Realism and a low point in her artistic production is marked by Die Linie (1949). Equally poor are the six tales which constitute "Friedensgeschichten" (1949). In these works the plot and the language are crushed under the weight of political tendency.

Totally uninteresting from an artistic point of view is the volume Die Kinder (1951). With the exception of "Das Obdach," which was written during the Emigration, these stories are trite glorifications of young positive heroes.

"Crisanta" (1951) has two of the prerequisites for a Socialist Realist work of art — narodnost and tipičnost — but has neither positive figures nor a Communist tendency.

In 1952, Seghers wrote two Socialist Realist works, Der Mann und sein Name and the Novelle cycle Der erste Schritt. Both have little to recommend them except their strident Communist tone.

The author published nothing between 1953 and 1958. The two offerings of 1958, "Vierzig Jahre der Margarete Wolf" and "Brot und Salz," are hastily written propaganda pieces. "Brot und Salz" is a distortion of the events in Hungary in 1956 and indicates that shock at this uprising led Anna Seghers to accept Communist



orthodoxy with frightening fanaticism. This impression is reinforced by the extremism manifested in Die Entscheidung (1959), her magnum opus about life in the GDR. This novel marks Anna Seghers' complete acceptance of Socialist Realism. It is a far cry artistically from her earlier novels, such as Transit and Das siebte Kreuz. Despite the fact that Die Entscheidung failed in some respects to satisfy the demands of the Party, it received unreserved praise from its critics and unanimous censure in the West.

Die Kraft der Schwachen (1955) was well received in East Germany, although only one of the stories in the collection is Socialist Realist. Some of the old Seghers mastery is evoked in "Heimkehr des verloränen Volkes," for example, but in general the works are inferior to her early short stories.

An example of how far Anna Seghers had moved towards Socialist Realism since her return to East Germany is provided by "Das Licht auf den Galgen" (1951), the third work in the Antilles trilogy which manifests many more Socialist Realist features than did the two earlier parts.

Das Vertrauen (1959), a continuation of Die Entscheidung, affirmed western critics' suspicions that Anna Seghers had reached

a new low in her creative impulse. Yet East German literary pundits acclaimed it as a masterpiece of Socialist Realism.

Thus it can be seen that, although Anna Seghers had demonstrated a reluctance to adopt the methods of Socialist Realism immediately after her arrival in East Germany, two years later she had incorporated most of them into a novel. Her acceptance of these methods has since been absolute except for a few minor works. The inferior quality of most of the works from this last period, that spent in the GDR, has been attested to by a majority of western critics, as well as this writer. It may, therefore, be assumed that attempting to adhere to the rules of Socialist Realism has caused a tension in Anna Seghers which has destroyed her creative genius.

### III. CONCLUSION

It was the intention of this dissertation to discover the relationship between the Communist writer Anna Seghers and the aesthetic doctrine of the Communist Party, defined as Socialist Realism.

Socialist Realism, as revealed by a study of its origins and characteristics, is a hard-to-define mixture of demands and prohibitions which has been imposed on Communist artists since its official proclamation in 1934 by Stalin through his Minister of Culture Andre Shdanov. It is difficult to define since there are varying opinions among Communist leaders and intellectuals as to what specific terms and concepts mean. It is at the same time both variable and inflexible. It is variable, in that the demands made upon artists differ according to historical and political factors. It is inflexible, since artists are rarely permitted to stray from the path marked out for them.

Several factors in Socialist Realism remain constant. The most important of these is Communist tendency (partiynost), which is interwoven with the socialist perspective of optimism. National flavour (narodnost), typicalness (tipičnost) and the figure of the positive hero are also constant requirements.

Although Socialist Realism was imposed upon Soviet writers by a governmental policy which could only be termed ruthless, the

same pressure could not be brought to bear on Communist authors living in non-Communist countries. Therefore, adherence to this doctrine could not be demanded of Anna Seghers before she settled in the Soviet Zone of Germany in 1947. However, the early works of Anna Seghers, those written between 1926 and 1932, show a constant progression towards Socialist Realism even before the doctrine was proclaimed as the correct method for Communist writers.

"Grubetsch" (1926) and "Die Ziegler" (1927/28) are pessimistic accounts of poor people, characterized already by Seghers' extraordinary ability to delve into the lives of the downtrodden and render the drabness interesting. The obvious sympathy with the poor is their only link with what was to be defined as Socialist Realism. "Die wellblech-Hütte" (1928) is more politically oriented, recounting the experiences of two American socialists — one white and one black. It was the racial theme which led Anna Seghers to abandon the story. This dissertation is the second study of Seghers' works to deal with this fragment, which has been otherwise ignored by critics, and it is the first to give an answer as to why it remained incomplete. The problem of race, which is connected with the international class struggle, has been a difficult one for Anna Seghers to treat throughout her works.

Aufstand der Fischer von St. Barbara (1928) anticipates Socialist Realism in several ways. It is the first portrayal of

an event connected with the class struggle. Its two heroes may be termed prototypes of the positive hero soon to be demanded of Communist writers. Its tendency is revolutionary, but not communistic. Written the year Anna Seghers joined the Communist Party, Aufstand der Fischer is the first Seghers work to contain what was later called the socialist perspective of optimism.

"Auf dem Wege zur amerikanischen Botschaft" (1929/30) is a glorification of proletarian solidarity. The only objection of Communist critics was to the stream-of-consciousness technique, reminiscent of James Joyce, which the author had employed.

"Bauern von Hruschowo" (1929/30) corrected many of the mistakes which Communist critics had found in earlier works. The events are set in a specific historical and national context and are related to the international revolutionary movement. The tendency is Communist, and Russia is shown to be the example towards which workers and peasants must turn.

Die Gefährten (1932) is a totally communistic work. Most of the main figures are party members. It is confusing and dull — a result not of the tendency but of the form. Anna Seghers was at this time influenced by John Dos Passos' U.S.A. trilogy and had adopted the fragmented form which rendered impossible any development of characters and which splintered the action in many unconnected plots. Communist critics also deplored that this precluded any study of economic and social factors.

The anecdotes "Die Stoppuhr" and "Der Fuhrerschein," as well as the other small works based on Chinese themes evidence strong Communist or Socialist tendency. They contain no heresies or defects from the Marxist viewpoint, proving perhaps that perfect Socialist Realism is possible only in the short form.

Thus, during the first period of her literary activity, Anna Seghers moved of her own accord towards what was later to be defined as Socialist Realism. She began by expressing a sympathy with the oppressed. She soon exhibited Communist tendency in her works and then, in "Bauern von Hruschowo," included aspects such as national flavour and the socialist perspective. Die Gefährten shows an intensifying of all these characteristics. Her only guidelines in these days seem to have been her own literary tastes and the advice of Communist critics, which she followed in regard to everything except the question of form.

The works of the first phase of the period of the Emigration (1933-1937) are marked by a note of pessimism which reflects the author's own mood. During this time, Anna Seghers attempted to explain why and how the Nazis had come to power.

Der Kopflohn (1933) manifests a marked reduction in Communist tendency when compared to Die Gefährten. Thus, although greater attention is paid to social and economic factors than in her previous works, the novel is further from Socialist Realism than many works written earlier.

The same is true for "Der letzte Weg des Koloman Wallisch" (1934), which is a recreation of a historical event. It is both socialist and realistic, but not a work of Socialist Realism.

Der Weg durch den Februar (1935) bears many similarities to Die Gefährten in its structure. The photomontage technique is again used, preventing any in-depth study of the characters. It is a confusing novel, convincing neither as propaganda nor as art.

In 1934 Andre Shdanov proclaimed Socialist Realism as the correct method for Communist writers. Its effect on Seghers' work was not immediate, since Der Weg durch den Februar was written in haste after the uprising in Austria in 1934. However, after its completion, she had time to reflect on the implications which this declaration would have for her work. Her initial reaction seemed to be an unwillingness to confront the problem. She escaped into the world of mythology, producing two stories of great artistic merit — "Die schönsten Sagen vom Rauber Woynek" and "Sagen von Artemis." During the years 1934 to 1937 she wrote only one work of Socialist Realism, the anecdote "Das Viereck."

Die Rettung (1937) is a counter-piece to Der Kopflohn, explaining why the urban proletariat turned to the Nazis. It reminds one of "Grubetsch" in its effective descriptions of the drabness of proletarian existence. The atmosphere is one of despair. In an attempt to incorporate some of the demands of the Party into her

novel, Anna Seghers has her hero undergo a miraculous conversion and join the anti-Nazi underground. This forced optimism is out of place in the story. Die Rettung is Anna Seghers' first attempt to incorporate, or at least pay lip service to, the doctrine of Socialist Realism in a novel. The result shows that a dichotomy was produced in a writer who had previously approached Socialist Realism of her own accord.

In 1938, Anna Seghers' conflict regarding Socialist Realism came to a head in an exchange of letters with the Hungarian Communist philosopher Georg Lukács. She did not dispute the Party's demand for Communist tendency in art; this she had long manifested in most of her works. She did, however, fear that forbidding artists to experiment with form would lead to sterility.

The years 1938 through 1946, which we have termed the second phase of the Emigration, mark the height of Anna Seghers' literary production. This may in part be due to the fact that she had reached the pinnacle of her physical and mental powers. But it may also be attributable to the lack of control which the Party could exert over her during her exile. Das siebte Kreuz (1940), although now incorporated into Socialist Realism by Party critics, proclaims no Communist tendency. It is an affirmation of humanity and man's will to survive. National flavour is present, not in the way in which the Party had decreed it, but simply as an outpouring of homesickness and love of country by the exiled author.



Transit (1943), her crowning literary achievement, is totally removed from Socialist Realism. It is close to Kafka and the French existentialists and contains the mythical elements which characterize many of her best works. It is a compelling description of isolation in an absurd world which is rendered bearable only by love.

Anna Seghers' sole works of Socialist Realism in this period were the short story "Das Ubdach" and "Die Saboteure." The latter was written immediately before her return to Germany. It seems strangely out of place amid the other works.

The question of why she chose to return to the Soviet Occupied Zone of Germany must be discussed, since this decision was to affect all her later works. Although her writing did not necessarily reflect it, Anna Seghers remained a convinced Communist throughout the period of exile. She had not come to Communism through an intellectual process, as had, for example, Brecht. Therefore, it is not surprising that she did not think through the consequences of her decision and chose to remain in a country where artistic freedom would be guaranteed, as did Brecht when he vainly tried to settle in Munich. A Socialist State was being established on German soil, and Anna Seghers felt that her place was there. She seemed willing to pay the price. This is the message of Die Saboteure.

Upon her return, she did not launch into writing Socialist

Realism. Her first reaction was again to escape into mythology ("Das Argonautenschiff") and then into history ("Die Hochzeit von Haiti" and "Wiedereinführung der Sklaverei in Guadeloupe").

Die Toten bleiben jung (1949) is the first attempt by Anna Seghers to use Socialist Realism in a novel. It failed because the reactionary characters took on a fascination of their own, while the Communist figures never came alive. Communist critics dutifully praised it, but were clearly disappointed.

During the fifties, Anna Seghers produced many stories which were pure Socialist Realism. The Stalin worship of Die Linie and the hysterical Cold War tone of "Friedensgeschichten," to name only two examples, did little to disguise the poverty of inspiration which animated these stories. The extravagant praise which was showered upon these third-rate propaganda pieces only served to underline the fact that this talented writer had turned Party hack in her declining years.

The new editions of some of Seghers' earliest stories also attest to this fact. Sentences which offended the Party were deleted from "Der letzte Weg des Koloman Wallisch" in the 1963 Bienenstock edition.

The novels Die Entscheidung (1959) and Das Vertrauen (1969) confirmed what many Seghers readers feared. Despite her protests against dull, schematized literature voiced in speeches to Writers'

Congresses, Anna Seghers had sacrificed her talent to the Communist Party with the same religious fervour with which a nun dedicates herself to the mystic bridegroom.

After studying the relationship of Anna Seghers to Socialist Realism, one is prompted to question whether there is not some inherent defect in the aesthetic doctrine of the Communist Party, since adopting its tenets could cause a talented writer who had earlier approached it intuitively to produce works totally devoid of literary merit.

Socialist Realism is often considered dull of necessity because it usually chooses the worker as its central figure. Yet Anna Seghers had powerfully described the drabness of proletarian existence in her early works. Many critics believe that the Communist tendency destroys the aesthetic value of Socialist Realist art. Again, Anna Seghers has championed the Communist cause in many of her best works without detriment to them.

However, when the Communist Party demanded that writers adhere to all its numerous directives, the result was a stultified form of literature which no longer could be termed art.

The warnings of people like Engels, Lukács and Anna Seghers herself went unheeded by the bureaucrats in Moscow and East Berlin. The lack of freedom which Anna Seghers had feared would result in sterility in the arts caused her own artistic downfall.

This dissertation is the first study of all of Anna Seghers' literary works. It is also the first in-depth examination of her writings in relation to Socialist Realism.

This writer compared all available early versions of Anna Seghers' stories with later editions in order to ascertain whether the author had revised them to comply with the Communist Party line of the 1950's and 1960's. This was found to be the case with "Der letzte Weg des Koloman Wallisch" and "Bauern von Hruschowo." Other changes were attributed to stylistic reasons.

The fragment "Die Wellblech-Hütte" had been included before in one Seghers criticism, but this writer determined the reason for its having remained a fragment.

In presenting an account of the origins of Socialist Realism and a description of its nature, this work takes into account both Communist and western sources. It is this attempt at an objective co-ordination of many tendentious views on Socialist Realism which represents its most significant contribution to scholarship.

## IV. NOTES

### Socialist Realism

<sup>1</sup> W. Stscherbina, "Über den sozialistischen Realismus," Probleme des Realismus in der Weltliteratur, ed. E. Dieckmann, trans. U. Brewing, I. Czikowsky, M. Koblischke, G. Sewekow and G. Wagner (East Berlin: Rütten and Loening, 1962), p. 79.

It should be pointed out that the time of writing Mother and Enemies Gorky stood under the influence of Marx but not of Lenin.

<sup>2</sup> Jürgen Rühle, Literatur und Revolution: Die Schriftsteller und der Kommunismus (Munich, Zurich: Knauer-T.B., 1963), p. 109.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Rühle, p. 56.

<sup>4</sup> Große Sowjet-Enzyklopädie Union der sozialistischen Sowjetrepubliken, ed. S. I. Wawilow et al., German ed. Jürgen Kuczynski, Wolfgang Schmidt, 2nd ed. (East Berlin, 1962), col. 1533. The definition varies slightly according to the edition.

In the statutes of the Soviet Writers Union, Socialist Realism is described as "the true historical-concrete presentation of reality in its revolutionary development." (Alexander Abusch, "Die Diskussion in der Sowjetliteratur und bei uns," Zum

Wesen des sozialistischen Realismus," Literatur im Zeitalter des Sozialismus: Beiträge zur Literaturgeschichte 1921 bis 1960, Schriften, 3 vols. (East Berlin, Weimar: Aufbau, 1967), II, 585. [Trans. K.V.A.]

A. Lawrezki gives a vaguer definition: "Wenn die sozialistische Bewegung in der Kunst (Literatur) erscheint und widerspiegelt wird, so ist das sozialistischer Realismus." (A. Lawrezki, "Zum Terminus 'Kritischer Realismus,'" Probleme des Realismus, p. 490). This definition, which reflects the more liberal attitude of the "Thaw," is too broad and is really a definition of socialist literature in general. Socialist literature, which is not identical with Socialist Realism, takes up the cause of the poor or at least shows sympathy with it. It is claimed by East German scholars that its antecedents can be traced back to Walther von der Vogelweide, Thomas Munzer, Grimmelshausen, Heine, and Weerth. In a discussion among members of the East German SED which took place at the Humboldt University in 1958, the results of which were later published in Neue deutsche Literatur ("Thesen zum sozialistischen Realismus" [NDL, 6, No. 3 (1958)], 120-132), the following conditions were decided upon as essential for the formation of a socialist literature: the proletariat must have formed itself into a class and be able to put forward its demands independently; the philosophy of the proletariat must be based on scientific socialism, freed of all utopian elements (literature with utopian socialist characteristics is not considered socialist literature, since utopian socialism is a product of

bourgeois ideology); this philosophy must have achieved a certain popularity among the proletariat; there must have been a period of increased class struggle, which hastens the revolutionizing and formation of the proletariat as a class and at the same time acts as a catalyst in the creation of socialist literature.

When a socialist state has been formed, socialist literature enters into a new stage of its development. With the advent of the dictatorship of the proletariat, socialist ideology becomes the dominant ideology and socialist literature the dominant literature. Thus, it can develop into the national literature, a role which it had always been suited for, since it had represented the class interests of the proletariat, and therewith the true interests of the nation. This goal can only be attained after the defeat of the bourgeoisie and of the cultural institutions which served its interests. When socialist literature can present the interests and aims of the proletariat as the interests and perspective of the nation, it can then develop as a realistic literature.

In "Thesen zum sozialistischen Realismus" a clear distinction was made between socialist literature and Socialist Realism: "Unter sozialistischer Literatur verstehen wir alle Erzeugnisse der Schönen Literatur, die auf der sozialistischen Ideologie basieren. Zu den Werken des sozialistischen Realismus zählen dagegen nur jene, die den Forderungen des Realismus als einer wertenden, die Höhe der spezifisch künstlerischen Wirklichkeitserfassung bezeichnenden Kategorie nachkommen." The same

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criteria — "proletarische Klassengrundlage, sozialistische Ideologie, sozialistische Parteilichkeit" — apply to both Socialist Realism and socialist literature in general, but the Socialist Realist writer must, in addition, have absorbed and applied the realistic tradition in his works. (See W. Dreher, "Ursprünge und Traditionen. Wesen und Formen sozialistischer Literatur: Ein Nachwort zu den Thesen" [NDL, 6, No. 5 (1958)], 121-128.)

<sup>5</sup> R. N. Carew Hunt, Wörterbuch des kommunistischen Jargons: Schlagworte unter der Lupe, trans. Hans Schmidhüs and Roman Rossler (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder-T.B., 1958), p. 142.

<sup>6</sup> A. Romanowski, "Zur Geschichte des Terminus 'Sozialistischer Realismus,'" Sowjetwissenschaft: Kunst und Literatur, 6, No. 2 (1958), 161-165.

Romanowski's version is also that of the Great Soviet Encyclopedia, at least in the 1952 East German edition. See col. 1558.

<sup>7</sup> cf. G. Rudloff, "Zur zweiten internationalen Konferenz revolutionärer Schriftsteller in Charkow 1930," Weimarer Beiträge, 6, No. 2 (1960), 305.

<sup>8</sup> In 1926 Stalin formulated this somewhat differently: "Proletarisch ihrem Inhalt, national ihrer Form nach — das ist die allgemeinemenschliche Kultur, der der Sozialismus entgegengeht."



J. V. Stalin, quoted in K. Selinski, "Nationale Form und sozialistischer Realismus," Probleme des Realismus, p. 107.

<sup>9</sup> Hunt, pp. 141-142.

<sup>10</sup> Joseph M. Bochenski and Gerhart Niemeyer, Handbuch des Weltkommunismus (Freiburg, Munich: Alber, 1958), pp. 478-479.

<sup>11</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Party Organisation and Party Literature," On Literature and Art (Moscow: Progress, 1967), p. 23. Italics in the original.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>13</sup> Lenin, "On Proletarian Culture," On Literature and Art, p. 154.

Stalin later formulated this in a more abstract way: ". . . jedes literarische Werk [muß] mittels der literarischen Gestaltung der Sprache, der Gruppierung der Bilder und Wörter, des Rhythmus usw. in uns solche Gedankenverbindungen, Gefühle und Stimmungen erzeugen, solche Erlebnisse und Gedanken beschwören, die uns für oder wider etwas mobilisieren." Quoted in Peter Ludz, "Marxismus und Literatur: Eine kritische Einführung in das Werk von Georg Lukács," Schriften zur Literatursoziologie, 3rd ed., Soziologische Texte, 9, Werkauswahl, 2 vols. by Georg Lukács [Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1968], I, 57

<sup>14</sup> Friedrich Engels, draft of a letter to Margaret Harkness; London, early April 1888, trans. from the English, in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, Über Kunst und Literatur, ed. M. Kliem, 2 vols. (East Berlin: Dietz, 1967, 1968), I, p. 159. Italics in the original.

<sup>15</sup> Engels, letter to Minna Kautsky; London, 26 November 1885, in Marx/Engels, Über Kunst und Literatur, II, p. 322.

The discrepancy between Engels' and Lenin's remarks on tendency is explained by Hans Koch in "W. I. Lenins Schrift 'Parteiliteratur' und ihre aktuelle Bedeutung" (Weimarer Beiträge, 6, No. 4 [1960]), 679, as resulting from the different function art had in their respective times. He quotes from the above-cited letter to Minna Kautsky: ". . . daß sich unter unsern Verhältnissen der Roman vorwiegend an Leser aus bürgerlichen, also nicht zu uns direkt gehörenden Kreisen wendet, und da erfüllt auch der sozialistische Tendenzroman, nach meiner Ansicht, vollständig seinen Beruf, wenn er durch treue Schilderung der wirklichen Verhältnisse die darüber herrschenden konventionellen Illusionen zerreit, den Optimismus der bürgerlichen Welt erschütteret, den Zweifel an der ewigen Gültigkeit des Bestehenden unvermeidlich macht, auch ohne selbst direkt eine Lösung zu bieten, ja unter Umständen ohne selbst Partei ostensibel zu ergreifen" (p. 322). What Engels is describing here later came to be known as Critical Realism. Koch's opinion is partly defensible. It would be anachronistic for a Communist writer, writing in and for a

Communist society, to dwell on the injustices of a past society. But it is clear from the text, which Koch omitted, that Engels added this as a secondary reason ("Dazu kommt . . .").

<sup>16</sup> Lukács, "Tendenz oder Parteilichkeit?" Literatursoziologie, p. 119.

<sup>17</sup> Lukács, "Kunst und objektive Wahrheit," Probleme des Realismus," 2nd ed. (East Berlin: Aufbau, 1955), p. 19. The first edition of this book was entitled Essays über Realismus. Italics in the original.

<sup>18</sup> cf. József Révai, "Die Lukács-Diskussion des Jahres 1949," Georg Lukács und der Revisionismus: Eine Sammlung von Aufsätzen (East Berlin: Aufbau, 1960), p. 23.

<sup>19</sup> Quoted in Clara Zetkin, "My Recollections of Lenin: An Excerpt," On Literature and Art by V. I. Lenin, p. 251. Also in German in Klara [sic] Zetkin, "Lenin über die Kunst," NDL, 1, Sonderheft (1952), 20.

<sup>20</sup> Engels, draft of a letter to Margaret Harkness; London, April 1888 in Marx/Engels, Über Kunst und Literatur, I, 157.

The letter was written in English. This writer has taken the liberty of translating it back into English.

<sup>21</sup> Engels, letter to Minna Kautsky; London, 26 November 1885, in Marx/Engels, Über Kunst und Literatur, II, 322.

22 Johannes R. Becher, Poetische Konfession (East Berlin: Aufbau, 1959), pp. 84-85.

23 V. I. Lenin, quoted in G. Nedoschiwin, "Kunst und Wirklichkeit: Leitgedanken aus dem Essay 'Über die Beziehung der Kunst zur Wirklichkeit,'" Aufbau, 7, No. 4 (1951), 339. Trans. K. V. A.

24 A. Sobolow, "Lenins Reflexionstheorie und die Kunst," Aufbau, 6, No. 8 (1950), 771.

25 The influence of Lenin's ideas on contemporary Socialist Realism can be seen in this definition of realism decided upon at the meeting of the East German SED in 1958: "Unter Realismus in der Dichtung verstehen wir die künstlerische Darstellungsweise menschlicher Lebenswirklichkeit, die diese nicht statisch gestaltet, sondern in ihrer Bewegung, ihrer Entwicklung und Widersprüchlichkeit, das heißt analog den objektiven dialektischen Prozessen in der Wirklichkeit. . . . Der Wahrheitsgehalt des Kunstwerks resultiert . . . sowohl aus unmittelbaren Lebenserfahrungen des Künstlers wie aus seiner Kenntnis und Beachtung der objektiven Entwicklungsgesetze der Gesellschaft." ("Thesen zum sozialistischen Realismus" [NDL, 6, No. 3 (1958)], p. 125.)

26 Lenin, "On Proletarian Culture: Draft Resolution," On Literature and Art, p. 155. This draft resolution was written on 8 October 1920 and first published in the magazine Krasnaya Nov, No. 3 (1926).

- 27 Große Sowjet-Enzyklopädie, col. 1533.
- 28 "Thesen zum sozialistischen Realismus," NDL, 6, No. 3 (1958), 324.
- 29 Heinz Plavius, "Der positive Held im sozialistischen Realismus und der neue Charakter der Arbeit," Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie, 11, No. 8 (1963), 954.
- 30 A. Sobolov, "Lenins Reflexionstheorie und die Kunst," Aufbau, 5, No. 8 (1950), 772.
- 31 W. Stscherbina, "Über den sozialistischen Realismus," Probleme des Realismus, p. 86. Trans. K.V.A.
- 32 An example of this is Geergo Lukács' advice to writers on the portrayal of the most important positive hero, the Bolshevik: "Jeder Bolschewik soll ein Führer der Massen sein, in den verschiedensten Situationen, unter den verschiedensten Bedingungen der Arbeit und des Kampfes. Dazu ist vor allem die Aneignung der revolutionären Theorie des Kommunismus notwendig. Da aber jede Situation eine andere ist, da die konkreten Umstände, die Menschen usw. immer verschieden sind, muß jeder Bolschewik in jeder Lage die Lehren des Marxismus-Leninismus in besonderer Weise anwenden. So wird die Persönlichkeit des Bolschewiken, und zwar nicht zuletzt seine intellektuelle Persönlichkeit, ein ausschlaggebender Faktor für die bolschewistische Führung."

(Lukács, "Die intellektuelle Physiognomie der künstlerischen Gestalten," Probleme des Realismus, p. 88. Italics in the original.)

33 F. Engels, letter to Minna Kautsky, London, 26 November 1885, Marx/Engels, Über Kunst und Literatur, II, 322.

34 Gerhard Branster, "Der positive Held und sein Widersacher," NDL, 8, No. 9/10 (1959), 223.

35 For further information see J. Elsberg, "Strittige Fragen bei der Untersuchung des Realismus im Zusammenhang mit dem Problem des klassischen Erbes"; R. Samarin, "Zum Problem des Realismus in den westeuropäischen Literaturen der Renaissance"; and N. Gej, "Zur Definition des Realismus," Probleme des Realismus.

36 M. Sholokov, "Address to the Twentieth Party Congress," Pravda, 21 February 1956, quoted in Bochenski/Niemeyer, Handbuch des Weltkommunismus, p. 510.

37 Lukács, "Die kritische Aufarbeitung der Stalinschen Periode: Solschenizyn: Ein Tag im Leben des Iwan Denisowitsch," Probleme des Realismus II: Der Russische Realismus in der Weltliteratur, vol. 5 of Werke (Neuwied, Berlin: Luchterhand, 1964), 552.

38 N. Khruschchev, "Za tesnuju sviaz literatury i isskustva s zizniju," Kommunist, 12 (1957), pp. 23-24, quoted in Bochenski/Niemeyer, Handbuch des Weltkommunismus, p. 513.

<sup>39</sup> A. Solzhenitsyn, "Solzhenitsyn to Writers Union: To the Secretariat of the Board of the Union of Writers of the USSR," letter dated 12 September 1967, reprinted in full in Problems of Communism, 17, No. 5 (September/October 1968), 40.

#### Anna Seghers' Early Works

<sup>1</sup> Friedrich Albrecht, Die Erzählerin Anna Seghers 1926-1932, Neue Beiträge zur Literaturwissenschaft, Vol. 25 (East Berlin: Rütten and Loening, 1965), 5-6.

<sup>2</sup> Paul Rilla, "Die Erzählerin Anna Seghers," Vom bürgerlichen zum sozialistischen Realismus: Aufsätze, Reclams Universal-Bibliothek, 385 (Leipzig: Reclam, 1957), p. 133. See also Albrecht, Anna Seghers, p. 253, n. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 136. See also Albrecht, Anna Seghers, p. 253, n. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Sabine Brandt, "Anna Seghers: Glanz und Elend: Der Roman 'Transit' und die 'Erzählungen,'" Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 25 April 1964.

<sup>5</sup> R., review of Auf dem Wege zur amerikanischen Botschaft, Die Linkskurve, 3, No. 3 (1931), 24.

<sup>6</sup> The Luchterhand edition of Anna Seghers' early stories (Seghers, Erzählungen, 2 vols. [Neuwied, Berlin: Luchterhand, 1964], I), omits "Bauern von Hruschowo," as well as Aufstand der Fischer von St. Barbara. In addition, no story written between 1930 and 1936 is included. Although the publishers have made no claim to presenting a complete collection of the author's short stories, it is regrettable that they should, however unwittingly, give the reader the impression that so prolific a short story writer as Anna Seghers published nothing during these six years. A closer examination reveals that the excluded stories are mostly Socialist Realist in nature.

<sup>7</sup> The second Aufbau edition of Seghers' short stories (Der Bienenstock: Gesammelte Erzählungen in drei Bänden [East Berlin: Aufbau, 1963]) gives 1926 as the date of origin for "Grübetsch." There has been no evidence brought to light which would cause this date to be disputed. However, since the dates given for the other stories contain certain discrepancies (the 1951/1953 Bienenstock edition gives the date for "Bauern von Hruschowo" as 1929, which is probably correct, whereas the 1963 edition has changed this to 1929/1930) and since the author herself is uncertain as to the exact dates of origin of her early stories, this writer has given the universally accepted date with qualifications. For further information, see Albrecht, Anna Seghers, p. 254, n. 6.

At least one other early story is attributed to Anna



Seghers. It is supposed to have been published in the Frankfurter Zeitung in the early or mid-twenties, but has never been found. Set in Holland, its heroine is named Anna Seghers. See Hans Neugebauer, Anna Seghers, Schriftsteller der Gegenwart, Vol. 4 (East Berlin: Volk und Wissen, 1962), p. 10, and Albrecht, Anna Seghers, p. 254, n. 7.

<sup>8</sup> Anna Seghers, "Grubetsch," Erzählungen, 2 vols. (Neuwied, Berlin: Luchterhand, 1964), I, 5. Further page references in my text are to this edition.

<sup>9</sup> Seghers, "Selbstanzeige," Das Tagebuch, 12, No. 2 (10 January 1931), 72.

<sup>10</sup> Sabine Brandt gives a brief account of this in her article "Anna Seghers: Glanz und Elend" (FAZ, 25 April 1964): "Der Kuriosität halber sei erwähnt, daß die erste Erzählung, 'Grubetsch' (1926), die in der alten 'Frankfurter Zeitung' das Licht der Literaturwelt erblickte, seinerzeit wegen 'unsittlicher Details' Gegenstand staatsanwaltschaftlicher Ermittlungen wurde."

<sup>11</sup> I. Diersen, Seghers-Studien: Interpretationen von Werken aus den Jahren 1926-1935: Ein Beitrag zu Entwicklungsproblemen der modernen deutschen Epik (East Berlin: Rütten and Loening, 1965), p. 94.

<sup>12</sup> Seghers, "Die Ziegler," Erzählungen (Neuwied, West Berlin: Luchterhand, 1964), I, 114. Further page references in

my text are to this edition.

13 Diersen, Seghers-Studien, pp. 95-96.

14 Seghers, "Selbstanzeige," Das Tagebuch, 12, No. 2 (1931), 72.

15 The Marxist critic Inge Diersen rejects this interpretation by Marcel Reich-Ranicki. See Diersen, Seghers-Studien, p. 327, n. 10, and M. Reich-Ranicki, "Die Kommunistische Erzählerin Anna Seghers," Deutsche Literatur in West und Ost: Prosa seit 1945 (Munich: Piper, 1966), p. 358.

16 Albrecht assumes that L. has been sentenced to forced labour, but nowhere is it mentioned that L. has to work.

17 Brekoly is probably of Cuban extraction. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries numerous Cubans immigrated to the Gulf Coast area of the United States.

18 Seghers, "Die Wellblech-Hütte: Bruchstücke einer Erzählung," 24 neue deutsche Erzähler, ed. Hermann Kesten (Berlin, 1929), p. 162. Further page references in my text are to this edition.

19 Albrecht, Anna Seghers, pp. 67-68.

20 Albrecht describes Brekoly as being half Asiatic and half Negro. "Von einer gelben Mutter" is more likely to mean that

Brekoly's mother was a light mulatto or "high yellow," as they are called in the United States, rather than an oriental.

21 Albrecht, Anna Seghers, p. 71.

22 Ibid., p. 75.

23 Other details also serve to undermine the realism of the story. Sending prisoners into isolated areas in groups of two was not an American practice. The desert is also incorrectly depicted. L. claims it is cooler at night to sleep outside, Brekoly repudiates this. We are given to understand that the latter is right, since L. is merely providing an excuse. Actually, the desert is cold at night.

24 An attempt to pinpoint the setting geographically by analyzing the names of the characters proves fruitless. Some names could be Breton (Kedennek, Desak), while others bear resemblance to Flemish or Dutch names (Bruyk, Bruyn). The towns mentioned — Port Sebastian, St. Barbara, St. Blé, St. Elnor, Wyk — could be in Portugal, Spain, France or Scandinavia, respectively.

Inge Diersen writes that Anna Seghers told her St. Barbara "'schwimme' irgendwo zwischen der Bretagne und Holland...". (Diersen, Seghers-Studien, p. 316, n. 15). It is a fictional landscape which the writer wished to portray. M. Reich-Ranicki offers this opinion ("Die kommunistische Erzählerin Anna Seghers," Deutsche Literatur, p. 360): "Santa Barbara soll offenbar als

symbolischer Ort verstanden werden. Die Erzählung mythologisiert die soziale Revolte schlechthin."

The use of the term "Pfennig" (Seghers, Aufstand der Fischer von St. Barbara [Hamburg: Suhrkamp, 1962], p. 38) cannot be construed as localizing the story in Germany. No doubt the author meant simply the equivalent of that monetary unit.

Finally, there are two distinct geographical locations mentioned. The men of St. Barbara fish off the Grand Banks of Newfoundland; since Portuguese, Basque and many other European fishermen fish these banks, this indicates only that St. Barbara is probably on the Atlantic Ocean. A ship bound for Algiers is mentioned (p. 100). This would put the location anywhere on Europe's western coast.

25 There is one factor which indicates the general time in which the story is set. Hull arrives in St. Barbara by steamer (pp. 8-9). Steamships are frequently mentioned thereafter. Kedennek's boat is also motorized (p. 96). This would put the time in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century.

26 Seghers, Aufstand der Fischer von St. Barbara (Hamburg: Suhrkamp, 1962), p. 36. Further page references in my text are to this edition.

27 Inge Diersen attributes Hull's reluctance to leave St. Barbara to two factors: his desire for Marie and his concern about the fate of the uprising. He returns because life without

successful participation in the class struggle is unthinkable for him, but he is not sufficiently knowledgeable about this to realize that he can be useful not only in St. Barbara. She then concludes that, although Hull could be considered a positive hero from his role in the story, he is not successfully presented as such. See Diersen, Seghers-Studien, pp. 43-45 and 50-51.

<sup>28</sup> Most critics have found the character of Hull unsatisfactory. Albrecht terms him unconvincing and criticizes his lack of practicality. See Albrecht, Anna Seghers, p. 138. Reich-Ranicki says: ". . . seine Handlungsweise ist unerwartet, alogisch und sprunghaft" ("Die kommunistische Erzählerin Anna Seghers," Deutsche Literatur, p. 359). Heinz Neugebauer disapproves of Hull's "anarchistische Vorstellung vom Wesen einer Revolution" (Anna Seghers, p. 17). Ernst Glaeser in "Anna Seghers" (Berliner Tageblatt und Handelszeitung, 10 July 1931), calls him "ein feudalistischer Revolutionär."

<sup>29</sup> Wolfgang Joho, "Das Beispiel: Anna Seghers zum 60. Geburtstag," NDL, 8, No. 11 (1960), 3.

<sup>30</sup> Paul Rilla, "Die Erzählerin Anna Seghers," Vom bürgerlichen zum sozialistischen Realismus, pp. 139-140.

<sup>31</sup> P. F. . . r, "Seghers: 'Aufstand der Fischer von St. Barbara,'" Die Rote Fahne, 9 December 1928, 3rd supplement.

32 L. Hirsch, "Das preisgekrönte Buch: Seghers: 'Aufstand der Fischer von St. Barbara,'" Berliner Tageblatt und Handelszeitung, 27 December 1928.

33 A. Schirokauer, "Kleist-Preis für Seghers," Die literarische Welt, 11 January 1929.

34 H. H. Jahn, "Rechenschaft Kleistpreis 1928," Aufzeichnungen eines Einzelgängers: Eine Auswahl aus dem Werk, ed. Rolf Italiaander (Munich: List T.B., 1959), p. 76. Originally published in Der Kreis, 3, 1929.

35 In the unsigned review of the story in Die Rote Fahne, 14, No. 21 (1931), Paris is named as the location. All other critics have followed suit. Albrecht tries to make a case for Berlin as the historical setting, but cannot find evidence that a march took place in Berlin on the actual day indicated in the story. See Albrecht, Anna Seghers, p. 107.

36 Seghers, "Auf dem Wege zur amerikanischen Botschaft," Erzählungen, I, 126. Further page references in my text are to this edition.

37 For further comments on the dates, see Albrecht, Anna Seghers, pp. 263-264, nn. 48 and 49.

38 Seghers, "Selbstanzeige," Das Tagebuch, 12, No. 2 (1931), 72.

39 "Schließlich ist bedeutsam, daß mit dem Kleinen eine proletarische Gestalt geschaffen worden ist, die sich ihre Willensfreiheit erhalten hat und wesentliche Charakterzüge eines Revolutionärs besitzt. Er ist der erste Vertreter eines Typs, der in den folgenden Werken Anna Seghers' ständig wiederkehrt: der proletarische Revolutionär, dessen Haltung vorwiegend von ethischen Motiven bestimmt wird." Albrecht, Anna Seghers, p. 121.

40 Reich-Ranicki, "Die kommunistische Erzählerin Anna Seghers," Deutsche Literatur, pp. 357-358.

41 Diersen, Seghers-Studien, p. 104.

42 Ibid., p. 105.

43 Rilla, "Die Erzählerin Anna Seghers," Vom bürgerlichen zum sozialistischen Realismus, p. 137.

44 The Bienenstock edition of 1951/1953 gives 1929 as the date of origin, whereas the 1963 edition gives the date as 1929/1930. "Bauern von Hruschowo" is placed before "Auf dem Wege zur amerikanischen Botschaft" in the 1963 edition (the latter story was omitted in the 1951 edition). This writer believes it to have been written after "Auf dem Wege," since it was placed after it in the Kiepenheuer edition of 1930 and shows considerable political development when compared with it. The original edition simply states: "Die Novellen wurden in den Jahren 1926-1930 geschrieben."

(Seghers, Auf dem Wege zur amerikanischen Botschaft und andere Erzählungen [Berlin: Kiepenheuer, 1930]).

45 Seghers, "Bauern von Hruschowo," Der Bienenstock: Ausgewählte Erzählungen in drei Bänden, 3 vols. (1963), I, 115.

Further page references in my text are to this edition.

46 In the 1930 Kiepenheuer edition and the reprint of the story in Europäische Revue, 6 (1930), p. 907, "entfernt" originally stood for "weitweg."

47 The original wording was less concise: "Dieser Korb voll Leben gehörte zu ihm, war von seiner Art, ja noch mehr, seiner Klasse." (Seghers, "Bauern von Hruschowo," Europäische Revue, 6 (1930), p. 908.

48 Quoted in Albrecht, Anna Seghers, p. 190.

49 A noteworthy exception is the anecdote "Die Stoppuhr."

50 Among the minor changes in "Grubetsch": ". . . ihre Arme wären mit Gänsehaut überzogen" (L, 5); ". . . ihre Arme wie kahle Zweige überzogen sich mit Gänsehaut" (K, 150). ". . . sonntags, werktags . . ." (L, 16); ". . . Sonntags, Werktags . . ." (K, 169). Quotation marks are eliminated in the Luchterhand edition in thoughts, e.g., "Was ist das, ein Unglück? dachte Anna" (p. 7). "Die Ziegler" shows a few minor changes also: "Du wirst



ja bald ganz kaputt sein" (L, 110); "Du wirst ja bald krepieret sein" (K, 85). "Auf dem Wege zur amerikanischen Botschaft" contains only one change: "herumgespielt" (L, 129) was originally "herausgepufft" (K, 117). The Kiepenheuer edition of "Bauern von Hruschowo" was not used for a comparison with the later version, because only an edition with pages missing could be located by the writer.

<sup>51</sup> Seghers, "Selbstanzeige," Das Tagebuch, 12, No. 2 (1931), 72.

<sup>52</sup> Seghers, Die Gefährten: Roman (East Berlin: Aufbau-T.B., 1959), p. 9. Further page references in my text are to this edition.

<sup>53</sup> G. Wieland, "Anna Seghers: 'Die Gefährten,'" Zwei Welten, 5, No. 3 (1934), 48. Italics in the original.

<sup>54</sup> cf. Seghers, "Geleitwort," Studienblätter aus China by Gustav Seitz (East Berlin, 1953).

<sup>55</sup> Anna Seghers recounts how she wrote this in "Kleiner Bericht aus meiner Werkstatt," Die Linkskurve, 4, No. 9 (1932).

<sup>56</sup> The subject matter, which concerns a coolie who was carrying a too-heavy load of furniture and is crushed to death under it when a dog knocks him off balance, was used for the story

of Lan-si in "Der erste Schritt," Der Bienenstock: Ausgewählte Erzählungen in zwei Bänden, 2 vols. (East Berlin: Aufbau, 1959), II, 293.

57 cf. Albrecht, Anna Seghers, p. 236.

58 Seghers, "Die Stoppuhr," Der Bienenstock (1963), I, 154.

59 In the original version (Seghers, "Der Führerschein" [Die Linkskurve, 4, No. 6 (1932)], p. 25), the entire action takes place in Taipei.

60 Seghers, "Der Führerschein," Der Bienenstock (1963), I, 28.

#### The Emigration 1933-1937

1 Diersen, Seghers-Studien, pp. 198-199.

2 Ibid., pp. 199-200.

3 Reich-Ranicki, "Die kommunistische Erzählerin Anna Seghers," Deutsche Literatur, p. 362.

4 Diersen, Seghers-Studien, pp. 202-203.

<sup>5</sup> It is interesting to note that the old Jew, Napthal, who plays a part of some consequence in the book, is not mentioned by Mrs. Diersen in her otherwise thorough review of the novel.

<sup>5</sup> Seghers, Der Kopflohn: Roman aus einem deutschen Dorf im Spätsommer 1932, Gesammelte Werke in Einzelausgaben (East Berlin: Aufbau, 1961), II, 24. Further page references in my text are to this edition.

<sup>7</sup> Diersen, Seghers-Studien, p. 219.

<sup>8</sup> cf. Neugebauer, Anna Seghers, p. 40 and p. 41.

<sup>9</sup> Diersen, Seghers-Studien, p. 215.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 217.

<sup>11</sup> Inge Diersen finds this unsatisfying: "Es bleibt ein nicht recht erklärbarer innerer Zwang, der Johann ins Dorf zurückzieht." Seghers-Studien, p. 218. She compares Johann's action with Lorenz' return to Bentsch in Die Rettung: "Mit Bentsch ins reine zu kommen, ist für Lorenz wichtiger als persönliche Sicherheit — und das Zusammentreffen ist für die Entfaltung des Roman-gehalts unerlässlich. Johann Schulz jedoch hat — außer seiner geringfügigen Habe — bei Bastian nichts mehr zu suchen. Lorenz' Rückkehr hilft ihm selbst, und sie hilft Bentsch. Johanns Rückkehr hilft weder ihm noch Bastian." Diersen, Seghers-Studien, p. 345, n. 10.

12 Diersen, Seghers-Studien, p. 213.

13 Ibid., pp. 214-215.

14 Seghers, "Vaterlandsli<sup>u</sup>be," Glauben an Irdisches: Essays aus vier Jahrzehnten, ed. Christa Wolf, "Reclams Universal-Bibliothek, 459 (Leipzig: Reclam, 1969), p. 11.

15 See Diersen, Seghers-Studien, p. 348, n. 10.

16 She is addressed as "gn<sup>u</sup>ädige Frau." Seghers, "Der letzte Weg des Koloman Wallisch," Der Bienenstock: Ausgewählte Erzählungen in drei Bänden, 3 vols. (East Berlin: Aufbau, 1963), I, 165, 166. Further page references in my text are to this edition.

17 "Heute morgen in Graz in der weißgetünchten bäuerlichen Küche meines Genossen . . ." Seghers, "Der letzte Weg des Koloman Wallisch," Bienenstock, I, 159.

18 The original version, published in Neue deutsche Blätter, I, No. 10 (1933/1934), reads: "Sie sind 'ne Deutschländische? Wie ist es dort?" (p. 589). This is replaced by "Wie ist es in Deutschland?" (Bienenstock, I, 164). The German nationality of the narrator is more clearly indicated in the original version, being definitely established on pp. 590 and 591.

- 19 Diersen, Seghers-Studien, pp. 256-257.
- 20 Seghers, "Der letzte Weg des Koloman Wallisch," Neue deutsche Blätter, 1, No. 10 (1933/1934), 592.
- 21 Abusch, "Anläßlich einer Neuauflage des Romans 'Der Weg durch den Februar,'" Literatur im Zeitalter des Sozialismus, Schriften, II, 412-413.
- 22 Reich-Ranicki, "Die kommunistische Erzählerin Anna Seghers," Deutsche Literatur, p. 362.
- 23 The change is justified, for the finding of a job in Linz for Nuß, who had to leave Styria because he had killed Johst, is directly connected with the Fischer family and the widow Johst, who figure in the episodes immediately preceding and following the Linz interlude.
- 24 Reich-Ranicki, "Die kommunistische Erzählerin Anna Seghers," Deutsche Literatur, pp. 363-364.
- 25 For further discussion of this aspect, see Diersen, Seghers-Studien, pp. 262-264.
- 26 Seghers, Der Weg durch den Februar, Gesammelte Werke in Einzelausgaben (East Berlin: Aufbau, 1961), II, 226. Further page references in my text are to this edition.

- 27 Diersen, Seghers-Studien, pp. 270-271.
- 28 Rilla, "Die Erzählerin Anna Seghers," Vom bürgerlichen zum sozialistischen Realismus, p. 150.
- 29 A. Shdanow, "Rede auf dem 1. Unionskongreß der Sowjet-Schriftsteller (1934)," Über Kunst und Wissenschaft, Kleine Bücherei des Marxismus-Leninismus (Stuttgart: Das neue Wort, 1952), pp. 3-12.
- 30 In Seghers-Studien, Diersen stops after Der Weg durch den Februar; Albrecht's study, Die Erzählerin Anna Seghers 1926-1932, ends with Die Gefährten, a logical pause because of the Emigration; Paul Rilla's article "Die Erzählerin Anna Seghers" ignores the years 1935 to 1937.
- 31 cf. Albrecht, Anna Seghers, p. 38.
- 32 Seghers, "Das Viereck," Der Bienenstock: Ausgewählte Erzählungen in drei Bänden, 3 vols. (East Berlin: Aufbau, 1963), I, 183.
- 33 Seghers, "Die schönsten Sagen vom Räuber Woynok," Erzählungen, 2 vols. (Neuwied, West Berlin: Luchterhand, 1964), I, 149. Further page references in my text are to this edition.
- 34 Seghers, "Sagen von Artemis," Erzählungen, 2 vols.

(Neuwied, West Berlin: Luchterhand, 1964), I, 190-191. Further page references in my text are to this edition.

<sup>35</sup> Sabine Brandt believes the location is Silesia. (Brandt, "Im Konflikt von Kunst und Ideologie: Zum literarischen Werk der Anna Seghers," FAZ, No. 266, 15 November 1965.)

<sup>36</sup> Inge Diersen states: "Von der Rettung an wird ~~eine Linie~~ weiterverfolgt; genauer: diese eine, zum großen Zeitgeschichtsroman führende Linie setzt sich konsequent durch." (Seghers-Studien, p. 303. Italics in the original.)

<sup>37</sup> Seghers, "Vorwort," Die Rettung: Roman (Neuwied, West Berlin: Luchterhand, 1965), p. 5. Further page references in my text are to this edition.

<sup>38</sup> "Das Buch hat keinen eigentlichen Helden. Die Arbeiterschaft, das ist der Held." Justin Steinfeld, "Zwei Stimmen zu einem Werk," I, Das Wort, No. 3 (1938), p. 135.

<sup>39</sup> Seghers, Der Weg durch den Februar, p. 415.

<sup>40</sup> Quoted in T. Motylowa, "Sozialistischer Realismus im Roman," Sinn und Form, 18, No. 1 (1966), 84.

<sup>41</sup> Inge Diersen compares Lorenz' return with that of Johann Schulz and comes to the same conclusion (Seghers-Studien, p. 345).

<sup>42</sup> Klara Blum, "Zwei Stimmen zu einem Werk," II, Das Wort, No. 3 (1938), p. 139.

<sup>43</sup> Brandt, "Im Konflikt von Kunst und Ideologie," FAZ, No. 266, 15 November 1965.

<sup>44</sup> Günther Cwojdrak, "Über einige frühe Werke von Anna Seghers," Aufbau, 8, No. 12 (1952), 1115.

<sup>45</sup> Brandt, "Im Konflikt von Kunst und Ideologie," FAZ, No. 266, 15 November 1965.

The Emigration 1938-1946

<sup>1</sup> Georg Lukács, "Es geht um den Realismus," Probleme des Realismus, p. 237.

<sup>2</sup> Georg Lukács and Anna Seghers, "Ein Briefwechsel zwischen Anna Seghers und Georg Lukács," Probleme des Realismus, p. 242. *Italics in the original.*

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 243-244.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 246.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 247.



<sup>6</sup> Lukács and Seghers, "Ein Briefwechsel zwischen Anna Seghers und Georg Lukács," Probleme des Realismus, p. 247.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., pp. 259-260.

<sup>8</sup> Rühle, p. 196. Italics in the original.

<sup>9</sup> See Neugebauer, p. 52.

<sup>10</sup> Seghers, Das siebte Kreuz: Roman, Rororo Taschenbuch 751/52 (Berlin, Hamburg, Stuttgart: Rowohlt, 1968), p. 42. Further page references in my text are to this edition.

<sup>11</sup> The village Botzenbach is mentioned in both novels. Zillich is the same man as in Der Kopflohn. Aldinger is not the same person in both novels, however.

<sup>12</sup> Rilla, "Die Erzählerin Anna Seghers," Vom bürgerlichen zum sozialistischen Realismus, p. 149.

<sup>13</sup> See A. Abusch, letter to Anna Seghers, Briefe ihrer Freunde (East Berlin: Aufbau, 1960), p. 6.

<sup>14</sup> Reich-Ranicki, "Die kommunistische Erzählerin Anna Seghers," Deutsche Literatur, p. 364.

<sup>15</sup> Rilla, "Die Erzählerin Anna Seghers," Vom bürgerlichen zum sozialistischen Realismus, p. 147.

<sup>16</sup> Helmut Barnasch, "Die Inhaltsangabe eines literarischen Werkes: Anna Seghers: 'Das siebte Kreuz,'" Deutschunterricht, 7, No. 7 (1954), 407.

<sup>17</sup> Reich-Ranicki, "Die kommunistische Erzählerin Anna Seghers," Deutsche Literatur, p. 372.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 373.

<sup>19</sup> Erika Hinckel, Anna Seghers, Schriftstellerreihe: Lektionen der Parteihochschule "Karl Marx" beim ZK der SED (East Berlin: Dietz, 1956), p. 15.

<sup>20</sup> Fritz Böttger, "Anna Seghers: Der Lebensweg der Dichterin und eine Würdigung ihres Schaffens mit besonderer Berücksichtigung ihres Romans 'Das siebte Kreuz,'" Deutschunterricht, 5, No. 6 (1952), 287.

<sup>21</sup> Seghers, Briefe an Leser (East Berlin, Weimar: Aufbau, 1970), pp. 36-37.

<sup>22</sup> Klaus Jarmatz, Literatur im Exil (East Berlin: Dietz, 1966), p. 257.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 259.

<sup>24</sup> Abusch, Schriften, II, 228.

- 25 Rühle, p. 196.
- 26 Böttger, "Anna Seghers," Deutschunterricht, 5, No. 6 (1952), 286.
- 27 Georg Lukács, quoted in Rühle, p. 194.
- 28 S. Brandt, "Vor der Abdankung," rev. of Seghers: Das siebte Kreuz, FAZ, 28 November 1962.
- 29 Barnasch, "Die Inhaltsangabe eines literarischen Werkes," Deutschunterricht, 7, No. 7 (1954), 404.
- 30 Seghers, "Das Obdach," Erzählungen, 2 vols. (Neuwied, West Berlin: Luchterhand, 1964), I, 200-201. Further page references in my text are to this edition.
- 31 Seghers, Briefe an Leser, pp. 21-23.
- 32 Ibid., pp. 26-27.
- 33 Matthias Wegner, Exil und Literatur: Deutsche Schriftsteller im Ausland 1933-1945 (Frankfurt am Main, Bonn: Athenäum, 1968), p. 49.
- 34 Heinz Neugebauer refers to the hero of Transit as Seidler without making clear that this is not his real name. Most of the secondary literature is guilty of this oversight. (See Neugebauer, Anna Seghers, p. 69.)

<sup>35</sup> This figure may have been suggested by Joseph Roth's mulatto friend mentioned in Abusch, Schriften, II, 202.

<sup>36</sup> Rilla, "Die Erzählerin Anna Seghers," Vom bürgerlichen zum sozialistischen Realismus, p. 163.

<sup>37</sup> Erika Hinkel does not even mention Transit in her small but otherwise exhaustive Seghers study.

<sup>38</sup> G. Snamenskaja, "Der Realismus in Anna Seghers' Romanen," Sowjetliteratur, No. 1 (1950), p. 192.

<sup>39</sup> Heinz Neugebauer figures prominently in this group. He distorts, for example, the function of Georg Binnet and his mistress Claudine: "Genauso wie Heinz durch sein aktives Handeln zur Niederlage der Faschisten beiträgt . . . so sind auch die Franzosen Georg und Claudine Binnet bereit, alle Kraft und sogar das Leben dafür einzusetzen, um ihr Land nicht nur von der faschistischen Unterdrückung, sondern auch von der sozialen Ungerechtigkeit zu befreien" (p. 72). The Binnets (if one can call them that, since they are not married) are preoccupied solely with day-to-day living. They never indulge in political discussions. There is absolutely no basis in fact to call them "class-conscious French workers" (p. 72). The Binnet household represents for the narrator peace and home for which he yearns. It is also wrong to surmise that the narrator refused to leave France because of the little boy ". . . der die Zukunft verkörpert" (p. 73).

The triteness of Neugebauer's criticism is summed up in the way in which he excuses the novel's failings vis-à-vis Socialist Realism: "Es ist zu vermuten, daß sich die Schriftstellerin zu jener Zeit, als sie den Roman schrieb, in einer ähnlichen Depression befunden hat wie der Held des Buches" (p. 71).

<sup>40</sup> Seghers, Transit: Roman, Rororo Taschenbuch (Berlin, Hamburg, Stuttgart: Rowohlt, 1966), No. 867, p. 26. Further page references in my text are to this edition.

<sup>41</sup> Rilla, "Die Erzählerin Anna Seghers," Vom burgerlichen zum sozialistischen Realismus, p. 162.

<sup>42</sup> Reich-Ranicki, "Die kommunistische Erzählerin Anna Seghers," Deutsche Literatur, p. 376.

<sup>43</sup> S. Brandt, "Glanz und Elend," rev. of Transit and Erzählungen by Anna Seghers, FAZ, 25 April 1964.

<sup>44</sup> In the East German edition of her collected works, the date 1943 is given, whereas the Luchterhand edition gives the years 1943/1944 for the story.

<sup>45</sup> Hans Meyer notes that the dates do not coincide with the biographical data of Anna Seghers, and that she would only have been fourteen years old at the time. "Diese Nachrechnung . . . soll zeigen, daß die Erzählerin dieser Geschichte nicht mit

der Erzählerin der Geschichte verwechselt werden darf." Hans Mayer, "Anmerkung zu einer Erzählung von Anna Seghers," Sinn und Form, 14, No. 1 (1962), 121. Italics in the original.

<sup>46</sup> Seghers, "Der Ausflug der toten Mädchen," Erzählungen, 2 vols. (Neuwied, West Berlin: Luchterhand, 1964), I, 210. Further page references in my text are to this edition.

<sup>47</sup> Abusch, Schriften, II, 812.

<sup>48</sup> G. Snamenskaja, "Der Realismus in Anna Seghers' Romanen," Sowjetliteratur, No. 1 (1950), p. 192.

<sup>49</sup> See Neugebauer, p. 77.

<sup>50</sup> Reich-Ranicki, "Die kommunistische Erzählerin Anna Seghers," Deutsche Literatur, p. 377.

<sup>51</sup> Seghers, "Das Ende," Erzählungen, 2 vols. (Neuwied, West Berlin: Luchterhand, 1964), I, 300. Further page references in my text are to this edition.

<sup>52</sup> Snamenskaja, p. 191.

<sup>53</sup> Seghers, "Die Saboteure," Aufstellen eines Maschinengewehrs im Wohnzimmer der Frau Kamptschik: Erzählungen, Nachwort von Christa Wolf, Sammlung Luchterhand, No. 14 (Neuwied, West Berlin: Luchterhand, 1970), 42. Further page references in my text are to this edition.

<sup>54</sup> Neugebauer, p. 89.

The GDR Years

<sup>1</sup> Seghers, "Der Anteil der Literatur an der Bewußtseinsbildung des Volkes," Glauben an Irdisches, pp. 200-201. Also in Seghers, Die große Veränderung und unsere Literatur: Ansprache zum IV. Deutschen Schriftstellerkongreß (East Berlin: Aufbau, 1956), pp. 8-9.

<sup>2</sup> Seghers, "Das Argonautenschiff," Erzählungen, 2 vols. (Neuwied, West Berlin: Luchterhand, 1964), p. 7. Further page references in my text are to this edition.

<sup>3</sup> Seghers, "Fragen und Antworten," NDL, 18, No. 2 (1970), 51.

<sup>4</sup> ~~ibid.~~, pp. 51-52.

<sup>5</sup> Seghers, "Die Hochzeit von Haiti," Der Bienenstock: Ausgewählte Erzählungen in drei Bänden, 3 vols. (East Berlin: Aufbau, 1963), II, 152. Further page references in my text are to this edition.

<sup>6</sup> Seghers, "Fragen und Antworten," NDL, 18, No. 2 (1970), 52.

<sup>7</sup> Anna Seghers admits that the title may have been inspired by Kleist's "Die Verlobung von San Domingo." She defends Kleist against criticism that his story lacks social awareness: "Kleist, den ich sehr bewundere, kann nichts dafür, daß er von der Negerrevolution nicht viel wußte und nicht viel verstand. Für ihn war San Domingo etwas Phantastisches, Exotisches." (Seghers, "Fragen und Antworten," NDL, 18, No. 2 [1970], 52.)

<sup>8</sup> See Neugebauer, p. 75.1°

<sup>9</sup> See Seghers, "Fragen und Antworten," NDL, 18, No. 2 (1970), 52-53.

<sup>10</sup> Seghers, "Wiedereinführung der Sklaverei in Guadeloupe," Der Bienenstock (1963), II, 224. Further page references in my text are to this edition.

<sup>11</sup> Klaus Heimsdorf, "Die nationale Bedeutung der zeitgenössischen sozialistischen Literatur," Weimarer Beiträge, 7, No. 7 (1961), 294.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 296.

<sup>13</sup> Seghers, "Der Anteil der Literatur," Glauben an Irdisches, p. 224.

<sup>14</sup> Inge Diersen, "Zu Problemen der Komposition in Anna



Seghers' Romanen 'Die Toten bleiben jung' und 'Die Entscheidung,'" Aufsätze über Anna Seghers und ihr Werk: Zum 60. Geburtstag der Dichterin, ed. Deutsche Akademie der Künste (East Berlin, 1960), p. 57.

<sup>15</sup> F. C. Weiskopf, Literarische Streifzüge (East Berlin: Dietz, 1956), pp. 142-143.

<sup>16</sup> Seghers, Die Toten bleiben jung (Neuwied, West Berlin: Luchterhand, 1967), p. 285. Further page references in my text are to this edition.

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<sup>18</sup> Inge Diersen, "Kritik des Militarismus und Gestaltung der nationalen Perspektive in Anna Seghers' Roman 'Die Toten bleiben jung,'" Weimarer Beiträge, 7, No. 1 (1961), 83.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 85.

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22 Tamara Motyljowa, "Die Literatur des demokratischen Deutschland," Neue Welt, No. 2 (1951), p. 124.

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<sup>95</sup> Seghers, "Das Schilfrohr," Die Kraft der Schwachen, p. 78.

<sup>96</sup> Seghers, "Das Duell," Die Kraft der Schwachen, p. 100.

<sup>97</sup> Seghers, "Der Prophet," Die Kraft der Schwachen, p. 62.

<sup>98</sup> Friedrich Albrecht, review of Die Kraft der Schwachen by Anna Seghers, Sinn und Form, 18, No. 3 (1966), 1046.

<sup>99</sup> Seghers, "Der Führer," Die Kraft der Schwachen, p. 40.  
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<sup>100</sup> Cardenas was President of Mexico from 1934 to 1940. A liberal, he nationalized foreign oil holdings in Mexico, and did much for the general welfare of the citizens, especially those of Indian origin. It was he who made it possible for foreign refugees like Anna Seghers to settle in Mexico.

<sup>101</sup> M. Reich-Ranicki, "Die Anna Seghers von heute: Zu ihrem Erzählungsband 'Die Kraft der Schwachen,'" Die Zeit, 28 January 1966, pp. 17-18.

<sup>102</sup> See "Das Motiv Vertrauen: Diskussion," NDL, 17, No. 5<sup>1</sup> (1969), 149. Western critics have generally referred to Das

Vertrauen as the second book in a series. See F. J. Raddatz, "Der unbewältigte 17. Juni: Zu dem neuen Roman von Anna Seghers" (Süddeutsche Zeitung, 8/9 February 1969), and Barbara Skriver, "Auf der Parteilinie: Anna Seghers' neuer Roman 'Das Vertrauen'" (FAZ, 19 July 1969).

<sup>103</sup> Seghers, Das Vertrauen: Roman (East Berlin: Aufbau, 1968), p. 287. Further page references in my text are to this edition.

<sup>104</sup> "Das Motiv Vertrauen: Diskussion," NDL, 17, No. 5 (1969), 150.

<sup>105</sup> M. Reich-Ranicki, "Bankrott einer Erzählerin: Anna Seghers' Roman 'Das Vertrauen,'" Die Zeit, 14 March 1969, p. 28.

<sup>106</sup> Seghers, "Das Unsterbliche der Völker war in ihm verkörpert," NDL, 1, No. 4 (1953), 6.

<sup>107</sup> Heinz Plavius, "Vertrauensfrage," NDL, 17, No. 5 (1969), 167.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., p. 164.

<sup>109</sup> Sigrid Bock, "Epische Welt und Menschenbildkonzeption: Zum Roman 'Das Vertrauen' von Anna Seghers," Weimarer Beiträge, 15, Sonderheft (1969), 131 and 133-134.

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