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ROBERT E. SHERWOOD—MORAL PACIFIST

Robert E. Sherwood’s commitment to social reform emerged chiefly from his revulsion to war. The horrifying memories of the physical discomfort, wastefulness and the neurosis that accompanied World War I [in which he participated as a member of the Canadian Black Watch and was severely gassed and wounded] prompted him to raise his voice against all wars. Furthermore he believed that war resulted from a scrambling for economic power. The pursuit of material success, according to him, led to the upper class’s exploitation of the economically underprivileged classes, and caused a scrimmage for power among megalomaniacs which inevitably resulted in hostilities and culminated in warfare. Abhorring the chaos that war produced, Sherwood wished to see a peaceful, happy and egalitarian society—one that imparted justice to all and respected human dignity, freedom and personal integrity. These moral beliefs coalesced with his dramatic ideas, resulting in his condemnation of war in plays such as Waterloo Bridge (1929), and Idiot’s Delight (1936). Since he believed that economic reasons were in part responsible for war, he portrayed in The Petrified Forest
(1935) the economic and consequently spiritual sterility that the Depression caused during the decade. Though Sherwood never presented an explicit Marxist analysis for the purpose of social reconstruction, his plays reflected an influence of socialist ideas.

Although Sherwood's despair had found outlets in the 1920s in plays such as The Road to Rome and Reunion in Vienna, his commitment solidified only in the 1930s when Depression at home caused economic havoc, and Fascism abroad made the fear of war a reality.

International events towards the end of the 1930s, however, caused a shift in Sherwood's pacifism. Fascist forces in Europe, that so clearly endangered the ideals of liberty, equality and freedom, urged Sherwood to make an effort to put an end to world dissolution. According to John Mason Brown, he viewed Hitler and Stalin's non-aggression pact in 1939 as a strategy on the part of "the same megalomaniacs who could capture control of nations...to try to control the world."\(^1\) Realizing the necessity of war to save democratic values from crumbling and mankind from losing freedom, he encouraged a fight to the finish against Fascism. He attacked the United

States' policy of isolationism and conveyed the necessity of a just war to isolationist Americans through *Abe Lincoln in Illinois* (1938) and *There Shall Be No Night* (1940).

Thus, while his commitment to the preservation of peace and democratic values compelled him to spread anti-war ideas in the first half of the decade, the same set of commitments disposed him towards war in the second half.

Despite his disillusionment with the contemporary situation in the mid-1930s, Sherwood nurtured the notion that "by being alert to the machinations of the merchants of death, people could liberate themselves from mass bloodshed." This optimism found expression in almost all his plays of the decade.

Sherwood expressed his anti-war sentiment in *Waterloo Bridge* (1929) through a conventional plot in which Roy Cronin, a young American soldier, falls in love with a prostitute named Myra on a short visit to London in the midst of the Great War (1914-1918). Roy cannot stay on with her because he is called back to duty. Bitterly resentful of his war experience, he cries in an impassioned tone:

> [F]or three years I've done everything they told me. I've sloped arms when they told me and

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saluted when they told me; I've stood up
straight when they told me and ducked when they
told me.'

However, he realizes that he has to fight this war [as
Woodrow Wilson said] to prevent future wars. For this
reason he leaves his beloved whore behind and resumes his
duty to save mankind.

Through Roy, however, Sherwood severely indicts war,
by having him tell his girl Myra:

What's the war, anyway? It's that guy up there
in the aeroplane. What do I care about him or
his bombs? . . . . What do I care who he is, or
what he does, or what happens to him? That war's
over for me. What I've got to fight is the whole
dirty world. That's the enemy that's against you
and me. That's what makes the rotten mess we've
got to live in.'

Baird Shuman sees Roy's diatribe as one that belonged to
committed playwrights of the 1930s. Thus, he finds Roy's

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3Robert Sherwood, Waterloo Bridge (New York: Charles
Scribner's Sons, 1930) 165-66.

‘Robert E. Sherwood, Waterloo Bridge 168. Evidently Roy’s
speech had resulted from Sherwood’s personal observation of
'blacked out, hungry London in 1917’, on his visit from a war
hospital during World war I. Shocked to see that London’s
"all-conquering pride, which had made Britain universally
great . . . had been killed in action in the war, and of all
the dreadful losses that Britain sustained, this was the
bitterest and the one that can never be replaced." His despair
grew worse on perceiving "the ebb-tide in the spirits of the
tired, battered people of London." which the war had caused.
It caused him to view war with grim despondency and led to
his re-creation of a picture of war-time England. For
Reference see Waterloo Bridge xi.

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speech similar to the lab assistant’s in *Waiting For Lefty* (1935) in which war becomes a living hell for innocent men like most private soldiers.

Roy, however, remains doubtful about this war putting an end to all wars. This is because, despite Sherwood’s belief in mankind’s interest in saving the world, Sherwood cannot help feeling disconsolate about the probability of war’s outcome. Myra spells out Sherwood’s fear when she tells Roy: "You can’t get away from this war, soldier."

Roy’s frustration with the war and sense of futility reinforces Sherwood’s despondency and skepticism about it. One can attribute Sherwood’s reaction to his realization that, given the economic and political circumstances at the time that he wrote the play, the world was clearly heading into the convulsion of another war.

Sherwood’s downheartedness further reflects in Myra’s friend and fellow-professional, Kitty’s speech who skeptically wonders when the war is going to end. "Tomorrow?", she asks, "No! Next Year? No! A ‘undred years from now.’ The god-awful war-economy forces Myra and

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5Baird Shuman, Robert E. Sherwood 81.
'Sherwood, Waterloo Bridge 38.
'Sherwood, Waterloo Bridge 131.

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Kitty into prostitution to earn their livelihood. They represent prototypes of ordinary people affected by the hyper-self-defense consciousness of total war. Myra quits her job as a farmerette because the money offered is inadequate for survival and her new profession takes far better care of rent and food. Given their circumstances, however, Sherwood shows the logic of their vocational choices, absolving them of any moral guilt. Through their misery in fact, the playwright attempts to evoke the audience's sympathy and make the public realize the humiliation that often accompanies the personal loss that war incurs. He heightens this pathos in a scene where Myra, despite her fatigue, lurks around Waterloo Bridge in the hope of another customer because if she "wait[s] till to-morrow, it'll only be that much harder."

Though the play ends on a gloomy note, as Roy departs for the front aware of the possibility of not returning, ever, and Myra becomes a victim of the bombing war-planes, Roy's departure and his courage to fight for peace, freedom, and justice, inspires a bit of optimism, at least, if one tries hard enough to share his ideals.

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8Sherwood, Waterloo Bridge 27.
Sherwood's thoughtful concern with humanity in *The Petrified Forest*, showed that the decade's economic sterility and political confusion deeply troubled him. Though the play's main theme is the spiritual and intellectual petrification of modern life, its action nonetheless conveys the message of social impoverishment. At the Black Mesa Bar-B-Q cum gas station in Arizona, near the National Petrified Forest Park, Sherwood throws together a number of unrelated characters that include an intellectual named Alan Squier, the lunchroom manager and his daughter Gabby. These people present a microcosmic picture of a world surrounded by economic desert and political violence. Gradually they all disclose their hidden frustrations. Their revelations about their economic, social and spiritual prospects reveal the emptiness pervading their lives. The play shows that Sherwood's "criticism of man and society was becoming a more definite aspect of his dramaturgy and his philosophy of life."

Though the plot revolves around the sentimental romance between the brilliant but frustrated intellectual Alan Squier and the lunchroom manager's daughter Gabby, the social significance of the play never falters. In

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fact, Sherwood states at the very start of the play, through a conversation between a couple of telegraph linemen in the opening scene, the disillusionment of the working-class. These workers express their consternation with the nation, indulge in Bolshevik speeches, and declare the necessity of a revolution similar to the one in Russia, so that they can "finally get some of the equality [that] they talked about in the Declaration of Independence."[10] For, says the first lineman: "How do you think this government was started if it wasn't by revolution?"[11] He expresses his disgust with the deprivation and degradation resulting from social and economic inequality. "Where's this soul that everybody hollers about?"[12] he questions. All we have in America, he says, is "Rugged individualism! Everyman for himself! That's the kind of liberty we've been getting."[13]

Evidently Sherwood empathizes with their troubles. Yet his reference to the revolution is not an invitation to violence. The revolutionary talk suggests rather

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changing the system so that it will provide equal prosperity and dignity to all its citizens. Instead of "individualism" Sherwood prefers the socialist idea of equality and community. Therefore, even though the linemen’s views sound similar to Agate’s views in Odets’ Waiting For Lefty on the revolution as being the only solution to end class warfare, they differ in that their talk is not militant. At the same time the first lineman’s views reveal the hopes of Russia during the 1930s. Impressed with the Soviet Union’s apparent progress after the revolution the lineman lauds Russia for “pushing ahead.” He claims:

They’re pioneering! . . . They’re opening up new territory--and for the benefit of all, not so’s a few land grabbers can step in and take the profits after somebody else has done the real work . . . . Those engineers in Russia are building something new. That’s where they’ve got in on us. We ain’t building--We’re repairing. [To other lineman] . . . . What do we do--day after day? We climb up poles, and fix the wires, so that some broker in New York can telegraph in a split second to some guy in Los Angeles to tell him he’s ruined.”

The lineman’s disappointment with the American economic system symbolizes the general sentiment of the lower middle-class during the Depression period. Furthermore, it reflects Sherwood’s empathy for the

working classes. For he does not condemn the linemen’s opinion nor suggest that their solutions are incongruent. For example he has Gramps, the B-B-Q owner agree that there is some truth in what the lineman alleges.

Alan Squier voices Sherwood’s social message by denouncing the values of Herbert Hoover’s rugged individualism as being responsible for causing not only economic but intellectual and spiritual sterility as well. He calls it:

. . . the graveyard of the civilization that’s been shot from under us. Platonism--patriotism--Christianity--romance--the economics of Adam Smith--they’re all so many dead stumps in the desert.15

Through the gangster Duke Mantee, and his gang of thieves who arrive at the café and savagely order food and beer, Sherwood exposes the nature of fascist and totalitarian evils. According to Walter Meserve, Duke symbolizes totalitarianism, and "is certainly very much part of the present world, as the newspapers of the 1930s will reveal."16 However, Sherwood has the Brutal Duke arrested by the Sheriff. After a bout of intense violence and a shootout at the restaurant, the Sheriff finally nabs

15Sherwood, The Petrified Forest 397.
16Meserve, Robert E. Sherwood 107.
him. This whole sequence of events represents the contemporary state of disorder and unrest. Duke’s arrest reflects Sherwood’s faith in the triumph of the good over evil. Despite its grimness, therefore, the scene instills hope.

Sherwood’s optimism does not let him end the play here. He goes on to convey that the socially ill world can be regenerated if each member of society undertakes its revival as his or her own responsibility. Hence, he lets Squier, whose existence is meaningless in this world, realize the futility of his being, and discover this as the opportune moment to make his life worthwhile by interjecting hope in someone else’s. Once this awareness dawns upon Squier, he decides to help Gabby fulfil her dreams of going to France. He believes that she is "the renewal of vitality -- and courage--and aspiration . . . essential to . . . the whole damned country, and the whole miserable world."17 Strangely, Squier provokes Duke to shoot him (knowing that Duke cannot now escape the Sheriff) so that he can pass on his $5000 insurance policy to Gabby. Realizing the importance and nobility of Squier’s purpose in having himself killed, Duke encourages his altruism and kills him. Squier’s gesture represents

17Sherwood, The Petrified Forest 405.
the sacrifice for humankind that Sherwood recommends as an essential ingredient to overcome socio-economic inequality. Thus, the entire action of "romantic protest in The Petrified Forest," according to Meserve, becomes "no less than a thoughtful concern for humanity than the . . . dramatic protests of Clifford Odets . . . [in] Awake and Sing and Waiting for Lefty."18

In 1936 the threat of a second World War which seemed to be on the threshold inspired Sherwood to write Idiot's Delight. Caspar Nannes claims that during the twenties Sherwood had aimed at achieving a warless world.19 The Spanish civil war of 1936, the Italian invasion of Ethiopia and Hitler's ominous shadow over Eastern Europe seemed to Sherwood "dreadfully similar to 1914."20 The situation compelled him to once again raise his voice against war. And so Idiot's Delight opened in New York amidst international tensions--two days after Italy had invaded Ethiopia--and in London less than a week after Hitler's forces had marched into Austria.

18Meserve, Robert E. Sherwood 103.
An anti-war play, *Idiot's Delight* is an account of the outbreak of an imaginary world war and its effects upon a group of people at the Hotel Mount Gabriel in the Italian Alps. The theme of the play attacks war as an absurdity. The people present at the hotel include an armaments manufacturer, Achille Weber, who starts the conflict by persuading the Italians present in the hotel to attack Paris. Also present are his woman companion Irene, and an American vaudeville dancer Harry Van with his troop of six blonde chorus girls. The dancer eventually decides to give up his life with Irene when Achille deserts her at the hotel. Among others present are a pacifist radical who turns nationalist as soon as war breaks out; a German physician who loses years of hardwork and experimentation on cancer because the war delays his return to his country, and a newly wed English couple who have to return to their country. The play ends on an ironic note, with the vaudevillian and his lady singing "Onward Christian Soldiers," to the accompaniment of falling bombs.

The war that "sweeps over the people of the play like the flood from a broken dam" results in the death of the communist spy from execution by a firing squad. In addition it destroys Irene and Harry in the final scene,

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demolishing the hotel with bombs, machine guns and shells. The hotel in Europe is itself emblematic of the political situation, the tension of war, of uncertainty and oppression. Sherwood's description of the hotel in Act I sets this mood:

... there is something about this place that suggests "a vague kind of horror." This is nothing definite, or identifiable, or even, immediately apparent. Just an intimation."

The assortment of nationally disparate characters shows Sherwood's internationalism. He deliberately uses this setting to present a microcosmic cross-section of European humanity. According to Burns Mantle, they "represent about every facet of the war problem, and through them it is very stirrringly and thoroughly analyzed."

While Quillery, the Communist, enunciates the conflict of "the [f]ree democracies against the Fascist tyranny," Irene, Achille Weber's (munitions-manufacturer) Russian mistress, articulates Sherwood's stance: "Poor dear God. Playing Idiot's Delight. The game

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23Mantle, Contemporary American Playwrights 24.
24Sherwood, Idiot's Delight 115.
that never means anything and never ends."²⁵ Towards the end of the play, she distinctly pronounces the terrifying nature of war to Harry Van which she believes is "just for the purpose of killing us . . . you and me . . . . Because we are the little people--and for us the deadliest weapons are the most merciful . . . ."²⁶

The Captain, who works strictly on orders he receives from his fascist headquarters, represents the passive man—the derelict who is controlled by officers who make war. Dr. Waldersee expressly divulges this characteristic trait in his address to the Captain:

You have no comprehension of what is at stake. You are a soldier and indifferent to death. You say you are sorry, but it is nothing to you that hundreds of thousands, millions, are dying from a disease that is within my power to cure!²⁷

Dr. Waldersee’s inability to complete his research on cancer represents the fate of the frustrated intellectual whose efforts to preserve the human race are rendered futile by power-hungry maniacs. The war, much to his consternation, forces him to abandon his research, leaving him eventually with no choice but to offer his

²²⁵ Sherwood, Idiot’s Delight 104.
²²⁶ Sherwood, Idiot’s Delight 186.
²²⁷ Sherwood, Idiot’s Delight 19.
services to his country. He justifies his abandoned research on a cure for cancer thus:

Why should I save people who don’t want to be saved— so that they can go out and exterminate each other? Obscene maniacs. . . . Then I’ll be a maniac too. Only I’ll be more dangerous than most of them. For I know all the tricks of death! And— as for my rats, maybe they’ll be useful. Britain will put down the blockade again, and we shall be starving --and maybe I’ll cut my rats into filets and eat them.29

And Cherry, the Englishman, thinks of war as nothing but bestial frenzy.

In Sherwood’s opinion war is not only detrimental to mankind but is self-inflicted and results from man’s idiocy. He expressed this in the play’s Post-Script:

. . . let me express here the conviction that those who shrug and say, "War is inevitable," are false prophets. I believe that the world is populated largely by decent people, and decent people don’t want war. Nor do they make war. They fight and die, to be sure— but that is because they have been deluded by their exploiters, who are members of the indecent minority.29

But Sherwood does not attribute the reason for war solely to mankind’s animal aggressiveness. He attributes it in part to the self-interest that nationalistic

28Sherwood, Idiot’s Delight 161.
passions generate; to the selfish capitalist pursuit of people like armament makers who encourage warfare; and fascist megalomaniacs who make war inevitable by its glorification.

Sherwood sees nationalism as a religion that fosters war. The nationalistic hatred and self-interest that everyone (except Harry and Irene) reverts to upon the outbreak of war, greatly perturbs him. It is precisely this problem that bothers Sherwood about the professed Communist Quillery. After France is attacked, Quillery immediately reverts from internationalist socialism to nationalistic patriotism. The "moment he [gets] a whiff of gunpowder he beg[i]n[s] to spout hate and revenge."30 Unable to accept his parochialism, Sherwood has Quillery executed by the fascists, who dies shouting "Vive La France."

The same patriotic passion fills the supposedly scientific mind of Dr. Waldersee, who insists that he is not concerned with politics. He at first condemns nationalism as a "virus" which has especially inflicted Germany so that the Nazis "expect all bacteriologists to work on germs to put in bombs to drop from airplanes. . .

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30Sherwood, Idiot's Delight 124.
In an accusatory manner, Dr. Waldersee rebukes his inmates at the hotel for forgetting that Germany also has a right to live. Besides his frustration with his inability to continue his biomedical research, his love for his fatherland induces him to abandon the path which would save lives (cure for cancer) and follow one which destroys lives by making poison gas.

The war also stirs the patriotism of Mr. and Mrs Cherry, the English couple. Despite their yearning for peace and quiet on their honeymoon, they return to England so that Mr. Cherry can fight for his country.

Armaments manufacturers, according to Sherwood, are equally responsible for spreading the germs of anarchy in the world. They do this because, as Irene says in her ironic reference to Achille Weber, they are "true m[e]n of the world" and "it is . . . [their] duty to stir up a little trouble here and there to stimulate the sale of . . . [their] products." Sherwood was among the many . . . who believed munitions manufacturers were the "merchants of death" responsible for the First War and in their own interests working for a

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31 Sherwood, Idiot’s Delight 60.
32 Sherwood, Idiot’s Delight 124.
second.” In Idiot’s Delight, Sherwood floats this premise through Achille Weber. For Sherwood, Weber represents the "indecent minority" that he refers to in the post-script of the play. For personal profit, Weber abandons his fundamental responsibility of being loyal to another human being, Irene. He leaves her behind in the frontier Hotel, while he arranges to move to a safer one so he can avoid being a victim of bombs. Weber’s "unchivalrous abandonment of Irene" is, according to critic Baird Shuman, "an abandonment to almost certain death, [and] is directly attributable to the fact that Irene expresses pacifist sentiments." She denounces him for promoting all this great, wonderful destruction, everywhere. The munitions maker, whose prime purpose is to make huge profits during war-time, naturally considers Irene’s pacifism a threat to his commercial interests. This selfish venture on Achille’s part is Sherwood’s method of making a merchant of death sell his mistress for his master motive.

Achille’s answer to Irene is that he is merely doing his business. In this way he tries to absolve himself of

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guilt. He retorts by questioning Irene if she could explain "who are the greater criminals-- those who sell the instruments of death or those who buy them and use them?" The implication is that the foolishly patriotic masses who buy and use these weapons are the ones to blame as well. Thus Achille’s reply to Irene raises an important question which had haunted the conscience of Odets in *Golden Boy*: whether those who use ordinary people are responsible for conflict in the world or those who allow themselves to be used. Sherwood’s position is that if no one is held responsible then that will make the situation worse. His solution is to hold all humans accountable. However, though Achille is certainly liable to such a charge, Sherwood also blames the public for giving in to the victimizers’ plan. Achille’s reply to Irene is designed by Sherwood not to absolve him of his guilt but to show that he and his ilk are not the only ones answerable for mankind’s suffering. In every way Sherwood makes a “thundering, contemptuous blast at nations that make war, men who make bullets, and the inarticulate sheep-like humanity that allows itself to be in peonage of war.”


Sherwood’s anguish over the idea that ordinary human beings become pawns in the hands of “megalomaniacs” who want the power to control the world, is reinforced when Dr. Waldersee is unable to resume his experiments because of a war in which he has no involvement. He gets held up in the hotel through no choice of his own. This hinders the completion of a humane task that he endeavoured to achieve. Waldersee is a prototype of the duped intellectual class. The Captain too is a “powerless . . . pawn” in the hands of generals who make war. Critic Walter Meserve claims also that “Irene remains a beautiful pawn in a horrible world.” This process of ubiquitous victimization reinforces Sherwood’s anti-war message: we are all idiots delighted by our own destruction!

Sherwood’s anxiety over war is buttressed through Irene’s description of its horrors in terms of possible prospects for the English couple:

. . . I saw him in his nice, smart, British uniform, shooting a little pistol at a huge tank. And the tank rolls over him. And his fine strong body, that was so full of the capacity for ecstasy, is a mass of mashed flesh and bones—a smear of purple blood—like a stepped-on snail. But before this moment of death he consoles himself by thinking, “Thank God she is safe! She is bearing the child I gave her, and he will live to see a better world.”. . . But I

\[3\] Sherwood, Idiot’s Delight 26.

\[3\] Meserve, Robert E. Sherwood 122.
know where she is. She is lying in a cellar that has been wrecked by an air-raid, and her firm young breasts are all mixed up with the bowels of a dismembered policeman, and the embryo from her womb is splattered against the face of a dead bishop.39

Harry Van too (who, according to playwright Edward Sheldon, is in fact Robert Sherwood himself,40) vehemently denounces war. In a sudden outburst he declares that this madness of war is "God-damned bad management."41 Regretting that the international situation is always deplorable, he sums up the trouble with the contemporary world: "We have become a race of drug addicts—hopped up with false beliefs—false fears—false enthusiasms... ."42 Harry’s diatribe reflects "the mood of the period: to "surrender to idiocy as though idiocy were the only remaining characteristic of the human race." At the same time it presented a "feeling of helplessness," about the aura surrounding the period, that was "clearly one of abandonment to the stupidities to come, as though nothing would stop them from coming, and as though there was no

39Sherwood, Idiot’s Delight 105.
40Quoted in Meserve, Robert E. Sherwood 116.
41Sherwood, Idiot’s Delight 162-63.
42Sherwood, Idiot’s Delight 42-43.
Quillery, the French communist ideologue, voices Sherwood’s protest against fascism. Perceiving war as "mass murder--mass suicide," Quillery bitterly condemns the Nazis, lamenting what the Nazis might do to Dr. Waldersee whom he sees as a "servant of humanity." According to him:

... the Nazis would make you abandon your cure of cancer. It might benefit too many people outside of Germany--even maybe some Jews. They would force you to devote yourself to breeding malignant bacteria--millions of little germs, each one trained to give the nazi salute and then go out and poison the enemy. You--a fighter against disease and death--you would [be]come a Judas goat in a slaughter house."

The transmission of Sherwood’s protest through Quillery tells us something of the impact of socialist ideas upon Sherwood’s liberal thinking. Quillery’s speech expresses Sherwood’s pacifist and anti-fascist stance: "This is not 1914, remember! Since then, some new voices have been heard in this world--loud voices. I need mention only one

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"Sherwood, Idiot’s Delight 81.

"Sherwood, Idiot’s Delight 81.

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of them—Lenin—Nikolai Lenin!" He implies that the implementation of socialist ideas, in actuality, may be able to save society from fascist tyranny.

Also through Quillery, Sherwood lauds the United Front [a Communist initiated organization for making the world safe for democracy] and praises Quillery and "[a]ll brothers, collaborating harmoniously for the United Front!" Like the liberal Elmer Rice, Sherwood too seems to have found some validity in the organization's pro-democratic ideology. Indeed, Quillery's faith in "the mature intelligence of the workers of the world" reflects Sherwood's confidence in the common men, for they are "a force more potent than all the working planes and submarines and tanks." The only "antidote for war" according to Quillery, is "Revolution!". "And the cause of Revolution", says he, "gains steadily in strength." He supports this by giving Italy's example where "despite all the repressive power of Fascism, sanity has survived, and it [revolutionary cause] becomes more and more articulate."

"Sherwood, Idiot's Delight 40.
"Sherwood, Idiot's Delight 40.
"Sherwood, Idiot's Delight 41.
"Sherwood, Idiot's Delight 41.
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Quillery's attitude reveals that Sherwood was not averse to the idea of revolution. It also becomes clearly evident from Harry Van's favourable opinion on the use of revolutionary methods. "I'm just in favor of any revolution", Harry says, "Anything that will make people wake up, and get themselves some convictions."\(^5\) This reveals Sherwood's penchant for the Jeffersonian or Gandhian kind of revolution as a non-violent means of awakening the people and causing change for a reformation to a peaceful society. As an internationalist, Sherwood also ventriloquizes Quillery's claim that communists have "no nationality"\(^51\) and their belief that "machinery is international."\(^52\) National sovereignty should be seen as the primary culprit.

Sherwood's internationalism, love for humanity, and faith in man's brotherhood encourages him to feel optimistic and hopeful. He believes that people will act responsibly enough to prevent war. His belief is based on the following assumption:

. . . a sufficient number of people . . . remember that, between 1914 and 1918, twelve million people died in violence to make safe for democracy the world which we see about us today.

\(^5\)Sherwood, Idiot's Delight 42.
\(^51\)Sherwood, Idiot's Delight 38.
\(^52\)Sherwood, Idiot's Delight 39.
Sherwood’s optimism comes alive through Harry, who declares his "faith in peace on earth and good will to men" and believes that "no matter how much the meek may be bulldozed or gypped they will eventually inherit the earth."\textsuperscript{54} This happy expectancy continues to show in the last scene when Harry looks at Irene and reassuringly tells her that the next morning will bring the light of truth with it. Incidentally, Harry and Irene are the only two people in the play who defy national boundaries. Through them Sherwood manifests his optimism that individual humans can rise above their nationalistic cultural origins, further reinforcing his liberal internationalist ideas.

Sherwood’s hopeful outlook inspires him to suggest solutions and methods of dealing with belligerency. According to Sherwood war occurs when decent people are "deluded by their exploiters."\textsuperscript{53} From this one can learn the following lesson:

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\item \textsuperscript{53}Sherwood, "Post-Script," Idiot’s Delight 190.
\item \textsuperscript{54}Sherwood, Idiot’s Delight 61.
\item \textsuperscript{55}Sherwood, Post-Script, Idiot’s Delight 189.
\end{itemize}

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If decent people will continue to be intoxicated by the synthetic spirit of patriotism, pumped into them by megalomaniac leaders, and will continue to have faith in the "security" provided by those lethal weapons sold to them by the armaments industry, then war is inevitable; and the world will soon resolve itself into the semblance of an ant-hill, governed by commissars who owe their power to the profundity of their contempt for the individual members of their species.56

He further suggests that if the megalomaniac "is greeted with calmness, courage and ridicule, he becomes a figure of supreme insignificance." He believed that a "display of the three latter qualities (calm, courage and ridicule) by England, France, the Soviet Union and the United States w[ould] defeat Fascism in Germany, Italy and Japan, and . . . remove the threat of war which is fascism's last gesture of self-justification."57 The most effective way to put an end to war is for man to "refuse to fight! . . . refuse to use those weapons that . . . [munitions manufacturers] have sold . . . [him]."58 Sherwood once again confers the responsibility to rectify the problem of war on ordinary people. According to him:

By refusing to imitate the Fascists in their policies of heavily fortified isolation, their hysterical self-worship and psychopathic hatred

56Sherwood, "Post-Script" Idiot's Delight 189.
58Sherwood, Idiot's Delight 176.
of others, . . . [man] may achieve the enjoyment of peaceful life on earth, rather than degraded death in the cellar."

Idiot's Delight was uncanny in its resemblance to contemporary reality. This similarity led Andrew R. Kelly to report in The Washington Times that the play was "so close to . . . reality that its political implications, its cynical bombardment of the forces which incite nations to carnage, its bitter finale, might serve as a semaphore warning to powers now shining their howitzers."60

Although Idiot's Delight appeared to be a political play, it was motivated by Sherwood's moral conscience. For this reason Sherwood does not allow any man to take up arms and fight. During the rehearsals of Idiot's Delight, Sherwood wrote that he "believe[d] in two things . . . true democracy and true christianity" and "hope[d] to God neither of them dies before . . . [he did]." He believed that "certainly nothing can kill them but brutal stupidity . . . ."61 and therefore implored the public through the play to overcome this idiocy of war. This belief in "true democracy" becomes obvious in Harry and Irene's singing of

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60Quoted in "Indicting war as 'Idiot's Delight," The Literary Digest 121, March 28 (1936): 20.

"Onward, Christian Soldiers," amidst bombs crashing on them at the end of the play.

Sherwood’s commitment to the preservation of liberty and freedom found expression in Abe Lincoln in Illinois, which opened in New York on Oct 15, 1938. At this time, according to Harold Clurman, "Democracy, anti-fascism and the fight against other forms of reaction were causes that . . . demanded [Sherwood’s] participation."

By this time he was convinced that the adoption of a policy of appeasement on America’s part towards Nazi Germany was impossible. On October 7, 1937 Sherwood recorded in his diary that he could no more "go on forebearing . . . . [t]he Hitlers, Mussolinis, Jap war lords [who] have outraged and insulted every standard of decency steadily . . . . [and it was time for America] to kick the living shit out of them." He saw a similarity between the situation before the American Civil War, when the same problem of appeasement or war confronted Lincoln. Sherwood participated in the shifting situation by suggesting through Abe Lincoln in Illinois the necessity for war preparations.

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"Brown, Ordeal of a Playwright 45.

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Although the play appears to be a biographical piece—in that it recounts thirty years of Lincoln's life tracing his development from his early years in New Salem through his law practice in Springfield until his departure for Washington as President-elect in 1860—it inevitably raises the problem of war and peace and compromise. It also discusses political and social issues such as slavery, labour strikes and the plight of poor whites. Slavery and secession were dead issues in the year 1938. However, they became significant as they related to topics such as equality, liberty and fraternity which were vital at a time when Nazism, fascism and militarism were destroying democratic values in Europe and threatening ruin in the United States as well as throughout the world.

Abe Lincoln in Illinois thus, strongly embodies analogies with these political events that began to take shape in the decade. It conveyed a sense of the crises that accompanied the perpetuation of a dubious peace against the possible redemptive benefits of a horrible modern war. The play represented Sherwood's catharsis and a shift from a strong anti-war belief toward an attitude favouring war.

Lincoln's prediction about the survival and preservation of American democracy affirms Sherwood's
faith in the future. In Himelstein’s observation, Lincoln’s faith confirmed Sherwood’s own confidence in the future—a step further from the mere hope that he expressed in *Idiot’s Delight*." The patriotic fervour with which Lincoln endeavoured to preserve the Union and the country’s democratic traditions is revealed in his declaration that "[all] I am trying to do—now, as long as I live— is to state and restate the fundamental virtues of our democracy, which have made us great, and which can make us greater." Sherwood further reaffirms his ideas about protesting against any threat to democracy through a speech that Lincoln gave during the debate with Stephen Douglas.

This country, with all its institutions, belongs to the people who inhabit it. Whenever they shall grow weary of the existing government, they can exercise their constitutional rights of amending it, or their revolutionary right to dismember or overthrow it. . . . As a nation, we began by declaring, "All men are created equal." [But we now follow] the complacent policy of indifference to evil, and that deprives . . . our republic of its just influence in the world; enables the enemies of free institutions to taunt us as hypocrites; causes the real friends of freedom to doubt our sincerity; and especially because it forces so many good men among ourselves into an open war with the very

"Himelstein, Drama Was a Weapon 144.

These views directly convey that Lincoln did not favour war but ultimately rejected indifference to evil, and so waged war because it seemed to him the only recourse to preserve the Union, the country’s integrity, and the principles of freedom and liberty upon which the country was established. Lincoln’s opinion of pacifism and the necessity of war represents Sherwood’s thinking and conviction at the time. Lincoln’s defence of the idea of revolution represents a judicious mix of Sherwood’s liberal thinking and revolutionary faith:

> Whenever they (the people) shall grow weary of the existing government, they can exercise their constitutional right of amending it, or their revolutionary right to dismember or overthrow it.67

This commitment to 'the Liberal Party throughout the world—to make the democratic spirit live and grow' produced, especially for the communists, "a link between themselves and the native American tradition of

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66Sherwood, *Abe Lincoln in Illinois* 137-139.
67Sherwood, *Abe Lincoln in Illinois* 137.
revolution."68 Himelstein observes that Sherwood’s position on revolution, however, is not militant, but one that emphasized his faith in liberalism and democracy.69 Thus, as in his previous plays, Sherwood’s stress on the revolution is based primarily on a preservation of human justice and freedom, on saving government of, by, and for the people.

Lincoln’s commitment to this faith compelled Sherwood to choose him as his play’s protagonist. For Lincoln became an example of an ideal representative of the period, who spoke "not as a representative of any one community —any one faith or class, but as a member of the human race."70 The "never parochial, never nationalistic" Lincoln "who strongly believed that the strongest bond of human sympathy, outside of the family relation, should be one of uniting all working people, of all nations and tongues and kindreds"71 appealed to Sherwood’s internationalism.

Through Lincoln’s last speech in the play, as he

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68Himelstein, Drama was A Weapon 144.
69Himelstein, Drama Was A Weapon 153.
parts with the crowd at the railway station to proceed to Washington, Sherwood exhorts the people to follow what he so firmly believes in:

Let us live to prove that we can cultivate the natural world that is about us, and the intellectual and moral world that is within us, so that we may secure an individual, social and political prosperity, whose course shall be forward, and which, while the end endures, shall not pass away.\(^7\)

In 1940, Sherwood’s commitment to the restoration of peace further transposed his initial anti-war position in the first half of the decade to one that definitely if reluctantly favoured war. The Soviet attack on Finland shattered his dreams of "political prosperity" and human welfare for the masses. The rise of Nazism by 1939 convinced him that "Hitlerism was as great a menace to the United States as it was to any free country of Europe—that as a force it was far more formidable than most complacent people in the democracies supposed."\(^3\)

Morally committed to preserving peace and human dignity, he wrote There Shall be No Night in the hope of imparting some meaningful and thought provoking ideas to the public about American responsibility in maintaining the

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\(^7\)Sherwood, Abe Lincoln in Illinois, 183-84.

\(^3\)Quoted in Brown, Ordeal of a Playwright, 44.
democratic process. In addition, America’s non-intervention policy at a precarious time perturbed his sensibilities. He believed that to safeguard democracy it was imperative that the United States intervene in Western Europe and thereby protect it. The result of his disillusionment was an indictment of all totalitarian elements, in the play. However, despite the evidence showing man’s hunger for power, Sherwood exuded faith in the common man’s ultimate self-realization. He advocated putting end to this menace even if it involved national sacrifice.

Sherwood presented the play in 1940 amidst a politically confused and perturbed America. It portrayed the political suffering of the democratic world under fascist oppression. Sherwood conveys his message through the fate of a Finnish family that joins Finland’s defense against Russia and sacrifices two lives for the democratic

"According to John Mason Brown, Sherwood, like other liberals, had great faith in the Soviet Union as a force for world peace and believed that potentially it was "the mightiest opponent of Fascism." "Russian aid to the Spanish loyalists had sustained his belief. Thus, despite the Nazi-Soviet treaty, Sherwood was willing to believe that "Stalin was playing his own shrewd game against fascism." This illusion about Russia disappeared when the Russians assaulted Finland in November 1939. Finland refused Moscow’s demand for a cession of territory at the head of the Gulf of Finland. Russia invaded the country alleging the necessity of defending Leningrad from attacks by or through Finland. See Brown, The Ordeal of a Playwright 47."
cause—the father’s and the son’s. The father, a famous psychiatrist, abandons his pacifist beliefs to become an army physician and gets killed as an infantrymen. The son, a ski-trooper also dies in the war. The mother decides to destroy the house before the arrival of the Russians.

Equating the Russian attack on Finland with Fascism, Sherwood draws the audience’s attention to the atrocities of unbridled statism and indicts the Nazis who gave birth to it. The forceful propaganda speeches of Dr. Zeimessin, the German consul in Helsinki, thrust this message forward. Nazism is, according to him:

... a process of annihilation. It is a studied technique, and it was not invented in Moscow. You will find the blue-prints of it, not in Das Kapital, but in Mein Kampf... It involves, first, liquidation of all "leaders of thought--political, religious, economic, intellectual. Among the masses--the difficult ones are killed--the weaklings are allowed to die of starvation--the strong are enslaved."

The action of the story also reveals, in Himelstein’s observation, that although "these people know all the arguments against war, they realize that words will not stop the enslaving forces of the totalitarian powers." He believes that the Finns fight because they would

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7Robert E. Sherwood, There Shall Be No Night (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1940.) 87.

7Himelstein, Drama Was a Weapon 148.
rather die than be slaves, and yet believing that man will eventually put an end to his brutishness, they continue to fight in the hope that this war may be the last. Once again the desperate hope that Sherwood expressed in *Waterloo Bridge* and *Idiot’s Delight* gets strengthened in this play. At the same time, the play *There Shall Be No Night* represents Sherwood’s call to America for action and intervention to save democracy from totalitarianism. Sherwood urges American participation to put an end to the terrible process that is destroying the human race. As long as Americans, with what Zeimessin calls their selfish self-complacent personal security, don’t hinder the Nazi plans for Mexico, South America and Canada, they’ll learn "to mind their own shrinking business."77 Such apathy on America’s part, according to Kaatri, occurs because "[w]hen life becomes too easy for people, something changes in their character, something is lost."78 Sherwood harangues the United States for its self-secure attitude and urges her people to wake up. In the manner of Agate (though non-militant) in Odets’ *Waiting for Lefty*, Sherwood makes an overt call to urge the country to act.

77Sherwood, *There Shall Be No Night* 89.

78Sherwood, *There Shall Be No Night* 56.
Sherwood attempts to convince people about war's necessity through the peace-loving neurologist Dr. Valkonen, who, despite his belief in war as an insane and weak-minded activity, abandons an opportunity to find a safe refuge in America with his wife and joins the Finnish forces to resist the Russians. Likewise, his son Erik too sacrifices his love for Kaatri to join the war and is killed. The reasons that Valkonen offers are those that Sherwood believed in:

I have suddenly realized what and where I am . . . I am trying to defeat insanity -- degeneration of the human race. . . . This is a war for everybody--yes--even for the scientists who thought themselves immune behind their test tubes."

Despite his advocacy of war, however, (because he sees no other recourse at this point) Sherwood implicitly indicts it for the suffering that it causes. In Valkonen and Erik's death, he delineates the fate of individuals and intellectuals who have to pay this price for freedom. As in Idiot's Delight and Waterloo Bridge, he portrays the victimization of young people like Erik and Kaatri, who like Roy and Myra in Waterloo Bridge and Harry and Irene in Idiot's Delight face ruthless destruction at the hands of war. Erik nearly gets killed before he can marry

"Sherwood, There Shall Be No Night 99-100.

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Kaatri and leaves his unborn child behind. (They’re married when he is on his deathbed in the hospital). Similarly, as Myra in Waterloo Bridge reminds Roy that the war will not spare him, Miranda reminds Valkonen that a Russian in a bombing plane ten thousand feet up cannot "tell the difference between an ordinary person and a winner of the Nobel prize."\footnote{Sherwood, There Shall Be No Night 94-95.} Such reminders describe total war’s impersonal nature.

Yet this indictment does not dissuade Sherwood from his main task. He reinforces his conviction through Gosden, a British pacifist, and Frank Olmstead, whom Valkonen and his American ambulance drivers encounter in a Finnish schoolhouse. Frank mirrors Sherwood’s commitment to preserving peace in his candid but cynical explanation of why his conscience goads him to go to war.

What the hell do you think it says? How could I ever live with myself again if I didn’t go? That’s what happens when you expose yourself to this. Oh, God—how many times have I taken an oath that if the United States were ever again duped into going to war, I’ll be a conscientious objector! . . . . But—here’s the choice—given to me now—and I haven’t got the guts to say, "No—I won’t fight."\footnote{Sherwood, There Shall Be No Night 160.}

This is further strengthened when Gosden says:

\begin{quote}
What the hell do you think it says? How could I ever live with myself again if I didn’t go? That’s what happens when you expose yourself to this. Oh, God—how many times have I taken an oath that if the United States were ever again duped into going to war, I’ll be a conscientious objector! . . . . But—here’s the choice—given to me now—and I haven’t got the guts to say, "No—I won’t fight."
\end{quote}
Every one of us can find plenty of reasons for not fighting. And they’re the best reasons in the world! But—the time comes when you’ve bloody well got to fight—and you might just as well go cheerfully.82

Sherwood also implies that harmony and peace can be achieved through a collective effort-- when and if people shed their nationalistic passions. (As does the American Miranda who lets Valkonen and Erik fight for Finland). Valkonen, in his radio broadcast to America that the work for which he has received the Nobel prize will be completed by someone else years later, implies that it is a task that has to be carried by all of mankind. For this reason Sherwood sees the supreme necessity of reverencing all life. He accomplishes this by having Kaatri leave for America so that she can safely have hers and Erik’s child which will be one little link with the future.

It is through Dr. Valkonen, thus, that Sherwood expresses optimism in the power of human beings "to conquer bestiality, not with . . . muscles and . . . swords but with the power of the light that is in . . . [their] minds."83 Sherwood hopes that the possession of this power will induce every man of good will to fight for the preservation of human freedom and liberty so that he

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82Sherwood, There Shall be No Night 162.
83Sherwood, There Shall Be No Night 153.
may "help speed the day when man becomes genuinely human, instead of the synthetic creature—part bogus angel, part actual brute—that he has imagined himself in the dark past." And the consciousness, that man possesses the power to alleviate this process of wiping out oppression, can only be achieved through action. In this way Sherwood justifies his acceptance of a just war. Sherwood explicitly expresses this sentiment when Valkonen repeats Jung's phrase that there "is no coming to consciousness without pain."

The pain involves sacrifice, which Sherwood views as heroic and finds to be an essential element for the war effort. However, while on the one hand he sees tragedy in Valkonen and Erik's death, he views their participation in the war with great admiration. Therefore, he has them give up their personal objectives for the attainment of peace, and convinces Miranda, despite her fear of being on the threshold of losing both husband and son, to let them fight for the safety and sanctity of human life.

From this discussion of Sherwood's plays it is evident that during the thirties he remained a constantly

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84Sherwood, There Shall Be No Night 154.
85Sherwood, There Shall be No Night 22.
committed spokesman for freedom, peace, non-violence, and a peaceful society. For these reasons he wrote plays that indicted war. But as Fascism made such enormous leaps as to seem the wave of the future, he changed his mind and started to call for belligerent means. The political and social unrest in the decade inspired his use of political themes to express his concern for humanity. His commitment sprang from a moral sense of obligation and "sensitivity to man's joys, sorrows, sense of patriotism, indignation, despair and hunger. . ."

"This is because, as Harold Clurman alleges, Sherwood's attitude "was [primarily] fundamentally moral rather than, as some are . . . inclined to believe, political."" This is also evident from Sherwood's rewriting of There Shall be No Night in 1943 in which he changed the nationality of the chief contending party from Finnish to Greek. It is a testimonial to his basic intention of disseminating the value of freedom and liberty to all people. Had the play "been fundamentally political rather than moral," says Baird Shuman, "Sherwood could not have rewritten it."" The political events of

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86Meserve, Robert E. Sherwood 223.
88Shuman, Robert E. Sherwood 69.
the thirties had provided him with this vital concern for freedom and democracy and had compelled him to dramatize his commitment. This argument raises the question of consistency. If morally committed, then why did Sherwood not verbalize his commitment as arduously during the twenties? One answer to this question lies in the fact that while Sherwood did convey an anti-war message in plays like *The Road to Rome*, he only expressed it tacitly and as a secondary theme. This is because at that time he did not find the theatre to be an expository device.89

Though this view seems strange from a socially oriented playwright, it nonetheless shows that the problems peculiar to the twenties did not demand any social commitment from writers. Writers' protests became audible only during the thirties when the economic and political turmoil demanded loud voices of social protest.

Though the political events of the 1930s crystallized Sherwood’s commitment, his personal background gives some obvious clues about its formulation. His experience in the attrition of the first World War made him realize that modern war is idiotic and thus disillusioned him about its purpose. According to Oscar J. Campbell:

> During his recovery in the hospital [after World War I], he lay between an Austrian who was

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terribly burned out by liquid fire and a South African Jew with a machine-gun bullet lodged in the base of his spine. The poor fellow would never walk again. The three disabled veterans of utterly different traditions and utterly different cultures came to the same conclusion. They were suckers to have been caught in war, the supreme idiot's delight. They felt passionately that war was a hideous injustice and that no man had the right to call himself civilized as long as he believed that another war could be conceivable or possible.90

Sherwood's disillusionment with the war, in fact, left him dissatisfied with the peace without victory and victory without peace that the war had bestowed upon the nation. John Mason Brown, Sherwood's biographer, comments that Sherwood felt the futility of war, insisting that mankind should accept that "war is a dirty business and those who engage in it must be prepared and even eager to fight it in the dirtiest manner possible."91 Sherwood's feeling is manifest through Jason in The Petrified Forest when he complains that his participation in the war had been a futile exercise because "they didn't hand out medals to us soldiers that drove trucks—even if we did get right up into the danger zone time and time again."92

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92Sherwood, The Petrified Forest 365.
Certainly, "the terror and stupidity, the brutality and waste of those days and the disillusion that followed them were constantly with him . . . [and showed] through everything of importance that he had written." For this reason the repercussions of war on ordinary people became a persistent theme in his plays. He demonstrated the love-destroying power of war on Roy and Myra in Waterloo Bridge, on Harry and Irene in Idiot’s Delight and on Erik and Kaatri in There Shall be No Night. This theme is reminiscent of the one in Auden and Isherwood’s play On the Frontier, where an Ostnian girl, Anna, and a Westland boy, Eric, find out that love is destroyed by war and the hatred that causes war. (For instance, their families are constantly fighting and breeding animosity). Eric's speech at the end of the play reinforces Eric’s premise:

The hatred of our enemies
Is the destructive self-love of the dying,
Our hatred is the price of the world’s freedom."

Such an outlook towards war changed Sherwood's initial Republican sympathies which had inspired him to

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vote for Warren D. Harding as presidential candidate in the 1920s. He turned into a liberal democrat by 1932 who believed in the liberty of the individual. Lamenting his support of Harding, which he believed was nothing but an act of "betrayal" toward his country on his part, he stated twenty years later:

I did my bit in the great betrayal. I voted for the proposition that all the American soldiers who had given their lives in the Great War had died in vain. And what I and all other Americans got from Harding's victory was a decade of hypocrisy, corruption, crime, glorification of greed and depravity, to be followed logically by a decade of ascendant Hitlerism."

In the post-war period Sherwood's moral egalitarianism grew stronger. It soon became evident when, in 1924, he was made an Editor of Life magazine along with Robert Benchley and declined to accept his own salary because he was unhappy about the inequity that existed in their pay scales. According to his mother, Rosina, who proudly wrote about her son's gesture to Jane de Glenhm in London on May 1, 1924:

My Bobby has been made editor of Life with Bob Benchley. . . . Bobby's salary is $10,000. Dana Gibson proposed giving Bobby a larger share because he did so much more, but Bobby insisted on sharing equally."
Sherwood’s commitment, perhaps, also resulted from his rebellion against the genteel tradition to which his family belonged. In the preface to There Shall Be No Night, he recalled: "I had been brought up to believe that because I was 100 percent American—and a Harvard man, at that--I was superior." His army training in the Canadian Black Watch with other fellow soldiers, and months of hospitalization after the war, however, illuminated his mind with the knowledge that no human being was superior.

Perhaps for this reason Sherwood chooses his characters from all walks of life: scientists, communists, isolationists, munitions-makers and professional soldiers. His heroes range from a president in Abe Lincoln in Illinois to a vaudeville dancer in Idiot’s Delight, a soldier in Waterloo Bridge, an intellectual in The Petrified forest and a scientist in There Shall be No Night. Through such diversity Sherwood attempts to establish that no one is absolutely superior. Even though their attitudes towards life and war differ, at the core of their thinking lies their commitment to attain the virtues of peace and freedom. This shows that at the heart of these characters dwells the common man who nurtures the

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hope of instituting a peaceful civilization.

The authenticity that Sherwood imparts to his characters creates an illusion of reality which makes it easier for the audience to identify with them and share their enthusiasm to participate in the struggle for peace. The plays' virtue of being inhabited by real people like Harry Van, Dr. Valkonen, Irene, Roy Cronin, Alan Squier and all the others makes them effective in diffusing Sherwood's pacifist message to the audience. The legitimacy of Sherwood's characters prompted a favourable comment from Granville Vernon about Sherwood's ability to portray real characters. He wrote: "When . . . he writes about Europeans, they are Europeans and not abstractions conceived by a mind which has never been east of the Hudson River; and he . . . write[s] equally veritably about gunmen, and cowboys, and hoofers, and chorus-girls."

Sherwood's preoccupation primarily with the dissemination of his social messages made the artistic considerations of his dramas secondary. To suit his purpose he constantly experimented with different artistic techniques. He admitted:

I tried every style of dramaturgy—high comedy,

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low comedy, melodrama, romance (both sacred and profane), hard-boiled realism, beautiful writing, and of course I inserted a message. That message was that I was opposed to war."

Sherwood's ardent commitment became a necessary element in developing a forceful social theatre—and turned him into "a dramatist who could please an audience while suggesting [the most profound] ideas concerning man and his society."\(^{100}\)

\[^{100}\text{Quoted in Oscar James Campbell's, "Robert Sherwood and his Times," 276.}\]

\[^{100}\text{Meserve, Robert E. Sherwood 36.}\]