INFORMATION TO USERS

This material was produced from a microfilm copy of the original document. While the most advanced technological means to photograph and reproduce this document have been used, the quality is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original submitted.

The following explanation of techniques is provided to help you understand markings or patterns which may appear on this reproduction.

1. The sign or "target" for pages apparently lacking from the document photographed is "Missing Page(s)". If it was possible to obtain the missing page(s) or section, they are spliced into the film along with adjacent pages. This may have necessitated cutting thru an image and duplicating adjacent pages to insure you complete continuity.

2. When an image on the film is obliterated with a large round black mark, it is an indication that the photographer suspected that the copy may have moved during exposure and thus cause a blurred image. You will find a good image of the page in the adjacent frame.

3. When a map, drawing or chart, etc., was part of the material being photographed the photographer followed a definite method in "sectioning" the material. It is customary to begin photoing at the upper left hand corner of a large sheet and to continue photoing from left to right in equal sections with a small overlap. If necessary, sectioning is continued again — beginning below the first row and continuing on until complete.

4. The majority of users indicate that the textual content is of greatest value, however, a somewhat higher quality reproduction could be made from "photographs" if essential to the understanding of the dissertation. Silver prints of "photographs" may be ordered at additional charge by writing the Order Department, giving the catalog number, title, author and specific pages you wish reproduced.

5. PLEASE NOTE: Some pages may have indistinct print. Filmed as received.

Xerox University Microfilms
300 North Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106
BUNTEK, KATHLEEN ANNE
ISOLATION AND SOLIDARITY IN THE EARLY WORKS
OF ANNA SEGHERS,

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY, PH.D., 1978
ISOLATION AND SOLIDARITY
IN THE EARLY WORKS OF ANNA SEGHERS

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By
Kathleen A. Bunten, B.A., M.A.

*****

The Ohio State University
1978

Reading Committee:
Charles W. Hoffmann, PhD
Hugo Bekker, PhD
David Benseler, PhD

Approved by
Advisor
Department of German
Dedicated to my mother and father,
Margaret and Richard Bunten
VITA

August 12, 1946............. Born-Montclair, New Jersey
1968............................... B.A., Westminster College, Pennsylvania
1969............................... M.A., Middlebury College, Vermont
1970-1972....................... Teaching Associate, German Department, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio
1972-1973....................... Fulbright Fellow, Freie-Universität, West Berlin
1973-1976....................... Instructor of German, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio
1976-1977....................... Assistant Professor of German, Marshall University, Huntington, West Virginia
1977-1978....................... Instructor of German, Mt. Holyoke College, South Hadley, Massachusetts
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VITA</th>
<th>iii</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Anna Seghers' Way to Communism</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. &quot;Grubetsch&quot;</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. &quot;Auf dem Wege zur amerikanischen Botschaft&quot;</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Aufstand der Fischer von St. Barbara</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Die Gefährten</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. A Look Ahead: The Exile and G.D.R. Works</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1

Anna Seghers' Way to Communism

Until Paul Rilla's "Die Erzählerin Anna Seghers" appeared in 1950, Anna Seghers' way from a general, unpolitical social concern to active support of communism was largely ignored in the secondary literature. Rilla writes: "...aber dass die Bücher der Anna Seghers ganz jenseits einer bürgerlichen Kritik stehen, dass in ihnen 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...einnimmt." It is my contention however, that Seghers did not begin writing from a communist perspective, as Rilla states, but rather from a humanistic desire to improve social conditions. Seghers came to feel only gradually that social change could be achieved best through communism, and I find that her growing conviction can be seen in her early works. One can look at the stories "Grubetsch" (1926) and "Auf dem Wege zur amerikanischen Botschaft" (written in the late 1920's and appearing
in 1931), at the short novel Aufstand der Fischer von St. Barbara (1928), and at the novel Die Gefährten (1932) to see Seghers' path to communism. In these works the characters become increasingly aware of their isolation and turn to political means to alter their social circumstances. In effecting change the characters overcome their alienation and are integrated into a revolutionary community. The parallels with Seghers' life cannot be missed: she began writing in 1926 with the desire to overcome social inequalities which cause alienation and by 1932 she felt the establishment of communism was the only means of achieving a just society.

Critics writing after Rilla have seen a development toward a communist perspective in Seghers' early works, but have done little to explain her motivation for this system. Albrecht's study, Die Erzählerin Anna Seghers 1926-1932, which was written to correct Rilla's interpretation and to show that the author goes through a process of breaking away from her bourgeois background, traces Seghers' political development from "Grubetsch" (1926) to Die Gefährten (1932). He attributes the writer's decision for communism to the experience of class conflict. Inge Diersen also takes as a point of departure the premise that once the author left the bourgeois atmosphere of her early years, she saw the unequal structure and "inevitably" turned to communism as the only solution. Albrecht and
Diersen differ only slightly in determining whether Seghers' alleged encounter with class conflict was direct or indirect. Albrecht states that Seghers was surrounded in her childhood and secondary school years with a classical-humanistic atmosphere but that already by the time she reached the university the values inculcated in her childhood no longer had meaning for her: "Die klassisch-humanistischen Ideale des Bürgertums, die Anna Seghers in ihrer frühen Jugend aufnahm, wurden in diesen Jahren für sie problematisch, die Bindung an ihrer Klasse lockerte sich, der Boden für die Aufnahme neuer Eindrücke und Bildungserlebnisse war bereitet." Diersen attributes the turn to communism to class conflict but contends that indirect contact with it led Seghers to the new ideology. Diersen feels that the writer's contact with revolutionary students as the university was the decisive event: "Es war in erster Linie eine indirekte und nicht die unmittelbare Erfahrung des Klassenkampfes, die die Bürgertochter und promovierte Kunsthistorikerin Netty Reiling dazu bewogen hatte, 1928 in die Kommunistische Partei einzutreten.... Zu den eigenen Erfahrungen der Kriegs- und Nachkriegszeit... traten die geistigen Auseinandersetzungen an der Universität. Hier kam sie mit Emigranten aus den von konterrevolutionärem Terror beherrschten europäischen Ländern in Berührung. In den Erlebnissen anderer erschlossen sich ihr neue Welten, neue Gesichtspunkte, neue Erfahrungen. Diese im wesentlichen
vermittelten...Eindrücke öffneten ihr allmählich den Blick für das Proletariat, seine Situation und seine Rolle."6

Other critics offer even less satisfactory explanations of Seghers' decision for communism than Albrecht and Diersen. Some western critics see Seghers' choice as irrational, emotional, and to a large extent incomprehensible in light of her bourgeois background. The most extreme approach is taken by Reich-Ranicki. He feels that Seghers, unlike Becher and Brecht who also came from the middle class, did not seek a philosophical, social, or political system in communism. Says Reich-Ranicki: "Für die junge Anna Seghers...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 Hörigkeit...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 Werkes...."7 The claim that Seghers found in communism an atheistic religion which she had "fervently" sought since childhood is an interesting one, since communism and religion are generally held to be mutually exclusive. But nowhere does he prove his thesis, and the statement is thus of little value.
Seghers came to communism as the result of personal and social concerns she had before she entered the university. Her decision was an outgrowth of her humanistic background, and not "disillusion" caused by the "dichotomy between classical ideals and imperialistic reality" of the 20's, as Albrecht suggests. The main reason for Seghers' intense commitment to communism is not the experience of class conflict, but rather her continued concern for the preservation of the common man, and this, in turn, was a by-product of her own personal search for a meaningful, intense life. The few pertinent autobiographical comments Seghers has made in interviews hint that at an early age she had a vague longing for adventure, for a different type of existence, and for one which would engage her full energies. Her wish for a complete life led her to seek and to find an ordered system in which the individual could develop in a structured way, allowing him to realize his full potential, not by pursuing private desires, but by working with others for the establishment of a better society. Satisfaction for the individual would come through helping one's fellow man and shaping a better future. This desire to grow by helping others made Seghers receptive to political doctrine. Gradually she came to associate the development of the individual with a commitment to a specific socio-economic system and as a result she joined the communist party.
Seghers' social concern stems from a sensitivity toward the suffering of the innocent. An anecdote she in the anthology *Atlas: Zusammengestellt von deutschen Autoren* attests to this care for the unfortunate. Here Seghers talks about her native city of Mainz, where two monuments had moved her in her youth. One was the cathedral and the other, less significant but equally engraved upon her memory, was a small flat stone in a street whose name she could no longer recall. It commemorated the death of a mother killed by a bomb as she went to get milk for her child. Seghers says of the stone: "Ich weiss nur, dass der Stein zum Gedächtnis einer Frau eingefügt wurde, die im Ersten Weltkrieg durch Bombensplitter umkam, als sie Milch für ihr Kind holen wollte.... Menschenfresserisch, grausam war der Erste Weltkrieg, man begann aber erst an seinem Ende mit Luftangriffen auf Städte und Menschen. Darum hat man zum Gedächtnis der Frau den Stein gesetzt, flach wie das Pflaster, und ihren Namen eingraviert.—" Typically, Seghers sees the momentous events of war in terms of the ordinary, nameless individual. In the anecdote the horrors of war are epitomized in the fate of one mother helping her child, and Seghers planned to write a story about the orphan. Though the story was never written, I see in this intention Seghers' desire to set her own monument, so to speak, to one such victim of suffering. The memory of the mother's sacrifice would be
preserved in print as well as in stone; and by continuing the story an added dimension could be given to the mother's act, showing how it affected the child's life. The recollection of the small monument and the wish to write about the unknown woman and child illustrates two points: Seghers not only perceives momentous historical events in terms of how they affect the individual, but she also views literature as a means of preserving the lives of ordinary people from obscurity.

Seghers' sensitivity, idealism, and desire for adventure were evident already in her youth. She was born the only daughter of Isodore Reiling (1868-1940), a Jew who had charge of the Mainz Cathedral treasury. The family enjoyed a comfortable middle-class existence and tried to give their daughter a good humanistic education. Seghers' mother read her parts of Faust aloud and encouraged her to continue reading on her own when she reached the Gymnasium. Aside from these facts, not much else is known about Seghers' background, though Albrecht comments that the family was basically liberal in its political views but does not seem to have taken any active role in the politics of the day.11

The cultural heritage of the Rhine region, which Seghers speaks of as "diese lebhafe und aufgeschlossene Umgebung, die seit Jahrhunderten bereitwillig alle möglichen Kulturströmungen in sich aufgesaugt und verarbeitet hat" played
an important part in her writing. The legends of the area particularly excited her imagination; Batt emphasizes that they are important in virtually all her works if only peripherally. Some will be discussed in the context of the specific works later on.

Apart from the cultural history of the region, the Rhine itself seems to have fascinated the youthful Seghers. Batt quotes from a letter she wrote him in 1957 that she often dreamed of following the river in its course to the sea: "Ich bin vom Rhein, und sah jeden Tag den Rhein mit an, weil er bald in Holland ins Meer fließen wird." Like the region's legends, the river also appears in her works. Seghers herself says "Ein Fluss spielt fast in allen meinen Geschichten eine gewisse Rolle." The author's childhood fascination with the river was documented in her first story, "Grubetsch," as an object of longing and the means of escape to an existence for its characters. Also in Das Siebte Kreuz (1942) the river is fugitive Georg Heisler's means for escape from death in a concentration camp to freedom—the river is again the symbol, that is, of a new and better life.

The events of World War I brought suffering and human destruction close to home for Seghers: Mainz was bombed toward the end of the fighting and occupied by French troops after the armistice. The war and the occupation must have made an intense impression on the young secondary school
student, yet there is little record in any of her writings or autobiographical comments of how she felt about the war itself. Only two things stand out in her recollection of these years. The first is the small stone "monument" already mentioned. The second, though further removed from her immediate experience, also had great impact on her: the Russian Revolution. At first she only heard rumors about the political upheaval in the East. Questioned in an interview in 1967 by Wilhelm Girnus as to when she had realized its meaning, Seghers said that at the time the Oktober Revolution had had very little impact on her: "Es hat eine Weile gedauert, bis das Ereignis in verschiedenen Gerüchten, Botschaften und Zungen...bis zu mir hinkam. Und derartig widerspruchsvoll und oft so sonderbar, dass ich von alleine nicht recht daraus klug wurde." However, she continued, the significance quickly became clear to her: "Aber sehr schnell habe ich darüber nachgedacht, und sehr schnell was diese Ereignis für mich verbunden mit einem neuen...starken, unerhörten Begriff von Gerechtigkeit. Ich glaube, so sonderbar das klingt, das war damals das erste vorherrschende Gefühl, als ich noch gar nichts von Politik verstand. Ich hatte zum ersten Mal voll und ganz verstanden, noch bevor es mir jemand erklärte, dass es ein Oben und Unten, ein Hoch und Niedrig gibt. Das, was wir heute einfach Klassen nennen, das hatte ich damals in meiner Weise als ganz junger Mensch verstanden." Characteristically,
Seghers did not interpret the Russian Revolution as a political event at all, but viewed it in basic human terms. In the same interview she spoke of an awareness of injustice stirred by what she heard about the revolution: "Ich sah jetzt mir wachen Augen, dass es Menschen gab, die schlechter als andere gekleidet waren, dass es Menschen mit schlechten Schuhen gab. Ich scheute mich, bessere Schuhe zu tragen als diese. Ich sah mit erschrockenen Augen, wie man durch die Stadt einen Gefesselten führte, der weiss der Teufel gegen was revoltiert hatte.... Das ist sehr, sehr weit weg von diesem mächtigen Ereignis, und es hat für mich doch dazugehört." As Batt notes, the feeling for human suffering awakened interest in social and political questions, and concern for social justice preceded ideological dogma. Not until several years later—at the University of Heidelberg—does Seghers begin to interpret the events of the Russian Revolution in terms of class conflict. She was led to her political interpretation of it by leftist students: "...denn damals als ich verstand, was Revolution ist, ich meine, mit dem Verstand verstand, nicht mit dem Gefühl, war ich auf der Universität und kam mit sehr vielen Studenten, Emigranten aus revolutionären Ländern zusammen.... Auf der Universität wurde mir erst bewusst, was ich vorher nur gefühlt hatte." A list of Seghers' courses suggests that she had some theoretical knowledge of socialism and marxism by the time
she began to associate with the radical students. Although she sampled a great variety of disciplines—history, philology, art history, Chinese studies—she also made it a point to hear lectures by Emil Lederer on "Sozialtheorie des Sozialismus" and "Sozialpolitik und soziale Bewegung."\(^{19}\)

Among the refugees from the Räterepublik (Hungary) was the sociologist Laszlo Radvanyi, whom Seghers married in 1925. He was no doubt the one who introduced her into the leftist circles at the university. These groups closely followed the events in Southern and Eastern Europe and in Russia with great interest: "Wir waren alle aufgewühlt mit den Ereignissen unserer Zeit. Die junge Oktoberrevolution und was ihr gefolgt war, in Deutschland selbst, in Ungarn, in Oberitalien, in vielen anderen Nationen, das alles griff in unser Dasein ein, bei dem einen tief, bei dem anderen ruckhaft. Und während wir daran teilnahmen, leidenschaftlich diskutierend, folgten wir unserem Studium."\(^{20}\) Seghers does not specifically say what the students discussed, but the tenor of her words above gives the impression that the association with the refugees did less to increase her ideological knowledge than to show her what revolutionary practice was. Seghers was struck more by the drama in the personal lives of the revolutionaries themselves than by the ideals they fought for. They stimulated her artistic imagination, for the protagonists of her first full-length novel, *Die Gefährten* (1932), are revolutionaries similar to
the ones she met at Heidelberg. Her interest in the tales of the political emigrants can be read in the foreword to that book: "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 Emigranten durch unseren Erdteil gespült. Und seine Zeugen, erschöpft von den Erlebnissen, doch ungebrochen und kühn, uns überlegen an Erfahrungen, auch in Opferbereitschaft im grossen und Hilfsbereitschaft im kleinen, waren für uns wirkliche, nicht beschriebene Helden." Such praise of the revolutionary zeal of the emigrants, such admiration for their conviction finds its clear echo in the later depiction of the revolutionary heroes in Seghers' works, for in them the stature of the individual is in all cases increased by dedication to communism. The same esteem of suffering for a cause which made her recall the mother's sacrifice for her child attracted her to the dedication of the emigrants—they seemed heroic because of their willingness to offer themselves for their beliefs. In the short stories and novels, this willingness emerges as the cornerstone of Seghers' concept of humanity.

Contact with the refugees from unsuccessful revolutionary attempts gave Seghers a new perspective on the idea of sacrifice. Earlier she had thought of it in terms of specific human relationships, of a mother for a child,
for example, but now she was the individual's sacrifice in ideological terms and for the good of a political system. Meeting the exiles expanded her concept of man from one who is enabled as an individual through suffering to one who achieves significant stature through sacrifice for a political cause.

Although Seghers was not a communist when she left Heidelberg in 1924, the experiences at the university had sharpened her interest in political questions and intensified her concern with social problems. Contact with leftist student groups, some theoretical grounding acquired in lectures, and the impressions of the political emigrés played a role in her decision to join the Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands in 1928. What seems to be the deciding factor was that her husband was a marxist. Laszlo Radvanji was active in party affairs; and in 1925 they moved to Berlin, where he directed the "Marxistische Arbeitschule."

The author's first serious attempts at writing came after the move to Berlin. She took the pseudonym "Seghers," which she borrowed from the graphic artist Hercules Seghers, a contemporary of Rembrandt, to whom she was drawn while in Heidelberg by Wilhelm Fraenger's Die apokalytische Landschaft des Herkules Seghers. The landscape of Hercules Seghers and the author's love for the Dutch coast played a role in the setting she chose for her first short
story "Die Toten von der Insel Dai." This story was, according to her, "die gruslige oder grauslige Geschichte von einem holländischen Kapitän." In what ways early love for the sea, for the exotic, and for fairy tales were reflected in this first story one does not know, since it is unfortunately lost; however, from a comment she made about her first tries at writing one can be reasonably sure that it attested to her fascination with the romantic: "Es gab dabei zwei Linien: Erzählen, was mich heute erregt, und die Farbigkeit von Märchen. Das hätte ich vereint und wusste nicht wie." Her desire to use legendary tales and motifs gives way to social issues in the first published story, "Grubetsch," for which she received little notice. In a letter written to Batt she mentions that her curiosity about the "verarmten und verwahrlosten Menschen in gewissen Rheinufervierteln" inspired the story. In many of the later works she is able to integrate legendary and mythological elements into stories with a social theme.

"Grubetsch" was first published as a serial (March, 1927) in the Frankfurter Zeitung, a leftist liberal newspaper under the editorship of Siegfried Kracauer. The author designated herself as "Seghers." Her next work to appear, the short novel Aufstand der Fischer von St. Barbara, was also signed with the surname. With the appearance of Aufstand Seghers was immediately recognized as a noteworthy new author. Hans Sahl of the Berliner Börsen-Courier
called Aufstand a masterpiece and acclaimed its author: "Seghers...ist eine sensationelle Begabung.... Seine [sic] erste Novelle ist ein Meisterwerk, seine Sprache hat den dramatischen Rhythmus, die hinreissende Prägnanz Kleistischer Erzählungen.... Ein neuer Erzähler, dessen Namen überraschend auf dem deutschen Büchermarkt erschien, hat sich mit diesem kleinen Werk eingeführt."  

The second edition of the story gave the author's first name as "Anna," thereby revealing her to be a woman. Her name was again linked to Kleist when she was chosen among eight hundred authors to receive the literary prize given in his honor. In justifying the choice of "Grubetsch" and Aufstand to be awarded the Kleist Prize of 1928, the chairman of the committee, Hans Henny Jahnn, emphasized the preciseness of Seghers' style: "Ich habe den Preis der jetzt achtundzwanzigjährigen Anna Seghers zuerkannt, weil ich eine starke Begabung im Formalen gespürt habe. Bei grosser Klarheit und Einfachheit der Satz- und Wortprägung findet sich in den beiden Novellen ein mitschwingender Unterton sinnlicher Vieldeutigkeit, der den Ablauf des Geschehens zu einer spannenden Handlung macht."  

During the same year in which she received the Kleist Prize Seghers joined the KPD and soon afterwards the Bund Proletarisch-Revolutionärer Schriftsteller, a group just founded to further the production of literature for and in support of the proletariat. The writers came from both
the working and middle classes. Among others in the BPRS from the bourgeoisie were Johannes R. Becher, Erich Weinert, Friedrich Wolf, and Ludwig Renn. Referring to Seghers and Renn, who joined about the same time, the editors of the "Bericht Über die Tätigkeit des Bundes proletarisch-revolutionärer Schriftsteller im Jahre 1929," wrote: "Zwei Schriftsteller, die in der Bourgeoisie einen guten Namen hatten, kamen zu uns.... Sie kamen nicht etwa als 'Sympathisierende', sie nahmen unsere Literaturlösungen völlig an."

According to the general program of the BPRS the writers were to produce literature which would instruct the reader in the "tasks of class conflict" and prepare him for the coming proletarian revolution. Seghers adopted this purpose as her own. Nevertheless, the assertion in the BPRS report of 1929 that Seghers accepted completely the literary tenets of the group is an oversimplification which does not describe her position in 1928 as a writer. In the first place, there was little agreement on how to write proletarian literature. In her book Marxistische Literaturtheorie: Kontroversen proletarischen-revolutionärer Schriftsteller, Helga Gallas follows the efforts of the BPRS writers from 1929 to 1932 to clarify the relation of the new working class literature to the so-called "bourgeois" literary tradition. Debates in Die Linkskurve, the official periodical of the BPRS, sought to establish the merit of
traditional works for the new writing. Gallas notes that in the long run the debates did nothing to define a final assessment of how "bourgeois" and proletarian literature might profitably be related. Since 1928 there was no uniform concept of literature among the BPRS, it is meaningless to claim that Seghers had "fully accepted the tenets of the organization."

When Seghers joined the group she had little idea of how to translate her social concern into stories and novels with working-class themes. Allying herself with the BPRS was a clear-cut indication of the direction she now wished to take, but only gradually did she formulate any sort of system of marxist literary aesthetics. In the late twenties and the early thirties she had just begun to clarify her own ideas of socialist literature, and she did not take part in the debates on aesthetics in the BPRS. The fact that she did not publicly defend any position does not of course mean a lack of reflection on her part about marxist literary theory or the position of bourgeois vis-à-vis proletarian literature. Rather, she did not yet have a clear idea of what the production of Arbeiterliteratur actually meant, and her silence in questions of marxist aesthetics suggests an understandable hesitation to take a public stance, since the BPRS took a hard line toward writers of middle-class background.
To sum up Seghers' position as a writer and a marxist around 1928: when she joins the KPD and the BPRS, she has already established a reputation as a promising author. She has demonstrated a social conscience in "Grubetsch" and Aufstand but has not yet turned to writing from a marxist viewpoint. After joining the BPRS she learns about marxist aesthetics which she begins to incorporate into her works. Contact with the BPRS and the literary debates are the impetus for her first "proletarian" novel, Die Gefährten, and the basis for the development of her own system of literary aesthetics.

Seghers continues to work for the cause of communism on a national and international level through personal representation and through her works. In 1930 she represents the BPRS at the "Charkower Konferenz der Internationalen Vereinigung Revolutionärer Schriftsteller." Her works reflect her interest in furthering the communist cause. The collection Auf dem Wege zur amerikanischen Botschaft contains two stories with revolutionary themes: "Bauern von Hrushowo" and "Auf dem Wege zur amerikanischen Botschaft." The latter work will be discussed below (see pp. 44-66), and we shall use it to document the author's development as a communist writer. In 1930 Seghers begins Die Gefährten, probably after her return from the Soviet Union; and the novel is the first full-blown reflection of Seghers' enthusiasm for the communist cause because the theme is
the international solidarity of the working class and the hoped-for triumph of the proletarian revolution. 33

Although Seghers' way to communism cannot be so clearly read as in Johannes R. Becher's autobiographical novel Abschied, in which he reckons with his pre-communist past, a development can be followed in the works before Die Gefährten. These works—"Grubetsch," "Auf dem Wege," and Aufstand—have for their themes the search for some system which can save modern man from destruction in his environment and society. Seghers' subjective way to communism can be traced in these works and it will be seen that her political decision in 1928 was motivated by her desire for a genuine life in a society based upon humanitarian principles and the desire for justice. Seghers chose communism for subjective reasons and her relationship to this system remains subjective.
Notes


5 Albrecht, Seghers, p. 17.

6 Diersen, Seghers-Studien, pp. 15-16.


11 Albrecht, Seghers, p. 15.


14 Batt, Seghers, p. 18.


17 Batt, Seghers, p. 20.


21 Anna Seghers, Die Gefährten (Berlin: Aufbau, 1951), pp. 94-95.


24 Wolf, "Glauben an Irrdisches" in her Lesen und Schreiben, p. 84.

25 Batt, Seghers, p. 31.


28 Batt, Seghers, p. 55.

29 Batt, Seghers, p. 55.


31 Gallas, Literaturtheorie, p. 49.
Chapter 2
"Grubetsch"

"Grubetsch" has been ignored in the secondary literature on Seghers, despite the fact that the story was recognized with the Kleist Prize. The work caused only mild interest at its debut and then was largely forgotten. Albrecht attributes this neglect to the fact that critics have been unable to place the story in her development toward communism; the story does not show the way to the socialist revolution and the picture of man in the work is pessimistic.1

Albrecht sees the influence of Dostoevski on the young Seghers as one reason for the grim picture of man in "Grubetsch."2 While at the university in Heidelberg Seghers read Dostoevski's novels; they gave her insight into man's existential plight and she conceptualized pre-revolutionary Russian society: "Nach Dostoevskis Romanen stellten wir uns die aufgewühlte Gesellschaft Russlands vor, in der man die Revolution schon grollen hörte."3 Seghers says that she and the other students of the leftist groups found in these novels an exciting new society which differed from their own, and in an interview with Christa Wolf she acknowledged her debt to Dostoevski: "Eine Wirklichkeit ist uns aus den Büchern gekommen, die wir im Leben nicht gekannt haben."
Für uns war es eine erregende, eine revolutionäre Wirklichkeit. Ich spreche jetzt nicht von der politischen Revolution, die ja nah war...sondern...von einem revolutionären Herauswählen, in Bewegung gehen [sic] des menschlichen Schicksals, etwas durch und durch Unkleinzüchterliches."

She says Dostoevski's novels gave her insight into the lives of the downtrodden: "...Elend und Hunger und Kämpfe um ein besseres Leben." Seghers takes much of her concept of man tortured by social circumstances from Dostoevski, and she admires his ability to externalize the deep psychological and dramatic dimensions in a given character and produce "aus der düsteren Wirklichkeit, aus unbeachteten Menschen, wahre, verborgene Dramen."  

Albrecht also argues that the pessimistic tone of "Grubetsch" is the result of Seghers' break with the middle class, saying that her remarks about the impact of Dostoevski on her as a student show that Seghers' bourgeois humanism reached a crisis in the confrontation with "imperialistic reality" and that "Grubetsch" definitely attests to this situation. However, Albrecht weakens his own argument when he admits the lack of biographical material on Seghers' early development, and the hypothesis of a "crisis" remains only that. Instead of trying to interpret "Grubetsch" from the perspective of Seghers' later works, it would be better to view it as reflecting a beginning of her ideological and literary development.
In my opinion, Albrecht's contribution to our understanding of Seghers' works lies less in the conclusions he draws about "Grubetsch" than in his attempt to identify some of the literary and historical factors which influenced the young author. The story has themes and motifs from several literary movements and reflects Seghers' interest in social questions; it is the author's first attempt to put down on paper some of the things which stimulated her imagination: the drama of the Dostoevski novels, a picture of a pre-revolutionary world, and a glimpse into the lives of the poor along the Rhine.

Entering the world of "Grubetsch," one is at once struck by the dim and depressing atmosphere. The first paragraph, like the openings in many of Seghers' works, sets the tone, here decidedly drab, for the story: "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 weggeworfenen Pantoffel und einen Haufen verfaulter Apfel. Wie ein Grubenlicht in der Tiefe zeigte sie den Weg dem Regen, der dünn und un-unablässig in diesen Schacht herunterregnete. Nur irgendwo in halber Höhe regte sich etwas Weissflatterndes, Lebendiges. Das waren ein paar Wäschestücke, die die Besitzerin ins Küchenfenster gehängt hatte, wie sie vor dem Regen in die Stadt gegangen war" (p. 5). The details of the courtyard
taken singly and collectively relay desertation and decay: the pile of rotten apples and the slipper are cast-away remnants of human life no longer present. The rain and the peculiar yellowish light contribute to the dismal atmosphere. The garbage, the dim light, the seemingly endless rain, the absence of life suggest that the courtyard is decaying. The author herself designates this atmosphere as "böse." Clearly, she wishes to sustain this sense of dread throughout the story because the mood thus evoked dominates throughout.

The tenement seems to exist in a vacuum, since few people come into it from the outside. Only a handful of people leave the tenement either, and when they do, the narrator does not follow them into the outside world. The woman gone into the city at the beginning of the story seems to stop existing at the boundary of the tenement, for the narrator's description does not follow her beyond the walls. Almost the only one to come into the courtyard is the man known as "den Schlenker," the landlord, who comes to collect the rents. Actually, he comes because of a morbid fascination with the atmosphere: "Drüben in der Stadt bekam er manchmal Heimweh, musste hierherfahren. Häuser hatte er genug. Hier kam er immer selbst her. Die Miete, die er sich holte, die gab er schon auf dem Rückweg aus. Vielleicht hatte er nur Heimweh nach diesem Ding in der Kehle, das es da drüben nicht gab, dieses sonderbare
Ding, das das alte schlaftrige Herz klopfen, den langweiligen Tag zucken machte, der Angst war es ähnlich, wenn Angst wohltun könnte" (p. 10). "Der Schlenker" belongs to the tenement just as much as if he actually lived there.

Seghers carefully constructs a closed environment to show its effects on the characters and they live under uniformly miserable circumstances. Economic factors could be the cause for the depression of the tenement. Many of the characters are unemployed and wait for something to happen. In the beginning of the story the narrator notes the apparent hopelessness of a group of young men: "Die Burschen, vier, fünf, blieben vor der Haustür auf dem Pflaster liegen und warteten auf ein Ereignis. Sie hatten keine Arbeit" (p. 9). Without jobs, the residents of the houses are overcome by lethargy, yet the scene is repeated so often that one wonders whether the unemployment is not the result of the idleness rather than its cause. Another example shows that the characters' downfall is not exclusively determined by economic factors: Martin, who has a job in the beginning of the story, is destroyed anyway through the loss of his wife to Grubetsch. Seghers show the tenement to be economically determined, but not exclusively so.

She never makes entirely clear whether the characters have been ruined by their environment, or whether they are degenerate to begin with. Certainly they are caught up in
a vicious circle of vice and meaningless acts. They are victims of their sexual desires; in one scene Paul and his wife are together: "Sie legten sich auf das Bett, fassten sich an, liessen sich los, fassten sich auf wieder, liessen sich wieder los, fassten sich wieder. Sie hatten keine Lust, aber eine Faust fasste sie von aussen, wie sehr sie sich wehrten" (p.58). Sadism is also rife in the slum. Paul beats the child of his wife's first marriage: "Auf einmal stand Paul auf und riss ihn zurück. Er fing an, auf ihn loszuschlagen, seine Wut wurde zur Verzweiflung, und er schlug, als ob ihm das nützen könnte" (p.54). The list of vices goes on: adultery, alcoholism, and prostitution are prevalent among the characters. They are not even a society in the conventional sense of the word, because the residents have no cohesiveness; they are only a collective of fellow sufferers. Though they live under the same miserable circumstances, they do not band together to change things, but are only thrust further apart.

This alienation is most clearly seen in the lack of normal family ties. Paul and his wife are bound together solely by their sexuality, and they are typical for the rest of the families as well. Even "der Schlenker," as he enters the courtyard, pictures himself destroying his family. The question of what is cause and what effect comes out most clearly in the case of the landlord. The
reader is never able to determine whether he always has these thoughts, or whether the place brings them on. In "Grubetsch" the reader is shown only that the environment affects the characters; the ultimate cause of the alienation cannot be found out from the story.

Only Martin and his sister Anna have a caring and normal family relationship. The author establishes at the beginning of the story that they are an exception to the rest of the occupants: "Martin--er war kein Sebald, der bloss so ein paar Fetzen an seinem Fenster baumeln gehabt hatte und dahinter Prügel und Liebe durch die Löcher in der Hof schie lend [sic]. Bei Martin war aufgeräumt bei Tage und geschlossen bei Nacht. Wenn man zu ihm ging, dann wurde man nicht hineingestopft in eine grosse Schlamperei, nein, sie rück ten sauber auseinander und gaben ihm einen Teil vom Platz und einen Teil von der Lampe" (p.33). Martin and his family lead an orderly life. They were not originally a part of the tenement: Martin had come to the city looking for work, had married Marie, and had sent for Anna to live with them. The simple fact that Martin and his sister come from the outside makes them different from the others, whose existence in the slum seems endless. Paul, the widow Sebald, the "red twins," and the other nameless members of the community know nothing other than the confines of the buildings. Their coming to the tenement is unrecorded and therefore
Martin and his family differ from the others only in the beginning of the story, however. He soon falls under the influence of the malevolent atmosphere of the run-down housing complex; he is destroyed by alcoholism, and his destruction follows a clearly marked path. First his family ties break down; he quarrels with Anna over her chores because of the jealousy between Marie and Anna. With time, he becomes worn down by his work and the narrator says of him: "Die letzte Zeit hatte Martin ein schreckliches Gesicht bekommen, das zwar nicht gerade Kummer ausdrückte, aber doch Erstaunen, dass der tägliche Weg immer länger war, als er sich vorgestellt hatte" (p.31). Finally he is devastated when he discovers Grubetsch and Marie together in a bar. In this scene Martin strangely enough lays his head on Grubetsch's shoulder and sobs: "Etwas Schreckliches ist mir heute geschehen...du kannst dir gar nicht vorstellen, was mir heute Schreckliches geschehen ist" (p.39). In the next moment Grubetsch starts Martin on his way to alcoholism: "Grubetsch...nahm die Flasche und stopfte ihren Hals in Martins Mund so tief es ging. Martin sträubte sich und schluchzte...dann machte er eine dumme Bewegung mit der hohlen Hand, in die Luft, als ob er dort etwas auffangen wollte, was ihm davongeflogen war" (p.39). The narrator shows that Martin's unique qualities have left him. He has lost his spirit and in
this scene, which has the air of an initiation or baptism, Martin becomes like the others. Thereafter he virtually disappears from the story. When he last appears, he is a drunkard without a job, just like the rest.

Anna seems to differ from the other people but, like Martin, comes to a bad end. Her degradation begins with her entrance into the slum. She is sensitive and innocent at the beginning, and her physical appearance suggests delicacy. She is said to be of "beinahe wunderbarer Magerkeit. Nicht nur wie die Fünfzehnjährigen gewöhnlich mager sind--man hatte ihr Überhaupt zu wenig Körper gegeben, nur ein ganz kärgliches zerissenes Ding" (p.5). Seghers tends to stereotype a character merely by physical type or appearance, a technique already obvious here in her first story. Anna proves to psychologically delicate as well: she has fears and anxieties. In one of the opening scenes, which also foreshadows her seduction by Grubetsch, she feels herself threatened by "der Schlenker" and cries for help from Martin: "Schlenker sah sie verwundert an, Anna streckte die Hand gegen ihn, ganz ausser sich vor Angst.... Anna...machte einen schnellen Satz nach der Wand, der Schlenker kam ihr nach, Anna lief ans Fenster, zog sich hinauf, da drunten im Hof stand ihr Bruder, schwatzte, sie schrie: 'Martin, Martin!' Der Schlenker lachte auf, schüttelte den Kopf" (pp.12-13). Although his actions toward her were relatively harmless—"der Schlenker" had
laid his hand on her arm—Anna overreacts because she of course feels herself threatened. She is vulnerable to the threats, real or imagined, from others and, although she is aware of her vulnerability, she is unable to help herself and must call on others to rescue her.

One trait which elevates Anna above the rest is her desire for a different existence. This desire is characteristic of many of the figures in Seghers' early stories. As Batt notes, such characters have "ein geheimes Wissen um eine andere Welt, so unbestimmt es auch ist, die Sehnsucht nach einem Abenteuer, das sie dem Immergleichen entreissen könnte." The wish for "something different" appears for the first time in "Grubetsch," but the goal for change is not yet established. Since, in 1926, the author did not have a clear idea in mind beyond the vague need for social improvement, she merely shows that the people want change, and explores how their environment prevents it. In the subsequent works this desire becomes synonymous with the revolutionary impulse—and the revolutionary is no longer passive like Anna. In Die Gefährten action is possible because the individual has the means by which to accomplish change. Now there is a direct goal—the proletarian revolution—and the means to bring it about in support of others with the same goal. Solidarity in Die Gefährten is a group wanting a specific kind of change.
Anna can conceive of change only in terms of a disaster. In an early scene Marie says: "Der Grubetsch ist wieder da... jetzt wird es ein Unglück geben" (p.6). Anna's reaction is: "Was ist das, ein Unglück?... Ist es wie der Hof dort und wie das Zimmer dort hinten? Oder gibt es noch andere Unglücke, rote, glühende, leuchtende Unglücke? Ach, wenn ich so eins haben könnte!" Seghers show that Anna's longing is determined by the events in the slum, where change is never for the better. The girl's statement also is a device to foreshadow the actual disaster which befalls her.

Grubetsch is instrumental in Anna's destruction as he was in Martin's. He appeals to her desire for warmth and love by bringing her a bird as a present, and the bird is used as an image of freedom. Grubetsch points out the limitations of her life by contrasting it with his own life on the river. She is captivated and finally seduced because she sees her desire for love and the possibility for a new life realized in him. Her happiness is short-lived, however, since he soon abandons her for Marie. Grubetsch has destroyed Anna by cutting off her chances for love and ruining her family life with Martin and Marie as well. When Anna discovers that Grubetsch has left her for Marie, her awakened love and her hopes for a better life die within her: "Anna spürte eine Hand in einem Riss in ihre Brust hineinfahren, etwas herausholen und sich wieder
zurückziehen. Einen kurzen Augenblick hatte dieser Riss weh getan, dann zog es noch wenig und war vorbei. Da wo die Hand hingegriffen, etwas herausgeholt hatte, war es jetzt leer, es war nicht angenehm und nicht unangenehm, es war gar nichts" (p.36).

At this point everything that has made her a sensitive feeling human being is gone; the narrator over-dramatizes her loss of love through the image of the hand. The rest of Anna's story is one of predictable downfall. Like Martin, she virtually disappears from view; and only at the end of the story do we see her again as a prostitute. She too now belongs completely to the socially degenerate tenement world; both she and Martin are permanently trapped. Since her desire for love and happiness has been perverted so that she is like the others, her destruction actually begins with her wanting something different. The hopelessness of longing for change in a hostile environment without the means to effect it is shown by Anna's story. She is an example of any sensitive individual in this type of world, and thus her story can be called in the words of Walter Heist and "exemplarische Geschichte."

Grubetsch, like Martin and Anna in the beginning of the story, seems independent of the courtyard. He appears to occupy a unique position in the tenement because of his mobility, but this seeming detachment proves illusory. He too is ultimately trapped and destroyed. More highly
developed than Anna and Martin, who are only types, Grubetsch is interesting in his own right, having characteristics from the legend and the fairy tale. It will be recalled (see p. 14 above) that when Seghers began to write, she was looking for a way to combine two interests: "Erzählen, was mich heute erregt, und die Farbigkeit von Märchen." Grubetsch is an attempt at such a combination. He has properties which set him off from the average person and these are seen both in his character and in its effect on others. At first he does not appear to belong to any society at all. A loner, he spends most of the year on the river working on a barge. His life is determined not by society, but by the cycles of nature—he leaves the tenement in the summer and returns only in the winter when the weather becomes severe. Batt compares him to the dragon in the legend which breaks into villages from time to time to threaten the inhabitants. This comparison is justified, since already in the first scene his coming is linked with disaster: "Der Grubetsch ist wieder da... jetzt wird es wieder ein Unglück geben" (p. 6). Shortly thereafter the reader learns that Grubetsch has been indirectly responsible for Sebald's contracting a disease which eventually kills him: Grubetsch had taken Sebald with him to the prostitute on the river. As is the case with Anna and Martin, Seghers carefully establishes Grubetsch's character early in the story. The reader knows that he is
relatively free of the courtyard or virtually any other encumbrances, that he has traits which remove him from the normal world of everyday existence, and that he exerts a powerful and destructive influence on others.

Once his character is established not much else is added beyond demonstrating that he too is caught in his environment. He performs two functions in the story: he acts as a catalyst on the other characters; and as a victim finally of the tenement atmosphere himself, he substantiates again that the environment is inescapable. If he appears to have more freedom than the others, his end—murder by Paul's knife—is all the more radical, only proving the rule rather than the exception.

Grubetsch is able to discern the secret wishes of the characters, and in every case this knowledge leads to their destruction. As Seghers says, he is a man "der es versteht, die geheimen Wünsche der Menschen nach Zugrundegehen zu erraten und jedem in seiner Weise zu erfüllen." This statement suggests that the others consciously want destruction; however Seghers attributes powers to Grubetsch which are not entirely justified by the story. The environment, not some odd or mysterious power, as Albrecht suggests, allows Grubetsch to hold sway over the others: "...Die Voraussetzungen für Grubetschs Wirken liegen in den besonderen Verhältnissen des Hofes. Die tiefen Ursachen für das von Grubetsch gestiftete Unheil
sind also nicht in seiner Gestalt zu suchen; er legt nur verborgene Widersprüche frei und beschleunigt—gleichsam als Katalysator wirkend—schon vorhandene Entwicklungen." Grubetsch serves, that is, to hasten a process which has in fact already begun for the characters. His apparent freedom makes them realize their own limitations and in seeking the freedom they come to desire, they are overpowered by the environment. In the case of Anna, Martin, and Marie, Grubetsch discerns the desire for freedom and meets each according to his need. To Martin, who is tired of struggling to earn a living, he seems understanding, and Martin responds to his apparent concern: "Von allen Menschen...merkt dieser Grubetsch allein, wie müde ich bin" (p.34). He also triggers Anna and Marie's desire for sex, although he distinguishes between the two. He makes love to Marie strictly on a physical level, while he gives Anna the emotional warmth she wants along with sexual gratification. He gives Sebald's boy, cast off by his mother and beaten by his stepfather, the love and attention he wants. And since we can find no clear-cut reason for Grubetsch's murder, one can view it in a way as satisfying Paul's mania for senseless and uncontrolled violence. His attack on Grubetsch is as violent as it is unreasonable in that he kills the one person who provides contact with the outside world and in some way engenders hope.
Grubetsch falls victim to the tenement atmosphere because he comes to be dependent upon it. He feels the effects of isolation and turns to the courtyard life to overcome them. Each new phase of Grubetsch's dependence begins with his return; and though the phases are less important than the process itself, they serve as markers that help the reader see the development more clearly.  

The first time Grubetsch appears he causes the breakdown and destruction of Martin's family and attracts Sebaldr's boy. The second return from the river is earlier than usual, and Albrecht interprets this unexpected arrival as a limitation in Grubetsch's initial desire for contact with the others. During his second stay in the tenement Martin and Anna are destroyed, and "der Schlenker" falls prey to his own fears and has a heart attack. At this time Grubetsch is at the seeming height of his power. In the third section of the story this influence has begun to wane, for it becomes evident that the people of the tenement are no longer under his control. Their resentment now turns to open hatred: "...sie hassten ihn, oft hatte er vor ihnen gesessen in der blauen zerschlissenen Jacke, war vor ihnen durch die Sonne gegangen, gleichmütig in der Torfahrt verschwunden" (p.62). In the third section the peoples' hatred of Grubetsch coincides with his dependence upon them. Grubetsch craves the company of others while he is lying in his room under the bar: "Er hatte auch Lust
nach Munks Licht, er hatte Angst, dass dieser niedergebrannten trüben, gelben Laterne etwas zustossen möchte, bevor er seinen Kopf daruntergestreckt hatte. Er fürchtete, die Leute möchten auseinandergehen, bevor er sich zwischen sie drücken könnte, rechts und links ihre Schultern und Hüften spüren. Einen Augenblick lag er regungslos, er dachte, das müsste alles von selbst zu ihm kommen.... Dann sprang er auf und stürzte heraus" (p.61).

Grubetsch's position at the end of the story is the exact opposite of the place he occupies at the beginning. He has lost the capacity to see through the others and the ability to exploit their desires. He is now so driven by the need to overcome isolation that he seeks the company of others and is killed by Paul. In the murder scene it is shown that Paul is able to approach and knife him because Grubetsch wants Paul's company. But this desire is not the cause of the murder; the festering evil of the tenement finally overcomes Grubetsch.

What effect does Grubetsch's death have on the courtyard? Life seems to go on just as it did: "Zwar ereignete sich noch immer manches: einer der roten Zwillinge ertrank im Fluss, Pauls Frau nahm einen Liebsten, und Paul prügelte sie, wie Sebald sie geprügelt hatte" (pp.63—64). Yet Grubetsch's absence does make a difference, for the reader is told that the events in the slum took on another character: "Aber das waren gewöhnliche
Liebschaften, gewöhnliche Tode" (p.64). The final statement—especially the word "gewöhnlich"—reminds the reader of the ambivalence in the people's reaction to Grubetsch. On the one hand, after his death life returns to normal for the people so that they no longer seek release from someone who exploits them. On the other, the only chance for a glimpse into a better existence disappears with him. The last sentence expresses the subjective regret for the loss of hope. As Batt notes, "Dieser Schlussatz ist...ein charakterischer Seghersatz; eine scheinbar wertfreie Feststellung, für keinen Affekt durchlässig, der dennoch die Melancholie abzuspuren ist: das Bedauern Üben den Untergang des Märchenhaft-Poetischen in einer mit Hegel gesprochen, 'zur Prosa geordneten Wirklichkeit.'"

Behind such seemingly dispassionate commentary by the author stands an interpretation. In Aufstand and Das Siebte Kreuz the narrator's comment comes at the beginning and gives the significance of the events to come. In Aufstand the narrator reminds the reader of the immortality of the revolution, and in Das Siebte Kreuz he looks back from a future perspective and recalls that more difficulties would lie before the prisoners of the concentration camp. This type of evaluative commentary is used sparingly in the later works because it suggests a dimension outside the narrated events and as such interferes with the intended objective tone.
In "Grubetsch," however, a decidedly subjective under­
current complements the objective narration of events and
is reflected in the narrators tone of regret expressed for
the characters' loss of hope.

Behind the narrator's consciousness stands the
author's own concern for the plight of modern man; by
showing the effects of an evil society on the characters,
Seghers hopes to awaken the reader's pity and make him
aware of the need for social change. The story is like a
Kollwitz drawing, which moves the viewer to sorrow and
regret over man's lot in life. It is not a direct call
for reform, since the means for change are not shown in
the story. In "Grubetsch," Seghers has followed the
method of many naturalists, Zola for example, by showing
the problem and leaving the solution up to the reader. Not
until the later socialist works is the reader suggested the
means to achieve social change.
Notes

1. Albrecht, Seghers, p. 40.
8. Seghers, "Grubetsch," in Der Bienendstock: Gesammelte Erzählungen in drei Bänden (Berlin: Aufbau, 1963), I, pp. 5-64. All page numbers refer to this edition.
11. Albrecht, Seghers, p. 28.
13. Batt, Seghers, p. 34.
15. Batt, Seghers, p. 34.
18 Albrecht, Seghers, p. 31.
19 Albrecht, Seghers, p. 34.
20 Albrecht, Seghers, p. 32.
21 Albrecht, Seghers, p. 33.
22 Batt, Seghers, p. 37.
Chapter 3

"Auf dem Wege zur amerikanischen Botschaft"

"Auf dem Wege zur amerikanischen Botschaft" was written in the late 1920's and published as the title story in a collection which appeared in 1931. In it Seghers puts into practice some of the ideas she must have formulated while sitting in on the debates in the BPRS during the late 1920's and the early 1930's. The issue at hand was how an emerging socialist literature might prepare the way for the coming proletarian revolution. Many of the authors of the group felt that depicting the mass was more important than portraying the individual, that documentary rather than creative techniques should be used, and that the subjectivity of the artist should be curbed. Seghers remained silent during the debates, but the content and the techniques she used in "Auf dem Wege," written at that time, suggest that she had opposed this majority opinion. For "Auf dem Wege" is outside the mainstream of the new proletarian literature; Batt notes that at a time when Brecht was writing in a decidedly "neusachlich" style and F. C. Weiskopf was praising the work of Turek, Kläber, and Knauf, Seghers seemed out of place: "So stand Anna Seghers Schaffen, das von einer
The thesis of this chapter is that Seghers feels social activism begins on the individual level with a change in consciousness and the decision to join the mass; furthermore, that "Auf dem Wege" is her attempt to show the subjective way of the individual to the working class; and last, that her literary aesthetics defend the validity of subjectivity in the approach to communism.

Here Seghers traces the course of the individual, who—like herself—goes from isolation to political engagement. The emphasis is on group action in the story, and only the political side of the characters is shown. They are stereotypes because Seghers wants only to prove through them that political consciousness can be awakened in very different people. The characters in the story are reduced to the role of "joiners" with the demonstration at the cost of their individuality. The narrative follows four people in a political demonstration against the sentencing of Sacco and Vanzetti in 1927, and gives the marchers' thoughts as they wend their way through the city. The time involved is very short, approximately two to three hours from the formation of the demonstration to its ending in the clash in front of the American Embassy. The four main
figures of the story are designated only as "der Mann," "die Frau," "der Junge," and "der Fremde." What emerges in their thoughts is a common picture of misery and dissatisfaction with daily life. The man is bitter and resentful after the death of his son in an industrial accident, and his comparison of his wife to the woman marching next to him gives the reader an idea of the greyness of his home life: "An der ist nicht mehr viel zu holen, die ist genau so ausgefegt wie meine zu Haus" (p. 132). And one word especially is used over and over to describe him: "Mürrischkeit." It occurs throughout the story in such phrases like: "Solche Ströme von Mürrischkeit flossen aus ihm heraus, genug eine Stadt zu ersäufen (p. 143), or "sein Gesicht überzog sich mit einem Reif von Mürrischkeit" (p. 144). This one description is all that is said of him.

In the case of the boy and the woman the reader knows little more than that their lives are a different struggle for existence. The boy lives at home with his parents, is jobless, and sometimes helps with the family business of selling figs. He has come to the demonstration because it promises the excitement otherwise missing in life. A bit more is given about the woman. She is a widow and sole supporter of her family; the narrator says of her "alles Süße hat man aus ihr herausgequetscht, Tag und Nacht, fertig ab... (p. 138), and from the thoughts of "the man" about
her, we know that she not only feels inwardly tired and worn out, but also appears that way to others.

The private lives of the three are alike and differ only in the reasons for their drabness. The sole difference between the characters is in what they have to overcome so that they can march along in the demonstration. The man must forget his indifference with the others. When he first joins the demonstrations, he barely notices the man next to him: "Zu faul, seinen Kopf zu drehen,warf ihm der Mann aus den Augenwinkeln einen Blick zu, einen Blick vollkommener Gleichgültigkeit" (p. 131). Or: "Der Mann warf ihm wieder einen Blick zu, sein Gesicht erstarrte vor Geringschätzung" (pp. 131-132). The boy is the only one of the four with political experience behind him, but he must learn to control an egotistical desire for the excitement he gets from such demonstrations before he can effectively join with the others. The woman has to put aside for a time her feeling of responsibility for her family. At one point in the demonstration she makes a conscious effort to forget about her children and to concentrate on the matter at hand: "Die Frau horchte jetzt auf.... Alte Gedanken rieben sich innen an ihrer Stirn, um nochmals ausgedacht zu werden; aber so kam sie nie auf den Platz, so voll und schwer. Wegstossen musste sie endlich diese Kinder und verlassen. Durchbeissen alle Nabelschnüre" (p. 150). To become an effective member of the mass the
individual has to overcome an aspect of his own ego or something central to his personal life. The different characters are introduced only to illustrate various aspects of the progression from isolation to solidarity. As in "Grubetsch," where destruction was the fate of all the characters regardless of their starting point, the characters in "Auf dem Wege," including the stranger who will be discussed in a moment, end up joining the demonstration. Their individual problems are introduced to create the impression that their decision is made at some cost.

The story is narrated toward the final clash between the police and the demonstrators. By the time the throng reaches the Embassy, the four have completely suppressed the earlier thoughts of their private lives and fixed their sights upon the coming clash with the police: "Die literarischen Helden werden in den Brennpunkt der Ereignisse geführt, in Situationen höchsten Einsatzes und letzter Entscheidungen. Die Folge ist die Konzentration der Charakterdarstellung auf 'die Kraft' im Menschen, einen ethischen Impuls, der oft noch mehr oder weniger absoluten Charakter hat und sich einzig auf die revolutionäre Sache richtet." Seghers herself seems to have been aware that the characters are reduced to one-sided figures in the story, since she expressed dissatisfaction with it. In a small article entitled "Selbstanzeige," she said about
"Auf dem Wege": "Am wenigsten gefällt mir die Geschichte, nach der das Buch genannt ist. In dieser Form stellt sie überhaupt nur den Stoff zu einer Erzählung dar: Was geht in einer Viererreihen während einer Demonstration vor? Was begibt sich mit diesen vier verschiedenen, einander völlig fremden Menschen?" She said, furthermore, that she wanted to use the material or idea of the story as the basis of another work: "Da mir der Stoff wichtig ist, werde ich ihm bald noch einmal bearbeiten." It seems likely that she wrote Die Gefährten to expand on the theme of proletarian solidarity, for in the later novel the reader is shown how a great number of individuals in a variety of countries work for the proletarian movement.

In "Auf dem Wege," however, the depiction is on a small scale. In general terms the examples of the man, of the woman, and of the boy indicate that the joining of the individual to the marchers is essentially predetermined, that all obstacles to this fusion are set up only to be proven illusory. This—along with the single dimensionality of the figures—can best be demonstrated in discussing the last of the four central characters, the stranger. For two reasons he is an example of how the individual goes from isolation to solidarity with the group. First, he is a more important character than are the other three. The story begins with him; more details are given about his life than about those of the others; and his
death in front of the Embassy is the dramatic climax of the story. The reason for this importance lies in the stranger's background: he comes from the outside, possibly from another class, from the bourgeois. The designation "the stranger" itself is meant to show that he is a stranger not only to the city, but also to political demonstration. Coming from the middle class means he has farther to go toward solidarity with the working class according to marxism. If the change is more dramatic in his case, so are the consequences: the others may have been arrested after the melee in front of the Embassy, but the stranger has been killed by the police.

The stranger is also important in the story because his change from bourgeois thinking to solidarity with the proletarian cause reflects Seghers' own way to socialism—not so much in detail, perhaps, but certainly in its essence. For the stranger this commitment means death; for Seghers it meant a lifelong dedication to the socialist cause. The parallels between the stranger and the author, both of whom come from the outside to the proletarian movement, cannot be missed.

The stranger joins the demonstration by chance and stays because marching provides, at least momentarily, a change from his everyday routine. The starting point for a decision for communism or the desire for social change in many of Seghers' early works stems from dissatisfaction with
daily life. In the story at hand the reader learns very little about the stranger’s life at home aside from the fact that he seems to lead a comfortable existence but feels alienated from his family. At one point in the march he thinks about what is going on at home at that moment: "Jetzt war daheim ein weisser Tisch gedeckt. Hinter ihm sass die Frau, die fremde glitschlige, verteilte unschuldig Suppe" (p. 145). The reader does not know any of the reasons why the stranger wants something different aside from his desire to see the city for a time: "In dieser 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, so wenig wie etwas gilt, was man im Schlaf macht. Was ich in dieser Stadt mache, wird einfach nicht mitgerechnet. Das kann ich. Das geht" (p. 130). All that is thought about the trip to the city is that his visit here will be somehow different, although there is no specific idea as to how. The city itself is actually not his goal, providing as it does only the scene for living out the temporary change he needs. During the march the stranger catches sight of two towers he had seen from some distance and feels joy at the sight: "Er hob den Kopf und erblickte wieder seine beiden Türme in unerwarteter Nähe. Sein Herz zog sich vor Freude zusammen. Diese Türme standen wie Wächter über seinem Wunsch, über dem
unerfüllbaren, verrückten Wunsch seiner Jugend, der heftigen, in Scham und Angst geheimgehaltenen Begierde, der letzten Hoffnung der letzten Jahre: allein in die Stadt zu fahren" (p. 133). Only the abstract hope and nothing else is given here; the stranger has had an undefined and strong desire for "something else" since his youth. Albrecht notes the non-directededness of the stranger's hope when he says: "Er sucht...nichts, was in der empirischen Wirklichkeit zu finden wäre und beim Namen genannt werden könnte, sondern etwas Unerahntes, die Inkarnation romantischer Sehnsucht." The fact that man's hope for a better existence arises spontaneously and is non-directed shows us that Seghers views the longing as a basic human condition which reasserts itself again and again. The hope is not necessarily bound to economic condition, but is rather a general human characteristic, because the stranger does not come from the same class as the other marchers in the row. It has been seen in "Grubetsch" that all of the characters, regardless of whether they fit in with the society of the courtyard or not, have the desire for something better, however fleetingly.

In "Grubetsch" the characters wanted to achieve no specific goal other than release from the immediate environs of the tenement. In "Auf dem Wege" we witness a build-up to a change—and even if it is not actually shown, the
potential for real change is there. This potential exists in the story because Seghers now sees socialism as a way for man to determine his position in life. Hope in "Auf dem Wege," while still not directed toward a whole political ideology, takes on a political thrust. The link between the hope of the individual and his ability to affect society in a positive way is his desire to belong, and the sense of togetherness which the characters reveal represents a step beyond "Grubetsch." In the earlier work part of the characters' misery was due to their feeling of alienation from each other, and their inability to change their lots lay to a large extent in the deep division between the members. "Auf dem Wege," on the other hand, suggests that through solidarity with others the individual can change his circumstances. And like the hope for a better existence, the desire to belong to a group is seen as a strong and basic human characteristic. Nowhere is this feeling clearer than in the case of the stranger. At first he only joins the group of demonstrators by accident and is simply carried along with the tide of the marching crowd. He is not even interested in why the crowd is marching, for he has resolved not to try to integrate what he will do in the city with his normal existence but, rather, to regard it as an interlude. As he marches along, however, the stranger begins to take an interest in the throng and its goals. He asks the man
next to him "Wohin gehen wir eigentlich?" (p. 131). Later on he asks about the marchers' purpose and feels like going along out of pity for Sacco and Vanzetti: "Das will ich mal tun für die beiden Jungens, denn die dauern mich" (p. 131). Though the decision is also in part made because he does not want the next man to think ill of him, his decision nevertheless shows the beginnings of a conscience not present when he joined the march. Once awakened, this feeling of responsibility toward the group and its goals is irreversible. The stranger's desire to pursue his own interests in the city is replaced by an increasing identification with the group he has joined. At first he wants to escape from the marchers; later on he has the chance to leave them but stays out of a feeling of solidarity: "Der Fremde hätte sich am liebsten drüben hingesetzt, um einfach alles vorbeiziehen zu lassen, aber die anderen dauerten ihn, die drei in seiner Reihe, die dann ohne ihn waren" (p. 133). The stranger identifies himself with the other marchers when he distinguishes between himself and the onlookers. The latter do not know the feeling of belonging, because they sit back and do not participate: "Die lernten nie, was eine Stadt war, spürten dort oben niemals ihre Körper in eine Kette und stimmten" (p. 146). The association between the stranger's feeling of solidarity and the city implies that his unspecific wish has been fulfilled. The association city-wish is made even
clearly in the stranger's death scene. After the stranger is shot down in front of the Embassy, the narrator says: "Als wäre er hier geboren, schlug die Stadt über ihm zusammen, Beine und Röcke, Himmel und Häuser" (p. 152). The city, symbolizing the stranger's hope for something different, and his participation in a political demonstration turn out to be linked. He has gone from isolation and self-interest to solidarity with the collective.

The decision of the individual to join the collective is usually less a political than a psychological one in the works of Anna Seghers. Just as the hope for a better existence arises spontaneously in those living under circumstances which do not allow them to develop themselves to the fullest, so too is the choice to join the collective spontaneous and almost instinctive. The stranger derives security from the literal forward progression of the marchers: "Im Stehen war die Angst am grössten, geringer im Gehen, gar nichts im Rennen... (p. 148). Seghers stresses the importance of the individual's choice to join the group since she feels that his possibilities for achieving self-realization are limited by the nature of his surroundings, and only when he bands together with others can he change his environment. As a marxist she believes in the inherently positive quality of the socialist society, and accepts without question the fact that its causes are just. In "Auf dem Wege" the
proletarian class is the defender of life. On the surface it may appear that a political issue at stake in the protest of the sentencing of Sacco and Vanzetti, but actually the issue is the preservation of life in general. The workman, who was not able to prevent his son's accidental death, joins with the others to hinder the deaths of two other men. Public outcry is viewed as an effective measure for stopping unjust execution.

For Seghers the proletariat is more than just an economic class; it is the collective repository for the idea of the socialist revolution, which will set up a society for the benefit of all, preserving human life and values. Since the idea rests with the entire class, and not just with its individual members, the idea is passed on and preserved even when the individual dies. The value of the individual is diminished, since the class is the bearer of the idea. In "Auf dem Wege" to a small extent and more especially in the later stories the characters trust blindly in the success of the revolution and sometimes sacrifice themselves for the cause in a selfless way that is baffling to the reader who does not share the author's ideology. The socialist reader is more apt to regard as positive the sacrifice of individualism.

The integrity of the individual is diminished in favor of the mass in all the works written after 1928, when Seghers joined the revolutionary proletariat, in whose
causes she firmly and sincerely believed. She views the balance in favor of the mass as positive, since she feels that only in this framework could one be freed from alienation and work effectively toward a better future.

A decision for the mass is increasingly important and the uniqueness of each person's choice to join the revolutionary cause is one of the few aspects of individualism left in Seghers' works. In "Auf dem Wege" all four characters end up marching along with the demonstration; the difference between them is what they must overcome to march.

One other way in which the characters differ is the manner in which they work for the cause. In Die Gefährten and the works written after Seghers had more experience with party function, the dedicated party worker who leads and inspires emerges as a prominent figure. There, especially in Die Gefährten, she shows in some detail the accomplishments of such leaders. In "Auf dem Wege," however, the contribution of the individual is still told without detail and packed into a few brief moments.

Several reasons may be noted for the stranger's sudden and almost meaningless death in front of the Embassy. It is a means of gaining the reader's sympathy for the demonstrator's cause by showing the brutality of the reaction; that is, his death is used for effect. The violence and swiftness of his death is due to the author's
notion that political engagement is akin to a battle situation. According to Albrecht, revolutionary reality in "Auf dem Wege" is the "Brennpunkt des Lebens, gesteigerte Wirklichkeit." In the story the individual is called upon for immediate yet short-range contribution for the cause.

In the story the stranger is "sacrificed" to prove the justness of the demonstration, yet the loss of one man, which might seem tragic after he had just decided for the cause, is not interpreted so by the author. She gives no commentary about the stranger's death, but Albrecht mentions a similar case in one of her later works which she does discuss. In Die Entscheidung (1959), two characters, the journalist Herbert Melzer, and Katherina Riedl both die just after deciding to support the socialist system of East Germany. When questioned in an interview why these two characters had to die at just this moment, Seghers replied "...die Gestalt in einem Buch muss selbst nicht unbedingt optimistisch sein, um Optimismus, um richtige Handlungen beim Leser zu erzeugen." Her comment, though made some thirty years after "Auf dem Wege" and in a much different context, also holds true for the stranger. For Seghers it is the cause which must be maintained; the value of the individual consists in the way in which he helps further it. Emphasis is therefore placed on ideological "right thinking" rather than on the fate of the
individual.

In "Auf dem Wege" Seghers turns again to the theme first introduced in "Grubetsch": how can modern man free himself from alienation? In "Auf dem Wege" political involvement is given as the answer to isolation, and this opens up a dimension lacking in "Grubetsch," the relation between political activism and daily life. Now Seghers places political participation and the everyday life of the proletariat side by side, though she does not even raise the question of how they should be integrated. Activism here seems to grow out of the misery of daily life, without any support or guidance from a political organization and it seems to lose its meaning after the immediate moment of the demonstration is over. The participants are not followed home and the dialectical relationship between the mass and the individual in many facets of his life is completely missing. The story concentrates merely on one aspect of class conflict, political demonstration.

The interest in the psychological process of joining the demonstration did not correspond to the documentary writing the BFRS demanded of its members; and probably the strong emotionalism and the lack of a clearly discernible dialectical relationship between the individual and society caused the story to be discounted by the group. Seghers did not defend her subjective approach to proletarian
literature until almost ten years after the debates in the EPRS in two letters to Georg Lukács. This timing demonstrates that her approach to literary aesthetics is more functional than theoretical; for she first worked out the techniques she considered valid in "Auf dem Wege," and only then attempted to deal with them theoretically. She expresses herself on questions of writing as specific issues arise, rather than formulating a unified system of aesthetics. Her statements, according to Batt, are more "Eindrücke und Gedankensplitter, Assoziationen und Reminiszenen als systematische Überlegungen." These literary discussions serve occasionally as a defense of techniques she has used already in a work, as Sauer note: "Überblickt man die Äusserungen im Zusammenhang, so wird deutlich, dass künstlerische Selbstverständigung eher begleitende als wegweisende Funktion gehabt hat; mitunter diente sie auch der Selbstverteidigung."^1^1^2^ In letters to Lukács dated June 1938 and February 1939, Seghers took issue with his views on how realism could best be attained in a new progressive literature. For him, it is important to write works which grasp reality "...wie sie [die Wirklichkeit] tatsächlich beschaffen ist, und sich nicht darauf zu beschränken, das wiederzugeben, was unmittelbar erscheint." Every important "realistic" writer— he cites Thomas and Heinrich Mann, Romain Rolland, Maxim Gorki as examples—is able to present his material
"...um zu den Gesetzmäßigkeiten der objektiven Wirklichkeit, um zu den tiefer liegenden, verborgenen, vermittelten, unmittelbar nicht wahrnehmbaren Zusammenhängen zu gelangen.\textsuperscript{14} Writers such as these should serve as models for the new socialist literature, Lukács feels. He distinguishes between those "realistic" writers who can show the underlying historical and social process, and those of the so-called "avantgarde," who profess to do so. Lukács criticizes authors from the naturalists to the surrealists, for their inability to show the laws of social structure; he regards their literature as subjective in approach and says it takes its own subjectivity for reality. In his opinion such writers are useless for progressive literature: "Sie bleiben alle, gedanklich wie gefühlsmässig, bei dieser ihrer Unmittelbarkeit stehen, graben nicht nach dem Wesen, das heisst, nach dem wirklichen Leben der Gesellschaft, nach den verborgenen Ursachen, die diese Erlebnisse objektiv hervorbringen, nach jenen Vermittlungen, die diese Erlebnisse mit der objektiven Wirklichkeit der Gesellschaft verbinden."\textsuperscript{15} Lukács rejects some of the techniques found in the literature of the so-called "avantgarde" precisely because they are subjective; one such is the montage, a technique borrowed from film. While Lukács admits that the montage has some value in depicting the inner turmoil and the crisis of modern man, he denies its value for progressive literature because it does not identify the
causal complex in society. Though he feels the "avantgarde" literature had developed literary devices well suited to probing into the psyche of alienated modern man, he none-theless rejects them in favor of "realistic writers.

Seghers stands closer to contemporary literature and its styles than does Lukács and in the two letters previously mentioned takes issue with his views of realism.

The differences between the author and the philosopher are methodological rather than ideological, since Seghers agrees in principle with Lukács that socialist literature should be realistic. She states in the first letter, "beim Schaffen eines Kunstwerks, wie bei jeder menschlichen Aktion, ist das Massgebende die Richtung auf die Realität." Seghers and Lukács differ, though, how they think the transition period from capitalism to socialism is to be handled in literature. Lukács feels that such a crisis period can be represented with traditional forms in literature; Seghers sees new forms necessary for the adequate depiction of a society in flux. She cites examples from her own field of art history to prove her view: "Solche Krisenzeiten sind in der Kunstgeschichte von jeher gekennzeichnet durch ihre Stilbrüche, durch Experimente, durch sonderbare Mischformen, nachher kann dann der Historiker sehen, welcher Weg der gangbar geworden ist." Often the new forms appear "empty" from the standpoint of the outgoing epoch, but they should not be viewed
negatively: "Vom Standpunkt der antiken Kunst aus, war das,
was nachkam der reinste Zerfall. Im besten Fall, absurd,
experimentell. Es war aber doch der Anfang zu etwas
Neuem." Seghers feels something similar happened with
her own generation of writers who grew up in the crisis
period of the First World War; they also produced forms
in literature which differed from those of the preceding
era, since they rejected its traditional forms. They had
no literary models which they considered valid. She asks
Lukács: "Was hatten wir denn für 'Spiegel' im Krieg und
kurz nach dem Krieg, als wir aufwuchsen?" The models that
did exist, "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." It was left to her contemporaries to transfix reality as
best they could, in small pieces, "Splitterchen" as she
calls them. These "Splitterchen" are not decadent, as
Lukács feels, but the beginnings of a new art: "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.... Was Du als Zerfall ansiehst,
kommt mir eher wie eine Bestandsaufnahme vor; was Du als
Formexperiment ansiehst, wie ein heftiger Versuch eines
neuen Inhalts, wie ein unvermeidlicher Versuch."
While Lukács feels that the traditional forms are valid for all times, Seghers contends that each new reality dictates the methods used to depict it. The most important fact is that it is shown; less important are the means. On this basis she excuses the occurrence of "Stilbrüche," "Experimente," and "sonderbare Mischformen" as she terms them.

Discussions of realism, Seghers states, have generally focused on method. She, however, sees artistic creation in a two-fold process, which she paraphrases from Tolstoi's diary: "Auf der ersten Stufe nimmt der Künstler die Realität scheinbar unbewusst und unmittelbar auf (er nimmt sie ganz neu auf, als ob noch niemand vor ihm dasselbe gesehen hätte, das längst Bewusste wird wieder unbewusst; auf der zweiten Stufe handelt es sich darum, dieses Unbewusste wieder bewusst zu machen usw." Any examination of the creative process also should include the first factor, the impact of reality on the artist, for this is the crucial one in artistic production: "Es ist nicht minder wichtig wichtig, nie zu vergessen, dass eben jene primäre Reaktion die Vorbedingung ist, die Voraussetzung des künstlerischen Schaffens, ohne die man ebensowenig zu einer Synthese kommt wie ohne Methode." The concept of "directness," as it applies to the impact of reality on the artist, appears here in Seghers' theoretical writings for the first but not the only time. This concept is of primary importance, because how reality strikes the artist determines the methods by
which he represents it. She gives as examples Kleist, Lenx, Bürger, Hölderlin, and Gündnerode; all were in conflict with their society and unable to overcome its reality. One cannot draw a perfect parallel between them and her own generation, Seghers says, but they are similar in that they also had the difficulty of "ein gewisses Steckenbleiben auf der ersten Stufe". Too great an impact of reality on the artist will result in an unrealistic work, because he will not be able to gain a sufficient overview of his time. On the other hand, too great a concentration on the method of picturing reality will also produce a flat, unrealistic work. Many socialist authors, she says, work from method alone and forget about their original impression. Their writing is lifeless: "Was mit dem 'Zauberlehrling' passierte, war noch eine Idylle, gemessen an dem, was diese Freunde anrichteten. Sie hatten es fertiggebracht, die Welt ganz zu entzaubern. Bei ihnen war jene primäre Reaktion...vollständig verschüttet, oder sie war überhaupt nicht vorhanden." One of the cornerstones of Seghers' aesthetics is that the original response of the artist to reality must be evident in the work.

The impact of reality on the author is important, so that he may recreate his impression for the reader. According to Seghers, writers who show reality without taking their own reactions into account depict "eine unerlebte Welt, die auch für den Leser unnachlebbar wurde."
link between author and reader is the subjective experience of reality; the closer the writer can reproduce his impression, the more likely the reader is to experience it too. Thus Seghers adds a third dimension to the creative process: the reader, and terms the interrelation between the three the "...einzigartige, eigentümliche Verknüpfung von subjektivem und objektivem Faktor, Um- schlagstelle vom Objekt zum Subjekt und wieder zum Objekt." In her letters Seghers reminds Lukács that a picture of reality in a historical transition period can only be understandable through subjective means. In "Auf dem Wege" Seghers tries to make the reader experience the march from the subjective perspective of the man, the woman, the boy, and the stranger; "carried along" with the throng, the reader too is to surrender himself to the cause.
Notes

1 Albrecht, Seghers, pp. 120-22. Albrecht notes that although "Auf dem Wege" was written sometime around 1929/30 according to its placement in the chronologically arranged story collection Der Bienenstock, the story belongs to an earlier period. I followed Albrecht's placement of the story in Seghers' development.

2 Batt, Seghers, p. 62.

3 Albrecht, Seghers, p. 122.

4 Seghers, "Selbstanzeige," p. 11.

5 Albrecht, Seghers, p. 97.


7 Albrecht, Seghers, p. 97.

8 Albrecht, Seghers, p. 105.

9 Albrecht, Seghers, p. 105.

10 Seghers, "Über die eigene Schaffensmethode," Kunstwerk, II, p. 27.


14 Lukács, "Realismus," p. 69.
15 Lukács, "Realismus," pp. 67-68.


18 Seghers, "Briefwechsel," p. 177.


21 Seghers, "Briefwechsel," p. 175.


23 Sauer sees "Unmittelbarkeit" as the cornerstone of Seghers' aesthetics in his article "Verteidigung der Unmittelbarkeit."


26 Seghers, "Briefwechsel," p. 175.

27 Wolf, "Glauben," p. 93.
Dostoevski's works seems to be the first Seghers criticized for their inability to help the reader overcome his feeling of alienation and find a way to change society. She sees as the main theme of his works—and one which she adopted for her own as well—"die Erlösung des ,einzelnem Menschen' aus seiner Zerissenheit, seinen Ängsten, Zweifeln und Versuchungen, seiner Sehnsucht nach Harmonie und Freiheit." Although she praises Dostoevski for his ability to present "genuine drama" from the conflicts of man in society, however, she criticizes him for failing to provide the characters with a solution to their problems: "So wahr aber die Konflikte sind, die Gestalten, die in sie hineingeraten, müssen an der Lösung scheitern, die keine ist." She attacks him for leaving his reader without hope for a resolution: "(Es) bleiben nicht nur oft seine Gestalten erschöpft und zerknirscht auf der Strecke, auch der Leser bleibt mit ihnen...denn wie er auch mitgerissen war, er sehnt sich, dass durch den Konflikt, durch all die Widersprüche hindurch, ein Weg schimmern möge...der weiterführt auf der Erde."
The term "optimistic tragedy" is often used in con- nection with Anna Seghers' work and refers to the idealism and hope for change which lies behind seemingly hopeless and unchangeable events. It is my contention that the short novel Aufstand, which has as its theme the immortality of the revolutionary impulse that survives temporary setbacks, is the first of Seghers' works to which the term rightfully applies. In Aufstand Seghers conveys the belief that man will not be forever repressed by his environment.

The unsuccessful revolt of the fishermen is introduced with a metaphor of the immortality of the revolutionary spirit, which prevails beyond the defeat of this one action. The story is narrated from two time perspectives: from the point of immediate defeat, and from the point of longing and desire for future victory. Seghers was to use this narrative device again in Das Siebte Kreuz when the reader is told that the flight of the escaped prisoner, Georg Heisler, is successful before the story actually begins. While the simultaneous existence of the two levels, introduced at the beginning of Aufstand, is not carried through the story, the metaphoric identification remains in the reader's mind as he follows the events of the story, and reminds him that the revolution will ultimately win out in spite of the present defeat: "Der Leser wird nicht nur mit dem Wissen, dass der Aufstand mit einer Niederlage enden wird, in die Geschichte geschickt, sondern zugleich mit der
Versicherung, dass der Kampf nicht umsonst war, dass er
eine zwar nicht äußerlich sichtbare, aber doch tief-
greifende Veränderung geschaffen hat."

The first paragraph of Aufstand, one of the most
effective passages to be found anywhere in Seghers'
writing, draws its strength from the contrast between the
detached prediction of the defeat and the desire for future
victory:

Der Aufstand der Fischer von St. Barbara
endete mit der verspäteten Ausfahrt zu den Be-
dingungen 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 kahlen
Marktplatz und dachte ruhig an die Seinigen, die
er geboren, aufgezogen, gepflegt und behütet
hatte für das, was für sie am besten war.

Marcel Reich-Ranicki has remarked that this para-
graph not only contains the content of the entire work,
but also demonstrates a salient characteristic of Seghers'
writing, the combination of objective report with the
poetic. The facts of the revolt are narrated in a cool
tone: the fishermen still work under the same terms as last
year and the revolt was actually over before the deaths of
the two major figures. The mood changes, however, with
the final sentence and introduces "eine gewisse epische
Beschaulichkeit und eine fast balladeske Stimmung. The sentence differs from the other in its length and by the fact that it contains the only metaphor in the paragraph. The revolt is pictured as a sort of benevolent creature which hovers over the marketplace and keeps the memory of the action alive. Reich-Ranicki calls this metaphor "ein kühnes poetisches Bild" similar to Expressionist writing which personified abstract concepts. The revolt is not pictured merely as a struggle against social injustice and exploitation, but as an abstract longing for justice which survives individual setbacks.

The storz is set somewhere on the coast of Northern Europe, usually taken to be Brittany. From the few hints that are given in the text, it is difficult to determine where St. Barbara actually lies; the names of the surrounding villages do not give any indication, nor do the names of the villagers point to any specific nationality—they are English, Flemish, and French. Seghers states that St. Barbara "floats" somewhere between Brittany and Holland; otherwise she has no special setting in mind, for she wants the story to be a "Sage." More important than a specific location is the timeless nature of the setting—one critic calls it "archetypal." The ahistorical setting underscores the main idea of the immortal revolutionary spirit.
The narrative closely follows the events of the strike and the lives of the people who take part in it. The work is divided into three main sections, each of which begins with the onset of a new season. The first part is the exposition in which the major characters are introduced and the necessity for the strike is demonstrated. Hull's arrival in early fall starts the rising action. He has spent the summer on the island of St. Margaret recovering from a slight injury and is wanted by the police for his part in leading a strike in Port Sebastian. He speaks to the fishermen in St. Barbara and urges them to strike: the time seems ripe, for the fishermen no longer can exist on the company's terms of a minimal wage and a small portion of the catch: "Früher war es auch schlecht, aber jetzt ist es noch schlechter..." (p. 17). The rest of the action in this first part only adds details about the hard life of the fishermen. What exists between them and the company is class conflict; and the strike represents a fight for better living conditions. The chasm between the company and the fishermen cannot be bridged without great compromise on the part of the latter; the fisherman who allows his son to be sent by the company to navigational school is resented by the others. This man's opportunism and change of allegiance is an exception; the fishermen are loyal to their own because they all live under the same harsh conditions.
Hull calls for a meeting between the fishermen of St. Barbara and the surrounding villages and the first part ends with the close of the fishing season for the year. The second section develops the action toward the coming conflict. The time is winter when the fishermen have little to do, and under the surface the strike begins to take form under Hull's leadership. Living conditions worsen: Kedennek's child, born around Christmas, soon dies; hunger becomes widespread; the fishermen will have a difficult time holding out until spring.

The situation worsens and reaches a climax with the arrival of spring. Relations between the company and the fishermen are at an all-time low; the owner's son is beaten up by the villagers, who storm the company office. Hull is unable to mold the unorganized mob into any sort of cohesive group. The strike is finally called, but one of the ships sails despite it. The boy Andreas sabotages the ship, and unexpectedly survives the explosion, only to be shot down and killed on the cliffs by soldiers brought in to suppress the revolt. The strike is completely leaderless after Hull is captured. The action described in the first paragraph of the work is completed when the strike ship "Marie Farere" sails out to sea under the same working conditions as the previous year, and the strike is "already" ended before Hull is taken into custody and Andreas dies on the cliffs.
This thumbnail summary makes clear that the narrative follows closely the development of the revolutionary idea. The author's attention remains by and large fixed on either the mass of the fishermen or the individuals leading the strike. Seghers has created her characters to illustrate various attitudes toward the revolt. The real heroes of Aufstand are the fishermen as a group, since the strike arises from their struggle for a better existence. They are a collective in a real sense, which is new to the works of the author. In "Grubetsch" the courtyard dwellers are a group of people suffering under the same detrimental conditions but they do not band together. They seem to have no past and no future, other than a vague hope for change. In "Auf dem Wege" the focus is on the psychology of the individual rather than on the mass. The fishermen of Aufstand, however, are closer to being a society in the marxist sense: they exist under the same conditions, and most important, they have a common tradition of struggle against the elements and economic oppression. Relatively uniform in their characteristics— they are silent, enduring, typical perhaps of any race of people used to the harsh life on the seacoast— their solidarity is a natural outgrowth of the fishermen's existence: "Die Solidarität der Fischer hat etwas Urwüchsiges, sie ist phrasenlos und unsentimental, eine Selbstverständlichkeit, von der
niemand Aufhebens macht, die aber auch den Geringsten unter ihnen auf sicheren Lebensgrund stellt.\textsuperscript{13} Solidarity binds the people together against the company, against the military, and against traitors from their own ranks. Despite its apparent strength, however, the solidarity of the fishermen lacks impulse. It is more of an enduring than an active nature since it needs a catalyst: the people are actually not able to begin the strike until Hull arrives from the outside. By 1928 Seghers views solidarity as an important prerequisite for a revolution, but not sufficient in itself to spark it; the idea of the revolution could only come from the outside.

The fishermen's situation is representative of any people who struggle for existence against overwhelming odds. It is intended to be a paradigm of any society in which class conflict exists. The lack of definite national setting and the absence of a history beyond class struggle causes Diersen to term the work "eine Art legendäres Urbild des Klassenkampfes."\textsuperscript{14} Seghers clearly wishes the reader to regard the fishermen and their strike as one possible action in the long history of the struggle between oppressor and oppressed.

\textit{Aufstand} is abstract enough to be interpreted both as "Daseinsvorgang in fast metaphysischer Verklärung"\textsuperscript{15} and symbolic for an actual historical epoch. In the
careful balance between "coolness" and expectation in the narrative tone of the first paragraph, Schneider sees the calm before the storm in the Weimar Republic when the German proletariat awaited a revolution. Hull's entry into the society of the fishermen, then, can exemplify the necessity for the revolutionary idea to be brought in from some outside source—most likely from a political party—or the fact that the German proletariat needed new impetus to start the revolution.

In Kedennek, a fishermen, the reader can see the revolutionary spirit of an individual put into action. Kedennek is one of the few who has kept alive the memory of the previous strike against the company; Hull's arrival seems to herald another. Andreas notices the renewal of hope in Kedennek: "...obwohl Kedennek genau so aussah wie immer, merkte Andreas doch, dass etwas an Kedennek verändert war. Obwohl er nicht wusste, woran es lag, kam es ihm doch sonderbar vor, dass sich etwas an Kedennek veränderte" (pp. 15-16). His pose has been one of waiting and expectation similar to that of other Seghers characters—Anna in "Grubetsch" and the stranger in "Auf dem Wege." The difference between the earlier figures and Kedennek lies in the fact that he has more of a chance of seeing them fulfilled, for he says "Jetzt hören sie auf mit ihren Plänen, das is [sic] gut. Jetzt wird es ernst, das kann man daran sehn, dass er (Hull.
K. A. B.) gekommen ist" (p. 16). Until Hull's arrival Kedennek had viewed his life as grey, made up of "vier Wände und eine dickbäuchige Frau und Bohnen und Kinder und Hunger" (p. 24). For him external change brings the beginning of a new consciousness, which is first suggested from an outside viewpoint and then demonstrated through his course of action. A later description further confirms the change in Kedennek: "Andreas be-trachtete Kedennek aufmerksam. Er hatte ihn noch nie soviel auf einmal sprechen hören. Das fiel Andreas aufs Herz, vielleicht, weil er unbestimmt spürte, dass für Kedennek reden soviel bedeutete, wie für jemand anders, sich zu einer unbesonnenen und folgenschweren Tat hinreissen zu lassen" (p. 16).

Kedennek's inner change is translated into action in a dramatic moment of conflict between the fishermen and the soldiers. It is the moment when he leaves the crowd and walks toward the fishing boat which threatens to sail despite the strike. At this point Kedennek sacrifices himself for the success of the strike, a gesture understandable within Seghers' ideological system, wherein the individual comes to himself only through giving himself for the good of the cause. The process of self-realization is shown in his death scene: "Kedennek ging weiter, wie es ausgemacht war, nicht zu langsam in ungewohnt kleinen, leichten Schritten. Er hatte im
Rücken ein sonderbar kahles Gefühl, er verstand, dass die Übrigen zurückgeblieben waren und dass er allein ging, und er verstand auch, dass der Soldat auf ihn schießen würde.... Sein ganzes Leben hatte Kedennek nur an Segel und Motoren, Fang und Tarife gedacht, aber während dieser acht Meter hatte er endlich Zeit gehabt, an alles Mögliche zu denken. In seinem Kopf waren alle Gedanken eingezogen, die zu empfangen der Kopf eines Menschen geschaffen ist. Er dachte auch an Gott, nicht wie man denkt, an etwas, das es nicht gibt, sondern an etwas, das einen verlassen hat" (pp. 65-66). Kedennek’s decision to act is similar to that of the stranger; they are both prototypes of those who sacrifice themselves for a movement. From the perspective of an outsider his death may be senseless. Reich-Ranicki views this individual critically as "jener Mann, den die Teilnahme an einer politischen Demonstration in einen Rausch versetzt, der somnabul mitmarschiert, ekstatisch mitschreit und sich völlig sinnlos opfern will."¹⁷ Reich-Ranicki may be right in this particular instance: though Kedennek’s act of defiance causes the strikebreakers on the boat to change their minds and fight the soldiers, the strike is unsuccessful in the long run. Furthermore his death worsens his family’s financial situation, for they are of course left without a breadwinner and Marie is forced to leave St. Barbara and to seek work in the city. Kedennek has
aided the cause, but he has not met his responsibilities in daily life. At the time when she wrote *Aufstand* Seghers felt that the individual could choose either revolutionary activity or private life, but not both, as will be seen in other figures in the book too.

Typically, Seghers shows the conflict between daily life and political work most clearly in her women figures. Often they are presented as thin, colorless, and ground down by the struggle to keep themselves and their families alive. Sometimes these characters are little distinguishable from one another: Marie Kedennek is related to "the woman" who tries to eke out an existence in "Auf dem Wege" or to Katherina Bordoni in *Die Gefährten*. The description of Marie helping unload the fishing boats will serve to document the toll of the struggle for life: "Da kam Kedenneks Frau, sie war schwanger, aber so hager, dass ihr Bauch wegstand wie ein Knorz von einer dünnen Wurzel. 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. 20). The portrait is made consciously dreary to show how the economic situation of the village snuffs out the vital spark in them. Woman, the giver of life, is not able to sustain it in the adverse conditions of *Aufstand*: Marie's child dies soon after birth.
Marie and the other women like her are too caught up with their own work to take active part in the strike. Its political aspects are lost on her, not because she is ignorant of them but because she puts her family first. When she begs Andreas to sail on the strike ship, she does not see this act as a breach of solidarity with the others, but only as the means of keeping her family alive. All she can do to help is to aid Andreas' escape from the soldiers after his sabotage of the strike ship. Her understanding is evident to Andreas when he explains the importance of his act: "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" (p. 75). But her family lives in such poverty that Marie cannot do more for the strike than aid Andreas in a small way. For her the concerns of the individual take precedence over political action.

Hull, like Grubetsch, arrives from the outside. As in Grubetsch, who longs for freedom but also for the companionship with the others of the tenement, there is in Hull a conflict between the desire to be free to pursue revolutionary activity as he will and the need to associate with others. In the later character too the irreconcilable desires lead to the destruction of others and of himself as well. The situation with Hull is more complicated than with Grubetsch, however. His ambivalence
does not just destroy him; it leads to the failure of the strike. While his inability to lead the strike is not the sole cause of its failure—the economic conditions in St. Barbara make success unlikely from the outset—Hull's problematical nature is an important factor. Hull is not just a private person as Grubetsch is, he is a revolutionary, and to Seghers this role means sacrifice of one's private life. Hull is not able to make such a sacrifice.

Before 1928 Seghers conceived of the revolutionary as a person set apart from normal life. This picture came from her encounters with the political emigrés at the universitz. From their examples it seemed that political life and the day-to-day routine must be mutually exclusive. The revolutionary was, she thought, forced to live outside society—a view infused with considerable romanticism. After she joined the KPD, Seghers came to believe more strongly in party's demand that the individual direct all his energies toward the furtherance of the communist cause. In Hull Seghers works out some of the psychological problems of one who tries to combine political work with private life and fails.

From the beginning Hull seems to be a successful strike leader and the people await his coming: "Manche haben gesagt, das er kommt...und manche haben gesagt, dass er nicht kommt; jetzt ist er gekommen" (p. 16). That
Hull has even become a bit of a legend is seen in the song of Marie, the prostitute, sings in the bar just after his arrival and before he stands up to talk to the fishermen. Hull is able to move the fishermen to strike because of his independent position as a political organizer.

At first glance it appears that Hull is the protagonist of Aufstand, since he is the central figure. He is less the hero however than a catalyst, for he organizes the strike potential of the fishermen. His ability to inspire others is seen best perhaps in his relationship to Andreas. He creates in Andreas a romantic image of life outside St. Barbara when he tells the boy about his own previous life: "Hull fing an zu erzählen von draussen, Häfen, Strassen und Weibern. Andreas hörte erstaunt mit zu" (p. 37). Hull has the same attraction for Andreas that Grubetsch had for the courtyard dwellers in that he serves as an example of a better existence, and he encourages Andreas to participate in this life by asking him to go along when he leaves St. Barbara, which Andreas readily agrees to do. Hull does not give theoretical knowledge to the youth about revolution and class conflict so much as the impulse to rebel and the chance to participate in the strike that Kedennek had denied him.
The teacher-pupil relationship between Hull and Andreas, whereby the older, more experienced activist passes on knowledge to the younger, less experienced, is the first instance where the motif of mentor occurs in Seghers' works. Two later examples are the friendships between Wallau and Heisler in Das Siebte Kreuz and between Waldstein, Richard, Robert, and Thomas in Die Entscheidung. Like Hull, these "teachers" act as catalysts on their pupils.

Hull longs to live an unfettered private life along with his public role as strike organizer. He sees revolutionary activity as an extension of both his own ego and his zest for life. He lives from strike to strike, and he feels himself most alive when he is in the thick of things. He thinks back on the action at Port Sebastian and recalls "damals war er...fröhlich, das war gut, wenn man lustig war, dann ging einem alles vor der Hand..."(p.19). Port Sebastian was a means for creating excitement and for testing his power: "Er brauchte nur in die Hände zu klatschen, dann sprang der Austand aus ihm heraus, auf die Stadt, aus der Stadt über die Küste, vielleicht über die Grenze" (p. 19). The image of Hull's uprising spreading itself out over the coast is reminiscent of the image in the first paragraph of the revolt hovering over the marketplace. The opening of the work points to the survival of the uprising, the later image to its close
association with life. For Seghers revolution above all means life, since it is for her the method by which inhumane circumstances can be altered. Further proof of the association revolution-life is the fact that for Hull inactivity means fear, anxiety, and a kind of death. Hull sees the prostitute Marie and wants to have a relationship with her; his desire for her is also linked with death: "Auf einmal dachte er, dass das alles, seine unsinnige Lust nach diesem hässlichen, dürren Mädchen, seine Gier, sich alles genau zu merken, nichts andres als die Todesangst selbst war, von der er manchmal hatte sprechen hören" (p. 8). A relationship might take away Hull's freedom and so he associates it with death. Inactivity also makes him uneasy. After the first meeting with the fishermen of St. Barbara Hull thinks back with pleasure to the strike in Port Sebastian and contrasts it with the depression his present waiting cuases: "Plötzlich, als ob sie in einem Winkel der Kammer gehockt und nur gewartet hätte, bis er ganz wach war, fiel solche Traurigkeit an ihn, fest an die Kehle" (p. 19). The connection between his political work and the fear of death is again clear in the scene where he begins to speak to the strikers of St. Barbara; the other villagers have not shown up and it appears the strike is not going well: "Die Angst kam gar nicht aus seinem Herzen, frass nicht von innen nach aussen.... Die Angst war der Schatten, den
das Unglück selbst auf die Menschen wirft, wenn es so nah ist, dass man es mit der Hand berühren kann" (p. 60).

The drive for life and excitement that characterizes Hull from the beginning is so strong as to seem like a fateful force. Albrecht notes that Hull seems driven almost against his will to come to St. Barbara and to remain there. The fascination with the strike holds him and even draws him back after its unsuccessful conclusion and his escape to a nearby island. Though he is reasonably safe there, he longs to return to St. Barbara ("Er hatte Heimweh," p. 81) and when he returns, he is captured. His return is senseless in terms of the strike, since it had obviously failed before he sailed for the island. But he returns to the village because he associates his work there with life: "Was sein Schicksal an den Aufstand gefesselt hat, ist vielmehr Teil seines eigenen Ichs, ein Trieb...." Hull's view of the uprising as an extension of his own ego is justifiable, but there is more to his drives than that. He arrives by accident at St. Barbara, much as the stranger in "Auf dem Wege" joins the demonstration by chance. He also begins to feel some solidarity with the villagers and seeks personal relationships with them. The bond that holds him to them is the desire to belong to a group. As in the case with Grubetsch Hull is not so free as he first seemed and he is destroyed because he tries to combine independence with
solidarity. Hull, like Kedennek and his wife, must choose one or the other.

Explanation of what attracts Hull to political activity is difficult, however a reason must be at hand because his drive for action is typical of Seghers' characters—the stranger in "Auf dem Wege" is the first and best example. Figures seem drawn almost against their will into demonstrations, strikes, and political work. The stranger is not politically motivated; Hull is, yet he too is magnetized by group action. Schneider offers the best explanation of Seghers' characters of this type when he says they are drawn into revolution as a kind of vortex: "Der Fremde wird vom Sog des Zentrums angezogen, wo authentisch, d.h. revolutionär Geschichte gemacht wird; das entfremdete Proletariat kommt erst durch die solidarische Aktion zu sich selbst." Schneider also attributes Hull's gravitation toward the scenes of the uprising to the same equation between political action and self-realization: "Es ist dasselbe, was den von weit her gekommenen Fremden Hull und die Stätte seiner Revolte kettet. Nur der Ort der Aktion ist die Heimat." Even though the historical process mentioned by Schneider is only sketched in Aufstand, it is nonetheless present in the symbolic reference to the future recurrence of the uprising in the beginning of the narrative. The characters in Aufstand either accept or reject a role in changing
history. For Seghers they have no choice; Hull's ambiguity and failure are due to the impossibility of combining private life with political work.

Andreas Bruyn, Kedennek's foster son, revels in taking part in the strike. A character much like Hull, Andreas feels a joy in being alive and the word "Freude" is often associated with him. His lust for life and happiness expresses itself through rebellion too. There is a distinction, of course, between Andreas' youthful rebellion against authority and Hull's more politically founded action against the fishing company, but the relation between them is nevertheless evident. Andreas' pleasure in defiance can be seen when he spilled the fish in front of the company supervisor and when he pulled a knife on a ship's captain, both times after he was struck across the face for impertinence: "Er hatte solche Lust nach Freude. Er kannte sie noch gar nicht. Ein-, zweimal war sie flüchtig durch ihn hindurchgegangen, damals auf dem Fischmarkt, wie er die Fische weggeschmissen und quer über den Platz gerannt war, zwei Minuten lang hatten die Pflastersteine gehüpft, die grauen Wände der Lagerhäuser geflimmert... (p. 15). After he drew the knife on the captain he also had a thrill of pleasure: "Das andere Mal, das Messer zuckte ihm noch in der Hand...eben war er noch allein und verzweifelt, da wuchsen plötzlich seine Gefährten rechts und links von ihm...einen Augenblick
war alles anders gewesen" (p. 15). These two flashbacks show that in the past Andreas had associated happiness with rebellion. Seghers establishes his rebellious nature in the beginning so that his later attack on the strike ship will be in character.

Andreas is also partially an outsider. In the Kedenneks he has something of a family, but he does not feel at home with them, since he shares only their poverty and crowded existence. He is isolated from the rest of the fishermen and their families too, and so it is all the more understandable that he is drawn to Hull.

Andreas is disappointed that Hull does not speak to him right away: "Es kam ihm sonderbar und unverständlich vor, dass Hull ihn noch nicht angesprochen hatte. Gerade ihn nicht, Andreas, der ihn vom ersten Augenblick an erwartet hatte" (p. 35). The arrival of Hull makes Andreas very much aware of his limited life; and when Hull offers to take him along when he leaves St. Barbara, the boy readily agrees, because he is attracted to an adventurous life outside the pattern of ordinary existence.

Both Andreas and Hull seek to improve the economic situation in St. Barbara, although they differ in their methods. Both believe in uprising as a means of changing the society. Diersen sees a similarity between Hull's thought— "Er brauchte nur in die Hände zu klatschen, dann sprang der Aufstand aus ihm heraus" —and Andreas' plans
for the future of his children: "Seine Kinder würden mal anders aussehen, keine Zwei-Brocken-Bohntentarif-kinder. Es kam ihm einfach vor, alles zu ändern. Er brauchte nur die Hände an den Mund legen, alles zusammenbrüllen" (p. 25). Revolt is for Andreas, as for Hull, an extension of his own ego and a way of proving himself. Where they differ is in their goals for the uprising. For Hull the strike in St. Barbara is a successor to the one he led in Port Sebastian; for Andreas the strike has more direct bearing on the future life of the village and himself. His thoughts about how things would be different for his children show that he thinks about the strike in a social context.

Like Hull, Andreas is drawn back to St. Barbara after his successful escape; he too cannot stay away "von seinem Fünktchen Küste" (p. 69). He returns to the village because he is afraid he might miss something of the strike, makes a vain attempt to prevent the ships from sailing, and is killed on the cliffs by the soldiers.

Andreas' death seems to be in vain, since his actions do nothing to alter the already collapsed strike. As so often in Seghers' works, however, one must look for meaning beyond the immediate event. Although Andreas dies, his impulse for happiness lives on: "...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. 89). His spirit becomes an abstraction of rebellious zeal, just like the metaphorical creature of the marketplace. For Seghers the idea supersedes the individual.

The message of Aufstand is that even though the economic conditions have not been altered by the strike, the consciousness of the people has altered so that revolt might occur again sooner or later. At the time when she wrote Aufstand Seghers saw the provisions for successful revolt to be solidarity, good leadership, favorable economic circumstances, and a total commitment on the part of the individual. Aufstand shows a society in which these elements are not sufficiently present; the only thing which remains after the defeat is the longing for a time when conditions will be right.
Notes

1 Albrecht, *Seghers*, p. 17.
2 Seghers, "Woher sie kommen," p. 216.
3 Seghers, "Woher sie kommen," p. 216.
4 Diersen, *Seghers-Studien*, p. 27.
13 Albrecht, *Seghers*, p. 130.
24 Schneider, "Seghers," p. 117.
25 Schneider, "Seghers," p. 117.
Though Anna Seghers had just joined the Communist Party when Aufstand der Fischer von St. Barbara appeared, the work was less that of an experienced communist than a leftist sympathizer. The hoped-for revolution in Aufstand was not clearly a communist one, and the work was sufficiently unspecific in its desire for a better future to be read by people of wide political doctrine and not just those from the far left. Hans Henny Jahnn awarded the book the Kleist Prize for its humanitarian message: "...alles, was als Tendenz erscheinen könnte, verbrennt in einer leuchtenden Flamme der Menschlichkeit."¹

The central focus in all Seghers' works is man's search for harmony and fulfillment: "Der aufmerksame, liebevolle Blick der Dichterin gilt dem einfachen werk-tätigen Menschen, seiner Sehnsucht nach menschlichem Glück, menschlicher Würde, nach ein wenig Wärme und Geborgenheit; gilt seinen ‚geheimen Wünschen.'"² The question of how this desire might be fulfilled, first hinted of but not answered in "Grubetsch," is given a more ideological solution from work to work; nonetheless
the motif is still only an amplification of the basic theme. Seghers believes that the age-old dream of man for a humane, just, and harmonious society, a sort of earthly paradise, will be fulfilled under communism. In Die Gefährten the revolution and the longed-for communist society are symbolized through a number of images taken from the Bible and Christian theology: martyrdom for the faith, the concept of a community of believers, religious conversion, and the hope for a new world. It is my contention that although Die Gefährten is a far more radical statement than "Grubetsch," "Auf dem Wege," and Aufstand of the belief that communism is the only means to achieve a thoroughly new society, the book also reflects the extremely traditional way of thought from which Seghers comes.

Die Gefährten was Seghers' first work to run into political opposition. The novel, which glorifies the international proletarian revolution, came into conflict with Nazi politics and was banned in 1933. The ideological content of Seghers' works after Die Gefährten necessitated their publication outside of Germany and forced the author to emigrate in 1933 to escape political persecution. From 1933 until 1947 when she came to the German Democratic Republic to live, Seghers' works were published in Holland, Mexico, Switzerland, and the United States.
Die Gefährten unmistakably reflects Seghers' belief in the validity of the communist cause. The Soviet Union has been termed the "ideal center" of the narrative since many of the characters draw their strength for revolutionary tasks by travelling there. This country has played a role in Seghers' consciousness, as could be seen from her memories of hearing about the events of the Russian Revolution as a teenager (see pp.9-10). Seghers viewed Russia as the land free from all oppression. In 1930 she saw the country first-hand; as a representative of the BPRS she travelled with Johannes R. Becher and Ludwig Renn to Charkow to take part in the "II. Internationaler Konferenz proletarischer und revolutionärer Schriftsteller." She recorded her impressions in a short story "Die Bauern von Hrushowo" and again later in Die Gefährten. In the former the Soviet Union appears as a source of inspiration for the oppressed; a land of revolution in the latter, the country is depicted as a type of paradise in which man has reached a state of happiness and equality.

Seghers' ties with communism, strengthened by her visit to Russia, were also deepened by her association with the BPRS; and Die Gefährten is understandable only when one keeps her ties to this organization in mind. The work is a proletarian novel and follows many of the guidelines for literature set down by the group. One of
the chief dictates of the BPRS was that the writers show the working class that its destiny was to lead the nations. Johannes R. Becher termed these works for the class "eine Waffe der Agitation und Propaganda" in one of his early speeches before the BPRS.\textsuperscript{5} They were supposed to increase political awareness in the reader and to direct him toward his proper role in the revolution. Seghers concurred with Becher's view and in writing \textit{Die Gefährten} she emphasized the positive outcome of the class struggle for the proletariat. As she phrased it, she wanted to show "...hinter der Verzweiflung die Möglichkeit und hinter dem Untergang den Ausweg."\textsuperscript{6} She apotheosizes the labor of the average worker to such a point that \textit{Die Gefährten} does indeed run the danger of approaching undisguised propaganda.

The world of \textit{Die Gefährten} appears consistent within itself because all elements are related to an external premise: that the working class has a past in persecution and struggle but a hope for the eventual realization of its rightful place in history. The work is often critizied for its ideological one-sidedness, and even marxists feel Seghers overemphasizes the role of the proletariat in the class struggle.\textsuperscript{7} Sigrid Bock has suggested that Seghers herself may have criticized the work indirectly in a speech entitled "Vaterlandsliebe" given at the "I. Internationaler Schriftstellerkongress zur Verteidigung der Kultur" in Paris in 1935.\textsuperscript{8} Seghers refers to the necessity for
producing a clear picture of society so that the reader can see historical process at work and therefore realize that the Nazi interpretation of history is false. She speaks of the difficulty and complexity of producing such a picture of society: "Selten entstand in unserer Sprache ein dichterisches Gesamtbild der Gesellschaft." Seghers may have felt that Die Gefährten did not show the class struggle in its entirety; another comment hints that she might have lacked the artistic means of creating a convincing model of a society at the time she wrote Die Gefährten. In a letter to Lukács Seghers reflects on her development as a writer and says that only after she had emigrated, that is after 1933, was she able to find a suitably sophisticated structure for conveying an ideological idea: "Obwohl ich doch lange selbst schrieb, begann ich erst damals...darüber nachzudenken, was den alten und neuen Büchern, die meine Freunde und Helfer waren, solche Wirkungskraft gab. Ich begann über ihren Aufbau und Struktur nachzudenken."10

The lack of criticism on Die Gefährten may reflect a negative reception, although the obscurity of the work is also partially attributable to non-literary factors. The Nazi ban robbed the book of its intended audience in the German-speaking countries and severed the link between author and reader. Publication of German works in foreign countries was difficult, and knowledge of the
work through reviews was also limited by the small number of exile journals. While Die Gefährten was still available in Germany, it had only two reviews, one by S. and P. Kracauer in the Frankfurter Zeitung, and the other in the Prague exile journal Neue Deutsche Blätter. Few modern critics have more than passing comment for it either, and the work's obscurity may be due to the fact that proletarian literature in general is viewed as cliched or not valid in terms of subsequent literary movements. Proletarian writing, prevalent in the late 20's and early 30's, gave way after Hitler to the more moderate anti-Nazi Volksfrontliteratur. Ideologically stringent proletarian literature did not fit in with the goals of the Volksfront, a very loose association of authors from bourgeois, liberal, and leftist backgrounds whose one common interest was to combat growing Fascism in Europe. Schneider attributes the end of Seghers' own "proletarian phase" to the rise of Nazism and the resulting anti-Fascist wave. After the internationalism of Die Gefährten Seghers was to make an about-face and turn to the fate of her own nation. Her anti-Nazi exile works were more widely read after the war than Die Gefährten during the period of reflection upon Germany's past. Not until the GDR sought to establish its literary legitimacy in the revolutionary literature of the past did the proletarian novels of the 20's and 30's come again into the limelight. Die Gefährten was republished
in the GDR and reviews appeared in Neues Deutschland, Die Weltbühne, and the Berliner Zeitung. After a brief period of critical attention the work fell again into relative obscurity where it remained until the mid-sixties. In 1965 both Inge Diersen and Friedrich Albrecht analyzed it in their studies of Seghers' early development as a writer, but their books did little to establish a reputation for it, and to date, no complete article on Die Gefährten has appeared in the GDR. Renewed interest in the work seems doubtful, at least among the younger generation of East Germany, which is now dealing with an entirely different reality than the proletarian internationalism of the earlier decades.

The novel has received even less attention in the West than in the East, no doubt because the Western critic who does not agree with the basic ideological tenets is apt to find it stark and heavy going. Both the gruesome scenes, in which the revolutionaries are tortured for information, and the quasi-religious glorification of the heroic deeds of party workers seem extreme to the non-communist critic.

The structure of the book also makes it difficult to follow. The work abounds in quick scene changes and shifting perspectives. Montage is more frequently used than it had been in "Auf dem Wege." The reader remembers from Seghers' letter to Lukács that she felt post-World
War I society was infinitely complicated to its own generation, and only a complex literary technique could render it best. She felt that novels should show the intricate "causal net of society", and by this term she meant the class struggle in its entirety.\footnote{14} The breadth and scope of \textit{Die Gefährten} stem from this desire.

Diersen suggest that Seghers wanted to produce a "Weltbild."\footnote{15} Her opinion is justified since the work traces the political, sociological, and historical ramifications of communism over a length of time. The action spans the years from 1919 to approximately 1930/31 in many European nations as well as in the Soviet Union. Albrecht notes that the action is further divided into two periods, Summer 1919 to Winter 1920/21 and Winter 1924/25 to 1930 or 1931.\footnote{16} The last two years are contemporary with the writing of the work, a fact which critics overlook. And the extension of the action into the "present" of that time is significant, for Seghers conceives of the revolution as an on-going process which has bearing on the present. As L. Lamberechts correctly points out, the time structure in all her novels and stories is more than an organizational principle: it reflects their ideological \textit{Tendenz}.\footnote{17}

The book, which is without a central plot, consists of a series of vignettes from the lives of many revolutionaries. There is no one protagonist as the central hero,
since Seghers believes all workers for the cause are important. Their contributions are highlighted, because the author feels that the common man is the mover of history. The individual is raised above his small sphere and placed in his correct role in history, as part of a collective working for a better future. The number of characters is so large and their lives so unrelated that the book bears little resemblance in form to the traditional novel. 18

The characters are supposed to be related by their common dedication to the communist cause. They believe that history is progressing toward inevitable revolution, just as Christians believe that past and present ages will ultimately lead to a new era with the return of Christ. The narrative techniques of Die Gefährten emphasizes this fluidity of history; it does not dwell on the defeats, but hurries on to the next action. The reader is not allowed to focus his attention too long on one revolutionary figure or on a specific local revolt, but is forced to think of the movement as a whole. Each narrative strand begins with the defeat of a revolt, with the end, so to speak. Almost immediately thereafter however, the second phase begins: the struggle of the revolutionaries to carry on in Germany, Hungary, Poland, the Soviet Union, China, or Bulgaria. The Hungarian revolt is typical for this pattern. The book starts with the defeat of the Räte-government and
the assertion "Alles war zu Ende" (p. 1). However the action immediately moves to the resumption of revolt elsewhere. As Schneider says, "'Alles war zu Ende.' Aber woanders fängt es mit frischer Kraft wieder an-- das ist die Botschaft des Buches."19 This alternation of defeat and renewed revolt is a rhythm carried on throughout the book, and the spontaneous emergence of new fighters for the cause indicates that an undercurrent of revolution constantly wells up to bend history for its own purposes. The realization of the end goal-- successful international revolution is not shown in Die Gefährten, however, because at the time the work was written communist governments had not taken over the countries concerned. The most Seghers could do at that time was to show the hope for their future victory.

Successful revolution, according to Seghers, depends upon the cooperation of all those who desire it, as well as upon correct historical timing. For her, working together for change does not occur so much in the formal framework of a party apparatus but rather, in the instinctive banding together of the proletariat, and Batt notes correctly: "Weil die proletarische Weltbewegung in diesem Buch organisatorisch und institutionell nicht fixiert wird, vielmehr durch eine rational nicht erklärbare Kraft wirkt, erscheint sie nicht nur als Mass und Ziel, sondern als ein metaphysischer Wert."20 The characters in the novel
approach communism in a subjective way reminiscent of the author's own. Repeatedly and without the aid of political indoctrination, characters decide to work for the cause.

This subjective and basically unpolitical relationship between individual and idea is found not just in Die Gefährten but in all of Seghers' later works. The short story collection, Die Linie, offers particularly good examples of such a relationship. In these stories lesser party officials, cut off from the higher committee, make decisions which later turn out to be "right" in accordance with the party line. In Die Gefährten, instinct leads the individual to join the proletarian movement, and this decision is the first step in changing historical process. Lamberechts says: "...diese den Menschen gebotene Aussicht, die Gesellschaft zu ändern, beruht an erster Stelle auf der positiven Entscheidung des Einzelnen, die sich überall und unabhängig der jeweiligen Ordnung und des zeitgebundenen Erfolgs wiederholen kann, ja, nach Seghers, wiederholen wird." The success of the revolution is dependent upon the readiness of people to sacrifice for it.

Die Gefährten was written to show the reader the correct decision for communism. Each character illustrates a particular way in which the individual can relate to the proletarian movement. They fall into two easily discernible groups; the first group of characters, those who are oriented toward the present and their own private pursuits,
are presented as shortsighted and opportunistic; and they end in loneliness, frustration, and despair. The others look to the future and the communist state. Though the future-oriented are persecuted, Seghers makes clear that their attitude is correct: they have the security of the group, and the knowledge that what they fight for will survive, even if they should be killed. Haas likens the characters' decision to work for the communist cause to a religious conversion, "...eine den Menschen total erfassende Veränderung," in which the person's old life is set aside and a new "genuine" one begins. Once this decision or "conversion" takes place, Seghers considers any subsequent backsliding in revolutionary work a breach or morality.

Three characters in Die Gefährten, who are contrasted with the politically-minded majority, abandon the party to lead private lives. They fail to adjust to a new life, and although it is difficult to tell from the work whether Seghers attributes their rejection of the party to a moral and psychological breakdown, or the breakdown to the rejection of the party, the message is clear enough: life outside the movement is impossible. At the time she wrote the novel Seghers felt communism was urgently needed, and she took seriously Becher's admonition to the BPRS that Europe's alternatives were "...Untergang in die Barbarei oder Befreiung der schaffenden Menschen durch den Sozialismus, Diktatur des Proletariats oder Faschismus...."
Dr. Steiner tries to forget about his former work in the party and start a new life. A Hungarian university professor, he safely escapes to Germany after the collapse of the Hungarian Räterepublik and almost immediately he forgets his former duties. In Germany he avoids contacts with old political associates out of fear that such interaction might jeopardize his new teaching career. Steiner ends in isolation and defeat, and the consequences of a "wasted" and private life outside the revolutionary movement are brought home in an imaginary scene set in the future. It begins "eines Abends nach vielen Jahren wird Steiner in seinem Arbeitszimmer in der kleinen Universitätsstadt, in der er sich festgesetzt hat...hinter seinem Schreibtisch immer ruhiger werden" (p. 278). The author describes how the professor will go to the train station to escape from his existence to a more "meaningful" life. He will be unable to board the train and it will leave without him. Steiner "wird wie verzweifelt wie am Rande eines Abgrunds stehen bleiben. So gross wird seine Verzweiflung sein--er könnte sie nicht ertragen, wenn seine MÜdigkeit nicht grösser wäre" (p. 280). Steiner will continue to exist as a lonely university professor; from the perspective of the party his life is directionless.

Faludi's course also leads to despair and frustration. A former officer in the Hungarian Bolshevist Army, he does not adjust well to its peacetime work: "Er war immer
gewohnt, im Brennpunkt zu stehen, in einer Arbeit, wo es scharf auf scharf ging, auf Tod und Leben. Wo der Mensch ganz deutlich gesehen wird. Wenn die Lage nicht danach war, wenn es keine solchen Aktionen gab, dann versuchte er, sie herbeizuführen" (p. 203). Like Hull in Aufstand, Faludi regards revolution as an extension of his ego. In the earlier work Seghers had shown that Hull's attitude is not conducive to successful revolt, and she is equally critical of Faludi, since he fails in his personal life as a result of not adapting to his given role in the party. At the end he is "mit sich und der Welt zerfallen", and his failure demonstrates that the individual must follow the party's direction.

Bató, another Hungarian refugee, also drifts away from the movement into an aimless existence. He first goes to Moscow, then to Berlin to work on a party newspaper. In the beginning a mass demonstration in Moscow imbues him with revolutionary fervor, but later his enthusiasm wanes in his day-to-day tasks. He lets his family ties interfere with his work and, frustrated with his lot, he concludes "Seit ich von Wien fort bin, sind meine Freunde von mir abgebröckelt. Meine Familie ist nur eine Zufallsfamilie. Meine Stelle ist nur eine Zufallsstelle. In der deutschen Partei habe ich keine Arbeit. Meine Kraft hat wohl bloss ausgelangt, mich vom Alten loszureissen, nicht im Neuen einzuwurzeln" (p. 161). At the end Bató
PLEASE NOTE:

This page not included in material received from the Graduate School. Filmed as received.

UNIVERSITY MICROFILMS
is still in limbo, ineffective at his job and unsatisfied with his life. As in Faludi's case, no middle ground exists between active participation and frustration, between solidarity and isolation.

All aspects of the characters' lives are directed toward communism. When she wrote Die Gefährten, Seghers felt that man's only chance for survival was through political means and that his private life necessarily must be sacrificed. Here family ties and friendships exist only to pass on political information or transmit the revolutionary spirit. The revolutionary is considered the ideal hero in the book, for he is the selfless individual whose knowledge and skills will help mankind.

The revolutionaries of Die Gefährten are the heirs of the earlier characters in Seghers' works who long for "something different". Now this longing is translated into a work ethic for the party. Pali devotes his entire life to politics; home and comfort he finds wherever he can: "Pali versuchte an sein eigenes Daheim zu denken, an den zehnten Bezirk. Aber sein Herz zog sich nicht einmal zusammen, als ob es dieses verlernt hätte. Er war zufrieden mit diesem Abend. Ein anständiger Genosse, eine Unterkunft, eine Decke" (p. 239). Pali is contrasted with Bordoni, who is hindered by his family ties from taking part in strike work. Bordoni thinks of home as "fauler Brei aus Frau, Hausrat, und Kindern..." (p. 141). But later on,
after being thrown out of Italy and France for his illegal activities, Bordoni leaves his family to go to Moscow. His wife does not object to his leaving, since she also now feels his work is important. Her change from resentment and skepticism about her husband's union work to supporting it is unmotivated. In the beginning she regards Pali's entrance into their lives as an intrusion: "...dieses Gesicht reisst in mein Zimmer ein Loch, das kann man nie mehr zunahen. Durch dieses Loch wird viel von aussen einkommen" (p. 121). When the family is forced to leave France, she blames Pali: "Pali hatte an allem schuld, an der Partei, an dem Herumgeziehe, an ihrem Mann, an allem" (p. 261). But later she shows curiosity about their new life: "Auf einmal sagte die Frau mit neuer, harter, ganz veränderter Stimme: 'Wohin fahren wir eigentlich?' Der Mann sah sie schnell an, ihr Gesicht war wie die Stimme: neu und hart" (p. 263). The most important thing is to impress upon the reader the fact that Katherina has changed her thinking; her development as a character is inconsequential.

Böhm, a Hungarian revolutionary living in Austria, completely turns his back on his father because of his party work. When the old man enters his room in Vienna Böhm does not even greet him, but dismisses him curtly: "Hören Sie mal...lassen Sie mich in Frieden. Bekümmern Sie sich nicht mehr um mich. Fahren Sie nach Hause" (p. 125).
When questioned by his companion about the identity of the stranger, Böhm answers: "Mein Vater, den hab' ich rausgeworfen" (p. 125). Böhm's use of the formal "Sie" is proof of the complete breakdown of the relationship between father and son.

The most extreme example of the unimportance of human relationships in the face of revolutionary goals is the case of the Chinese work Liau-Yen-Kai, who turns his new-born son over to the communist state to be raised and used according to his abilities. He leaves the child behind without further ado and he thinks of the boy only once later on: "Er dachte an seinen Sohn. Gewiss war er gesund und stark. Er brauchte ihn ebenso wenig wie er ihn" (p. 242). As Albrecht notes, the collective hinted at in the title is suprapersonal and excludes family and close friends. Liau-Yen-Kai is the opposite of the mother in Mainz who sacrificed herself for the child: the Chinese worker of Die Gefährten sacrifices his child for his politics.

A teacher-pupil relationship, already found in the friendship between Hull and Andreas in Aufstand, is repeated in Die Gefährten. Again an older man inspires a younger, less experienced one, giving him knowledge and commitment, transmitted not through a formalized system, but through a subtle "telegraphing" of the message through three successive generations of revolutionaries. Seghers
frequently uses religious symbolism to convey the inexplicable process by which political zeal is handed from one person to another.26 Gestures from traditional Judeo-Christian ceremony are used in the two "blessing" scenes between Solonjenko and Janek, and Janek and Labiak.27 These scenes occur respectively at the end of the first and second parts of Die Gefährten; and their placement is symbolically significant, for it indicates that the idea transmitted lives on. In the first scene Janek, a young Polish worker just sentenced to four years in prison for passing out political leaflets, is placed in a cell with Solonjenko. The latter places his hands upon Janek's head and begins to instruct him on how to act during his imprisonment: "Du musst immer fragen, Janek, frage viel. Da lies was!... Wir werden dir jedes Wort erklären. Wenn du nach vier Jahren herauskommst, willst du noch weiterarbeiten, verstehen, was vor geht" (p. 143). Janek begins to read and school himself politically while in prison. Solonjenko's words have opened his horizon—until then he had only blindly followed his brother Wladek—and they have released him psychologically from the narrow confines of the cell as well: "Es war ihm zumute, als hätte er bis jetzt in der Dumpfheit und Enge einer Zelle gesessen, und Solonjenko hätte sie mit einer Faust entzweigeschlagen, und Luft und Helligkeit drangen von aussen ein" (p. 144). Solonjenko has changed Janek's consciousness somehow, but
no rational explanation can be found which fully explains the manner in which he has affected the younger man. As Haas points out, one can only say that the power comes to Janek, distinguishing him from the other non-political prisoners, and that his new strength derives from kinship with the ideological community. The religious gesture underscores the irrationality of this relationship.

Janek heeds well Solonjenko's admonitions, and at the end of the work he takes over the role of teacher in a scene almost identical with the first. After many hard years as a revolutionary, Janek is again thrown into prison. This time he is the one to spark hope in a younger comrade, Labiak, who, depressed over his sentence, envies Janek's composure: "Labiak betrachtete und betrachtete ihn, als wollte er entdecken, an welcher Stelle Janeks Kraft sass" (p. 308). Janek notices the young man's distress and repeats the same "blessing" gesture that Solonjenko had made years earlier: "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 auf seinem Kopf lag" (p. 308). The laying on of hands brings to mind several religious ceremonial gestures: the Old Testament blessing of a child about to go into the world by the father, the healing of the afflicted through God's help, and the New Testament baptism into the community of
believers. Labiak's changing from doubt and despair to confidence and hope is shown through religious symbolism because the transformation has no completely rational basis and because the community into which Labiak is "baptized" is founded on belief and faith rather than on science. The repetition of the scene shows that Janek "kept faith" with the movement after his "conversion" and implies that others will continue to be inspired, just as Janek and Labiak are.

For Janek and Labiak the cost of building a new social system is imprisonment; for others it is death. The work begins with an account of the many who died for the Räterepublik in Hungary and then flashes back to the death of one farmer, Sebbő, at the hands of the counter-revolutionary army. One of the lieutenants beats Sebbő to make him talk, but the man does not yield: "Sebő's Gesicht, von der Braue bis zum Mundwinkel, lief sofort blau an, ohne seinen Ausdruck finsterer Ruhe zu verändern" (p. 101). Even in death he seems steadfastly to maintain his composure: "Sebő nach der Seite gedrehtes Gesicht...auf der Erde war unverändert, ruhig und finster" (p. 102). Sebő's fortitude in the face of torture stems from a future orientation which discounts the struggle of the present.

A similar scene also attest to another revolutionary's strong belief in his cause. The Bulgarian farmer Stojanoff
is also surprised, captured, and tortured to death by soldiers. When his small son asks the mother how the father died, she replies: "...er starb froh, in voll-kommener und gewisser Hoffnung" (p. 288). Her words are reminiscent of Biblical formulations about the life of the world to come; the reader raised in a religious tradition applies the Judeo-Christian concept of a new world to Stojanoff's fervently desired communist state. Seghers consciously uses religious allusions to make the reader ponder whether communism would bring about a sort of earthly paradise.

The revolutionary leader in Die Gefährten believes deeply in the communist cause of course and in the wisdom of the party. He derives his legitimacy from the organization, but his tie with it is emotional rather than political. The Bulgarian party representative Michael Dudoff has a gift for inspiring others not only to join the local political strikes and demonstrations, but to remain faithful to their ideals. Dudoff's acuity and talent for leadership are seen through the eyes of Dimoff, another Bulgarian worker: "Ein einziges Mal hatte er [Dudoff] gehört, am Ausgangspunkt seines jetzigen Lebens...; damals hatte er zuerst eine klare, eindeutige Antwort auf alle Fragen bekommen, sogar auf solche, die in seiner Armut an Brot und Worten noch gar nicht gestellt hatte. Er wünschte sich, Dudoff zu hören, ja, sehnte sich
Danach, in seinem finsteren, von Verfolgungen und Drohungen eingeschnürten Herzen" (p. 265). Dimoff joins the party as a result of Dudoff's charismatic powers of persuasion: "Dann war Dudoff heraufgekommen, er hatte die Partei in ihrer Stärke vor ihn hingestellt, in der nur eine Lücke war, wo etwas Wichtiges fehlte: er selbst" (p. 269). Dimoff feels himself "called" to the party very much the way the disciples were to Christ's kingdom.

Dudoff's escape from prison and his subsequent capture and death are viewed as near legend by his followers. His escape is rumored about before its actual occurrence, and Stojanoff dies with a sense of triumph, thinking Dudoff to be free: "'Sucht ihr Dudoff? Dudoff ist euch durch! Dudoff geflohen. Das ist ein grosses Glück für mich!' Er lachte und schlug mit Armen und Beinen um sich, und es war, als spüre er vor Freude nichts von seinem eigenen Tod" (p. 230). Dudoff is honored among the woodcutters he has organized and during the manhunt he is sheltered by them. Their solidarity protects him and he is able to escape. One of the men recalls: "In Marjakoy hat ihn niemand verraten. Wer wird denn sein eigen [sic] Fleisch und Blut verraten. Mein Mund soll Dreck fressen, wenn ich lüge. Wenn einer gejagt werden soll, mein Sohn oder Dudoff, ich würde den Sohn drangeben" (p. 170). Dudoff is respected by the people for his position in the party, and his personal magnetism also makes him their
leader. He is able to inspire trust even in those who normally stand on the periphery: "Man kann sogar sagen, dass er aufgehoben bei denen ist, die sonst der Partei den Hintern hinstrecken und von nichts gehört haben und nichts hören wollen. Das haben sie doch gehört und begriffen in ihren Nussköpfen, dass das, was Dudoff getan hat, auf sie gegangen ist" (p. 265).

Dudoff's persecution and eventual death show similarities with the story of Christ. An anecdote is recounted about his sudden appearance at the hut of a blacksmith, who saws off an iron rod which binds the escaped prisoner's hands. Dudoff asks the man if he knows who he is, but the man does not recognize him. Nevertheless, he helps him, accepts the iron rod as payment, and says he will lay it under the threshold so that anyone going or coming must cross it. Then the two sit down to a meal. The narrator of the anecdote finishes by attesting to its truth: "Ich bin selbst diesen Sommer über seine Schwelle gegangen" (p. 199). Haas rightly sees in this anecdote a recognition ritual similar to Christ's questions to the disciples, a reminder of the Last Supper, and the leaving behind of a relic as proof of his presence for unbelievers. The parallel to Christ can be seen perhaps most clearly at Dudoff's death. He has been hanged along with several other local party leaders, and activity in the city has been halted because the soldiers
have ordered the gates closed. A period of waiting ensues outside the walls; the farmers sit around in a tavern and discuss the hanging. One of them relates a rumor: the story has been told that late on the same evening as the hanging the guard saw someone slip through the watch; he followed the man curiously and saw him tacking placards around the town. Still puzzled, the guard continued to trail him until he reached the gallows. With a shock the watchman realized that the fourth place was empty. Thereupon the elusive figure climbed up, put his head in the noose, and hung there again.

Dudoff's death is not that of an ordinary individual and has been apotheosized with religious symbolism. In the tale told about him he is "resurrected" not in a physical sense to be sure, but in the realm of legend. The rumor that his work continues inspires others, and the religious symbolism adds to the mystique of his character. Dudoff has been elevated to a legendary figure through his association with Christ, and through him the revolution is "ein nicht mehr nur nach historischen Gesichtspunkten messbaren, sondern ein über das Rationale hinausreichenden Phänomens."³²

In Die Gefährten the revolution has a moral value, and heroism or cowardice are judged accordingly. The revolutionaries are positive heroes who are supposed to be models for the reader, whom the author views as a
potential revolutionary. The reader is not to identify with individual characters, however, but with all of them as a group. The characters are conceived of as a mass; and in this orientation Seghers followed the demand of the BPRS that writers of proletarian literature depict "das Proletariat als kollektive Einheit, als Masse...mit bewusster Zurückstellung stark individualistischer Zeichnung der Einzelperson." The mass is emphasized because marxism holds that the individual is incapable of acting on his own and that only through his role in his class is he able to develop himself and become an exemplary figure. Seghers shows the futility of action outside the mainstream of the proletariat in the frustration and aimlessness of Steiner, Faludi, and Bató. She feels that a person can be heroic only within the collective. Solidarity with others of the class gives one a sense of who one is and at the same time instills him with a historical and moral purpose which in turn contributes to progress.

Identification with the movement gives the revolutionaries of Die Gefährten strength in the face of adversity. They are long-suffering, enduring, and tough. One of the guards in Janek's prison comments about the hunger strike of the political prisoners: "Zäh sind diese Politischen, die geben nicht bei, sie kauen Eisen" (p. 186). Hope and inner fortitude are recognizable by light
metaphors; a glow of conviction gleams in the revolutionaries' eyes like the nimbus around the saints. In the Sophia prison a cellmate sees this light in Dudoff's eyes: "Nikoloff konnte sein Gesicht nicht erkennen, es war vollkommen dunkel. Er wunderte sich, woher trotzdem die hellen Punkte in diese Augen kamen. In der vollkommenen Finsternis hatte keins [sic] Lichter ausser des anderen Augen" (p. 200). Nikoloff's perception of the light in Dudoff's eyes despite the total darkness—Seghers emphasizes this blackness twice—proves that the members of the revolutionary community are recognizable to each other by instinct or some other inexplicable mystical means. Light imagery also occurs frequently in torture scenes when the victim "looks" beyond the moment into a new world: "In der ganz vollkommenen Finsternis der Welt gab es zwei winzige Ritzen, durch die ein unerträglich leuchtendes Licht glänzte: Stojanoffs Augenspalten" (p. 228). The comrades of Die Gefährten may fit Becher's description of the proletarian hero who is a "realitätsgerechter, Ich-starker, allzeit vorbildlich arbeitender Genosse...der in fester Zuversicht auf die kommende Revolution hinter offensichtlichen Niederlagen die künftigen Siege erblickt." But Seghers expresses this "realism" symbolically. She feels the responsibility to convince her reader of his role in history. For her, literature is part of the social process, and in it author and reader work together: "Der
Autor und Leser sind im Bunde: sie versuchen zusammen auf die Wahrheit zu kommen." A sense of purpose has remained with her throughout her entire career, for similar statements occur often in her speeches. One made in 1950 sums up her attitude: "Die Verantwortung des Schriftstellers ist eine ungeheur grosse Verantwortung.... Jeder Schriftsteller muss sich bewusst sein, dass die Fähigkeit nicht ihm gehört. Sie ist nicht sein Privatbesitz, sondern sie ist eine Fähigkeit, die...seinem Volk gehört." The feeling of responsibility, coupled with Seghers' belief in the power of literature to convince the reader and to alter his life are the driving forces behind her writing. Her wish to include the reader in the revolutionary proletariat can be found in the foreword to the second edition Die Gefährten: "Vielleicht werden all diese jungen Menschen, die sich treue 'Gefährten' sind, ohne einander zu kennen, auch den Lesern des Buches zu treuen Gefährten" (p. 95).

The effort to show the characters of the novel as members of a supra-community robs the figures of their individuality and above all of their humanity. One critic has commented that many of Seghers' characters in her GDR novels are easily confused with one another, and such is also the case with Die Gefährten. One only needs to compare this work with "Grubetsch" to realize the loss of psychological detail which has come about with the
increased emphasis on the political. The characters are a faceless blur; they give up their present humanity for the abstract hope of a future society.
Notes

1 Sembdner, Kleist-Preis, p. 105.
3 Batt, Seghers, p. 181.
4 Albrecht, Seghers, p. 216.
5 Batt, Seghers, p. 55.
7 Albrecht, Seghers, p. 216.
9 Seghers, "Vaterlandsliebe," Kunstwerk, I, p. 65.
10 Seghers, "Georg Lukács," Kunstwerk, III, p. 163.
12 Schneider, "Seghers," p. 112.
15 Diersen, Seghers-Studien, p. 121.
16 Albrecht, Seghers, p. 192.
Diersen notes in her Seghers-Studien that Die Gefährten appears in the Gesammelte Werke in Einzel- ausgaben without a genre description. p. 117. See also footnote, 16, p. 329.

20 Batt, Seghers, p. 76.
23 Batt, Seghers, p. 68.
24 Albrecht, Seghers, pp. 209-10.
25 Albrecht, Seghers, p. 219.
26 Haas, Ideologie, p. 181.
27 Reich-Ranicki refers to Solonjenko's and Janek's placing of hands as "die segnende, alt-testamentarisch anmutende Geste mit der die kommunistischen Revolutionsäre ihre geheimnisvolle Kraft in der Gefängniszelle auf die Vertreter der nächsten Generation übertragen, weist eher auf religiöse und mystische als auf marxistische Vorstellungen der Autorin hin." Reich-Ranicki in his "Die kommunistische Erzählerin Anna Seghers."
28 Haas, Ideologie, p. 181.
29 Haas, Ideologie, p. 184.
30 Haas, Ideologie, p. 119.
31 Haas, Ideologie, p. 123.
32 Haas, Ideologie, p. 127.
33 Gallas, Literaturtheorie, p. 88.
34 Gallas, Literaturtheorie, p. 88.
35 Haas, Ideologie, p. 201.
36 Franz Trommler, Sozialistische Literatur in Deutschland (Stuttgart: Kröner, 1976), p. 490.


40 Trommler, Sozialistische Literatur, p. 487.
Chapter 6
A Look Beyond: Exile and Return

The international dictatorship of the proletariat hoped for in Die Gefährten was to remain only a dream; by 1932 Fascist governments in Europe had put an end to the possibility of a widespread revolution. In Germany the KPD and the SPD were not able to unite against the NSDAP, and soon members of the KPD were forced to go underground. On the 16th of May, 1933, Anna Seghers' name appeared on a list of banned authors in the Börsenblatt für den deutschen Buchhandel; she had already been arrested once but was later released, and she was still under constant surveillance.¹ There seemed no other choice but to flee, and so Seghers and her family left for France.

Most critics agree that exile in 1933 marked the end of a development in Seghers' writing. This chapter takes a brief look at two subsequent phases in Seghers' life and writing. The first period is from 1933 until 1947, when Seghers lived in France and Mexico and wrote anti-Nazi literature; the second period is from 1947 until the present. In 1947 Seghers returned to the Soviet-controlled section of Germany and not to her native city of Mainz.
She began writing works supporting the new German Democratic Republic, for she regards this state as the true representative of the working class.

After leaving Germany Seghers and her family were able to find a place to live outside of Paris. Almost immediately she began to work with anti-Fascist groups. In the first year of exile she helped reestablish the Schutzverband Deutscher Schriftsteller which had been abolished in Germany, and she edited the Prague-based periodical *Neue Deutsche Blätter* (1933-35) which published works and articles by anti-Nazi writers. The other editors too, Wieland Herzfelde, Oskar Maria Graf, and Jan Petersen (a pseudonym for Hans Schwalm, who was still underground in Berlin) had been active in the proletarian movement before 1933.

Seghers spoke out against the Nazi regime in Germany at two writers' conferences. In 1935 she gave a speech at the "I. Internationaler Schriftstellerkongress zur Verteidigung der Kultur" before some of the best-known liberal contemporary writers such as Thomas and Heinrich Mann, Henri Barbusse, Maxim Gorki, and Aldous Huxley, who wished to make literature a means of defeating the Nazis. In her address, "Vaterlandsliebe," Seghers calls for cooperation among those assembled. She asks them to think of the true meaning of patriotism and to disregard the emotional overtones which can be misused easily and
had been so in the past by the ruling classes. Patriotism is deceptive in that it seems to be what the people want, she says, but in the last analysis it leads to war. It is especially appealing to the masses since rallying around a common cause seems to dissolve class differences. The community of the people is an illusion however: "...im Frieden gab es keine Gleichheit, jetzt gibt es mächtige, betrügerische Verlockung, die Gleichheit vor dem Tod." True nationalism does not lead to war, but is the unity of the people through a common language, through the daily work process, and through the landscape of the country. In conclusion she asks the writers to create new homelands where there would be true communities.

In 1937 Seghers again noted the written word's power to combat Fascism in a speech given at the "II. Internationaler Schriftstellerkongress" which met in Madrid, Valencia, Barcelona, and Paris: "Das in die Massen getragene Wort hat seinen Sinn wiedererlangt. Das, worüber wir in der letzten Zeit geschrieben haben, wurde nicht nur vor Augen gestellt und wiederholt, sondern unter opferischen Kämpfen blutig ins Leben gesetzt." Seghers agreed with Heinrich Mann who felt that literature of the exiled writers should be the "Stimme ihres stummgewordenen Volkes." Solidarity with other anti-Fascist writers gave Seghers the secure basis from which to write: "Dieser Solidaritätsbewegung, die vom sozialistischen Kern der
Emigranten ausging, durfte es vor allem zuzuschreiben sein, dass das aufgezwungene Exil nicht resignierend als Fluch akzeptiert, sondern als politische Aufgabe... begriffen wurde... und Anna Seghers während der sieben Jahre ihres Frankreichaufenthalts neben einer Reihe von Erzählungen und Aufsätzen vier Romane vollendete."  

Just as Seghers had devoted most of her writing before 1933 to the cause of the international proletarian revolution, she now expended most of her energy on the defeat of Fascism in her homeland: "Waren Anna Seghers' Werke vor 1933 auf Internationalismus und inner-proletarischen Fragen orientiert, so gewinnen nun nationale Grundprobleme an Bedeutung. Wie Becher oder Brecht scheint auch sie erst in den Schlufwinkein der Fremde deutscher Geschichte, deutscher Kultur und deutscher Landschaft innezuwerden. Die Besinnung auf Nationales wurde nicht allein durch den Verlust der Heimat veranlasst, sondern nicht minder durch den politischen Auftrag, an ihrer Befreiung von der faschistischen Zwangsherrschaft mitzuwirken."  

Seghers sees in Fascism a political system which promises the German people their "rightful" place in history as leaders of other nations and a sense of solidarity within their own land. Her views of Nazism are formulated most clearly in a speech given before other Communist writers of the Heine-Club in Mexico in 1941. In this speech she reiterated ideas expressed in
"Vaterlandsliebe": Fascism is a perverted form of nationalism; in order to eradicate Nazi beliefs the two must be distinguished from one another. There are four main points in "Deutschland und Wir": first, the social and national history of Germany have never been identical. The spirit of nationalism in the German lower classes has always been misused by the rulers and Nazism has also gained hold through such abuse. Second, many outsiders falsely assume that the National Socialists and the German people are synonymous: "Für sie ist die Geschichte eine Einheit, die Geschichte ist starr, die Bartolomäusnächte der Völker haben kein [sic] Morgen, die Grundeigenschaften des Volkes stehen fest, unveränderbar, rassenmässig." For many Germans too the Fascists and the people are one; and even for those who do not fully accept to this view, Hitler's nationalism has an appeal, for it gives them a false sense of importance: "Sie fühlten sich als Sieger, sie die daheim nicht in den kleinsten Lohnkampf gesiegt hatten; sie fühlten sich als Herrscher von Ländern, sie, die daheim kaum Zweikuhbauern waren. Sie, die daheim armelig eng unverwertet dahingelebt hatten, wurden plötzlich dringend gebraucht mit Leib und Seele...." The genuine patriots are those who have fought for social justice. Seghers exhorts her listeners not to allow the Fascist interpretation of history to stand; she appeals to her audience to remember that the "real" Germany is the
total of the language, the culture, and the landscape which has been the setting of the country's history:

"All das zusammen ist Deutschland, andre Einheit von Volk und Land, von Volk und Geschichte, als der Faschismus sie darstellt, doch eine unzertrennbare Einheit aus der man nichts herausnehmen kann: um es allein zu lieben, Musik oder Sprache oder Landschaft, weil eins durch das andre bedingt und geworden ist."

Her fourth point concerns the role of the German writer in the rebuilding of his homeland. She feels that Germany can be restored only through a change of consciousness which the writer could bring about: "...durch den Glauben und durch das Wissen von der Veränderung der Gesellschaft und des einzelnen Menschen." Finally she expresses the hope that the defeat of Fascism will bring with it a new society: "Die Entfachisierung Deutschlands wird seinem Volk, die eigne [sic] Geschichte Überwindend, die Einheit des sozialen und nationalen Bewusstseins [Seghers' stress] bringen, die Grundlage seiner neuen Kultur."

Seghers' novels written between 1933 and 1947 have as their theme the rise of Fascism in Germany and its effect upon the nation and the individual. The first one to treat the theme is Der Kopflohn: Roman aus einem deutschen Dorf im Spätsommer 1932. The season of the subtitle is symbolic and applies to the political situation during the end of the Weimar Republic, when Nazism was beginning to
take hold in Germany, and the economic and social climate had begun to change. Seghers shows the rise of Fascism in the microcosm of a German village somewhere in Rhine-Hessia. The reduced scope, already used in "Grubetsch" and Der Aufstand, allows the author to examine the effect of the political situation upon the individual and give a "psychogram" of the villagers. In this way the reader reflects upon the close relationship between the political situation and the individual. The action is confined to the village, but is triggered from the outside: the people's lives are changed by the arrival of Johann Schulz, a young worker with some socialist ties. He is wanted for the death of a policeman during a demonstration and hides with his mother's relatives in the village.

Der Kopfloh from is not the story of Johann Schulz so much as of the farmers with whom he finds refuge. Like the fishermen of Der Aufstand, they are bound by a sense of solidarity which arises from suffering under a common misery of subsistence living. This solidarity works to the good of Schulz, for even though a substantial reward has been offered for his return, none of the farmers betrays him. He is given shelter because of their spite against the authorities, primitive sense of class consciousness, and as their small countermeasure against the general frustration. One of the best examples of the unreflective thought process which saves Schulz is the farmer Algeier's
reasoning: he decides not to reveal his presence in order to spite Merz, one of the richer farmers: "Algeier hatte nichts übrig für die Roten. Er hatte für niemand was übrig.... Eins aber war sicher, dass dem alten Merz alles Rote mehr zuwider war als Pest und Cholera. Er würde sich einen Mordspass draus machen, diesen Jungen durch das Dorf Spießbruten laufen zu lassen" (p. 69). The unconsciousness of Algeier's decision, and his inability to articulate it even to himself can be seen in his resolution not to tell anyone about Schulz: "Das würde euch so passen" (p. 70) and the narrator's comment "Er wusste nicht genau, wen er mit euch meinte" (p. 70).

Not all villagers are like Algeier, who feels some frustration with the social situation but does little to alter it. Some turn their anger at being oppressed into oppression of others, and the Nazis are quick to take advantage of their desire. A good example is Zillich, a figure who also appears in Das Siebte Kreuz and in the short story "Das Ende" (1946). He is a brutal farmer of limited intelligence who feels himself victimized by his circumstances and takes it out on others. He falls easy prey to the local Nazis; in Zillich Seghers shows the type of mentality to which the violence of the NSDAP appeals. When the local party catches Schulz, Zillich begins to beat him: "Sein Gesicht brannte, als hätte er endlich den Feind entdeckt, der sein Elend verschuldetete" (p. 178).
Zillich is typical of all the farmers, for they all join in: "Nun begriffen all Männer, dass nicht nur Zillich das Recht zum Schlagen hatte, sondern jeder gab aus seiner eigenen Verzweiflung einen Schlag bei" (p. 179).

As in the previous works Seghers gives the characters life as individuals but also shows them as typical members of their society. In Der Kopflohn also various figures show the possible reactions to the central issue of Fascism. There are those who, like Zillich, find an outlet for their need to control their lives in the power of the Nazis. Merz is an example of the opportunist who sees the ends and disregards the means: "...es ist besser, man ist dabei und kann den andern auf die Finger gucken," he says to his son (p. 141). Kösslin is typical of those who go along with the Nazis in order to have work: "Kösslin wäre auch mit dem Teufel gegangen, wenn er ihm erlaubt hätte, in der Hölle Holz zu hacken" (p. 52). At the same time however, Kösslin shows the beginning of an awakening consciousness when Schulz points out to him that his desire to work is being exploited by his Nazi employers. As is typical in Seghers' works, this altered attitude is projected outward and is noticeable in Kösslin's appearance: "[Kunkel] merkte nichts davon, das Kösslins Gesicht anders aussah, als es je, seit er es kannte, ausgesehen hatte" (p. 177).
Der Kopflohn pictures on a small scale the unequal struggle for power between Nazis and potential anti-Nazis during the early 1930's. The local Communist party is not able to gain support in the village and the number of people like Kösslin who question the basics of the Fascist movement is small. Even those who reject the local Nazi group do so out of a dull resistance which would hardly lend itself to organization. As with the fishermen, theirs is a passive stubbornness. In Der Kopflohn, the static situation in the beginning is little altered with the coming of the catalyst from outside. Schulz is turned over by the Nazis to the local authorities and since the consciousness of the people has been unchanged, it can be assumed that the Nazis continue to encroach upon the village government. Der Kopflohn occupies a position in Seghers' anti-Nazi novels similar to "Grubetsch" in the earlier ones: it is a "statement" of a hopeless situation.

The next novel also deals with the rise of Fascism in Germany. Die Rettung, published in 1937 by Querido Verlag in Holland, is also set in the Weimar Republic between 1929-1933, and shows how the economic crises of this period affect the lives and consciousness of miners in Upper Silesia. Seghers says of these people in the book's introduction: "Die Menschen sind Menschen der Krisenzeit, ihre Leiden sind Leiden der Krisenzeit, ihre
The book begins with an immediate crisis: a cave-in traps some miners seven hundred meters down. Their will to live is fired by Bentsch, a man respected by all, and after eight days they are finally rescued. This rescue remains in the mind of both the characters and the reader throughout the rest of the story.

Almost immediately after the miners are saved from physical catastrophe, they face a crisis of another kind: the mine is closed and for three years they are unemployed, a situation which was typical for much of Germany in the late 20's and early 30's. The novel focuses on the effects of unemployment on Bentsch; his daily routine is given in great detail: trips to the unemployment office, gatherings around his kitchen table by his fellow miners to while away the time, and the small, almost mindless tasks he sets himself to occupy his life.

Bentsch's political consciousness is also affected by his unemployment. At first he does not reflect upon the reasons for his situation; gradually however he comes to ponder on the political climate of his country, and in the end, joins a communist partisan group. His reasons for doing so are not entirely clear from the novel; the reader only hears that he is searching for a "Macht, die so gewaltig war wie seine Ohnmacht, nach einer Klarheit, so gross wie seine Verwirrung" (p. 191). For whatever the reasons
Bentsch has "saved" himself a second time, and will in turn perhaps save others.\textsuperscript{17}

Bentsch's decision to help his country however he can is important, since it shows that the potential for change is at least present in a society gradually being taken over by the Nazis. For Seghers the gesture has significance, since it shows that the historical process has not been arrested. In \textit{Die Rettung} though Seghers does not overestimate the potential for anti-Nazi resistance in Germany, unlike other communist authors of the time who depicted an extensive underground which has no basis in fact.\textsuperscript{18} In \textit{Die Rettung} as in Germany as a whole the majority of the people are politically neutral similar to Bentsch in the beginning, or are swayed by Fascist promises of work. The KPD and the SPD are not able to unite and present a common front in opposition to the National Socialists. \textit{Die Rettung} is a rather bleak but not entirely depressing picture of Germany at the time; the reader hopes that there will somehow be enough solid individuals like Bentsch, who can organize to save the country.

A year after the appearance of \textit{Die Rettung} Seghers began writing \textit{Das Siebte Kreuz}, the novel which was to become her best-known work.\textsuperscript{19} The first parts of the book were already published in 1939 in \textbf{Internationale Literatur}, a periodical appearing in the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{20} Before the entire book could be published however
several copies were lost in an air raid in France and the author herself had to burn a copy when the Nazis advanced into Paris. One copy sent to F.C. Weiskopf in America, however, arrived safely, and he had it published [in English] by Little, Brown. After Seghers landed in Mexico it was published there in German.

Seghers had gathered material about life in Nazi Germany from emigrants. The plot of a successful escape of a prisoner from a concentration camp was probably inspired by the feat of Hans Beimler. Most of the details of everyday life under Hitler came from the writer's own memories of Germany and accounts for the verisimilitude of the book. Stephan Hermlin, living in exile in Moscow when the chapters were published there stated that their effect upon the German emigrants was "stark, ja gewaltig gewesen, weil uns, die wir Deutschland vor nicht allzulanger Zeit verlassen hatten, die Heimat in ihrer Landschaft und ihren Menschen mit bestürzender Wahrhaftigkeit begegnete. Darüber hinaus war es die Echtheit der Umstände gewesen, unter deren Bestimmung unsere Landsleute umhergingen und handelten."  

In "Deutschland und Wir" Seghers asks: "Was ist Deutschland?" In Das Siebte Kreuz she answers: Germany is a unity of landscape, culture, history, and above all people, which is different from the one claimed by the Fascist histories: she seeks to "rescue" this country
from the Nazis: "Nicht unser Land ist wild und barbarisch, wild und barbarisch in unserem Land ist nur der Faschismus. . . ." In uncovering this "other" Germany she wishes to make her reader see the potential society which is worth preserving. The reader's changed consciousness is the first step in creating a new Germany: "Der Prozess der Entfaschisierung des deutschen Volkes wird...durch den Glauben und durch das Wissen von der Veränderung der Gesellschaft und des einzelnen Menschen [gehen]. An diesem Prozess wird jeder deutsche Antifaschist mithelfen. Denn nur dann ist er es wirklich."  

The novel engenders hope in the reader that the Nazis will not hold power forever, and that their ability to terrorize will come to an end. The Germans as individuals and as a collective are the key; their endurance and belief will spell the end to Fascism. A statement by an unknown prisoner in the concentration camp could stand as a motto for the novel: "Wir fühlten alle, wie tief und furchtbar die Äusseren Mächte in den Menschen hineingreifien können bis in sein Innerstes, aber wir fühlten auch, dass es etwas im Innersten gab, was unangreifbar war und unverletzbar" (p. 368).

Seven prisoners escape from the concentration camp at Westhofen. One is recaptured on each of the six days after the breakout and nailed to crosses by the sadistic commander Fahrenberg; the seventh cross remains empty
however: Georg Heisler escapes to Holland through a combination of luck, wit, courage, and most of all, the help of those he meets along his way through the Rhineland. Heisler's success exposes the cracks in the seeming monolith of Nazi power.

Heisler's feat gives hope to the prisoners remaining behind in the camp: "Ein kleiner Triumph gewiss, gemessen an unserer Ohnmacht, an unseren Sträflingskleidern. Und doch ein Triumph, der einen die eigenen Kraft plötzlich fühlen liess nach wer weiss wie langer Zeit, jene Kraft, die lange genug taxiert worden war, sogar von uns selbst, als sei sie bloss eine der vielen gewöhnlichen Kräfte der Erde, die man nach Massen und Zahlen abtaxiert, wo sie doch die einzige Kraft ist, die plötzlich ins Masslose wachsen kann, ins Unberechenbare" (p. 7). Heisler's breakout also plants the idea in the minds of those outside that the Nazis are not almighty. This small event is seen in a larger perspective by his friend Hermann: "Man muss nachdenken...eine gelungene Flucht ist immer etwas" (p. 56).

Heisler's flight is established already in the beginning of the first chapter as a significant act and the reader is led to follow Heisler's course and see why he is successful by knowing the outcome in advance. The novel presents two narrative stances: one of a week after the outbreak, when it is finally established that Heisler is completely free, and an even later one set in a vague
future. The narrator, one of the prisoners, speaks of "noch heute" and "später" (p. 7) and the trials that were before them, and although it is not clear whether this future is a time when Germany is no longer under Nazi rule, the possibility at least is left open. After the brief introduction which establishes Heisler's escape as successful, the narrator reconstructs the events of that week. The reader is asked to follow him but at the same time is reminded that what happens has bearing on himself and the community: "Jetzt sind wir hier. Was jetzt geschieht, geschieht uns" (p. 9).

The action of the novel is placed in a historical perspective. Before Heisler even appears, the history of the Rhineland is presented in a panorama of the rise and fall of empires, viewed from the imagination of Ernst the shepherd gazing at the river. The conquerers come and go, but the land remains the same: "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" (p. 11).

The seven days following the prisoner's escape are narrated from many different perspectives; the same time period is "criss-crossed" with the stories of a substantial cast of characters.26 Because the short scenes are either parallel to or in contrast with the main thread of the plot which follows Heisler, the novel is easier to follow
than *Die Gefährten*, where the montage threatens to fall apart for lack of a central focus. In *Das Siebte Kreuz* one thread of the plot concerns Heisler's friends' efforts to help him; another subplot which shows the quiet life of a farm belonging to his friend Franz Marnet is a thematic contrast to the main plot. The farm is a kind of *locus amoenus* in which life follows the rhythms of nature.\(^\text{27}\) This "paradise" is the antithesis of the "hell" of Westhofen where a dehumanized political system threatens to destroy the prisoners.\(^\text{28}\)

Heisler stands midway between this "heaven" and "hell," for by virtue of his endangered status he cannot enjoy life as Marnet does, but unlike the prisoners left behind, he at least has a chance to live and determine his fate. His rescue is due to a complex number of factors none of which can be completely separated from one another. He survives by his cunning and also by disappearing into normal life. In contrast to *Die Gefährten*, where daily life is negative, everyday existence is seen here as a source of strength and security. Earlier Heisler had despised the familiar; now he thinks about "Macht und Glanz des gewöhnlichen Lebens" (p. 49). Above all, Heisler escapes due to the help of the average German citizen. The complexity and the scope of this aid can be seen best perhaps in the thoughts of Fahrenberg when he admits to himself that Heisler is probably gone for good:
"Fahrenberg fühlte zum ersten Mal seit der Flucht, dass er nicht hinter einem Einzelnen her war, dessen Züge er kannte, dessen Kraft erschöpfbar war, sondern einer gesichtslosen, unabschätzbaren Macht" (p. 366). This power lies in each individual's willingness to risk himself and the plot is tightly constructed to show solidarity is imperative. Each act supports the house of cards: take away and the whole thing collapses.

The inner personal strength necessary for the survival of the collective is the theme of Transit (1944), Seghers' next novel. The work is narrated in the first person, a technique she used for the first time. A German living in Marseilles tells his story to an unknown listener while the two sit in a cafe overlooking the harbor. The impulse to relate the tale comes from hearing the news that the ship "Montreal," on which two of the narrator's friends sailed, had gone down somewhere between Dakar and Martinique. The narrator was supposed to have sailed with them but did not, despite the fact that he had a valid visa and ticket, something almost impossible to obtain in the last free port of Europe just before the outbreak of the Second World War. Why he was saved from destruction forms the basis of the narrative.

The narrator— he does not yet give himself a name— had escaped from a concentration camp in Germany in 1937, where he had been interred for striking an SA officer.
Like Heisler in *Das Siebte Kreuz*, he had managed to cross the Rhine, and came into a French work camp. From there he fled over the Loire before the invading Nazis. In Paris he runs into an acquaintance, Paul Strobel, who wants him to deliver a letter to a writer named Weidel. The narrator goes to his apartment and finds that the man has committed suicide. He has left a manuscript behind, which the narrator begins to read, and when the work breaks off unfinished, he is disappointed not to find out the fate of one character resembling himself. He feels abandoned by the author: "Mich überfiel von neuem die grenzenlose Trauer, die tödliche Langeweile. Warum hat er sich das Leben genommen? Er hätte mich nicht alleine lassen dürfen. Er hätte seine Geschichte zu Ende schreiben sollen. Ich hätte bis zum Morgengrauen lesen können. Er hätte noch weierschreiben sollen, zahllose Geschichten, die mich bewahrt hätten vor dem Übel" (p. 19). The narrator finds out afterward that Weidel killed himself because he was abandoned by all his friends and also his wife. The man reading his manuscript feels an affinity to him since he too is alone, but questions Weidel's solution to the problem of isolation.

The narrator takes Weidel's papers and manuscripts. Travelling under the alias of Seidler—the reader still does not know his real name—he reaches Marseilles. His reaction to seeing the city is like the stranger's in
"Auf dem Wege": "Ich glaubte beinahe, ich sei am Ziel. In dieser Stadt, glaubte ich, müsste endlich alles zu finden sein, was ich suchte, was ich immer gesucht hatte" (p. 28). His hope is only an illusion though, for he tells his listener: "Wie oft wird mich dieses Gefühl noch trügen bei dem Einzug in eine fremde Stadt" (p. 28). Seidler does not yet know that an individual must make his own life. Marseilles offers two very different possibilities from which Seidler must choose: it is on the one hand "die letzte Herberge in der Alten Welt" (p. 84) or on the other a jumping-off point from which the refugees can start another life in the new world. Marseilles is, so to speak, a "Nullpunkt" where the old life has not yet ended and the new has not yet begun and thus a place for the individual to assess his past and plan his future.

Into this city pour thousands of refugees whose one thought is to escape death and destruction and frantically build for the future elsewhere. Their already desperate situation is made almost intolerable by the bureaucratic tangle of passports, transit-visas, and tickets, one dependent upon the other. Seidler, now using Weidel's papers because of an administrative fluke, is removed from all the struggle, and obtains both visa and valid ticket to sail. However, he is indecisive whether to go or stay and through his reflection about the past the reader learns that he has not been committed to anything: "Ich hatte
als Kind die Mutter vergessen, wenn ich angeln gegangen
war. War ich beim Angeln, dann brauchte mir nur ein
Flössler zu pfeifen, und ich kletterte zu ihm hinauf und
vergass mein Angelzeug. Er brauchte mich nur ein kleines
Stück auf dem Floss mitzunehmen, und ich vergass meine
Heimatstadt" (p. 157). When he first arrives in Marseilles,
Seidler is little different from the child he was. Gradually,
he begins to change from contact with people in the city.
The great majority of them are "Im-Stich-Lassern" and their
company is a contrast to the society of Das Siebte Kreuz.31
Seidler sees the futility of their blind flight from
Europe into an unknown future while observing them in
hotels, cafes, and embassies. Some die senselessly, like
the choir director who succumbs to a heart attack after
being denied his transit-visa. A woman who consumes her
travel money in oysters after losing passage on a ship
presents an absurd picture, and there is irony and a touch
of humor in Seidler's hotel neighbor who receives free
passage and a "moralische Bürgschaft" from an American
couple in exchange for taking their dogs across. Seidler
compares himself to these people, and although he feels
he is different, he does not know yet why.

His liaison with one of those particularly determined
to leave exacerbates his conflict. Seidler meets Marie,
Weidel's wife who had deserted him. Rumors that "Weidel"
was in Marseilles eventually led her to Seidler, who
helps her and her doctor boyfriend obtain papers to leave. Seidler falls in love with Marie, but recognizes in her one of the "Im-Stich-Lasser" and as Weidel's alter ego, condemns her for her callousness toward the writer.

Such people as Marie are shown to have a false orientation to the present, since they seek only a future in which their private desires may be fulfilled. These people present a danger to those who want responsible lives in the present. The danger of escapism is emphasized in a scene set in a subterranean chapel. In it there are images of sterility and decay: "ewig uralte Priester" and choirboys in "ewiger bleicher Jugend" (p. 67). The priest quotes from the Apostel Paul about the dangers he had suffered: "Ich bin dreimal gestäupt, einmal gesteinigt, dreimal hab ich Schiffbruch erlitten. Tag und Nacht zugebraucht in der Tiefe des Meeres, ich bin in Gefahr gewesen durch Flüsse, Gefahr durch Mörder, Gefahr unter Juden, Gefahr unter Heiden, Gefahr in den Städten, Gefahr in der Wüste, Gefahr auf dem Meere, Gefahr unter falschen Brüdern" (p. 67). Seidler interprets this message in a secular sense and applies it to his own situation, making his retreat to what seemed a secure hiding place now appear threatening: "Ich rang nach Atem. Ich wollte nicht auf dem Meeresgrund klebenbleiben, ich wollte dort oben gehen mit meinesgleichen" (p. 67).
The hollow, senseless life of those who think of nothing but leaving is contrasted with the "genuine" existence of a handful of others. Heinz, Seidler's friend from the French work camp, is a model figure by which Seidler begins to measure himself. Left almost a complete cripple by the Spanish Civil War, Heinz possesses a compensatory inner strength which Seidler feels he himself lacks: "...du hast etwas Festes in dir und von dir.... Du kannst dir nicht vorstellen, wie es jemandem zumute ist, der ganz leer ist" (p. 99). Heinz' depth stems from his faith in the humanity of man: "...dieser Mensch war in jeder Sekunde, selbst in der finstersten, davon überzeugt, dass er nie allein war, ...dass es...auch keinen noch so vertrotteten Teufel...der nicht zum Aufhorchen zu bringen war, wenn ihn eine menschliche Stimme um Hilfe anging" (p. 96). Seidler feels that someone like Heinz will not suffer "Gefahr unter falschen Brüdern" and through his example recognizes his irresponsibility: "Ja, alles war immer nur durch mich gegangen.... Mir selbst gefällt nur, was hält, was anders ist, als ich bin" (p. 157).

Seidler then begins to see Marseilles in a new light, not as a place of departure, but of permanence, unchanging despite the hordes of people who have swept through it over the centuries. He is confronted with the ordinary people who survive in history: the woman who bakes pizza in the harbor, the sailors, and the Binnet family he
visits. Seidler in turn finds some of this toughness in himself: "Ich habe damals zum erstenmal alles ernst bedacht: Vergangenheit und Zukunft, einander gleich und ebenbürtig an Undurchsichtigkeit, und auch an den Zustand, den man auf Konsolaten Transit nennt und in der gewöhnlichen Sprache Gegenwart. Und das Ergebnis: nur eine Ahnung—wenn diese Ahnung verdient, ein Ergebnis genannt zu werden—von meiner eigenen Unversehrbarkeit" (p. 181). Seidler casts his lot with those who stay and Binnet approves of his choice with words similar to those in the beginning of Das Siebte Kreuz: "Du gehörst zu uns. Was uns geschieht, geschieht auch dir" (p. 184).

Seidler's decision to lead a responsible life in a society justifies Weidel's writing, because without having read the unfinished manuscript, Seidler might never have reflected upon his attitude. Dissatisfaction with his life comes when he reads Weidel's story of the "ziemlich vertrackten Menschen [und] einer darunter, der mir selbst glich" (p. 18). Seidler is struck by the notion that a book can have relevance to his life and he tells his listener: "Sie haben ja in Ihrem Leben Geschichten genug gelesen. Für mich war es sozusagen die erste. Ich hatte ja Übergenu,g erlebt, aber nie gelesen" (p. 18). Seidler's naive reaction to a book is a reflection of Seghers fundamental belief in literature as "Lebenshilfe"; for her writing has the practical aspect of changing the reader's
consciousness and directing his life in new channels. Even though Weidel was destroyed by his isolation his story "saves" the life of another for a productive role in society.

Transit was completed in Mexico, where Seghers lived from 1941 until 1947. During these years she worked closely with other anti-Fascists living in Mexico City as a member of the group "Bewegung Freies Deutschland" which published the periodical Freies Deutschland. She was also president of the "Heinrich-Heine-Club" which was dedicated to "die Förderung deutscher freiheitlicher Kunst, Literatur und Wissenschaft durch Wort und Schrift, Belehrung und Schulung." The author was not so preoccupied with these groups that she did not have time to appreciate the culture, history, and beauty of her host country. She says "Ich verdanke diesem Land unsäglich viel" and many of the short stories written after she returned to Europe are set in Mexico and have its peasants and artists as main characters.

Seghers' most autobiographical and subjective work, the short story "Der Ausflug der toten Mädchen" (1943/44) comes from her time in Mexico. The impulse for the story came from the news that the author's mother had died in a concentration camp and that her native city of Mainz had been destroyed. The narrator, "Netty," lies ill in Mexico and her thoughts go back to a school outing. She contrasts
the behavior of the girls in the class then with their acts during the war. The dehumanization of the Third Reich is seen in their betrayal, lying, and treachery and the story has been called rightly a "Klage über den erlittenen Schmerz."\[^{35}\]

With her return to Europe in 1947 a new period began in Seghers' life and writing which can be dealt with only briefly. When she returned to Germany the writer chose the Soviet zone, for she viewed that sector's socialist government as the legitimate heir of the German working class movement and the place where her works would gain acceptance: "Man fragt mich oft, warum ich nach dem Krieg in diesen Teil Deutschlands fuhr, der damals die Sowjetunion war, und nicht in meine Heimat an den Rhein. Darauf antworte ich: Weil ich hier die Resonanz haben kann, die sich ein Schriftsteller wünscht. Weil ich hier ein enger Zusammenhang besteht zwischen dem geschriebenen Wort und dem Leben. Weil ich hier ausdrücken kann, wozu ich gelebt habe."\[^{36}\] Seghers holds that the GDR can continue to exist only through the efforts of its people. From the Twenties on she had written from the perspective of hope for this state; after 1947 she wrote to preserve and build the country. Her writing now had a legitimizing function which it continues to have in the 70's.

Before she turned to writing about the GDR present Seghers reckoned with the recent German past. When she
returned from Mexico she carried with her the manuscript for the lengthy novel Die Toten bleiben jung, published by the new Aufbau-Verlag in Berlin in 1949. This work deals with the origins of Fascism in Germany. The stories of a young Spartakus fighter, of his family, and of his murderers are related in a loose montage similar to that of Die Gefährten. The action spans the years 1918/19 to 1944/45 and the frame of the novel, the survival of the revolutionary idea through these years, is supposed to hold the sprawling narrative together. In Der Aufstand this idea is expressed through the central metaphor; in Die Toten bleiben jung it is carried by biological inheritance. In the beginning of the novel, young Erwin, who has a vision of a new world in which "Freiheit und Gerechtigkeit von einer unerschöpflichen Macht gelenkt wird," (p. 9) is executed by three soldiers. Before he dies the young man warns "Ihr könnt jetzt Schluss mit mir machen. Ihr kommt aber auch noch dran" (p. 12). Erwin's ideals are "inherited" by his son Hans; driven by a subconscious desire to understand the historical process, the boy becomes a revolutionary through the teaching of his father's friend Martin. At the end of the work Hans is killed by one of the officers who had executed his father. The narrator implies that the idea of the revolution has remained unaltered, since the officer thinks: "Wie war er jung geblieben. Wahrscheinlich waren längst alle tot, die
The idea lives on although Hans is killed: his unborn child will survive to carry on and "inherit" the idea as he himself did.

The bulk of the narrative between the two killings follows the lives of Erwin's murderers: the industrialist Klemm, the Prussian Junker Wenzlow, the Baltic landowner von Lieven, and the enlisted man Nadler. These men all become Nazis; the officers because of class interest and Nadler, dull and brutal like Zillich of Der Kopfloh'n, to attain power not accorded to a small farmer. In writing Die Toten bleiben jung Seghers says she wanted to show "warum, wodurch, und wozu die Jugend, verführt und gezwungen, für den Faschismus in den Krieg zog" and the novel abandons the Volksfront-ethos of Das Siebte Kreuz when it defines Nazism along class lines. The book's ideology called forth a reception which was divided along political boundaries: lauded in the GDR, the work was not well received in the west.

The final novel under discussion here is typical for Seghers' writing after she settled in the GDR. Die Entscheidung (1959) is conceived from the standpoint that the GDR is the only German state in which the citizen has power and that he must choose—before the building of the
Berlin wall of course—between capitalist, still Nazi-ruled West Germany, and the workers' state of the GDR. The characters are divided according to their decision for or against socialism. For the author this political decision shapes all other aspects of life: "Auf alle, selbst die privatesten, selbst die intimsten Teile unseres Lebens wirkt sie ein: 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?" Two groups of figures are contrasted, one in a factorz in the Rheinland, the other in a plant in the fictional city of Kossin. The owners of the West German factory are pictured as grasping capitalist, non-reformed Nazis whose one desire is to regain control over their former holding, the now state-owned factory at Kossin. The narrative is mostly concerned with the group in the German Democratic Republic because a decision between capitalism and socialism is considered timely here. The rebuilding of the Kossin factory is supposed to stand as a symbol for the success of the "gemeinsame...Anstrengungen befreiter Menschen." The workers of the Kossin plant demonstrate different degrees of commitment toward improving a state-owned operation. In the course of the novel most of those unconvinced of the factory's value for themselves overcome their objections and begin to work for the common good.
On the side of the GDR government there are a number of "positive heroes" who work tirelessly for success. One is Martin, from *Die Toten bleiben jung*, whose life is described as "...ein Stück Geschichte, eine Legende" (p. 499) because he always leads at important meetings. Another is a teacher, Waldstein, a stock character whose leader-prototypes were already encountered in Hull, Dudoff, and Solonjenko. Waldstein is an exemplary figure who schools two generations of students in socialism. The welder Robert Lohse comes to support the Kossin effort and by doing so finds his place in society. The new work ethic of the GDR demands that each individual use his talent for the good of the community. At first Lohse does not fit in; but, through his work with the young apprentices, he discovers his ability in teaching. Development of the individual and integration into society go hand and hand.

Not everyone decides for the GDR however. As in the case of those outside the party in *Die Gefährten*, the "incorrect" choice leads to destruction. Although the engineer Rentmair comes from the west to help at the plant, he does not yet believe in the new political system. He feels himself an outcast, and accused of negligence in an accidental industrial death, he commits suicide. His death is attributed by the others to indecision: "Er war ein Mensch, der nicht mehr im alten Leben drin war und in unserem neuen auch nicht ganz...bei ihm war es ein
Wettlauf zwischen allem, was dem Mann helfen wollte, und allem, was ihn zugrunde gerichtet hat" (p. 384). Another character who wavers also dies. Katherina Riedel hesitates, but later follows her husband from West to East Germany. She crosses the border alone over fields and dies as the result of the premature birth of her child. In an interview the author commented about Katherina's irresolution: "...Sie konnte nicht probeweise mitgehen: es gibt nur hüben und drüben. Sie hat sich Furcht einjagen lassen. Sie ist zu spät gekommen." In Die Entscheidung there can be no hesitation in opting for the new political system of the GDR: human relationships, individual aspirations, and the characters' very existence are subordinate to the building of socialism.

Die Entscheidung is perhaps Seghers' crassesst statement that a democratic community can only be attained through socialism, and not surprisingly praise or condemnation for the novel are meted out according to the critic's acceptance or rejection of this basic premise. A non-Marxist is likely to disregard Seghers' GDR works in general and look more favorably on earlier works such as Der Aufstand and Das Siebte Kreuz with a less strident political message as more "representative" of Seghers' craft. Nevertheless the reader should see her works in their entirety. The GDR works are only a radical formulation of a message running through all of Seghers' novels and stories: that man
is a social creature with a responsibility toward his fellow man; that he can and must change his society for the good of all; and that in so doing he improves himself and gains a small measure of immortality by shaping the historical process. Readers may or may not take exception to the political terms in which this message is couched--that is their privilege; but, they cannot help admiring Seghers' unflagging dedication to this ideal.
Notes

1 Batt, Seghers, p. 81.


3 Seghers, "Vaterlandsliebe," p. 65.


6 Batt, Seghers, pp. 84-85.

7 Batt, Seghers, p. 90.

8 Seghers, "Deutschland und Wir," Kunstwerk, I, p. 188.

9 Seghers, "Deutschland," p. 189.

10 Seghers, "Deutschland," p. 190


12 Seghers, "Deutschland," p. 191.


16 Seghers, *Die Rettung* (Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1965). All page numbers are quoted from this edition.

17 Walter, "Chronik," p. 20.


19 Seghers, *Das Siebte Kreuz* (Zürich: Büchergilde Gutenberg, 1949).

20 *Internationale Literatur* 6 (pp. 6-34), 7 (pp. 49-65) 8 (pp. 8-25), Moscow (1939).

21 Seghers refers to Hans Beimler in her speech of greeting to the "II. Internationaler Schriftstellerkongress 1937": "Lassen Sie mich hier auch Hans Beimler (underlining A.S.) gedenken, dessen Leben als Antifaschist und Genosse uns allen ein Beispiel ist." In *Kunstwerk*, I, p. 66. Beimler was a Reichstagsabgeordneter of the KPD who successfully escaped Dachau concentration camp. He fought in the International Brigade during the Spanish Civil War and fell in December, 1936.


23 Seghers, "Deutschland," p. 190.


26 Haas, "Veränderung und Dauer," *Deutschunterricht*, 20 (1968), No. 1, p. 70.


30 Walter, p. 43.
31 Batt, Seghers, p. 160. "In Transit wird eine epische Gegenwelt zum Siebten Kreuz errichtet. Denn der Ich-Erzähler begegnet allerorten „Im-Stich-Lassern...."


33 Batt, Seghers, p. 170.


35 Batt, Seghers, p. 182.


37 Seghers, Die Toten bleiben jung (Berlin: Aufbau, 1949).

38 Batt, Seghers, pp. 203-04.


40 Walter, "Chronik," p. 32.


43 Seghers, "Schaffensmethode," p. 27.
Primary Sources


Secondary Sources


