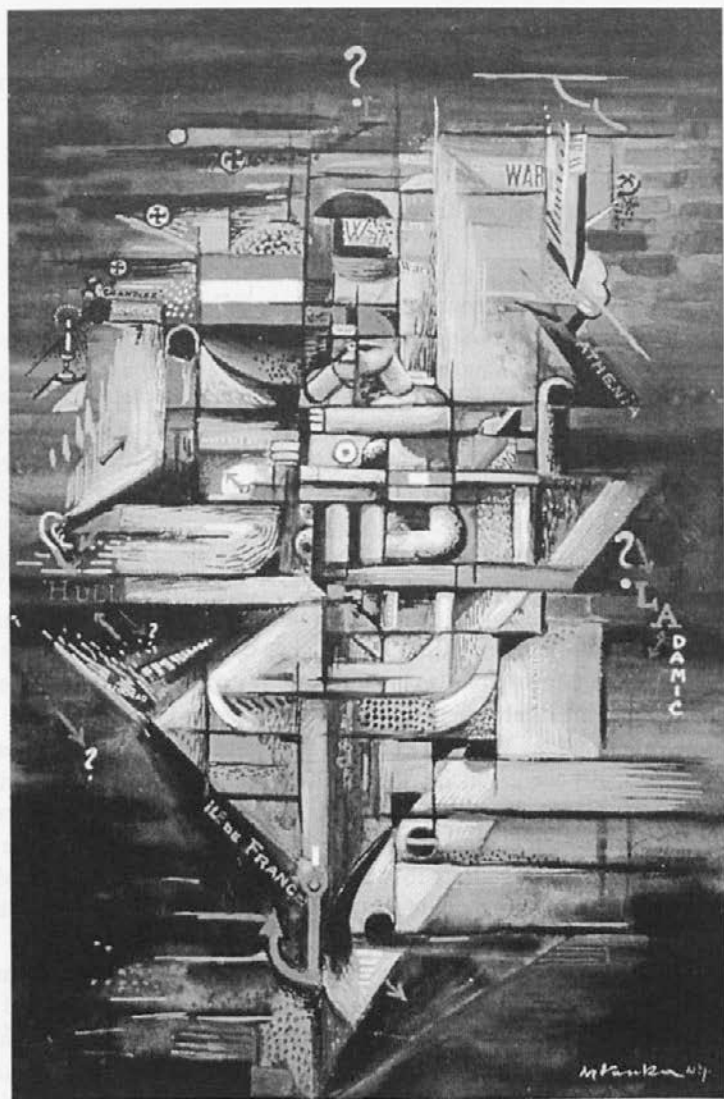


READING A PAINTING: MAXO VANKA'S COLLAGE »WORLD WAR II«

Henry A. Christian
Tine T. Kurent

Only within the last few years has there begun a measurement of the quantity and quality of the *oeuvre* of the Croatian artist Maksimilian – usually called Maxo – Vanka (1889–1963). That assessment-in-progress now makes possible the determination of several geographical and chronological categories of Vanka's production. The illegitimate child of Austro-Hungarian nobility, Vanka was educated in Zagreb and Brussels, gained the protection of Queen Elizabeth of the Belgians, served in the Belgian Red Cross as a stretcher bearer, and finished the Great War as a pacifist in Zagreb. The subject today of a second look in his native land, the artist's Croatian work – known in the United States to a few of Croatian descent – represents a primary category of Vanka materials. A professor at the Academy of Art in Zagreb, under the directorship of the famous sculptor Ivan Mestrovic, Vanka became known throughout Western Europe for precise and distinctive portraits, landscapes – especially scenes on the island of Korčula – and accurate renderings of various regional peasant dress and symbols, such as the religious procession presentation in the Modern Gallery in Zagreb, the wedding scene now in the upper hall of the Zagreb Old Town Hall, or the stunning lone, standing woman in white in the small gallery adjoining the monument to the Peasant Revolts at Gornja Stubica.

A second category has its origin in 1934 when Vanka and his American wife Margaret (nee Stetten) and their daughter Peggy visited the United States and a year later decided to take permanent residence in America despite Vanka's reluctance to be within the strong financial and social aura of his wife's family. The Vankas had met the Slovene born American writer Louis Adamic and his wife Stella at Vanka's summer home on Korčula during Adamic's Guggenheim Fellowship year long residence in Yugoslavia. The painter was noted in Adamic's *The Native Return* and



Maxo Vanka's collage "World War II", 17"6" by 11"6", New York, 1939

the mysterious story of Vanka's early life formed the first half of Adamic's *Cradle of Life*.¹ Early in 1937, with Adamic's aid Vanka received a commission to decorate the walls of the newly completed second St. Nicholas Croatian Catholic Church in Millvale, Pennsylvania. The murals Vanka accomplished in three months in 1937 are both ecclesiastical and a depiction of the immigrant experience and the toll taken by both European conflicts and industrial America. In combination with an article by Adamic which described Vanka's having seen a ghost while working in the church, the artist's effort brought the murals, Vanka, and the Millvale parish significant if not prolonged fame.² A second set of murals executed by Vanka in the Millvale church in 1941 was again religious but this time also fused the Mary-Jesus-crucifixion theme into a stark, powerful anti-war motif. The two sets of Millvale murals, then, represent the majority of Vanka's work known in the United States and to some extent in Croatia just before and then after World War II. Eventually the murals were the basis on which the St. Nicholas Church was, in 1981, declared an Historic Landmark by the Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation and placed on the National Register of Historic Places by the United States Department of the Interior.

For what can be called his other American production, there are at least three additional categories of Vanka's work that remain nearly totally unknown to the world.³ The first segment of these numbers more than 110 sepia and charcoal

¹ N.Y.: Harper, 1934, pp. 161-164, 279, 296; N. Y.: Harper, 1936.

² "The Millvale Apparition", *Harper's Magazine*, 176 (April 1936), pp. 476-486.

³ In 1934-35, some of Vanka's "European" works were displayed in a less than successful show in New York City and another in Pittsburgh. In March of 1939 an exhibition at the Newhouse Galleries in New York offered large photographs of the Millvale murals and Vanka's "recent paintings and drawings", a portion of which Alfred M. Frankfurter described in the Galleries' program as examples of "Vanka's curious, self-invented technique of sepia drawing, so remarkably effective in its communication of mass and chiaroscuro as well as outline." A smaller exhibition in November of 1957 at Charles Barzansky Galleries in New York offered "fruits, flowers, and allegorical landscapes" according to Frank Zachary's program notes. In 1968 the Yugoslav Academy of Science and Art installed fifteen oils and sketches and six items of sculpture donated by Margaret Vanka in a Memorial Museum building on Korčula which had belonged to Mrs. Vanka's father; only one item was Vanka's American work. Two small exhibitions in Pennsylvania, a memorial presentation at the Scofield Gallery in Doylestown in 1964 and at Crest Galleries in New Hope in 1968, offered sketches and oils. Such limited exposure certainly warrants Vanka's American work being described as "unknown".

drawings – ready for matting and framing – executed in various locations across the United States. In his first American years Vanka sometimes accompanied Adamic on the author's lecture tours; and these sketches – usually signed, located, and dated without the thousand numeral (i. e. 937) – depict smoking factories and mills, railroad yards, churches in working-class districts, monumental structures from The Cathedral of Learning at the University of Pittsburgh to the United States Capitol, the Chicago lakefront, New York City tenement fires, anti-war marches, and the like. A family trip to the West Coast produced several California scenes and portraits. Of this work by Vanka, Adamic wrote in *My America* in 1938: "*He drew and painted mostly bums, white and Negro workers, prostitutes ... warehouse-district and river-front scenes ... the unemployed living in fantastic 'Hooverilles' ... diverse Bowery degenerates and unfortunates ... from the substrata of American society. I saw that, somehow, his sympathies and proclivities drew him in that direction more than to Park Avenue, although he was deeply fond of his in-laws and many of their friends.*"⁴ After 1938 more often than not signed and located as "N. Y." but not dated, Vanka's production encompassed the opulent structures lining Central Park, portions of the Park itself, industrial side-streets, harbor craft, boxers, workers, and the public in general. Exercising his long-standing ability as a portraitist, he executed a dozen or more vivid renderings of the Black population of the nation; and Vanka's portrait of the actor Rex Ingram hangs in the Schomburg Museum in Harlem. All in all, this segment of Vanka's unknown work can be classed as 1930's industrialism parallel to work by Louis Lozowick, people and places in the manner of Reginald Marsh, and overall an exhibition of what constitutes "social consciousness". It would be no surprise to have found it among the work of WPA artists, and many of Vanka's late Depression scenes easily pass today as views of the American "homeless".

The second category of unknown work consists of a few drawings but mostly oils, executed in Vanka's impressionist-like brushstrokes. The majority of these canvasses depict flowers, often cut or potted, and the landscape in and around Bucks County, Pennsylvania, to which the Vankas moved in 1941. Among these oils there are also renderings of the interior of a bar, the portrait of an unidentified Black artist at his easel, a Croatian piper in traditional national costume, and a bold, honest nude female seated in a wood, these last two works are on display at the Croatian Fraternal Union headquarters near Pittsburgh.

⁴ N.Y.: Harper, pp. 162-163.

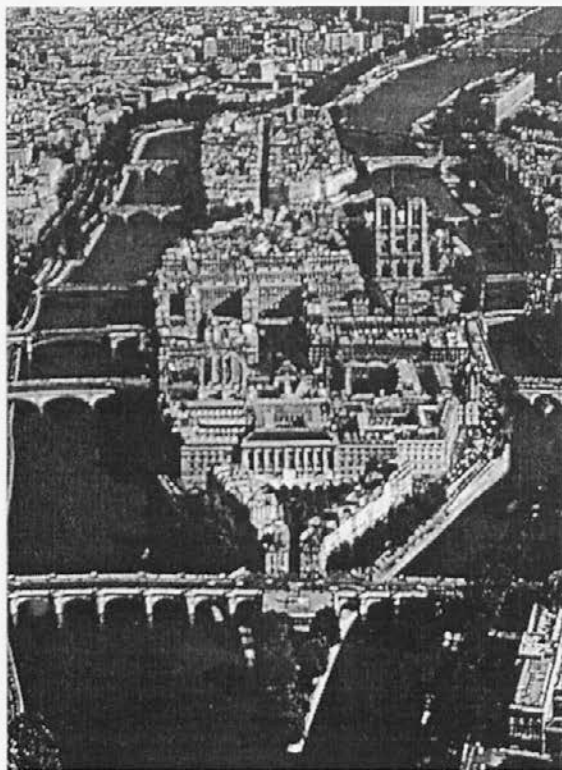
The third category consists of more than 75 pastel drawings and over 100 postcard size sketches of both known and obscure sites, and an additional 125 sketch blocks, all of which were generated by the artist when the Vankas made a trip around the world in the 1950's – groupings that together or by themselves represent a series of exhibits or a volume or two.

But unique even among all the works in these last three categories is the primary subject of this study – the only complex collage of the two in that genre Vanka is known to have executed. Coming upon this work in a gallery or museum, the viewer immediately senses a formidable visual and intellectual challenge. The collage offers a palette of bright and subdued watercolors and a myriad of shapes within shapes, of recognizable and possible symbols, of words both obvious and obscure. Lacking the usual identification card, the work is perhaps first identified by the lower right hand signature “M. Vanka N. Y.” (9).⁵ That such a signature indicates a probable execution in 1939 is not a widely known fact; a date for the work may then remain undetermined. An attempt to read the collage, Braque-like, may offer a beginning organizing principle. The word *war*, cut from newsprint, is pasted in the upper half of the painting ten times (2, 3, 5). Also cut from pre-printing are the names of the capital cities Belgrade, Paris, and Washington (4, 2, 6). From pre-printing too is the island and/or island town of Korčula added, complete with accent mark (1); and painted on are the letter *L* and the words *Hull*, *Chandler*, *Athenia*, *L Adamic*, and *Ile de France* (2, 4, 1, 3, 6, 7-8). Readers of Louis Adamic can quickly link the initial *L* at what can be called the start of the collage to the author's full name elsewhere (2, 6) and probably know the author-artist friendship from Adamic's books and articles. *Hull* and *Chandler* are nautical words, meaning structure and a ship dealer or trader, but seem rather inconsequential in the context of the names of two real ships Vanka employed. The *Athenia*, torpedoed on September 3, 1939, was the first ship sunk in World War II and is so shown in the collage, specifically placed below the threatening sword-bomb shape bearing the word *War* (3-6).⁶ The collage therefore could not have been painted before September 4, 1939.

⁵ The complexity of the collage is perhaps best viewed, organized, and discussed by use of the Division by Threes system: the work is divided vertically and horizontally into thirds, creating rectangles which are numbered left to right as 1 to 9, the center of the collage thus being number 5. Vanka's signature therefore appears in rectangle 9, as is noted in parenthesis in the text. Other elements discussed will be so noted as accurately as possible.

⁶ “Athenia Torpedoed, Sunk”, *New York Times*, September 4, 1939, p. 1.

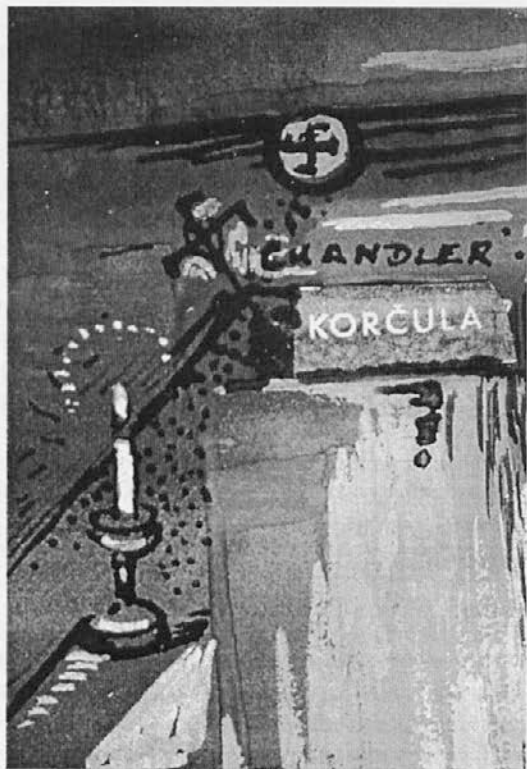
Possibly remembered too is the fact that the french liner *Ile de France* arrived at Havre on August 30 and was scheduled to leave for New York on September 1, 1939. But the ship waited in port to take on nearly 400 extra passengers, mostly Americans, and finally sailed on the first day of the war, arriving at New York on the night of September 9 and docking the next day. The liner name immediately beside a bright red anchor indicates the collage intends the true ship (7-8); the collage therefore post-dates this American port arrival.⁷ Notice of the liner also directs



Paris, Ile de la Cité.
Another shape of the
collage.

⁷ "Reports from Foreign Ports", *New York Times*, September 1, 1939, p. 37; "1,000 Americans Sail on French Liner", September 3, p. 1; and "Ille de France Here with 1,777 Aboard", September 10, p. 34.

attention to the overall shape of the collage. Reminiscent of the famous A. N. Cassandre 1935 poster of the liner *Normandie*, the ship next to which the *Ile de France* was docked on September 10, the Vanka collage takes on the shape of a ship, although here it would seem a vessel possibly prow down where the Cassandre rendering is if anything prow up. In evidence as well are two air ventilators (1-4, 6) and any number of other mechanical shapes and planes that may symbolize the interior of a vessel. Mid-way on the left are brush strokes which could be windows or portholes (4). From Adamic and other sources it is clear Vanka was a unique, highly imaginative, deeply knowledgeable, even somewhat mystic person. Interpreting his vision is therefore an exercise of one's own imagination. The presence of the word *Paris*, for example, may then provoke in the viewer the parallel between



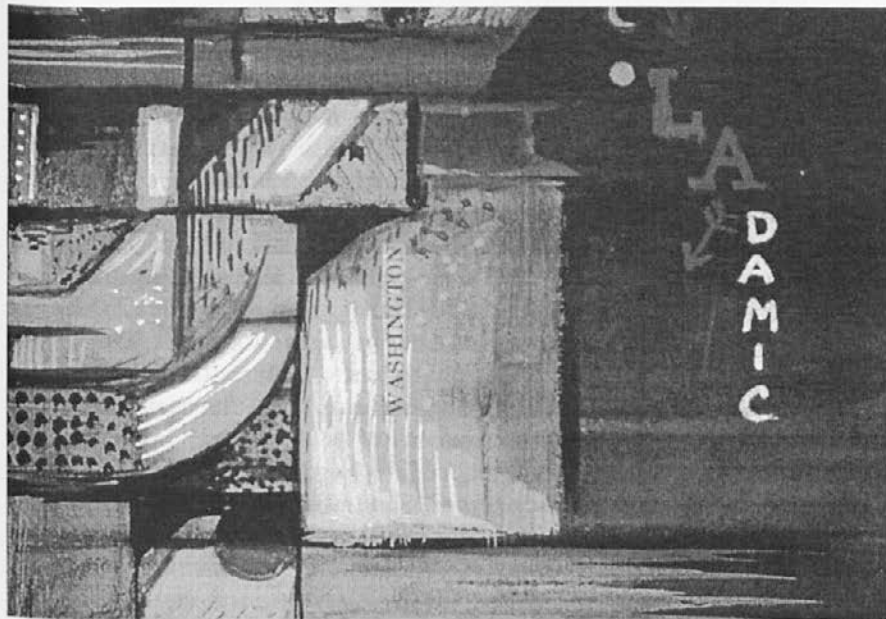
Detail of segment 1-4 of the collage: A swastika-germ, inscriptions CHANDLER and KORČULA, and the candle.

the ship-like shape of the collage and an aerial view of the Ile de la Cité.⁸ Regarding the island, *The Secret of the Seine* notes the existence of an early "Gallo-Roman settlement (...) started by a tribe of Gauls, fishermen and traders known as the Parisii. Par, in Celtic, means boat (...) the Parisii's capital on an island in the Seine /is/ now the Ile de la Cité".⁹ The Ile de France, after which the liner was named was that area between Paris and Orleans controlled by the Capetain kings circa 900-1000, i. e., as much of a unified France as there was at the time. In the collage, Paris, therefore France, ergo Europe is situated among and threatened by the words of a war already declared by the time the *Athenia* was sinking. The opening initial *L* with its accompanying question may therefore prepare for Adamic but also evoke the memory of the *Lusitania*, the 1915 sinking of which moved the United States closer to entry into the Great War, as the *Athenia* may have done for this 1939 war. Since war is clearly one theme of the collage, a viewer may ponder the opposing blue and red arrows, often with a question mark nearby (2, 4, 6). What will the war mean to Louis Adamic and his work, to Washington, to Adamic and Washington, to Belgrade? Furthermore, the ear into which something must pass and then move on to and from Belgrade clearly seems to be linked not to a maritime structure but to the American Secretary of State Cordell Hull (1871-1955). The bold presence of the flag of the Netherlands may indicate the May 10, 1940, invasion of that nation and Belgium and Luxembourg; the collage would certainly be configured differently had these other capitals and nations been more involved, so 1939 still seems the most probable date of composition. Although the true edges of the collage are less than precise, potential viewers whose ken includes the Kabalistic *gematria* may find that the length 17 1/2 inches (35 half-inches), multiplied by 13, results in the number 455 which is the title of the collage: THE BEGINNINGS OF WORLD WAR BY MAKSIMILIAN VANKA; the width 11 1/2 inches equals 92/8, 92 being VANKA FECIT.¹⁰

⁸ A preliminary article on the collage – "Kolaž maksimilijana Vanke Videnje Druge Svetovne Vojne", *Zbornik Občine Grosuplje*, 18 (1994), pp. 221-224 – notes this and some other interpretive possibilities cited before. The authors are indebted to Dr. Ann C. Watts, Department of English, Rutgers University, Newark, N. J., U.S.A., for insight into the Paris view.

⁹ Nort Rosenblum, Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley, 1994, pp. 32-33.

¹⁰ THE BEGINNINGS OF THE WORLD WAR BY MAKSIMILIAN VANKA: (20+8+5) + (2+5+7+9+14+14+9+14+7+19) + (15+6) + (23+15+18+12+4) + (23+1+18) + (2+25) + (13+1+11+19+9+13+9+12+9+1+14) + (22+1+14+11+1) equals 455; VANKA FECIT: (22+1+14+11+1) + (6+5+3+9+20) equals 92.



Detail of the segment 6-6 of the collage: inscriptions WASHINGTON and LADAMIC

Yet most provoking and baffling amid possible readings of the collage are the words *Korčula* and *Chandler*, and within their relationship lies both the personal and the eventual universal meaning of this work of art. In an historical speculation “Chandler” could reflect Zacharia Chandler of President Grant’s administration or William E. Chandler, President Chester A. Arthur’s Secretary of the Navy, who urged a nineteenth century national rearmament. But the name *Korčula* seems too closely linked to Chandler to verify historical American figures. Just to the left of Chandler in the collage stands a form that looks like a Celtic cross which either changes to or is actually the beginning of the series of circles or perhaps mines which contain proto-swastikas and their accompanying masses of black dots – some of which are already falling toward the burning candle – that eventuate in the bird-like droppings just above the sinking *Athenia* (1-2-3). But it is most improbable that Vanka should construct a collage with no more organizing principle than that he

wished to note the names of major cities, his good friend Adamic, the site of his summer home, and a good deal more all within the frame of the 1939 war. Indeed, the origin of the Vanka collage is quite the opposite kind of process.

Each summer after moving to the United States the Vankas and their daughter spent a portion of their vacation on Korčula. Margaret Vanka's father, Dr. Dewitt Stetten, had purchased a house beside the artist's cottage; and the doctor and his second wife Alice were usually in residence with the Vankas. In 1939 only the Stettens made their usual journey abroad. Late in the summer, under war clouds, they made their way from Korčula north to Paris and at Le Havre boarded the *Ile de France* in time to be passengers on that secret, dangerous passage to America.¹¹ The voyage, the war, the world – these were important matters to the three families – and it is probable that together for Thanksgiving dinner in 1939 the Stettens had the opportunity to recount at length their summer to the Adamics and inspire within Vanka the collage he would soon produce. The *New York Times* account of the voyage captured some of the excitement the Stettens must have exhibited:

"When they appeared for the usual immigration examination, passengers were informed that the State Department would retain their passports. They received landing cards as usual, and were told that for future voyages to Europe they would have to reapply for traveling papers. The Americans, glad to be home and away from the continual dread of a periscope sighted at sea, accepted the ruling without protest.

*Officers of the ship maintained the usual silence, and passengers told the usual stories of alarms, imagined submarines and wished for naval escorts that apparently never materialized."*¹²

Although one of Vanka's shapes is certainly the French liner, within that form is also that of a threatening submarine. The ventilators (1-4, 6) are therefore also periscopes; and the partially red helmeted face, evolving from all manner of

¹¹ National Archives, Washington, D. C., Roll No. 6396. Passenger and Crew Lists of Vessels Arriving at New York 1897-1942. From September 9, 1939. Vol. 13767-13768. List of U. S. Citizens, No. 9, S. S. *Ile de France*.

¹² *Op.Cit.* *New York Times*, September 10, p. 34.

circle-like bombs emanating from those beginning at Korčula, is at least with one eye openly sighting for some victim (2). Below that head-face, which seems to have a body or legs of some sort, is the red and white circle looking like a bull's-eye but reproducing the German national symbol traditionally worn above the visor of both dress and field uniform caps (5). The mechanical innards of both vessels mesh, the upper portion of the collage being more submarine, the lower more liner. Hidden within is the liner's barely visible, secret national flag. In the upper half, war, the words of sinkings, and danger predominate; the lower half of the form indicates the liner and its name and a safe anchorage finally achieved. What at the top had been bomb-like circles may even by the bottom have become musical notes of greeting (6, 8).¹³

Yet once the crossing had been explained, the Stettens had still more to impart. On Korčula they had encountered an American writer, Douglas Chandler, who had written articles in *Travel Magazine* in 1935 and 1936 and beginning in 1937 had published five articles in *The National Geographic Magazine*, including one titled "Changing Berlin" and another about Yugoslavia titled "Kaleidoscopic Land of Europe's Youngest King".¹⁴ At the conclusion of that article, Chandler had written: "Then, one bright day, passing a house in Korčula town, an ancient house from the top story of which ran a covered bridge to a 15th century tower, someone whispered in my ear, 'That house can be bought'. I hesitated, and was lost".¹⁵ In the close confines of the island, the Stettens therefore find Chandler that summer living well and enjoying something of a celebrity status. Appalled by Chandler's open profession of pro-Nazi, anti-Semitic views, the Stettens saw the American writer as both a threat to the tranquility of Korčula and a catalyst for the Fascist aura pervading Europe. Safe at home by September, the Stettens had lost none of their anger toward Chandler. Dr. Stetten had fired off a letter to the State Department. Would Secretary Hull take notice? Would Washington contact Belgrade about the American Nazi? Could Louis Adamic, who was perhaps aware of Chandler's articles if not his politics, employ some of his Washington contacts concerning Chandler?

¹³ The authors are indebted to Judith A. Christian and Dr. David Hoddeson, Department of English, Rutgers University, Newark, N. Y., U.S.A., for long, thoughtful if finally inconclusive speculations about these note-like forms.

¹⁴ 71 (February 1937), pp. 131-177, and 75 (June 1939), pp. 691-738.

¹⁵ *Op. cit.*, (June 1939), p. 730.

As the situation unfolded before Vanka, the artist could only be extremely intent. In *My America*, Adamic had written Margaret Vanka "believed I had helped her in getting /Maxo/ to decide to come to America. What had, I think, really decided him just then was his thought that he had no right to keep his wife and child in Europe, where the dangers of war seemed to be increasing by leaps and bounds".¹⁶ What Adamic was too self-effacing to say was that Vanka had acted on advice Adamic had given him in the winter of 1933. In Zagreb, waiting in line to see *City Lights* one night, Adamic had pointed out to Vanka that the Nazis had no interest in honest writing, good art, or their own respective spouses, both of whom were Jewish. Now in 1939, here was Douglas Chandler spewing anti-Jewish hate amid the purity, the honest light of hope of Vanka's ideal, ancient Korčula, spreading the kind of Horror that had already sent much of Europe to war. With what may be imagined as determined intensity, shortly afterward Vanka set to work on the collage, executing it on what is the large, seamless side of an ordinary grocery store paper bag. When he had finished, the artist gave the work to his friend Adamic.

"The Beginnings of World War II", a sufficiently appropriate possible title for the collage, obviously carries great significance within Vanka's life and body of work, both known and only now being brought to light. It draws nearly as much attention in Adamic's history as well. Methods in the collage presage some of Vanka's anti-war forms when he returned in 1941 to the St. Nicholas Church. In his frightening, full-length rendering "Injustice", a figure bearing a bloody sword balances gold coins as more valuable than bread and wears a gas mask. The questioning, opposing arrows of Vanka's collage are now altered to two joined, winged hands, one attempting to pull at the eye piece of the gas mask while the other points away, a forefinger directed upward to the madonna "Mary, Queen of Croatians" above the altar. Opposite "Injustice" Vanka painted "Mother 1941", a full-length crucified female figure at whose feet lies an open book which contains the words "Mati 1941, To Louis Adamic".¹⁷

Important as the collage may be for those interested in Vanka and Adamic, the work of art has significance beyond either man or the causes of its inception.

¹⁶ P. 162.

¹⁷ Doris J. Dyen, "Aids to Adaptation: Southeast European Mural Painters in Pittsburgh", *Folklife 90: Annual*, James Hardin, ed., Washington, D. C.: Library of Congress, 1991, pp. 21, 19, and 17 resp.

Much as Picasso's *Guernica* is always a commissioned depiction of the 1937 bombing of a Spanish town, the painting nevertheless is forever perceived in light of the subsequent defeat of the Spanish Republicans and the coming of World War II. So too does the final importance of Vanka's collage depend on later events. Dr. Stetten's letter of complaint was sufficiently heard in Washington to cause the Yugoslav authorities in Belgrade to revoke Chandler's residence permit in August of 1940. Told to leave Korčula before September 1, Chandler then settled in Florence.¹⁸ On May 27, 1941, the *New York Times* carried the following item under the title "Reich 'Paul Revere' Reveals Name":

*"One of Germany's radio commentators for America, 'Paul Revere', disclosed his identity last night in his regular broadcast over the official German radio, the National Broadcasting Company reported. He said he was Douglas Chandler, and that he was celebrating his fifty-second birthday. He declared that he was known in advertising and journalistic circles in the United States and had worked from 1936 to 1940 on the Baltimore American and had been a feature writer for The National Geographic Magazine."*¹⁹

Two years later Chandler was again in the *Times*, now with Ezra Pound and six others indicted for treason for "broadcasting Axis propaganda for Germany and Italy".²⁰ Attorney General Francis Biddle noted "It should be clearly understood that these indictments are based not only on the content of propaganda statements, the lies and falsifications which were uttered, but also on the simple fact that these people have freely elected, at a time when their country is at war, to devote their services to the cause of the enemies of the United States".²¹ In a breakdown of the eight accused traitors, material from the Department of Justice files reported Chandler's various employments and publishing ventures. "By 1938" the *Times* noted, "his conversion to nazism was 'complete' and he extolled its virtues in lectures in England and Scotland. In 1940 his anti-Semitic and pro-Axis views forced the Yugoslavian Government to withdraw his temporary residence permit".²² Also in

¹⁸ John Carver Edwards, *Berlin Calling: American Broadcasters in Service to the Third Reich*, N. Y.: Praeger, 1991, p. 125. Edward's chapter "Douglas Chandler, Alias Paul Revere" is a complete treatment of Chandler's life and activities.

¹⁹ P. 6.

²⁰ "8 from U. S. Indicted As Aiding the Axis", July 27, 1943, pp. 1, 6.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

1943, in a chapter titled "Through Decline Toward Disaster: 1934-'41", in a volume about Yugoslavia at war, Louis Adamic noted Chandler's broadcasts and indictment, beginning his short paragraph as follows:

*"After official Yugoslavia finally committed itself, in '36, to a pro-Axis reorientation, the country was overrun by Nazi agents, not all of whom were Germans. There was at least one American, Douglas Chandler, who had published some articles in the National Geographic Magazine, whose editors of course had no knowledge of his connections in Germany. But he used the publication as a key to various doors and a mask for his activities. Like many other foreign writers gathering material about Yugoslavia, he enjoyed special privileges. He did not confine himself to writing. On the island of Korcula, off the central coast of Dalmatia, he stirred up a minor pogrom against the few Jewish Yugoslavs and Austrian Jewish refugees. In spite of complaints by some native Korchulani, no one in authority moved against him – until an American, Dr. Dewitt Stetten of New York, who owned a summer home on the island, exposed his activities to the State Department in Washington."*²³

Had Vanka's work been on display anywhere, that information from Adamic might have allowed a reader-viewer to begin to penetrate the collage. By September 20, 1945, Chandler was listed as one of five of the traitors who had been arrested in Europe; on December 30, 1946, Chandler was reindicted for treason by a Federal grand jury in Boston; on June 28, 1947, he was convicted and on July 30 fined \$10,000 and sentenced to life imprisonment.²⁴ Just what the years had meant to the Berlin broadcaster are indicated by remarks he was allowed to read before his sentencing. Chandler started in part, *"I recommended to my counsel before the trial that I should take the stand to establish the truth of my beliefs, particularly as to the danger to my country from the conspiracy of world Jewry"*.²⁵ What is read in the

²³ *My Native Land*, N. Y.: Harper, 1943, pp. 359-360.

²⁴ "Five U. S. 'Traitors' Held", *New York Times*, September 20, 1945, p. 10; "Two Are Indicted on Treason Count", December 31, 1946, p. 5; "Chandler Guilty in Treason Case", June 29, 1947, p. 7; "Chandler Gets Life for Treason in Wartime Talks on Nazi Radio", July 31, 1947, p. 1.

²⁵ *Op. cit.*, *New York Times*, July 31, 1947, p. 1.

The authors wish to express sincere gratitude to Ira Schwartz of The Image Studio of New Jersey, Short Hills, New Jersey, U.S.A.

Information regarding M. Vanka not otherwise here documented results from numerous

collage – the distance between Chandler's words of "indifference to a New York Jewish physician" on Korčula in 1939 and this 1947 utterance, one rivaling any statement in any war crimes court anywhere, is the measure of the rise and fall of Fascism in the twentieth century. On that alone does Vanka's collage have an existence beyond its origins, finally allowing the painting better to be titled "World War II".

Not lost to the viewer but perhaps liable to play too secondary a role to the interpretation of the painting is the stunning quality of this Vanka work. Encompassing a multitude of broad and fine line brush strokes, hundreds of dots, shapes, and shadows (see illustrative details of portions of segments 1 and 6), the collage is as visually engaging even were the viewer to avoid explication.

The provenance of the collage "World War II": at Louis Adamic's death in 1951, Stella Adamic returned the collage to Maxo Vanka. In 1991, Margaret Vanka and Peggy Brasko presented the collage to Dr. Henry A. Christian.

personal and telephone interviews of Margaret Vanka and Peggy Vanka Brasko and her husband William conducted by Henry A. Christian from 1966 in 1996. The authors are also grateful to Dr. George J. Prpić, Professor Emeritus at John Carroll University for useful personal information and his publication "Maksimilijan Vanka", *Hrvatske Revije*, 8 (1958), pp. 129-160; and to Dr. Ivo Vidan and Mrs. Vidan for personal information and Dr. Vidan's "Maksimilijan Vanka i Louis Adamič," *Forum* (Zagreb), 1-2 (1984), pp.385-411.

POVZETEK

KAKO RAZBRATI SLIKO: KOLAŽ MAKSA VANKE »DRUGA SVETOVNA VOJNA«

Henry A. Christian
Tine T. Kurent

Vojna se je začela, ko je parnik Ile de France odpeljal zadnjo skupino ljudi iz Evrope v Ameriko na varno. Med njimi je bil tudi dr. DeWitt Stetten in drugi judovski begunci. Dogodek je upodobil njegov zet, ameriško-hrvaški slikar Makso Vanka s kolažem, na katerem parnik spominja na Ile de la Cité, srce Evrope. Drugi simboli na kompoziciji prikazujejo začetek vojne: kužne kali, ene s svastiko, druge s črno fašistično barvo in tretje z rdečim mikadovim soncem; podobno tudi napisi WAR ter imeni dveh ladij, ki so ju v dveh vojnah potopili Nemci, LUSITANIA in ATHENIA. Začetnici L in A zapiše Vanka še enkrat in ju razširi v ime L ADAMIC. Z velikim vprašanjem nad črko L se sprašuje, ali bo svet razumel svarila njegovega prijatelja Louisa. Oba, Vanka in Adamič, sta bila Američana, oba sta bila zaskrbljena zaradi naci-fašizma in antisemitizma.

Pripoved dr. Stettena o svoji rešitvi je zapisal Adamič v poglavju o nacističnem agentu Douglasu Chandlerju: "Ko se je uradna Jugoslavija končno odločila, leta '36, pristopiti k politiki Osi, so deželo preplavili nacistični agenti, pa ne samo nemški. Med njimi je bil vsaj en Američan, Douglas Chandler, ki je do tedaj objavil nekaj člankov v National Geographic Magazine, katerega uredniki seveda niso imeli pojma o njegovih zvezah z Nemčijo. Vsekakor je uporabljal svoje publikacije kot ključ za odpiranje mnogih vrat in za maskiranje svojega početja. Kot mnogi drugi tuji pisci, ki so zbirali gradivo o Jugoslaviji, je tudi on užival posebne privilegije. Toda ni se omejil samo na pisanje. Na otoku Korčula, pred Srednjo Dalmacijo, je sprožil skoraj pravi pogrom proti tisti peščici judovskih Jugoslovanov in proti judovskim beguncem iz Avstrije. Kljub pritožbam nekaterih korčulanov se nihče od oblasti ni niti zganil proti njemu, dokler ni dr. DeWitt Stetten, Amerikanec iz New Yorka, ki je imel počitniško hišo na otoku, razgalil njegovo rovarjenje Zunanjemu ministrstvu v Washingtonu. Chandler se je nato umaknil v Italijo in tam nadaljeval s svojim

delovanjem za Os. Leta 1942 so ga tisti Američani, ki so poslušali kratkovalovne postaje, poznali pod imenom 'Paul Revere', ko je iz Nemčije razglašal nacistično propagando. Pravosodno ministrstvo ga je 26. julija '43 obtožilo izdaje skupaj z Ezro Poundom in štirimi drugimi Američani, ki so služili kot agenti Osi." (My Native Land, Harper and Brothers: New York and London, 1943, pp. 359–360).

Kolaž je visok 17 in pol palca ali 35 polovičnih palcev, širok pa je 11 in pol palca ali 92 osmin palca. Meri imata kabalističen in gematričen pomen:

V številu 455, kar je zmnožek 13-krat 35, je skrit naslov kompozicije: THE BEGINNINGS OF WORLD WAR BY MAKSIMILIAN VANKA ali s številkami $(20+8+5) + (2+5+7+9+14+14+9+14+7+19) + (15+6) + (23+15+18+12+4) + (23+1+18) + (2+25) + (13+1+11+19+9+13+9+1+13) + (22+1+14+11+1) = 455$. Vanka je izbral zlovešče število 13, prav primerno v kontekstu z vojno. Poleg tega je višina 17" 6" enaka meri 210"; polovično število 105 pomeni tudi NEXT WAR, s številkami $(14+5+24+20) + (23+1+18)$.

S številom 92 pa se je podpisal avtor: VANKA FECIT velja $(22+1+14+11+1) + (6+5+5+9+20) = 92$.

V luči dogodkov, ki so sledili, je postal Vankin kolaž simbol II. svetovne vojne proti naci-fašizmu in antisemitizmu.