Masaryk University
Faculty of Arts
Department of English and American Studies
English Language and Literature

Marie Bartošová

The Naïve and Innocent - The Role of Americans in Graham Greene’s novels
Major Bachelor’s Thesis

Supervisor: doc. Mgr. Milada Franková, CSc., M.A

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Author’s Statement:
I declare that I have worked on this bachelor thesis independently, using only primary and secondary sources listed in the bibliography.

Marie Bartošová
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Appendix I.: The List of Works by Graham Greene

Appendix II.: *An Invitation to Voyage*
1. **Introduction**

The topic of the thesis deals with anti-Americanism in Graham Greene’s novels. The study will focus on Greene’s political development. Graham Greene was a name in the West as well as in the Communist countries in the times of the Iron Curtain. The times of the Cold War are long time over and Graham Greene’s works tend to be forgotten. Greene’s young readers do not have knowledge of the political background of his work in comparison to his readership of the Communist Czechoslovakia. Nevertheless, Greene is still attractive to be read because of catchy thrilling plots and a fallibility of main characters. Greene as a Catholic author – that is the most frequent issue. But what about his political topics? Greene favoured socialistic regimes and criticised the USA and capitalistic countries. The Communist propaganda twisted his works for its purposes, and therefore his Catholicism was pardoned in the Eastern Block.

Firstly, I will describe the life and work of Graham Greene in order to draw attention to events that initiated his political opinions. Owing to his mental disposition Greene looked for a thrill in his life and therefore he travelled into countries in a difficult political situation. There he first met with the interventionist policy of the powerful Western Allies. On the basis of his experiences Greene gradually developed from a writer dealing with social topics to a writer considering world political issues.

The chapter about involvement and disloyalty discusses Greene’s point of view on the writer’s position in the society. Greene trusted the idea that a writer should stand up for the ordinary people against the state machinery. Later he extended this idea also on world politics.

In the 1950’s the USA lived in an anti-Communist hysteria. Greene was present at the American intervention in Vietnam and he expressed his disapproval with the US policy in the novel *The Quiet American*. The character of naïve and innocent young American, Alden Pyle, is a personification of American imperceptiveness to a distinct Vietnamese culture.
Greene continued to incline to the left-wing ideas also in the 1960’s and the 1970’s. The development in the USSR scared him off and he focused on nationalist anti-American movements in Latin America. Greene favoured dictatorships believing that a new kind of social system emerged. On the other hand, he pounced at the American policy in those countries and at the US support of insensate political systems. The novel *The Comedians* described the terror regime at Haiti. The Smiths, naïve and quixotic, and also heroic, are a rare exception in the gallery of American characters in Greene’s work for their depiction is generally a positive one.

The last chapter deals with Greene’s inclination to Communism. It tries to find out why Greene favoured the left-wing ideology and its governments and tended to it until his whole life.
2. The Life of Graham Greene

Graham Greene is a British author of novels, short stories, plays, screenplays and poems. He became a legend already within his lifetime. His novels are gripping enough to be read without the knowledge about the author’s life, nevertheless, each of his works has features typical of Greene, so that critics claim that his novels take place in Greeneland. The “greening of Greene” (Sherry, Vol. I, 65) as Norman Sherry calls it, has its roots in the author’s life1.

Graham Greene was born as the fourth of six children of Charles Henry Greene and his wife Marion Raymond Greene in Berkhamsted on 2nd October 1904. Charles Henry Greene was a headmaster at Berkhamsted School and his wife was responsible for the catering at St. John’s, a boarders’ house. Unlike his elder brothers, Graham was not good at games and did not fit into the collective at school: “He was isolated, disliked and distrusted since he was the headmaster’s son” (Sherry, Vol. I, 69). He was very sensitive, book-oriented and could not get used to scheduled boarders’ life at St. John’s. His cousin Barbara Greene remembered that it was common that Graham had “crises” – nervous breakdowns.

In 1921 – still a pupil at Berkhamsted School - Greene suffered from depression and had suicidal intentions. His parents sent him to psychoanalysis to the psychiatrist Kenneth Richmond. Richmond’s therapy included analysis of dreams. This stay began Greene’s tradition of dream diaries - he made use of them as sources of inspiration by writing.

In 1922 Greene continued his studies at Balliol College in Oxford. His first literary attempts were published in Oxford Outlook magazine. In 1925 he and his friend Claud Cockburn joined the Communist Party of Great Britain, they were paid up members for four weeks. This could be only an episode in his adventurous life if Greene did not betray that fact to an American

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Time correspondent, which earned him problems with the US immigration policy in the 1950’s and 1960’s.  

After finishing his studies, Greene worked as a journalist in the Nottingham Journal and later in The Times in London. His first novel in 1929, The Man Within, was a success and Greene decided to start a career as a freelance novelist. The disillusion came with the second (The Name of Action) and the third (Rumour at Nightfall) novels that did not have favourable responses. Greene emerged from the crisis with the novel Stamboul Train in 1932, after that he continued his career successfully. Greene also wrote essays and contributed to newspapers, where he expressed his opinions about topical political issues.

As a journalist and correspondent Greene also travelled into the countries of political disorders. Travelling was a kind of escape. Greene was of manic-depressive nature and often described his mental condition as a kind of world-weariness. He felt boredom and despair. He searched for exceptional experiences and inspiration for his work in countries in difficult political situation, at places where danger of death was persistent. Norman Sherry wrote: “If death had come, his diaries reveal, he would have welcomed it.” (Sherry, Vol. III, Pref. XV). He wanted to do espionage in Ruhr Republic in 1924 and worked for MI6 in West Africa in 1941. He made more travels into the third world countries in Asia and Africa and was also interested in the politic situation in Latin America.

During his life Greene wrote two autobiographies: A Sort of Life (1971) and Ways of Escape (1980). As he was at a high age, his close friends and his publisher suggested to him that he choose his own biographer. He decided for Norman Sherry. Graham Greene considered his

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2 In the 1950’s and the 1960’s the USA started a strict anti-Communist policy that included restrictions for incomers to the USA that had ever been members of a Communist party (such as Greene). When John F. Kennedy’s became a president in 1961, the strict rules were gradually abolished.
3 The collection of Greene’s contributions to the press Yours etc.: Letters to the Press. brings a general view of his involvement and political opinion.
4 Greene worked for the Secret Intelligence Service even in the 1950’s (in Vietnam) and the 1960’s.
family life to be private and he did not want to talk about in interviews. In 1926 he converted to the Roman Catholic Church. He got married to Vivien Dayrell-Browning in 1927. They had two children a daughter Lucy Caroline (born 1933) and a son Francis (born 1936). They started to live in a separated marriage in 1948. They never divorced. Greene lived towards the end of his life in France. He died at La Providence Hospital in Vevey, Switzerland on 3rd April 1991.

3. The Work of Graham Greene

Graham Greene was often referred to as a Catholic author. He himself did not like this label and regarded himself as “a writer who happens to be a Catholic” (Conversations with Graham Greene, 58). This classifying began with Brighton Rock, a novel handling a Catholic theme: “Until Brighton Rock, nobody knew that I was a Catholic […] I always considered myself a protestant inside the Church rather than being a protestant outside.” (Conversations, 94)

His work can be divided into periods: his early works, political novels, Catholic novels and return to political novels again. Even Greene admitted such a development:

For one period I did write on Catholic subjects: From Brighton Rock to The Burnt-Out Case. […] One only began with a Catholic subject because one found it a great interest of the moment. […] My period of Catholic novels was preceded and followed by political novels. It’s a Battlefield and England Made Me were political novels. I was finding my way. […] The Quiet American and The Comedians are political novels. One has come full circle in a way. (Conversations, 79)

At his beginnings as a student in Oxford, Greene wrote essays, poems and short stories. To his early works are also counted The Name of Action and Rumours at Nightfall, novels in which Greene was only in search for his own style. In the 1930’s novels social problematic

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5 It was probably not very pleasant for Greene that Sherry revealed the background of his personal life, because Greene claimed that “he, Greene, would not live to read the second volume and that Sherry would not live to complete the third.” (Bergonzi)
ensued. In *Stamboul Train, It’s a Battlefield, England Made Me* and *A Gun for Sale* Greene demonstrated his dismal opinions on society and its development. With *Brighton Rock* in 1939 his period of Catholic novels started and Greene earned a reputation as “a Catholic writer”. The novels *The Power and the Glory, The Heart of the Matter* and *The End of the Affair* also dealt with Catholicism. A change in output came in the 1950’s, when Greene turned to social topics again. Greene emerged as a critic of the political situation in countries such as Vietnam (*The Quiet American*), Haiti (*The Comedians*) and Latin America (*The Honorary Consul)*.

Besides the above-mentioned “serious” novels, Greene also followed a sort of second line in his literary production, novels for easy reading. Greene called them “entertainers” or “entertainments”. The work on them was a kind of relaxation:

> The strain of writing a novel, which keeps the author confined for a period of years with his depressive self, is extreme, and I have always sought relief in “entertainments” – for melodrama as much as farce is an expression of a manic mood. (Kulshrestha, 179)

Typical features of Greene’s entertainments were emphasis on outward action, a lack of development in the characters and a use of melodramatic devices to link constituent sections of the novel. Most of them were thrillers. Their plots were usually based on crimes, murders, intrigues or espionages. Nevertheless, even in entertainers Greene raised moral and social questions, which brought the novels above the average of the genre. The characters may be depicted in a simpler way, on the other hand Greene compensated this weakness by psychological thrill. The first entertainment was *Stamboul Train* and it was a novel that began his steady successful career. The late thrillers had features of farces. As Kulshrestha indicates, Greene did

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7 Greene’s bibliography as well as the list of entertainers are added in the Appendix I.
not write any thriller since 1958, he found stress relief in writing comedies in such books as *May We Borrow Your Husband* or *Travels with My Aunt*.

Greeneland⁸ and seediness are terms often mentioned in relation to the setting of Greene’s narratives. “Greenelands” were countries of the third world such as Vietnam in *The Quiet American*, Mexico in *The Power and the Glory* or Duvalier’s Haiti in *The Comedians*. The protagonists happen to live or are forced to dwell in hopeless, desperate atmosphere in a country at war or civil wars or political unrest, where they become involved in events, though they usually resist to. Descriptions “seedy” and “seediness” often occurred by depictions of the settings; their meaning is shabby, old or worn out. Graham Greene did not like when critics pounced on Greeneland:

> I’m always slightly irritated by that phrase, “Greeneland”, and I can’t help wondering where the critics live, what sort of lives they live. I mean the Vietnam War is seedy, yes. The rule of Batista in Cuba belonged to that seedy world – dirt, torture, people half-starved. Where do these critics live? Do they live in Kensington and listen to the traffic going past the window and then have a cocktail party with friends? That, I think, is a worse world than “Greeneland”, and less true. (*Conversations*, 49)

The collection of interviews *Conversations with Graham Greene* shows that even within the span of time from the 1930’s till the 1970’s the journalists asked Greene almost similar questions dealing above all with the Catholic or political features of his novels. Greene’s answers were pretty much the same, which indicates a man of a clear point of view. Catholicism is an eternal topic; the idea of religiosity speaks to almost everyone. The political issues seem to be losing their up-to-dateness as well as the historical events are getting old and close to being forgotten. Nevertheless, Graham Greene valued *The Quiet American* and *The Honorary Consul*, his political novels, as his best novels.

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4. Involvement and Disloyalty

Graham Greene explained what a writer’s duties are in *Why Do I Write?* (1948). The author should be interested in the common good of society. Society means for him “people bound together for an end, who are making a future” (Böker, 27). Greene proved to be a sharp critic of the capitalist society though he did not offer solutions to the political issues. The way to gain readers on his side was to create fallible characters in order to “elicit sympathy and a measure of understanding” (*Why Do I Write?*, 46). In his opinion the successful characters were products of state propaganda and their authors were corrupted by the system. They did not affect society. On the other hand, the evoked sympathy to erring characters had to have its consequences. It was to awaken the humanity in the public. The reader should realize that “the apparent villain is in fact human, and deserves more compassion than the apparent hero” (Böker, 349)

Therefore Greene introduced outsiders who did not follow the unwritten rules of society. If the characters are disloyal to the society, their creator must behave the same. Greene emphasizes that it is the author’s duty to “to tell the truth as he [the writer] sees it and to accept no special privileges from the state” (*Why Do I Write?*, 31). The author must be disloyal to the establishment in order to make society better.

*The Quiet American* is a nice example of a disloyal work; it aroused a wild discussion on both sides of the Iron Curtain in the time of its publication. Greene had a capability to encompass a political issue into his novel one step earlier than it became up-to-date on the world political scene. *The Quiet American* speaks to the American involvement in Indo-China and it was published in the time of the first Vietnam War involving the US troops. If the book described wrongful interferences in the unknown political scene, the Vietnam War showed that the USA started a conflict of doubtful outcomes. Greene declares: “[...] literature may thrive on political

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9 Böker quotes from Toynbee, Philip. “Graham Greene on ‘The Job of the Writer’”, The Observer, 15.9.1957, p. 3
disturbance, if the disturbance goes deep enough and arouses a sufficiently passionate agreement or denial” (The Lost Childhood and Other Essays, 63).

To be disloyal means to lose security procured by the state. Loyalty stands for subordination. Therefore who wants to write independently cannot rely on conveniences from authorities. Greene recognized the link between loyalty and power. Greene explains:

I remember one day in Rule’s, in the thirties, overhearing a conversation at another table. A farmer was discussing the labourers whom he was able to hire at cut rates from a neighbouring lunatic asylum. He said: 'They are admirable workers. And they are so loyal.' My suspicion of what many people call loyalty was confirmed that day, though perhaps I would not go quite so far as my character Javitt in 'Under the Garden,' who advised: 'If you have to earn a living, boy, and the price they make you pay is loyalty, be a double-agent and let neither of the two sides know your real name.'” (Why Do I Write?, 31)

There is a connection between loyalty and the unequal distribution of economic and political power. Uwe Böker notes that results of such loyalties are depicted in The Ministry of Fear and Our Man in Havanna. (Böker, 35)

Therefore loyalty means dependence. It is not a result of free choice. The writer should never accept any privileges, when he wants to report truthfully:

The kindness of the State, the State’s interest in art, is far more dangerous than its indifference. […] The danger does not exist only in totalitarian countries. The bourgeois state, too, has its gifts to offer to the artist […]. If only writers could maintain that one virtue – so much more important to them than purity – unspotted from the world. Honours, State patronage, success, the praise of their fellows all tend to sap their disloyalty. […] How few die treacherous or blaspheming in old age, and have any at all been lucky enough to die by rope or a firing squad? I can think of none, for the world knows only too well that given time the writer will be corrupted into loyalty. (Why Do I Write?, 30, 31, 47)

Greene called himself an Anarchist in some interviews. What kind of Anarchist was he? He explained that his anarchism was based on his resolution to protect the common man against the state machinery and the politics of the ruling Party. Greene’s anarchism was a disloyalty to
the political powers. He was “disloyally loyal”. He was in the service of the society and towards it he was loyal but he fought against the ruling authorities to which he had to be disloyal.

5. The Anti-Greene USA in the 1950’s

In 1941 the Atlantic Charter comprised an idea of the whole world cooperating. The idea of “One World” was strongly supported by the US president Roosevelt. On the other hand, Winston Churchill and Joseph Stalin had a clear idea of the post-war structure in Europe. The Soviet Union wanted to create a secure sphere for itself in Eastern Europe that would protect it from the influence of the Western Allies. Although the “One World” vision had the best intentions, it would have also enhanced the position of the United States in particular. In 1946 Churchill spoke about the “iron curtain” and in 1947 Truman delivered a speech before Congress in which he expressed a new negative politics towards the USSR: “I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.” (Brinkley, American History, Vol. 2, 834)

Communism was a threat to democracy and the USA was to support fight against this threat. The 1950’s in the USA were hence marked by the fight against Communism. The “One World” idea was lost when Communism spread over to Korea and China and the USSR developed an atomic bomb. This unexpected development caused unease in the mood of the US nation, which was a good basis for the idea of a Communist conspiracy in the States. In 1947 the Republican Party accused the Democrats that under their rule the Communist diversionists infiltrated into the society. The House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) concentrated

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10 One World was a book by Wendell Willkie. It expressed the hope of many people in the USA for positive development of amiable relations among the USA, Great Britain and the USSR.
first at the movie industry, arguing that the Communists spread into Hollywood and that movies were affected by their propaganda. The interrogations followed. In 1950 the McCarran Internal Security Act was enacted. Communists were to be followed, prohibited to work in defence plants and denied passports. Besides, Communists from overseas were denied visas to enter the States. In 1952 Joseph McCarthy, a Republican senator, based his career on the persecution of Communists. The support for McCarthy ended in 1954.

Greene made a personal experience with the McCarran Act in 1952. As already mentioned, Greene revealed to a Time correspondent that he was a member of the Communist Party when he was twenty-one. What was meant as a joke on the absurdity of the McCarran Act, caused long-time troubles with the immigration office. When Greene was to receive the Catholic Literary Award in 1952, he applied for a visa and had to wait for it for three weeks, since Washington handled it. The New York Times wrote about this incident commenting that the authorities attempted to “hygienize” the intellectual circles: “an attempt which has seriously damaged our reputation as a liberal democracy abroad and has encouraged the forces of reaction, parochialism and xenophobia at home” (Böker, 146)

Greene also commented on the development of the anti-Communism crusades. In September 1952 Greene wrote an open letter to New Statesman protesting against the measures of the American Department of Justice against Charlie Chaplin. Chaplin with his family sailed for a vacation to Europe when the Department issued an order that he was to be arrested if he came to the USA without reporting the reasons. Greene commented that these methods of the Department of Justice infringe the freedom laws: “Intolerance in any country wounds freedom throughout the world”. (Böker, 147)

In another event Greene made problems to the immigration offices because he wanted to travel from Haiti to Great Britain via San Juan in Puerto Rico without a visa. He described in
Ways of Escape that what he expected to be a fine provocation of the US bureaucracy and fun became an unpleasant experience. Although he wanted to make himself visible when he phoned to the newspapers about his problems with the immigration office, at the end of the story he was really tired by the intransigence of the customs officers. He was deported back to Haiti and travelled onwards to Havana. (Ways of Escape, 210-216)

Greene proved to be a sharp critic of the American policy against foreigners. He used his fame in order to point at the senselessness of the anti-Communist laws. His aims might be seen as attempts to ridicule the system. The policy of the USA worsened the image of the state that protects democracy, Uwe Böker implies that Greene’s main aim was not Anti-Americanism, a fight against a superpower. Greene’s point was to protect the common man against the state machinery. He only railed against injustice. (Böker, 147-148)

6. The Quiet and Innocent (The Quiet American)

Graham Greene went to Vietnam in 1951. He stayed there within four years every winter. He reported about the war in Vietnam. His articles became dubious as he started to question the Americans’ right to interfere into the conflict: “They were there to protect an investment, but couldn’t the investment be avoided?” (Böker, 148) Greene predicted that Viet Minh under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh and with the support of Communists from China had stronger motivation to fight than the corrupted representatives of the South supported by the Western powers. He anticipated that the US idea to “defend democracy” and prevent Communism from expansion in Asia was hopeless.

As he remembers it in Ways of Escape he did not think at first that he could write a novel set in Vietnam until he met an American who tried to explain him the importance of
“finding a ‘third force in Vietnam’. "](Ways of Escape, 163) Although Greene explains in the preface to The Quiet American that he rearranged the historical events the way they fitted into the novel and he claims that “[he] certainly not borrowed the characters of anyone in Viet Nam” (The Quiet American, 5), he made use of his own experiences and incorporated even whole passages from his diaries into the novel.\footnote{For example, Fowler’s experience with opium smoking by which he starts to recite Baudelaire’s La Invitation Voyage was actually Greene’s experience described in his diary.}

The plot of The Quiet American is based on two main characters and their totally different lifestyles and attitudes towards politics. Thomas Fowler, a British journalist probably in his late fifties, lives in and reports about the wartime Vietnam for a couple of years and tries to remain impartial, on the other hand, his counterpart, Alden Pyle, a young American idealist, comes with only theoretical knowledge of the situation to the country, but with a strong commitment to his secret task of stepping in the political development. Right at the beginning we are told that Pyle was found murdered and that Fowler is suspected of the involvement in the crime and we also know that he really took part in it. The question whether Fowler killed Pyle or to what degree he is to be blamed for Pyle’s death remains unanswered until the end of the novel. Meanwhile the readers are thrilled by the plot, Greene develops the story based on the bias between Fowler and Pyle, their different attitudes towards political events in Vietnam and their rivalry for a beautiful Annamite Phuong.

If Pyle is a personification of an improper American politics and imperceptiveness towards a distinct Asian culture, then Fowler as a narrator of the whole story conveys Greene’s critique of such a meddler. Fowler can be considered to be Greene’s voice against the American politics, he and Pyle are full of contrasts, but this does not mean that Fowler is an absolutely good character. Fowler is a typical Greene’s hero – sceptical, negative, not very successful in his life,
but satisfied with it as it is, without any high aspirations. His only aim is not to interfere into anything or not to make any significant decisions because he does not want to bear any responsibility. To compare Fowler to Pyle is the easiest way to make the readers committed to what happened in Asia in the 1950’s and to force them to form their own opinions. Greene tries to win them over on his side and tells his own truth in the meantime.\(^{12}\)

What we learn about Alden Pyle is that he differed from the other Americans who stayed in Vietnam. Fowler says that he had enough of American reporters who were “big, noisy, boyish and middle-aged, full of sour cracks against the French” (*The Quiet American*, 23). Fowler does not concur with their manners as well as their way of making reportages. He knows that the army gives them restricted information about the war:

> […] after an engagement had been tidily finished and the casualties removed from the scene, they would be summoned to Hanoi, nearly four hours’ flight away, addressed by the Commander-in-Chief, lodged for one night in a Press Camp where they boasted that the barman was the best in Indo-China, flown over the late battlefield at a height of 3,000 feet (the limit of a heavy machine-gun’s range) and then delivered safely and noisily back, like a school treat, to the Continental Hotel in Saigon. (*The Quiet American*, 23)

The American reporters do not even have any interest in reporting truthfully about the war. They only want to enjoy the warlike adventure from a safe distance of a bar, plane or brothel. Like a group of boys at a scheduled school trip they are safe from any unforeseen incidents and do not feel the need to take the initiative and set out to the unknown battlefield. At the hotel in Saigon, they like to stay at the upper terrace – “the terrace which was popularly believed to be safer from hand-grenades.”(23)

On the contrary, Pyle is keen on the conflict. First thing he wants to know when he meets Fowler is if the shot he has already heard was an explosion from a grenade. Fowler

\(^{12}\) However this does not mean that the public agreed with his political opinion at the time of publication.
explains to him that it was probably only an exhaust of a car. Pyle is not afraid to take part in the war. He does not seek the company of other Americans, he even seems to be disturbed by their manners. He is quiet – “not one of those noisy bastards at the Continental” (17), modest and “very, very serious” (23). Fowler thinks that “a quiet American” characterizes Pyle precisely and at the same time he admits that it is as unusual description as “a blue lizard” or “a white elephant” (17). But Pyle really differs from the ordinary Americans. If they are middle-aged and boyish, he is young and inexperienced, but acts with dignity. They enjoy war from a safe distance and Pyle does not fear to rush into a danger. If they love their freedom, adventure and Vietnamese girls, he remains earnest, keeps control of himself and his love to Phuong is as honest as it only could be. Nevertheless, he comes with an opinion that the intentions of the USA are the best for Vietnam, which causes his inability to adjust and comprehend the Vietnamese culture.

The different approaches of Fowler and Pyle towards Vietnamese culture are reflected in their relationships towards Phuong. They are both in love with her, but they understand love differently. Phuong means Phoenix (11), a fabulous bird that rises from its ashes. Fowler also means “a hunter of birds”. This can indicate what kind of relationship they have. Phuong, like a Phoenix, brings calmness to Fowler’s world: “she was a certain hour of the night and the promise of rest” (12). He even compares her to a bird that brought happiness in his flat: “to take an Annamite to bed with you is like taking a bird: they twitter and sing on your pillow. […] their bones too were as fragile as a bird’s.” (13)

Fowler admits that his intentions with Phuong are egoistic. He lies in order to keep her by his side for he is afraid that he could not find another woman because he is old and he does not want to stay and die alone. She is a kind of medicine for his anxieties. He will have to go back to Britain sooner or later and he cannot offer to marry her since his wife does not agree with divorce. Moreover, he likes Phuong for her pragmatic attitude to life. He knows that as long as he
secures her home, she will stay. She will never be burdened with contemplations about relationship, which makes living with her easy. Her only motivation is to find a man who will keep her safe. A marriage to a European or an American man (who represents a kind of safe life guarantee) is the highest aim that she can think of. She likes to go to a milk bar or a cinema and is keen on the royal family, but the war in Vietnam absolutely does not matter to her. However, no matter how self-serving his behaviour is, Fowler still perceives Phuong as a personality with her needs.

On the other hand, Pyle cannot understand Phuong because he is influenced by her appearance of a weak woman who should be saved from life in Vietnam. Although he falls in love with her and is enchanted by her beauty, he does not see her as she really is. He trusts Phuong’s sister, Miss Hei, that Phuong wants family and children and does not see through Miss Hei’s materialistic intentions to gain a man of a better background for the sister. Moreover, Pyle’s businesslike behaviour shows when Hei unscrupulously offers Phuong to Pyle praising her good qualities as a possible wife. Notwithstanding the fact that Pyle knows Phuong only for few hours, he accepts her sister’s approach and discusses Phuong’s good character as if she were a thing and he does not understand or does not want to understand when Fowler indicates that their behaviour is improper. The way he thinks of Vietnam is the same when he discusses Phuong’s needs with her sister.

Where Fowler’s intentions are commanded by his desire for Phuong’s body, Pyle controls himself. He behaves courteously and keeps his distance. When he dances with her: “[he is] holding her so far away that you expected him at any moment to sever contact” (40). He has not had any experience with love and therefore he relies on conventions. He wants Phuong and thinks that the best he can do is to propose to her. Under the conviction of doing the right thing he wants to enhance Phuong to a better life. As if an American way of living were the best thing
for an Asian woman, he wants to marry Phuong, introduce her to his family and let his mother help her to assimilate to the American society.

He lets Fowler interpret the proposal because he does not speak good French and Phuong does not speak English. As if he offered a contract, Pyle mentions his material properties and wants to substantiate his proposal with a medical certificate and a document of his blood group. Furthermore, he wants to remain as reserved as possible because he does not want “to sway [her] emotionally” (76). Pyle’s features are sensibility and competitiveness. Although his knowledge of the language is weak, he could ask her himself, but he wants to do it at the presence of his rival. As if it were an act of bidding. What Fowler finds painful is for Pyle apparently a kind of competition. Right from the beginning he apologizes to Fowler that he will take Phuong away because he is convinced that he will win. Basing his appreciations on a cold calculation that he, the younger and more reliable, must win, he loses countenance when Phuong says no.

He also loses his temper when Fowler’s deception is revealed. He cannot understand how Fowler could promise to marry Phuong when it was a lie. He is exasperated that Fowler did not treat Phuong honestly. If the agreement about marriage is seen as a kind of contract, then Fowler’s falsehood violated Pyle’s world. According to his reaction he never thought of lying and the situation is absolutely inapprehensible to him. Fowler comments that Pyle is so innocent, young and inexperienced, and therefore he cannot understand that someone can resort to cheating in the matters of love.

If Fowler is afraid of living without Phuong and Pyle wants only to do the right thing without any conception of what she really is like, then the same relationships they have towards Phuong’s country, Vietnam. Fowler loves the country and Pyle is incapable of understanding it.
When Fowler smokes an opium pipe prepared by Phuong, the poem *An Invitation to Voyage* by Baudelaire comes up to his mind:

‘Mon enfant, ma soeur ...’ How did go on? *Aimer à loisir, / Aimer et mourir/ Au pays qui te ressemble.* Out on the waterfront slept the ships, ‘*dant l’humeur est vagabonde*’ [...] I had seen the flowers on her dress beside the canals in the north, she was indigenous like a herb, and I never wanted to go home. (14)

In Baudelaire’s poem Fowler sees his general associations with Vietnam. An incomer describes a country of “order and beauty,/ Richness, quiet and pleasure […] [that] is to satisfy,/ Your slightest desire.” (59) Fowler loves Vietnam because the country rendered him pleasure and happiness that he did not have in Britain and he considers Vietnam to be his new home: “[…] and I did not care a damn [of Britain]. […] I wanted to keep the sight of those silk-trousered figures moving with grace through the humid noon, I wanted Phuong, and my home had shifted its ground eight thousand miles”. (25)

He repeats many times that it is not his aim to get involved. There are sensible reasons for not favouring any side – it is not his war and he is only an observer. On the other hand, he is emotionally involved right from the beginning: “It’s not a matter of reason or. We all get involved in a moment of emotion and then we cannot justice get out.” (152) No matter how much he wants to remain impartial he has to undertake an action against Pyle in the end.

However there are implications that Pyle is rational and cannot get emotionally involved, there is a field where he takes part in very enthusiastically. It is the politics and his special task. Again he wants to do the right thing and does not understand Fowler’s objections that the Vietnamese peasants have never expected to be saved by the USA or even anyone else from the West. Pyle is in politics as rational as in relations. He comes to Vietnam equipped with

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13 The translation of *L’Invitation au Voyage* is taken over from *Flowers of Evil and Other Works* by Charles Baudelaire. p. 56-59. For the translation of the whole poem see Appendix II.
14 ‘My child, my sister…’ ‘[…] Of loving peacefully/ Loving and dying / In the land that bears your resemblance […]’ ‘Whose temperament is a wanderer’s’ (Flowers of Evil, 59)
knowledge from books by York Harding, an expert on Indo-China issue. York Harding is Greene’s invented character, a writer who maintains the position that neither the French colonists nor Communists should gain control over Vietnam, but that the USA should support a nationalistic movement, a kind of a Third Force\(^\text{15}\), that will start a new regime and will be loyal to the US politics. Pyle’s task is to find such a representative of the Third Force and to develop cooperation. In his innocence he believes that General Thé that has separated from Caodaists could be a leader of such a nationalistic movement.

As Uwe Böker implies there are even symbolisms in the names York Harding and Pyle. “York” means to “put out”, “knock out” or “eliminate”, “harding” is the process of becoming tough, resistant or firm. The process of Harding leads to “pile” (a homophone to “pyle”) that associates distance and static. (Böker, 154) Greene plays with associations of “pile”. Fowler does not like to call Pyle by his first name because in contrast to the surname “Alden” it does not awaken any associations: “Pyle has got – associations. Have you thought about it?” (75) In the mortuary Fowler thinks that Pyle’s corpse is pulled out “like a tray of ice-cubes” (29). The associations of “pyle” or “pile” come up when Pyle’s special task starts to bring disaster. After the bomb attacks the places remain in ruins. All lies in piles.

No matter how sarcastic Fowler is about York Harding, Pyle does not want to understand the impropriety. When they stuck at a watchtower with two Vietnamese men, Fowler asks Pyle: “Do you think they know they are fighting for democracy? We ought to have York Harding here to explain it to them.” (93) Fowler emphasizes that the Western powers should not interfere into politics of Vietnam. The whites only impose to Asians thoughts that they would never think of – “isms and “ocracies” (95).

\(^{15}\) The idea of supporting a nationalistic Third Force that will concur the Communists was a popular idea in the USA and Great Britain after the year 1945. (Böker, 152)
When Pyle comes up with the idea of a Domino effect\textsuperscript{16}: “If Indo-China goes …” (95), Fowler replies:

I know the record. Siam goes. Malaya goes. Indonesia goes. What does “go” men? If I believe in your God and another life, I’d bet my future harp against your golden crown that in five hundred years there may be no New York or London, but they’ll be growing paddy in these fields, they’ll be carrying their produce to market on long poles wearing their pointed hats. The small boys will be sitting on the buffaloes. I like buffaloes, they don’t like our smell, the smell of Europeans. And remember – from a buffalo’s point of view you are a European too. (95)

Fowler can imply that the Western powers do not have the right to intervene, but Pyle does not want to understand. He believes Harding’s theory absolutely. Fowler comments:

[Harding is] a superior sort of journalist – they call them diplomatic correspondents. He gets hold of an idea and then alters every situation to fit the idea. Pyle came out here full of York Harding’s idea. Harding had been here once for a week on his way from Bangkok to Tokyo. Pyle made the mistake of putting his idea into practice. Harding wrote about a Third Force. Pyle formed a one – a shoddy little bandit with two thousand men and a couple of tame tigers. He got mixed up. (168)

Pyle becomes a victim of his own naivety when he starts to supply General Thé with material for bicycle bombs. The situation becomes serious when civilians are the targets of Thé’s terrorist attacks. Pyle does not want to understand that there was an intention in it. He refers to the explosion as to a mistake. There was to be a parade and the victims should be soldiers. Fowler understands it clearly that Thé let the bomb explode deliberately:

Do you expect general Thé to lose his demonstration? This is better than a parade. Women and children are news, and soldiers aren’t, in a war. This will hit the world’s Press. You’ve put General Thé on the map all right, Pyle. You’ve got the Third Force and National Democracy all over your right shoe. (162)

\textsuperscript{16} Dwigt Eisenhower adopted the idea of Domino in the US foreign policy. It was based on the Truman Doctrine that stated that the USA would support any democratic government in the world in a fight if it were threatened by a Communist putsch. The Domino idea stated that if the USA left one Asian country to the influence of the Communists, other counties would follow. Therefore an intervention was justified. For more see Böker, 153 and Brinkley, p. 834, 844-846, 874-876.
Although Fowler is angry with Pyle, which makes Pyle worried, he cannot get him moved emotionally. If Pyle’s approach towards Phuong is distant and reserved, he is also incapable of perceiving the reality. When he steps into blood, his only thought is that he has to have the shoe polished before he visits the Minister.

Pyle never thinks that the war concerns him personally and that he could be in danger. He follows Fowler to a battlefield in order to tell him that he fell in love with Phuong and is more worried about Fowler’s reaction than about his own safety. At the watchtower besieged by Viet Minh he also does not seem personally concerned – “like a schoolboy watching a demonstration in the laboratory” (106). He asks if he should shoot the two young Vietnamese soldiers just in case.

“I didn’t know”(162) and “Thé wouldn’t have done this”(163) are Pyle’s only answers to the incident of explosion. Later Pyle admits that he had a serious talk with Thé as if one discussion would change the guerrilla. Nevertheless, he still keeps on supporting him and does not understand that the General only abuses his naivety and that there is no fairness in politics.

Fowler realizes that he cannot stop Pyle and having innocent casualties on his mind he decides to take an action: “[…] you can’t blame the innocent, they are always guiltless. All you can do is control them or eliminate them. Innocence is a kind of insanity.” (163)

To eliminate Pyle is the only way to stop him. Pyle even admits: “[…] I’m not likely to change either – except with death.”(179). Fowler gives him the last chance when he reads him a poem that describes a behaviour similar to Pyle’s and contains a menace of what will happen to a person that does not feel guilty. When Pyle does not understand, Fowler lets him to go on an appointment where he is killed by Communists. Fowler sacrifices Pyle because he wants to protect the ordinary people, the Vietnamese. Pyle sees the victims of war only as a triviality. In
his opinion they died for a good thing, for his task. Where Fowler cannot get rid of sight of dead children, Pyle sees a relative error.

In conclusion, the quiet American, Alden Pyle, is a character brought to an extremity. Coming from a comfortably situated family he becomes enthused with political theories that he comes to carry out as if it were a harmless school experiment. His background of a commercially oriented US society makes it impossible for him to understand the needs of an agrarian country. His inability to empathize supported by his inexperienced youth and naivety bring only disaster. Greene shows that any help of the Western powers is useless and that it would be better to leave it to a natural political development than to interfere and introduce alien concepts, “isms and ocracies” (95), to Vietnam. The ordinary Vietnamese do not need the notions of world politics to live happy lives. The conflict is caused by extraneous influences. Some foreign politicians only steal lives of the Vietnamese and bring deaths to their relatives.

In the time of the publication the novel aroused a lively discussion. The American and the Communist literary critics saw in the novel Communist propaganda. In the USA the book caused a negative hysteria, in the USSR the book was welcomed and praised. These speculations were based on the fact that Fowler establishes a contact with Communists in order to get rid of Pyle. This could lead to a conclusion that Fowler himself becomes a Communist. The critics neglected the situations when Fowler sees corpses of children and their mothers. Fowler decision to sacrifice Pyle is based on the empathy with the victims, on the perception of suffering.

17 The information about reception of The Quiet American is based on Böker, 156. For more information see also “Wrong Model.” Yours etc.: Letters to the Press. p. 126-127
7. The Turn Point in Greene's Political Development in the 1960’s

When Greene remembered his joining the Communist Party of Great Britain, he usually referred to it as to a youthful excess. He rejected to admit that at that time the membership was for him important. His friends recollected that when they asked him in 1925 why he did it he answered: “Well, I think it’s the only future.” (Sherry, Vol. I., 161) His inclination to left-wing politics lasted till the end of his life, even if he probably did not want to admit it frankly.

As already mentioned, Greene started his career with novels about social issues, then turned to Catholic novels in the 1940’s and then swung back to social and political issues in the 1950’s when he started to write novels concerning the world politics. At this stage *The Quiet American* could be considered as the peak of Greene’s output. If the 1950’s are regarded as the time of Greene’s critique of the American intervention in South-East Asia, then in the 1960’s the features of Greene’s work changed because Greene started to take interest in the political issues in Latin America. This development continued to the 1970’s.

Greene had a strong inclination to sympathise with socialist regimes such as Fidel Castro’s regime at Cuba or Omar Torrijos’ dictatorship in Panama. His contributions to the press supported political developments that inclined to the left-wing politics in the states of Latin America. Actually, he stood up for such developments and opposed interventions of the Western Powers with the USA as a leader of those actions. Important is the fact that Greene supported regimes that were in his opinion “social” and that were not “Communist”.18 Communist was according to Greene the regime in the USSR and in its satellites in Eastern Europe and against it he had strong objections. Although for most journalists, the public and also “democratic”19

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18 See Čulík, 397 and Böker, 165.
19 By “democratic” take in consideration the Truman Doctrine that drew the line between democratic and nondemocratic governments. The division “the USA against the USSR and its satellites” extended to “the USA against any regime that would be potentially Communist” (For more see Brinkley, 878).
regimes there was no difference between the dictatorships in Latin America and the soviet regime, Greene saw there differences and decided to point at them in the press\textsuperscript{20} and even in his books\textsuperscript{21}.

There were the Cuban Crises in the 1960’s that probably contributed to the turn point in Greene’s attitude when he started to support socialist regimes in Latin America. The other aspects were the Cold War and the US politics since 1945. As Brinkley\textsuperscript{22} points out the relations of the USA and the states of Latin America were never good. Although Franklin Roosevelt in the 1930’s started the programme Good Neighbor Policy that was to maintain good relationships with Latin America, this project was abandoned a decade later when the United States began to send most of its foreign aid to post-war Europe and Asia. Even though the USA turned away from Latin America, their business activities in the countries continued. Many Latin Americans therefore started to understand the US presence as a kind of exploitation, as a “Yankee imperialism” (Brinkley, 877). During the 1950’s and the 1960’s the anti-American was on the rise, which the US government realized too late. Any kind of US political intervention in Latin America was at that time recognized as incompetent and led to protests\textsuperscript{23}.

Cuba could be seen as an example of a Latin American state where an inadequate supportive politics of the USA in the 1950’s led to a takeover and an advance of an Anti-American regime. The USA supported the military dictatorship of Fulgenico Batista that seized power in 1952. In return the dictator was loyal to the States and the American corporations controlled the Cuban economy. When in 1957 a movement of resistance started to form under the

\textsuperscript{20} See also “Dr Castro’s Cuba.” \textit{Yours etc.: Letters to the Press}. p. 109-111

\textsuperscript{21} Such as \textit{Getting to Know the General: The Story of an Involvement}, in which Greene describes his friendship with and admiration to a dictator General Torrijos in Panama.

\textsuperscript{22} For the development of anti-American policy in Latin America see Brinkley, 878-881

\textsuperscript{23} When Vice President Richard Nixon made a political visit in Guatemala in 1958, he was welcomed by demonstrations and protests.
leadership of Fidel Castro, the USA did not step in at first. In 1959 Castro came to power and introduced restrictions against the USA\textsuperscript{24}.

Graham Greene travelled to Cuba already in 1950’s. He informed about Batista’s regime in British newspapers. He denounced the regime and American and British governments that supported it:

President Batista’s police state, addicted like most police states to the practice of torture, was supported not only by the American Government of the time, not only by the more influential racketeers of Las Vegas, who controlled the gambling concessions and brothels of Havana, but also, in blinkered way by the present British Government. (\textit{Yours etc.}, 109)

In Greene’s opinion the Americans did not only profit on the trade with Cuba; there were also the businessmen from Las Vegas that ran nightclubs, Casinos and brothels in Havana and misused Cuban milieu. Regarding his political engagement that favoured Castro Greene was invited to a visit to Cuba in 1963.

Graham Greene wrote about Castro’s regime enthusiastically. He argued that though Cuba was short on consumer goods and groceries due to political isolation, it was a success that the USA did not have any influence on the state any more. He also found an improvement in the educational system since the fall of Batista’s regime and was pleased by Castro’s support of Cuban art. What impressed Greene was the cooperation of the Marxist regime with the Catholic Church.

Greene was enthusiastic about Castro’s speeches in the public: “[…] there is a sense of man thinking aloud. He explains his course of action, he admits mistakes, he explains difficulties – one has the sense that he respects the intelligence of his audience. […] This is a new voice in

\textsuperscript{24} For more information about the development of the relationship between the USA and Cuba in the 1960’s and 1970’s see Brinkley, p. 901-903.
the Communist world.” (Böker, 164)\textsuperscript{25} When Castro’s regime started it brought a noticeable improvement for the low class\textsuperscript{26}, which Greene appreciated. He believed that this regime is a kind of human Marxist regime, a counterpart to what the USSR represented.\textsuperscript{27} Therefore he probably did not pay attention to a suppression of civil rights (such as work camps for political prisoners) and a transition to a dogmatic Marxism during his next visit in 1966. He still saw Castro as a strong personality and thought that Cuba was “the real testing ground of Communism” (Böker, 164).

The reason why Greene wanted so much to believe in the humanity of socialistic regimes or dictatorships was probably based on the bad experience with Communism in the USSR. The tough government of the Soviet Union over half of Europe disappointed Greene. He described the government of the USSR as a “hideous Establishment of stupid men” and protested against “that lack of a human face in what is still called Soviet ‘communism’ there” (\textit{Yours etc.}, 141). In 1967 Greene protested against the Soviet dictatorship in the press by the occasion of trials with Russian writers Sinyavsky and Daniel who were put on trial because of their satirical works criticising the regime.\textsuperscript{28} He wrote letters to the Soviet government; he wanted that his publisher in Moscow would help the tried writers. When he got negative responses and understood that he could not influence the events in the USSR, he at least commented the injustice in the British press. Greene had as well opposed the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. He protested that the USSR did not have the right to occupy a country in which Communism tended to humanity. He found in Dubček a politician with a new attitude, an attitude that would mean a beginning of humane Communism. In the contrast the Soviet Union stopped this development and

\textsuperscript{25} Böker quotes from Greene, Graham. “Return to Cuba.” \textit{The Sunday Telegraph}, 22.9.1963, p. 4-5.
\textsuperscript{26} See Kašpar, p.169
\textsuperscript{27} See “Tyrannies.” \textit{Yours etc.: Letters to the Press}, p.140.
Normalisation followed. Greene therefore focused on revolutionary tendencies somewhere else in the world, such as nationalistic movements in Latin America.

Greene’s critics pounced that he did not see the facts and absolutely uncritically favoured dictatorships. In the 1970’s he approved and described positively the regime of Salvator Allende in Chile, in the 1980’s a friendship with the dictator Omar Torrijos in Panama started. Greene wrote about his relationship with Torrijos a book, *Getting to Know the General: The Story of an Involvement*, in which he described his admiration for General’s work and his political fight for the Panama Canal against the USA.

When Greene favoured the socialist or Communist regimes in Latin America, his contributions were sometimes provocative, sometimes too idealistic. Other journalists blamed him for his Communist approaches or they pointed at his blindness to the dark sides of such governments. As much as he could be a sharp critic of Soviet Communism, he was capable to excuse violations of human rights in the states that he liked. Partially it was probably caused by his idea of “disloyalty”. The other aspect was Greene’s characteristic feature – a natural inclination to Communist ideas. In the task of “disloyalty” he tried to point at political faults of the Western Powers, such as the USA and Great Britain. Greene was against American colonialism in the world, against the US interventions in the third world countries. Therefore he supported the anti-American nationalist movements that emerged in Latin America in the 1960’s and the 1970’s. Nowadays, considering those times one should not blame him for believing in human socialist movements, even though it was proved that Greene’s anticipations were mostly wrong.

29 See Böker, p. 165 and *Yours etc.: Letters to the Press*, p. 190 and 238.
30 See Greene, Graham. *Getting to Know the General: The Story of an Involvement*. 
8. The Naive and Quixotic Smiths (The Comedians)

The novel The Comedians is an example of Greene’s report about a political regime of terror that was supported by the USA\textsuperscript{31}. Greene visited Haiti three times in the 1960’s and already in 1963 he informed about the desperate situation caused by the reign of François Duvalier, also called Papa Doc, and his secret police Tontons Macoute in the article “Nightmare Republic”\textsuperscript{32}. When Duvalier removed all possible representatives of an opposition and appointed himself to a president for a lifetime\textsuperscript{33}, Greene did not see any chance for an improvement. Greene expressed his opinion in the novel The Comedians\textsuperscript{34} that was published in 1967.

As well as in cases of his other novels Greene found inspiration in a real life and real people that he met on Haiti.\textsuperscript{35} Greene made the use of the desperate situation in Haiti and created a serious novel with features of the macabre and absurd that lead to comic situations. The Comedians are actually a farce because the situation at Haiti is depicted so hopelessly that the only way out was to derogate the incomprehensible relations on the island by absurdity and comics. The novel is in many ways similar to The Quiet American, besides this fact that in the novel about Vietnam Greene did not go so far.

The narrator of the story is an owner of a hotel at Haiti, Brown, who does not have any morals and lives his life aimlessly. His reaction to all the absurdities that he faces to is his scepticism. His point of view stands against two more attitudes. The first one is represented by Jones, a kind of cheater, who knows how to misuse the situation and his most important ability is to live at someone’s else expense. A contrast to the characters of Brown and Jones that see through each other right from the beginning is presented the married couple, Mr. and Mrs.

\textsuperscript{31} See also “Tyrannies.” Yours etc.: Letters to the Press. p. 140-141. and “Haiti Massacre.” Yours etc.: Letters to the Press. p. 146-148.
\textsuperscript{33} Duvalier’s reign lasted from 1957 to 1971.
\textsuperscript{34} For more information about Greene’s visits o Haiti and his experience see Sherry. Vol. III., p. 313-375.
\textsuperscript{35} Greene comments on his inspiration in The Comedians, p. 5-6.
Smiths, naïve and idealistic Americans. The Smiths belong to the gallery of comic figures of Americans in Greene’s novel, but on the other hand, this time the whole impression of them is a positive one. No matter how long they trust their own assumptions and although they tend to get into troubles, they do not make any harm (in comparison to Alden Pyle). Even in the choice of names hides the absurdity. Smith, Brown and Jones are so common names that they could be confused one with another. Nevertheless, the characters are totally different.

Greene got to be inspired by a poem by Baudelaire once again.36 This time it was *A Voyage to Cythera*37 that it was referred to.38 A young poet who is forced by the political consequences to join guerrillas and fight Duvalier mentions passages from it. The opposition in the poem also refers to the plot in *The Comedians*. The poem is based on the expectations of the traveller that sails to the island and on the reality that he sees when his ship comes closer to the shore. What from a distance seems to be an island of love is actually a place of a terror and death. The traveller sees a corpse on the gallows that decays.

In *The Comedians* the passengers sail on the ship Medea to Haiti and each of them has although different, nevertheless generally positive expectations what the island is like. We are let to know about their intentions of their voyage to Haiti. But when they finally land, they realize that the petrifying situation on the island. Brown experiences this change more times. Firstly, he remembers the happy times before Duvalier’s reign, when his hotel was prosperous, and now he cannot earn a living there. Then he thinks of his love, Martha Pineda, whom he had a relationship with, but when he comes to his hotel what awaits him is the corpse of the ex-minister, Doctor Philipot, on the bottom of the swimming pool. Another character, Mr. Jones, sees in Duvalier’s

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36 For the analysis of the poem see also Böker, p. 185-186.
37 For the whole poem see “A Voyage to Cythera.” *Flowers of Evil and Other Works by Charles Baudelaire.* p.89-91.
38 See *The Comedians*, p. 118 and 173.
corrupt regime an easy way to get rich by cheating, but actually dies when he tries to help guerrillas that fight against Papa Doc’s regime.

The Smiths, an older American couple, come to Haiti with an aim to establish a vegetarian centre that would improve the quality of living of the poor people. It takes them a long time to gasp that the political system is so much corrupt that their project cannot even get started. The Smiths are vegetarians and trust that by introducing vegetarianism they will lighten the situation to the poorest. Mr. Smith explains: “Vegetarianism isn’t only a question of diet, Mr Brown. It touches life at many points. If we really eliminated acidity from the human body we would eliminate passion.” (21) The first wrong assumption that the Smiths have is that vegetarianism is a way to improve the social situation at Haiti. They did not realize that the Haitians do not any meat or even fish to eat. As the Americans coming from a welfare state they did not count with such poverty that people do not have meat to eat. Although Brown points at this mistake, the Smiths continue to work on establishing the centre.

The political activity of the Smiths plays also an important role. Mr. Smith was a presidential candidate and the married couple remembers it as the highest aim that Mr. Smith managed to reach in his political career: “It was not for nothing that I had been a presidential candidate.” (113) They make use of the title “presidential candidate” and they are accepted with honour at Haiti because as sceptical Brown points out no one is aware of the electoral system at Haiti and does not know that Mr. Smith was only one of the many. At this point, another feature of Americans, their political activities at home and the respect they treat any political participation is depicted. The Haitians would probably not regard it with such a dignity as the Smiths do if they understood the irrelevance of Smith’s participation as a candidate for a party that wanted to eliminate consummation of meat in the USA.
Another assumption that the Smiths have is the idea of their advantage of not being the racists. They remember when they took part in a demonstration for the civil rights of the blacks in Nashville: “The policeman gave me a black eye.” (128) They refer to their ability to deal with the blacks equally more times: “We have a great love for coloured people.” (19) What they do not regard is the fact that they came to Haiti, a country where all inhabitants have black skin, the poor as well as the dictator Duvalier and his henchmen Tontons Macoute, and that the colour of the skin does not play any role in the stratification to social classes. When Brown tries to make them realize, but he does not manages to.

Actually, the pale skin is a kind of disadvantage for it is a sign of an incomer, in their case of someone who is naïve and from whom a lot of money could be gained. The Haitian officers expect that Mr. Smith, as an American with a sort of political career, has a certain sum of money that could be used for their personal purposes. An absurd discrepancy emerges when Brown tries to make Mr. Smith understand that the Haitians are not interested in the idea of a vegetarian centre, moreover, they would like to con him out of the money donated on the project. On the other hand, Mr. Smith actually does not possess any big sum of money and expects the Haitian officers to obtain the supplies for his project.

If Alden Pyle believes in fair play of his counterpart General Thé, the Smiths do the same. However they do not give the corrupted Haitians any advantage, any dangerous weapon as it happened in the case of The Quiet American. Moreover, Mr. Smith’s uncompromising attitude enforced by dealing about Jones’ release from prison has an unexpected impact on the officers. They do not know how to avoid to Mr. Smith’s fairness when he insists on a respecting of his rights and therefore they have to do what is supposed to be the right thing. They leave Smith and Brown visit Jones. It is also Mr. Smith’s sense for fair-play that compels the two-faced Secretary of Social Welfare to admit his dishonest intentions to gain the money for himself. The Smiths 
excuse long time the unfair behaviour of ruling class at Haiti. They try to persuade themselves that the fault is on their side. Finally, they manage to understand, which means a big shock.

Until the turn point comes, the behaviour of the Smiths is based on the principles of equality that they energetically impose. Alden Pyle counts with the same presupposition that nothing can happen to him. In the same way Mr. and Mrs. act when they attempt to prevent Tontons Macoute, actually murderers, to steal the corpse of Doctor Philipot. It is also Mrs. Smith who saves Brown from a certain death when she reproaches a troop of Tontons Macoute in her imperfect but persuasive French combined with English:

She advanced on him, all her hard won vocabulary forgotten. “How dare you come here flourishing a revolver? Give it to me,” and she held out her hand for it as though he were a child with a catapult. Captain Concasseur may not have understood her English, but he understood very well the gesture. As though he were guarding a precious object from an angry mother, he buttoned the gun back inside the holster. […] She said in her atrocious accent, “You have searched. You have not found. You can go.” [Captain Concasseur ] capitulated. He led his men out and soon they were going down the drive more noisily than they had come, laughing hollowly in an attempt to heal their wounded pride. (186, 187)

To sum it up, the Smiths have some features common with the quiet American, Alden Pyle. However, Greene despite their unbelievable naivety depicts them positively. They contrast with the character of sceptic Brown that admits in the end that they are “not comic, [but] heroic” (192).

It is important to emphasise that Greene did not want to write a novel about Americanism policy as it was in the case of The Quiet American. The Smiths create only a subplot. The main aim was the depiction of Duvalier’s regime. The novel gained its publicity. The dictator raised objection against the work and let on its own expense publicise a tourist brochure depicting Haiti as a paradise country with lot of illustrative photos.  

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9. Greene as a Sympathiser with Communism

During the Iron Curtain the democratic world protected itself from the non-democratic threats, such as soviet communism or dictatorships. Those were the days when to stand up for revolutions based on Marxist ideology meant to be labelled as being “left-wing oriented”. Greene expressed his disapproval with the American policy of interference. He saw the USA as a new-age colonising power that misuses weaker countries. If Greene was an anti-American activist, what was his attitude towards Marxism-Leninism? To what degree was he a Communist?

“Well, I think it’s the only future.” (Sherry, Vol. I., 161) This Greene told to a shocked friend when he was asked about his membership in a Communist Party. It has to be considered that Greene always looked for a change, a thrill in his life. His membership could be a way of escape from the boredom that he suffered from. But as Jan Čulík points out Greene’s left-wing tendencies remained in him for the rest of his lifetime. They are also apparent in the collection of Greene’s articles *Yours etc.: Letters to the Press*. For an inhabitant of a former Communist country it is difficult to understand Greene and his support of Communism and his belief in revolutions. Especially when everyone knows what consequences they had. How could anyone who saw what Communist takeovers made with a half of Europe even then believed in a rightness of putsches in Latin America? As Čulík remarked when Greene met with an ideology, it had catastrophic consequences.40

Greene always liked the idea of a socialist state. In his early novels in the 1930’s the social issues are present, such as in *It’s a Battlefield* and *England Made Me*. As an inhabitant of capitalist Great Britain he was discomposd by the materialism and the loss of humanity. It should be remembered that as the Cold War started the democratic governments found it rightful

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to defend their political systems against the threat of Communism from the USSR and to use sharper means. The interventions in the Third World countries were the consequences of such a policy. Greene found this to be an inadmissible overstep of authorities. He was on the side of countries that could not protect themselves against such a strong power, as the USA was.

Greene felt liking to Communism. Moreover, he was not alone who was gripped by the idea of establishing a better political system that would be a starting point for a better society. The idea could not be realized. When the Stalinism started, Greene diverted from the Soviet Union and started to take interest in the regimes in Latin America.

However, even then some of his statements were very provocative. In the 1960’s the trials with Sinyavsky and Daniel took place, which caused an important change in Greene’s opinion on the USSR. However, even then he claimed that

If I had to choose between life in the Soviet Union and life in the United States of America, I would certainly choose the Soviet Union, just as I would choose life in Cuba to life in those southern American republics, like Bolivia, dominated by their northern neighbour, or life in North Vietnam to life in South Vietnam. But the greater the affection one feels for any country the more one is driven to protest against any failure of justice there. (Yours etc., 136)

His critics reacted by saying that they did not understand that he could be so irrational and suggested that he should start to live there that he liked those regimes so much. 41 In 1971, again, he claimed to be “in greater sympathy with Communism than ever before, though less and less now with the Russian version of it” (A Sort of Life, 132). Greene admitted that he turned away from Stalinist Communism and took interest in Cuban regime and Castro’s politics.

He railed against information in newspapers that described Castro as a Communist. He based his objections on an assumption that a leader who supports the Catholic Church and

41 See “The Writers Engage in Battle.” Yours etc.: Letters to the Press, p. 135-139.
integrates it in his political movement cannot be a Communist.\textsuperscript{42} When Castro gradually more and more cooperated with the USSR, Greene still believed that a new revolutionary governing system developed at Cuba. The union of socialistic ideas and Catholicism was for a writer that happened to be a Catholic and dealt with social issues was such an amazing process that he was capable of not seeing the injustice in the country. Greene noticeably contributed to a positive image of Castro’s Cuba by his articles in the press.\textsuperscript{43}

It was Castro who recommended Greene to Omar Torrijos.\textsuperscript{44} Torrijos invited Greene to a visit of Panama in 1976. The aim was to gain publicity for the political disagreement between the USA and Panama. Torrijos negotiated with the USA about the return of the Canal Zone, which was under American control. Greene was enthusiastic about General’s personality and started to draw attention on the political situation in Central America. The book \textit{Getting to Know the General} was also a way to create a positive image of Panama’s dictator. Greene acted as a Panama’s representative during the negotiations with the USA. The Canal Zone was finally returned to Panama in 1978. It has to be mentioned that Greene distorted the facts in order to make the United States more negative in comparison to Panama or Cuba.\textsuperscript{45}

Another example of Greene’s inclination to regimes of Latin America was his support of government of Nicaragua. Greene reacted doubtfully on an article that described the regime as tending to Marxism-Leninism and indoctrinating education. An answer of a journalist, Charles Mosley came. In an open letter he described a school first-grade textbook with a lot of examples such as: “On page 59 the text reads “DEFENCE – The valiant militia march in the square. They all hold their rifles in their hands. The militia are of the people. The people are ready for defence.

\textsuperscript{42} See “Cuban Itch.” \textit{Yours etc.: Letters to the Press}, p. 111-112.
\textsuperscript{43} For more about Greene’s relationship to Castro and Cuba see Sherry. \textit{Vol. III.}, p. 137-139, 146-147 and 449-450.
\textsuperscript{44} On Castro’s recommendation of Greene see Sherry. \textit{Vol. III.}, 569.
\textsuperscript{45} The information about Greene’s help to Torrijos in the Panama politics is based on Sherry. \textit{Vol III.}, p. 568-573, 575-579 and 582-584.
The militia defend peace. Long live militia!” (Yours etc., 243). Greene answered that there was always a kind of propaganda when an important political changes happened in the country. Such indoctrination was a normal part of patriotism. He raised an objection: “I remember as a boy of eleven being indoctrinated by posters of Lord Kitchener pointing his finger at me from the hoardings and apparently saying ‘England has need of You.’“ (Yours etc., 244) One could object that the British did not go in the World War II. so far that they would learn their children mathematics by counting grenades.

Greene was obdurate in his positions. He supported left-wing regimes and was against right political leaders supported by the USA, such as Papa Doc at Haiti or Stroessner in Paraguay. In is opinion, the socialist dictators could always change, but those supported by the USA could not. Greene did not want to admit that every dictatorship had its political victims.

On the other hand, he urged for the release of political prisoners in the Soviet Union and its satellites. In 1973 he appealed to the Czech authorities on behalf of Karel Kyncl who was sentenced to twenty months of imprisonment. Greene praised Kyncl whom he met in 1969 as a true patriot and a defender of the Czech government and of the Communist Party at the appointment.\textsuperscript{47} The same argumentation he used when he signed the petition for release of Rudolf Bahro, a writer from the German Democratic Republic in 1978.\textsuperscript{48}

Kyncl made with Greene an interview in 1984. He noticed that Greene notwithstanding the facts still naively believed in Communism and possibility that the ideology could function in real life. Kyncl pointed out that what Greene missed to make his opinions more crystallized was a personal experience with the regime.\textsuperscript{49}

\textsuperscript{46} See “Sweet Waste of Effort” Yours etc.: Letters to the Press, p. 242-244.
\textsuperscript{47} See Yours etc.: Letters to the Press, p. 165-166.
\textsuperscript{48} See Böker, p. 163.
\textsuperscript{49} For more see Conversations, p. 166-171.
Jan Čulík\(^{50}\) pointed that Greene always tried to unify Catholic belief with Communist ideas. (Therefore the endeavour for Castro’s Cuba at the beginning.) His whole life Greene balanced between Socialism and Catholicism. He tried to find a way to bring these unlike attitudes together. Greene hoped that Communism and Catholicism could be unified by a virtue of belief. He hoped that a unification would bring equality of all people. As if he forgot that Communism was always implied by a kind of dictatorship, when a group of people imposed Communist rules by an application of power. Greene never admitted the hopelessness of his effort. Therefore his endeavour was not always taken seriously.

An exceptional case was Greene’s support of George Orwell who had difficulties with publishing *The Animal Farm* for a long time. Greene praised Orwell for the endurance and for his rejections to make changes in the work. Orwell was for Greene a bright example of a disloyal writer who does not want to submit to the demands of the Establishment. It is interesting that Greene supported Orwell that worked on “destruction of Soviet myth in England”\(^{51}\), but on the other hand, always tended to support any socialist or Marxist revolution in belief of creation an ideal socialist state.

Graham Greene once stated: “If I live in a capitalist country, I feel Communist; if I am in a Communist country, I feel a capitalist” (*Yours etc.*, 145). Actually, Greene was an idealist that did not fit in either of the two political systems that existed at the time of the Iron Curtain. He inclined to left-wing ideas that should change the capitalist world, but he never lived in a Communist country so long to gasp that the Marxist ideology in any of its varieties is not realizable. He worked only with mediated information about the life in Communism. And in favour of by him preferred regime he was able to twist the information himself because he saw

\(^{50}\)The information is based on Čulík, Jan. “XIV. Greeneland” *Graham Greene*, p. 384 –402.

\(^{51}\)See Böker, 145.
the reality in his way. Which regimes would Graham Greene prefer nowadays? Surely Graham Greene would find some that he would be fond of.

10. Conclusion

Graham Greene created in his work characters of “ naïve and innocent” Americans. In this way he expressed his disapproving opinion about American policy in the third world countries, such as in Asia and in Latin America. Although Greene is usually referred to as a Catholic author, the political issues of his work should not be disregarded. Important for the analysis of his political novels is the knowledge of the historical backgrounds of those times. Greene always tended to Communist ideology, therefore he was admitted even in Communist countries in spite the fact that he was actually a Capitalist author dealing also Catholic themes.

It was surely Greene’s character and his mental disposition that influenced his development to a writer producing political novels. At important features in Greene’s life I want to point out in the first chapter depicting his life. Greene described often his state of mind as a kind of boredom with life. In order to escape he searched for new experiences in the third world countries, where he also got to know the consequences of Western Powers’ policies for the first time.

In the next chapter Greene’s career as a writer is depicted. At his early beginnings Greene wrote poems and short stories. In the 1930’s his first social novels were publicized. In the 1940’s Catholic novels emerged. The new direction represented the novels of the 1950’s that dealt with world political issues. The interest in politics resembled also in next novels of the next decades. The critics described the Greene’s output as Greeneland because it was typical of Greene that stories of most novels were set in seedy third world countries. In order to relax from
serious topics Greene wrote also novels for easy reading that he called “entertainments” and later also short stories.

The chapter about involvement and disloyalty discusses Greene’s opinion on position of a writer within a society. The author should be disloyal to the ruling authorities and be an advocate of ordinary people. He was ought to stand in for a common man against the state machinery. The way to force the people to think about an improvement in the society was a creation of fallible characters. Greene stated that not the perfect heroes, but the persons with mistakes would make the public more affected. The readers should identify with imperfect characters, whose stories would point at negative features in the society.

In the 1950’s the USA declared that they would fight against Communism anywhere in the world, if it were necessary. Their world politics influenced also the political development at home. A persecution of American Communists followed. The chapter number five describes how Greene reacted at the US development. The other feature of a fight against non-democratic political systems was the intervention of the Western Powers in Vietnam.

Greene reacted on the event by writing the novel *The Quiet American*. In this novel he firstly used a character of an American in order to show the imperceptiveness of Americans towards a different culture in South-East Asia and the senselessness of the intervention in general. The character of a young American, Alden Pyle, is naïve and convinced in the rightness of his deeds that he actually brings a leather disaster.

Furthermore, Greene’s turn point in his political opinion that happened in the 1960’s is analysed. Greene favoured Communism in the Soviet Union at first, but when he understood that Soviet Union became a strictly totalitarian regime, he took interest in Latin America, where nationalist anti-American movements were on the raise. Greene supported the turnovers believing
that those meant new ways to start better societies. Greene wrote articles that favoured socialist
dictatorships and pounced at the US policy of supporting regimes that violated civil rights.

An illustrative example of a wrong American policy was the support of Papa Doc’s
regime on Haiti. Greene once again used the characters of Americans that demonstrated the naïve
attitude of Americans towards the regime on Haiti in general. On the other hand, it must be
pointed out that the Smiths are positively depicted. Although they make mistakes at the
beginning because of their wrong assumptions, later they see through. Greene describes them as
heroic.

The last chapter ties to find out why Greene felt liking to left-wing politics and favoured
Communism and later military dictatorships in Latin America. Jan Čulík pointed at Greene’s
endeavour to unify Catholicism and Communism, two absolutely different ideologies. Greene’s
idealistic attitude to Communism also originated from the fact that he did not have a real long-
time personal experience with totalitarian regimes. On the other hand, there is a clear evidence
that Greene became totally uncritical when he started to support some Marxist regime and he did
not see the mistakes anyway. His idealistic tendencies could not be changed.
Czech Resume


Své názory zpracovával ve svých knihách. Změny v jeho tvůrčích obdobích jsou jasně patrné. Greene začínal jako autor románů se sociální tématikou, pak přešel ke katolickým románům ve čtyřicátých letech, aby se opět zaměřil na téma sociální. Od padesátých let ovšem umisťoval děj svých příběhů do různých zemí světa (literárními kritiky označovaných pro typickou bezútěšnost také jako „Greeneland“), aby tak upozorňoval na bezpráví páchané v rámci


Pátá kapitola je věnována politickému vývoji ve Spojených státech amerických v padesátých letech dvacátého století a Greenovu vnímání tohoto vývoje. Doba byla silně ovlivněna rozdělením světa na kapitalistický a komunistický, neboli demokratický a nedemokratický. Ve Státech začalo pronásledování komunistů. Prezident Truman vydal prohlášení, že USA pomohou kterémukoliv státu v boji proti nedemokratickým politickým směrům. Toto zasazení se o demokratický svět bylo vystaveno první zkoušce – válečnému konfliktu ve Vietnamu.

Greene zpracoval své vlastní zkušenosti ve Vietnamu v románu Tichý Američan (1955), ve které odsoudil americkou intervenční politiku. Kapitola „Tichý a nevinný“ popisuje, jak Greene na jedné z hlavních postav, naivním politickém aktivistovi, Aldenu Pylovi, ukázal nevhodnost amerického zásahu a také neschopnost pochopit odlišnou vietnamskou kulturu.

Sedmá kapitola se zabývá změnami v Greenových politických názorech v šedesátých letech i v pozdější době. Greene stranil komunismu, ale vývoj k totalitnímu systému v SSSR ho zklamal, a Greene přestal doufávat ve změnu k lepšímu. Místo toho se zaměřil na politický vývoj v

V osmé kapitole „Naivní a kichotští“ rozebírám Komedianty jako příklad románu, který kritizuje americkou politiku podporující hrůzovládu diktátora Duvaliera na Haiti. Postavami naivních Američanů jsou tentokrát manželé Smithovi, snad jedni z mála, jejichž popis nevyznívá pouze negativní. Navzdory jejich neuvěřitelné důvěřivosti jim Greene přiznal i atribut hrdinských, a to v pravém slova smyslu.

Co vedlo Greena k nekonečnému nadšení pro levicovou ideologii? Tím se zabývá poslední kapitola popisující Greena jako člověka sympatizujícího s komunismem. Jan Čulík podotknul, že Greene věřil ve spojení křesťanské víry a komunismu. Na základě Greenových článků stranicích levicovým režimům a dále také rozhovorů s Greenem vycházím z předpokladu, že Greenovi chyběla především dlouhodobá osobní zkušenost s komunistickým režimem a dále, že byl natolik ochoten věřit v možnost vytvoření lepší společnosti na komunistických ideálech, že byl schopen ignorovat jasné nedostatky například levicových diktátorských režimů, v jejichž správnost věřil. Pravděpodobně i dnes by Graham Greene našel ve světě stát, který by podle něj právě stál na počátku procesu vytváření nové lepší společnosti.
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Appendix I

Works by Graham Greene\textsuperscript{52}

Novels

\textit{The Man Within}. London: Heinemann, 1929.

\textit{The Name of Action}. London: Heinemann, 1930.


\textit{It’s a Battlefield}. London: Heinemann, 1934.


\textit{The Power and the Glory}. London: Heinemann, 1940. (in the USA as \textit{The Labyrinthine Ways})


\textsuperscript{52} In chronological order.
Entertainments

*Stamboul Train.* London: Heinemann, 1932. (in the USA as *Orient Express*)

*A Gun For Sale.* London: Heinemann, 1936. (in the USA as *This Gun for Hire*)


Short Stories


Plays


Poems

*Babbling April*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1925.

Children’s book


Travel Books


**Autobiographies**


**Biography**


**Essays, Reviews and Letters and Others**

* The Lost Childhood and Other Essays. London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1951.

Works edited by Graham Greene


Appendix II

An Invitation to Voyage

My child, my sister,
Think of the delight
Of going far off and living together!
Of loving peacefully,
Loving and dying
In the land that bears your resemblance!
The wet suns
Of those disheveled skies
Have for my spirit
The mysterious charm
Of your treacherous eyes
Shining through their tears.

There, all is order and beauty,
Richness, quiet and pleasure.

Highly polished furniture,
Made beautiful by time,

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Would decorate your room;
    The rarest flowers
    Mingling their odors
With the vague fragrance of amber,
    Rich ceilings,
    Deep mirrors,
Eastern splendor,
    Everything there would speak
    In secret to the soul
Its sweet native tongue.

There, all is order and beauty,
Richness, quiet and pleasure.

    Behold sleeping
    On the canals those ships
Whose temperament is a wanderer’s;
    It is to satisfy
    Your slightest desire
That they come from the ends of the world.
    -The setting sun
    Clothes the fields,
The canals, the entire city,
    With hyacinth and gold;
The world goes to sleep
In a warm light.

There, all is order and beauty,
Richness, quiet and pleasure.