

virtually automatic success at twenty yards. Now team A's kickoff specialists jog on to the field, as do team B's kickoff receiving specialists. If team A's kicker does his job well (and he should since it is all he is ever asked to do), he kicks the ball into the end zone where it is prudently downed by team B's specialists at downing balls in end zone. Then both speciality squads leave in a sea of substitutions.

This is the action sport? If one hundred m.p.h. pitches are action, and if huddles and measurements and jogging substitutes are not action, then baseball must have five times more action than football.

The illustrations in *This Great Game* show baseball action at its graceful best. Such action involves a remarkable lot of thinking, and that is where Earl Weaver, manager of the Baltimore Orioles, takes charge. His essay (and it is his; it is not "as told to" anybody) is a chewy, no-nonsense introduction to the thinking that has made him spectacularly successful.

This year four of his pitchers may win twenty or more games (only the 1920 White Sox had four such pitchers) and the Orioles may win one hundred or more games for the third season in a row (a feat matched only by the 1929-31 Athletics). There are those who believe that the Orioles' talent is such that they could win without a manager. Readers of Weaver's essay may decide that the talent looks so good because it is so well managed.

Weaver believes homework is important. He knows exactly how everyone on his team bats against every pitcher in the league. He knows the sacrifice is overrated because "statistics show that a man on first with nobody out has a better chance of scoring than a man or second does with one out." And he knows how much of baseball strategy revolves around base running and preventing base running. He insists that "baseball is just a game of common sense" which is no doubt true, just as it is true that, as his record shows, not all common sense is equally common.

Roger Angell's "Baseball in the Mind" is a light masterpiece, a love song to baseball sung by a fan with perfect pitch (no pun intended).

A fine, precise writer, Angell possesses the subtlety which we baseball fans fervently believe derives from extensive scrutiny of baseball.

Baseball, Angell says, "is intensely remembered because only baseball is so intensely watched." He gives an example of intense watching: "The pitcher, immobile on the mound, holds the inert white ball, his little lump of physics. Now, with abrupt gestures, he gives it enormous speed and direction, converting it suddenly into a line, a moving line. The batter, wielding a plane, attempts to intercept the line and acutely alter it, but he fails; the ball, a line again, is redrawn to the pitcher, in the center of this square, the diamond. Again the pitcher studies his task — the projection of his next line through the smallest possible seg-

ment of an invisible, seven-sided solid (the strike zone has depth, as well as height and width) sixty feet and six inches away; again the batter considers his even more difficult position, which is to reverse this imminent white speck, to redirect its energy not in a soft parabola or a series of diminishing squiggles but into a beautiful and dangerous new force, a force of perfect straightness and immense distance. In time, these and other lines are drawn, there are on the field; the batter and fielders are also transformed into fluidity, moving and converging, and we see now that all movement in baseball is a convergence toward fixed points — the pitched ball toward the plate, the thrown ball toward the right angles of the bases, the batted ball toward the as yet undrawn but already visible point of congruence either with the ground or a glove. Simultaneously, the fielders hasten toward that same point of meeting with the ball, and ooh the base runner and the ball, now redirected, race toward their encounter at the base. From our perch we can sometimes see three or four or more such geometries appearing at the

same instant on the green board below us and, mathematicians that we are, can sense their solutions even before they are fully drawn. It is neat, it is pretty, it is satisfying. Scientists speak of the profoundly moving esthetic beauty of mathematics, and perhaps the baseball field is one of the few places where the rest of us can glimpse this mystery."

As Angell says, "only baseball, with its statistics and isolated fragments of time, permits so precise a reconstruction from box score and memory."

"Because of its pace, and thus the perfectly observed balance, both physical and psychological, between opposing forces, its clean lines can be restored in retrospect. This inner game — baseball in the mind — has no season, but it is best played in the winter, without the distraction of other baseball news."

This book, like its subject, is neat, pretty, satisfying. It captures the pace and balance of baseball and will be enjoyed by fans while they play their private winter baseball. □

George F. Will

Planting People

Agrarian Policies and Problems in Communist and Non-Communist Countries

edited by W.A. Douglas Jackson

University of Washington Press, \$15.00

MAN IS ALIENATED from himself if he is not the master of his own labor process and its fruits!" was Marx's ultimate indictment of a social system that interposed private property and market requirements between the worker and his life activity. Where man's labor is controlled by others through the power of employment which property confers, man finds himself estranged from his own productive activity, and his life subject to alien powers. So runs the central justifying thesis of Socialist Revolution. Well, the thesis was wrong. We all know that the system of production without private property they have established in Marx's name has failed to eliminate the root condition about which Marx complained. The industrial worker, Marx's well-nigh exclusive concern, has come no closer to his own labor process and its product in Soviet Russia than in other industrialized countries. What is less known, however, is that the Communists have on their part instituted a new alienation in a branch of production where it did not exist in Marx's time and does not exist in the non-Communist world: the alienation of the peasant, through a system that interposes politico-bureaucratic organization between the tiller and his land. Communist rule, far from bringing about the "realm of freedom," has caused not only the appearance of new crimes but also a new mode of exploita-

tion. While no political resistance should be expected from the embittered peasantry of Russia and China, their enduring passive resistance has thrown agriculture into a state of permanent crisis that is the Achilles heel of Communist management.

This is the thesis developed in depth over a number of years by Karl A. Wittfogel who has thereby made a major contribution to the study of what might be called the "inner contradictions of Communist-run economies." The most pithy and comprehensive statement of his ideas is contained in *Agrarian Policies and Problems in Communist and Non-Communist Countries*. Here are his main points: Throughout recorded history, in all civilizations, successful agriculture has not been essentially based on large farms. Moreover, throughout a wide variety of social systems, farm operations "were not controlled by the state but by a variety of small and large private owners or possessors." What the Communists have done to agriculture thus has "no parallel among the major civilizations of history."

What have the Communists done to agriculture? First, they have forced it into the mold of large, even gigantic units, bureaucratically controlled, in the hope of thereby paralleling the development of industry. Second, they have organized the tillers of land army-like into brigades, "large production brigades," teams and squads, within

larger command units called collective farms, communes or state farms. Thirdly, after they took the land away from the farmers, they made a concession in granting them small plots for private cultivation but then repeatedly snatched these back, or changed their size, so that this small possession never appeared even as secure as the rights of medieval serfs. Fourth, having removed the main incentive for careful farming, they had to pressure the peasants through political, economic and bureaucratic ways of intimidation which to begin with resulted in the enormous man-made calamities (the famines in Russia of 1931-32 and in China of 1959-61), and then left a permanent regression of agricultural productivity so that both formerly rich countries now must import grain for their own subsistence. Fifth, having inflicted a perennial backwardness on their own agriculture, both regimes have had to adjust their industrial programs so that the Chinese, for one, had to abandon their priority for heavy industry and give preference to industry serving the countryside.

The dogmatic eyes of Communists have been riveted on the "class of the proletariat," industrial labor. Wittfogel points out that in their fixation they overlooked or minimized two basic differences between industrial and farm labor. First, industrial labor can be organized into a continuous stream of

small specialized operations, as has been done along the perpetually moving conveyor belt. Farm labor, by contrast, has its nature-appointed times and intervals, and is characteristically performed by tillers each of whom carries on a number of different operations, so that the whole requires a man who personally cares. Thus the prime condition of highly productive agriculture is the loving attitude of peasants, and nothing can procure this attitude as well as the family ownership of the land, a fact which the Chinese acknowledged more than two thousand years ago as the Ch'in rulers introduced private property of land. This was the difference which Marx, Engels, Kautsky and Lenin overlooked as they postulated that "societal development in agriculture is taking the same road as in industry."

Secondly, there is a profound difference between the type of labor-extensive production of grains characteristic of Russia, and the labor-intensive cultivation of such heavily irrigated crops as rice. In Russia, plowing, sowing and reaping can be done by a few and relatively simple operations that lend themselves to a certain degree of large-scale organization, but the second type calls for repeated weeding, transplanting and other variegated operations that must be performed individually. This the Chinese overlooked when, mouthing Stalin's

slogans, they proceeded to an accelerated collectivization and semi-military organization not because they felt that their agriculture was ripe for it but solely because they had built sufficient "political strongholds" in the countryside and thus felt confident that they could put the peasants under effective pressure. Compel the farmers they did, but the resulting regression of their agriculture was even worse than that of the Russians. The Chinese developed a permanent "labor shortage," despite the enormous growth of their population. This "labor shortage" simply means that those who live on the land do not devote themselves sufficiently to the tasks that have to be done, and this in the country that prior to Communism had the highest developed art of farming in the world! Finding that peasants under compulsion do not incline to work, the Chinese first mobilized their women, separating them from their family responsibilities and thus turning over daily living functions to the Communes. When this did not remove the "labor shortage," they began to order masses of city folks into the countryside to help with the chores. Now everyone knows that industrialization requires a steady reduction of farm population and the migration of workers from the countryside to the cities. The Chinese have so mismanaged their agricultural patrimony that in their country this process had to

The Alternative: A Chic Discussion Piece



The Alternative is an insipid journal of polarizing iconoclasm whose style is intellectual, argumentative and satiric or so they say. It deals with national issues and personalities and offers insightful, original and sometimes offbeat reviews of current books.

To subscribe, just clip this unique order form and, with the appropriate amount of money (two dollars for students and faculty members, four dollars for others), mail to The Alternative, c/o The Establishment, R.R. 11, Box 360, Bloomington, Indiana 47401, Continental U.S.A.

"The Alternative is a welcome addition to the ranks of American opinion journalism."

—Spiro T. Agnew

"...stands almost alone among a welter of New Left, radical and revolutionary publications."

—Louisville Courier Journal

"I predict for The Alternative a leading role in philosophical and political battles to come."

—M. Stanton Evans

"...one of the most amusing and outrageous and interesting student journals in America."

—William F. Buckley, Jr.

"The Alternative would be a fine magazine if you'd cut the cursing and name-calling."

—A Reader

Enclosed is \$.....foryear(s) subscription to The Alternative (nine issues per year).

Please enter a

☐ New Subscription

☐ Renewal

as checked below.

Student and faculty members:

☐ 1 yr. \$2

☐ 2 yrs. \$3.50

☐ 3 yrs. \$5.00

Regular subscribers:

☐ 1 yr. \$4

☐ 2 yrs. \$7

☐ 3 yrs. \$10

Name _____

Address _____

City, & State _____ Zip _____

College or Univ. _____

be reversed and that they had to send mechanics, engineers, students and professionals to handle milk pails on the farm. All the same, even though they largely increased the amount of irrigated land, the total agricultural product failed to go up, and all they could do was, dollar in hand, come shopping for grain in Canada.

No anti-Communist revolutionary upheaval will arise from this state of affairs, though. Under totalitarian rule, even city people find it well-nigh impossible to group together with others of like mind. Among the scattered peasants, such groupings are wholly inconceivable. Their discontent thus will express itself more in sullen-

ness, careless work, poor cooperation and initiative and a brooding resentment of their masters, the Party and bureaucratic cadres. Still, this is not unimportant when one bears in mind that armies usually are composed of farm boys, and that without overabundance of farm products there can be neither industrialization nor sustained warfare. Thank you, Mr. Wittfogel, for having put your finger on the least-known of Communism's "inner contradictions!"

Gerhart Niemeyer

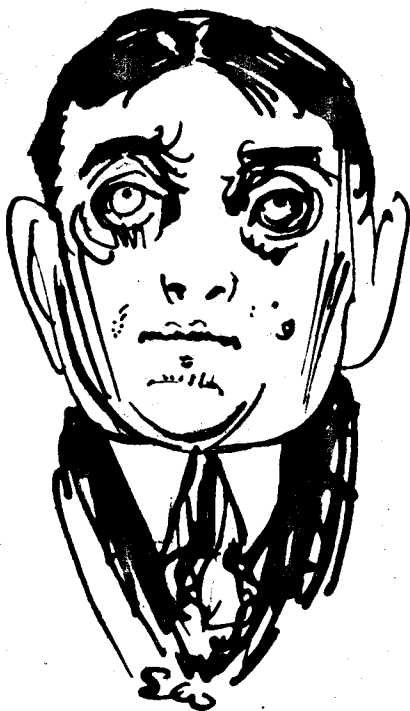
Gerhart Niemeyer is a professor of government at Notre Dame

Darling of the gods

Mencken, Iconoclast from Baltimore

by Donald C. Stenerson
University of Chicago Press, \$7.95

HL. MENCKEN, newspaper reporter, magazine editor, political and literary critic, was once called by Walter Lippmann the most influential private citizen of America. But he lived in Baltimore, not New York and not even the inconvenience of commuting to New York for several decades could persuade him to move away.



Professor Stenerson's analysis of Mencken's ideas and prejudices emphasizes the influence of his birthplace. Its southern traditions helped shape his political orientation. The German-American community of Union Square, where he was raised, ingrained in him family pride, common sense and an appreciation of hard work and thrift. Listening to his father discuss the family cigar business made him conscious of belonging to the managerial class and colored his views of labor, business and economics.

This book, which is not a conventional

biography, begins with the mature Mencken at the height of his influence as editor of *The American Mercury*. From his editorial chair, as earlier with *The Smart Set* (1914-23), he led the rebellion against the puritanical sham and fake of the nineteenth century's genteel tradition.

Mr. Stenerson then reverts to the formative years of Mencken's boyhood and early newspaper days. Constant exposure to the sprawling lustiness of street life made him appreciative of things American and disdainful of secondhand culture derived from abroad. It laid the ground for his love-hate relation to America.

As a youngster, H.L.M. fancied being a poet; his first book was *Ventures Into Verse* (1903). Mr. Stenerson next treats Mencken's experiments in short story writing, in a chapter which first appeared in *Menckenniana*, the quarterly published by the Enoch Pratt Free Library. While drama critic on the *Baltimore Morning Herald*, Mencken wrote the first book on George Bernard Shaw to appear in this country (1905). This was followed by the introduction to United States readers of the German philosopher Nietzsche, to whom he felt akin, although Mr. Stenerson holds that Social Darwinism permeates his views.

Yet the Herr Professor (as H.L.M. would have called him) holds that Mencken was neither an original nor a systematic thinker. "His prejudices were the themes of his art, not the building blocks of a coherent system.... Just as we think we have grasped the quintessential Mencken, another and contradictory phase of his thought emerges." And what an amazingly wide range he encompassed: politics, literature, music, linguistics, the social and natural sciences and metaphysics.

Throughout his career Mencken maintained certain basic beliefs and attitudes. Yet at times, Mr. Stenerson points out, "his theoretical determinism was at odds with his faith in individual initiative, his libertarianism, and his

belief that the small group of truth-seekers can bring about a limited kind of progress. His social and political views ranged from conservatism to Jeffersonian liberalism to distrust of democracy.

Mencken made no pretense of being consistent. As an expert at controversy he enjoyed being attacked. He may well be the only author who ever obtained royalties by collecting and republishing the brickbats hurled at him (in his book entitled *Menckenniana*, a *Schimpflexicon*).

What are Mencken's most enduring contributions to American culture? Mr. Stenerson believes they are his affirmation of the right to dissent, and the gusto and artistry with which he expressed his prejudices.

"The unimaginative and ignoble man," Mencken maintained, "likes the grayness, as a worm likes the dark; he wants to be made secure in his wallow; he craves certainties to protect him — a simple and gross religion, safety for his precious money, no wild ideas to craze his wife. Prohibition, the rope for agitators no bawdy twanging of lyres. It is the business of the artist to blast his contentment with the sounds of joy." How rich a legacy Mencken bestowed by this identical bawdy twanging of his own lyre.

This is a challenging book, full of controversial views and deductions, and it will really stir up the Menckinites.

Betty Adler

Betty Adler is the editor of Menckenniana, a journal concerned with H.L. Mencken which can be ordered by writing the Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore, Maryland, and her work has appeared in the Baltimore Evening Sun.

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor:

In 1930 I arrived at Kent State, wide-eyed and innocent, a true-believer in God and Man. Within six months a group of faculty Fagins had converted me into a raving radical, who shouted God is dead and the establishment doomed.

Not much has changed in academe since then. Most effective activists still lean to the left. Ohio State's late "Alternatives Committee," which had liberal solutions to everything, used to publish the names of its 150 members in the *Lantern*. Our conservative faculty activists could meet anytime in a telephone booth.

It's much the same with student bodies. Young liberals (or radicalists) control most student governments for the simple reason that they act to support their beliefs.

Campus liberals do their homework well. They constantly plot, meet, write, speak, campaign and elect — exerting power far beyond their numbers.

Campus conservatives have no clout. Though actually the majority (as proved by Ohio State University Poll results), they sit in the grandstands of life and let the liberals run with the ball.

I admire campus liberals. I do not admire campus conservatives, who expect to ride the freedom train forever without paying a fare. They do not plot, meet, write, speak or elect anyone. They seem to think democracy is a spectator sport.

Now this traditional slanting of academe