

• The Bookshelf •

CONDUCTED BY HENRY C. TRACY

BACKGROUNDS AND FRONTIERS OF HUMAN HISTORY

CIVILIZATION ON TRIAL. By Arnold J. Toynbee. New York: Oxford University Press. 263 pp. \$3.50

Arnold J. Toynbee, whose great work, *A Study of History*, has made him the world's leading analyst of civilizations past and present, follows it with a specific study of our own Western civilization and the challenge it must meet if it is to survive even one more half-century. His thesis in the *Study* was that these great cultural organizations, twenty in all since 4000 B.C., grew strong by meeting successive challenges; broke down when they failed to meet them. Each thought itself the one true civilization, all else being barbarian. Each believed itself the final order of society. None was, nor is, ours. Here he writes: "Civilization as we know it is a movement, not a condition; a voyage, not a harbor." True, ours has spread a network of trade and communication around the world, but it has not won the major part of humanity to its standard. It has not solved the problems of war and class which, unsolved, brought death to each extinct civilization. The crowning touch of this arresting work is that it locates the point at which we stand in a time-scheme of six thousand years of struggle and failure to found a world order in which class or race conflict and ordeal by war should have been eliminated. By our incredible skill in making war the lethal thing it now is, and by our incredible folly in perpetuating class and race hate, we have imperiled not just our own civilization but all of humanity along with it. A way out is projected in this volume.

R. V. Coleman's *The First Frontier* (Scribner. \$3.75) derives its freshness from a unique interlocking of events (discovery, settlement, growth) on all margins of the New World frontier, and the vigor of a narrative splashed with color yet meticulous in historic detail. Events spaced thousands of miles apart are tied in with a main stream of action by French, English, Swedish, and Dutch settlers. With a vividly human approach, this work wins wide appeal and offers durable value. It is illustrated from rare old engravings.

Vera Lysenko's *Men in Sheepskin Coats* (Toronto. The Ryerson Press. \$3.50) is a story of mass migration. A quarter of a million Ukrainians found in the Canadian Northwest a true frontier, a belt of untouched prairie and brushland a thousand miles long, three hundred miles wide, and attacked it in the spirit of stout frontiersmen. Landless victims of Europe's overlords, they subdued the wilderness with bare hands, then earned and learned the use of farm machinery by which they gained leisure to form social organizations, revive their arts and crafts, express their sense of unity as a free people. Admirably told, this narrative leads to a report of notable achievement: integration of Ukrainian traditions, language-treasures, and folk arts into the creative life of Canada.

Marguerita Rudolph's *The Great Hope* (John Day. \$2.75) follows the fortunes of but one family (Jewish) trapped in the Ukraine during World War I, divided thereafter, only half of them ever realizing their hope of a better life in the New World. Those in the U.S. accept the Western way; those who stayed, the So-

viet; but the bond is not broken. Miss Rudolph's writing has appeared in *COMMON GROUND* from time to time, and CG readers will want to read this book.

Disruption by an earlier war ended more happily for the Rumanian family in Anisoara Stan's chronicle, *They Crossed Mountains and Oceans* (Wm. Frederick Press. \$3.75). Early chapters of the book tell of scenes and people in Transylvania with fresh feeling and a vivid sense of the values in peasant life. Dignity, integrity, love of the land, and artistic gifts are seen at their best on these ancestral farms. Believing that folk arts are the very soul and heart of a people—any people not born into a mechanized civilization—the author promotes plans for an ethnographic museum of peasant culture, for all groups making up our foreign-born minorities; not glass cases but folkcrafts in actual operation.

The Nationality Rooms of the University of Pittsburgh, text by John G. Bowman, Ruth Crawford Mitchell, and Andrey Avinoff, with 17 water colors and 46 crayon drawings by Andrey Avinoff and 2 etchings by Louis Orr (University of Pittsburgh Press. \$25) is a beautiful volume about the 17 classrooms various nationality groups living in or near Pittsburgh have given to the University. The story of the rooms and their significance to the community has already been told in *COMMON GROUND* (Spring 1946 issue), and this richly illustrated volume bears added testimony to the quality and permanence of the undertaking.

Race and Nationality as Factors in American Life, by Henry Pratt Fairchild (Ronald Press. \$3) goes on from a discussion of the difference between race and nationality groupings into a development of the thesis that "the United States has gone just about as far as it can safely go in permitting, in the name of humanitarianism and liberalism, the

dilution of its own nationality"—in other words, that American "nationality" will be weakened by further immigration. Here he represents the antithesis of *COMMON GROUND*'s point of view that this country has become great and strong and free precisely because it attracted to it throughout history the strength and potentialities of the freedom-loving people of the world.

Americans From Hungary, by Emil Lengyel (Lippincott. \$4), is another fine addition to the Peoples of America series, a story of liberty achieved through migration. Ravaged by Tartars, crushed by Turks, subjugated by the Hapsburgs, these brave folk almost won liberty under Kosuth but lost it by a Czar's intervention. Social revolution then took the form of mass migration of the victims of the rapacious land-barons. Deprived of the land they so passionately loved, peasants turned to mines and industries in America. Educated and gifted sons of Magyar and Jewish Hungarians fled, too, and theirs is the story of talent and genius flowering in exile, well told here. Besides notable contributions in science and engineering, their work has been outstanding in literature, art, music, and leadership—witness David Lilienthal, son of Hungarian-born immigrants, whose record every man knows.

Revolution by mass migration was impossible for the millions of China, but *Swords of Silence*, by Carl Glick and Hong Sheng-Hwa (Whittlesey House. \$2.75), tells of the part played by the few who could come to us, notably a peasant's son, Sun Yat-sen. This boy saw freedom here, dedicated his life to winning it for China, roused the secret societies of his homeland, organized them, and drove the Manchu dynasts from the imperial throne. The nature, history, and operation of these secret societies is told here, and their aim: for

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peace, and a rule that is neither Nationalist nor Communist but of and for the people of China.

Francis Butler Simkins in *The South, Old and New* (Knopf. \$6) covers the growth of southern sectional consciousness from its start in 1820 through the resultant clash of 1865 (seen as defense against northern intrusion); tells of the agrarian revolt that came later, of changing race relations, turbid politics, and allied aspects of social and political drama in which two opposed sets of custom and concept collided and no harmony was achieved. Suspicions and aversions remain; economic empire (northern) still galls. Yet liberalism grows.

A Southern Vanguard, edited by Allen

Tate (Prentice-Hall. \$4.50), collects essays, poems, and stories expressing the character of the South in its moods of aspiration and revolt: a blend of devotion to the South's ideals and of despair over the spiritual disorder that blights the land. Essays, deeply critical, strike a high point of vision, often transcend sectional unrest.

The Dixie Frontier, by Everett Dick (Knopf. \$4.50), is a vivid story of pioneer, planter, and slave migration over early trails or by wagon and flatboat later on. Enriched by fragments of old diaries and letters, the narration reveals motives of migration, ways of folk in movement, conditions of housing, health, thrift, schools, politics, and the start of industry and trade.

PREJUDICE UNMASKED

Carey McWilliams, in *A Mask for Privilege* (Little, Brown. \$2.75), draws on wide experience with minorities and discrimination in the United States. This book, his third in that field, is a study of anti-Semitism, its origin, motivation, and effects, and is as solidly built as a pyramid, and as pointed. He proves that the spread of this anti-social, anti-democratic virus is linked with the rise of predatory business and a new-rich class jealous in defense of a social status based neither on culture nor merit but linked with nationality and religion. Discrimination, in a pattern set by this pseudo-élite, spread to clubs and hotels first, then to educational and commercial centers, and has now become a political tool as well. This study shows a steady increase of myth-based prejudice from 1877 on.

All Manner of Men, by Malcolm Ross (Reynal & Hitchcock. \$3.50), deals with the long fight for equal opportunity, by

which is meant not "free enterprise" but equal chance for equal abilities. Such equality has largely been won for the white worker, but the late war found the Negro still shut out from vitally important industries. As chairman of the FEPC for three war years, Mr. Ross tells the inside story of that Committee's efforts in conferences with employers and meetings with union leaders. Fear of strikes was the main bar to success with employers. Though there was constant vilification of the FEPC by southern Congressmen, this chronicle demonstrates that white workers will respond favorably even when through sheer ignorance of the facts they first resist intrusion of Negro labor and threaten strikes. The stenographic report of a talk that won over prejudiced white workers from the Ozarks (pp. 75-78) is a fine illustration of how the Committee functioned.

Caste, Class, and Race, by Oliver C.