

BOOKS

UNDERCOVER PLOTS REVEALED

by DAVID S. MUZZEY

THE PLOTTERS, by John Roy Carlson. E. P. Dutton and Company. New York. 1946. Pp. xii, 393. \$3.50

This is a companion volume to Mr. Carlson's best seller *Under Cover*, published in 1943. The former book narrated, with a wealth of corroborative detail, the author's investigations, over a period of five years, of the subversive activities of Nazi and Japanese agents in this country. The present volume, with no less thoroughness of research, is devoted to the undercover plots of native Americans to undermine our democratic way of life by instilling the poison of fascist and communist doctrine into the minds of the American people. The book deals with the period since V-J Day, and its main emphasis is on the attempts of fascist groups, camouflaged in the red-white-and-blue of American "patriotism," to win the allegiance of the millions of returning veterans of the war. That many of these GI Joes were disillusioned on finding themselves without housing facilities and their country in a turmoil of industrial strife is true; but we may doubt that either their number or their discontent warrant Mr. Carlson in his opinion that they will be the dominant factor in determining the future of American democracy.

One is amazed at the versatility of Mr. Carlson in the adoption of roles enabling him to penetrate into the secret councils of the plotters, even to the ruse of posing for more than a year as "mother" Patricia O'Connell in order to worm himself into the confidence of the fascist and anti-Jewish Mothers of America and United Mothers of America, whose heroes were Gerald L. K. Smith, Father Coughlin and others of that stripe. Although Mr. Carlson exposes the rabble-rousing and hate-inspiring speeches and writings of both fascist and communist agitators, crying "a plague on both your houses," it is evident that he regards the former as the more dangerous of the two. Their persecution of the Negroes and Jews, their mendacious insistence that our government is under Jewish control, their persistent campaign to bore into the veterans' societies and recruit the returning GIs, their contemptuous

insults to our public officials from Franklin Roosevelt (the "traitor" in the White House" who deliberately plunged us into war with Japan) and President Truman (the "piano player who was foisted on the American people by the Jew Sidney Hillman") to all the subordinate democratic "dupes"—all this is described at length, with numerous photographs of manifestos, letters, pamphlets and newspaper items, which must convince every fair-minded citizen of the alarming extent to which these emissaries of bigotry and persecution (the "hatriots" masquerading as patriots) are spreading their poison among the masses of disoriented and susceptible people in our country.

The author, who writes under the pen name of Carlson, is an Armenian whose parents brought him "as a child from war-ravaged south-eastern Europe in 1921" to make "a complete and happy adjustment as American citizens." Though shamefully vilified and even threatened with death for his exposure of treason in America in *Under Cover*, he has continued his battle for justice and sympathy for men and women of all creeds and races with a calm and courageous persistence. In *The Plotters* he avows his faith in "the American democratic capitalistic order, which, all factors considered, including its failures. I regard as the method which best provides the basic needs of most of its people." But to fulfill this mission capital must renounce wholly the irresponsible feudalistic power it exerted in the heyday of big business and heed the warnings of its far-sighted mentors like Wendell Willkie and Eric Johnston. Mr. Carlson will not sell America short. Though his experience in probing the activities of organized sabotage has given him ample reason to be cynical about American democracy, his faith in the soundness of our institutions remains unshaken. "Far from regarding the American system as the blind alley bogus patriots would have us believe it is," he concludes, "I regard it as our highway to a more abundant future."

GOOD NEIGHBOR

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By Any Other Name

KAPUTT, by Curzio Malaparte. E. P. Dutton, New York. 407 pages. \$3.75

This book deserves the critical invective that has been levelled at it. It is sycophant, callous, pretentious, and enough more to fill out one of the pertinent categories in Roget's "Thesaurus." Purporting to be a microscopic exposure of the physical and moral degradation of Europe, it is really revelatory of the author himself. The publishers say in an advertisement, "We believe that Malaparte's political morals have nothing to do with the greatness of *Kaputt*." The book is far from great on any basis, But the publishers are wrong, precisely because the author's political morals are revealed in every one of the macabre stories he relates. When Malaparte gives the harrowing details of a St. Bartholomew massacre of thousands of defenseless Jews by Rumanian Iron Guardists, he is physically revolted by the savagery of it but not by its political and moral wickedness—he apparently is without qualms about the "political morality" of a Fascism which makes such things inevitable. Malaparte gives the impression of having been part of the facade of respectability which the Fascists attempted to erect —unsuccessfully, of course—so as to cover up the obscenity of their many affronts to human dignity. One can almost hear him saying, "Go to it, boys, you cannot make an omelet without breaking the eggs, but oh dear, *must* you be so gauche about it?"

Malaparte loudly proclaims his anti-fascism on every other page and is at great pains to show his intrepidity in having dared the wrath of his pals among the Himmlers and the Hans Franks, as when for example, he furtively handed a choice delicacy to a starving Jewish child in the course of an elegant visit to the Warsaw ghetto—methinks he doth protest too much. The fact is, according to informed sources, that he was "the darling of the Italian Diplomatic Corps in the '20's," and "the most coddled of the Italian war correspondents." He speaks with devastating irony about Mussolini, out of whose favor he apparently fell in an early stage of his diplomatic career, but limits his barbs to the various personality aberrations of Il Duce. If it is true, as alleged, that Malaparte for many years was under the protective wing of Ciano, he is indeed, ungracious in his back-stage anecdotes about that ill-starred young man. Here again, consistent with his "political morality," he says little about Ciano's very substantial contributions in bringing war and havoc to Italy and the rest of the world. The best tip-off on the depth of Malaparte's anti-fascism, is that his observations about his native Italy, consist almost entirely of a detailed and "analytical" account of the activities and proper significance of the Princess Colonna as the social and political collaborator of Ciano during the years that the latter lorded it over the various demimondes and political parasites of the Fascist hierarchy in Rome.

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