

not to me." Here is an unusual honesty.

On the other hand, he does not gloss over the hardships of life in the Soviet Union, but against them he points out the ever improving standard of living, the security against unemployment, the excellent facilities for recreation, the avocational possibilities open to workers, and the fact that cultural standards in so far as they are embodied in books, theatres, and music, are considerably higher than in other countries. On his own subject, education, he is most interesting and most optimistic.

However, with all its virtues, *My Russian Neighbors* is a good example of how quickly a superficial book dealing with the U.S.S.R. becomes valueless as far as certain facts are concerned. Take two examples. Mr. Wicksteed lists the food available in Moscow at the end of March, 1933, when there was a distinct shortage, thereby suggesting certain impressions which he would be the last person to support in the light of the subsequent improvement. Also it is no longer true that change for valuta is given in roubles which automatically depreciate in value because they are in the hands of foreign visitors—change for valuta is now always given in foreign money and this has been so since before July of last year. Impressions gained from a superficial view of such matters are quickly rendered false and misleading when they are presented without a careful and detailed analysis of the situation and the trends apparent in it at any given time. Mr. Wicksteed explains that things move rapidly in the Soviet Union, but it seems to me that he has lived there long enough to write with authority about the more important social trends to the exclusion of fluctuating details when he is not concerned with presenting those details in their full setting.

Nevertheless, as far as the meagerly informed middle class public is concerned, this is the best, simple explanation of what the Communists are trying to do in the Soviet Union that I have so far come across. If the book seems over-simplified, it must be remembered that Mr. Wicksteed has his own countrymen in mind and that newspaper accounts of the U.S.S.R. have built up an even greater body of false assumptions in England than they have in the United States.

ALICE WITHROW FIELD.

The Same Old Racket

THE NEW CAPITALISM, by James D. Mooney. The Macmillan Company. \$3.50.

James D. Mooney is "a prominent industrialist." Tom Mooney is spending his seventeenth year in jail. If Tom Mooney had written a book on the New America, he would have had to violate every criminal syndicalist law in the U. S. A. James D. Mooney has written an account that is as safe as grandma's tabby-cat curled up behind the kitchen stove.

The New Capitalism does not offer a plan for rebuilding American economy. Instead it pleads for a return to the good old law of

supply and demand which "to the man who leads economic groups is like the compass to the navigator." Mr. Mooney assures his readers that "a thorough grasp of this law will provide us with a magic means of understanding the general laws of economics and business."

There is no getting away from this fundamental supply and demand mandate. The law operates as it does because "the various actions and reactions that are included within the operation of this law are based . . . on human behavior. The law operates as it does because human beings have fundamental attitudes toward material things."

There is much more of the same kind in this chapter on "The Law of Supply and Demand." But why go further? If Mr. Mooney is right, then Stalin and Molotov were both wrong when they told the recent Congress of the Soviet Union Communist Party about the successes of socialist economy since 1928. According to Mr. Mooney, human nature being what it is, and the law of supply and demand continuing to operate, socialism is an obvious impossibility.

Mr. Mooney feels that the New Deal tampers "with that dangerous buzz-saw known as economic law." He does not like it. He realizes that we face a serious situation but he does not want our economic difficulties "to muck us down into socialism, fascism, communism, a cult of incompetence, or any of the other so-called new but in reality historically stale experiments that are now being tried throughout the world."

In a little exordium at the end of the book Mr. Mooney assures the business men that they are all "practical economists." On the next page he urges the farmers to "continue to produce all you can." He encourages the bankers with the assurance that they are "much more capable than the government of guiding credit into really self-liquidatory functions" and they "more than anyone else, are able to keep us straight on the fundamental economic point of all credit and interest charges." (Evidently Mr. Mooney has not heard of the billions that the bankers shot into the Wall Street gambling joint before the collapse of 1929, nor of the "frozen asset" years that followed. Let that pass, however.)

Mr. Mooney has other words of wisdom for manufacturers, for the Great Merchants (with a capital G), for the railroads and the public utilities. He urges them all to take the little tin horn of propaganda and blow it over the corpse of finance capitalism. If they blow hard enough, he promises that they can bring the dead back to life.

One other point. Facing page 189 is a picture of the Statue of Liberty, outlined against a cloudy sky. Six pages later a tin-hatted doughboy, with a rifle over his shoulder, stands guard beside some barbed-wire entanglements. Five pages later a line of battle ships is lost in the smoke of its big guns. And on page 203 a cop in a raincoat is holding up traffic with an authoritative gesture. Presumably all of these subjects are acting in ac-

cordance with human nature and in a way that will fulfill the great law of supply and demand.

The New Capitalism is extravagantly printed on coated paper. The first two chapters consist entirely of full page photo-reproductions with no word of accompanying text. The publishers, evidently with Mr. Mooney's assistance, have spent enough on the production of this one volume to keep *THE NEW MASSES* running for six months. (And what a shame, too! This book is indescribably rotten; *THE NEW MASSES* so terribly impoverished, and the drift to the left being what it is today!) But it is idle to regret past follies. *THE NEW MASSES* must keep going even if the Macmillan Company does squander thousands on material that really should not exchange for enough to put a three cent stamp on this review and send it in to the magazine.

SCOTT NEARING.

Renegade's Progress

PASSION'S PILGRIMS, by Jules Romains (*Men of Good Will*, Vol. II). Alfred A. Knopf, \$2.50.

The second volume of Romains' long novel leads us to the conjecture that this extensive work may well become one of the bourgeois novels which future Soviet critics will point to as mirroring much of life under the rule of the dying capitalist class of the twentieth century, just as contemporary professors resort to the *Chanson de Roland* or the *Canterbury Tales* for varying aspects of feudal life. Because Romains is one of the few writers who have sought completely to describe an epoch his work must long remain an outstanding social document. He has caught and he reflects many of the salient aspects of collective life in Paris in 1908. He disdains the novel built around a single character or a single family for one in which, by the use of pertinent economic and social detail, he has constructed a quite thorough portrait of an era. He has been able to do this because of his admirable literary technique and because he has borrowed part of the Marxist approach. Though he can actually ask how it is that none of Marx's

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theories are any longer valid, we can easily see that he would never even have thought of a collective novel—much less know upon what data to base it—had it not been for Marx.

Like the first volume the second possesses no particularity of emphasis on any one character or group of characters. In *Passion's Pilgrims* as the sub-titles indicate (*Childhood's Loves* and *Eros in Paris*) the stress is laid, if anywhere, upon the sexual adventures of many of the characters. Quinette, the book binder who has murdered the murderer whom he assured he would protect from the police, becomes a police spy and worms his way into the "Social Control" revolutionary group. Jerphanion, who seems to come nearest to expressing the author's life and ideas, does a great deal of speculation about his career and finally finds the girl whom he has been seeking. Jallex, Jerphanion's fellow-student, reconstructs the details of a love affair he had in early youth. Garau, the "left" deputy, succumbs to the maneuvers of the oil trust and rationalizes away his hopes for a social revolution. Sammécaud, the vulgar business man without a "de" in front of his name, just about wins the love of the wife of his aristocratic associate, de Champcenaïs. Michel, the German revolutionary, at a meeting of the "Social Control" group predicts that the German Social-Democratic party will not oppose its government's entry into war. At the end of the book we see Jaurès in a street meeting before a working class audience.

G. Servèze, in an excellent critical study (*Commune* Nov. 3, 1933, entitled *J. Romain's et le fascisme*, has gone to great lengths in pointing out Romain's many ideological weak-

nesses. He only confirms our judgment, expressed in a review of the first volume in *Left Front*, that the man belongs to the "Second International of Letters." Romain "corrects" Marx, denies the class struggle, condones the fascist governments of Italy and Germany, and attributes the great war directly to Germany. Space is lacking to show how *Men of Good Will* reflects these ideological weaknesses in the forms of bad judgment, sly distortion, and untrue emphasis. Were this possible we could show how the literary counterparts to the Noskes, Hilferdings, and Norman Thomases accomplish their destructive and befuddling tasks.

In *Passion's Pilgrims* we see each character developing in relation to his environment, moulding it and being moulded thereby. This is the dialectical process used unwittingly. Romain could not jettison all his early influences despite the market's demands. He has, however, perverted this dialectical process by narrowing it down so that the vaster perspectives are lost sight of. This is quite unlike its successful use in a proletarian novel such as Plivier's *The Kaiser's Coolies*, in which we feel and see behind each character's bald utterance the tottering of an empire and the dominant upsurge of the revolutionary movement. In *Men of Good Will* the great forces of history in movement in 1908 are not made an integral part of this purported collective novel. This is due entirely to Romain's refusal to accept the materialistic interpretation of history and to his reliance on erroneous psychological theories.

If future Soviet critics look for the most important aspect of collective life in 1908—that of the working masses engaged in production

and distribution and their day-to-day economic struggles—they will thumb the pages of this novel in vain. They will find oil-executives, "left" parliamentarians, book binders, students, housewives, street hooligans, real estate men, intellectuals, and even handicraftsmen but no real workers, no men and women shaped by the factory and the building gang.

This omission, as well as the undue emphasis laid on the erotic adventures of the characters, is part of the method by which Romain, while appearing to give and in many ways actually giving an accurate account of contemporary society, subtly imposes upon the reader an interpretation that is fundamentally and dangerously false. The failure to portray the working class makes possible the discrediting of the revolutionary movement, which quite clearly seems to be part of Romain's aim. The discrediting of the revolutionary movement, skillfully coupled with the suggestion that the masses are indifferent to and incapable of dealing with basic political issues, emphasizes the importance of the "men of good will." But all this is still only hinted at in the four sections of the work that have appeared (in two volumes) in America. When the final revelation comes, it will come with greater force because the way has been so stealthily prepared for it. Thus distortion becomes betrayal—and betrayal of a dangerous sort.

MARK MARVIN.

A Classic in Pictures

KARL MARX "CAPITAL" IN LITHOGRAPHS, by Hugo Gellert. Ray Long and Richard Smith. \$3.

If the title of this book were a strict definition of its contents, it might well be argued that Hugo Gellert had set himself an insuperable task in attempting to produce a pictorial equivalent for Marx's basic work. But actually this is an effort to present the essence of *Capital* not solely through pictures, but with the aid of pictures. The three volumes of the original have been condensed to sixty pages of text, each page confronted with a lithograph. There is also a frontispiece portrait of Marx. Gellert has not limited himself to the role of literal illustrator, but has tackled the problem of interpretation.

Thus when Marx, discussing the effect of capitalist crises on the working masses, illustrates his point with a quotation from an English newspaper of 1867 describing at length the misery of the unemployed, Gellert recasts the situation into a dramatic symbol of the current crisis with a picture of a gaunt, flabby naked child, towering above lower Manhattan's skyline. This picture is a real development on the theme of the text: the growth of wealth and its progressive concentration can only be accomplished under capitalism through the impoverishment of the working class.

Another striking example of imaginative interpretation: Marx, analyzing the secret of primary accumulation, details the process whereby the workers were forcibly and bru-



"THE LORD HAS SENT US A BLESSING!"

Kabat