

criticisms have any validity, are frankly recognized as a matter of state policy and where drastic action is being taken to eliminate them. The Soviet Union is the only country where compulsion is gradually disappearing as a weapon that is becoming unnecessary and real democracy is being realized by the working class. As for atheism, the philosophy of historic materialism, to which Eddy objects—is materialism more “dogmatic” than mysticism? Eddy thinks these “evils” so serious that he is surprised that any good thing can come out of Soviet Russia. He fails completely to understand that the triumphs of socialist construction flow from Marxism, which is not dogmatic, and from Leninist tactics in the class struggle, including the dictatorship of the proletariat and the “ruthless” use of force when necessary against those class enemies who, if not destroyed, would destroy the Soviets and bring back the blessings of capitalism, such as unemployment, mass misery, fascist terrorism, and also religious superstition.

Eddy calls the Soviet Government tyrannical and repressive. But Dr. Harry F. Ward, teacher in the Union Theological Seminary, chairman of the Methodist Federation for Social Service and of the American Civil Liberties Union, to whom freedom and spiritual values are surely as precious as to Dr. Eddy, has a different opinion. He writes in a far better book, *In Place of Profit*, that the Soviet Government “is in fact government of the workers, by the workers and for the workers. It is a proletarian state . . . The repressive aspect of the dictatorship (against the kulaks and bourgeoisie) is only instrumental, its main objective is constructive. The purpose of the dictatorship is to establish Socialism in which classes and dictatorship will be abolished.” Ward shows how the state is already developing proletarian democracy. As the need for force against its enemies disappears, this proletarian state uses persuasion instead of compulsion, as in the collectivization campaign. Ward quotes Stalin and other party leaders who severely rebuked party members for the “unjustifiable use of administrative compulsion, inimical to Leninism.” Persecution and terrorism against workers and farmers are not Leninist tactics, and those who resort to such methods violate party discipline and are expelled. Ward says that the Bolsheviks lead because they enjoy the confidence of the masses, who are led where they are first convinced they want to go.

Eddy reveals his bankruptcy, and that of other liberals and “religious radicals,” in his final plea for a “reformation of religion,” in his thesis that “Soviet tyranny and Anglo-Saxon injustice can learn from each other,” in his appeal for support of the New Deal as the alternative to Communism. He writes that in the U.S.S.R. there is justice but no liberty, in the U.S.A. there is liberty but no justice! He admits the collapse of capitalism, he admits that the church is and always has been a reactionary institution on the side of the ruling class, but he prays for a messiah, a prophet who will arouse Christians, miracu-

ously reform the church, and lead all good people out of the wilderness into a land flowing with socialist milk and honey. Eddy hails the N.R.A. as the first step in this miraculous, peaceful transformation!

For the most devastating answer to Eddy's mystical nonsense, his silly moralizing, read the speeches of Stalin, Molotov, and Kaganovitch to the 17th Party Congress now being held in Moscow. With Bolshevik realism they face the problems to be solved in the next four years. Read especially what they said about how to fight against bureaucracy and inefficiency and other defects which still exist in Soviet society, for the elimination of which the Bolsheviks, and only the Bolsheviks, have a realistic and effective program. Eddy's futile, ineffectual “religious liberalism” can only aid the enemy, leading to fascism not to socialism.

LISTON N. OAK.

### Tinkers of the Twilight

*OUR ECONOMIC SOCIETY AND ITS PROBLEMS: A Study of American Levels of Living and How to Improve Them. By Rexford Guy Tugwell and Howard C. Hill. Harcourt, Brace & Co. \$2.50.*

Though according to the authors this work has been less than ten years in the making, it is a genuinely monumental and painstakingly detailed contribution to the prevailing sociological confusion. It earns the palm because its illusions are so profuse and because they are produced without apparatus like Justism, Musteism, Social Credit, Technocracy, or other self-aligning hickies or jigs. The operators have nothing up their sleeves. They step right up to the footlights and fineigle the simple stuff of industry, commerce, farming, and social life and history into forms so frazzled that the results are fit for hardly anything but the instruction of the nation's youth; and the summaries of findings and lists of problems at intervals show that here indeed is what the nation's youth in not a few institutions is going to get.

The authors exhibit a certain unfamiliarity with the economic life of the ancient world. On page 5, for example, they say that no Athenian or Roman residence had a bathroom, a piped interior water supply, or sanitary arrangements. The fact is that Roman plumbers laid many private water lines of lead pipe in the ancient days; that the flush type of toilet antedates Rome, and that hot-water heating plants in private homes were not unknown to the Empire. . . . Nor am I too confident of the authors' knowledge of modern industry. They fail to identify understandably the characteristic working principles of reciprocating and rotary engines. Their definition of the internal-combustion engine does not differentiate it from the steam engine; they fail to indicate the difference between the explosion type of internal-combustion engine and the type in which ignition is by compression; their description of the internal-combustion working cycle does not include the Diesel en-

gine's, and their description of the Diesel engine does not include internal combustion. On page 195 they refer to a photographed drop hammer (steam lift, gravity release, sliding between vertical uprights, commonly applied to repetitive production—by fixed forging dies—of standard parts) as a *trip* hammer (power lift, gravity release, laterally mounted on pivoted arm. No mention is made of the high-pressure boiler, and on page 196 the increased efficiency due mainly to this innovation is credited to “mechanical firing” and “the use of pulverized fuel.”

Is this criticism meticulous and trivial? Well, it deals with some of the simple developments—at least they are simple now they are developed—of the world of industry which Messrs. Tugwell and Hill consider important enough to include in their survey of the economic scene. They are in large part what make the wheels go round throughout the present economic pattern. Why shouldn't the authors take a little pains to learn about them before writing about them? Why depend on the student to carry the necessary knowledge to correct a very misinformative text?

Unless the student who confronts the Tugwell-Hill survey has extraordinarily good fortune in securing help from Leftward sources, he will stand much less chance of correcting the text on the social and historic side. Can anyone unaided by Marxian sources see in the following the ruthless rise of the “merchant

## Parched Earth

by  
Arnold B. Armstrong

Wholly original and extraordinarily moving is this first novel of a bitter feud between the haves and the have-nots in a small California valley town.

Granville Hicks says: “It shows a profound and truly Marxian insight into the action of social forces and their effect on individual lives.”

“Frankly, a propaganda novel. The illegitimate idiot son might be said to stand for the Fascist movement”—N. Y. Times.

at any bookstore—\$2.50

**The Macmillan Co.**  
60 Fifth Avenue New York

nobles and ennobled merchants" of post-Tudor times?

Regulations that had been useful during the guild era proved harmful when the guilds declined. As a result strong governments swept away the medieval regulations and set up new codes under the mercantile system, in order to place industry under efficient managers, to coordinate national finances, to rid the seas of pirates, and to conduct exploration and colonization in the new lands to the west.

Equally interesting is the authors' assertion that agricultural improvement in the 18th century "set free" great numbers of people for participation in the new industries, since increased efficiency of food production delivered them from worry about sustenance. When it is considered that expropriation largely preceded agricultural improvement, that the quantity of food procurable for an English wage decreased constantly from about 1500 until the repeal of the Corn Laws, and that these laws were kept in force by the "advanced agriculturalists" as long as possible—until at least 25 percent of the population was receiving public relief, that is to say,—one wonders whether the large amount of possibly accurate material on contemporary finance, commerce and agriculture included by Tugwell and Hill can avail to balance even passably the weight of their preposterous sociological "errors." I use the quotation marks because it appears to me certain that the vital dialectic of social history has been purposefully eliminated by the authors—their mechanism of social change is almost 100 percent "rotary" in its operation. "Laissez faire," they say, "also met the needs of business and community life," and "such conditions in the United States in the nineteenth century made laissez faire a policy of wisdom, because it aided in the economic development of the country."

It is one thing to say that, given certain circumstances, time and place, a sequence of developments could hardly have been otherwise than it was. It is a far different thing to say that the sequence represented functional efficiency or social wisdom. The Tugwell-Hill opus is thoroughly underlain with such false assumptions, shot through with logic no less false, and fringed with conclusions and prescriptions which are false, nebulous, and ultimately not less than dangerous—dangerous as the trappings of a thoroughly material and vicious program of working-class oppression.

MURRAY GODWIN.

## Revolution in China

*CHINESE DESTINIES*, by Agnes Smedley. Vanguard Press. \$3.

No one aware of the trend of events will minimize the significance of the world's increasing interest in China, as evidenced among ourselves by any number of recent books about it—everything from Pearl Buck's Christian-ethical romances to the "political" histories of shallow academics, not to speak of such amorous trivia as *The Bitter Tea of General Yen*. From among all these Agnes Smedley's *Chi-*

*nese Destinies* has risen rapidly to a place apart.

Fired with passion and conviction, *Chinese Destinies* is no anemic fiction of the school of "pure" art. It has been hammered out of the sternest reality, the very stuff of life—forged upon an anvil of hard fact by a master craftsman, already widely known as a novelist of great distinction.

With a heart to feel, a mind to understand, and a sensitive pen to record the mighty drama in the lives of hundreds of millions of Chinese workers and peasants as they fight in life-and-death struggle to free themselves at last from their oppressors, both native and foreign, Agnes Smedley makes one's ears actually ring with the call to proletarian revolution as she herself heard it sounding across mountain and plain from Manchuria to Indo-China, from Shanghai to Sinkiang. In the rice and wheat fields, in the mines and factories, along the waterfront and in the most distant inland villages. A clarion call, sharp, clear, insistent, that has set the capitalist world to trembling, for in the capitalist-imperialist economy the "problem" of China has long been central.

One vast official *plunderbund*, rotten to the core, has all of China at its mercy for the moment—all of China except that considerable area, already larger than France and fast growing, where the toiling masses have united in their wrath to smash beyond repair capitalist-landlord exploitation. Here some seventy million workers and peasants have organized and disciplined themselves to assure victory to the Soviet power they have created. It is a vital power devoted wholly to the broadest possible advance of human well-being and culture. It has been forced at times to retreat and may have to do so again in face of almost overwhelming odds. But whatever its strategic retreats, the Revolution is ultimately invincible for the one and sufficient reason that it is inspired by the certain knowledge, based on experience and confirmed by example, that the creative power of the working masses alone is capable of rendering the earth a comfortable and ever richer home for all her children—a home full of sunlight with room both for eager, significant, constructive work and happy, fruitful play.

*Chinese Destinies* tells the heroic, heartening story of the Revolution against a background of black reaction and decay. The stories are told dramatically in simple concrete detail, for to Agnes Smedley the Revolution is no more abstraction, no dry matter of facts and figures, though she cites plenty of these. To her it is a living, thriving thing of flesh and bone, of heart and brain. Read *Peasants and Lords in China*, *Nanking*, or *Moving Picture of Shanghai* (that "pearl of a city" where in 1930 more than 36,000 people were picked up dead in the gutters, some starved, others frozen)—read these or *Canton Atmosphere*, a running account of is no mere abstraction, no dry matter of facts that the Revolution means life itself to millions. To convince yourself that the Revo-

lution marches, read *The Fall of Shangpo* or that most exciting story of *The Revolt of the Hunan Miners*, who rose to a man against abject slavery and fought their way, three thousand strong, through many hundred miles of hostile territory to reinforce the Red armies. And let those who harbor any doubt about the cultural significance of the Revolution—let them ponder well *The Dedicated* or almost any page at all in *Chinese Destinies*.

"Of course I am a Communist," exclaimed Chang Siao-hung, one of the Dedicated. "What else can any person be who desires that the vast mass of toiling human beings shall become free men, developing for themselves a culture such as has been denied them through all the ages? As a convinced Communist I am working in the ranks of the revolutionary workers and peasants of Central China . . . We started with nothing but the ancient system of brutal ignorance and subjection; today we have schools, hospitals, clubs, dramatic societies—as also free land for all who labor, and our varied political and military defense organs. In this territory I travel far and wide, establishing health institutes, lecturing on public health and hygiene, teaching women the care of themselves and their children . . . You wished to know the rôle I play in China. It is enough to say I am a Communist, for that means I am fighting in the ranks for a new world."

G. F. WILLISON.

## Comfort for Mr. Babbitt

*FIREWEED*, by Mildred Walker. Harcourt, Brace & Company. \$2.50.

There is nothing quite so comforting to good middle-class readers these days as assurance that God's still in his heaven and that all is well with the world of bourgeois virtues. This must explain the awarding of the 1933 Hopwood prize at the University of Michigan to this book and the assurance of its publishers that it will make a big hit, for it has little else to recommend it. It is a poor piece of work, technically and otherwise.

Take a glance at the story. The setting is a small lumber town in the northern peninsula of Michigan; the chief characters, Celie Henderson, daughter of a lumber worker, and Joe Linsen, a lumber worker himself. Celie works in the company store, but is dissatisfied with the dull life of the small town. She wants to make good in the big city, but just when it appears that her ambitions might be realized, Joe seduces her and they are married. Marriage merely accentuates her desire to escape into the world of cities and big buildings and easy money, but along comes a baby and the discontent is, for a while, stilled.

Inevitably, it arises again, but little assuaged by Joe's promotion to foreman and the birth of another child. It gives rise to the only rift in their happiness, for she nags Joe to get another job in the city while he is content to stay where they are. Joe loses his