

the unlawful terror of the angry, frustrated bourgeois, grappling with the lawful terror of the Ochrana, the secret police, organ alike of autocracy, the church and the landed aristocracy, and in some ways an autonomous entity within the Tsarist system.

Secondly, it is illuminating, that the police chiefs chose as apprentices, liberals, especially young and ambitious liberals. The police had a cynical conviction as to their corruptibility.

Thirdly, the problem of Aseff's motive. The author poses the question: why did Aseff not only betray the terrorists but, apparently the Ochrana, as well? The author's answer is acquisitiveness. Aseff was serving two paymasters and in his own way tried to be loyal to both. The terrorists' funds were always ample. Aseff controlled them and with them could indulge the luxurious tastes native to him and encouraged by the music hall mistress who displaced more and more openly, his revolutionist wife.

The question, however, might rather be "was the Ochrana deceived?" Its policy was always tortuous and always Machiavellian, but its main objective was clear. It was fighting consistently for its own survival. It had become a huge, self-contained organism within the governmental system. Any change in the direction of bourgeois democracy was against its interest, for it would mean displacement of the Ochrana by judicial institutions. The Ochrana existed, presumably, to protect Czarism; its aim became to turn Czarism into a protector of Ochrana. So long

as Czarism could feel that it needed the Ochrana the latter would be safe against the emergent bourgeois institutions which threatened it. At the time, the Ochrana needed the terror, precisely for what the Terrorists wished, to frighten the Czar, but just enough to have him keep the watchman on the job. For this purpose an unpopular minister, even an obscure member of the royal family could be sacrificed. By such repellant means, by such a mixture of sordidness and violence, a class, by its very nature criminal, though operating as the law itself, kept itself in power.

If we return to the American scene, to the stools, punks, provocateurs and other vermin that the bosses use to preserve themselves, to the incited riots in which an occasional cop, even a politician may be sacrificed, we see the same business going on.

Whatever the final interpretation may be, this conclusion is inescapable; no matter what its other motives may be, one of the strategies of a political system defending itself is to lure the revolutionaries to commit suicide by unorganized, sporadic, self-betraying violence.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER.

An Incomplete Indictment

ALL IN THE NAME OF GOD, by Everette R. Clinchy. The John Day Company. \$2.50.

ONE hundred years ago a series of anti-Catholic sermons preached by the Reverend Lyman Beecher resulted in a mob raiding and setting fire to the Ursuline Convent in Charlestown, Massachusetts. In the 1850's a Methodist named Orr, known as the Angel Gabriel because he summoned his audiences with a trumpet, instigated riots that culminated in the blowing up, burning, or damaging of Catholic churches in Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, and Ohio. In the 1890's the American Protective Association carried on an anti-Catholic campaign comparable in viciousness to the anti-Jewish

attacks of present day Nazis. Referring to the strength of this agitation the author quotes John Haynes Holmes as saying: "In the neighborhood where I lived and where I went to school it was commonly believed that in every Catholic Church a musket was planted in the cellar whenever a Catholic boy was born in the neighborhood of the parish."

These and many other similar facts that make up the story of religious prejudice in the United States Dr. Clinchy assembles in his brief and readable volume. His main emphasis is on the long history and deep roots of the anti-Catholic and anti-semitic movements in this country, though he includes much interesting material on the intolerance towards all sects not their own of the different religious groups among the early American colonists. He also gives a competent account of the growth of the liberal attitude, initiated by such statesmen as Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. All in all the book throws a good deal of light on contemporary religious and racial prejudice in America. And it has much to teach radical minority groups which are constantly running up against unreasoning antagonism on the part of the population as a whole.

This teaching however, is mainly in the form of the more directly observable facts. For in his discussion of causes and program of cures the Reverend Dr. Clinchy is typically unrealistic. He grants in one place that "control of Protestant-Catholic-Jewish relations rests in part upon control of economic oscillations" and that perhaps the profit system has something to do with inter-group jealousies and strains. But he never follows through these hurried hints of a thorough-going analysis and never once mentions the tremendous progress in eradicating religious and racial antagonisms in the Soviet Union since the establishment there of a socialist economic and cultural order. Nor does the author ever seem to glimpse the implications of his book's most excellent title. If the atrocious and deplorable things about which he writes were done "All in the Name of God", might it not be a good idea in this fourth decade of the twentieth century to try solving human problems in the name of something else?

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Side Trackers of American Thought

MOLDERS OF AMERICAN THOUGHT (1933-1934), edited by William H. Cordell. Doubleday, Doran and Company. \$2.50.

RECENTLY Mr. Harry Hansen reviewed the above-mentioned book and, after praising it up to the stratosphere, he reminded himself of a weak spot and wrote: "It is unfortunate that Mr. Cordell did not include one of the extreme radicals, in order to present both the terms on which the leftists hope to remake the American world and the character of its expression." Unfortunate is hardly the word. Unscrupulous would be a better one. Mr. Cordell was anxious to give space to Mr. C. Hartley Grattan and the latter's defence of those younger American intellectuals, who are unable to swallow Marx completely and regard the discipline of the Communist Party as a blow to their sacred, tissue-paper individualities. However, Mr. Cordell had no desire to reprint an article by Granville Hicks, Milton Howard, or best of all, Earl Browder, because such an inclusion might have been an antidote to the conservative-liberal poison, which Mr. Cordell has mixed.

Mr. C. Hartley Grattan is a profound humorist, who can assert that "Mr. Calverton is, of course, a convinced Communist and he and his fellows have gone the whole way to the left." This practice of singling out the radical quacks, hedgers and quibblers characterizes the collection. The writers attempt to imitate Machiavelli, but fall far short of his cleverness. They contend that the Communist Party program in this country is dictated by "men in Moscow utterly ignorant of American social peculiarities," but the actual peculiarities, the anemic qualms, the bland opportunisms, the chauvinisms masquerading as American traits, are better known to opposite intellectuals both in America and Moscow than the Grattans and Calvertons have any desire to admit.

The essay on verse, "Our Haughty Poets," by Mr. Newton Arvin, is nebulous. After confessing that American poets of the present "wish to express not so much of their own private experiences as the experiences and purposes of a whole class," and that many "desire to repudiate individualism in the interest of radical collectivism," Mr. Arvin can arrive at no conclusion clearer than the assertion that they will be less and less contented with personal immersions and will acquire a sense of responsibility to the culture of which they are a part. This smooth method of pointing to gravities and social changes and then minimizing them, would seem to be the trade-mark of certain perturbed liberals in our own time. Mr. Arvin mentions many contemporary Left poets but forgot to include Magil, Vogel, H. H. Lewis, Kenneth Fearing, and Don West—poets with a relatively simple incisiveness, unadorned intensity, naturally—while Isidor

Schneider is bracketted in the strange company of James Rorty and Horace Gregory.

The anthology opens with an extended, lugubrious paper by Theodore Dreiser, in his profuse style—"The Myth of Individuality"—and Mr. Dreiser declares that we are all tied by common needs, but fails to offer any solution other than the would-be mystical poem—"I am the doubter and the doubt, and I the hymn the Brahmin sings"—which closes his performance. The time of leniency toward Dreisers and Sherwood Andersons has long since passed. It is no longer pertinent to challenge them to a definite voicing of beliefs after their antics in the notorious *Spectator*. Their names may still be on the committees of organizations defending the rights of political prisoners, but this smacks more of absent-mindedness than of any lingering indecision. If, in the future, they decide to make occasional contributions to the Left, these should not be ignored but received, certainly, with an attitude of fundamental distrust.

Another essay in this doleful aggregation is "What Religion Means to Me," by Pearl S. Buck. This author states that she is not

a Communist but that the spirit of religion "is working in Communism," that the Communists are "missionaries," revere their leaders as much as Christians revere the saints so-called, while the proletarian "heaven of revolt" is as remote as the angelled, Christian paradise. This form of attack is insidious because it confuses steadfast, realistic insight with fanatical vaporings and strives, cunningly to malign the former by identifying it with the latter, in the hope that workers and a disgruntled middle class will be less inclined to trade the old for the new, if they can be led to think that such an alteration would be only a trivial exchange. The fact that Communists have a mission—the militant liberation of the proletariat in every country—is linked to the more odious noun, "missionary," in the effort to bewilder possible converts to Communism and inoculate them with a defeatism, in which they will consider the goal of a classless world to be as distant as any concocted Nirvana. The entire anthology bears an erroneous title. It should have been labelled "Side-Trackers of American Thought (1933-1934)" and, in parenthesis ("by no means completely successful").

MAXWELL BODENHEIM.

Brief Review

EX-PRIEST AND THE RIDDLE OF RELIGION, by L. H. Lehmann. Agora Publishing Co. \$2.50.

THIS is another exposé of the Catholic Church by a former priest too honest and too decent to remain within the fold. And he is undoubtedly correct in stating that the number of those following his example would be greatly augmented were it not for the sheer fear of making a sharp break with the past and starting a whole new way of life, both in an economic and spiritual sense. Mr. Lehmann's best chapters are in the first half of the book, in which he gives interesting information about the training of priests, the hocus-pocus with which they befuddle the masses, and the corrupting attitude of Rome towards sex. The author's main object however, is to save religion for mankind by getting rid of reactionary Catholicism; and he never shows the slightest awareness of the fact that all religion is something of a fraud and survives mainly because of backward social and economic conditions.

FIESTA IN MEXICO, by Erna Fergusson; illustrations by Valentín Vidauretta. Alfred A. Knopf, 1934. \$2.50.

Intended as an "objective" description of various Mexican fiestas, *Fiesta in Mexico* is actually a confection for the comfort of melancholy bourgeois who every day have less reason to believe in paradise. Capitalists will warm to the news that there still exists a land where insulted and injured folk take pride in the principle, "If I show no resentment, I am greater than he who offends me"—and where

children in church, agape before idols and tinsel, still turn in wonder and ask, "Mamá, is this heaven?"

Familiarity with Engels' "Origin of the Family" would have enabled Miss Fergusson to write a much better, because more understanding, book. She would have seen, to begin with, the fiestas and bullfights of Mexico as "breadless circuses," and all her descriptions would have gained by being related, even implicitly, to the hard facts of history, civilization, and social organization. However, constricted as it is within the narrow limits of uncoordinated visual detail and confused skepticism, it remains pretty much a gaudy Mexican-pink dulce to divert and hush the wails of fat, frightened capitalist babies.

EUGENE O'NEILL: A Critical Study by Sophus Keith Winther. Random House. \$2.

Professor Winther offers a detailed analysis of O'Neill's plays from the repudiated *Thirst* to *Days Without End*. O'Neill is credited with illuminating a series of very important modern problems, such as The Pagan Way of Life, Determinism, Fatalism and Free Will and The Relativity of Good and Evil. Dr. Winther suggests that O'Neill's contribution as a philosopher is heightened because he doesn't fall for the "easy philosophy of Communism." The author says, "O'Neill is too soundly pessimistic to be beguiled by so facile a solution. To him there is something fundamentally tragic in life itself." After reading this volume it appears that it is still possible to seriously contend that art has nothing to do with propaganda, or vice versa.