

epoch-making that in themselves they entail an affirmative answer to the query of Sidney and Beatrice Webb as to whether there exists a new civilization in the Soviet Union. The articles in question take up only five pages in the author's carefully annotated translation of the new constitution, and I declare without qualification that no one henceforth can be considered educated who does not read, remember, and reflect upon these five pages.

Of course it is easy to say that this is only a "paper" constitution. But it is obvious in the nature of the case that *all* written constitutions are paper constitutions. In other words, the extent to which constitutional provisions become actualized is dependent on the good faith of the government and people involved. Now I do not contend that the new Soviet constitution will always be lived up to 100 percent, especially during these first years; but I venture to predict that its basic principles will become in reality the law of the land far sooner than in the case of most other constitutions. The United States Constitution has been in effect for one hundred and fifty years, but we all know how frequently it is violated even today, particularly its guaranties regarding civil liberties.

Furthermore, the Soviet constitution shows a rate of growth towards democracy in the U.S.S.R. unprecedented elsewhere in political experience. The British parliamentary system has been in process of evolution for more than six hundred years, but till 1884 approximately 50 percent of the population did not have the ballot; and only in 1918 was universal suffrage for men and women over twenty established. In the United States it took nearly a century after the Declaration of Independence for Negroes to win equal political rights; even then it was mainly on paper and remains so to this day. Women's suffrage came in America only in 1920. In the Soviet Union, nineteen years after the revolution, there is suffrage for everyone of both sexes over the age of eighteen. These are a few of the more obvious comparisons that can be made, but they may be sufficient to indicate the swift pace at which Soviet democracy marches on.

CORLISS LAMONT.

Napoleon the Class Warrior

BONAPARTE, by Eugene Tarlé. Knight Publications. \$4.50.

THE relation between certain stages of Napoleon's life and their social and economic background has been demonstrated, in fragmentary analyses, by many writers, among them Marx and Engels. In this excellent biography by a leading Soviet historian, these analyses are now expanded and integrated, and Napoleon's personal role is shown in relation to the development of the bourgeois revolution in France.

As Tarlé demonstrates, the revolutionary and, later, imperial armies derived their strength from the newly liberated energies of the French middle classes. They conquered the feudal countries that opposed



Martin

them, but were unable to hold their conquests; at the beginning of the nineteenth century no more than now could there be a really unified Europe within capitalism. The greatest military genius of all times, with all his miraculous organizing powers, was helpless when faced with an economic crisis and the anarchy of the market. But as Tarlé shows, the rhythm of the social and economic forces explains not only the objective facts of Napoleon's rise and fall; it also explains to some extent his subjective decisions. Napoleon was aware of the forces he represented. He was a loyal instrument of his class, and naturally could not transcend its historic perspectives. In Russia he discarded the idea of liberating the czar's serfs, and even after Waterloo he refused to lead the "proletarian rabble" against the restoration of the Bourbons. In Tarlé's materialistic treatment, despite its necessary accent on impersonal forces, the tragedy of Napoleon as an individual is not blurred; on the contrary it stands out with greater clarity, because instead of a blind victim tossed about by chance, he is seen here as the focal point of a class consciousness. In addition to its scientific merits, *Bonaparte* has that of being as smoothly readable as any "novelized" biography.

NORMAN GOODRICH.

A Socialist Reads Lenin

ON JOURNEY, by Vida Dutton Scudder. E. P. Dutton & Co. \$4.

VIDA SCUDDER, professor emeritus of English literature at Wellesley College and for forty years a Christian Socialist, at the age of seventy-six has begun the study of Lenin's writings. Her article, "A Little Tour in the Mind of Lenin" in a current issue of the *Christian Century*, is refreshing after the mysticism of the closing chapters of her autobiography, *On Journey*.

In the earlier pages of her life story, she ranges pleasantly over the wide meadows of English letters, from Beowulf and Chaucer, through Ruskin and Matthew Arnold, down to Dreiser and Sinclair Lewis

—whom she does not so much like. She reads Dante and the records of early Franciscans in the original Italian, quotes them, and does not imagine that her readers may need a translation. She is conscious of writing more for the élite than for the masses.

From a family representing New England's cultured minority—an uncle was editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* and another uncle was head of Dutton's publishing house—Vida Scudder found herself readily in the field of literature. On her many trips abroad, she has been as much at home in Oxford or Assisi as in Wellesley, Massachusetts. The mediaeval, whether in art, religion, philosophy, or letters, has always called forth her special enthusiasm. It provided the theme for several of her earlier books, solid contributions to scholarship, on the Arthurian legends, the Franciscans, and Catherine of Siena. In religion she is more than a member of the Protestant Episcopal Church; she is an American Anglo-Catholic, that is, a catholic who has not "submitted to the Roman obedience."

It was through hearing Ruskin's lecture courses at Oxford in the 1880's, reading his "Unto This Last" and the works of Frederick Denison Maurice and Charles Kingsley, that the young graduate of Smith College became a Christian Socialist. Later she took out her red card as a member of the Socialist Party, but was never very active in the party's political life. Through the work of Denison House in Boston, one of the early college settlements, she maintained contact for a good many years with the trade-union movement in New England and with working-class neighbors who came to the settlement for classes, discussions and forums.

But for any consistent, logical economic thinking, the autobiography is disappointing. Miss Scudder admits that she is confused, that she is famous among her friends for her "disconcerting habit of switching from side to side in an argument." She has, however, a definite program of three "essential" points: "Faith in the movement toward political socialism, in the pressure exerted by organized labor, and in the growing development of Consumers' Coöperation." She claims that in the class struggle she is one with the workers in spirit. But she can speak of "laughing and weeping over the constant failure of communism"—and she can keep her name on the Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky.

It must have been after finishing the autobiography that she began to study Lenin's life and work, of which she now writes in such invigorating fashion. Urging her middle-class readers to travel "for a time" (why only for a time?) "along the new trails broken by communists," she describes Lenin as statesman and thinker and one whose intellect was at once powerful, flexible, and creative.

Will the time ever come, she asks, when Lenin's *Selected Essays* will be assigned in America as college preparatory reading? And she concludes that Marxists, "however one judges their ultimate theories"—which she rejects—have unprecedented understanding of

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the whole historic process. She is perhaps a little wistful about these Marxists. Is it because she does not accept what she realizes is an integrated and coherent conception of the universe?
GRACE HUTCHINS.

Recent Fiction in Brief

ANOTHER SUCH VICTORY, by Clifton Cuthbert. Hillman Curl. \$2.50.

A more interesting and significant novel than the author's earlier *Thunder Without Rain*, and sharply different in theme, *Another Such Victory* describes a strike of New England textile workers. While adding little to the strike-novel formula, it manages to be clear, honest, and readable; and one looks forward with interest to Cuthbert's next.

THE GODS ARRIVE, by Grant Lewi. J. B. Lippincott. \$2.50.

A novel of New York life from 1928 to 1933. Some excellent descriptions of department-store administration, particularly as it weighs on the workers. Energetic political conversations which, though a little confused, are enlivening and adult.

TODAY IS FOREVER, by Ramona Herdman. Harper & Bros. \$2.50.

Miss Herdman's first book, *A Time For Love*, was both polished and sympathetic satire, but in this novel she is bent on being serious and analytical and Freudian, and the results are less interesting.

A LAMP ON THE PLAINS, by Paul Horgan. Harper & Bros. \$2.50.

A rather static and indecisive novel of a young man of the Southwest in search of knowledge. Scattered among the embroidered and precious pieces of nature-description is some really good writing.

YOUNG ROBERT, by George Albee. Reynal & Hitchcock. \$2.50.

A lively story of working people in San Francisco of the forties. Some supple and precise writing and convincing portraiture of proletarian types.

WE ARE NOT ALONE, by James Hilton. Little, Brown. \$2.

About a little doctor in a small English community, who serves his patients with skill and sympathy and whose overbearing wife drives him into a strange affair with a German dancer. Undoubtedly one of the high points, if not the saturation point, in the hazy school of novel writing.

THE GROWN-UPS, by Catharine Whitcomb. Random House. \$2.50.

A story of corrupt parents and a child's mental suffering. Vivid and sensitive, though a trifle over-written.

PEOPLE ON THE EARTH, by Edwin Corle. Random House. \$2.

A Navajo lad lives for a time among white people and then returns to his own tribe. Observant study of Indian life and problems.

THE SCANDALS OF CLOCHERLE, by Gabriel Chevalier, translated from the French by Jocelyn Godefroi. Simon & Schuster. \$2.50.

The mayor of a French small town installs a public comfort station for gentlemen only, and a civic storm ensues. Not quite so gay, giddy, and Gallic as it should be.

PIPE ALL HANDS!, by H. M. Tomlinson. Harper & Bros. \$2.50.

Another sea story by the author of *Gallions Reach*. A pot-boiler, but quite accomplished.

LUCIFER IN PINE LAKE, by Samuel Rogers. Little, Brown. \$2.50.

A nihilistic and pretty stifling novel of a very disillusioned, very bitter young man. Shows little im-

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