

about their psychology. Again and again, he declares that Communists dream of an "apocalypse" of blood and violence, that they are fundamentally bent only upon destruction—are in fact just the "bearded Bolshies" of capitalist fantasy. Yet he must know that this is untrue. He must have seen, by no means only in Germany, that the class war is almost always initiated by the ruling class. He must have understood something of the roots of class hatred in the industrial hovels of the Ruhr. In fact, he did know; his previous work shows it. Then why is he being false to his own knowledge? Few first-rate journalists are that, and even less was it to be expected of a *Guardian* correspondent.

Voigt could not take it. Lenin once defined an anarchist as a "little man driven wild by oppression." I do not think Voigt, to do him justice, would be "driven wild" by oppression of himself, but rather by the spectacle of oppression, of violence and horror. This is becoming increasingly common among English liberals, many of whom believe, for instance, that the Spaniards have just simply gone mad with bloodlust. Yet Voigt fought in the World War and wrote one of the best books on it.

The horror of violence has finally driven these liberals into what is in fact a form of anarchism, in that it cannot accept any discipline. Formerly, they went into the Catholic Church. But that is closed to a man of Voigt's inheritance and past. His religion, though supported by numerous Biblical quotations, does not ring true. It derives chiefly from a personal admiration for Karl Barth and the Protestants resisting Hitler, because they are resisting Hitler, not so much because they are religious. It is perhaps a queer form of intellectual honesty which drives Voigt the whole secular way, into admiration and support of Chamberlain "realism." But, though he hates Hitler even more than he hates Lenin and Stalin, ultimately this position will turn inward from foreign politics and become a form of "Anglo-fascism," just as, in America, isolationism and "the fight against un-Americanism" might well become the disguise for American domestic fascism.

Voigt, by deliberately shutting his eyes to the class basis of fascism, or, in another place, by talking of "a proletariat hungering after private ownership," is already objectively a fascist, for fascism is fundamentally an attack upon the existence of a revolutionary working class. For him, the violence of the class struggle, paradoxically enough, obscures the capacity for seeing its existence.

Voigt's position, therefore, is typical of one section of British liberalism. But it is essential, if one is to understand this and also to understand a much larger body of English liberals whose present stand may be of incalculable importance for the preservation of democracy in Europe, to disassociate the Voigts from the *Manchester Guardian*. Great harm has been done by his publisher's misstatement.

In the last few years, and very especially since the Spanish war, there has been a marked increase of progressive feeling among the Eng-

lish middle class. C. Day Lewis has pointed out the wide success and range of the Left Book Club, especially promising since the reactionary leadership of the Labor Party has stifled the initiative of the local committees. This in turn has forced at least two very important English papers, the *Manchester Guardian* and the *News-Chronicle* into policies further left than they might originally have held. Both are banned in all fascist countries, both welcomed in the USSR. Although sticking to some of the old Manchester School tenets, the *Guardian* has supported the popular-front movement, has been sharply critical of Chamberlain's policies, and, in dealing with the United States, vigorously applauded the Harlan trial. Its tendency is, in fact, just the reverse of its former correspondent's, and while it is not always consistent, it does represent a truly democratic line, that is, a line in which liberty does not mean the Liberty League. Representing a strong current in English liberal thought, it does not indulge in diatribes against Marxism, though it certainly is not Marxist—nor, by any means, are all the readers or writers of the Left Book Club—but it does accept Marxism as a profound, interesting, and vital fact today.

Voigt has perhaps "supped full on horrors" and his stomach has turned. He has come to the conclusion that only by strong armaments can the peace be kept. Although arrived at in a different way, this is precisely the conclusion of the British steelmasters. But perhaps it is unfair to Voigt, who—not seeing that controversy in politics is only one weapon in the struggle, along with the strike, and even, but only if absolutely essential, the barricade—complains that Lenin ravaged his opponents as no Oxford don would think of doing, to quote his last paragraph: "Be ye strong, therefore, and let not your hands be weak: for your work shall be rewarded."

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cane where others speak of invention. And yet, to a Marxist, there is surprisingly little illumination in this indispensable and honorable book.

The Krupps are the first industrial concern in Europe to illustrate Lenin's dictum that the state is an executive committee of the governing class. Not even the mercantile East India Co. in the eighteenth century was so wonderfully and fearfully involved with the state as the Krupps with the German imperial and military machine. The Kaisers appear as their caddies, Bismarck as a sulky valet. Yet one thing does not appear. The Krupps for long periods sold abroad more than at home. Their sales were often made directly contrary to the imperial interest. Their treason and their rapacity, both nearly mortally dangerous to the Prussian state, were well known to the high command, the diplomatic service, and openly hinted at in court circles. Yet they were not merely protected but every criticism, every exposure, was turned into an asset. But detailed as is Menne's treatment, the economic reason for this consistent blindness is never clear. For example, the breakdown of Krupp policy in Turkey in 1914 is recited but no reason given why Turkey nevertheless turned its back on French finance and embraced the Krupps, once the war was on. This *non sequitur* is one of a long series. I believe Menne knows the answers but has not thought of presenting them.

There is also an historic emphasis that cannot be sustained. Throughout the book the reader is vividly made aware of everything negative in the growth of the Krupp concern, and unfortunate words such as "luck" and "chance" are over-used. The muckraking tradition weakens our understanding of the immense development of the Krupps as part and parcel of the development of heavy industry in Germany and, so to speak, of the exportation of capitalism from the British Isles to their competitors. That the story is chockablock with fraud may be assumed, but it helps us little. The history of British capitalism is incomprehensible without the slave trade, the Elizabethan pirates, land enclosures, etc., but it has provided us with the world in which, regrettably, we live. There seems to be no technical reason why the armament works at Essen so far surpassed the older gunsmiths of England, France, and Belgium. The history of the Krupps seems to take place on a theater floating in a vacuum. There is no vivid picture of the business vis-à-vis its workers except for some racy details of the social funds and the family-patriarchal exploitation policy. But that relation seems nearly static despite the constantly changing circumstances. All these things are mentioned somewhere, but they are skimmed.

The book is at its best in dealing with the Krupps before the war. It is really dramatic in the Big Bertha story—and merciless when it describes the mathematical beauty and technical backwardness of that overrated murderess. But it is vague and irrelevant with reference to the post-war inflation policy.

Those who have followed the superb analyses of Sternberg on the relation of the astronomical mark-inflation to the reinvestment of fixed capital will understand Krupp's policy; from Menne's book they will learn little. Nor is the relation of Krupp to Thyssen any clearer. The Krupps did not back Hitler. A few contingent associations do not make a story. They would have preferred a Schleicher, above all, a von Papen. Nothing in their experience, in their transfer between executives and the diplomatic and military service, could have made them understand the need of vulgar social demagoguery. Hugenberg was their guide and he detested Hitler. Yet he who was last is now first. The Thyssens, Hitler's devil-fathers, are pretty much out and Krupp in. What explains the transfer? Menne shows the contradiction but the tie-up is missing. The Krupps have flourished under Hitler as never before. Menne thinks they were in the secret of the Roehm murders, the June 30, 1934, massacre. Yet he speaks of their will to keep out of politics! This is loosely mentioned as required by their need for exports.

The book, at the end, is out of joint. Its intellectual power, analysis, discovery of underlying social causes run far behind its picturesque and historic achievement. But until a Marxist study appears we can only record our thanks for this much. We are in the same position as we were at the turn of the century when we had to welcome the study of Hobson on capitalist imperialism. But the dull Fabian scythe glinted when polished by Lenin: its cutting power had been unsuspected.

WILLIAM BLAKE.

Peasants and Jews in Poland

THE RIVER BREAKS UP, by I. J. Singer. Translated from the Yiddish by Maurice Samuel. Alfred A. Knopf. \$2.50.

THIS is a volume of short stories by the author of that extraordinary novel, *The Brothers Ashkenazi*, but the final effect of the book is not so much that of a compilation of stories as of a series of beautifully worked out sketches to be incorporated in a novel. Most of the stories are in themselves unsatisfying, although not one is lacking in the most impressive technical accomplishment. Their view of life is peculiarly limited in scale and mood; there is little in them of conflict, movement, change. And because their subjects are those of profound desolation, brooding inertia, and decay, one especially misses that emotional resolution which the short story is particularly fitted to emphasize. To read each story by itself is like looking at a lifeless kind of picture: populous, colorful, arresting—but motionless. It is only when the book is read and its essence recaptured as a whole that its value is perceived, for Mr. Singer has created a really vast panorama, so powerful in its realistic drawing that the very chaos almost assumes the vitality each unit in it lacks.