

Hegel, individual freedom comes in the culminating moment of history. Until that moment, man suffers under the tyranny of necessity. Sartre, however, keeps freedom *within* the dialectic; it is present at every moment. The individual is always at liberty to deny the conditions imposed by his past and by his surroundings; he is also at liberty to accept them; in any case, he freely chooses.

But now we are back to Sartre's old existential dilemma. Are all freedoms equivalent? Are the members of a serial multiplicity as free as the members of a revolutionary group? If they are, why choose revolution? Whatever the faults of the Marxian dialectic, it does provide an objective order of values. It is precisely because freedom is the culmination of history that each stage along the way represents an advance over the preceding stage. If freedom is an ultimate end the meaning of each act may be judged in relation to it. But if there is no such end what meaning can the "free" act have? How does one distinguish the freedom claimed by the civil rights movement from that claimed by the Ku Klux Klan (two groups presently "en fusion")? In Sartre's dialectic no distinction can be made.

The fact is that Sartre's freedom is absolute and unconditional, it is therefore meaningless. Merleau-Ponty, his one-time friend and close colleague, and a great philosopher in his own right, made this criticism of Sartre years before the *Critique* was written. Absolute freedom is no freedom.

ALBERT FRIED

BARBAROSA—THE GERMAN-RUSSIAN CONFLICT 1941-45, by Alan Clark. William Morrow and Company, New York, 1965, 522 pp. \$10.00.

IT'S GOOD THAT a generation reared in conditions of the cold war with the Soviet Union can find history books at hand such as this and also Alexander Werth's *Russia at War, 1941-45*). After all, there was a time when the greatest brunt of

the fighting against mankind's most terrible menace—Nazi Germany—was borne by the Red Army.

Unlikely though it seems, General Douglas MacArthur found, in a statement issued from beleaguered Corregidor, that "the hopes of civilization rest on the worthy banners of the courageous Russian Army." Recalling a lifetime of military study and experience, General MacArthur said "the scale and grandeur" of the Soviet effort at Moscow, "marks it as the greatest military achievement in all history."

How was it though, since Soviet Communism was as totalitarian as Nazi fascism, that the Russian people fought so well? Alan Clark, a 36-year-old British historian, quotes a letter in his possession, from a Russian who explains why he fought:

"Even those of us who knew that our government was wicked, that there was little to choose between the SS and the NKVD except their language, and who despised the hypocrisy of Communist politics—we felt that we must fight. Because every Russian who had lived through the Revolution and the thirties had felt a breeze of hope, for the first time in the history of our people. We were like the bud at the tip of a root which has wound its way for centuries under rocky soil. We felt ourselves to be within inches of the open sky.

"We knew that we would die, of course. But our children would inherit two things: A land free of the invader; and Time, in which the progressive ideals of Communism might emerge."

It's important that students today should learn in what unprecedented peril all of civilization was placed by the rise of Hitler Germany and its military attempt to conquer the world. It very nearly did. But the Nazis were defeated at Moscow. They were defeated at Stalingrad. They were defeated at Kursk. They were defeated at Berlin.

This well documented book, written with splendid verve and style explains why the Russians beat the Germans.

They beat them because they fought better. They beat them because their generals were superior to those of the vaunted Wehrmacht and its General Staff. They beat them because they produced more, and often better, weapons. There were other reasons. The Germans had to fight on two fronts. The Russians received invaluable aid from the West, especially from America. But above all the Russians won because they fought better.

The book recreates the excitement and suspense of the long battles that raged from the summer of 1941 to the springtime on the Oder in 1945. There are innumerable insights afforded the reader. Here we might just mention the record of conflict between Hitler and his Generals. Clark seems to place both the military attainments and deficiencies of Hitler in proper perspective. He demolishes the myth, so assiduously built up by the German generals, that it was only Hitler's faulty strategy that was responsible for Germany's defeat.

Clark also shows how Stalin was responsible for the near rout of the Soviet armies because of his appeasement of Hitler on the eve of Barbarosa; and because of his belief that space was more important than fixed defenses, while ignoring preparations to use the space that was grabbed before the war but lost so quickly after the Germans attacked; and also because of the unbelievable decimation of the Red Army cadres in Stalin's bloody purges.

It is puzzling, in a work that evidences such careful scholarship, to find the author accepting some of the mythology of the late Khrushchev regime. Clark singles out one civilian leader and places him on par with the generals, such as Chuikov, Rodimtsev, Yeremenko, as responsible for kindling the vigor and heroism of the defense of Stalingrad—Khrushchev.

One of the most interesting findings of this work, somewhat speculative, but supported by factual material, is that the Russians could have ended the war in 1944. Purely military considerations,

to which Roosevelt and the U.S. clung till the end, were no longer uppermost in Stalin's mind at this time. He shifted his emphasis in 1944 to the Balkans to assure his territorial and political objectives, quite apart from the attainment of military victory.

JOSEPH CLARK

THE NAZI SEIZURE OF POWER: THE EXPERIENCE OF A SINGLE GERMAN TOWN, 1930-1935, by William Sheridan Allen. Quadrangle Books, Chicago, 1965, 345 pp. \$6.95.

IN THE SMALL community of 10,000 which Mr. Allen studied, anti-Semitism had little resonance before 1933. There was little local hostility to the town's leading Jew—the banker, the community representative of "finance capitalism." When the army set up a camp in Thalburg, as he names the place, civilians blacklisted by the local Nazis found refuge by seeking employment with the military. The mayor, politically to the right, nevertheless was appalled by Nazi excesses and was forced out early in the Nazi era. Many members of the local business community were not enthusiastic about the prospects of National Socialist rule. However, the elimination of the Socialist "menace," which the Nazis promised, more than compensated for their vague suspicions about what the Nazis would do.

Mr. Allen's story, then, is not one of the interplay of massive impersonal forces labelled "capital," "labor," or the "Party." It is rather the story of clashes in the market place between class-conscious workers and SA troopers. It is the story of the likeable and sensitive book seller, who became the first townsman to join the National Socialists. It describes the talents and the problems of the able Socialist leader in conflict with the boy on his block who grew up to become the equally able but brutal Nazi leader. In little Thalburg the Nazis achieved power when they took control of the town council. They then began the process of