

but an essential part of their lives. These ideas he thinks are probably in some sense as old as the Germans, as old as Herman and the rude forest tribes whose first contacts with civilized Mediterraneans formed an abiding sense of inferiority among Germans. But in this book he begins his detailed study with that outbreak of a feeling of inferiority to the "West" which we call the Romantic Movement, and which as usual took the form of an assertion of German superiority. From the romantics he proceeds through Father John "the First Storm Trooper" to the "Metapolitics of Richard Wagner"—the heart of the book, its most original and thoroughly documented portion—to such scattered and varied late nineteenth-century racialists and *Realpolitiker* as H. S. Chamberlain, Lagarde, Langbehn, Treitschke, and finally to the "Prophet-Laureate of Metapolitics," Rosenberg. On all these men he has something interesting and often acute to say. Their ideas he maps clearly—never, of course, as they themselves would map them, for he makes no secret of his fundamental disagreement with them.

All in all, this is the best account of the intellectual origins of Nazism available to the general reader. It is a controversial book, packed with points worth disputing. Its numerous asides and admonitions will annoy convinced isolationists, for Mr. Viereck is constantly rubbing in the fact that North America is a part of the world the Nazis are singing about—"tomorrow the whole world." Its master-thesis, the superiority of Mediterranean "classicism" over Germanic "romanticism," has had critics and scholars at odds since long before the days of the late Irving Babbitt, of whom Mr. Viereck must be the youngest disciple now in print. But it is not an ill-tempered book, not a book that tries to brow-beat the reader into submission and agreement. In its own rather odd way, it is a reasonable book—not sweetly reasonable, but reasonable.

**SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S  
DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 392)**

RABINDRANATH TAGORE:

**CROSSING**

The peace of sadness is in my heart like the brooding silence upon the master's lute before the music begins. . . . .

I know that my melodies, still unstruck, are clinging to some lute-strings of thine, and they are not altogether lost.

# The Liberal Intellectuals: 4th Century B.C.

NORMAN COUSINS

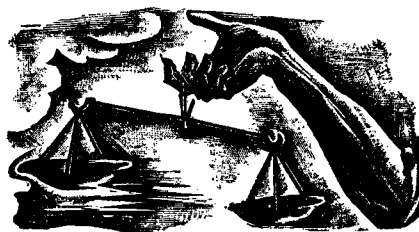
IT HAS been pointed out, frequently as an argument against democracy, that many of the leading Greek thinkers were critical of the democratic form of government. This is of course in a sense true; but their position must be set against their ultimate aims for humanity, for their measuring stick was frequently Utopia. Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle found countless flaws in democracy, certainly; but the sum and substance of their writings can in no way be interpreted as a refutation of free government. They were political theorists in search of the ideal state, writing not only for their time but for history. If it should seem paradoxical that they should have been severely critical of the Athenian way of life, let us reflect that it is no more paradoxical than the writings of many of our own liberal intellectuals of the early 1930's, when political experimentation was in the air, when democracy had broken down as a practical instrument—and when anyone who wrote in favor of democracy was considered by many to be naive or jingoistic. And yet, we have only to look in the front ranks of democracy today to find where most of these contemporary thinkers stand; what they condemned a few years ago was not democracy but the failures within it, and they condemned those failures at a time when it seemed to be operated for the Few and not for the Many.

Similarly, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle—the liberal intellectuals of their day—lived in Athens at a time when chaos had come to be associated almost automatically with government. These were the years following the Peloponnesian War, when such democracy as existed was woefully inadequate to meet the needs of the people and the state, and, finally, when the Athenian Era was fast drawing to a close. Complicating the political picture were the superstitions and shams

which were rife among the people, charges of impiety frequently being brought against leading thinkers. Socrates himself was condemned at the age of seventy to death on such a charge. He had been called radical and subversive, but he was no more subversive than the Brain Trusters 2,500 years later. The effect of his death upon Plato, and in turn, upon Aristotle, must not be entirely overlooked in any consideration of the background against which they wrote.

Even so, it is perhaps ironical to find Plato, in his earlier writings, admiring other states in Greece where the freedom of thought and expression which were so vital to his existence would have been conspicuously absent; indeed, where it would have been difficult for him to have taught or even to have lived. His "scientific socialism" favored a state where ambitious schemers could be kept out of office and where poverty would be eliminated. He deplored the consequences of individualism. And yet a more individualistic figure than Plato could not be found in all of Athens—except perhaps for his teacher, Socrates, or his pupil, Aristotle. He himself was individualistic democracy in action, even though to have acknowledged it publicly might have linked him with the great body of the people—where the shams and superstitions he had deplored all his life were most to be found.

But it would be a mistake to attempt to explain Plato's ideas entirely by referring to the psychology of the non-conformist. In his later writings, he left little doubt of his ultimate opinions. "Freedom in a democracy," he wrote, "is the glory of the state. . . . Only in a democracy will the free man . . . dwell." The "communism" he had once enunciated he now found largely impractical. Perhaps this may have been an outgrowth of his experience at Syracuse, to which he had been invited by Dion, the elder minister, a person with apparent intellectual pretenses, if not convictions, who offered Syracuse as a laboratory for the ideal state Plato had so meticulously constructed in theory. Dion believed that Syracuse possessed, in the person of Dionysius (no relation despite the similarity of names), a chief of state who fulfilled Plato's qualifications for a



leader who was competent, young, generous, and philosophical.

Plato came to Syracuse but the experiment was short-lived. He had to deal with human material, not geometrical figures which were unfailingly predictable, or which could be developed to a predetermined conclusion from a given proposition. Dionysius, though young and daring, was no philosopher, nor could he be taught to be one. Other complications entered the picture and Plato returned to Athens, which—imperfect democracy that it was in the post-Periclean period—was apparently still preferable to Syracuse. In fairness to him, however, it must be said that Plato himself gave up the experiment at Syracuse after he found the conditions hardly suited to the making of an ideal state. As to whether the perfect conditions were or are available anywhere is not a Platonic but a Homeric question.

Aristotle, who came to Athens to study under Plato, when the latter returned from Syracuse, was also given an opportunity by a state to make his ideas felt in the operation of government. The process was perhaps less direct than it was with Plato, for Aristotle was invited not to formulate a society but supervise the education of a young Macedonian later known as Alexander the Great. For several years, Aristotle, one of the most highly educated and civilized men who ever lived, instructed the brilliant and precocious young Alexander in biology, ethics, politics, government, philosophy, psychology, history, mathematics—in many of which Aristotle was the foremost authority and pioneer then living.

As to the practical results of this education, it is difficult to say. But in one particular at least, Alexander demonstrated either that he had not learned his lessons well or that he disagreed with his teacher. Aristotle believed in strict sovereignty and autonomy for the individual city, or city-state (since the word *polis* in Greek meant either). He did not believe that a state could or should be constructed on any scale which would prevent all its citizens from assembling together; he favored, in short, a carefully planned and integrated system of constitutional government, or democracy on a small scale. A more striking opposite to the world order Alexander attempted to forge could not be imagined. Conquest on the grand scale, unlimited dominion—these were Alexander's main goals.

Alexander's designs for world conquest were not without repercussions affecting his former teacher. After Alexander's early death, feeling in  
(Continued on page 16)

## "Cannon Instead of Butter"

**HITLER CANNOT CONQUER RUSSIA.** By Maurice Hindus. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1941. 299 pp. \$2.

Reviewed by WILLIAM L. SHIRER

A FEW days after the signing of the Hitler-Stalin pact on August 23, 1939, Maurice Hindus cabled his American publishers from Helsinki and suggested that he write a new book forthwith. The title would be, he cabled, "The Coming War Between Russia and Germany." His publishers, Mr. Hindus tells us—and we are not surprised—advised him by cable to continue working on his new novel of Czech village life.

Within less than two years, the war which Mr. Hindus saw coming from the first, did come. A few days later, the military leaders of this country, backed up in the main by our State Department, sent for the press representatives and told them that it was most unlikely that the Red Army could hold out for more than three weeks and that it would be a miracle if it was still in the field three months hence. With this most of the country's experts in the press and on the radio agreed. "The German army will go through Russia like a knife through butter," a high Washington official assured Mr. Hindus. He was not so sure. In fact, the more he thought about it during the first days of the campaign, the more certain he became of one thing, that Hitler could never conquer Russia. And now he has staked his reputation as one of our most consistent observers of the Russian scene by saying just that in the title of this excellent and most timely book, "Hitler Cannot Conquer Russia."

There must be good, solid reasons

which explain not only why the Red Armies have done better against Hitler's panzer forces than all but a very few expected, but why Mr. Hindus thinks Hitler can never conquer Russia. Those reasons make up this book. They make a good case and incidentally throw new light on certain Stalinist policies which Mr. Hindus, in common with most people in this country, abhorred, but which he now sees as having been forced upon the Soviet citizenry at a frightful cost only because they were designed to save Russia against just such an onslaught as Hitler has now unloosed. The desperate Five-Year Plans, the too-hasty and too-brutal collectivization of agriculture, the whole lowering of the living standard, turn out to be nothing more or less than part of a general policy of *cannon instead of butter*. This policy was cruel and grim, Mr. Hindus admits. But he thinks its fruits will save Russia now.

He cites a prophetic speech of Stalin: "We are fifty to a hundred years behind the advanced countries. We must cover the distance in ten years. Either we do this, or they will crush us." Those words were pronounced on February 4, 1931. The Russian dictator's sense of the time still left to him was truly remarkable. Exactly ten years! Whether ten years was enough history will presently show. But that those ten years were not wasted by Russia's iron man, the author makes abundantly clear.

In one of the most enlightening chapters of the book, he assesses Russia's productive capacity. To the many not familiar with this field there are some startling statements. The average man is still prone to see the Russo-German war as a conflict between German machines and Russian manpower—a most unequal kind of struggle. Yet Mr. Hindus reminds us that not Germany but Russia held first place in Europe in volume of production on the eve of this war; that not Germany but Russia led the continent in the production of machines; and that in such things as agricultural machinery and engines, the Soviet Union led the world. True, the quality may not be as good as that of those produced in America or Germany. But in three months of warfare, Russian tanks, guns, and planes seem to have done fairly well.

Mr. Hindus also has some comforting news for those who thought that the Soviet industrial system would be hopelessly crippled and therefore unable to equip a modern army if Hitler conquered the Ukraine, as he now

(Continued on page 20)



Maurice Hindus

Harold Stein