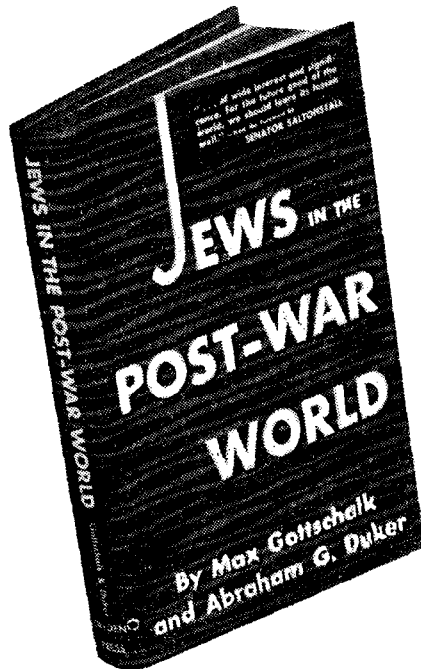


**"For the good
of the world,
we should
learn its
lesson well."**

— SENATOR LEVERETT
SALTONSTALL



THIS INFORMATIVE BOOK, written by experts of the American Jewish Committee, will help you understand the complex problems that face all Jews. Here are eye-opening facts on the plans of the various world organizations as they affect the Jew: minority rights, resettlement and migration schemes, Palestine, relief needs. A hard-headed book for all conference-minded citizens.

\$3.00 at your bookstore

THE Dryden PRESS

(Publishers of Sumner Welles'
GUIDE TO THE PEACE)

With Regard to Human Thought

THE PEEP-HOLE OF THE PRESENT. By Samuel Roth. New York: The Philosophical Library, 1945. 267 pp., with index. \$3.75.

Reviewed by ROBERT BIERSTEDT

THERE may never be unanimity of opinion as to the worst book ever published, but there can be no doubt that this one is a strong contender for that dubious honor. It purports to be a work in the field of philosophy, but it has about as much relation to that sublime discipline as astrology has to astronomy or palmistry to psychology. Ineptly titled, poorly conceived, wholly lacking in organization, distinguished by questionable taste, bad grammar, and illiterate proofreading, and containing nothing but the most fanciful notions for which there is not a shred of evidence, it presumes to correct Einstein in certain fundamental matters and yet would not pass muster as a freshman theme at any respectable institution of learning. These are serious charges and require documentation.

First of all, the advertisements for the book, limited to "a few quality periodicals," claim that it reviews the whole range of human thought from Lao Tse to Einstein. It does not. It reviews the range of human thought from Samuel Roth to Samuel Roth. And that, to be sure, is quite a range. On one page we find the statement that light does not travel, that it has no velocity at all, and on another that it travels through gases in waves. The frontispiece is an apparently well-substantiated photograph of a molecule and a paragraph near the end of the book asserts that a molecule is forever invisible. These are only two examples of numerous contradictions induced, we are forced to believe, by the author's total lack of knowledge of what it is he wants to say.

If the book has any leading ideas—an hypothesis open to question—they are, (1), that the ether is no more than "physical consciousness," that "consciousness is the stuff of which space is woven," and, (2), that all the planetary bodies and stars are parts of a "luminum." With regard to the first we learn a number of additional things, such as the fact that consciousness has weight, color, and mass, and that it is the product of the height times the width times the depth of an object. As to the "luminum," the word does not appear in the index and the reader is forced to dwell in the author's darkness concerning its nature.

Omitting Mr. Roth's disquisitions on mental telepathy, his rocket trips to the moon, his snide and wholly gratu-

itous references to sex, and his comments on World War II—all evidence of the absence of organization—the following quotations will exhibit his questionable taste: (1) "Space is a pregnant woman who is never a virgin, and who is unlikely ever to become a mother-in-law"; and (2) "Do we, then, really exist four-dimensionally? Brother, I don't know, and I don't ever expect to know."

Most of the book, however, is characterized by a meaninglessness which often becomes ludicrous, as in the following examples chosen among many merely for their brevity:

Presumably, space has a finely-grained skeleton, every one of whose limbs is a space-nothingness structure of particles composed of consciousness.

We may have to revise our conception of a vacuum so radically that it will denote the fullest and densest of our substances.

Where we are not instinctively informed, all the constitutions of the unknown are equally probable.

As positive consciousness, light is the axis on which all forms of matter evolve [*sic*]; and our reactions to it must compare with those of the rest of the world.

If the length (l) of an object, width (w) and depth (d) are each increased by a movement in progression of consciousness (c), the cube root of the difference between *lwdc* before the movement and the cubic content of the object after the movement has been perfected, equals the line of consciousness.

And, Section VII of Chapter Four in its entirety:

Santayanna [*sic*] uses the words *consciousness* and *spirit* as though they were interchangeable. A philosopher [*sic*] doing the work of a theologian suggests a painful state of emergency. The question is, where?

We can only reach the conclusion, far from reluctant in this case, that if a more spurious book, a more embarrassing piece of writing, or a more flagrant disgrace to the publishing business has ever appeared, we are not aware of it. It is saddening to reflect that such crimes can be committed in the name of philosophy.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 580)

O. LATTIMORE:
SOLUTION IN ASIA

At home, as abroad, we have the choice of attempting to facilitate change by an intelligent study of evolution, or . . . to halt change entirely, in which case we shall build up the pressures that eventually break out in revolution.

HINDSIGHT ON TOCQUEVILLE'S FORESIGHT

(Continued from page 9)

core of individualism as touching religion is matched, I think, by his failure to see through government and voluntary associations (both of which impressed him much in America) to the hard core of independence which makes association so freely possible here.

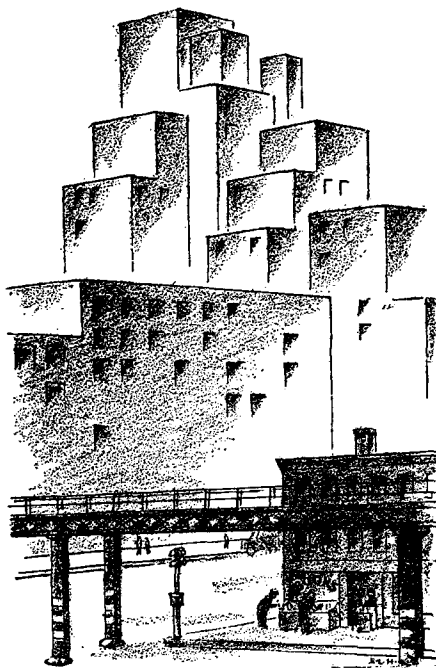
He saw that Americans were British the more bent toward equality by their surroundings. "The political education of the people," as he admits, "has long been complete; say rather that it was complete when the people first set foot upon the soil." That very English education was indoctrination for American rebellion, and it was the inculcation of religious independence. Men who would not let anybody else, however willing to do it, dogmatically hand them God, were surely not going to let anybody else hand them government. It does not really get at Americans, and never did, to describe government, as Tocqueville did, in its federal and local aspects (he neglected the states). Good as was his descriptive understanding, it was not enough, for the simple reason that Americans have always made their government, not it them, and dominated their environment, not it them; and they have always set more stead upon the maker than upon the made. They depreciate other forms of government without much appreciating their own, because they *distrust* all its forms. Free government, and all other forms of association, come easy to men who are free of mind and tolerant at heart. They join gladly because they can unjoin easily; and the fact that they can dissociate themselves makes it possible for them to stand their ground sturdily even while associated.

No, Tocqueville, for all his external clarity and his internal clairvoyance, never quite got to the heart of *homo Americanus*. His foresight failed only as his insight faltered. His background of authoritative sacerdotalism and cultural elegance achieved dominance over his logical foreground. He, the son of a nobleman, was an aristocrat; but so am I, the son of a blacksmith ("every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you," too). It is this very obviousness of the ubiquity of aristocracy that distinguishes, and still for the most part distinguishes, the American from the European. From all my recent months in Italy, directing Allied efforts at Italian re-education, I cannot recall a single Italian intellectual, certainly no member of the aristocracy, who seemed able to admit this obvious American truth that the son of a nobody might become the father of a

somebody, or might himself be as much a somebody as is anybody else.

The French nobleman was, for this same reason, afraid of what he saw in America. It was inevitable, yes. He would not fight it, no. But it was bad for the great things: for Honor, for Fame, for Virtue, for Glory. Accept it? Yes, because inevitable. But like it? No, not much. He feared the majority because he thought of it, with Ortega yesterday, with Hayek today, and with most Europeans always, as a mass; and he could not see that the mass is but individual men made into a "mess" by somebody's timorous mind and grudging heart. It is the old story of Jefferson with his own French nobleman. They both trusted "the people," as Jefferson admitted, but the Frenchman as their guardian, Jefferson as their comrade; and Jefferson's brand of trust has many a fruitful harvest in America meantime. So also Tocqueville: he could not discern that the thing he had to fear was fear: a real danger, however, because fear can make itself come true.

Tocqueville did not see how fully every American is but each of my Englishmen in Hyde Park, and has ever been; that the environmental factors making for equality lie beyond forests and deserts in the fearless love of liberty itself. Each knows the truth, or knows where it can be found. If he is not his own eventual authority, he will be his initial authority on who is authoritative. Each knows the truth. Each is willing to share it. But none is disposed to impose it. The latter is the more lasting marvel, that a man who



knows the truth and will share it, will nevertheless not impose it. This marvel arises from the lack of fear (as that lack arises largely from the assumption of equality). If it does not enter your head that another will coerce you, then it fails to enter your head that you may coerce him. That is the noblesse oblige about the matter which shows the ubiquity of aristocracy.

In America the sons of Tom, Dick, and Harry have achieved a more secure practice of this excellence—noblesse oblige, the peculiar virtue of an aristocracy—than the most immaculate European aristocrats, bankrupt as they are at the core by gnawing fear. Our prophet Whitman has signalled the American password:

Stranger, if you passing meet me and desire to speak to me, why should you not speak to me?

And why should I not speak to you?

Governments have their meaning only as means to this confidence of man in man. Religions are bad or good as they minister to this structure of psychic integrity. What makes a society dependable is that every citizen knows for himself what he will not stand and simply says no to anything beyond the allowed; knows for himself what he wishes and gives to it his nod. Such a citizen does not have to be afraid of other citizens, for he is not afraid of himself. Refusing himself to trespass, he advertises in his manner to all would-be trespassers: "You shall not pass." Equality, which is merely *equal liberty*, does not, therefore, spell mediocrity, all aristocrats to the contrary from Tocqueville down. It spells meliorism and the heroism that goes with the doing of daily justice.

We welcome the reappearance of Tocqueville. But we are fortunate to have him come back to us in the same publication season with Alonzo Myers's "Are Men Equal?" and with Marshall Field's "Freedom Is More Than a Word." These books are proper antidotes to such fear as impoverishes the Frenchman's brilliant reflections upon our democracy. These books, one on the plane of theory, the other on the plane of practice, make it clear that it is at the level of their highest that men are equal and that the counter-emphasis upon liberty finds its meaning horizontally, not vertically. Of course man wants freedom, as the enemies of equality shout. That goes without saying. But that *all* men want liberty, needs saying again and again. Freedom is more than a word, and what more it is, is action to make it a reality for every man, equally. The danger to democracy lies not in equality, but in such a definition of liberty as denies to it the equal access of all citizens.

Just off the press . . .

THE FORCES THAT SHAPE OUR FUTURE

BY CLYDE EAGLETON

Inspired by the question of an Iowa farm boy regarding his future, this book is an extremely understandable approach to the forces that have produced most of the problems over which Americans are now arguing. The author shows that an international system, able to maintain order among nations, is prerequisite not only for protection against war but for the solution of many internal problems—government, business, labor, standards of living, private enterprise, liberty, or security. He outlines compactly the sort of an international system that would be practical and attainable, and discusses what Americans must do in order to achieve it. The author is a well-known scholar in this field. He is Professor of International Law at New York University, now on leave to the Department of State as Legal Expert in International Organization and Security.

PRICE . . . \$3.25

Copies of Second Printing
still available . . .

THE PRESIDENT: OFFICE AND POWERS

BY EDWARD S. CORWIN

Professor of Jurisprudence
at Princeton University

PRICE . . . \$5.00

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY PRESS

WASHINGTON SQUARE, NEW YORK 3

— BUY WAR BONDS AND STAMPS —

THE KEY to San Francisco is found in



**Dumbarton
Oaks**

There the Big
Three agreed on
the formulas now
under discussion at the momen-
tous conference called to chart
world peace.

Dumbarton Oaks presents the
proposals, the pro and con argu-
ments, and fills in the back-
ground.

267 Pages \$1.25 Postpaid

H. W. WILSON CO.

962 University Ave. New York 52

A ROMANCE OF ENGINEERING

(Continued from page 10)

moved his plant to Trenton, N. J., where, as the John A. Roebling's Sons Company, it is still in the possession of his descendants and is one of the great American industries. Wire ropes and cables were soon replacing fibre ropes wherever hard usage was encountered, and before long they were making new achievements possible. One of these was the enlargement of the suspension bridge.

Leaving much of the management of his new industry to trusted subordinates and to members of his family, Roebling devoted himself with demonic energy and mounting passion to the construction of suspension bridges. He acquired a substantial fortune as a manufacturer; bridge building brought him little in the way of profit, left little time for family life, for music, or for philosophy, taxed even his torrential energies to the breaking-point, and eventually took his life; but the suspension bridge was his mission, and he did not count the personal cost.

After building several suspended aqueducts for the Pennsylvania and for the Delaware and Hudson canals, he entered in 1846 on the major phase of his career with the construction of a multiple-span suspension bridge across the Monogahela River at Pittsburgh. The principles and methods used in that work were later applied to the more famous single-span bridges that were to follow. Roebling himself invented the machinery and devised the methods to be used. He substituted wires laid parallel for twisted wires in making cables, thereby gaining far greater strength and endurance; he worked out the procedure by which bridge cables are made in place

and are rendered weather-proof. Equally important was his realization that by the supplementary use of trusses and diagonal stays he could attain virtually complete rigidity in suspension bridges. Several of his bridges, after many years of service, have been taken down because they no longer could carry all the traffic; but no Roebling bridge has ever broken down, blown down, or worn out. Contemporary bridge builders still have a few lessons to learn, Mr. Steinman believes, from the great pioneer. Roebling's contemporaries—even the brilliant Charles Ellet—were slow to learn Roebling's methods, and in recent years they have been neglected. The spectacular collapse in 1940, as a result of aerodynamic oscillations set up in a mild gale, of the Tacoma Narrows Bridge could not have happened if its designers had known their Roebling. The early master was also the master of the art of the suspension bridge.

But it is not my purpose to pretend to summarize an entrancing and significant story that deserves to be read in its entirety. An adequate summary would in fact be impossible, for the value of the book lies to a great extent in its richness of detail, in its full descriptions of the construction of the four great bridges that have made Roebling famous. Nor can I do more than mention the moving story of the son who inherited much of his father's genius, became his equal as an engineer, and carried the great Brooklyn Bridge to triumphant completion. This story of John and Washington Roebling, and of their heroic deeds should have a secure place among our biographical classics.



BURR
SHAFFER

"Now, remember, you name him 'Chief-not-get-elected-this-time'."

In the Viennese Tradition

THE PRISONER. By Ernst Lothar.
New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co.
1945. 308 pp. \$2.75.

Reviewed by F. C. WEISKOPF

IN all his work, comprising a large number of novels, essays, *feuilletons*, etc., Mr. Lothar displays those famous qualities which are characteristic of the Viennese school of writing—that “French variety of German language literature” as one of its witty members called it. His newest novel is no exception. It sparkles with the charm of a natural story-teller. It bears the marks of a rich and refined cultural heritage. It tells of the human warmth, the psychological insight, the musicality, and the sensuousness of the author. But it also suffers from a good deal of gay *Schlamperei*, that easy-going nonchalance leaving too many ends loose, touching too many strings without finishing the tune, and bridging too many gaps in the composition of the plot and in the development of characters with makeshift constructions.

In a very skilful prologue of high dramatic power, Mr. Lothar introduces the narrator of his story, a Viennese refugee professor, teaching German literature at an American college near the Rocky Mountains. A young prisoner of war in a camp four miles outside the college town has asked permission to see the professor, and the camp commander has considered it advisable to have the professor talk to the prisoner, a boy of sixteen, Toni Fritsch, private in an Elite Guard regiment of the *Hoch und Deutschmeister* division recruited in Austria.

Toni, whose father had known the professor in former times, turns out to be in deadly danger from the secret Nazi *fehme* for having spread “disloyal statements against National Socialism among Austrian prisoners” and having refused to participate in “German ceremonies and singing.” The prologue ends with Toni, in mortal fear of the expiration of an ultimatum set by the LPG (Gestapo operating clandestinely among the prisoners of war) telling the professor how he came to disagree with Nazism.

This raises high expectations in the reader who looks forward to a thorough psychological study of a Hitler youth freeing himself from the Nazi poison. But Toni's tale of his expulsion, for an alleged theft, from Vienna's famous *Theresianum* school, and of his frantic efforts to get justice from the highest officials of the Nazi party and the Reich, is partly too overcrowded with details, and partly too fragmentary. There is no real clash

between Nazi indoctrination and new cognizance born of bitter experience; there cannot be, for Toni is a very untypical, soft, and sometimes doubtful Hitler boy with anti-Prussian feelings and a certain pity and even sympathy for the Jews, entirely alien to the ordinary members of the Nazi youth organization.

But apart from that, Toni's recollections offer a vivid picture of a boy's maturing through the fight for justice, and no less vivid a miniature of his girl friend and later “war wife” Anna.

The epilogue brings the uncovering

of the secret Nazi machinations in the war prisoners' camp and Toni's rescue and (somewhat abrupt and Hollywood-like) reunion with Anna who manages to come all the way out of Austria to Italy and to the United States in spite of war and upheaval.

Readers of “The Prisoner” will particularly enjoy Mr. Lothar's art of sketching, with a few words, the beauty of an Austrian landscape or of a sunrise in Colorado, and of conveying with a similar economy of artistic means the atmosphere of a Viennese middle-class home or an American college campus.

The translation, by Mr. Galston, is a good, competent job.

Praise for Sergeant Nelson OF THE GUARDS by Gerald Kersh

“Sergeant Nelson is terrific

—definitely. There are chuckles, belly-laughs, sometimes horror, and tears for those who wish to shed them. There may have been more vivid accounts written of the British retreat to Dunkirk, but, if so, I have not read them. This is a portrait of a good soldier in any people's army anywhere that is fighting for democracy and human decency.”

—New York Herald Tribune

“No one since Kipling has captured the argot and character of the British Tommy with such fidelity. Sergeant Nelson is ‘a better man than I am, Gunga Din’. I laughed and wept reading this book.”

—Sterling North

“The most blood-&-thunder, swashbuckling, super-patriotic book of World War II.”

—Time Magazine

At your bookseller's \$2.50

THE JOHN C. WINSTON CO., PHILA. 7, PA.

