

Martin," ingenious exploration of a situation is again the framework—and the unexpected ending again wraps it up. It is usually thought unfair for a reviewer to reveal whatever main surprises an author stores up for his readers. As I mean to complain of this one, though, it's necessary to say that Mr. Golding has used a device which first showed up, as I recollect, in Ambrose Bierce's story, "The Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge"—the action is shown to have taken place during a drowning man's last instants of life.

Christopher Hadley Martin, RNVR, is washed overboard into the North Atlantic from a British destroyer during the Second World War. In the first vivid pages of the book we have his sensations as he fights his way to the surface—the dim spark of consciousness struggling to keep lit, throwing up meaningful and meaningless images as the body labors to breathe and move. Martin is afloat, alone, for an indefinite time, then is washed onto the rocky peak of a submerged mountain. The rest of the book concerns his struggle to survive and maintain his identity: his first successes at this, and then the gradual disintegration of Martin and his world. He staves off madness a while by slipping into his past; and the reader learns that Martin is a very bad piece of work indeed, given to betrayal and greed from childhood on. There is no comfort or sustenance in his memories, and he comes to realize that this barren rock is all he is to have of heaven or hell; that he has never looked to find anything but naked survival. At the end, fragmented and subhuman, his consciousness gutters out.

A last chapter makes it plain that

he died within seconds after hitting the water.

It seems to me that this surprise at the end flaws a striking and compelling novel. The author's intention is to reinforce the power of his portrayal of Martin's dreadful ordeal by showing that his hell was entirely his own creation; but he has made the setting of the rock and Martin's life on it so vivid and detailed that the ending seems mostly a trick, an unnecessary flourish; an actual island would have made his point just as well. With or without it, though, "The Two Deaths of Christopher Martin" is a memorable work of imagination and moral force.

AFFAIR WITH A PHONY: A favorite device, a popular modern pattern of the novelist, is to spotlight various characters and then weave their lives together. In "The Thing Desired" (Viking, \$3.50), Lalage Pulvertaft uses it effectively on a group of brittle, disillusioned, sophisticated London intellectuals, who go in for psychoanalytic thinking and regard old-fashioned emotions like love and friendship with wariness and suspicion. Her novel is modern, ironic, and well-written.

Much of it is told from the angle of young Caroline Arno'd, struggling with the ever-present life problems—love and a job—and trying hard to be sophisticated and cynical about everything. The dominating figure, however, is Adam Chard, a middle-aged writer "who has become a household word without writing since the Twenties." At first he is an enigma. Is he the victim of circumstance, of unhappy fate, or is he a fiend? It is gradually disclosed to us that he is a man who destroys rather than creates, a phony, an egotist, who has driven

his wife into a mental hospital and who is repeating the pattern of persecution on his temperamental but gifted young daughter. Naturally no good can come when he and Caroline are attracted and no good does come of it. But the reader is not quite prepared for quite as much havoc as ensues, involving a number of other lives and leading to a crashing climax—a modern line ending surprisingly in a burst of almost Victorian melodrama.

The author's forte is her analysis of character in quick, incisive, profile-like presentations. She is less convincing in telling what her people do, what happens to them later. It is never quite clear, for instance, why Caroline, who was usually wary with other suitors, including one whom she loves and who finally loves her, should let her defences fall and be attracted to the "most destructive character she had ever met." The line of the story therefore presents the author with more difficulties and is not always so credible. Partly at fault here is the hyper-intellectual milieu, filled with people who believe, in Caroline's words, that "the whole of life seems to be such a senseless muddle, such a shambles of people broken and sick and maimed and tied down to no purpose."

This novel is like a jig-saw puzzle, with excellent, colorful bits and pieces, but less convincing as a whole picture. It is interesting work, however, cynicism, irony, and all. Perhaps Miss Pulvertaft may achieve a more convincing story line in her next book.

—ROSEMARY C. BENÉT.

IN DEEPEST BUREAUCRACY: If you've had the impression that the American civil service did not always operate at a peak level of efficiency, and was sometimes more concerned with bureaucratic protocol than with pragmatism, "Come with Me to Macedonia," by Leonard Drohan (Knopf, \$3.95) should confirm your worst suspicions. Mr. Drohan's first novel—the title of which has only a glancing connection with the subject matter—concerns the operations of a military procurement office, staffed by civilian administrators and supervised by Army brass. There is apparently a question in Mr. Drohan's mind as to which echelon contains the bigger lunkheads, but with generous impartiality he makes out an excellent case for each side. In the military ranks is Lt. Col. Dawson, past master of the flashy "briefing session" and a stranger to sweet reason; in mufti the booby-prize winner is a statistician named John Lumm, whose office is so cluttered with brilliant filing devices that he can never

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Your Literary I. Q.

Conducted by John T. Winterich

TRIANGLES

Here are the given names of two sides of ten literary triangles. Fannie Gross of Asheville, North Carolina, asks you to complete each triangle with the name of the third side, along with the work and the author. Everything is squared away on page 27.

1. Grushenka and Dmitri
2. Anna and Alexei
3. Stephen and Virginia
4. Zenobia and Mattie
5. Michael and Lucetta
6. Charlotte and Albert
7. Leopold and Marion
8. Mabel and Peg
9. Jinny and Bradd
10. Ustane and Leo

How Communism Works

"The New Class," by Milovan Djilas (Praeger, 214 pp. \$3.95), is a strong indictment of the Communist system by a man who up to three and one-half years ago was a leading member of the Party hierarchy in Yugoslavia. It is reviewed by Henry C. Wolfe, author of "The Imperial Soviets" and other books.

By Henry C. Wolfe

EVERY once in a while a book comes along which helps influence the course of human events. Adam Smith and Karl Marx produced such works. And it is just possible that in "The New Class" Milovan Djilas has written a volume that may deeply affect the thought and deeds of men for years to come. In a good many ways this "anti-Communist manifesto" is an extraordinary exposition of a man's faith. For one thing, the author is not a free man in a free country, but a political prisoner in a Communist jail in Yugoslavia. He is at the complete mercy of the Tito regime. Yet months ago he instructed his publishers to go ahead with the book, no matter what happened to him. "The New Class," then, represents a rare act of courage and devotion to an ideal.

In appraising such a volume, obviously the background of the author is of the highest importance. The forty-six-year-old Djilas is a poet, a top Marxist theoretician, a famous guerrilla leader and a former idol of Yugoslav youth. Until his downfall three and one-half years ago, he was rated No. 3 in his country's Communist hierarchy and a possible successor to Tito. A Montenegrin, he is a true son of the people of the Black Mountain who, though surrounded by powerful invaders, maintained their freedom for centuries in the face of Turkish military power.

Djilas's known idealism, his magnificent war record, his friendship with liberal leaders in Western Europe, his colorful personality, his courageous self-sacrifice—all these assure him a wide audience. Free or imprisoned, dead or alive, the entire Communist empire must reckon with his influence.

What is it that Djilas feels he must

voice at such terrible personal risk? It is a message to people everywhere, a passionately felt warning of what Communism does to the body and soul of man. He has written a penetrating analysis that lays bare the weaknesses and corruption of Marxism, whether interpreted by Khrushchev, Gomulka, Mao, or Tito. The particular strength and significance of his book lies in the fact that Djilas goes to the heart of the "bureaucratic despotism" that, by its nature, engenders a "form of latent civil war between the government and the people."

DJILAS emphasizes the "thirst for power" that is "insatiable and irresistible among Communists." In the Communist system "careerism, extravagance, and love of power are inevitable, and so is corruption." The "classless society" is a cruel myth. On the contrary, the Communist state "inevitably creates privileges and parasitic functions . . . No other revolution promised so much and accomplished so little."

To Djilas the Kremlin's "peace offensives" are tragic farces. "Founded by force and violence, in constant conflict with its people, the Communist state . . . must be militaristic. The cult of force, especially military force, is nowhere so prevalent as in Communist countries." Throughout history, he writes, no other system "ever has provoked such profound and far-reaching discontent." Indeed, "Communist totalitarianism leads to total discontent . . ." In the so-called dictatorship of the proletariat "the worker has no choice but to accept the employer's terms." The Communist elite grind down the masses and "pillage the people." Communism, according to Djilas, is a gigantic racket carried on at the expense of the many for the luxurious benefit of the few who make up the "new class."

The author believes that the system carries within itself the seeds of its own destruction. Although apologists for the Kremlin like to argue that Marxism is "scientific," Djilas says that "Communist economy is perhaps the most wasteful economy in the history of human society." The men who run it "handle national property as their own, but at the same time they waste it as if it were somebody else's." Little wonder that he concludes that



Milovan Djilas—"courageous self-sacrifice."

the "new class" has "condemned itself to failure and shameful ruin."

And what does Djilas think of the "national Communism" now in vogue in Yugoslavia and Poland? It is all part of the wicked and corrupt system that the Kremlin dominates. "It will be unable to separate its fate from that which links it with the remaining Communist countries and movements." Thus, the answer to Communism is not some form of deviation but a complete break for freedom.

ZIONISM, PRO AND CON: Not all Americans of Jewish faith, it appears, regard the fortunes of the State of Israel with the same degree of concern. Lined up against the Zionist movement, which has long fought for the creation and preservation of Israel as a kind of Jewish national "homeland," is an organization known as the American Council for Judaism. Their position is now set down in Rabbi Elmer Berger's "Judaism or Jewish Nationalism" (Bookman, \$3).

Coming on the heels of dramatic developments in the Middle East, the Rabbi's partisan treatise is not likely to evoke much interest from readers who have come to recognize that (irrespective of the theological or philosophical aspects of the Zionist controversy) the survival of Israel as a free and independent nation, providing a home for Jews dispossessed and displaced by decades of war and intolerance, is, in the present struggle against Communist disruption and subversion, an immensely practical matter in which Americans of every religious persuasion have acquired an important stake.

—SAMUEL S. STRATTON.