

Makers of History

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truth'." On that note he ends an absorbing biography of a fascinating man.

Hungarian Enigma

"Memoirs of Michael Karolyi," (translated by Catherine Karolyi. Dutton. 392 pp. \$6.50), offers the recollections and public philosophy of Hungary's first President. Our reviewer, Emil Lengyel, is author of *"The Danube"* and *"Americans from Hungary."*

By Emil Lengyel

COUNT MICHAEL KAROLYI has been one of this century's most controversial statesmen. After World War I he was briefly President of the only truly democratic regime Hungary has ever known. When the Communists made their successful bid for power at that time he and his family went into exile. As one light after another was extinguished in Europe in the wake of fascism the Karolyis, because they were known as "radicals," had to wander from place to place, at long last finding sanctuary in the Britain of World War II. After the war Karolyi became Hungary's ambassador in Paris but resigned that post when Communist terror struck in Budapest. His recently published *"Memoirs"* offers the story of their peregrinations, his recollections of many notable persons of his age, and a summary of his public philosophy.

In their exile Count and Countess Karolyi became Socialists and he remained one to his death a short time ago. The much-debated "Karolyi enigma" has revolved around the paradox of an extraordinarily privileged aristocrat identifying himself with the underprivileged.

Many attempts have been made to explain this strange phenomenon. The Freudian "compensation" was the one most often heard. Yet it did not explain the stand of a man who seemed to have every advantage on his side. Both he and his radiantly fetching wife belonged to the top aristocracy of their native land, to families with historic names. According to his own glowing testimony in this book, their married life could not have been better. Both of them were intellectual aristocrats, too, and he had been one of Hungary's richest heirs.

If psychological compensation was

the motive, it must have been Karolyi's awareness of the injustice to which Hungary's people had been subjected at the hands of their own ruling lords.

Karolyi relates in this book that, in his view, the traumatic experience of World War II was to bring about a change of heart in the Danube valley. The curse of the region had been its suicidal fragmentation on the peripheries of Leviathan nations, especially the aggressive Russians and Germans. He favored an East European Federation, neither West nor anti-Soviet—a buffer region within which the tearing conflicts of the contemporary world could be reconciled. Karolyi saw the Soviets as especially concerned about this area, which had been used by the Germans twice within one generation to launch attacks against them. In his view Marshal Tito had found the right solution.

However, Karolyi was brought up short by Hungary's little Stalins when they staged their ghastly Moscow-type trial against Laszlo Rajk, the Foreign Minister and a national Communist. Rajk was accused of conspiring with Tito. This, Karolyi said,

was a lie and he declared his readiness to testify on behalf of the accused. His words went unheeded. Rajk was condemned and hanged. Karolyi turned away from Hungary's rulers in disgust.

Karolyi's own public philosophy is rooted in his past. He was deeply aroused by the social injustice in his native land, where feudalism continued rampant longer than anywhere else in Europe. It was in reaction to this that he turned to socialism and dreamed of extending the fancied benefits of collectivism to the rest of Europe.

In his peregrinations Karolyi thought he saw two main types of greatness. One was the heroism of those who dared to be true to their consciences, the "categorical imperative," the inner call. He encountered another, special type of greatness, in Britain, about which he wrote with unbounded admiration. Britain he found a nation with courage not only in war but also in peace.

This is an absorbing book, invaluable for its thorough analysis of the history of Danubian Europe in our tragic century.



Pick of the Paperbacks



THE SHOCK OF RECOGNITION. Edited by Edmund Wilson. *Universal Library.* 2 vols. \$1.45 each. A collection of "literary documents" by Poe, Emerson, Henry Adams, H. L. Mencken, etc., designed to illustrate the development of literature in the United States. Covers the period from the mid-nineteenth century to the 1920s.

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THE INVISIBLE MAN. By H. G. Wells. *Pocket Books.* 25¢. The plot of this 1897 novel is fantastic but the atmosphere diabolically realistic. The granddaddy of science-fiction stories.

Tu or Vous?

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little desire to turn back. His contact with the white man has produced hurt and heartbreak, but it has also produced a desire to accept and be accepted. The only cities he knows are the cities of the white man. His grievance is not that he has left the village but that he has not yet been made welcome in the civilization which uses him without quite finding a place for him. He is willing to detach himself from his past, willing to adapt, willing to contribute. But he would like to put down roots for himself and his family. And he regrets the well-intentioned arguments of those white people who believe they are advancing his best interest when they urge that he be "allowed" to return to the bush or the village in order to resume the ways of his ancestors. They want to stand their ground. Hence the battle for respect as part of a new way of life from which they feel there is no turning.

MONSIEUR GOURA was the proof of the desire of the African to make a total but normal commitment to tomorrow rather than yesterday. His formal education was limited to grade school; but with these basic tools he went to work for himself in the universe of knowledge. His natural leadership talents became apparent and he won acceptance for many of his ideas. His progress was rapid and now he was on his way to take his seat in the French Senate.

"Great gains have occurred and more are coming in the relationship of the French Government to the African peoples. Late though some of these changes are, they are far ahead of what has been done in most of the rest of Africa. Full citizenship means much to the Africans. We intend to justify it and make the most of it.

"But even the best laws do not change people overnight. You will still find white people who become infuriated when they hear another white man use *vous* to a black or refer to him as Monsieur. Recently I tried to buy a tractor for my farm. But the dealer refused to sell. He would rather deprive himself of a sale than enter into a transaction which indicated that the black had status.

"This sort of thing hurts. It denies respect in a way that makes it difficult to carry out the ideas I have about a real partnership in Africa. But I shall continue to try. For some day soon even the most obstinate people will discover that they lose nothing if they make a gesture of respect. They may even feel better." —N. C.

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Capitol

Fiction

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areas which are strange both to him and Mr. Murray. The author's treatment of the distaff side (in this instance a wild-eyed post-deb) is still his weakest point, and some of his slapstick interludes misfire because they are too far removed from the truth. But Mr. Murray's skill at combining the pungent phrase with an interesting narrative makes "Best Seller" a generally entertaining commentary on one man's struggle to stay out of intellectual lockstep.

—MARTIN LEVIN.

CHESAPEAKE BAY BOYHOOD: Gilbert Byron's "The Lord's Oysters" (Little, Brown, \$4.50) is literally a wonderful book. The wonder is that of a boy, Noah Marlin, growing up along the Chester River near Chesapeake Bay twenty-odd years ago. Inevitably there is something of Twain and Tarkington in his pranks, hooky-playing, and fishing. But other qualities, distinctly Gilbert Byron's, make the novel more than a nostalgic re-creation of an American childhood. The disciplined simplicity of the writing creates a poetic tone at once uncannily childlike and mature. Idyllic episodes are so juxtaposed with the cruelties of young boys that one feels the author to be the complete observer. This isn't childhood we're reading about, it's life.

Noah's father, George, is a Thoreau-esque riverman with a hands-off attitude toward the confinement of steady employment. Oysters and crabs are what he knows and loves best, but the river is an unreliable provider and pickings are habitually slim in the Marlin home. Although Noah's mother keeps nudging her man with talk of openings in the basket factory, you feel that she wouldn't want her free-wheeling husband to be any other way. Noah, needless to say, agrees.

In all, this is a story that delights and moves. But let's not forget the humor. It's humane, hearty, and ever-present.

—GERALD WALKER.

HUNGARY UNDER THE REDS: Because of recent events in Hungary and because of her earlier book, "I Am Fifteen—And I Don't Want to Die," one approaches Christine Arnothy's first novel "God Is Late" (translated by Anne Green; Dutton, \$3.50), with particular anticipation. Her theme is the depiction of life in Hungary several years after the country was sovietized.

The major actors are Janos Tasnady, composer and director of a Budapest opera company; his wife,

Gaby; his mother; and Imré Torzs, Communist commissar. Ironically enough, it is only the last—fanatic, austere, objectively brutal—who emerges with any personal integrity. The others, for reasons rooted in fear, in opportunism, and expediency are creatures lacking in principles or honor. Gaby, young, beautiful, lazy, becomes the mistress of the commissar, under unspoken threat, to be sure, but with an easy compliance which, under German domination, made her contemplate an affair with a Hungarian Nazi. Without decency or dignity, the husband and mother-in-law accept the situation and its material rewards.

Through the sordid story of Gaby's sister, Anna, who lives in the country, Miss Arnothy highlights the degenerative effects of Communism in rural Hungary. Here, as in Budapest, fear and expediency fashion the outlines of existence. And here, as in Budapest, one misses a note of active rebellion.

In writing this novel, Miss Arnothy took on a highly ambitious assignment that technically is still beyond her professional abilities. One senses that she was overwhelmed with her wealth of material and uncertain what to keep and what to discard. The result makes "God Is Late" a very uneven book both in content and treatment. It has passages and pages that are awkward, stilted, and structurally disjointed but, it should be added, it also has passages and pages that flash with an almost Chekovian perception and illumination of character. It is the latter which hold promise for the future work of this writer.

—ROSE C. FELD.

DULY NOTED: "Bedlam," by André Soubiran (translated by Oliver Coburn; Putnam, \$3.95), features the reflections of an ex-advertising man committed to a French prison hospital for the deranged. Though his mental equilibrium is endangered by some twenty-nine assortedly abnormal cronies, his wife's visits buoy his hopes of eventual release. Dr. Soubiran's narrative style is pretty flat, but like his earlier novel "The Healing Oath" it is packed with out-of-the-way information.

"**The Tall Captains,**" by Bart Spicer (Dodd, Mead, \$4.95), is a massive romantic novel that centers on the violent struggle between the French and English in eighteenth-century Canada. Most of the action is shouldered by Duncan Crosbie, a huge Scot whose hatred for the English leads him to fight alongside General Montcalm at Quebec. Although burdened by period detail, the novel is kept afloat by its entertainment values.

—S. P. MANSTEN.