

and to monopolize in their hands the control of the water courses, the corvée labor of the multitudes, the control of armed force and of the splendors of despotic communal consumption. With case studies drawn from the Far and Near East, the Incas, the Aztecs, and the Mayas of the New World, and from Europe itself, Dr. Wittfogel pursues the multiple varieties and changing histories of these various societies, along with the causes for the relative immobility of the most important of them.

The thesis is by no means as simple as a brief summary must make it, for the author seeks for the causes of the rise of other forms of "agromanagerial despotism" and the circumstances in which a society that is "stronger than its state" can undertake great hydraulic works without thereby engendering despotism. To the crude and overly narrow conception of "class" or "order" of Adam Smith and Karl Marx, who saw such orders or classes as determined by their relationships to private property and revenue, and who saw the state as a mere protector of such property, Dr. Wittfogel adds the awareness that the state itself can become the major owner of key property and the managerial bureaucracy a ruling class in a more literal and sweeping sense than any of the revenue-and-property classes ever were in a society based on property independent of the state. Indeed, it is these state-power-based ruling classes, and their capacity for monopolizing power where the state is stronger than society, that is the central theme of Dr. Wittfogel's interest as expressed in his "comparative study of total power."

This comparison naturally leads to a number of obiter dicta on the "total managerial apparatus state of the

U.S.S.R." that will prove fruitful to any student of modern Soviet history and institutions. In a chapter that is as entertaining as it is thoughtful ("The Rise and Fall of the Theory of the Asiatic Mode of Production"), the author recounts how first Marx and then Lenin became uneasy as they grew aware of the analogies between the Oriental managerial bureaucratic state and the total state control of industry and agriculture which they were advocating. The chapter ends with Soviet political theory, and those who echo it abroad, simply censoring this formulation out of the writings of Marx and substituting "feudalism" for "Oriental despotism" in all their discussions of Asiatic society.

As a comparative study of total power, the work seems to have one weakness. Its author tends to view total, totalist, and totalitarianism under the aspect of total monopoly of power, rather than that of an attempt to embrace all aspects of physical and spiritual life. But this conceptual weakness is constantly overcome in the concrete pictures of the operation of total power of Dr. Wittfogel's intense awareness of the sweep of modern totalitarianism.

A work so big in scope and so rich in detail concerning so many lands and times, teases the reviewer to offer samples of its richness and to argue with some of its details, but, since considerations of space forbid both one and the other, I should like to close by recording the over-all conviction that this is sociological and historical generalization in the grand manner such as had almost seemed to have gone out of style, and that history, political science, sociology, and anthropology will take a long time to assimilate critically the rich insights it provides.

Neo-Marxism

"The Political Economy of Growth," by Paul A. Baran (Monthly Review Press. 308 pp. \$5) and "The Critique of Capitalist Democracy," by Stanley W. Moore (Paine-Whitman. 180 pp. \$4.50), present criticisms of the state of the world from a pro-Soviet Marxist point of view but with certain qualities that differentiate them from the common run of such works. George Fischer, our reviewer, is an associate of the Harvard Russian Research Center.

By George Fischer

WITHIN recent weeks two books have appeared that represent a new and minuscule current in American thought and, still more strikingly, espouse a pro-Soviet Marxism, while displaying little of the passion for scholasticism and jargon characteristic of most Soviet and pro-Soviet intellectuals. They are technically competent, readable, and sophisticated. While they are pro-Soviet they are not Communist: the U.S.S.R. is endorsed as the most important existing manifestation of Marxism but not as either the long-run ideal or the short-run hub of the universe. In the midst of the Cold War this distinction may not seem tremendously important, but it does serve to separate these Marxist sheep from the Communist goats.

The bigger of the two books is "The Political Economy of Growth," by Paul A. Baran, professor of economics at Stanford University, whom his publishers describe as "probably the only Marxian social scientist teaching at a large American university." Baran's book deals with a question which since World War II has become a central theme in American thinking—the question of economic development (or "growth"), of the likely future course of advanced and backward country and how this may be affected. "The Political Economy of Growth" treats the question on two very different levels. One is the familiar Marxist condemnation of capitalism, or the West) and the idealization of socialism, its unique rational efficiency and its approaching triumph. Alongside this testament of a true believer, the book offers an imposing survey of the major problems inherent in economic development.

Adding value as well as spice to this analysis are Baran's criticisms of Western activities and motives regarding the backward areas, and his

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Your Literary I. Q.

Conducted by John T. Winterich

QUOTE . . . UNQUOTE

To quote is to quote correctly, which one doesn't always do. Helen Pettigrew of Charleston, Arkansas, offers a group of sort-of-familiar quotations some of which are given correctly and some of which are not. Repairs made on page 36.

1. Too little learning is a dangerous thing.
2. Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.
3. The paths of glory lead but to the grave.
4. Ay, tear her battered ensign down!
5. Heaven lies about us in our infancy.
6. Full many a rose is born to blush unseen.
7. The proper study of mankind is man.
8. This before all: to thine own self be true.
9. Learn to labor and to wait.
10. Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good-night.

Critic from Academe

"Contexts of Criticism," by **Harry Levin** (Harvard University Press. 294 pp. \$5), is a collection of essays on literature and the literary situation, most of them dealing with the present century. Professor William Van O'Connor of the University of Minnesota, our reviewer, is the author of *"The Tangled Fire of William Faulkner."*

By William Van O'Connor

HARRY LEVIN writes like a very good English don. I say this not to belittle but rather to characterize his new book *"Contexts of Criticism,"* which is witty, intelligent, and learned. Each of the essays, which cover a wide range of subjects, was originally given as a lecture. The first section is entitled "Working Definitions" and includes "New Frontiers in the Humanities," "Art as Knowledge," "Contexts of the Classical," "The Tradition of Tradition," and "What Is 'Realism?'" The other two sections are entitled "Notations on Novelists" and "Long Views," each of which includes five essays.

"Criticism in Crisis," from "Long Views," is a fine description of our literary situation as Alexandrian and it shows how at home Mr. Levin is in academic life. He sees as a good and necessary thing the return of critics to the university ("The emergence of the critic as a reviewer, commenting on books as they came along rather than lecturing on them afterwards, coincided with the rise of periodicals in the eighteenth century") and their being joined there by "many creative writers." He sees no great conflict between the critical and the creative. The two gifts frequently coexist. Where there is a conflict, he says, it is necessary for the two types to join forces: "Among all those who live by the printed word, such differences are far less strategic than their shared and jeopardized commitment: which is no, or never, the critique of forces encroaching not only upon the creation of literature but upon the preservation of culture itself."

In "Observations on Hemingway" he partially defends the academy against Hemingway's accusations that Academic America raises dust storms that are dispersed by "the rain" of honest writing. "Those of us who live

in the shelter of the academy will not be put off by this disregard; for most of us have more occasion than he to be repelled by the encrustations of pedantry. . . ." The essay itself is an excellent account of Hemingway's style, being especially good in showing the relationship therein of motion to emotion. Levin also gives Hemingway a couple of "lessons," telling him that his *and* method of linking sentences is called *polysyndeton* and that his method of argumentation is sometimes sly: "In the course of a single sentence, utilizing a digressive Ciceronian device, *paralipsis*, he has not only rounded up such writers as he considers academic; he has not only accused them of sterility, by means of that slippery shortcut which we professors term an enthymeme . . ." Levin meets Hemingway on his own ground and comes off pretty well.

There is further evidence of Levin's love of erudition in his sympathetic account of "Joyce's Sentimental Journey." He enjoys recalling that Joyce had contemplated a career as a professor of Romance languages at his college in Dublin. He sees Joyce's career as an Irish contribution to European culture: "Joyce's sentimental journey was neither a pilgrimage nor a crusade; it was his realization of Irish nationality within the widening perspective of European culture. In short, it was a tale of two cities, Paris and Trieste; of French poetry and erudition, of Italian music and philosophy; of two older writers rediscovered by a younger disciple, Edouard Diyardin and Italo Svevo; of two timeless masters, Flaubert, invisible and omnipresent, and Dante, first and last."

There may be two or three essays that are "academic" in the pejorative sense. One of these is "What Is Realism?" As a critical term, realism long ago lost any usefulness. Undoubtedly it belongs in the literary histories—but Mr. Levin should have left it there. He does a good deal better with "tradition" in "The Tradition of Tradition," for the term is one that still figures in literary arguments.

In reading some of Levin's essays one might be a little depressed by the learned allusions and the facts out of unexpected contexts, and not merely out of envy. But to quarrel too much about this would be to quarrel with his very real virtue as a critic.



Herbert J. Muller—"civilized over-view."

A Western Glory

"The Spirit of Tragedy," by **Herbert J. Muller** (Knopf. 335 pp. \$5), is a survey of tragic drama since the Greeks, with observations on the nature of tragedy. Professor Howard Mumford Jones of Harvard is our reviewer.

By Howard Mumford Jones

HERBERT J. MULLER'S "The Spirit of Tragedy" is described on the dust jacket as a "searching inquiry into the uses of tragedy." This is precisely what it is not. It is, rather, a pleasant, civilized over-view of a good deal of tragic drama since the Greeks, coupled with evidences of wide and intelligent reading in tragic theory, commonly introduced by the phrase, "As So-and-so remarks." "I speak mournfully as a teacher," he remarks in a footnote, "who has tried to do his best for Corneille," and Mr. Muller does his conscientious best, not only for Corneille, but for persons as various as Sophocles, Wagner, O'Neill, and Sartre. His book, he tells us in his preface, grew out of a question that takes us to the heart of tragedy; and the question is: why the periods of tragic glory have been confined to the Western world. This, he says, "involves the distinctive values of Western civilization," but with every sympathy for Mr. Muller's good intentions I cannot see that he has quite answered his own question, largely because, by confining himself to the Atlantic community, he denies himself any comparable examination of other cultures.

One of Mr. Muller's difficulties is uncertainty as to where to look for
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