

so accurately. He acknowledges a possibility of "liberation by evolution" in Eastern Europe and examines the factors involved. I believe in that possibility inside the USSR as well as in the satellites. I am strengthened in my hope by remembering that 1648 saw an end of religious wars in Europe without formal change in Catholic or

Protestant theology. I think a different policy by the U.S., many features of which Dr. Hook himself sets forth, would greatly aid the evolution we want.

Taken as a whole, "Political Power and Personal Freedom" is a book I recommend not only for reading and reference but for careful study.

## Brave Exposé of Those More Equal

**"Anatomy of a Moral: The Political Essays of Milovan Djilas,"** edited by Abraham Rothberg (Praeger, 181 pp. \$2.95), is a collection of eighteen anti-Communist articles by the former President of the Yugoslav National Assembly, who is still imprisoned for his heresies. Henry C. Wolfe, who has known Yugoslavia for more than thirty years, is the author of "The Imperial Soviets."

By Henry C. Wolfe

IN EARLY 1954, the Yugoslav magazine, *Nova Misao*, published an article that rocked the country's Communists and started the author on the road to disgrace and prison. The author was Milovan Djilas, President of Yugoslavia's National Assembly, a famed Partisan hero and a trusted leader of seventeen years of outstanding Party service. The article took the form of the bitter story that gives this book its title, a tale that exposed the cynical favoritism, the greed for luxury and privilege, and the *parvenu* snobbishness of Tito's Communist

elite, especially the female of the species. Paul Willen, in his introduction, calls it a "document, dealing chiefly with a back-biting feminine struggle for social position . . ."

The heroine of the little tragedy is a beautiful twenty-one-year-old opera singer who had married a Yugoslav general. She was a simple, good girl, innocent of social ambition and devoted solely to her music and her husband. Having come "from a large and poor family . . . she retained a conspicuous and somewhat vulgar thriftiness." But the ladies of the Party's high society hated her with "a bestial urge more stupid, savage and monstrous, more merciless than any fight among wild animals."

The young wife, as she soon discovered, had several strikes against her. She had married the "oligarchy's favorite bachelor"; she was too young to have served, like her tigress enemies, as a Partisan; she was an actress. Accordingly, the social queens of the "Peoples' Republic" impugned her morals and subjected her to "insidious hatred, scorn and icy ostracism." The men of the elite, true, did not persecute the girl. But Djilas arraigns them as a

hallowed and secluded class which, when not loafing in its magnificent *parvenu* offices, moved from place to place, lived in its own select and restricted summer resorts, gathered in its own exclusive clubs, slept in its own secluded houses, sat in its own exclusive theatres and stadium boxes.

It took fantastic courage for one of the main architects of Yugoslav Communism to expose the sham of its "social justice," especially inasmuch as the main characters in his story were immediately identifiable in Belgrade society. And the author does not hesitate to use *schmalz* and purple rhetoric to enhance the melodramatic effect of his exposé. But then he was striking a blow for freedom. Later, in "Land

Without Justice," the poetic story of his Montenegrin youth, Djilas was to reveal that freedom was the soil of his deepest roots.

"Anatomy of a Moral" is one of eighteen anti-Communist articles reprinted in this book. When the earlier articles appeared in the Communist newspaper *Borba*, their subtleties incurred little suspicion. The author was, after all, a regular *Borba* contributor, a renowned Communist theoretician with a reputation for an abstract, philosophical style. But "Anatomy of a Moral" was not subtle. And, especially in arousing the fury of the women scorned, it blazoned forth the Djilas heresy. The sensational Party crisis that developed ultimately led to a ten-year prison sentence for the heretic. It was while he was a prisoner that his slashing indictment of Communism, "The New Class," won worldwide success. He is still in prison.

These essays, then, constitute a spiritual prelude to "The New Class." Written as he was "groping his way out of Communism's emotional labyrinth," they externalize Djilas's growing disillusionment. They trace, as Mr. Willen puts it, "the intellectual metamorphosis . . . of a man obsessed with an intangible dream of human goodness, tolerance, comradeship. . . ." In his own words, Djilas longed "to emerge from the unreal, abstract world of the 'elite' . . . and to enter as profoundly as possible into the real world of simple working people and ordinary human relations." The last word in this book, significantly, is "freedom."



Milovan Djilas—Last word is "freedom."

### FRASER YOUNG'S LITERARY CRYPT NO. 846

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 846 will be found in the next issue.

LHCKKD ZFD NBBTQR  
VGDM XNT ZQD SNN  
XNTMF SN SZJD TO  
FNKE ZMC SNN  
NKC SN QTRG TO  
SN SGD MDS.

—E. O. ZCZLR.

### Answer to Literary Crypt No. 845

Don't tell your friends their social faults; they will cure the fault and never forgive you.

—LOGAN SMITH.

## Girlhood in the Imperial Heydays



—UPI.

Bandung, Java—"suggestion of transience."

**"Yesterday,"** by Maria Dermoût; translated by Hans Koningsberger (Simon & Schuster, 118 pp. \$3), recalls the author's childhood on a Javanese sugar plantation at the turn of the century. English writer Elspeth Huxley's own recollections of her years in colonial Africa, *"The Flame Trees of Thika,"* have just been published.

By Elspeth Huxley

THE greatest historical event of the mid-twentieth century is the crumbling of the three empires which bestrode Asia and Africa. Here is a major topic for European writers, but instead of going at it head on they have hitherto approached it, if at all, only to prod it or strike it glancing slaps. The time is not yet, perhaps; Tolstoy wrote of Borodino sixty years after; Stendhal, too, and Thackeray, needed time's perspective.

Meanwhile, a handful of colonial-born Europeans is at work candying in the syrup of memory their experiences of imperial heydays when the planter rode forth at sunrise to order his estates, his wife reclined on the veranda with a medicine chest handy, and the child-narrator gossiped with cook and groom, water-carrier, and gardenboy.

To gossip with these racial strangers was a very different matter from title-tattle with members of a depressed class within one's own society. Ori-

ental servants could be chief's sons or rajah's cousins, people of dignity, authority, and wisdom, equipped to open doors into a secret garden forever barred to adults, and to print upon the child's mind an image of mystery, cruelty, and splendor never to be either developed or erased.

Such a child was Maria Dermoût, daughter of a Dutch sugar planter, who writes, in vivid, sparse, evocative prose, excellently translated by Hans Koningsberger, of a Javanese upbringing over fifty years ago. One is reminded of one of those brilliant butterflies that dart like chips of precious stone about the rain-forests of the Celebes: iridescent, fragile, ephemeral, and lovely. This is the miniature of literature, like an Oliver or a Hillyard, perfect in detail, carefully wrought, slight—a minor art, conveying with it a suggestion of transience, of vanished harmony, of melancholy.

The tale, such as it is, concerns a love affair between a dashing uncle and a handsome married aunt which ends in a tragedy implicit from the start, for the book is drenched in a sweet sadness, like jasmine in moonlight, although the childhood was happy: a paradox inherent in all such recollections of a world now trodden under by the hobnailed boots of history.

Of more interest is the devotion Maria Dermoût skilfully suggests between Uncle Fred and his Sumatran servant Buyung—thickset, ugly, long-armed, untidy, continually chewing tobacco which would almost fall out of his laughing mouth. Here she touches a theme now altogether absent from European literature, that of master and man (Don Quixote and Sancho Panza), which can engender a love as great as that of man for woman, a love more binding, more unselfish, more honorable.

When Uncle Fred, jilted by his Nancy, decides to leave for Australia, Buyung puts on his best clothes (a black stiff jacket, a blue and gold sarong, a gold-threaded headkerchief with the points sticking up behind one ear), squats in front of his master and hesitantly asks him to stay. "You'd better be quiet, Buyung!" was the only answer. "Then it can't be helped, sir," Buyung replied, as he put away his best clothes and said no more. But later, sitting on a mat with clasped knees and rocking to and fro,

he searched all night for the spirit of his drowned master in all the places they had traveled together, until the dull, dark voice sank to a whisper, "Sir, sir, is that you?"; and, still later, with no farewells, he left the big house to return to the dense jungles of Sumatra.

Maria Dermoût's first novel, *"The Ten Thousand Things,"* written in her sixties, achieved a *succès d'estime*. *"Yesterday,"* an earlier work only now translated, is no less bewitching; it is perhaps a better book because it is more direct and circumscribed. The Indonesian characters, graceful shades behind a screen of kanari trees and gamelan music, white cockatoos and dappled horses, golden rings and marble floors and water buffaloes, haunt our world, but return to the sanctuary of their own. Maria Dermoût writes with a peacock's feather upon a rice-paper scroll.

## Muslim Legacy

**"Islam and the Arabs,"** by Rom Landau (Macmillan, 298 pp. \$4.95), traces the debt of the West to Islam and concludes with a summary of the problems faced by the Arabs today. Emil Lengyel is professor at New York University and the author of many books, among them the forthcoming *"America and the Middle East Today."*

By Emil Lengyel

PRESIDENT NASSER'S attempt to recreate a United Arabia is partly motivated by recollections of the record of the early Middle Age when Arab genius was in flower. That flowering is the main subject of Professor Rom Landau's latest book. He writes with relish about that stunning outburst of Arab genius which affected so many fields of human endeavor, arts, sciences, literature, philosophy, and theology. Their admiring contemporaries conferred upon many of these gifted Muslims, such as Averroës and Avicenna, the epithet *"stupor mundi,"* and, indeed, they were prodigies. Our own lives would be different without their contributions, and their influence is attested not only in the sciences and Moorish architecture but also by many of the words the English language took from them. Early Arab civilization did form a bridge between East and West.

This "creative explosion" of Islam was generated by a juxtaposition of ingredients that can cause either cataclysmic disasters or flashes of crea-