

years—is the prescription. Yet beneath this plea for diplomacy runs a thread of imaginative and eloquent concern for the largest issues of our national life. “The New Politics” of which the authors speak—they use the word “politics” in its fine old Aristotelian sense—involves in the final accounting something more than a sensible choice of instruments and means. Indeed, what is wrong with things as they have been going is not so much that we have lost prestige or seen our relative power

weaken. It is the fact that, because we were not acting according to our own character, we have become confused and flabby within.

“The more real danger,” the authors assert, “is that we may end up a gigantic historical irrelevancy, a state with nothing significant to say to the world, of interest only to ourselves, and that not keenly.” Thus Stillman and Pfaff discern the biggest issue of all; and they write of it with the sobriety and eloquence it deserves.

munist Party and other progressive organizations of the working class in capitalist countries . . . and contributes to the success of the national liberation movement. Thus the policy of peaceful coexistence in its social context is a form of intensive economic, political, and ideological struggle of the proletariat.

This speech was delivered too late to be cited in the book; but it confirms the correctness of the authors’ methodical analysis of the true meanings behind Communist formulas. When Norman Cousins was invited, as part of the American-Soviet cultural exchange program, to address the Presidium of the Soviet Peace Committee, he took advantage of the opportunity to stress the points that the American Communist Party was in the service of a foreign government and that only enforceable agreements could serve as a basis of American-Soviet relations where matters of national security were at stake.

This statement was quickly turned into an “unstatement.” The Soviet press, well represented at the meeting, printed nothing and the censorship forbade mention of it in dispatches to foreign newspapers.

The Overstreet book covers a wide range, as a variety of chapter headings indicates: “Colonialism: Soviet Style,” “The Making of Communist Man,” “The United Nations as Target,” “Exchange Programs: Whose Weapon?”

SOME of the analysis is a little hasty and thin, and much use is made of derivative sources. But the authors bring to a wider audience much material that is buried in specialized publications. One of the best of the many citations is from the work of Hugh Seton-Watson, the British expert on the Soviet Union, who observes in connection with the dilemma of disarmament and the temptation to accept the formula of unilateral discarding of nuclear arms:

The choice is not between the certainty of destruction of the human race and the certainty of Communist dominion but between the possibility of destruction, if the West retains atomic weapons, and the certainty of Soviet dominion, if the West unilaterally disarms.

The authors strike a reasonable balance between optimism and pessimism, pointing out that the Communists, despite many psychological advantages, have yet to capture a country by free election, and that the maintenance of the freedom of the peoples of the West is a matter of their own insight, courage, and determination.

Kremlin Cryptograms

“The War Called Peace: Khrushchev’s Communism,” by Harry and Bonaro Overstreet (Norton. 335 pp. \$4.50), analyzes what Communists really mean by such words as “peace,” “self-determination,” and “coexistence.” William Henry Chamberlin, author of “Russia’s Iron Age,” is a longtime student of the USSR.

By William Henry Chamberlin

“WAR IS PEACE,” blazons the “Ministry of Truth” in George Orwell’s fantasy of a totalitarian 1984; “Freedom is Slavery, Ignorance is Strength.” It is one of the most familiar techniques of Khrushchev’s diplomacy to mask warlike designs behind attractive sounding words such as “peace,” “disarmament,” “self-determination,” “anticolonialism,” “coexistence.”

Harry and Bonaro Overstreet, who won wide and deserved praise for their earlier work, “What We Must Know About Communism,” perform a useful task of interpreting what Communist “newspeak” and “doublethink,” to use Orwellian expressions again, really mean in practice. As they say very justly:

One constant danger in which we stand with respect to Communism has to do with the use of words. When Khrushchev speaks, we hear what he says; and we think he is saying what his words mean to us. Instead, he is saying what they mean to him; and, knowing that we misunderstand, he does nothing to set us straight, because he intends us to misunderstand.

They might have added that there is a type of weak, appeasing mentality that unconsciously craves to be de-

ceived, and the Communist propagandist is always ready to satisfy this craving.

For instance, it sounds generous and reasonable when Khrushchev, quoting the Charter of the United Nations, comes out in favor of self-determination for all peoples. How is this to be reconciled with the Soviet military suppression of the attempts of the people of East Germany and Hungary to practise self-determination, or with the fact that the Soviet Union now rules the biggest colonial empire in the world?

From Khrushchev’s standpoint, this reconciliation poses no moral or logical difficulties whatever. For has not Lenin written that the revolutionary task of the Bolsheviks is “to advance the self-determination of the working class within each nationality, rather than the self-determination of peoples and nationalities”? And what if, as happened in the Soviet Zone of Germany and on a bigger and more tragic scale in Hungary, the working class takes the lead in trying to throw off the yoke of Communist dictatorship? Elementary, my dear Watson. It is the members of the Communist Party, and only those members who remain loyal to Moscow, who interpret the true mood and interests of the working class.

With this psychological background, there is no prospect that Communism will ever give up any part of its empire out of deference to the abstract right of self-determination. “Peaceful coexistence” is sometimes thought of as an alternative to “cold war.” But Khrushchev himself, in a speech designed to explain to the Party faithful the meaning of the resolutions adopted at the world conference of Communist parties late in 1960, offered this somewhat chilling definition of coexistence:

The policy of peaceful coexistence facilitates the activities of the Com-

Echoes of a Century Ago

GUNBOAT ON THE MISSISSIPPI: Soon after midnight on April 24, 1862, Flag Officer David Glasgow Farragut issued hot coffee and hardtack to officers and men on a dozen darkened Union naval vessels anchored below New Orleans, placed buckets of sand to the rear of all guns should blood make the decks slippery, stripped his gunners to the waist, then hoisted two tiny red lanterns to *Hartford's* mizzen peak. Farragut was about to attempt the impregnable Confederate gantlet past Forts Philip and Jackson at the outer mouth of the Mississippi River. Forcing his Union gunboats between these close, formidable shore installations, Farragut went on upriver to capture the city of New Orleans. The shock that ran through the entire Confederacy when the disaster news spread that the South's greatest city had fallen is but one of the brilliantly descriptive chapters in Charles L. Dufour's most engrossing Civil War book, *"The Night the War Was Lost"* (Doubleday, \$4.95). Perhaps it is exaggeration to agree with his title, yet he makes a good case, from the Confederate side, of course. The author is an editorial columnist on New Orleans newspapers and he can write, though he occasionally falls for such ancient cliché mistakes as putting two "t"s in Mary Boykin Chesnut's last name. Must reading for naval warfare, Civil War, and Confederate buffs. Maps and illustrations.

COMPREHENSIVE GALLERY: In issuing *"The Autobiography of Carl Schurz"* (introduction by Allan Nevins, \$5.95) Scribners has done a perpetual favor for anyone seeking a one-volume abridgment of this three-volume classic. Here is one of the great nineteenth-century men, a general in Mr. Lincoln's army, later a Cabinet officer, a splendid historian, friend and champion of many a liberal cause. I concur with Allan Nevins, who says: "A great autobiography. No other single book of American memoirs, not even John Quincy Adams's diary, contains so many striking portraits of political and military leaders."

OFF-BEAT OPINION: In a preface to *"The Hidden Face of the Civil War,"* by Otto Eisenschiml (Bobbs-Merrill, \$5), the author warns us that "unless you are interested in the truth about the Civil War, do not read this book.

It may shock you." Well, it may, and it may also amuse you, if the Civil War happens to be your pasture. Dr. Eisenschiml claims that neither Lee nor Grant was a great general, that there was but one true genius among Civil War generals, Nathan Bedford Forrest (though Stonewall Jackson is ranked as near-genius), and that George Thomas was by all odds the finest military talent on the Union side. Grant the author cannot abide; Lee is impetuous and sadistic to the point of incompetence. Other items here include the scandalous traffic in contraband drugs, and naïve observations that politicians did their best to lose the war for both sides. Mostly opinionated nonsense—but sometimes interesting, documented, and thoroughly scholarly nonsense.

PRIVATE'S EYE-VIEW: Letters and diaries of a Yankee volunteer, one Owen Johnston Hopkins of Ohio, constitute *"Under the Flag of the Nation,"* edited by Otto F. Bond (Ohio State University press, \$5). Hopkins fought in the Cumberland and Vicksburg campaigns and wrote pretty routine reports of what he managed to live through. The collection offers occasional source material for future Bruce Cattons, but slim pickin's much of the time. Best entries involve Private Hopkins's romantic pursuit of his home-town sweetheart, Julia Allison, whom he wins and weds in the course of an interminable postal courtship. Pretty dull stuff for pages on end, the book is illuminated by the occasional insight and observation of a Civil Warrior who was there. The volume includes a fascinating private expense book in which an unsophisticated Ohio boy painfully lists each bottle of pomade (50¢), box of collars (50¢), and a precious single copy of the *Cincinnati Gazette* (\$1.60).

THE COLONEL'S TUNNEL: In the summer of 1864, with less than a year of bloody war remaining, General Grant's grinding assault on Richmond shuddered to a halt at Petersburg, where Lee and his ragged heroes had entrenched in a long and unshatterable line before the Confederate capital. A young mining engineer from Pennsylvania came one day to Union headquarters with a fantastic plan to dig a mine tunnel under Lee's most formid-

able fortification, blow it to smithereens, then break through the Lee line to end the stalemate. *"Inferno at St. Petersburg,"* by Henry Pleasants, Jr., and George H. Straley (Chilton, \$3.95), is the detailed, spade-by-spade story of how well Colonel Pleasants's plan worked—and how only incredible Union botching after the horrendous explosion choked off amazing fulfillment at the very threshold of success. It is hard to put down, once you've opened this unbelievable account of the "St. Petersburg crater," which might have ended the Civil War in 1864 instead of 1865. Marvelous contemporary drawings, photographs, and maps help immensely.



DOCUMENTARY, 1861-65: The best single buy of the Civil War Centennial may well be *"The War They Fought,"* by Richard B. Harwell (Longmans, Green, \$6.95). Originally published as two separate books, *"The Confederate Reader"* and *"The Union Reader"* (at \$7.50 each), Mr. Harwell's fascinating anthology is here available in a single volume costing less than either original. For those unlucky buffs unfamiliar with the Harwell it should be said that his way of presenting the war through newspaper pieces, personal letters from the front, communiques, songs, poems, diaries, sketches, magazine articles, generals' field reports, and political documents is apt to give a reader that feeling of authenticity somehow lacking in stuffier Civil War writing. Most fascinating item remains, however, the menu of the Oriental Saloon in Richmond on January 8, 1864. A bill of fare offering ham and eggs for \$3.50, (Continued on page 34)