

of the characters says, "I wonder who thought of the innocence of childhood. It must have been a person of great originality.") And the butler, in his laconic and sardonic way, can play the game as well as anyone.

We are told little about Hereward's novels except that, as he himself puts it, they have "cheered the homes of thousands." (His second son, who has literary aspirations, does not think well of them.) On the other hand, we are told much about his amorous adventures. He seduces the fiancée of one of his sons, and she bears a child, whom he adopts without acknowledging his paternity. The truth comes out when he shows too great a fondness for the fiancée of another son. And it is subsequently revealed that he has had a daughter by his wife's sister.

Each of these revelations provides the occasion for a family council, in the course of which each member presents his views. Although they all talk the same language, the various members are clearly differentiated by what they say, and we come to see them more and more sharply as the novel proceeds.

As for Hereward, we have seen him from the first as a man conscious of his greatness, and most of his associates feel this quality in him. His devoted sister Zillah tells his wife, "You have not married an ordinary man." Hereward himself, after his misdeeds have been exposed, says, "I am a man of great powers, swift passions and a generous heart. You have met them all, benefited by most, suffered from some." At the end he remarks, "I do not see myself as a god." "Then how does he see himself?" his eldest son asks. "None but a god could be as he is, and remain exalted in all our eyes." Miss Compton-Burnett does not make the reader believe that Hereward is a god—probably she wasn't trying to—but she does make us believe in his belief and the belief of those around him.

It is hard for me to assume that this novel, which is now so clear to me, will eventually fade and blur as its predecessors have done, but I am afraid that it will. This may be the price Miss Compton-Burnett pays for her cleverness, for all the artificialities she employs so adroitly: one comes to remember only the technical skill and the general themes, not individual stories or particular people. But perhaps the pleasure the novels give as one reads them is enough. Her complete control of her technique, her insights, her wit, her freedom from illusions, her ability to make one believe in a world that one knows is not real—these are virtues not to be underestimated.

—GRANVILLE HICKS.

ON THE FRINGE

Books and a Barefoot Publisher

ON FEBRUARY 24 Atheneum will publish *Episode*, subtitled "Report on the Accident Inside My Skull," by Eric Hodgins, who had a large portion of the population chuckling a while back with his novels *Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House* and *Blandings' Way*. The photograph on the dust jacket of his new book shows the author with a cigarette which he shouldn't have and without hair which he should have, at least around the ears. "The lady who took the picture," he explained, "used backlighting which practically bleached the hair out, and whoever processed the picture must have decided I had a halo that didn't belong with my face and took it all out. As for that cigarette, technically I shouldn't have it but I told my doctor he had to leave me one vice. So this is it."

Mr. Hodgins's new book covers three years of his life beginning with the morning of January 8, 1960, when he suffered a stroke followed first by a mental depression serious enough to warrant hospitalization and then by a fall which laid him up with a cracked hip. Though *Episode* sounds as if it might contain a few less laughs than *Crime and Punishment*, Mr. Hodgins says, "It's not a grim book, but neither is it *Mr. Blandings Has a CVA*."

It must have been the blank expression on my face that prompted Mr. Hodgins to say, "The medical profession never uses the word stroke. They call it a CVA, short for cerebro-vascular accident. Physicians, when dealing with patients, prefer to say 'your episode,' which sounds cozier than 'your CVA.' That's where my title comes from. Oh, and an episode doesn't have aftereffects; it leaves residuals."

"Anyway, my book exists because of Leona Baumgartner; to whom it is dedicated. She, as you know, was appointed Commissioner of Health for New York City by Mayor Wagner. Then President Kennedy named her Assistant Secretary of State, and she is now the Assistant Administrator for the AID program.

"Well, there I was suffering the residuals of my episode. My writing was inhibited both mentally and physically, with the emphasis on the latter. I had always been a fast and inaccurate typist and now I could no longer type. I was not in good shape when Leona started prodding me to write a book about

what I had been through. She said it would be good for me and it might be helpful to others, since so little is known about a stroke from the patient's viewpoint.

"Writing is tough enough even when the author is in top form. In my case it meant retraining myself to get my longhand back in shape and that took time. Well, I resisted Leona for two years by every lie and evasion I had ever encountered in a quarter of a century as an editor with Time, Inc. She's smart. She never asked how the book was coming along. I could have handled that. Instead, she kept saying, 'Where's your book?' As you can see, she won."

Outside my window I could see people freezing to death. Inside, the radiator was hissing and there wasn't an appointment on my pad. It was the best of all possible days. And then the phone rang and one of the loveliest voices I have ever heard said, "Mr. Frankel, I bet I'm the only barefoot publisher you've ever heard of. Won't you come and see me?"

One hour later, shaved and dressed to the nines, I was seated in the lobby of Alice McGrath's hotel trying to guess how many frostbitten fingers would have to be removed and wondering which icy street was resounding to the slap of naked flesh as my barefooted publisher dashed back to meet me. Naturally, she arrived in shoes. "Well, I do wear them when it's cold or rainy, but back in Los Angeles, where Thor Publishing Company is, I conduct most of my business barefoot."

I followed her up to her room, where she removed her shoes and her coat and gave me a look at what gets my vote for the prettiest publisher I've ever seen unless you know another 5'2", 119-pound publisher who looks like Paulette Goddard. If my mind was wandering from matters pertinent to this column, they didn't wander for long. "What does Thor publish?" I asked, just to hear the voice again.

Miss McGrath, who was curled up in an easy chair opposite me with her pretty little tootsies tucked under her, handed me a paperback book entitled *Stick Fighting for Self-Defense: Yawara, Aikido, Cane, Police Club, Quarter-Staff*, by Bruce Tegner. One of the cover pictures showed Alice McGrath looking as cute as a button as she jabbed a

fullback type in the stomach with a stick. "You?" I asked.

She smiled with becoming modesty. "Thor publishes books on self-defense by Bruce Tegnér. Twelve of them so far. He's the only author I have and I'm not looking for others. Thor may be the smallest publishing house in the country—I'm the editorial and business staff and there's a man who handles packing and shipping—but our net profit in the five years we've been in existence is better than many larger houses."

IN its five-year, twelve-book history, Thor has published only one flop, *Self-Defense for Women*. "Women don't want to defend themselves," Miss McGrath explained, "They seem to feel that men should protect them and see that they are not put in danger."

Miss McGrath became a publisher and jabber of men's stomachs because she "didn't want to go back to reweaving." It seems that she had once been a reweaver of damaged materials—a home job that allowed her to be with her children—and bored to death when she got an offer to serve as production manager on the film *The Savage Eye*. When that ended, she became a sales representative for Grove Press rather than face a return to patching cigarette burns. Somewhere along the way she took her eight-year-old son to Bruce Tegnér's School of Self-Defense and became fascinated herself, started jabbing away, and ended up as a teacher to would-be jabbers and gougers.

One historic day she and Mr. Tegnér were talking and he pointed out that there was no good American book on the subject of self-defense. It led to Thor's first book, *Karate: The Open Hand and Foot Fighting*, completely produced by just two people—Miss McGrath and Mr. Tegnér. To date, the book has sold 100,000 copies at \$1.95 each, which proves that Alice McGrath can afford just about all the shoes she wants to wear if she wants to wear any at all.

"Most days," she said, "I leave home barefooted and go through my whole business day that way. They seem to be used to me in Los Angeles. I can walk into my bank and they don't say a thing. There are even two good restaurants where I'm welcome without shoes. I only wear them now where it might embarrass someone else. I even attended the American Booksellers Association convention in Washington, D. C., without shoes."

Now I ask you, dear reader, isn't America wonderful? Where else could a well-shod reweaver work her way up the ladder of success to barefoot? It's Horatio Alger with calluses.

—HASKEL FRANKEL.

BOOKS IN THE NEWS

Two Angles on the Marxist Vision

Communist Strategies in Asia: A Comparative Analysis of Governments and Parties, edited by A. Doak Barnett (Praeger, 292 pp. Hard-bound, \$6.50. Paperback, \$2.50), scrutinizes Red Chinese and Soviet maneuvers in six Eastern nations. Frank N. Trager, professor of international affairs at New York University, is co-author and editor of "Marxism in Southeast Asia."

By FRANK N. TRAGER

THIS useful short volume probes the effects on six Asian communist parties of what A. Doak Barnett calls alternatively the "intense conflict" or "the competition" between the USSR and the Chinese Peoples Republic (CPR). It also traces the main outlines of communist strategy, tactics, and ideology in North Korea, North Viet-Nam, and Outer Mongolia, and in "the three largest and most important noncommunist Asian countries," India, Japan, and Indonesia.

The editor holds that there exist two major communist "models," the Soviet and the Chinese, each of which seeks to impose on other communist parties its own "detailed prescriptions for strategy and tactics," as well as certain "ideological fundamentals." The variant chapters on the Soviet and Chinese "models" by Donald S. Zagoria of Columbia University and Robert C. North of Stanford

University deserve a perusal, if for no other reason than because the authors—like the other contributors to this study—are authoritative in their fields.

The country-by-country studies, however, are perhaps more rewarding to the reader. For the politico-historical analyses presented by Harry Gelman of London and Columbia universities on India, Paul F. Langer of the Rand Corporation on Japan, Ruth T. McVey of MIT on Indonesia, Glenn D. Paige of Princeton on North Korea, Robert A. Rupen of North Carolina University on Mongolia, and Bernard A. Fall of France, now at Howard University, on North Viet-Nam are generally admirable if compressed summaries of data that must become better known if the noncommunist world ever decides to deal adequately with the threats with which it is confronted. Professor Barnett may be particularly applauded for his decision to include the chapters on Mongolia and North Korea, for these countries and their communist regimes are least understood by Americans.

Is there conflict and competition between the supreme leaders of the Soviet Union and Communist China? Newspapers in Moscow, Peking, and elsewhere daily confirm overt expression of such. Harsh words have been hurled by both the Russians and the Chinese at each other ever since Khrushchev's de-Stalinization campaign got up verbal steam in 1956 and '57.

The issue is not the terms or the fact of the debate. The issue is what does the debate mean under a given set of circumstances? This question, as answered in *Communist Strategies in Asia*, requires the detailed data analysis of experts. Other specialists may disagree with the authors of the book's chapters on the six Asian nations but they would first have to uncover and cite relevant data. Needless to say, this can be and frequently is done. To me, the evidence from these chapters does not support the notion of a single "model," Soviet or Chinese. It does support the view that we have to re-examine what is meant by "communist monolithicism"—a term loosely used even when applied to Stalin's era.

I submit that more harm than good comes from the use of the ambiguous word "model" (with Chinese or Russian modifiers). The word, in current fashion, comes largely from the mathemati-



"No, no—that's the export permit!"