

A World That Won't Stand Still

***Living in a World Revolution: My Encounters with History*, by Hans Kohn (Trident. 185 pp. \$3.95), a volume in the Credo Series, asserts that the essence of the social experience is comprised of diversity, pluralism, mutual respect, compromises, and continual change. Carroll Quigley is professor of history at Georgetown University and author of "The Evolution of Civilization."**

By CARROLL QUIGLEY

WHEN Socrates asked the aged Cephalus what old age has to relate of life to the coming generation, he did not get a very fruitful answer. He should have asked Hans Kohn. For Professor Kohn has much of value to report. It is doubtful if any lifetime in human history has covered a more eventful period than Professor Kohn's allotted three-score-and-ten, which began in 1891. And few men living in those years have been more aware of what was going on than the author of this little book. More—the author is that rare thing, a true cosmopolitan, as much at home, apparently, during his year in Irkutsk, Siberia, in 1919 as during his fifteen months in Paris, four years in London, six in Jerusalem, or fifteen in Northampton, Massachusetts. His youth in Prague was spent under that diverse and anachronistic political structure, the Hapsburg monarchy, which was destroyed in 1918, but which now, with the turning of the tide of Europe's political development, has many lessons for the future of an integrated Europe.

Not many men are better qualified than Professor Kohn to teach those lessons. In his twenties, during World War I, he was a soldier of the Central Powers; he was a prisoner of war in Russia during the five crucial years 1915-1920, and he was a student and journalist over much of Europe and the Near East until he came to America in 1933. Today, after twenty-seven years of teaching at Smith College and the City College of New York, he is recognized as the historical profession's outstanding authority on nationalism and one of its most facile and prolific writers.

From Professor Kohn's experiences, related by a learned and thoughtful

mind, a number of interesting conclusions emerge. One is that the experience of nationalism in much of Europe was very brief. In the 1890s Prague was still largely untouched by it, and today in Prague it has again become a secondary concern, while in the twenty years 1918-1938 it was the chief motivation of political action in all of Bohemia. Today Americans still insist on a fully integrated, largely conformist, nationalist society; hence it is something of a shock to us to read of the cultural and intellectual vitality that Prague, with its segregated linguistic groups, had in the 1890s. The Czechs, Germans, Jews, and others had separate theaters, literatures, and, to some extent, separate education, but they lived with a minimum of personal friction and found acquaintance with each other's cultures, especially music and literature, mutually enriching. Surely this is a model for the po-

litical and cultural future of Western Europe's Economic Community.

Almost equally striking is the intellectual and cultural fervor of young Hans and his friends. In an unaffluent society, where drudgery was endemic and automation undreamed of, they had the time and energy to sample all kinds of diverse experiences and to build the best aspects of these, by discussion and testing, into their own outlooks and values. How colorless in comparison is our contemporary students' "search for identity" in materialism and sensuality.

Professor Kohn's conclusions are not those of our recent past, but are those of an older convention, closer to our traditional Western culture. He sees diversity, pluralism, mutual respect, compromise, and continual change as the fundamental facts of human or social experience, and sees the slogans of the recent past, such as "One World, or None!," or the emphasis on conformity, integration, togetherness, and belonging, as misleading, even dangerous. In view of the rich experience of his own life and the longer-range view of his historical knowledge, his conclusions make sense—in terms of what is possible or desirable and in terms of the older traditions of our own Western culture.

Tight Little Island of Our Times

***The Age of Triumph and Frustration: Modern Dialogues*, by Charles Yost (Speller. 242 pp. \$4.95), voices the critical issues of our day as they might be probed by eleven contrasting, intelligent people. Malcolm Moos is professor of political science at Johns Hopkins University and visiting professor of public law and government at Columbia University.**

By MALCOLM MOOS

WHEN Brancusi was introduced to an acquaintance of an old friend, the noted sculptor asked what he was. "A writer," was the reply. "I've never cared much for the medium," said Brancusi. "You can't see it from every side." In the long struggle to deal with the collision of ideas many writers must have pondered the wisdom behind this remark. One of the oldest and perhaps one of the best literary forms for coping with ideas has been the philosophical dialogue—not a popular form, to be sure, but one having the distinct advantage of permitting the writer to put several conflicting viewpoints into orbit,

and then, by means of discussion, stimulating the reader to form his own judgments. In this fashion it is not just the bold brush strokes that illuminate and define the clash of opinion, but the subtle nuances—the half-tones that shade the final measure of analysis as an argument squeezes into the tight places.

Working on a broad canvas, Charles Yost does just this in *The Age of Triumph and Frustration*. At a time when the world quivers under the threat of the bomb, it is both a topical and pithy commentary on the elements of discord and change on this sorely troubled planet. In a remarkable tour de force, Mr. Yost has achieved almost the impossible: a book that could alternatively provide intellectual nutrition for a year's graduate seminar or, read in one sitting, a thought-provoking, thoroughly rewarding evening's entertainment.

For this discourse on the critical issues of the age the author has grouped his materials into ten informal dialogues—among them, "Democracy and Dictatorship," "The Modern Temper," "Individuality, Fanaticism, and Faith," "Modern Art and Literature," "War," and "The Confines of Utopia."

For his cast Mr. Yost has gathered

not quite a baker's dozen, but eleven men and women of various ages, nationalities, religions, achievements, hopes, and aspirations. The site is an imaginary island in the Mediterranean. Here, while supposedly vacationing, the individual characters give their testimony according to the lights he or she follows. Each differs markedly from the other. There is an Indian Brahmin turned Marxist, who after fifteen years of fruitless effort to convert Communist leaders to morality, has been expelled from the Party. Also in the group are a former United States Senator, an elderly philosopher, and a Victorian matriarch whose ideal is "the hierarchial tyranny of her ancestors rather than the popular tyranny of her contemporaries."

All of the speakers are intelligent, all incorrigibly human. Among those given the more profound, provocative, and witty roles, three stand out: the philosopher, the Victorian lady, and the judge.

Mr. Yost is clearly at home with the best in the literature of modern criticism, and he enriches the dialogues skillfully with striking quotations from Camus. Oretga y Gasset, Santayana, Whitehead, Djilas, Galbraith, and many others. He also writes with a subdued eloquence and an immense spirit. "It's never before in history been possible either to win so much in a decade or to lose everything in an hour. Man's on tiptoe reaching for a star, but the old earth's too soggy to give him purchase. He may fall and break his neck. The time has come to move onto high ground."

ALL the dialogues move briskly. "Democracy is not a matter of sentiment, but of foresight. Any system that doesn't take the long run into account will burn itself out in the short run."

Throughout, the venerable in age but not in spirit Victorian never pulls her punches. "I dislike the incorrigible discourtesy of mechanical gadgets. Is there any hope of teaching the telephone to be well-mannered? Is privacy any longer compatible with television, the loudspeaker, the phonograph, the automobile? How much more excitation can our little gray cells stand? Not only our best friends, our children and our dogs are having nervous breakdowns, but whole classes and nations. Husbands and wives are so high strung they divorce whenever the biscuits are burned or orgasm's tardy. . . . Our lives are organized like those of Pavlov's dogs, bells ringing all about us to start flowing the juices that used to come spontaneously from hunger and love."

Elsewhere, in a testy comment on art, she observes: "I dislike expressionism if

by that you mean all those anatomical horrors and mismated rubbish that litter snobs' collections. They're disgusting and cowardly. Painters like doctors should have the courage and decency to keep their panic to themselves."

Mr. Yost is not a brooding pessimist. Rather, he seems a man wise in the ways of diplomacy who shares the opinion of Britain's brilliant diplomat and man of letters Harold Nicolson, that great diplomacy is not so much a matter of finding brilliant solutions as the avoidance of costly errors. "The hopes of international peace depend upon a firm disregard of the rights and wrongs of disputes, on which there can never be agreement, and on a purpose either to settle them by compromise or to ignore them. This is a time for diplomacy, not for justice, since it's precisely the definition of justice that the battle is all about."

SR's Checklist of the Week's New Books

Crime, Suspense

BANBURY BOG. By Phoebe Atwood Taylor. Norton. \$3.50.

MAGNIFICENT MASQUERADE: The Strange Case of Dr. Coster and Mr. Musica. By Charles Keats. Funk & Wagnalls. \$4.95.

THE MISSING MAN. By Hillary Waugh. Doubleday. \$3.50.

Current Affairs

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE USSR: An Exchange of Views. Edited by Donald W. Treadgold. Univ. of Washington Press. \$6.

ORDER OF BATTLE: A Republican's Call to Reason. By Jacob K. Javits. Atheneum. \$5.95.

POLITICAL POWER: USA/USSR. By Zbigniew Brzezinski and Samuel P. Huntington. Viking. \$7.50.

Fiction

DARRELL. By Marion Montgomery. Doubleday. \$4.50.

A FEAST OF FREEDOM. By Leonard Wibberley. Morrow. \$3.95.

THE LATE MATTIA PASCAL. By Luigi Pirandello. Translated by William Weaver. Doubleday. \$4.95.

MINISTERS OF VENGEANCE. By Robert E. Conot. Lippincott. \$6.95.

OLD ACQUAINTANCE. By David Stacton. Putnam. \$3.95.

History

THE AFRICAN PAST. Edited by Basil Davidson. Atlantic-Little, Brown. \$7.95.

AT THE PLEASURE OF THE MAYOR: Patronage and Power in New York City, 1898-1958. By Theodore J. Lowi. Free Press. \$4.95.

COMMITTEE OF VIGILANCE: Revolution in San Francisco, 1851. By George R. Stewart. Houghton Mifflin. \$5.

Personal History

KEEP CALM IF YOU CAN. By Louise Hillary. Doubleday. \$3.95.

It is an article of faith, Mr. Yost concludes, that "democrats reserve the right to differ and to differ out loud." But "democracy cannot survive if democrats do not recognize each other and each other's interests, if they cut each other's throats and beat out each other's brains. . . . If the democracies were ever able to establish a predominant harmony within and among themselves, the iron curtains of the totalitarians would tremble at the 'high white note' as did the walls of Jericho before the trumpets of Joshua."

No one can second-guess which of the expressed opinions are those of Mr. Yost or who the characters in the dialogue represent in real life. No mind, here is a volume to keep close to the night table—a wise, salty, slender but muscular tract that brings a moral elegance to the serious dialogues of a free people.

KIND-HEARTED TIGER. By Gilbert Stuart with Alan Levy. Little, Brown. \$5.95.

RABBI AND MINISTER: The Friendship of Stephen S. Wise and John Haynes Holmes. By Carl Hermann Voss. World. \$6.95.

TODAY IS FOREVER. By Julian Hillas. Doubleday. \$4.95.

Poetry

BLUE BOY ON SKATES. By M. L. Rosenthal. Oxford Univ. Press. \$3.75.

THE MOMENT OF WONDER: A Collection of Chinese and Japanese Poetry. Edited by Richard Lewis. Dial. \$3.95.

SELECTED POEMS. By Stevie Smith. New Directions. Paperback, \$1.50.

SELECTED POEMS OF ANDREI VOZNESENSKY. Translated by Anselm Hollo. Grove. \$3.50.

Religion

THE BIBLE FOR STUDENTS OF LITERATURE AND ART. Edited by G. B. Harrison. Doubleday. \$6.95.

POPE JOHN AND THE ECUMENICAL COUNCIL. By Carlo Falconi. World. \$5.95.

PSYCHIATRY AND RELIGION. By Samuel Z. Klausner. Free Press. \$6.95.

Theater, Films

BRECHT ON THEATRE. Edited and translated by John Willett. Hill & Wang. \$6.50.

THE INFERNAL MACHINE and Other Plays. By Jean Cocteau. Translated by W. H. Auden, E. E. Cummings, and others. New Directions. \$6.50.

POINT OF ORDER! By Emile de Antonio and Daniel Talbot. Norton. Hardbound, \$2.95. Paperback, \$1.50.

TALMA: A Biography of an Actor. By Herbert F. Collins. Hill & Wang. \$7.95.

Travel

JESUS CHRIST, LIGHT OF THE WORLD. (A guide to the World's Fair Protestant and Orthodox Center. By Waldemar Roberts. Thomas Nelson. \$1.96.

—Compiled by RUTH BROWN.