

no such thing as a permanent institution. Institutions are organic."

By the time James Drought left my apartment after a stay of three parking-meter dimes, my head was ringing with words, my writing hand was numb, my apartment was awash in Droughtiana, and I was too confused to know what I thought of the man.

I made two phone calls, one to Raymond Walters, Jr., of the *New York Times Book Review*, the other to Richard Kluger, of the *Herald Tribune Book Week*. Both men had been quoted in the Skylight Press newspaper advertisement. Mr. Walters was quoted as saying, "Rebellious, Dynamic and Overpowering." Was it a comment on the author or his works? By way of answer, Mr. Walters sent me the "In and Out of Books" column he had written for the *New York Times Book Review* of September 20, 1964. It contained six paragraphs on James Drought. In the first I found the phrase "... an athletically handsome, rebellious thirty-three-year-old Midwesterner. . . ." The fourth paragraph began, "A dynamic overpoweringly articulate chap. . . ." I could not locate the "Rebellious, Dynamic and Overpowering" quoted in the advertisement.

Richard Kluger thought that the "Most Unusual Creative Writer in America" quote ascribed to him came from something he had written for "Book Week News," a promotional newsletter he puts out in conjunction with his job as editor of *Book Week*. Mr. Kluger said: "Yes, he is the most unusual creative writer in America. No one else I know of is so convinced that his own talent is titanic and is so insistent that it be hailed as such overnight. In the absence of unanimity on his stature Mr. Drought is energetically proclaiming it himself. I find him no more or less objectionable than all the other hard-sell hawkers in America."

Several days have elapsed since James Drought's visit and I still haven't got him comfortably squared away in my mind. Is he all hard-sell or "a kind of modern Thoreau," as critic Paul Pickrel described him in the *Yale Review*? Is he both? I think it best to give Mr. Drought the last word. If he were here as I write this he would take it anyway. "I don't fit into categories; neither do my books. I'm James Drought. I think the way I do. If anyone wants to know what that is, they can ask me. I just don't like labels. In the last ten years a lot of wonderful people have been smeared by labels. Anyway, I'm not an author buttoned up in my house waiting for agents' reports. I'm confronted with the sheer reality of producing and selling books. The fact that we have survived means success, but you've got to keep in mind the smallness—and the largeness—of our organization."

—HASKEL FRANKEL.

Letters to the Book Review Editor

Picasso by Papini

IN HIS ATTACK [SR, Jan. 9] on John Hay Whitney's Colby College speech Ronald E. Wood quotes with relish some remarks attributed to Picasso which he had found quoted in a "perspicacious book review" in the December 12th issue. I looked up the issue and found that the review was an appraisal of Huntington Hartford's *Art and Anarchy* by Selden Rodman, who had found the above-mentioned remarks "unbelievably truthful." Mr. Hartford had found Picasso's "confession" in a book entitled *Mirage of Africa* by Alan Houghton Brodrick, who in turn had lifted it directly or indirectly from a book by Giovanni Papini. Thus, Mr. Wood's quotation was at least five times removed from its original source.

But the original source was not Picasso.

The "statement" is bogus, a work of pure fiction concocted by Papini himself for his *Il Libro Nero* (Edizione Vallecchi, Florence, 1951, pp. 265-269), an imaginary diary consisting of "letters" from or "interviews" with Walt Whitman, Stendhal, Goethe, William Blake, Cervantes, Marconi, Hitler, Kierkegaard, etc., as well as with Picasso. Since 1952 Picasso has several times denied the authenticity of this "interview." This hoax was recently denounced by John Canaday, art critic of the *New York Times*, February 11, 1962.

One cannot blame Mr. Wood, who doubtless assumed a reviewer in the *Saturday Review* knew what he was quoting. But there is little excuse for Rodman, who is an art critic and historian (and should have investigated a statement he found "unbelievable"), or Hartford and his publisher, Doubleday, or Brodrick and his publisher, Hutchinson (London). All these writers were no doubt happy to quote an attack upon the integrity and good faith of a great artist whose work they did not like.

ALFRED H. BARR, JR.,

The Museum of Modern Art.

New York, N.Y.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Mr. Rodman's remark read: "The second [quotation], attributed to Picasso, seems almost unbelievably truthful: 'Giotto, Titian, Rembrandt, and Goya were great painters. I am only a public entertainer who has understood his times and has exhausted the best he could the imbecility, the vanity, the cupidity of his contemporaries.'"

Unquotable

WHY, IN MILTON R. KONVITZ's review of *Rebel Voices* [SR, Jan. 16] do you set Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis's first two names in quotation marks?

"DON M." MANKIEWICZ.

Norwich, N.Y.

The Last Best Hope

IN HIS REVIEW of *The United States and the United Nations*, edited by Franz B. Gross [SR, Jan. 30], Philip Van Slyck said: "Too much U.N. literature tends to deal with the Organization as either a dismal failure that may be ignored or abandoned, or as the 'last best hope of man on earth' that must be rescued from failure at all costs. Neither attitude leads to constructive policies. America's aims in the world were formed before there was a U.N., and they should remain constant even if the U.N. is paralyzed or collapses."

In answer to this, I affirm that the United Nations is indeed the last best hope of man on earth, although, of course, our ultimate hope is in God. John F. Kennedy, who was realist and idealist at the same time, said: "In the development of the United Nations lies the only true alternative to war. . . . Mankind must put an end to war, or war will put an end to mankind."

The U.N. must indeed be rescued from failure at all costs. In this atomic age, if there were no United Nations, we would have to create one. Why not, then, make the development and strengthening of the world organization the cornerstone of our foreign policy?

PALMER VAN GUNDY.

Glendale, Calif.

Proud Parallel

I WAS SHOCKED at his statement and its violence when I read the words of Robert J. Clements in *THE EUROPEAN LITERARY SCENE* [SR, Jan. 30]: "Though I am unhappy to draw a parallel between this distinguished physicist [J. Robert Oppenheimer] and the two pistol-packing accused murderers [Sacco and Vanzetti] . . ." [and to Professor Clements's] reference to "poets, playwrights and novelists who brazenly absolved the two anarchists of all guilt."

Many eminent, trained observers, of far greater "intellectual" force than I, have studied the case of Sacco and Vanzetti and come away with grave doubts or absolute disbelief in their guilt.

The crucial point of the pistol's identity as the murder weapon was surely confused beyond further proof by its careless handling by the police. It seems doubtful to me that anyone can ever make a downright assertion susceptible to proof that the good cobbler and the poor fish-peddler were indeed guilty.

But in the light of their behavior during the long years of trial, it appears to me that Dr. Oppenheimer (whom I admire) might well be proud to see his name and record as a human being set down beside those of Sacco and Vanzetti.

N. R. BACK.

Berkeley, Calif.

When Big Business Gets Too Big

In a Few Hands: Monopoly Power in America, by Estes Kefauver with the assistance of Irene Till (Pantheon. 239 pp. \$4.95), embodies the results of the investigations by the late Senator from Tennessee and his staff into the drug, steel, automobile, and baking industries. Paul H. Douglas, U.S. Senator from Illinois, has also fought monopolistic practices.

By PAUL H. DOUGLAS

ESTES KEFAUVER was at once one of the most useful and least appreciated of modern Senators. He did invaluable work in revealing the many facets of the national crime syndicate, in urging an Atlantic Commonwealth, and in exposing the pervasiveness of monopoly and imperfect competition. He had great political virtues but the intellectuals refused to accept him. His coonskin cap, his soft voice, deadpan manners, and undistinguished speech caused most of the political pundits to reject him. Yet, beneath his rural appearance, there lurked one of the best brains in the Senate, unsurpassed persistence, and the proverbial courage of a lion. No one in the country knew more about the evils of monopoly than he, and no one worked harder to reduce them.

Kefauver died with his boots on in the summer of 1963 while trying to prevent a private corporation from taking over the telecommunications industry and operating as a monopoly above and beyond government. For a day the public mourned its champion and then largely forgot the lanky and undemonstrative Tennessean.

It is therefore appropriate that this work, edited and completed by his close associate, Dr. Irene Till, should embody the results of his investigations and those of his staff into the drug, steel, automobile, and baking industries.

In a succinct opening chapter, which discusses the economics of the commercial drug industry, the authors tell how the big companies, by saturation advertising of their brand names, are largely able to lift their products out of competition and, as a result, reap extremely high profits. From 1957 to 1963 these averaged approximately 20 per cent after taxes. This was twice the norm for manufacturing as a whole and over a



—Chase, Washington.

Senator Estes Kefauver—"one of the best brains in the Senate."

third higher than the rate for such favored industries as the automobile, office machinery, electrical equipment, glass, and industrial chemicals.

KEF AUVER tried to remove one of the many reasons for these abnormally high rates by requiring that drugs be labeled by their generic, as well as brand, names. Since many drugs with dissimilar trade names are fundamentally the same, this reduction to a common terminology would deflate much of the puffy advertising and lead, as in Europe and in the purchases by hospitals and public agencies, to much lower prices for the individual consumer. The Kefauver proposal also called for a licensing, after a brief period, of patents. This aroused the most bitter opposition not only from the drug trade but also from the allied professions of advertising and communications. It was only the Thalidomide tragedy, as revealed by two courageous women, Drs. Helen Taussig and Frances Kelsey, that enabled the Senator from Tennessee to save even a portion of his bill. Although final compromise dropped the compulsory licensing feature, it nevertheless required the supplementary use of generic terms, which must be displayed at least half as prominently as the trade names. This has been of real use. The Tennessean won an additional victory in the bill's provision that drugs be

effective as well as safe, further that side effects be taken into consideration and, if injurious, stated.

Great powers are therefore given to the Food and Drug Administration. It is important that this agency, in turn, be closely supervised to see that its authority not be used to protect the big drug firms while discriminating against the small.

While the hearings on drugs were the most sensational in the long inquiry, those on steel, automobiles, and other great industries revealed many facets of monopoly and imperfect competition. Kefauver and his associates proved that there was little or no price competition in steel, that U. S. Steel and possibly one or two others set the prices, which were so high that most firms would break even when operating at only a third of capacity. The power of the big bread chains to drive small competitors to the wall by regional price cutting, which was supposed to have been outlawed by the Trade Commission Act of 1914, was demonstrated to be again at work.

AUTOMOBILES have witnessed the sharpest movement towards concentration. In 1921 there were eighty-eight firms in the industry; today four companies account for 99 per cent of the total output. The competition among these four is not in the field of prices but rather in planned obsolescence and style changes, which add billions to auto prices but have little or no function.

Everywhere, indeed, concentration has been proceeding apace. By 1962 the top twenty manufacturing companies had about 25 per cent of all manufacturing assets and amassed 38 per cent of the net profits after taxes, while the fifty largest held 36 per cent of the assets and received 48 per cent of the profits. Carrying this analysis still further, the 100 biggest concerns owned 46 per cent of the assets and reaped 57 per cent of the profits. Finally, the 1,000 largest manufacturing companies owned nearly 75 per cent of the assets and obtained 86 per cent of all the profits. It is a startling fact that the remaining 419,000 manufacturing companies had only about a quarter of the assets and received a bare 14 per cent of the profits, or about two-fifths as much as the twenty giants. Since 1962 this concentration has been increasing still further by the continued wave of mergers. The same process is taking place in other industries such as mining and retailing. Only in the service trades is small business holding on.

This means, of course, that the control of economic activity is becoming concentrated "in a few hands." As the English economist Joan Robinson dem-