

Germans, Swedes — meat-eating, beer-drinking people, with shoulders and hands like Atlas's—rush quickly and unbridled, restrained only by fear or the instinct of self-preservation. . . .” Yet, he identified himself with the oppressed. His ideal was a world of capitalists like Peter Cooper, who used his fortune to help the underprivileged. Writing of Cooper Union, the free technical academy that Cooper founded in New York, he said: “No saint has a higher altar in his cathedral than Peter Cooper in this school!”

Seventy years after his death (of a Spanish bullet), José Martí's ideas may appear as quaint as his style. Nevertheless, it's well that Professor Baralt has given us this selection of his writings. For men of ideals like José Martí, in contrast to men of power like Fidel Castro, are forever an inspiration.

**Wanted—A Sense of Wonder:** Professor Abraham J. Heschel, who teaches mysticism and ethics at the Jewish Theological Seminary, is one of the major thinkers in American Jewish life speaking out of the context of an ever-deepening traditionalism. Not just a teacher confined to his classroom, he marched alongside Martin Luther King at Selma, and spoke out for racial justice at the Chicago Conference on Religion and Race. This lecture, together with other provocative addresses delivered over the past decade, is contained in *The Insecurity of Freedom: Essays on Human Existence* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, \$5.95). In his poetic, aphorismic style, Dr. Heschel protests the sanctification of needs above ultimate values, the equation of faith with expediency, today's obsession with power, and the reduction of the status of man from that of a person to that of a thing.

He seeks a renewal of man's sense of wonder and mystery. Viewing his own religion and Christianity critically, Dr. Heschel calls for an awareness of the inadequacy of religious words and creeds and deeds in a manner that ultimately comes close to the rejection of the intellectual disciplines which rule modern life. Ethical imperatives, pronounced clearly and unequivocally, are here grounded on the faith of an ancient tradition. Yet the intricate structure of a highly personal faith somehow eludes the reader of these essays. Heschel's commitment is clear, but the sources of that commitment are hidden within the shadows of an introspection that commands reverence but does not transmit instruction. One has to go back to the earlier works, *The Earth Is the Lord's*, *The Sabbath*, and *God in Search of Man* to enter the landscape of Heschel's poetic theology and to encounter the principles governing that world.

—ALBERT H. FRIEDLANDER.



—Pic.

Charles de Gaulle—"a great man in the classic sense."

## The Gallic Paradox

**De Gaulle: A Political Biography**, by Alexander Werth (Simon & Schuster. 406 pp. \$6.50), **De Gaulle: Implacable Ally**, edited by Roy C. Macridis (Harper & Row. 248 pp. \$6), **An Explanation of De Gaulle**, by Robert Aron, translated from the French by Marianne Sinclair (Harper & Row. 210 pp. \$4.95), and **No Laurels for de Gaulle**, by Robert Men-  
gin, translated from the French by Jay Allen (Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 402 pp. \$6.95), examine the ingredients of a political phenomenon, France's towering "Monogénéral." Saul K. Padover, who participated in the liberation of Paris in August 1944, wrote "French Institutions, Values and Politics."

By SAUL K. PADOVER

CHARLES DE GAULLE is not merely another politician; he is a phenomenon that, as these books amply illustrate, defies logical analysis. The man whom *Le Canard Enchaîné* mockingly calls "Monogénéral," a particularly apt Gallic pun, keeps both friends and enemies in a state of bewilderment. He stirs deep emotions, not always flattering to his character. He is worshipped by

some, hated—in the case of Robert Men-  
gin, the word is loathed—by others. From a certain angle, de Gaulle appears as Machiavelli incarnate; from another, he is a pure patriot, France's greatest hero-figure since the sainted Joan. An autocrat, a cynic, a humanist, a nationalist, a philosopher, a garbler of truth, a faithless friend, an implacable enemy, a nondemocratic democrat, a professional soldier who despises his fellow-generals, a political leader with open contempt for the ordinary processes of politics—precisely what is he and what does he want?

Each of the books under consideration attempts to clarify the puzzle, with varying degrees of nonsuccess. The best is Alexander Werth's *De Gaulle*, a lucid political biography based on available sources, including the General's own utterances and polished writings (he is, among other things, a first-class literary stylist). Werth is both objective and sympathetic to his subject. His book may be recommended as a highly readable and comprehensive story of de Gaulle's remarkable political career. But the biography lacks depth. The closest that Werth comes to a psychological explanation of the de Gaulle phenomenon is to say that the General is a "happy compromise" between the eternal French yearning for order and authority, citing P. Vianson-Ponté's phrase that the Gaullist system is a "soft dictatorship with a debonair

authoritarianism." This is, one must say, an explication that doesn't explicate.

Roy C. Macridis, in the introduction to his collection of de Gaulle's writings and statements (including press conferences), presents a formal, academic analysis of the General's political thought. He stresses, and rightly so, de Gaulle's unwavering belief in the nation-state as rooted in nationalism. In de Gaulle's view, as Professor Macridis points out, the overriding political reality is nationalism, and not any substitute system, whether it be internationalism, regional arrangement, the U.N. (for which the General has scant respect), or ideology. He rejects ideology, particularly Communist ideology, as a fraud and a camouflage. "The banner of ideology," de Gaulle said at a press conference on July 29, 1963, "in reality covers only ambitions. And I believe that it has been thus since the world was born."

As de Gaulle sees it, in the political sphere the center of thought, feeling, and action lies inside the nation, its character, needs, and aspirations. Nations, and not denatured systems, make and carry out policies, for national, and not international, purposes. The guiding consideration is not some mystical idealism about the brotherhood of man but the hard facts of national life, or, in other words, the *raison d'état*. To advance the nation's objectives, whether it be for the maintenance of a balance of power situation or traditional treaty-relationship, force is always necessary. The army, therefore, must never be anything but the instrument of the state.

The state being the overriding reality, de Gaulle does not hesitate to scrap agreements or make radical changes in international relations. He is not hobbled by preconceived notions or deterred by pre-existing arrangements. For public opinion he has only disdain. He is icy in his political assessments and almost Olympian in his view of history—as he interprets history. In de Gaulle there is, at least in this reviewer's opinion, an utterly refreshing lack of cant or ideological dogmatism. He thinks in terms of the available power relationships, which may or may not be of long duration, and of the needs of France, an entity with which he is passionately identified. France, indeed, is the only subject about which this cold-blooded realist feels mystical. He realizes it and apparently he cannot help it, as he says in a moving passage in his *War Memoirs*:

All my life I have thought of France in a certain way. This is inspired by sentiment as much as by reason. The emotional side of me tends to imagine France, like the princess in the fairy stories or the Madonna in the frescoes, as dedicated to an exalted and exceptional destiny. . . . The positive side of

my mind . . . assures me that France is not really herself unless in the front rank. . . . In short . . . , France cannot be France without greatness.

It is de Gaulle's self-dedicated task to restore France to grandeur, put her in front as a major power, and make her the leader of European civilization. It is a grand design, not altogether shared by France's neighbors on the Continent.

In this passion for his country lies one of the keys to an understanding of the de Gaulle enigma. It helps, at least in part, to explain why he seems to be anti-American and anti-British and why he is opposed to NATO and other American-led arrangements. In part, of course, it is true that de Gaulle has an antipathy for what he quaintly calls the "Anglo-Saxons"; but it is a mistake to assume that he is motivated by mere pique in his grand policy. He is much too big a man for that.

De Gaulle is opposed to America—or, more accurately, to American foreign policy—primarily because he is convinced that a now-revived and economically prosperous France and Europe should once more be masters of their own destinies. Europe, he feels, should cease to be under the hegemony of foreigners, particularly Americans, whom he regards as ambitiously imperialistic and dangerously militaristic—a view, incidentally, shared not only by Russians and Chinese but also by many Europeans. He sees no special merit in the replacement of the smaller European nationalisms by a gigantic American nationalism. Furthermore, he considers Americans rigid and inflexible in their world view, and believes that the holocaust inflicted on Vietnam bears him out. Unlike so many Americans, de Gaulle is not moved by hatred of Communism,

a system for which he has only contempt. To him, Communist countries, particularly the Soviet Union and Red China, are not Communists first but nations first. They are great powers, and must be treated as such. De Gaulle is not inclined to think that love and hate have a place in international relations.

Much of this the reader can find in Professor Macridis's book, as well as in the biography by Werth and the *Explanation of De Gaulle* by Robert Aron. Mengin's *No Laurels for de Gaulle* belongs in a different category.

Aron's book is a disappointment. It is poorly organized, contains disparate materials, and suffers from the lack of a central thesis. Aron, a Resistance fighter and excellent historian, is clearly baffled by his subject, and he conveys his puzzlement to the reader. He doesn't seem to know what to make of de Gaulle, whose great qualities he admits and whose shortcomings he acknowledges. Like a man bedeviled, Aron struggles with the de Gaulle paradoxes. He sees in his almost-admired hero a monarchist loyal to republicanism; an anti-Nazi and anti-Communist capable of cruel arbitrariness; a leader who built his career on disobedience but who demands absolute fealty from his generals and officials; a champion of an anachronistic nineteenth-century nationalism whose radical conceptions of the world are such that they make him, in the words of Maurice Duverger, "a man of the twenty-first century." Altogether, one must say, Aron's *Explanation of De Gaulle* is no explanation, but it does contain scattered nuggets of shrewd political comment.

Mengin's *No Laurels*, subtitled on the jacket, "An Appraisal of the London Years," is strangely out of place on any shelf of serious books on the French President. A diary of Mengin's London years, 1939-43, which includes the hectic period when the Free French came into existence with the blessing of Winston Churchill, *No Laurels* tells much more about Mengin (and, for whatever reason, his wife Anne) than about de Gaulle. Mengin, a newspaperman and an obviously sincere and decent republican, hates de Gaulle, and his book is an indictment of the General as a politician full of duplicity, faithlessness, and vanity, a man consumed by unquenchable ambition for self-aggrandizement. *No Laurels* might appeal to French readers, particularly those who detest de Gaulle, but Americans are likely to find it too biased and much too personal (about the author, that is).

Nevertheless, Mengin's pages, too, contain some revealing observations about France and Frenchmen. To this reviewer, Mengin's most telling remark is that France has been a sick country during the Gaullist era. This is an admis-





sion not many Frenchmen like to make, but it is a basic truth and one, moreover, that goes far to explain the rise of de Gaulle, who saved France in two periods of national disaster. In 1940, he established the Free French against incredible odds, and he thereby restored the honor of his country after its shameful surrender to Hitler. For the pro-Nazi collaborators in Vichy France, of whom there were a disgracefully large number, de Gaulle has a feeling of shame and contempt. In 1958, he saved the French republic from an imminent putsch by Algeria-based generals, paratroopers, and their avowedly Fascist allies.

In sum, de Gaulle is best viewed on two levels. He is, first of all, an extraordinary personality, possessing the mystique, or charisma, of a successful leader. There can be no question but that

Charles de Gaulle is a great man in the classic sense of the term. Like other truly historic figures, he dominates and impresses. In the second place, de Gaulle must be considered as the product of his country at a decaying time in its history. It is the sickness of post-World War I France, with its bitterly divisive politics, its vicious class hatreds, its cynicism and moral decay, that brought forth de Gaulle. As one French wit remarked sardonically, "De Gaulle is right in thinking that he represents France. He is wrong in believing that that does him honor."

Nevertheless, de Gaulle deserves the gratitude of his countrymen for his dedication to the job of restoring France to health, honor, self-respect, and stability. For this, history will remember the *Monogénéral*.

like Pétain and de Gaulle, and thus begin to understand the mystery of France.

In his study of the lives of Pétain and de Gaulle the French historian, or rather popularizer of history, Jean-Raymond Tournoux has written a semi-documentary, semi-historical fiction. One is never quite sure just where in this fascinating narrative the documentary ends and the fiction begins (a not atypical characteristic of contemporary French political essayists). But no matter. It is a grand tale, told in the grand manner of a Dumas and a Michelet. Most of it rings true, whether it is properly documented or not. It will not be of much use to scholars or even to students of French modern history, but it does illustrate and reflect with accuracy one of the key aspects of French life, the love of "grandeur," of the "great man," and the great man's curious quirks.

Did you know that Pétain was noted as one of the great "woman-chasers" of his time? That he said, "I love two things best: sex and the infantry"? We are indebted to M. Tournoux for this sure-to-be immortal quote. M. Tournoux also tells us how Pétain, the commanding general, took delight in concealing his rank under an unmarked greatcoat, and then suddenly removing it to reveal himself in all his bemedaled glory to the consternation but cries of admiration of his chosen victims, the "poilus" and the Red Cross girls he liked best.

Tournoux also provides us with many revealing, and currently pertinent, quotes from General de Gaulle, particularly his obsessive fear of growing old, based upon his observations of Pétain's decline from glory to shame in his dotage. "You see, Pétain is a great man—who died in 1925. . . . He's an old trickster now, believe me; I know him well." "Old age is a shipwreck," de Gaulle would say, citing a favorite line of Chateaubriand. But de Gaulle knew that the French people revered the "hero of Verdun" largely to satisfy their own hunger for heroes. When the General toured France after the liberation, and saw all the cheering crowds, he was unimpressed. He said to Minister Robert Lacoste, "I saw the films of the Marshal's visits here. There were at least as many people present, and often the same ones."

These anecdotes, and many more citations of Pétain and de Gaulle, collected, Tournoux claims, over a thirty-year period, are entertaining to read and, whether genuine or apocryphal, or a little of each, do give a true picture of those two sons of France. And by so doing they provide a valuable portrait of a certain France, not all of France by any means, but a France of illusions that live on, which explains the continuing domination of France by the greatest illusionist of our times, Charles de Gaulle.

## They Both Served France

**Sons of France: Pétain and De Gaulle**, by Jean-Raymond Tournoux, translated from the French by Oliver Coburn (Viking, 245 pp. \$5.95), comprises anecdotes about the hero of Verdun and the leader of the Free French, who condemned each other to death. David Schoenbrun is the author of "As France Goes" and "The Three Lives of Charles de Gaulle."

By DAVID SCHOENBRUN

Now I am alone with you, how good it is!  
And there is no one to gaze upon us! . . .  
The secret that I share with thee,  
Mother, no one can steal from us! . . .  
Listen to this voice of reason which  
proposes to you and explains to you.  
Proposals as soothing as oil and truth  
as bright as gold!

THIS ode, addressed to Marshal Pétain in December 1940, was composed by France's national poet-diplomat, Paul Claudel. It portrayed the aged Marshal, a defeated, doddering "chief" of a Nazi satellite régime, as the true defender of Mother France, suggesting that he was cleverly playing some kind of secret game, some arcane strategy that would save the honor of France. At the moment that Claudel composed his "Ode to Pétain" the Marshal's one-time protégé and spiritual son, Charles de Gaulle, was struggling in London to build a Free French movement to fight for France's honor. Pétain had condemned him to death as a traitor for having refused to accept the armistice

and having broken his oath of allegiance by fleeing to London when France fell.

Only four years later Charles de Gaulle was back in France, with the victorious allied armies, while old Marshal Pétain had fled into exile. De Gaulle then had Pétain condemned to death, under the general "rule" of war which might be said to hold that a traitor is he who loses the war. But Paul Claudel, a very French poet, unabashed, wrote another ode to a new heroic son of France, composed at the liberation in honor of de Gaulle.

"And now I care not what others think of me! . . .  
They have often enough asked me for my body, and thou, ask me for my soul! . . .  
And the General replies: "Woman, be quiet! And do not ask for anything other than what I am able to bring thee!"  
"What canst thou bring me then, O my son?"  
And the General, lifting his arms, replies:  
"My will!"

These two odes, perhaps the worst trash ever written by a poet of world renown, are nonetheless quite genuine, appropriate examples of what happens to otherwise highly intelligent, cultured, and talented Frenchmen when they drink deeply of the wine of patriotism and nationalism in the dramatic moments of victory or defeat. Only if one can understand how Claudel could have written those almost burlesque lines solemnly can one understand the almost unbelievable true-life romances of men