

Dinh Diem the United States did address itself to seeking new opportunities for real Vietnamese nationalism. Yet I am impressed with Miss Hammer's balanced and compassionate treatment of this tragic and controversial man.

Many may share Miss Hammer's difficulty in understanding how United States officials apparently could have encouraged the fateful overthrow of Diem "without making any provision for filling the political vacuum inevitably created by that coup." She obviously deplures, as anyone must, the resultant disruption of the developing security and stability in South Vietnam. I am glad to see that she gives General Harkins overdue recognition for his understanding of Diem's approach to local military problems.

Miss Hammer balances her descriptions of South Vietnam with an account of the development of Communist North Vietnam. Her sympathies are not with the Communist Party or its apparatus, the Viet Cong, in the South. But she does give relatively objective treatment to internal and diplomatic affairs in the North. Among other things, she describes the terrible pressures of Hanoi's land reform program of 1954-1956, in which thousands of people were tortured and executed according to the Communist Party's own admissions.

Looking ahead, which is our task now, Miss Hammer puts her finger on serious dangers in the South: the gap between the urban and rural populations, the lack of leaders, the many divisive factors, and the segregation of the army from the people.

She does not address herself to issues of American policy. She notes that the

Geneva Accords of 1954 contained specific provisions only for a cease-fire, disengagement, and regroupment of French and Vietminh forces, and provided no details or long-term perspective for a definitive settlement of the Vietnamese question. In her comparisons of the prospects of the North and the South in 1965, the assets of the North would seem to outweigh those of the South. Miss Hammer is deeply concerned that Chinese influence over the North may end by forcing it irreversibly into a new Chinese empire. However, her book ends on a note of confidence. She has faith, which I share, that the desire for independence, the political influence of dedicated young army officers (I would add young civilians), and the agricultural resources of South Vietnam will keep it alive and eventually promote its development as a non-Communist, independent, and prosperous state.

MISS Hammer's book agrees with James Cameron's *Here Is Your Enemy* on two significant points. Both cite indications that American bombing in the North has had the effect of hardening and unifying the people and the Communist régime. Mr. Cameron's firsthand observations lead him to call every bomb a bonus for Ho Chi Minh. His personal conviction is one of total opposition to American policy in Vietnam.

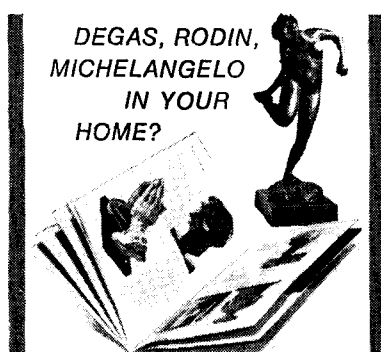
Of more long-run significance, both Miss Hammer and Mr. Cameron highlight the ignorance of Hanoi leaders about the world in general. North Vietnam's greatest liability, according to Miss Hammer, is Hanoi's blind pursuit of victory at any cost, which causes the Northern leaders "to act like sleepwalkers unaware of the course of history" and the realities of the twentieth century in their refusal to consider political compromise and peaceful nego-

tiation. Mr. Cameron left after several weeks in Hanoi—including a meeting with Ho Chi Minh and Prime Minister Pham Van Dong—with no doubt that the Communist régime understood extremely little about "the language of international persuasion or even of international facts." Indeed, he was concerned that the Hanoi leadership greatly exaggerated the protest movement against United States policy.

The two books also concur in their appreciation of the stern, tough fiber in Vietnamese character. In words which Americans should constantly remember, Mr. Cameron emphasizes the "singular resilience and continuity of the Vietnamese, who are, despite the graceful and beguilingly diffident tactfulness of their demeanor, among the toughest and most unanswerable people on earth."

Otherwise, Mr. Cameron's book is a disappointment to me. It is subtitled "Complete Report from North Vietnam." I wish it were. I had hoped to learn something about the way the North Vietnamese live, work, and react. Despite the usual totalitarian controls, Mr. Cameron had an opportunity unique for a non-Communist Western journalist to be our eyes and ears on a perfectly open basis in North Vietnam. To me, he missed the chance; his short book is overly simplistic and diaristic. He spends too many pages on hotels and airports and not enough in telling us about conditions in the North. But perhaps he was prevented.

In any event, I found his book skimpy and pretentious. This is unfortunate, because we need to know everything we can find out about the people (who are not our enemy) and circumstances in North Vietnam, where the authorities (who are) will decide to prolong or shorten their subversive warfare against South Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand.



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MEN OF LETTERS

These reticent British and American authors have generally used initials instead of given names. Margaret Rudd of Hastings-on-Hudson, N.Y., ask you to assign the correct initials to each man. If you can place all the initials, score yourself "good"; if you can also supply all the missing names, you rank as "psychic" or "librarian." Fill in on page 42.

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|-----------------|-------|-------------------|----------|
| 1. Auden () | A. A. | 9. Mencken () | J. D. |
| 2. Behrman () | C. S. | 10. Milne () | J. R. R. |
| 3. Cummings () | D. H. | 11. Priestley () | P. G. |
| 4. Eliot () | E. B. | 12. Salinger () | S. N. |
| 5. Forster () | E. E. | 13. Tolkien () | T. H. |
| 6. Hudson () | E. M. | 14. White () | T. S. |
| 7. Lawrence () | H. L. | 15. White () | W. H. |
| 8. Lewis () | J. B. | 16. Wodehouse () | W. H. |

Where Have All the Children Gone?

Nothing Ever Breaks Except the Heart, by Kay Boyle (Doubleday, 357 pp. \$4.95), contains twenty short stories concerned with the effect on human beings of war, mechanization, and the impersonal society. Theodore L. Gross, professor of English at The City College of New York, wrote "Albion W. Tourgée."

By THEODORE L. GROSS

KAY BOYLE reveals in this collection of twenty short stories the wisdom and humility, the anger and the passion of a thoughtful woman who looks back upon this generation with something like tender discontent and discovers that in spite of all her chastening experiences she is, after all, an American sharing the fate of her own country.

The book's title suggests Miss Boyle's humanistic point of view; the contents—divided into rubrics of "Peace," "War Years," and "Military Occupation"—indicate her intention to measure historically the central issues of our time.

Set in the United States, the first group of stories deals with various kinds of victims—usually children but often people with childlike sensibilities. Confronting a bleak urban life that threatens to twist their innocence into bitter skepticism, their love into hatred, they survive only because of some other sensitive individual's response. In "Seven Say You Can Hear Corn Grow" the idealistic son of a tired waitress comes upon a drunken man lying like a dead child on Christopher Street in New York. Crouched beside the derelict, trying to pull him out of danger from the traffic, is a vagrant girl, who proves as cynical as the young man's mother. The author subtly suggests the need for belief, for pity, for hope in a time when these human attributes tend to be characterized as merely sentimental or quixotic.

The theme of the stories in the "Peace" section—the need for compassion—is always clear. The technique, however, is often intricate and indirect, symbolic and allusive, implying more than is stated. Miss Boyle informs her work with an air of calculated haste, as if peace is always being threatened—by mechanistic forces, by impending war, by all that threatens to injure human love. She is indeed critical of America and of the impersonal society that cripples people, but she always views individuals with

understanding—regardless of the degree to which they have absorbed the crudities of their environment.

In the second section—"War Years"—we see an American woman's romance wither because her Austrian lover has welcomed the rise of Hitler; we share the loneliness of a Frenchman as he learns of his country's defeat; we feel the awkward alliances that exist between a British colonel and distrustful Italian partisans. We are haunted by the portrait in the title story of frightened refugees, none of whom realizes that the ex-pilot who might take them to their destination suffers from shattered nerves, his heart broken despite his ostensible self-control. Miss Boyle, who always measures war in terms of its effect on the human sensibility, is extraordinarily deft in creating its macabre, neuroathenic ambience.

SHE is also skillful in her use of silences, different kinds of silences—the kind, for example, that falls between the estranged people of different lands, or the kind that falls between self-conscious fathers and awkward sons, or those silences that are necessary for human survival.

The last story, "Fire in the Vineyards," is a coda to the entire volume, for it glances at devastated postwar France and measures the prosperous Germans,

the poor English, the Americans who are "not afraid of what may happen" to Europe and who read the signs "U.S. Go Home" or "*Les Américains en Amérique*." Miss Boyle is fully aware of and at times sympathetic to the anti-Americanism of the French; she too reviles the arrogance of the G.I. away from home who tells the French that "France never did nothing but sit on a corner holding a tin cup out, and we're sick of dropping the dollars in." But she realizes that to be an American is to suffer, in Henry James's words, "a complex fate."

KAY BOYLE has created a large and impressive body of literature over a forty-year period. She has been a novelist and foreign correspondent, a poet and a translator, a lecturer, educator, and children's storyteller. But her real contribution to American letters is in the form of the short story. Unlike Hemingway or Faulkner, she has no unique vision. Nor is her technique so individual that she modifies the tradition of the short story that precedes her. Although most effective when she is least specific, Miss Boyle is at times unnecessarily opaque. And, more rarely, her intense emotion can sweeten into sentimentality. But her best work has undeniable authority; stories like "Wedding Day," "The White Horses of Vienna," and "White as Snow" are already minor classics, artistic records of what life was like in the age of Hitler. This new collection demonstrates that she is one of the few living American artists who have seriously examined the effect of the Second World War upon Europeans and upon Americans in Europe.

Nothing Ever Breaks Except the Heart can only enhance Kay Boyle's reputation.



"Elsie? George. Listen, I ran into our marriage counselor and we have a few things we want to straighten out with you."