

over Arcadi's fate. Bernard Shaw emerges from the letters as a not very admirable human being. He wrote Lady Russell: "I still suspect that Berdichevsky's exile may be less stormy than his home life." Lady Russell charged that Shaw was "frivolous and cruel," and perhaps—this hurt worst—"rather stupid."

In 1938 Miss Utley went to China as a special correspondent for the London *News Chronicle*. Thanks to her successful book *Japan's Feet of Clay*, which had been published in Britain and America, the Chinese welcomed her. In Hankow, near the battle line, the "Last Ditchers," most of them American correspondents, proved friendly and hopeful. Hankow was a bad spot—torrid, bombed frequently, crammed with wounded soldiers, refugees, and the "Chinese *jeunesse dorée* of both sexes, who would dance with the Japanese at the gate and also after they had captured the city." Miss Utley's reporting of the fighting between Japanese and Chinese illuminates a theater of war that was little known or understood by Americans three years before Pearl Harbor.

By 1939 Freda Utley "was finding it more and more difficult to hold either my tongue or my pen concerning the Soviet Union and Communism." In the United States her blunt warnings

about Japan and the USSR won her friends, but caused her trouble as well. After war broke out, an effort was made to deport her. Only the intervention of Congressman Jerry Voorhis and other influential supporters saved her from deportation and eventually made it possible for her and her son to become American citizens.

In the second volume of these memoirs it is to be hoped that the proofs will be more carefully read. On page 121, for instance, the author says she went to Russia for the first time in 1926. Four pages later the date is 1927. On page 197 she gives the date of a letter from Chiang Kai-shek as 1930, which was eight years before she went to China. There are other errors.

Miss Utley's story testifies that the way of the "anti-Communist ex-Communist" is hard. She "incurred the displeasure of the 'Right' as well as the 'Left' . . ." Her temperament and ideals continued to keep her from "traveling in the middle of the road. . . I do not know whether in the parlance of our time I am now a liberal or a conservative, a progressive or a reactionary."

Henry C. Wolfe

Henry C. Wolfe is the author of *"The German Octopus"* and *"The Imperial Soviets,"* among other books.



"Remember, you are selling medicated talcum powder."

USA

THEIR TATTERED FLAGS: The Epic of the Confederacy

by Frank E. Vandiver

Harper's Magazine Press, 362 pp., \$10

"HISTORY," SAYS FRANK VANDIVER, "went against them almost from the start." *Their Tattered Flags*, which is intended to redress the slight, tries to atone for the literary syrup as well as the pedantry that have smothered the Confederates. It attempts to compensate for the ahistorical ax-grinding that too often has glorified the inglorious, castigated the noble, and ignored the human qualities of the Confederate experience. And it succeeds. Vandiver has written balanced, brilliant, literate history that Confederates themselves might recognize as their own.

True to its subtitle, the book is an epic, history as an art form. Vandiver's scope takes in the entire spectrum of life in the Confederacy. He deals with politics and poetry, diplomacy and folk humor. And ever in the background, often in the foreground, are the war and the dream of independence. The epic is heroic because Vandiver accepts independence as the ultimate Confederate aim. The nation once founded and the war once begun were caught up in a dynamic of their own, and the Confederates rose above their Old South origins. The epic is tragic because of these origins, and because the tide of human development doomed the resisting Confederacy almost at birth.

Vandiver's prose, too, is equal to the epic, being as lyrical as it is precise. The author weaves description and analysis together with a narrative that flows. Not only does Vandiver sketch his myriad characters masterfully, he allows them to develop with the course of events. When Robert E. Lee first appears he is the "King of Spades," an engineer officer with a passion for having his troops dig holes. The apotheosis comes later. Conversely, in 1861 Braxton Bragg is a good administrator in an army that needs administering. Only in 1864 does "Bragg's growing talent" become "mischief," and his appointment as Chief of Staff defy "even the bounds of nonsense." Vandiver's action is swift. The feeling and spirit

LITERARY I.Q. ANSWERS

1 J (house of Atreus), 2H (Titus Andronicus), 3F (Medea), 4L (Jude the Obscure), 5K (Hamlet), 6B (Sohrab and Rustum), 7A (Fall River murders), 8E (Oedipus Rex), 9C (Notre-Dame de Paris), 10 G (Oresteia), 11 D, 12 I (Phaedra).

of his battle accounts should rank them with Tolstoy's Borodino.

Their Tattered Flags also has an epic hero—not Lee or Stonewall Jackson, but Jefferson Davis. The Confederate president accepts his leadership role stiffly, and grows in office to the point where he personifies the “cause.” It is Davis, more than anyone else, who perceives the reality of the Southern nation fighting for its life. For its president the Confederacy is a fact; independence is the *summum bonum*. To achieve it the pragmatic Davis is willing to trample over states’ rights and finally abolish slavery.

Davis’s zeal and position place him naturally in the center of Vandiver’s Southern saga. The Confederate president struggles mightily against great odds. He is often brilliant, sometimes foolish. And Davis has his fatal flaw: he cannot inspire in others a devotion equal to his own. He is too often cold, reserved, and unbending. He makes and keeps more bitter enemies than close friends. At the last, history runs Davis to ground. His doomed Confederacy, like his leadership, is exhausted. So Davis “would suffer two prison years, win a mite of martyrdom, and last out his life as the symbol of the defeated South.” The Confederates, at the hand of history, “would suffer the wound of losing, and would nurse the wound in anger until anger became pride.” Then “at last a legend would arise.” Vandiver finally allows his hero a rightful place in legend as well as in losing.

Vandiver’s epic is art, but not merely for art’s sake. *Their Tattered Flags* is art for history’s sake. The author’s thoughtful research shows both in the breadth of his scope and in the depth of his analysis. He incorporates the best of recent historical scholarship as well as ground-breaking discoveries of his own.

Although *Their Tattered Flags* is not a biography, it ranks as the best biographical treatment of Jefferson Davis to date. Vandiver offers a balanced, human portrait to offset the extremes of invective and eulogy that mar other works about Davis. He gives new and deserved emphasis to the Confederate West, especially the Trans-Mississippi province. He makes intelligible the tangles of Confederate military supply, ordnance, commissary, and quartermaster. The book provides a fresh analysis of Confederate diplomacy with its little successes and larger failure. On these and other topics *Their Tattered Flags* offers new insight.

Vandiver’s prime historical contribution, however, is portraying the Confederacy as a nation. He calls the Confederates “rebels,” but his emphasis



is ever on the unity and nationalism that characterized the fledgling Southern state. Once the “fire-eaters” had done their work, Vandiver contends, cooler heads took charge and made a nation. Some of the results of Davis and his colleagues’ nationalist policy are the first military conscription in North America, suspension of *habeas corpus*, and the arbitrary impressment of crops and slaves. The author explains Confederate military strategy as part of the larger nationalism. Davis adopted the “offensive-defensive.” He would stand on the defense and suffer invasion. Then, when time and circumstances permitted, the Southern armies would strike and destroy their enemies. In this way the Confederacy could make the most of its meager resources and pose at home and before the world as a peaceful nation threatened by its neighbor’s aggression. The Confederacy, Vandiver observes, could win the war by not losing, by staving off defeat until the Union tired or Europe intervened. In keeping with his theme of nationalism, Vandiver treats the Confederate South as more than a mere mutation of the ante-bellum South. He depicts everything from culture to economy as being more Confederate than Southern. This thesis is intriguing and ingenious.

Their Tattered Flags is a monumental achievement. The book is great history, and Vandiver is the Confederate Clio.

Emory M. Thomas

Emory M. Thomas, assistant professor of history at the University of Georgia, has just completed two books on the Confederate South.

TURBULENT YEARS: A History of the American Worker 1933-1941

by Irving Bernstein

Houghton Mifflin, 873 pp., \$12.95

TEN YEARS AGO Professor Irving Bernstein published *The Lean Years: A History of the American Worker 1920-1933*. It is still, I believe, the best history of the Great Depression and the decade immediately preceding it. In that book Professor Bernstein, now associate director of the Institute of Industrial Relations at UCLA, broke with the dominant tradition in the writing of American labor history, which had concentrated on the trade union and its role in the labor market—a tradition established by John R. Commons and his Wisconsin disciples. Bernstein, while by no means overlooking the union, focused on the worker, organized or unorganized, his legal status, his politics, his social and cultural interests, and the way he was treated by the state and by his employer.

The second volume of Bernstein’s *History of the American Worker* takes us through the first two terms of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Presidency. Unlike *The Lean Years*, the new book devotes more attention to the union than to the worker. (The latter will be dealt with in a third volume covering the same eight-year period.) The approach is understandable, since until

(Continued on page 36)

The critic, Milton R. Konvitz, is professor of industrial and labor relations and of law at Cornell University.