

THE BOOK SHELF

THE BLACKOUT AGAINST THE SOUTH

by Harold Lord Varney

THE SOUTHERN TEMPER. By William Peters. Doubleday, New York. 283 pp., \$3.95.

THE SOUTH STRIKES BACK. By Hodding Carter III. Doubleday, New York. 213 pp., \$2.95.

THE WHITE BAND. By Carter Brooke Jones. Funk and Wagnalls, New York. 334 pp., \$4.50.

FACE OF MY ASSASSIN. By Jan Huckins and Carolyn Weston. Random House, New York. 498 pp., \$4.95.

AMONG THE PUBLISHERS against the South, 1959 seems to have been open season. Slant-minded writers, most of them intellectual renegades from their own native Southern tradition, have fed the "hate-the-South" market with a stream of novels and think books—all slyly designed to build up an unfavorable picture of the Southern American in the Northern mind. To my knowledge, not a single major publisher has been fair enough to balance this performance by publishing at least one title written by an author who admires the South. The reading public has been brainwashed with only one side of the contentious Southern subject.

In the serious field, although Little Rock has been spot news throughout the year, no publisher has made a

serious attempt to persuade Governor Faubus, the central figure in the integration situation, to write a book presenting the South's point of view. But two of Governor Faubus' arch opponents, both of whom have been repudiated by the people of Little Rock—Brooks Hays and Virgil Blossom—have found big time Northern publishers who were eager to print their words of wisdom. This was a follow-up of the Harry S. Ashmore anti-Faubus opus of 1958. But when Dean Alford, who defeated Hays for Congress and hence must be rated as a more genuine spokesman of Little Rock public opinion, wrote a book upholding the Faubus position, he found no Northern publisher. He was forced to print the book privately at his own expense.

The most pretentious book of the year, *The Southern Temper*, by the Northerner William Peters is a shameless attempt to describe all Southern segregationists as either unwholesome or contemptible characters while holding up the Ralph McGills, the Harry S. Ashmores, the Hodding Carters, the Harry S. Goldens, together with the spokesmen of the NAACP, as avatars of the light. Peters becomes positively gushy in his verbal love affair with Southerners who bootlick the

New York South-haters. His book was obviously thrown together by the dishonest device of interviewing only the tiny minority of Southern integrationists. When he does make a gesture of quoting outright segregationists—Roy V. Harris, Sam Englehardt, Jr., and Willis V. McCall—he does an undisguised smear job in the ignoble tradition of John L. Spivak and John Roy Carlson.

An even more virulent book is *The South Strikes Back*, authored by the younger Hodding Carter. The devil in Carter's story is the Citizens' Council. He documents his diatribes with the most one-sided presentation of an American organization which has been seen since Bob Taft was crucified with the slogan "Thou shalt not steal." Such writing is not honest description—it is little above the level of billingsgate. And yet Carter found a distinguished Northern publisher who was willing to present him.

When we move into the field of fiction, the one-dimensional approach to the South is even more apparent. I shudder to think what would happen to a manuscript in a New York publishing office which made an official of the Citizens' Council its hero. I doubt if even William Faulkner could get an acceptance. The pattern for Southern fiction is unchanging. It was set by Lillian Smith in *Strange Fruit* in 1944. According to this pattern, the Negro must always be a sympathetic character. The white Southerner, who tries to preserve his traditional way of life must have overtones of Simon Legree, or else he must be a virtual moral leper. But the Southerner who turns against his own people and apes the North must be presented with an

heroic, not to say sainted aura. Any book of fiction on the South which varies from these stereotypes will be read with a frowning eye by the masterminds in the New York publishing houses.

Most of the novels with a Southern locale which have been issued this year follow this safe and financially rewarding formula, a typical example is *The White Band* by Carter Brooke Jones. The hero is a Northern Negro professional agitator who comes South, as a representative of an organization closely resembling the NAACP, to stir up trouble. The villain is ex-Senator Duffield who heads the "White Band," an outfit which brings to mind the Citizens' Council, in the tradition of of literary tear-jerkers. Tarver is murdered by the White Bandists. The reader is left with the ineluctable impression that that is the way Southern segregationists act. Such a book is a trigger to arouse hate of the South in the minds of uninformed Northern readers.

Face of My Assassin by Jan Huckins and Carolyn West is in the same genre. Here the hero is a Northern newspaperman. He comes into a Southern community to dig up an anti-Southern smear story. In a melodramatic chain of events he finds himself in court, sentenced to be hanged for rape and murder. You have guessed it, he was framed by the Southern white robed "Avengers." In the end, the threads are all tied up, the hero is vindicated and the South hangs its head in shame.

When we realize that such a parade of lurid caricatures of the South is coming from the publishing houses each season, it is not hard to under-

stand why so much Northern thinking on the South is disbalanced and maudlin. Americans, in fixing this false stereotype upon the South, are doing America a serious disservice. The fact that such books make money, while an honest treatment of the South might not, is a feeble excuse for such South-baiting.

At a moment when the call is for national unity in the face of the hide-

ous Communist challenge, such literary waving of the bloody shirt is un-American and downright dishonest. It makes a travesty of the honored American tradition of fair play. It divides Americans. It would be an interesting question how Northern "Liberals" would react if the South should set up its own publishing houses to grind out similar hate books against the North.

COMMUNISM AS IT IS

by Herbert Wilton Stanley

THE UNDEFEATED. By George Paloczi-Horvath. Atlantic Little, Brown. Boston. 305 pp., \$4.50.

THE STORY of Mr. Paloczi-Horvath's life is the story of contemporary Hungary, in all its horror. The author's career has been a mirror of the Hungarian tragedy. Now a refugee in London, he has given us an "I-was-there" picture of what it means for an intellectual to live a Communist life behind the Iron Curtain.

Paloczi-Horvath was born a member of the landed gentry. He broke with his class to become the editor of a liberal newspaper under Horthy. When Premier Count Teleki killed himself in 1941 as a protest against the German take-over, Paloczi-Horvath fled and spent the rest of the war working with the British SOE. He was already a Communist sympathizer when he returned to Budapest in 1947 to edit a party-line weekly magazine.

What happened to him after he ac-

cepted the Communist discipline is a frightening commentary upon the inevitable moral degeneration of Communists once they attain complete power.

For the first two years, 1945-47, while the fiction of a coalition government was being maintained, the position of the Western-minded intellectual in Hungary was not uncomfortable, provided he did not engage in anti-Communist activity. Even capitalists were tolerated, nationalization was confined to the banks and the mines and the Communists actually posed as defenders of private property. But after the three non-Communist parties were eliminated from the government, Communist authority stiffened. The climax came in 1949 when Minister of Foreign Affairs Laszlo Rajk was arrested and executed. Paloczi-Horvath was implicated with Rajk and thrown into prison. He remained there almost five years, enduring almost continuous torture, both physical and psychological.

The description of how he preserved his reason by a contrived system of mental games compels admiration for the man. He survived and emerged from prison just on the eve of the fall of the Stalinist, Rakosi, the long dictatorship. Still a Communist, he became one of the outstanding writers who paved the way for the great demonstration of October 23, 1956, which touched off the revolution. When the Russians stamped out the uprising, Paloczky-Horvath escaped to England.

His book clarifies much that has been misunderstood about life under Communism in the Iron Curtain nations. He explains why Communist dictatorships always imprison and kill the sincere old-time Communists in the party. Dictatorship calls for yes-men. The idealistic Communist is an uncertain factor. The whole purge drive against Rajk and his followers in Hungary—what the author calls the “monster period of Communism”—was a liquidation of the old Bolsheviks. What was left in the party were the opportunists and the unseasoned newcomers. Paloczky-Horvath estimates that 950,000 of the 1,000,000 party members showed themselves to be anti-Communists when the short-lived Imre Nagy regime gave them the courage to reveal their real attitudes. If his judgement is correct, then we must conclude that the Kremlin position in the satellites is unbelievably shaky. If we accept this assumption, then our whole current cultural exchange policy with Khrushchev becomes irrational.

Paloczky-Horvath is especially revealing in his discussion of Communist terrorism. Communists like Rakosi, he points out, are schizoid personalities. Long years of mental enslavement

to the party destroys their ability to make moral judgements. They are always sincere in their rationalizations, even though they involve overnight reversals of belief. The most incredible acts of personal treachery to their comrades are explainable in terms of two-level personality which we find in every higher Communist functionary.

Few authors have ever conveyed so well the hideous realities of life under Communist dictatorship. Few of Paloczky-Horvath's intelligence have lived to tell the story.

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ROOSEVELT'S ROAD TO RUSSIA. By George N. Crocker. Regnery, Chicago. 320 pp., \$5.00.

THE DEGLAMORIZING OF Franklin D. Roosevelt has proceeded more rapidly than even the most optimistic could have foreseen. FDR still has his idolators but the superman legend of his four terms has worn thin. A symptom of the changed public temper is the appearance of George N. Crocker's *The Roosevelt Road to Russia*. Such a book would have been almost unthinkable a decade ago.

Mr. Crocker pulls no punches. What appears, after he has told the unpleasant story of 12 years of political trickery and irresponsible encouragement of Communism, is the picture of an inglorious Roosevelt who left America a worse place than he found it. The problems which he inflicted upon the nation, and failed to solve, are still crushingly with us. The a'iriness and immaturity with which he faced his Presidential tasks are an uncomfortable memory.

To retell this story of Rooseveltism, Mr. Crocker has unusual gifts. A painstaking and conscientious researcher, he has winnowed rumor and gossip from facts. What remains is irrefutable, documented fact. These facts are served up with a style which makes the book a joy to read. The text is enlivened by a stream of sidelights upon the motivation of the curious Roosevelt decisions. Mr. Crocker has a sense of history and he sees the Roosevelt epoch against a wide and crowded canvas.

It is my guess that this book will take its place as definitive critique of the Roosevelt who led us into war. Its appearance, upon the eve of a new period of muddling over Russia, is well timed. It is must reading for all honest minded Americans.—H.L.V.

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THE MAN WHO WOULD BE GOD. By Haakon Chevalier. Putnam's, New York. 449 pp., \$4.95.

THOSE OF US who are familiar with the J. Robert Oppenheimer case will recall Haakon Chevalier as the villain of the script. It was Chevalier, then a University of California professor, who acted as the messenger for Soviet agent, Peter Ivanov, to persuade Oppenheimer to supply the Russians with atomic information. Oppenheimer at first covered up for Chevalier, when questioned by Security officers. Then, under pressure, he named him.

Chevalier left the United States be-

fore he could be investigated and later popped up in Paris as a staff member of UNESCO. There Oppenheimer visited him in 1950—still apparently a friend—and the professor asked his aid in getting back to the United States. Oppenheimer didn't give it.

Now Chevalier has written a novel in which he literally impales Oppenheimer. Through the thinly disguised form of Sebastian Bloch (the "Man" of the title) he puts into Oppenheimer's mouth speeches which are in the most rabid Communist tradition. Under the mask of fiction, he portrays him as a card-holding member of the Communist Party. Not even Oppenheimer's severest critics have made such an accusation, although his brother Frank was an admitted member.

The reader asks himself the question, what is Chevalier trying to do? Has he written a spite book to revenge himself on Oppenheimer for exposing him and then leaving him an expatriate? Is he trying to say, in novel form, that the physicist was much deeper in the Communist conspiracy than has been suspected? The reader must supply his own explanation.

As a book *The Man Who Would Be God* will win no literary awards. It is prolix and marred by long stretches of dullness. It is bad fiction. But as a Communist mystery story, it will undoubtedly be an important conversation piece this winter in all cocktail parties and penthouse talkfests where "Liberals" foregather.—J.L.

Return postage, together with a self-addressed envelope, must be included with each manuscript submitted to insure its return.

THE MERCURY FORUM

Sir: Your World Wide Betrayal, Part I, in the September, 1959, issue is sensational. There is one important item you should add to it. It happened in 1913:

Congressman William I. Sirovich (Democrat, N.Y.), son of a rabbi, signer of the Golden Book of American Friendship with the Soviet Union, and supporter of the Communist-anarchist-murderer, Tom Mooney, brazenly traced the history of the "revolution by legislation" called the "New Deal" from its genesis to its culmination in Roosevelt's administration. (See pages 1625-1633, *Congressional Record*, February 6, 1935.)

Finally he came to the members of the modern precursor of the New Deal. The Hidden Hand—preparing the way for their New Deal Revolution—started the social legislation commission appointed in 1913 by New York Governor William Sulzer (married to Clara Rodenheim). The alien-minded Governor William Sulzer was **IMPEACHED AND REMOVED FROM OFFICE OCTOBER 18, 1913!**

This sinister commission prepared social legislation for New York State which was passed. It was the "beginning of the 'New Deal.'" Its members were Aaron J. Levy, Justice of the New York Supreme Court; William Sirovich; Franklin D. Roosevelt; James Foley, Surrogate of New York; Martin McCue; Alfred E. Smith; Robert Wagner and James J. Walker. "It made Smith four times governor

of New York and . . . Roosevelt twice governor, and paved the way for him to the Presidency." Sirovich, son of a rabbi, boasted that he had helped to write the 1913 "new deal" legislation. Front man Walker became the mayor of New York. Wagner introduced in the United States Senate the NRA, the Social Security Act, the National Labor Relations Act, the U.S. Housing Act, etc. His son is currently mayor of New York City. The 1913 legislation served as a model for similar bills which became law in 41 states (as of 1935)!

FRED FREDERICKS
New York City

Sir: "From the sublime to the ridiculous"—that old cliché seems to apply to your October, 1959, issue. Referring to the sob-sister drivel on page 130, "A Little Dog Cried." I wonder if a multi-billion dollar dog-food industry promulgates such stuff. The most usual attribute of the dog is noise, for which check the National Noise Abatement Council. For other attributes, refer to sanitation officers and communicable disease agencies. I offer the following thoughts:

People are funny—those who live in apartments almost invariably complain about noisy neighbors. So they buy a home and then acquire a canine whose 90 decibel racket permeates a square block. If there were fewer ever-yapping dogs, man's best friend might be his neighbor. Dogs draw flies. Dogs aren't hi-fi—just high deci-