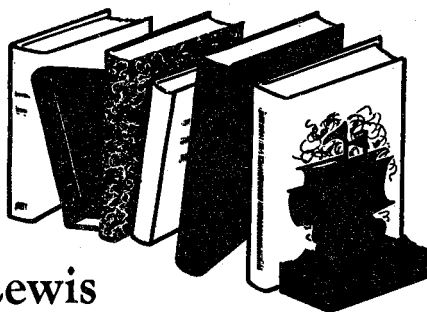


BOOKS

In Brief



By Jasper R. Lewis

PLAIN TALK ABOUT WORLD AFFAIRS

LOUIS FISCHER has written some interesting things about world affairs, based on his extensive world travels, and in his present book, *Gandhi and Stalin*, (Harper's, \$2.50), he has performed an added service. He takes these two leaders as symbols of two types of ideology, two ways of life. Fischer knows Gandhi, and his admiration and respect are clearly expressed, primarily for Gandhi's high principles, and secondarily for his personality. Stalin is portrayed as an able and ruthless leader whose principles, if any, are, of course, exactly opposed to Gandhi's.

Through a discussion of the characteristics of the two, Fischer ably and conclusively shows the potential influences at work in India and Russia. The portraits of the two men are drawn in terms of their attitudes toward mankind in general and their own nationals in particular. Of still greater import, however, are Fischer's comments on the present world problem, bluntly stated as communism on the one hand and democracy on the other. There is apparently only self-delu-

sion on the part of those who still seek "One World." Fischer says: "The combination of dictatorship and nationalism has destroyed the early internationalism of Soviet domestic and foreign policies." Fourteen years of living in Russia entitle Fischer to credit for knowing whereof he speaks. He is not afraid of a little state socialism mixed with capitalism—T.V.A. or Lend-Lease. But Russia is not an example of socialism, but of ruthless totalitarianism.

He makes clear that it is not necessary to have a majority of Communists in a country to control it. In any nation, it is the predominating middle class that weighs the scale. Depression, resentment and other causes influence a nation's policy, as witness Britain's experiment with socialism. The danger is that, as in Germany, the masses will mistakenly give power to fanatics, who later entrench themselves and establish a dictatorship.

The alternative is not Gandhi's "spinning-wheel economy." It is more equal distribution of power and avoidance of monopoly. Fisch-

er's suggestions for a cure are as applicable here as in Europe or Asia, and mostly concerned with greater security for the greatest number. Even the churches are at fault. Fischer quotes Gandhi: "I have noticed no definite progress in any religion. The world would not be the shambles it has become if the religions of the world were progressive."

Considering the vast power of Russia, made up of the Soviet domain in itself and its satellites in addition, Fischer points out that all Stalin has had to do is fill any vacuum in power as it appeared. In both Europe and Asia this has resulted in increasing influence. The way to stop her expansion is to fill the vacuums—that is, present democratic power instead. This does not mean war, but it means aggressive democracy.

Fischer has an excellent chapter devoted to what democratic nations can do, without Russia's cooperation. In his opinion, as an answer to the Soviet's continued use of the veto in the United Nations, the democracies should band together, not against Russia, but in pursuit of their own ideals. "Democracy is

under attack. Now is the time, therefore, to be more democratic, more moral, more Christian, more Gandhian." In other words, the famous military technique: the best defense is offense.

An international union of democracies, leaving out Russia, could accomplish much. There is, in Fischer's opinion, no present possibility of Russia treading the same path. Let the others then be militant for democracy. The United Nations, he believes, has already lost its chance, and the veto negatives its future. A new organization, with democracies only, might accomplish much in the way of inducing more settled economic and political conditions, and as it grew in power Russia's influence would wane. In the last analysis, some day Russia, too, might see the light—our light.

This is a plan for a campaign of ideals, backed by practical mutual assistance. It is not a guarantee against a third world war, but it has its merits, and is worth a trial. Fischer has presented the case fluently for the democracies. A Russian translation, circulated in the Soviet might accomplish more than have the conferences and congress.

BRIEFER COMMENT

The Revolt of Asia, by Robert Payne, (John Day Co., an Asia Press Book, \$3.50), is an expression of the author's opinion that the "Asiatic Century" has begun. The revolution in Indonesia, its leaders, its aims and its results, are discussed from that standpoint. Here is a picture of Gandhi, Nehru and others,

and the familiar ethnic problem more confused by political developments. Payne includes his views on Chiang Kai-shek, the Chinese Communists, and events in Korea, Burma, Malaya and the Philippines. There is much information about the people and the countries.

He concludes that the Asiatic