

esting and often provocative. His quotations are frequently fascinating.

But such a method of writing history means that many celebrated personages are granted short shrift. Julius Caesar himself is mentioned only briefly, and many others are merely referred to in passing. One century is covered in a few pages, but with concise brilliance: "Between the death of Marcus Aurelius in 180 and the accession of Diocletian in 285 . . . thirty-two emperors reigned. Of these thirty-two emperors, only two certainly died a natural death."

Commenting on the chaos and slaughter of the third century, Mr. Barr says: "Back of the monotonous violence . . . lay the fact that Rome's habit of conquest, which enabled her to take over first peninsular Italy and finally the many peoples and great wealth that Augustus controlled, had become a sort of reflex action. Rome had gobbled up many countries; and once the habit of violence and the respect for force and the love of pillage had been thwarted by the sea or the desert or by the uninviting poverty of Barbaria, the Roman Empire started gobbling up itself."

Mr. Barr always keeps in mind the Romans' obsession with war and with order. Their obsession with war had won them an empire and wealth. Their concern for order had been the source of the great system of Roman law, which, Mr. Barr thinks, has been vastly overpraised. Roman law was rooted in injustice. The wealthy and the poor received different punishments for the same crimes. Far more than under any subsequent legal system, the law was conceived of as a bulwark for property. And it permitted and even approved of many monstrous cruelties.

The privileged top layer of society became corrupt and depraved several centuries before the fall of Roman power. How much this decadence hastened Rome's decline the author does not attempt to estimate. He is content to discuss the many contributing factors, among them the loss of faith in the state religion and in the legal system, the economic and population decline, plagues.

The Mask of Iove is a magisterial work that requires prolonged attention and rewards it.

State lines, as recent election returns from the South have indicated, will not vanish very easily.) Could we have two supreme coordinate powers in one? Could representative government stretch across a continent? And, returning to the most troublesome of questions, how could sovereign states be combined with an effective federal government?

In the murky heat, ranged before green-covered tables in the State House at Philadelphia, they deliberated. Most of them were upper middle class, although many were land-poor. They feared the leveling influence of mass democracy, rowdiness, and violence. Yet their concern was not for themselves alone. Throughout, their thought, fervently voiced, was for the freedom and happiness of the people at large, people who must feel themselves a part of the new government. Throughout, their concern was for the posterity who would judge whether their work had been good.

Mrs. Bowen calls them forth: Dr. Franklin, wise, mellow, and moderate; Washington, in whose silence lay his strength; Madison, with his foresight and formidable learning; Hamilton, "nostrils and mouth sensitive as in a blooded horse," who foresaw the vast, urban America we know today. We see and hear the ironic Gouverneur Morris, the pernicky Elbridge Gerry, the slovenly, ranting Luther Martin, and the bespectacled James Wilson, "unsung hero of the Federal Convention," his mind "one blaze of light." For it was Wilson who overcame the fears of a single vigorous executive. It was Wilson who saw no reason why men should enjoy any less freedom under a national government, who warned, when fearful men wondered if the wild states to the West should be admitted on terms of equality, that the majority must govern in all cases. Both he and Roger Sherman sensed that the West might one day be the population center, that their children and grandchildren might well be Westerners. Sherman, silent and shrewd, honest yet convincing, is another of Mrs. Bowen's heroes. For it was he who saved the convention with his idea that the vote be counted two ways, by states and by individuals.

The question of representation was the rock upon which the Convention nearly shattered. Franklin besought divine aid. Washington's face assumed the look it wore at Valley Forge. The question was: should representation be proportional? The small states insisted, as they do today, that with proportional representation a few large states would control the nation. Whether or not the so-called Great Compromise, making the states forever equal in the Senate, was right, it is certain that the Convention would have broken up without it. Like-

A Government for the People

Miracle at Philadelphia: The Story of the Constitutional Convention, May to September 1787, by Catherine Drinker Bowen (*Atlantic-Little, Brown*, 346 pp. \$7.50), tells of the problems, many of them still with us, that wracked the writers of the U.S. Constitution. Margaret L. Coit of the Fairleigh Dickinson University faculty is co-author of "The Growing Years," a book on the post-Colonial period in America.

By MARGARET L. COIT

IN HER lucid, enlightening *Miracle at Philadelphia* Catherine Drinker Bowen does not attempt to break new ground or to enter into academic controversy. Her purpose is to transmute intellectual dialogue into drama, to call up the voices, the sounds, the look and the feel of times past, and to tell an old story zestfully, as if it had never been told before. It is an account of conciliation rather than conflict, of "the grace and glory of compromise, sitting on Washington's shoulder like the dove." And it is told without bias, except for the one shared by Washington and Mrs. Bowen, that what happened at Philadelphia was truly a miracle.

The miracle was threefold. The personalities were at variance, their problems were immense, their interests clashed. Already the twangy, spare-spoken New Englanders were "damned Yankee" to Southerners, while to Northerners gun-carrying Kentuckians might have come from another planet. The interests of North and South, declared South Carolina's Pierce Butler, were virtually those of separate nations. To many their state was their country. Town-meeting villages in New England wanted no governor but "the Goviner of the Univarse." The so-called "league of friendship," the Articles of Confederation, was tarined to the breaking point. Taxes went uncollected and debts were unpaid. The situation, as Washington and Madison saw it, was too serious for despair. Both Washington and young Hamilton realized that America had achieved continental dimension and must begoverned accordingly; the question was how.

Mrs. Bowen makes it clear that many of the problems that wracked the Constitution-makers yesterday are still with us today. How federal was our government? How sovereign the states? Should, or could, state lines have been abolished? (Here the Constitution-makers ran up against the difference between what should have been and what could be.

wise, it would have broken up, with no constitution and no government, had it outlawed slavery. The Convention's job was not to reform society, but to form a government for society as it existed.

It is at this high point in her story that Mrs. Bowen pauses to conduct us on a tour of the states, with their "slaughtered trees" and immensity of free land for the taking, where poverty like that in Europe seemed unknown and almost everyone could read. Yet she dispels nostalgia for the good old days with an acrid account of the then "modern" medicine, which was agonizing and revolting, and of the contaminated wells and the filth thrown into the streets.

To this vast country of Indians and forest, chaos and dreams, the new constitution was about to be submitted. As the Convention was winding to an end the men looked their last on the big clock and on the aged Franklin in his sedan chair. They had defeated drives to make aliens less than citizens. They had rejected religious tests for officeholders, thus paving the way for a John Kennedy. The Convention stylist wrote "We the people" as a gesture of tact; he could not name states that in the end might not be bound by the constitution. The "Supreme Law of the Land" was right out of Magna Charta.

There is no letdown in Mrs. Bowen's account of the ratification; these chapters are as tense and dramatic as any in the book. The battle was touch and go. It was coast against back country, old states against new. In New York it was sheer politics, and here Hamilton fought with almost superhuman persistence.

In Massachusetts, with its town-meeting tradition and its veterans of Shays's Rebellion sitting in convention, the tide was turned by a blunt-spoken plow-jogger, Jonathan Smith, from the Berkshire hills; but the vote was terribly close. In Virginia that "overwhelming torrent" Patrick Henry was the nerve-center of the opposition; ranged with him were Colonel Lee, Benjamin Harrison, and James Monroe. Their cry, as in Massachusetts, was for a Bill of Rights.

The constitution-makers had seen no need for spelling out the natural rights of man, but this turned out to be the condition for ratification. From offstage the voices of Jefferson and Adams sounded in approval. Edmund Randolph, who would not sign without amendments, now led and won the battle in Virginia. In the end, even the dissidents went home to urge support of "The United States of America."

Mrs. Bowen has given us a fascinating story, brilliantly told.



Democracy vs. Dictator's Ghost

Overtaken by Events: The Dominican Crisis from the Fall of Trujillo to the Civil War, by John Bartlow Martin (Doubleday. 821 pp. \$7.95), reveals how the ghost of "El Benefactor" continues to haunt the nation he enslaved. Dan Kurzman, winner of the George Polk Memorial Award for newspaper reports on the Dominican revolution, is the author of "Santo Domingo: Revolt of the Damned" and other books.

By DAN KURZMAN

IN 1962, President Kennedy sent John Bartlow Martin on one of the most difficult ambassadorial assignments ever undertaken by a United States diplomat in Latin America. Martin was given the task of guiding the transformation of the Dominican Republic, which had writhed for thirty-one years under the terroristic dictatorship of Rafael Trujillo, into a model Latin American democracy.

The Dominican Republic, on the surface at least, seemed to offer a unique opportunity for constitutional experimentation. For within a few months following the assassination of Trujillo in 1961 his whole totalitarian structure had disintegrated.

On the one hand, the Dominicans, after three decades of unrelieved suppression, longed for democracy more than the people of most Latin American nations. On the other, since the Trujillo family owned some 70 per cent of the nation's wealth, this wealth could now be put at the service of the people.

Furthermore, because of Kennedy's role in ridding the country of the hated family—its efforts to cling to power after the dictator's assassination were frustrated by the appearance offshore of United States warships—America was extremely popular among the Dominicans.

But for all these advantages, Martin soon discovered that the death of a dictatorship did not automatically mean the birth of a democracy, particularly when the dictatorship had been as all-pervasive as Trujillo's. In his book, *Overtaken by Events*, Martin describes this realization in fascinating and minute detail that sometimes reads like a surrealist novel about a vast mental institution.

Trujillo was dead, it was true, but his ghost would not die. Dominicans who

worked with him or for him—that is, most of the population—were tormented with guilt feelings, and their sons with a gnawing shame conducive to rebellious Leftist and ultra-nationalist attitudes. Military officers, trained to kill and steal for the dictator, now killed and stole for themselves. Rightist businessmen and politicians saw Trujillo's death as an opportunity to grasp for themselves the national wealth so long hoarded by his family. Democratic leaders understandably reacted to the years of extreme suppression with plans for flawless democracy. Almost no one had the least administrative experience in the wake of an anti-Trujilloist purge.

From all this the Communists hoped to profit, though, ironically, they were also the victims of Trujillo's ghost. They had developed no leaders of stature and were feared by most Dominicans as a new threat to the recently found freedom they savored like people suddenly released from prison.

It was largely through Martin's unrelenting efforts that a free election was finally held in 1962 despite innumerable plots by would-be dictators to thwart it. Juan Bosch, an idealistic, reformist democrat, came to power, and Martin helped to nurse him through crisis after crisis in the face of Rightist efforts to oust him. After seven months, however, Bosch was overthrown, and a military-controlled government took over.

But if Bosch was not an ideal president—and no president can be adequately judged after seven months in office, particularly under the circumstances that existed in the Dominican Republic—he had given his nation a rare, fleeting moment of freedom. It was enough to instill a revolutionary spirit in a people long conditioned to fear and submission.

In April 1965 this spirit gave vent to violence, supported by followers of both Bosch and current President Joaquín Balaguer, which resulted in the felling of the de facto government and might well have eliminated the power of the Trujilloist military if U.S. troops had not been landed to halt the revolution.

Martin was sent back to the Dominican Republic to explore the way to peace after the U.S. Embassy had burned its bridges to the rebels by vigorously backing the military. In his book he confirms with remarkable candor what correspondents had reported: Ambassador W. Tapley Bennett had made intervention inevitable by rejecting a rebel