

warriors' graves in Spain. And those deaths in Spain are so placed, in Mr. Shapiro's text, as almost to appear a punishment of the victims for not having followed Mr. Eliot to church.

RELIGIOUS ritual is too often a symbolic substitute for the moral act. It has time and means for decorum and fine clothes—brocades of priestly robes and marble walls of temples. In contrast the moral act cannot wait to dress and pose; it is forced into rage or suffering that do not look seemly to exquisites. It is the past moral act that the exquisites honor, the moral act that has acquired a patina of time and tradition. Mr. Eliot, who grieves over past Calvaries, averts his eyes from present martyrdom. Had he lived at the time of the Crucifixion he would have considered Christ uncouth. He would have announced his choice for Herod and the Established Synagogue.

The confusion in belief that Mr. Shapiro locates in the modern mind is more accurately to be located in his own. It comes from denying the living fervor, the reality of the moral act, and seeking it where it is not, but where it might be purified of sweat, dust and danger and wear ceremonial habiliments.

Those who make no such search, experience no such confusion. We, writers of the Left, feel none. In spite of reaction's "cold pogrom" that has taken from us the ampler freedoms of expression, limiting us to restricted and harassed publication, we do not feel Mr. Shapiro's "failure of belief." We believe in man and are therefore unconfused and undefeated. It is a T. S. Eliot who shrank from life as a "wasteland," who sought the certainty of "dry bones." It is a deserter like Koestler whose *The Yogi and the Commissar* Mr. Shapiro picked as one of the three books of the year that he liked, who minces into the fashionable resort of mysticism.

If Mr. Shapiro makes the same choices, let him say so. If he is uncertain, let him wait until his thoughts are clear. Let him not take advantage of his Pulitzer Prize prestige, which carries with it a great responsibility, to rush his confusions into print.

Stalin at War

THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR OF THE SOVIET UNION, by Joseph Stalin. *International* \$1.75.

HERE in a single volume are the history-shaping directives of the first socialist nation to its Red Army, the Partisan detachments and to the people

on the fighting home front. It seems long years since we read the first of these speeches in the ominous summer days of 1941 when the bottom seemed to be falling out of the world. While our press enlarged on the "invincibility" of the Nazi armored legions, Stalin's calm and reassuring speech of July 3, 1941 proclaimed to the Soviet people and to the world that "history shows that there are no invincible armies and never have been." His fifteen major addresses, which occupy here little more than a hundred pages, met the needs of a time of unprecedented danger to all humanity. Now that fascism is crushed it is well to reread these brief addresses, which contain the essential estimate of the war, the over-all strategy of those mighty battles and the many-sided aspects of the difficult road to victory. They form a continuous, consistent and enduring whole, fully corresponding to the reality of the past and the perspectives of the future, with the victorious outcome of the war testing and revealing their deep wisdom.

Well may we ponder over what are the sources of this clarity of vision and depth of wisdom. Over and above the manifest military genius and affection for humanity in these addresses is to be seen the mastery of the social and historical science of Marxism-Leninism. The mastery extends to its theoretical



foundations, its living and creative soul and its dialectical method of thinking. To understand this is to understand the essence and the source of Stalin's wisdom and his immense contribution to victory both in these addresses, in the actual conduct of the war and in preparing his people and his nation for the crisis, forseen long before it arrived.

RALPH BOWMAN.

Bad Conscience?

THE DWARF, by Par Lagerkvist. Fischer. \$2.50.

THIS book from the pen of a skilled Swedish novelist purports to be the diary of a dwarf dwelling at the court of a prince of the Italian Renaissance. Short as the book is, it is filled with dramatic incident: warfare, crime, wholesale poisonings and plague, lewd orgies and every kind of treachery—but not a single noble deed or noble character in the whole book. Even the painter (recognizably modeled after Leonardo da Vinci) interrupts his painting of the Last Supper to design vicious instruments of warfare for his prince-master.

Allegorically the dwarf may be supposed to represent man's evil genius, his baser self, who perpetually betrays him into some vileness, who in the midst of peace schemes of war, in the midst of love, dreams of adultery, and, in short, who never interrupts his evil course except to pray briefly for forgiveness. In the final pages of the book all is calm and reverence. The painter is back at his Last Supper and the prince is in deep mourning for his adulterous wife who has been laid to rest in consecrated ground. But the dwarf knows that this mood cannot last. "If I know anything of my lord, he cannot spare his dwarf for long. I muse on this in my dungeon and am of good cheer. I reflect on the day when they will come and loosen my chains, because he has sent for me again."

Were I to sum up for the reader the flavor of this novel I could not do it better than to repeat a fable by Aesop which this book constantly recalled to me:

Two men have become known far and wide for their truly ideal friendship. The very gods are jealous and one of them is delegated to take care of this matter. He appears to one of the two friends and speaks as follows: "Such a beautiful comradeship as is yours deserves a reward from heaven. Therefore make any wish you please and it will be yours, and your friend will even

get double what you have wished for.”

The man to whom providence has granted so signal a favor, ponders what his wish shall be. A thousand pieces of gold? Why not at once a million? After all he has but to ask. Then why not a kingdom? Or even grander: why not power over kings: an emperor!—But as his imagination sweeps on and on, an annoying shadow accompanies his fancies: no matter what he may wish for, be it kingdom or a million pieces of gold, his friend will at once have two kingdoms. Or two million. At last in a fit of envious rage, he finds the perfect wish: he begs the gods to make him blind in one eye.

This will serve to give the readers of this review a conception of the bitter contempt for man expressed by this book. This attitude flows logically from the author's position: if man is but the battlefield between good and evil, and if he is now at the mercy of the one, now at the mercy of the other then is he not verily a contemptible thing whose good deeds are a mere decoy to entice the unwary all the more certainly into the swamp of evil?

And if this book ends with the dwarf in dungeon but expecting that surely some day his master will call him back into favor again, then is that not to say that all our fine resolves following World War II must as surely end up in a World War III, just as our good resolutions following World War I ended up in World War II?

Sophomores and reactionaries love this philosophy of contempt. The sophomores will get over it, but the reactionaries cling to it. With coarse laughter they will admit that they are themselves as contemptible as all the rest of us. “And now boys, since we've all let our hair down, and we know all of us are vile, let's grab our share while the grabbing is good.” Such is the philosophy of Pegler.

In Talmudic lore the reason why God does not destroy the world is that there is at least one good man among mankind. The same reasoning ought to apply to a novel. In one of his studies Jung tells the story of a Catholic priest who was strangely preoccupied with the figure of Judas. He worried about Judas, wondering whether God ever could forgive him, and reasoning that if Judas had not betrayed Christ, then Christ might never have died on the cross and mankind never have been redeemed. Judas was therefore somehow a divine instrument. This priest was bold enough to carry his argument to the very highest councils of the Church and

at last received permission to preach that an All-merciful God might even have forgiveness for a Judas. But lo and behold! Scarcely has our priest had his deepest wish gratified than he defrocks himself and abandons his vows. And Jung asks: is it not likely that the priest was so taken by the figure of Judas for so many years, because subconsciously he identified himself with Judas, and unknown to himself was already preparing long in advance his own forgiveness?

Sweden's inglorious role in the late war against the evils of Nazism is too well known to need detailing here. She earned herself a pretty penny making munitions for the Hitler machine that caused the death of millions of soldiers and millions upon millions of civilians, and the final toll, what with starvation and cold for this winter, is still not in. But if all of us have a dwarf of evil within us, then there's nothing to be done about it: why, even Leonardo da Vinci left off painting the “Last Supper” in order to design machines for war.

Is it too long a stretch to suggest that Par Lagerkvist wrote a novel about the Italian Renaissance for the same reason that a certain Catholic priest reached back for the figure of Judas?

GUY ENDORE.

Together for Freedom

IF HE HOLLERS LET HIM GO, by Chester B. Himes. Doubleday, Doran. \$2.50.

BACK over a century ago—in 1801—an anonymous author, having been moved by the tremendous slave conspiracy engineered by Gabriel in Richmond the year before, published, in Baltimore, a scheme for the compensated emancipation and colonization of the Negro people. He included the latter idea, colonization, because of his own prejudices and because he knew, as he wrote, that “the Negroes if once emancipated, would never rest satisfied with anything short of perfect equality.”

And in September 1865, having just achieved emancipation, 103 Negroes assembled in Charleston, South Carolina and, in a petition as yet unpublished, urged the State authorities—still Bourbon to the core—to grant “perfect equality for all men before the law.”

This aspiration for equality, together with the power to reason from which it is derived and with which it is inextricably interwoven, characterizes humanity. And this drive, which cannot be uprooted and is denied only at fearful peril

to the individual and to his society, is the theme of Chester B. Himes' moving novel. Throughout the book this is the strain that Bob—a young Negro war worker in a Los Angeles shipyard—stresses: “I had to know that Negroes weren't the lowest people on the face of God's green earth. . . . That's all I ever wanted—just to be accepted as a man . . . just a simple Joe walking down an American street.”

Gabriel, and a thousand like him, living in a slave society, chose the most effective path open to them—rebellion. The South Carolina Negroes, having cast off their chains, chose the most effective path open to them—political activity; and for a generation they “stormed the gates of heaven” and bequeathed to us a memory still green.

Bob rejects the secret these ancestors of his possessed, and the secret which the disinherited of the earth must never forget—collective, organized action. At one point his tender, but agonizing, love for Alice almost brings him to it but not quite, and going it alone he smashes his brains and tears his heart bucking the walls of the obscene ghetto into which he and his people have been forced.

God knows these things happen in our America and Himes performs a service as an artist in once again showing us its hideous face. For Himes can write. The intensity of his feeling is clear and his prose carries this emotion across to the reader with an almost unbearable intensity. Structurally, the work is solid and believable—tragically believable, and no reader with a modicum of sensibility will soon forget the characters here presented.

But we say to Bob, and we say to Himes: others suffer, too, and others aspire, too. Come, in the name of humanity, come join hands with us. Add your strength to ours, and so lose your weakness and your terror.

HERBERT APTHEKER.

On Music

MUSIC OF LATIN AMERICA, by Nicolas Slonimsky. Crowell. \$3.50.

MUSIC FOR YOUR HEALTH, by Edward Dolsky, M.D. Ackerman. \$2.

THERE has long been a need for an intelligent and concise treatment of Latin American music. Nicolas Slonimsky's new volume, *Music of Latin America*, does not, unfortunately, meet that need. Slonimsky knows his subject as do few other contemporary musicians; but he evidently could not decide what it was that he wanted to do. *Music of*