

which makes absolute distinctions between war and peace is false." Since the character of the postwar world will be determined largely by the distribution of power among the great nations at the end of the war, he said, we ought to be more concerned with the military and political decisions during the war than in sketching ideal blueprints for the period after the war. History has ratified his appraisal with a vengeance.

Niebuhr's inconsistency, like the reports of Mark Twain's death, has been grossly exaggerated. It is true that after World War I, Niebuhr was still a pacifist of sorts and a socialist of sorts, and that as late as 1936 he referred to the Soviet Union as "the most thrilling social venture in modern history." But that is not the whole story.

In 1927 while he was still a pacifist and seven years before he resigned from the Fellowship of Reconciliation, Niebuhr developed a penetrating critique of pacifism which he elaborated in subsequent writing.

Long before he left the Socialist Party Niebuhr had serious reservations about the efficacy of socialism. In 1932 he said "it is probably romantic to hope, as most socialists do, that all causes of international friction would be abolished" if socialism were established. Four years before his 1936 statement praising Russia he criticized the religious pretensions of Marxism and noted the "abuse of power" and "the growth rather than the diminution of political terrorism in Russia." Under the impact of the Moscow trials, the Soviet attack on Finland and the German-Russian pact, Niebuhr became increasingly critical of the U.S.S.R.

In 1938 he compared Stalin's "dictatorship" to that of Hitler and in 1940 he predicted the possibility of postwar Russian expansion in Europe. He denounced the "subservience" of non-Russian Communist Parties to "Russian diplomacy, in all of its tortuous turnings." "The trouble with all the comrades and semi-comrades is that they have made Com-

munism their Christ and Russia the Kingdom of God." During and since the war he became increasingly critical of Soviet foreign policy. In short, Niebuhr since 1940 has been about as soft on Communism as Winston Churchill.

Why, then, did Niebuhr sometimes cling emotionally to certain causes and shreds of Marxist dogma which he had already disposed of intellectually? According to his own testimony, it took the impact of the Depression and war to force him to accept the deeper logic of his increasingly pragmatic political presuppositions. His personal association with leading socialists here and abroad also delayed his full acceptance of his own insights.

In retrospect, Niebuhr says he was "incredibly stupid in slowly arriving at a position which now seems valid but which required all the tragedies of history to clarify." If this is stupidity, the world could do with more of it.

• • •

Professor Toynbee as Theologian

Christianity Among the Religions of the World by Arnold Toynbee. Charles Scribner's Sons. 116 pp. \$2.75.

By William Clancy

In this as in his last book (*An Historian's View of Religion*), Professor Toynbee plays the role of synthesist: surveying the vast, complex area of the traditional higher religions, he attempts to indicate what the future of these religions, acting together in a civilization that is struggling to be born, will be. And if Professor Toynbee as historian was, in some circles, a cause for controversy, Professor Toynbee as theologian seems likely, in other circles, to be a cause for despair.

Whatever despair is felt, however, will not be over Professor

Toynbee's intentions: they are manifestly good. Nor, for that matter, will it be over his insights: many of them are brilliant. It will be felt, rather, over the theological-philosophical hodge-podge that somehow emerges from the two.

Professor Toynbee's basic insight is a profound one: in modern history a new and terrible phenomenon has arisen, the phenomenon of a totalitarian materialism that takes the form of Nationalism and Communism. The root of this materialism is man's worship of himself. In the face of this, the great religions of the world, forgetting their ancient rancors, must stand together to vindicate their common vision of man.

Few reasonably enlightened theologians would oppose Profes-

sor Toynbee here. Where Professor Toynbee falls from insight to sentimentality is in his specific recommendations.

In his recommendations for Christianity, for example, Professor Toynbee says that "we ought . . . to try to purge our Christianity of the traditional Christian belief that Christianity is unique." He admits that this will be difficult, but it must be done, he says, if we are to purge Christianity of "exclusive-mindedness and intolerance."

The essence of the Christian religion is its conviction of its own uniqueness. The Christ has come. In its efforts, however well-intentioned, to explain that uniqueness away, Professor Toynbee's book seems a curious return to the banalities of an eighteenth century kind of rationalism.

Anatomy of Revolution.
Public Affairs Press. 65 pp. \$1.00.

The brutal facts of Soviet intervention in the Hungarian uprising of 1956, as established in the report of a specially appointed UN committee, are now available in a paperback condensation.

The Rise of Khrushchev
by Myron Rush. Public Affairs Press. 116 pp. \$3.25.

Dr. Rush penetrates the obscurity of Kremlin politics by analyzing the language of Party documents and spokesmen to find significant clues to Khrushchev's acquisition of power.

Theory and History: An Interpretation of Social and Economic Evolution
by Ludwig von Mises. Yale University Press. 384 pp. \$6.00.

Various philosophical and economic systems are explored and related to history in this study, a summation of the author's thought in the area of the social sciences.

New Frontiers of Knowledge.
Public Affairs Press. 125 pp. \$2.75.

In a collection of essays originally prepared as talks for broadcast by the Voice of America, leading writers, scholars and public figures express their views on the outlook for a future world.

Sovereignty: An Inquiry into the Political Good
by Bertrand de Jouvenel. University of Chicago Press. 320 pp. \$4.50.

"The exploratory workings of a questing spirit": thus the author describes the character of his latest book, in which concepts of government and social authority receive the creative scrutiny of a philosopher.

The Story of the American Negro
by Ina Corinne Brown. Friendship Press. 212 pp. \$2.75.

A noted anthropologist contributes a concise history of the American Negro, from the early days of the slave trade to the cultural, social and economic situation of present-day America.

The Ashanti: A Proud People
by Robert A. Lystad. Rutgers University Press. 212 pp. \$5.00.

The complex culture of the Ashanti—one of the peoples of the new state of Ghana—is the subject of this thorough and timely study. The political implications of the new Ashanti independence receive special attention.

Increasing the Wealth of Nations
by Albert Lauterbach. Public Affairs Press. 40 pp. \$1.00.

A survey of the issues involved in the economic advancement of peoples, this pamphlet provides the basis for a knowledgeable approach to a world-wide problem of increasing urgency.

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