

a deaf and raucous Jingoism is a renaissance of the love of the native land The extraordinary thing is that eating up provinces and pulling down princes is the chief boast of people who have Shakespeare, Newton, Darwin and Burke"

Something of his ideas can be seen in his proposal—a joke, to be sure, but a joke about a serious thing—that heraldry should not be an art confined to the aristocracy. "The tobacconist should have a crest, and the cheese-monger a war-cry. The grocer who sold margarine as butter should have felt there was a stain upon the escutcheon of the Higginses." It was this sense that industrialism destroyed for so many people the possibility of such things as honor, loyalty and local patriotism (values the world labeled "medieval") that so infuriated Chesterton. He was not merely fanciful in this feeling, but often remarkably prophetic. One of his novels is about a group of people who declare war on the State in order to stop a highway from obliterating their neighborhood: it was written in 1904.

In short, and despite his lapses and missed targets, Chesterton began and carried forward an argument about the direction of modern development before most people understood there was anything to argue about. On one side, the Socialists cared only for wealth (in one of Shaw's plays, a Cockney ruffian finds eventual happiness in a perfect industrial order run by a benevolent millionaire); on the other, Liberals cared only for Progress and the Empire. Socialists held to a sense of justice growing dimmer as they forgot where it came from (the Gospels), and Lib-

erals deserted the Sermon on the Mount for Social Darwinism and schemes to "improve" the lower classes.

In the midst of all this Chesterton too gave an "impatient shrug of sanity" and put to us a proposition that becomes increasingly difficult to ignore. "There is no basis for democracy," he wrote in *What I Saw in America*, "except in a dogma about the divine origin of man. That is a perfectly simple fact which the modern world will find out more and more to be a fact. Every other basis is a sort of sentimental confusion, full of merely verbal echoes of the older creed. . . . Men will more and more realize that there is no meaning in democracy if there is no meaning in anything; and that there is no meaning in anything if the universe has not a centre of significance and an authority that is the author of our rights."

I think we are about to find out that Chesterton was right. There is, at least, plenty of reason to suspect that people are looking for some principle of justice in public affairs that has heretofore been lacking (lacking everywhere, and not just in the White House). And it is hard to imagine them finding that principle in any of the usual places. They will eventually be forced back to a creed that in most circles brings only the blank stares of incredulity: "It is the theory of equality. It is the pure classic conception that no man must aspire to be anything more than a citizen, and that no man should endure to be anything less."

A Long View from the Left: Memoirs of an American Revolutionary

by Al Richmond

(Houghton Mifflin; 447 pp.; \$8.95)

Memoir of a Revolutionary

by Milovan Djilas

(Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; 402 pp.; \$12.00)

Joseph R. Starobin

Here are two books from two such different worlds as Yugoslavia and the United States, yet each entitling his work the "memoirs of a revolutionary." Milovan Djilas actually leads a revolution, and then experi-

ences a profound disillusionment, becoming a heretic and suffering jail within Tito's Yugoslavia, itself ostracized by Stalin. Al Richmond, by contrast, clung to the American Communist movement fifteen years

after most of his associates left it because they could no longer straddle the dilemma of neither making a revolution nor participating in left-wing reform. Ironically enough, Richmond's comrades now accuse him of having written an "anti-Party book," even though his strictures about Czechoslovakia are hesitant and even though he hardly grapples with the depth of the crisis of communism. Since his book appeared he has been forced out of the movement to which he gave so much. Djilas at least tried to dig into *why* it all happened. It remains to be seen whether Richmond can do so.

Few societies could be so contrasting, of course, as prewar Yugoslavia and the United States of the Depression and then postwar years. A memoir written almost two decades ago, the Djilas book follows on

his *Land Without Justice*, the memorable story of childhood in that quasi-tribal, tempestuous backyard of Serbia known as Montenegro. The account is not easy to follow, with its bewildering succession of names and events from King Alexander's seizure of power in 1929 to March, 1941, when the Yugoslavs were the first in Europe to defy the Axis. Essentially, this is the story of how Communists were forged, especially out of the student milieu at the University of Belgrade. They were a small minority then, terribly divided by the factionalism of a previous decade that had made them the despair of the Communist International. They were torn by the religious-political hatreds among the six different peoples, all South Slavs; they had their own hedonism, their indigenous anarchism, their illusions to overcome.

Yet, as stands out here in such painful detail, the Communists gained ground; no other force had the same capacity for sacrifice; none was so favored by the polarization between the Axis powers and Soviet Russia and by the collapse of Western influence, thanks to the betrayal of the Spanish Republic. There was a no-quarter atmosphere in that non-democratic society. Preparing a revolution took a terrible toll, especially in face of the viciousness of police who compensated for their ineffectiveness by their sadism. The toll was equalled only by the subsequent partisan warfare. Hundreds of radicals tried and failed to be revolutionaries; friends became enemies, and later tried to become friends again. Throughout this self-portrait by an increasingly ruthless commissar (Djilas soon became one of the top four in Tito's high command) there emerges the essential humanity of a man who really wanted to engage in *belles-lettres*. There is a special lyricism in the love affair with Mitra, the poignancy of her presence on the other side of the river from the prison in which Djilas is held, his forgiveness of her frailties which never spelled disloyalty.

Wholly different in its lyricism is Al Richmond's evocation of a child-

hood in Czarist Russia's ghetto—the vignettes of the strong-willed Jewish mother who escaped with the child from Poland to Moscow, then to London and America, rearing the only son as the father disappears a few weeks after they reached Chicago. The same warm, detached, unself-pitying style that makes the early years memorable suffuses the portrait of what American communism in the early thirties was like: the dogged determination to organize the awakening of the helpless unemployed, the migrations through dingy offices amidst slogans translated from the Russian to catalyze steel workers near Baltimore, and that remarkable crowd of hoboes, hedonists, anarchists and worldly-wise sailors who batted down the hatches of unionization on the waterfront. Some of these men, as Richmond recalls with the skill of a muted passion, gave their lives in the hills of Spain, as no one else did. The account has its pathos too: the rallying of young Negro mothers to a Communist meeting in Philadelphia, coming with their children, only to discover that the young Communists were not actually offering "free lunches" but only demanding them from the city government!

As a budding journalist on the Sunday edition of the *Daily Worker*, which hit perhaps 100,000 circulation in its heyday, Richmond jumps at the chance to found the *Peoples World* in San Francisco, perhaps the only Party paper that struck real roots in the constantly upturned soil of California. It was common ground for Harry Bridges's Longshoremen, fresh from their "general strike," and for the Hollywood writers before they became the blacklisted "ten." Fifteen years later Richmond stood trial under the Smith Act, which with dubious constitutionality made advocacy of ideas and political activities a crime. He recreates with skill the idiocies of the legal abracadabra and gains acquittal in the midst of communism's much deeper crisis of 1956-58.

Less successful than these vignettes are Richmond's political judgments. He remonstrates with the

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Old Left for its recoil from the violent rhetoric and sometime violence of the New Left, recalling Big Bill Haywood, of the IWW's trigger-happy days, and how Debs, of a very different socialist tradition, stood ready to defend the McNamara brothers and Haywood, though disagreeing with them. But it remains ironic that the plea for tolerance of the Weathermen and the Black Panthers appears in print as the latter have abandoned their earlier tactics and the former have disappeared. To say that it all happened earlier in the century does not quite explain or justify its happening in the late sixties.

In another essay that interweaves the autobiography Richmond wonders whether the CIO's left wing might not have survived if it could have steered a finer line between compromise of principles and the duty to stand up for them no matter what the cost. What is missing is any analysis of the inner drama of the Communists in the labor movement who were in fact leading a movement of reform (in which they soon had real competitors) but who professed to be making a revolution—a revolution which could not be made even if it had had a genuine rank and file, which it didn't.

Richmond laments, in still a third essay, that the Communists failed to establish a theoretical culture of their own. In a fine passage he recreates

the mood of the pre-Debsian days when native American left-wingers revered German Social Democracy in the same way as they were later to reverence the icons of the Bolshevik Revolution. But to say it all happened before explains little. Nor does it excuse the later performance.

Moreover, once the American Communists decided, as they did at the 1957 convention that put Richmond on the National Committee, to find their own path to Marxism and their own rationale for a truly American Party, there was little follow-through. Richmond stayed on,

important enough to help write Party programs and unencumbered by the great majority of his former friends, even trial-mates, who departed. One wonders why the mandate to find a true theoretical culture was never fulfilled. And one wonders at what late date his own doubts became formulated with respect to the experience of Czechoslovakia. On that score, his comrades have given him no quarter. Richmond held on, it seems, as much out of inertia as conviction, to a movement whose withering he never analyzes, in a country whose dynamic he may never begin to understand.

West Point: America's Power Fraternity

by K. Bruce Galloway
and Robert Bowie Johnson, Jr.

(Simon and Schuster; 448 pp.; \$10.00)

Laurence I. Radway

Disenchantment with the military is a familiar postwar feeling. But the period piece under review is not a distinguished example of that sentiment. Its authors, a young West Point graduate and an urban planner who soldiered in Vietnam, believe that the United States Military Academy is "one of the most powerful and corrupt institutions in America." Since the time of Sylvanus Thayer, they say, it has produced a closed circle of élitists, automatons, warlords, liars and crooks.

Depicted as victims of an educational process that renders them incapable of independent thought, West Pointers are held to subordinate both individual conscience and the public interest to the narrow ambitions of the "power fraternity." In one breath they invoke their famed honor code to impose Draconian sanctions for relatively trivial collegiate offenses, in another they condone sleazy system-beating practices which foreshadow efforts to cover up major misdeeds in Vietnam.

That miserable war itself is said to be but the most recent episode in a graceful history which includes the repression of American Indians, Filipino insurgents and Latin American peasants. As former Lt. Col. Anthony B. Herbert alleges in the book's foreword, "Vietnam was no accident of fate, but rather the goal toward which our Army had been doggedly headed for years."

In discussing this indictment, I must put two cards face up. One is that I regard myself as a camp follower or sympathetic critic of the armed forces; the other is that I have done considerable research on the service academies and was unhappy to find no notice of it in this book.

Much of what Galloway and Johnson criticize in West Point mirrors charges long familiar to other students of the subject. Cadets do get insufficient time to read. Knowledge is too often distributed in bite-sized, spoon-fed doses. Rhodes Scholarship applicants may very well

be prepared for their interviews as carefully as Soviet athletes are prepared for the Olympics. And—a more original and important point—the sweeping absolutism of West Point's code of conduct, by blurring the distinction between minor and major transgressions, may in the end tempt men to give everything the *appearance* of perfection.

Yet I find the book a caricature, not a likeness. As a caricature it suffers from two defects. First, it gives scant recognition to major changes that have taken place at all service academies in recent years. Second, it displays no understanding of the complex functions of these institutions or of the society or polity in which they must operate.

At all academies the Spartan and insular regimes of yesteryear have been relaxed. They have been modified partly to meet changing military requirements, partly to attract and retain student customers, and sometimes simply because the Joneses at one institution try to keep up with the Smiths and Browns at the other two.

So reveille comes a bit later, hazing is less severe, upper classmen get progressively more privileges, the once uniform curriculum has been modified by the introduction of electives, more attention is paid to preparing students for graduate study, departmental structures become increasingly like those at civilian universities, and faculties become more professional (to the extent that professionalism can be measured by training and research activity). The result is that, while the service academies undoubtedly attract a less cosmopolitan clientele than, say, Ivy League or prestigious state universities, these differences are likely to be narrowed rather than widened by the experience young men have at the academies today.

There are limits to the notion that the academies can or should be made to resemble civilian universities. For one thing they operate in four fields simultaneously: liberal arts, engineering, military science and what can only be called character formation. That is why the students' time