

young people. "Yeshu" or "Yesu" is seen as a prophet loyal to the Torah who must be distinguished from the Christology laid upon him by Christian believers. "Paul is without exception characterized as the founder of the Church and the cause of its breaking away from Judaism." Dr. Lapidé does not tell us much about how Israeli textbooks handle the gospel accounts of Jesus' resurrection.

At yet another level of discourse Israeli scholars like Joseph Klausner and David Flusser are also seen to stress Jesus' Jewishness. The latter holds that Jesus' commandment to love one's enemy is new in Judaism but represents an appropriate expansion of the tradition. Abraham Isaac Kook, the first chief rabbi of Palestine, laid out what he took to be the dangers inherent in Jesus' emphasis on the spiritual life. Nevertheless, he pronounced that spirituality authentic and even recommended it as a "necessary protest against any form of Judaism which [is] too one-sidedly dependent on the study of texts...and the practical observance of religious laws." Dr. Lapidé sees the lighted fuse in this statement and aptly observes that "thus far no rabbinical writer in Israel has undertaken to develop Rabbi Kook's ideas...."

The author obviously supports current Israeli approaches to Jesus, especially those that underline Jesus' kinship with Judaism. While he makes no exalted claims for the ability of this Jesus, "newly evaluated and demythologized," to bridge the gap between Jews and Christians, he nevertheless hopes that "new insights...forthcoming from the land of the Bible" will yet produce ecumenical amity. For Dr. Lapidé there is something uniquely promising about the contemporary Hebrew fascination with Jesus. He may be right.

In the interest of honest dialogue, however, one must register some difficulties in this generally splendid work. First, the widespread tendency among Israeli writers, shared by Dr. Lapidé, to blame Paul for the deification of Jesus and the split between Judaism and Christianity must be challenged. According to many exegetes today, the acclamation of Jesus as heavenly Lord happened before Paul's conversion, while the church-synagogue split occurred decades after his death. Second, neither Dr. Lapidé nor

the people he refers to give adequate attention to the resurrection-ascension of Jesus and the descent of the Holy Spirit, teachings altogether characteristic of the earliest *Jewish* Christian community in Jerusalem. Finally, only three scholars cited by Dr. Lapidé (two of them American rabbis) take serious note of the deeply apocalyptic strain in Jesus' teaching. Yet Christian scholarship has struggled with this since the publication of Albert Schweitzer's *Quest for the Historical Jesus* early in

the twentieth century. What if Jesus actually did think of himself as the final messenger of God's imminent, world-transforming kingdom? What if his little band of twelve *was* meant to be the vanguard of a renewed Israel?

The Jewish study of Jesus, particularly that now being carried on in Israel, has much to teach Christians. But it cannot simply leap over the mysteries of the New Testament text, mysteries that continue to perplex even those of us who call that text Scripture.

## In Search of History: A Personal Adventure by Theodore H. White

(Harper & Row; 561 pp.; \$12.95)

### James A. Nuechterlein

*In Search of History* is Theodore White's substitute offering for what would have been the fifth quadrennial version of *The Making of the President*. Some readers, understandably addicted to White's explanations of how the man currently in the White House found his way there, may regret the substitution, but most will find it more than a fair exchange.

The making of the president series revolutionized the reporting of American politics and it will surely remain White's most notable achievement. By now, however, the approach has exhausted its capacity to engage or instruct; after four tours over the same landscape, even so shrewd and perceptive a guide as White would have a difficult time finding new ways to hold our attention. But he still has things to show us, and this memoir, by expanding and altering his field of vision, affords him new opportunities and us new pleasures. In giving us, this time, the making of the author, White tells us almost as much about the nation he has so diligently chronicled as about himself. The one story is more unambiguously a success tale than the other, but they are both affectingly and intelligently told.

White's is indeed a classic American success story. Born in the Jewish ghetto

of Boston in 1915, he grew up in a stimulating but divided family. His father, an impoverished lawyer, tried to teach him atheism and socialism, but upstairs, where his mother's parents lived (it was their house), orthodox Judaism and a desire for respectability prevailed. White's father kept his son up in an all-night vigil for Sacco and Vanzetti in 1927, but his mother, one of the very few people in the neighborhood who voted Republican, taught him to value money, security, and the American Dream. Both sets of influences left their mark.

His father died when White was sixteen, and the family was forced onto home relief. While the Depression necessitated some interruptions along the way, White managed, by dint of high intelligence and prodigious energy, to work his way through Boston Latin School and Harvard. His record at both institutions was brilliant, and on his graduation from Harvard in 1938 he was awarded a traveling fellowship that took him to China, where he hoped to supplement his undergraduate specialization in Chinese history with direct observation.

China fascinated White, and before long he had forsaken his dreams of a career of detached scholarship in favor of reporting—mainly for *Time*—the

turmoil of a nation caught up at once in a war with Japan and in an internal struggle for power between the Nationalists and Communists. White went to China as a radical, and nothing he saw there changed his mind. Initial admiration for Chiang K'ai-shek gave way first to dislike and finally to loathing. The monumental incompetence and corruption of the Kuomintang appalled White (he was particularly horrified by a famine he observed in Honan Province in 1943, where literally millions of people died, many of them through sheer governmental ineptitude) and the Communist alternative appeared increasingly attractive. White came to know and like Zhou Enlai extremely well. With Zhou, White succumbed—as he often would again later—to an inclination to romanticize great men. (Now, he says, he is “as wary of friendship with the great as a reformed drunkard of the taste of alcohol.”) In addition to his friendship with Zhou, White was influenced by the contemptuous hatred for Chiang developed by another of his heroes, General Joseph Stilwell, the head of American forces in China.

often outrageous charges of the contemporary Right, but exoneration goes too far. The young men of the State Department did not simply predict Mao Zedong's victory, as White suggests; some of them clearly welcomed it and wanted America, if not directly to contribute to it, at least to do absolutely nothing to impede it. In fighting McCarthyism, it is necessary to keep the issues straight. Furthermore, it would have been far more difficult and damaging for the U.S. to drop Chiang and switch to Mao (or to strict neutrality) than White seems to understand. White still insists that he was entirely correct in his bitter quarrels with Henry Luce over *Time's* coverage of the Chinese civil war. The reader might well conclude that, in different ways and for different reasons, they were both wrong; one might also conclude that there was available no “good” policy for the U.S. to follow in the China tragedy.

If White's experiences in China confirmed his undergraduate radicalism, his years of free-lance reporting in Europe (1948-53) initiated a gradual shift to the political center. The use of

nudged White, and so many other liberals of the time, from noncommunism over into anticommunism. The invasion itself was a shock; equally significant to White was the failure of any Western Communists to condemn it or even, apparently, to question it. The recognition that communism could allow for no internal “loyal opposition” confirmed White as a cold war liberal. When he returned to America in 1953, he still thought of himself as a man of the Left, but his sense of what constituted the legitimate Left had altered considerably from what it had been five years earlier.

White returned to an America convulsed by McCarthyism, and it is ironic that the now-moderate White found himself under enduring suspicion concerning his radical past. His own brush with the national security monomaniacs was relatively minor (in 1954 the State Department delayed renewal of his passport for a brief period before clearing him of suspicion of subversion), but the incident had its effects. White had stood up to the climate of fear by volunteering to testify at a State Department security hearing on his old friend from China, John Paton Davies; nonetheless, the “prudence” engendered by the investigation into his own background led to a subtle self-censorship that was to last for several years.

“I meant to go on writing of politics in America, and clearance of charges meant that I could continue to do so. But I know that from then on and for years I deliberately ignored the dynamics of foreign policy and defense because too much danger lurked there; and for that shirking I am now ashamed.”

But there was more to the Fifties than McCarthyism—a point often forgotten by students of the decade—and White presents a useful corrective to those revisionist accounts that see the era as a time of horror relieved only by boredom, banality, and empty materialism. Indeed, it is White's current view that “Eisenhower's years in Washington, from 1954 through 1960, were the most pleasant of our time.” America in the middle-to-late Fifties was a prosperous and contented society, and that is not, for any nation, so commonplace a condition as to be casually derogated.

White's own career also prospered,

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***“...one might also conclude that there was...no ‘good’ policy for the U.S. to follow in the China tragedy.”***

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By October, 1944, when he went to Yanan Province to cover the Communists' seventh party congress, White had become an open advocate of the removal of Chiang and the creation of an alliance between the United States and a new Chinese Communist regime. Even today, when his politics have swung some distance away from the Far Left, White writes of that time in a romantic, even sentimental, vein. (His account of Saturday night at the Communist dance hall is bathed in an uncharacteristic hokey nostalgia.) One admires White's refusal to edit his memories to suit political fashion, but his faithfulness to his youthful idealism occasionally results in dubious judgments.

White properly defends himself and the young American foreign service officers in China at the time against the

American power in Asia had seemed to White misdirected and inept; now, in a Europe rebuilding itself under the Marshall Plan, White saw that power being exercised in positive and intelligent ways. The rebirth of Europe under democratic capitalism taught White that liberalism was not, after all, moribund, and that liberal values flourished better in the “trading” world of market economies than in any variety of the “Pharaonic” worlds of centralized planning and allocation. In the course of his political education White had broken not only with his Yanan ideas but with those of British Labor's Fabian socialism, with which, when he first reached Europe, he had instinctively indentified.

Perhaps the greatest single influence on White's thinking in this period was the Korean War. It was Korea that

though not by any means in an uninterrupted upward curve. After a brief period with Max Ascoli at *The Reporter* in 1954-55 he moved to *Collier's*. (He also served a short stint at *The New Republic* under Henry Wallace just after the war, and has some telling comments on the "School of Liberal Journalism.") When *Collier's* folded just before Christmas 1956, White struck out on his own. He wrote two best-selling novels, one of them a rendering of the fall of *Collier's*, and from that experience developed the idea of writing "History as Story," viewing politics within the dramatic context of men seeking and using power. The campaign of 1960 provided a splendid opportunity: John Kennedy made a plausible hero, Richard Nixon a more-than-plausible villain; and with these materials White's skillful feel for narrative and his exhaustive knowledge of American politics produced the overwhelming success of *The Making of the President—1960*.

Oddly enough, the section on the Kennedy years is the weakest part of the present book. White, as he concedes, was then and is now entirely caught up in the Kennedy mystique. He tries hard to maintain analytical distance, but this is essentially the Kennedy of Camelot. John Kennedy was doubtless an attractive man, but it does his memory no real service to exaggerate his accomplishments and discount his failures. White says it himself: "I still have difficulty seeing John F. Kennedy clear." Myth-making aside, White offers little new on the 1960 campaign. He belabors the religious issue and gets into some uncharacteristically overblown analysis that turns the Nixon-Kennedy race into a contest matching America's Protestant culture against its Catholic culture. All in all, it seems clear that White covered the Kennedy ground better the first time around.

It would be both uncharitable and unfair, however, to end this review on that note. *In Search of History*, taken whole, is a fine, instructive, and often touching book of memories. White is perhaps the premier political journalist of our time and this book shows why. His strength is not simply that he observes and thinks and writes better than most people. He is also a decent man. His incapacity for cynicism is a

rare and valuable quality in our modern media culture. White knows that he sometimes romanticizes individual men, and he worries that he is also too attached to his country. He refers to his unabashed patriotism as "my worst weakness as a professional journalist." In some ways, perhaps so. Yet instinctively one prefers a man who cares too much to one who maintains his professional objectivity at the cost of human sympathy and affection. White's romanticism occasionally leads him astray, but he is certainly no fool, and more often than not he puts his enthusiasms to good uses.

## Leon Trotsky by Irving Howe

(The Viking Press; 214 pp.; \$10.00)

### George McKenna

It is not entirely clear why Irving Howe has written this book. So much has been written on Leon Trotsky, notably the massive three-volume work by Isaac Deutscher, that one wonders whether this slim volume can say much more. What this really is, Howe says in his preface, is not a biography but a "political essay with a narrative foundation." An essay, however, is organized around a central thesis, and this book has none. The organization is roughly chronological rather than thematic, and it reaches no overall conclusions.

Perhaps the book has a hidden format. Howe admits that he came under the spell of Trotskyism in his youth, and, though he still remains a socialist, he finds himself farther and farther separated from Trotsky's ideas. Nevertheless, he considers Trotsky "a figure of heroic magnitude" and "one of the titans of our century." What this book seems to be is a kind of dialogue between Howe and himself, or perhaps between the youthful and mature Howe. The first Howe labors to build an equestrian statue while the second, no less diligently, chips away at it till nothing remains but a pile of rubble. The reader comes to the end of the book not with a full understanding of the positive and negative features of

We look forward, then, to the second book he promises us at the close of this one. As of 1963, where *In Search of History* leaves off, White could still describe himself as a standard American liberal. He leaves enough hints in his reflective epilogue to make us suspect that, while the Theodore White of today may still be a liberal, he is a considerably more ambiguous, even baffled one. After the storms and discontents of the Sixties and Seventies we are all a little bewildered in our politics. As he continues to make sense of his own political wanderings, White should help the rest of us as well.

Trotsky but with a sense of bewilderment: *Why* should we consider Trotsky "one of the titans of our century"?

Take Trotsky's "sensitivity," which Howe believes sets Trotsky apart from all "vulgar Marxists." He notes that Trotsky was steeped in the classics of Russian literature and could interpret texts imaginatively and intelligently. Yes, says Howe, but he was also a rigid and doctrinaire Marxist-Leninist who was incapable of talking about a book without bringing his "petrified ideology" into the discussion.

And what of Trotsky's political "sensitivity"? Of all Trotsky's political observations the one that is perhaps best remembered is his prediction that Lenin's élitist methods would eventually lead to one-man dictatorship. This was indeed "striking," Howe says, but perhaps not so prescient. Stalinism was a complex phenomenon, and any attempt to account for it "through the working of an exclusive cause, such as the Leninist doctrine of organization, is likely to prove superficial." Well, what *was* profound in Trotsky's political writings? Certainly not his hopes for proletarian revolutions in Spain and France during the 1930's. Certainly not his insistence that the Second World War was simply another "imperialist war" in which the