

B O O K R E V I E W S

The Pacifist Conscience Edited by Peter Mayer (Pelican, 447 pp. 9s6d)

This anthology of short essays and extracts from Eastern and Western writing on Pacifism since Classical times covers most aspects of non-violence and spreads beyond the limits of Pacifism as such. Camus, Tolstoy, Dolci, Freud and Martin Luther King are among the forty-odd authors quoted, while Mahatma Gandhi's Statement at his trial in 1922 presents non-violence in its purest essentials. Simone Weil's "The Iliad, a Poem of Force" is a fascinating study of the whole concept of power.

Everyman's Concise Encyclopaedia of Russia By S.V. Utechin (J.M. Dent, 1961, 30s.)

This is a book which contains, in a condensed and easily accessible form, the basic information needed alike by the expert and by the layman with a general interest in Russia. Articles cover the political and economic state since 1917, and also the Russia of the Tsars. A balance which is neatly demonstrated in the illustrations where a hydro electric station jostles a vigorous 18C cartoon of an Old Believer resisting Peter the Great's attempts to shave his beard. Statistics were accurate in 1961 - the date of publication - when, of course, Khrushchev was still in power. But, although not completely up-to-date, this is a valuable addition to any but the most specialised library of Russian works.

The Crisis of India By Ronald Segal (Penguin, 5s. )

Ronald Segal's "The Crisis of India" is a comprehensive and perceptive work of vivisection, revealing in sharp and clinical detail the diseased anatomy of a state which only two decades ago was acclaimed by the West as the new light of Asia.

Every word in the book rings true, not only retrospectively but prophetically - what the author wrote in 1964 is merely underlined by the events of 1967 - and it is indisputedly a brilliant piece of documentation, immensely readable and invaluable for an understanding of India's tragic situation.

But for some reason, (disillusionment, perhaps) the book has one failing. It lacks humanity, and reveals a Swiftian disgust and contempt, more explicit than stated, for every aspect of Indian life, beginning quite logic ally with Hindu philosophy itself. One can hardly blame Mr. Segal. Indeed one must admire him for refusing to overstate his case. Nevertheless there are other sides to the Indian picture which he has chosen to ignore. Tolerance and loving kindness, for instance, and above all, generosity on a scale seldom encountered in Western countries. The women tend to be more formidable and less downtrodden than he supposes, and it should be remembered that India can show more women in high places than are discernible today in Britain, America, Russia or China.

Some of the author's theories, though interesting, are a bit off the cuff. There is one that equates a lack of discipline in childhood with the average Indian's lack of civic responsibility in matters of sanitation which seems to founder on the fact that the average awful American child still grows up with a healthy respect for hygiene.

However, these are minor and possibly frivolous criticisms. Mr. Segal may regard Indians without affection, but his diagnosis of their country's malaise appears to be alarmingly accurate. It is hard to believe that India, paralysed by irresponsibility and incapacitated by overpopulation, can survive much longer under the present system. But when the dissolution comes, who will be the heir? and who is going to pay for the funeral?

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Southern Africa In Transition (Published for the American Society of African Culture by Frederick Praeger \$ 2.95. 427 pp.)

This is a collection of papers first presented at the Fourth International Conference of the American Society of African Culture held at Howard University, Washington in 1963, edited by John A. Davis and James K. Baker. Though there has been little change in the basic Southern African situation during the three years that elapsed between presentation and publication, some developments have taken place that necessitated revision and editorial postscripts in order to bring the papers up to day and this has been skilfully done.

There is a section dealing with each of the countries which together make up Southern Africa as well as sections which discuss in more general terms the problems of struggle, the role of international action, U.S. policy and the role of foreign private capital. Each section is followed by discussion and criticism by the participants of the conference.

One is made aware of the vast social and political problems that face both the independent territories as well as those struggling for independence. Though there may be room for disagreement in some of the conclusions drawn by the distinguished contributors, this book provides a good factual background as well as giving some idea of the thinking of those most concerned in these problems.

Peace in Vietnam (A Report Prepared for the American Friends Service Committee) (Published by Hill and Wang, New York. 95¢ 112 pp.)

The American Friends Service Committee, a Quaker organisation, argues that the United States by ignoring the growth of nationalism and the need for socio-economic change in South East Asia is betraying its own history and ideals. It traces American involvement following the French departure after the Geneva Conference through the support given to Diem to direct military intervention. It then examines the United States' failure to respond to signs of negotiation from Hanoi but, finding both sides increasing in flexibility, suggests the possibility of a Geneva-type conference leading to a settlement.

The Naked Society by Vance Packard (Penguin Books, 5s. 322pp)

A warning, quite up to the standard of Mr. Packard's earlier works. Anyone chilled by Chief Justice Douglas' recent opinion (as reported in the Times) should go here for further data on the superficially plural yet in fact interlocking systems which have become sovereign in the United States in the last twenty years, and whose effect has been to identify and when the individual cannot be regimented to crush the "different". It is encouraging that the book is available in a popular edition here, and one hopes this country will avoid the abuses erected into which are now an integral part of the power structure of the United States.

Rush to Judgement By Mark Lane (Bodley Head, 42s. 478 pp)

This book, on the Kennedy assassination and its sequel, builds up an impressive case against the Warren Commission but is less convincing when he seeks to establish the innocence of Oswald. This enthralling book shows the dangers that arise when the national interest conflicts with an unbiased search for the truth. The real problem was not that the Warren Commission was consciously dishonest but simply that it had the preconceived idea of what its enquiries would bring to light. The book has an introduction by Professor Trevor-Roper.

Freedom at Stake By Peter Archer, M.P. and Lord Reay (Bodley Head, 12s 6d 111 pp)

A Members of Amnesty's British Executive and a member of the Parliamentary Committee of Amnesty International have combined to examine human rights in theory and practice in a number of countries with widely differing political systems. As well as Great Britain, the authors give detailed attention to the United States, Russia, Spain, Portugal, Ghana and South Africa.

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Freedom at Stake Cont.

The authors illustrate their thesis with cases taken from Amnesty files and Groups with prisoners in these countries are particularly recommended to read this book.

Paraguay By George Pendle (O.U.P. under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1967. 2ls. 96pp)

This is an excellent introduction to Paraguay by a writer who in his History of Latin America (Penguin 3s 6d) proved his ability to cover a large subject in a restricted space. For much of its history, landlocked with its neighbours, the deliberate policy of its rulers, and its unique blending of Spanish and Guarani culture. This volume traces the history of Paraguay, explaining the roots of the present day dictatorship, and in a survey of modern Paraguay an examination of the economy is skilfully linked with a description of the life of the people. There are some useful tables illustrating Paraguay's economic development, and the extent to which it is becoming integrated in the economic progress of Latin America as a whole.

The Struggle for a Birthright By Mary Benson, (Penguin African Library 8s 6d 314pp)

For many the obstacle to active sympathy for African nationalism in South Africa lies in the violent policies advocated by the two nationalist movements. STRUGGLE FOR A BIRTHRIGHT explains why, as successive requests for the slightest political progress were blocked by the Government, a time came in 1961 when the only remaining means appeared to be violent revolution. This was after 50 years of passive resistance. Beginning with the foundation of the African National Congress in 1912, Mary Benson describes the growth of the party and, mirrored in this, the growth of African political awareness. Many of the present ANC leaders are her friends; almost all are now in prison or exile. She tells the story with understanding, deep compassion and a wealth of first-hand source material from interviews and from the hitherto unpublished documents of the Congress - many of which exist now only in the archives of the Special Branch.

Law in Eastern Europe No. 3. The Federal Law of the Soviet Union and the Union Republics (edited by Z. Szirmai; introduction by J.M. van Bemmelen, translation by F.J. Feldbrugge) 1959. Sythoff, Leyden 122 pp. 23.75 guilders (£2 5s 0d)

No. 7. Miscellanea (various authors; edited by Z. Szirmai) 1963 . 458 pp. 63.75 guilders (£5 8s 0d.)

No. 9. Soviet Criminal Law (by F.J. Feldbrugge; edited by Z. Szirmai) 1964. 32.50 guilders (£3 5s 0d).

Well translated documentation and objective commentary on Soviet Law are rare. These volumes reach a high standard in both respects. No. 3 in the series gives the original Russian text and an English translation of the group of laws concerned with criminal law and procedure which were enacted in 1958 and apply to the whole of the Soviet Union. These laws cover:- Basic principles of Criminal Legislation; Criminal Responsibility for Crimes against the State; Criminal Responsibility for Military Crimes; Basic Principles of Criminal Procedure. Those making use of this volume in the practical work of Amnesty will note the importance of Section 3 of the Basic Principles of Criminal Legislation which marks a significant change from earlier practice in requiring that offences should be "forbidden by law" and not merely be "similar" to those in part prohibited. They will also be interested in the Law on Criminal Responsibility for Crimes against the State with its similar tendency to require more specific

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criminal acts, rather than, as formerly, to bring in vague "counter-revolutionary activity". On the other hand crimes against the State in the Soviet Union still contain some elastic concepts, such as "agitation or propaganda, conducted with the intention of undermining or weakening the Soviet power, or of committing certain especially dangerous crimes against the State, spreading slanderous fabrications, with the same intent, defaming the Soviet political and social system, as well as distribution, preparation or preservation with the same intent, of writings of such content" (Section 6 of the Law on Criminal Responsibility for Crimes against the State - punishment; - six months to seven years, in certain cases ten years). The existence of such laws makes all the more important the fairness of the procedure in the criminal process. Some impression of criminal procedure in the Soviet Union will be obtained from the translation of the Basic Principles of Criminal Procedure. It will be evident that one of the crucial points is the custody of the accused before trial, and in this connection the vital role of the Procuracy. The limits of custody without the consent of the Procuracy are now fairly narrowly defined, although the periods of detention with such consent may extend, where consent is given, by the Procurator General of the Soviet Union for as much as nine months (Section 34 of the Law on Criminal Responsibility).

No. 9 in the Law in Eastern Europe Series is a detailed treatise on the general principles of Soviet Criminal law. Most of the book is for the expert in comparative criminal law, but the general reader would be interested in the chapters on the aims and kinds of punishment, some of the latter being relatively unfamiliar at least in modern times in most Western countries - e.g. exile and banishment. No. 7 in the Series consists of a series of specialized articles covering aspects in civil and criminal law in not only the Soviet Union but also other East European countries. The most relevant for anyone concerned with personal freedom is that on "People's Justice: the Anti-Parasite Law, People's Volunteer Militia and Comrades' Courts" by Glenn G. Morgan. These manifestations of popular justice may be regarded as a first step in the democratization and deformalization of the law; the author thinks however that they have been introduced for practical rather than ideological reasons to try to control people who, while avoiding the more normal courts, are not working with the requisite enthusiasm for the Soviet regime. One might conclude that the reasons for their introduction have in fact been mixed. They have a limited jurisdiction but their effect on the life of the ordinary citizen should not be overlooked. Another important contribution affecting civil liberties is that by George Ginsburgs and Armins Ruzis on the Criminal Law and the Protection of State Secrets. The law in this field which was formerly very vague, permitting its application to almost any information, has since 1955 at least been given a more coherent and rational shape.

The three volumes here reviewed are not easy reading but they are scholarly and detached and certainly the best guide in English to the aspects of Soviet law with which they deal.

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