

supposed amiability to be the principal requisite in thinking; accuracy and effectiveness, I should have said, are more important. Mr. Krutch's essays are no doubt amiable and urbane, but they are neither detached nor fair. Is it, for example, precisely fair, in view of the diversified achievements of Russia in science and all the arts, to say that the tendency of Communism is "to reduce all intellectual life to a state where it is concerned with nothing except essentially theological debates concerning the meaning of dialectical materialism"? Is it detached to grasp at every bit of slander about the Soviet Union and to disregard the steady progress that is

being made there in every field of activity?

Not all the intellectuals who read his articles will, I believe, accept his thesis that he has all the virtues on his side and that on the Communist side are only dogmatism, harshness and intolerance. Mr. Krutch has his own variety of dogmatism and intolerance and even, beneath the mask of urbanity, his own brand of harshness too. Communists may be dogmatic, harsh, and intolerant; perhaps they have need to be; but that is not all they are. If intellectuals are looking for courage and honesty and impatience with cant and intolerance of injustice, they will not find them on Mr. Krutch's side. GRANVILLE HICKS.

Black and White, Unite and Fight

BABOUK, by Guy Endore. The Vanguard Press, Inc. \$2.

B*BABOUK* is the story of an African youth who, sold into slavery in San Domingo, developed in his middle age into an insurrectionist. Guy Endore has done better than anyone else to date with such a subject, but he could have done much better with a little more preparation of his material and a little more care in the development of his story.

In making an African youth the chief character of a novel dealing with the slave trade, and slavery in San Domingo, Mr. Endore cultivates virgin soil. Other writers will use the same general theme but they will all have to credit the author of *Babouk* with breaking the ground. Even one who is no more than casually acquainted with the history of African peoples knows that Endore's Africans are authentic. Evidence of Endore's wide historical research are apparent throughout the book: apparent in unfolding of character, in tribal and place names, in ethnological references, and so on. Not only are his Africans, with their numerous cultures, authentic; his descriptions of the capture and transportation of Africans for the slave trade is historically accurate. *Babouk* is an excellent document for the student of African lore, of the slave trade, and of slavery.

Endore has no illusions about the reasons why slavery arose when it did in this part of the world. In most instances he is as sound economically as he is historically. The thread of dramatic narrative that holds the book together is a good story, splendidly told. *Babouk*, with others from his and neighboring tribes, is sold into slavery. He reaches the coast and the compound carrying a heavy but valueless stone—valueless except for exhausting the body and breaking the spirit of revolt.

In the compound the slaves are "tasted"—that is, each is licked under the chin by the official "nigger taster"—to determine the state of their health. They think they are being tasted to find out which of them will make the best dish for the white captors. *Babouk* is separated from his fellow-villagers, branded, chained with another slave of the same size, and driven aboard the ship. There follows

a chain of dramatic incidents, admirably held together by a narrative that loses nothing by the author's frequent stepping out of character to chat amiably or satirically with the reader. There are the horrors of the middle passage and of the plantation.

But Endore confuses his reader toward the end. Whether this weakness in *Babouk* derives from the author's own confusion I do not know, but I suspect it does. The author does not spare the white slaveholders. He sees clearly through their tricks of doping the blacks with religious hashish. He is not led into sentimental moralizing about Negro "superstitions," for he realizes that all primitive peoples, as well as most "civilized" peoples, are ridden by superstitions springing from their historical past and their environment. Better, he knows that superstition under the guise of "civilized" religion is none the less superstition; he knows that this superstition both in pre-literate and "civilized" society is manipulated by those in power as an instrument to maintain its power. He knows that the basis of "race prejudice," with its byproducts of torture, murder, and oppression in general, is economic. We know that he knows all this by the quotation with which he heads his chapters; for instance, Chapter 19: "Divide and rule," say the imperialists; 'Black and white, unite and fight,' modern rallying cry for world social justice."

How does Endore confuse his readers? Immediately following these excellent passages, he lifts his voice in angry protest against the world-wide oppression of blacks by whites, making it clearly a matter as between blacks and whites. In other words, he gives the impression that he is dealing with "race" forces instead of economic forces. He does this by going into a polemic against whites in general: by presenting the ghastly picture, and justifying it, of the blacks rising en masse, in their newly organized strength, against the whites in general. Here, he does not touch upon the fact that whites and blacks under capitalism, under imperialism, are divided into classes. He now overlooks the Negro oppressors of Negroes (which he pointed out earlier), and white oppressors of whites, and that the interests of all workers, white and black,

have nothing fundamentally to do with "racial" similarity or dissimilarity.

"But it is the white man's drum, backed by lash and chain, by gun and cannon, that has girdled the globe. And that is why the Negro jumps with mortal fright when he hears it. But beware, whites! Beware!" Does that not sound like the excuse for and warning of a "race riot," when we know that Endore means it to be nothing of the kind? It may be that the author is telling the white man that if he continues to bedevil and oppress the Negro, black men may organize to fight back. Perhaps he is implying that the way to avoid a "race war" is to organize the whites and blacks together against their common enemy. What he means is not clear; what he says is too clear, and it is not true. He might have added a word about why the white man's might has encircled the globe; and he might have told us why it happened to be the African that was enslaved at that particular time.

Mr. Endore cries to the blacks and whites to unite and fight. Good! Then he suddenly leads them into a situation from which there can come nothing but "race war"; leaves the blacks and the whites glaring murderously at each other across an unsubstantial color line—all the blacks glaring murderously at all the whites.

The confusion that arises from this treatment of the relation of whites and blacks under imperialism has not spoiled the book as a fine and readable novel. I do not wish to leave

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the impression that it has. It is the best book of its kind yet done. Perhaps Mr. Endore himself will write a novel showing what Leninism has done toward uniting the black work-

ers and the white workers in such a way as to make "race war" impossible while bringing the proletarian revolution nearer.

EUGENE GORDON.

is to be a friend of mankind, to be a proclaimer of liberty and peace."

This love for "proclamation" without sacrifice and without understanding is characteristic of Lewisohn's middle-class position. His solution of the Jewish problem is a mere affirmation of Jewishness, of one's descent from the sages of old, of one's mission as passive bearer of a mysterious secret from God.

As to his casting in his lot with his own people—I don't know but what I like that; it's natural and thoroughly honorable to him. If all Jews did it, I for one would respect them the more. I don't think that Jews who try not to be Jews do themselves any good in the eyes of intelligent people. There's something wrong with a man who betrays his own kind. . . . I didn't always take that point of view, but I've changed my mind about a good many things during the years since the war. . . .

How hollow all this is, is most clearly revealed when Lewisohn deals with the present German situation. He condemns German Jewry for their failure to shout "Jew" loudly enough, as though that has anything to do with Hitler's Fascism. He then turns against Germany for having lapsed from intelligence into barbarity. But he offers no explanation of this lapse.

Such statements show that Lewisohn, like all middle-class people, has not "changed his mind during the years since the war." He, they, learned nothing from that experience. They still repeat, as they did in the years prior to 1914 that they do not *want* war; they do not *want* anti-Semitism. But they propose no solutions and they refuse to accept those solutions which are proposed. Lewisohn retreats into middle-class mysticism, middle-class religion.

The force that the world needs is a binding, not a separating force, not foolish theory but converting power, not Karl Marx, but Moses and Jesus. . . . Our economic ills are the direct result of moral delinquency and stupid mismanagement. . . . The ultimate cause of social change remains in individual conversions toward specific moral choices and their laws

That Lewisohn should write thus in the face of present revelations about munition manufacturers, big industrialists, and their affiliates in government, and their propaganda drives, certainly does not speak well for his "changed mind." More than that, it contradicts his own statements about psychology. But after all, what is a contradiction more or less to Lewisohn?

Lewisohn speaks of psychology as though it were something more than a description of mental processes. He lauds it as a thing in itself, separate and apart from its originating forces and the channels of its action. Psychology is divine. Freud is God. Here, Lewisohn knows he is on safe ground with his middle-class readers. "Psychology" is a new word that has intrigued them but, being middle-class, they have never explored its actualities. It gave them excuses for inaction and further grounds for their mysticism: "there are depths which shall forever remain dark and concealed, locked up within us." Thus, swami-like,

The Not-So-Strange Case of Ludwig Lewisohn

THE PERMANENT HORIZON, by Ludwig Lewisohn. Harper and Brothers. \$2.50.

SINCE the publication of *Upstream*, twelve years ago, Ludwig Lewisohn has assumed and been accorded the position of seer in Israel. His following was largely drawn from the middle-class, the comfortable bourgeoisie, with whom he took his stand about a year ago in Scribner's magazine and which stand he now reaffirms with embellishments in this collection of articles. Not infrequently however his books could be seen in the hands of stenographers or heard discussed by society leaders, at weekly literary soirees. Ludwig Lewisohn was supposed to communicate something deep and meaningful; he was regarded as a challenging writer, an authority, above all "a man who made you think." That his readers had to be *made* to think was indicative both of the comfortable lives they were leading and of the energy they were willing to release for thinking. Readers who have to be *made* to think, generally read for amusement. However that may be, Lewisohn was read and widely discussed. At these discussions, one soon arrived at the conclusion that while Lewisohn might be challenging and "a man who made you think," it was by no means certain what he was challenging or what he was making you think about. There was a suspicion in some quarters that Lewisohn was, not unlike his rabbinical commentators,—mere sound and fury. His popularity, skeptics traced, to three sources: one, the undisguised personal references in his writings which piqued the gossip mongers at a time when literary confessionals was still a novelty; two, the authoritarian, ex-cathedra tone he assumed; three, exaggerated and well-timed ballyhoo.

That Lewisohn was no revolutionary spirit was quite clear from the beginning. Today he admits that he is "too ignorant of economic technics" to enter into any discussion about the New Deal. That however, has not hindered him from making vast moral judgments condemning Marxism, supporting bourgeois ownership of property, and lauding President Roosevelt's solution of our economic difficulties.

But Lewisohn was no revolutionary for another and more definite reason. He had no sense of fellowship, of comradeship. He hated the mob whom he identified with any one who disagreed with him. It was Lewisohn against the Christians; Lewisohn against all critics; Lewisohn against the world. He never ceased to proclaim his individuality, his freedom, all the while identifying himself with the middle-class, of all mobs, the dullest and most barren.

Therefore, Lewisohn is not to be dealt with

as a writer trying to grapple with fundamental problems. His prophetic manner reduces itself to a piece of rhetoric. His role is less than reformer. He speaks for a group whose desires and aims are so amorphous and confused that they do not resent his own confusion. He speaks in the name of a middle-class Jewry, or in those few cases when he fakes up general themes (I am not now discussing his literary criticism, though a study of that too would bear me out), for a middle-class in general, who alternate cringing to the rich, with mock heroics. Lewisohn plays to those heroics. Like a ham actor bellowing the lines of Hamlet, his mistakes noise for understanding. For instance, in his statements on the Jewish situation, a subject dear to Lewisohn, he has shouted loudly and at great length that he was a Jew, while in his soul of souls he hated the fact that he had been born Jew. Through several volumes he has tried to convince himself that he was a Jew and "glad of it," a feat that middle-class Jewry makes its life long goal. Lewisohn's Jewish return was mock heroics. He was going to be a martyr, albeit a comfortable one.

"So you're going back to the Jews. What a quaint thing to do."

"They think that any emphasizing of the Jewish question might drag them in and shake their position."

"Well, Elizabeth, don't you agree with them?"

"Of course not. I'm my father's daughter. . . . When I was a kid, long before I knew what suffrage was, I thought I'd like to be a missionary in China and maybe be martyred for the sake of the Lord. . . ."

"Do go on, Elizabeth, do!"

Romanticism — and faked. Certainly not scientific sociology which is the only way to treat the Jewish question. Elizabeth's conversation is cut off but Lewisohn goes on, in several other books addressed to the Jews and in some others which touch upon them indirectly as members of western civilization. Lewisohn sets himself up as solver of the eternal riddle, the problem of the Jew. He would unravel that "mystery that puzzled the ages," that "sneer that crossed the face of the eternal." First one had to make a tour of the chief centers of Jewry. Lewisohn did this and returned a convinced Zionist. He glowed over the noble Cholutzim, those pioneers who left books and pens to dig in barren Palestine. But he spoke from an establishment in Paris. Like other middle-class people, Lewisohn did not choose to be discommoded by his beliefs. The "parlor Zionist," justifies himself:

"Not every one need go upon so long a pilgrimage. But everyone can come home to himself and to Israel, and learn that to be a Jew