

emerges very clearly. Indeed as a German he assumes, probably rightly where his compatriots are concerned, that there will be generations of students poring over the texts of those German emigres who expressed views about their country during the early '40's.

British readers will recognize that their more extravagant ideas of 're-educating' Germany were only dreams. The change that has come about in German attitudes is due, as Professor Leibholz foresaw, to the influence of German intellectual leaders, not to that of Allied Military Government. In the dedication to this volume the author implies that the compatriot who has had the most effect upon the rising generations is one who is not able to speak for himself. Dr Leibholz's essay on Die-

trich Bonhoeffer, written for the British compilation *The Cost of Discipleship* (1948), is much the most important part of this volume. So great and sincere is the Professor's regard for the martyred pastor that he will surely not mind it being said that his own thoughts take wings through the verses of Bonhoeffer's last poems, so aptly quoted. The simple, prophetic beauty of these poems leaves the professor's worthy style and logical reasoning grounded on the earth while they soar up to heaven.

This is perhaps the moral for every reviewer: what he writes is ephemeral, what he quotes may be eternal.

Peter Benenson

MISSISSIPPI: THE CLOSED SOCIETY by James Silver. *Gollancz, 30s.*

A PROFILE OF THE NEGRO AMERICAN by Thomas E. Pettigrew. *D. Van Nostrand Co., paperbound 21s; clothbound, 46s 6d.*

The murder of a young mother of five, a tragic aftermath to the otherwise inspiring protest march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, added one more shocking event to the growing list which already included the shooting of a heroic Baltimore postman and the triple-lynching of civil rights workers in Philadelphia, Mississippi. Well might the observer in Britain look with horror upon the mounting toll of death – not to mention the property destroyed through bombings and other terrorist acts – and wonder how a supposedly civilized nation could endure, much less produce such displays of primitive hatred and malevolence. It is probably not enough to say that the dreadful situation is steadily improving, that the very demonstrations which have evoked these obscene reprisals are themselves evidence of this improvement and assurance of ultimate victory in the struggle to achieve equal rights for the Negro in America. The challenging question remains, and it is well that the shocked and disgusted world outside keeps forcing that question to the fore.

Recent months have shown however, that the question is not one that challenges America alone.

I have read the public notice boards in the vicinity of Notting Hill and I, too, have been shocked. The offerings of lodgings which include blunt warnings like 'Europeans only' or 'Sorry, no Africans or Asiatics' are a troubling sign that the lesson of the American tragedy has not been learned. It ought to be recognized that the process of ghetto-building which such exclusions necessarily reflect carries a double threat to the stability and security of a social order which has prided itself upon its sense of fairness and decency: first it creates increasingly unbearable tensions while the ghetto walls are being raised and, second, it promises even greater tensions and disturbances when these walls come tumbling down, as they certainly must in the course of time. In a sense, we Americans are suffering through the latter stage now; the troubles we are having (in the urban centres of the North to an only slightly lesser degree than in the rural outposts of the South) are but a grim foreshadowing of the price Britain may yet have to pay in the future if the exclusionists succeed today.

The scandals of Smethwick and Leyton have relevance here too, of course. However great or

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small a factor racial prejudice may actually have been in these campaigns, there is no denying that it played some part in their outcome. Nor is it the fact that there were lunatic fringe candidates or parties openly committed to the principle of racial exclusion that deserves most attention in this context. Far more dangerous was the calculated reluctance on the part of more 'responsible' politicians to repudiate extremism in the hope of benefitting from its vicious backwash. The American outsider must be forgiven if, drawing upon his own bitter experiences, he seems to detect a whiff of racism in such a stance of olympian detachment from the whole nasty business.

It is good, therefore, that both these books have now been made available in this country. Professor Silver provides not only a whiff but the full and brutal stench of racism-in-action in his chilling eye-witness account of the brief Oxford insurrection of 1962 when James Meredith with the help of the armed forces of the federal power 'broke the colour bar' at the University of Mississippi. The 'closed society' and the forces which brought it into being or are now united in the desperate effort to maintain it are subjected to the critical analysis of a man who is both a professional historian and a representative of the 'new South' which is striving against all but insurmountable odds to make itself heard. If at times the impression is taken that Silver, the controversialist contributor to newspaper correspondence columns, has won the continuing struggle against Silver, the objective scholar, the gain in terms of the fervour of commitment more than balances whatever loss this may represent. One catches something of the atmosphere of excitement, the strain of cruel anxieties, and the heartbreak of despair as the author sees colleagues, neighbours, friends (and possibly, if one reads between the lines, family as well) failing the great test and missing the opportunity to free themselves from the shackles of a thoroughly shameful past. Occasional faults or inadequacies of literary style are minor failings indeed when measured against the insights provided into the crisis in Mississippi and, by extension, in the whole of the 'Deep South.'

The concluding section, 'Some Letters from the Closed Society', is more of a disappointment in that the letters are those written at the time by Professor Silver himself. Their contents repeat material or observations already presented in earlier chapters – or provide material that could just as easily have been included there. It would have been far better had this section consisted instead of a selection from the letters *received* by him and the others like him who did try to stay the flood of unreason and rebellion. The few such letters and comments he does introduce from time to time have a thoroughly shattering impact because they, more than anything Silver himself could possibly say, strip bare the true nature of his 'closed society' with all its brutality and inhumanity.

Professor Pettigrew's contribution is of a quite different order. He has gathered together the findings of a great number of individual research efforts bearing upon the myths and stereotypes which have grown up about the American Negro. Taken in total, these findings effectively disprove much of what 'common sense knowledge' would have to tell about such things as the Negro's limited intelligence, his predisposition to criminality and other forms of deviant behaviour, and the hazard to health standards he would present to his white neighbours if he were not kept 'in his place.' Pettigrew does not deny, of course, that this racial minority in fact does account for a disproportionate share of America's major social problems. On the contrary, he painstakingly documents these facts and goes on to show quite convincingly that their explanation is to be found, not in the factor of race itself, but rather in the disadvantages forced upon the Negro by centuries of imposed social and cultural inferiority. Furthermore, the studies he cites show that these deficiencies can be and are overcome once the Negro is given full and equal opportunity.

Like Silver, this author is committed to the cause of inter-racial justice and civil rights but his commitment is not as vigorously proclaimed. What we have instead is a coldly objective review of the essential facts; and, as a result, his book becomes an invaluable aid for the more ardent

crusader who will have to be prepared to meet objections of the kind Pettigrew examines and refutes. The more interpretative chapters dealing with the Negro role and its special burdens, the variety of reactions to oppression, and the nature and risks of the on-going movement of protest are perceptive and show deep understanding.

Together these books spell out a lesson that simply must be taken to heart. Of course, some may object that the issues of race discrimination in the American South and Commonwealth immigration in Great Britain are not as closely linked as this reviewer has suggested. Yet if we choose to consider causes, there is really not too much to choose from between the exploitation associated

with slavery and that following upon centuries of colonialism. So, too, with the problems attendant upon the elevation in status of the previously underprivileged. Our generation has been chosen to bear the burden of often unpleasant adjustments that will have to be made until these newcomers in our midst have been able to master all those proprieties we value so highly. Finally, and most important, the ultimate solution to all these problems has to be the same unbounded love and sincere respect for every human being – irrespective of differences in race, religion, or national origin – simply because he, like ourselves, was created in the image of God.

Gordon C. Zahn

PRIEST AND WORKER: the autobiography of Henri Perrin translated and with an introduction by Bernard Wall. *Macmillan, 25s.*

The priest-worker movement attempted to reach the unskilled industrial worker, alienated from the Church in a post-Christian society, by a real sharing in his life. The priest-worker abandoned the clear and well-structured 'pastoral' relationship of the parish for an 'incarnational' role like that of the monk; but unlike the monk he lived his life in constant contact with people whose ideas were very different from his own. This was a new role for the priest, and a very exacting one. (The difficulties of this kind of role, in a secular context, emerge vividly in a recent Penguin, *The Unattached*. Yet the young field-workers who undertook that experiment had been trained in the social sciences, and they did not have the obligations of the priesthood.)

Priest and Worker is not an autobiography in the usual sense. It is rather a memoir, put together by some of Father Perrin's friends after his death in 1954, largely from his newsletters and personal correspondence. The resulting book is uneven and incomplete, but the writing has the impact of immediacy. We see Father Perrin struggling with his day-to-day problems and working painfully towards the realization of his personal vocation.

How he realized it we do not know. When the activity of the priest-workers was severely restricted by the Holy Office in February 1954, they faced an acute crisis of conscience: the specific vocation of the priest-worker, in which they had come to believe so firmly, seemed to be called in question. Some submitted to the restrictions, others decided to continue as workers and accept the penalty of excommunication. Father Perrin obeyed in giving up work, and asked six months' leave from his bishop. During this time he lived in retirement, occasionally exercising his priesthood, and considering whether he should ask to be laicized, so that he could continue as a worker. Before making any final decision he was killed in a road accident, at the age of forty.

In some respects this book is already dated. Social change has been rapid, not least in the Church. But this only makes it clearer that many of Father Perrin's ideas were in advance of his time. We need books like this, if we are to learn from the mistakes and missed opportunities of the past.

Austin Gaskell, O.P.