

citizenship in the United States. They have been patriotic citizens during the war and have done more than their share in carrying the load of wartime community activities. I have talked to some of them and I find that their pride in American citizenship today has a sour taste.

They are afraid. And so am I! To me it is ominously frightening that so many good people (and I mean good people, good average citizens, the kind you like to have as friends) should not only accept this anti-foreign argument without protest but should, in some cases, fall in with it.

These are not followers of Gerald Smith or Father Coughlin. Put a starving German baby or a starving Negro boy in their back yard and they would be the first to feed him and care for him. But they have drunk deep of the draughts of Nazi poison and don't know it.

I say it frightens me. I think it should frighten all of us.

If there is any phase of the referendum that is pleasing to me, it is that it demonstrated once again how deeply rooted in the soil of New England, even in the panhandle of Connecticut, is the old-fashioned town-meeting idea of democracy. Even though we may live in a snooty suburb of New York, some of the good old New England democracy is so much a part of the soil and the air that we breathe it in whether we were born in San Francisco or Tidioute.

Here was an important issue to the community. The first impulse of the leaders on both sides of the debate was to hold a referendum.

Next month we may be signing petitions against a through highway, and the month after that we may be holding meetings to get the New Haven to put flower boxes around the Riverside Station. But at least we still believe in the right to petition and we still think that if there is something we want done or not done, we should vote on it.

Therefore, although I don't like the way the vote came out, although I am a little ashamed of it, although I am frightened at some of the things that happened while we were deciding to vote, I know that I am licked.

We voted. I am in the minority. But we all had a chance to say what we wanted to say, as loudly as we wanted to say it. Even though licked, we can still go on fighting in the hope that community opinion may change. There's always a chance for another vote.

That, at least, is a lot—in these days a precious lot!

C. B. LARRABEE.

## Affirmation of a Faith

*THE SON OF THE LOST SON.* By Soma Morgenstern. Translated by Joseph Leftwich and Peter Gross. New York: Rinehart & Co., Inc. 1946. 269 pp. \$2.50.

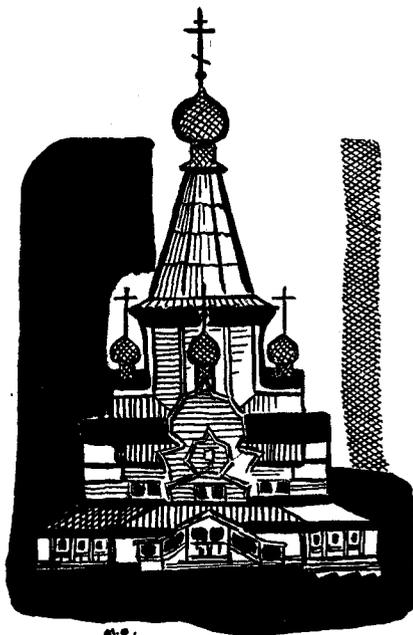
Reviewed by NATHAN L. ROTHMAN

IT has been said many times that the major themes of imaginative literature are love and war; the big novels of our time have, most of them, confirmed this. Yet we need only to look a little farther back, into the histories, diaries, biographies, sermons, and letters, to remember, if we have forgotten, at least one other driving force almost as im-

I have said that this is apparently the first of a series of novels, because the actual physical data of time and circumstance that are presented here seem merely to be a preamble to a longer history to come. We are introduced to the central characters, we are given a broad understanding of past events that have shaped present facts and relationships, and we view one or two crucial moments as the present begins to move in perceptible directions.

This is the story of Wolf Mohilevski, a Jewish landowner in Poland, is going to Vienna in 1928, to attend a Jewish Orthodox Congress. Another reason for his trip is to find a lost nephew, son of a brother whose name has been unmentioned in his home town since the day he embraced another faith and accepted baptism. If the novel were to be condensed to its plot ingredients, they would appear as follows: Mohilevski attends the Congress; Alfred, his nephew, attends also, as guest of his guardian, a Jewish councillor in Vienna; uncle and nephew meet and know one another; Alfred decides to return to Poland and see if he cannot enter the Jewish community there and discover for himself the life his father had renounced; together they depart for home. The time elapsed is but a few days. We seem barely to have met these people, and they seem barely to have begun their movements, before the book is ended.

It is clear that the greater part of their history is still submerged, to be revealed in future books. But there is enough here. For the lack of actual narrative length and breadth, there is the intense density of thought and feeling to compensate. The fearful piety of Wolf Mohilevski, the varied states of revelation to be found at the Congress he attends among the representatives of European Jewry, the searching, yearning, serenely religious hunger of Alfred (this is a very complex and difficult portrait, beautifully done), are traced separately and jointly like themes in a sonorous fugue. This is a good figure to pursue just a little further. Each of these portraits is a statement of one aspect of the varied people who are known as Jews. Together, intertwined, interplaying, they make a whole, resonant, fugued, positive statement of Semitism—what it is, not what it is not. Not, that is, another outcry against anti-Semitism; but a yea-saying, a definitive declaration: this we are. I shall await the books to come, if they are to come, with great interest.



mediate as these two, almost as violent, and not a whit the less consuming. This is the religious compulsion, toward or away from God (an inversion of the theme, not a negation of it), which has played a very minor role in the contemporary novel, although it looms as large as ever in men's minds.

It is, indeed, a salutary thing to see a novel with this great philosophic reality squarely at its core. Mr. Morgenstern's book—the first, apparently, of a series—is not about the struggle of man against man, or for woman. Its rigors are those of the spirit, in flight away from God, in malaise among the empty spaces of freedom, in search again for the comforts and confinements of surrender to God. This is the drama, stated intellectually in cold logical terms, stated emotionally in terms of personalities throbbing with the passions of religion that are as devastating and as exalting as the passions of love.

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## BLOOD, SWEAT, TEARS, AND IRON CURTAINS

MR. CHURCHILL'S addresses invariably find their **rightful place in published volumes**, there to be reviewed as significant and historic commentary. But the Fulton, Missouri, and the New York City speeches\* have about them a driving urgency that does not permit even a literary journal to defer its review until the formalities of book publication are observed.

We pass over at once as of perhaps little consequence the curious circumstances surrounding the Fulton speech. With the best will in the world for Missouri in general and for Westminster College in particular, and with the fullest sympathy for Mr. Truman's loyalty to Missouri institutions, we are moved to wonder that the great influence that goes with the office of President of the United States should have been used to bring the former British Prime Minister to Fulton in what inevitably smacks of virulent chamber-of-commerceism. Not that Fulton is undeserving of its eminent visitors; it is just that the collateral exploitation of the Missouri locale and its institutions in connection with the speech seemed excessively deft, or, rather, deftly excessive.

But what is important, of course, is not the locale but the speech itself. What Mr. Churchill had to say at Fulton may not go down in history alongside some of his memorable war addresses, but there can be no doubt that the entire world listened to him, just as there can be no doubt that his

\* *THE SINEWS OF PEACE. An Address by Winston S. Churchill. Westminster College, Fulton, Missouri. Introduction by Harry S. Truman, March 5, 1946.*

BY WAY OF CLARIFICATION. *An Address by Winston S. Churchill. Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, New York, N. Y. Extended Introduction by Thomas E. Dewey, March 15, 1946.*

message legitimized and brought out into the open perhaps less brilliantly articulate but nonetheless emphatic efforts in certain quarters not only to welcome but to bring on a showdown with Soviet Russia now.

In the course of his Missouri address, which he aptly titled "The Sinews of Peace," Mr. Churchill made four principal points. It is risky and perhaps unfair to attempt to summarize the arguments of someone with whom you disagree, particularly when the tone, the qualifications, and the careful development of his material cannot possibly be reflected in short-order form. But we hope we do Mr. Churchill no injustice in stating that the essence of his position, as first stated at Fulton and later amplified in New York, is as follows:

(1) The United Nations Organization must some day become a "temple of peace," but it is no such temple now. That being the case, nations must still look to the "solid assurances of national armaments for self-preservation." At the same time, however, everything must be done to build up UNO. As a step in that direction, it is suggested that a beginning be made by creating an international air force consisting of nationally trained and nationally uniformed air squadrons.

(2) But it would be "imprudent" to go so far as to turn over atomic weapons to the international police force. "God has willed" that atomic energy for military purposes be discovered by the Western democracies. Such a blessing is not to be lightly held. But should non-democratic nations develop their own atomic weapons, then the democracies will have the advantage of a "formidable superiority."

(3) The only way to promote a genuine world organization, and the only way to prevent war, is through a "special relationship between the

British Commonwealth and Empire and the United States." This would involve joint military preparation and joint military action, as well as eventual common citizenship.

(4) The principal threat to the peace of the world today is Soviet Russia, which has drawn an "iron curtain" across the European continent. Though Soviet Russia does not seek war, she seeks the "fruits of war and the indefinite expansion of her power and doctrines." The only way to settle this threat is through strength, which the Soviet only respects, while the Soviet has only contempt for weakness, "especially military weakness."

In considering these points—and in disagreeing sharply with most of them—we also deplore the many ill-considered attempts to answer Mr. Churchill by vilification and abuse.

Let us state forthwith that we do not believe that Mr. Churchill is a "vicious reactionary" or "devout Fascist" or a "Nazi-at-heart"—to quote from some of the less inspired labels that have been flying his way. We believe Mr. Churchill to belong to the truly great not only of his own time but of history. We believe he built a bridge that had to be built at a time when failure to build one would have cut off the British people and a number of other peoples, including the American, from eventual victory. What he said to keep that hope alive can never be unsaid, nor should it ever be forgotten.

But it is democracy's strength that each great debate can begin afresh. Victors of previous debates keep being challenged by new facts and events and circumstances. Logic and wisdom require re-proof rather than reputation. There is nothing self-starting or self-sealing about reason; its generative or protective power grows out of specific situations with specific facts to feed on. Little won-

## Interview With An Authority

By Lt. A. L. Glaze

APIED old codger tossed his drooling chin  
Cool crazily, crossing and uncrossing his eyes.  
"Youngster," he wailed, sucking his whiskers in,  
"Because of those strange disturbances in the skies  
There where the aircraft fizz, or below where the groves  
Are blooming with corpuscles red or white, and flesh,  
And ideals gallop at burning the pitiful loaves  
And spoiling the fishes, I have dreamt afresh;  
I discovered the nature of him we see as God.  
He fingers his lip pointlessly back in a cave,  
Fed by buzzards prophetlike—" A pain  
Crossed the old man's wrinkles. He wove a nod  
To some phantasm passing that it was brave  
To greet. He grinned confidingly. "God is Insane."