

there in the heart of Colum: the sins of pride and covetousness. He steals the perfect Psalter in order to copy it to the end, and the end is war. Colum is brought to trial and judged guilty of open rebellion. In the end he banishes himself to Iona, being allied with the potent druids. The novel stops at the point when the saint's greatest adventure began.

Miss Macnicol's pages are as crowded as Madame Oldenbourg's but are far less agitated and dazzling. They take us back into the island mists and temperate sunlight through which human frailty, bloodshed and holiness twist together and form into such Runic patterns as enrich the borders of the Book of Kells.

An Ulster Protestant who has read *Colum of Derry* says: 'I am enthralled by this book'. It enthral but it does not excite. It is neither erotic nor horror-raising. It is not likely to become a best-seller even in Eire.

REVIEWS

MARXISM: PAST AND PRESENT. By R. N. Carew Hunt. (Bles; 12s. 6d.)
 WHERE WE CAME OUT. By Granville Hicks. (Gollancz; 13s. 6d.)

After recent reports coming out of Washington it is interesting to note that as lately as the summer of 1953 it was still possible to give a series of lectures, free from political bias and hysterical denunciation, on the theme of what Marx really meant. Mr Carew Hunt's book is based on lectures given at the School of Advanced International Studies of Johns Hopkins University and is a corrective, in a less indulgent sense, of his valuable *Theory and Practice of Communism*. In a cold and incisive way he analyses the leading themes of Marxist ideology (one is tempted to write 'faith') and is at great pains to fathom even the most confused concepts of the Marx-Engels 'deposit', as for example the distinction between 'productive forces' and the 'relations of production'. Where necessary Lenin and Stalin are brought in as commentators, particularly to show how they had to adapt the Marx-Engels line when faced with the realities of a Communist system, as in the highly embarrassing question of the withering away of the State.

Mr Carew Hunt scores no cheap points but shows the inherent philosophical difficulties, confusions and contradictions of Marx's thought, the wish fulfilment in his analysis of capitalism, the misreading and obsession with the French revolutionary tradition in his historical knowledge and political philosophy. The 'past' of the title is largely philosophical, while the 'present' is an all too short account of present Marxist thought in the U.S.S.R. One point he does not make clear,

as does Professor Cole for instance in the second volume of his *History of Socialist Thought*, and that is that the Marxist system must be accepted on faith. In fact it is a faith, one of the most rigid and demanding that history has known. This goes far to explain the observation of Lord Keynes that it 'must always remain a portent to the historians of opinion—how a doctrine so illogical and dull can have exercised an influence over the minds of men, and through them over the events of history'.

Most Marxists are not converted by the doctrine, they are converted by a vision to a faith, when other visions and other faiths have failed them. This seems to be the outstanding lesson of the autobiographies of a number of disillusioned Marxists whose latest god has failed them. The latest to testify is Mr Granville Hicks, whose book is remarkable for two qualities: it explains the mentality of the American liberals who turned the thirties into the 'red decade', thereby providing Senator McCarthy with abundant material for his tarnished crusade, and it sets forth a rational and liberal alternative form of anti-Communism to the McCarthy type of witch-hunt.

Mr Hicks was, in the thirties, one of the intellectual lights of the Communist Party of America. The depression had driven him in the general direction and Dimitrov's Popular Front, launched at the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International in 1935, turned him from a fellow-travelling editor of the *New Masses* into a card-carrying member of the party. His contribution to the cause was mainly literary—he wrote the life of John Reed, founder of the party in the U.S.A.—and in University circles. After the Nazi-Soviet pact he broke with the party. In many respects his testimony is more balanced than that of those who, like Whittaker Chambers and Elizabeth Bentley, had dramatic stories to tell of espionage and sabotage—there was nothing of Philips Oppenheim in his association with the party and there was no high drama of renunciation when he resigned. Those he left behind denounced him for his lack of faith. 'Officially', he writes, 'there is no room for faith in the Marxist scheme, but it is an indispensable part of the Communist make-up.' In a few lines he describes how that faith is tested and hardened by what seems a caricature of a novitiate: 'Some . . . crave submission to absolute authority. Others gradually become so dependent on the party, psychologically and intellectually and socially, that they cannot conceive of breaking with it even when its discipline irks them. When an individual has accepted three or four changes of line, reversing his stated opinions each time, he does not have much left with which he can resist.'

Mr Hicks is an anti-Communist but makes quite clear in pungent, and what might be regarded as almost libellous, terms his contempt

for the McCarthyites, the Fake Liberals and the Retarded Liberals who fight under the same banner. (He would have no difficulty in finding all three types in this country.) His position he defines as 'critical liberalism' and his appeal for a positive approach to the problem of Communism is to be welcomed. One can even approve the restrained yet folksy way in which he proposes the American way of life, with its potentialities and its dangers, as the foundation on which to build. But faith and vision are lacking. For that one must rise above the virtues, real and important though they may be, of the small town community and an ever increasing material standard of living.

JOHN FITZSIMONS

MAN AND THE STATE. By Jacques Maritain. Edited by Richard O'Sullivan, Q.C. (Hollis & Carter; 21s.)

M. Maritain has laid us all so much in his debt by his writing on political philosophy, to which in recent years he has devoted far more time than to metaphysics, that the prospective reader of this latest contribution will want to know whether it is a summary of his previous work or whether there are new insights and fresh developments of his fundamental position. To this the best answer is that there are both. The general philosophical ideas that were developed in *Freedom in the Modern World*, *Scholasticism and Politics* and *The Person and the Common Good* are here taken for granted, or merely referred to in passing, while M. Maritain addresses himself to the problem of Ends and Means which is, he says, 'a basic, *the* basic problem in political philosophy'. He would have us banish the word 'sovereignty' from our vocabularies, along with the false attribution of such independence and power 'in an absolute and transcendent sense' to the body politic, to the State or to the people. In the State it leads to an absolutism that becomes intolerable, while in the comity of nations it provides insuperable obstacles to the emergence of any kind of true world political society. On the other hand, 'democracy carries in a fragile vessel the earthly hope, I would say the biological hope, of mankind'. Some of the best pages in the book are on democracy as the moral rationalization of political life and how 'government by the people' should be exercised. The most striking feature of these pages, as indeed of the whole book, is M. Maritain's utter realism, his insistence that 'the primary duty of the modern State is the enforcement of social justice', and the clarity and forcefulness of his expression. Once the false idea of sovereignty has been banished and backward social conditions have been improved we are free to move on to the idea of world government, and this M. Maritain does in a final chapter full of good sense but with the realization that this concept can only be made a reality after many years of struggle and effort.