

- BOOK REVIEW -

THREE WORLDS

Nicholas S. Timasheff

Milwaukee, The Bruce Publishing Company, 1946. (245 pps.)

Three Worlds is a book which proposes to explain the significance of the social changes that have taken place in the world since the beginning of the twentieth century. The author, Dr. Nicholas S. Timasheff, is a native of Russia; he was a professor at the School of Economics in St. Petersburg, but in 1921 he was forced to flee his country. After travelling and teaching in Europe, Dr. Timasheff came to the United States, where, now a naturalized citizen, he holds a social professorship at Fordham University. Beginning with the political and economic structure before World War 1, Timasheff traces the patterns of the development of society up to the present day. He sees the world divided into three major social orders—Communism, Fascism, and liberal society (Democracy). Professor Timasheff, a linguist who speaks seven languages writes from experience and observation, and he is well qualified to analyze Fascist, Communist, and Democratic society.

On the eve of World War 1, Western society was largely liberal, both politically and economically. Not all states were democratic, but in all countries a struggle for more political freedom was going on. The economic order was even more uniform, and any interference with the *laissez faire* theory on the part of the state was looked upon as an undersirable remnant of feudalism. World War 1 and its aftermath set the stage for the development of Communism and Fascism. Communism arose in Russia, not by necessity, but through a combination of unfortunate accidents, and has since passed through many stages in its evolution to the form in which we know it to-day. Fascism arose mainly to prevent the emergence of Communist society outside of Russia; it was, and is, a movement towards nationalism and conservatism, as opposed to the internationalism and radicalism of Communism.

Timasheff compares the Communist, Fascist, and Democratic worlds from a political, economic, and cultural point of view. He shows that each is workable in its own way, and that, considered in a purely material light, both Communism and Fascism have much to offer. He shows how the fundamental differences existing between the three gave rise to a three-cornered struggle, which finally resulted in World War 2. The struggle is by no means finished and the fate of Western society has not yet been determined. The war was inevitable; but now the question must be posed whether or not the evils which made possible the Communist and Fascist transformation of not a few nations of Western society have been uprooted. The author states that the possibility that Communism or Fascism would be the final conqueror of Western

civilization is not out of the question. After examining the three societies in their proper prospective, the author concludes that liberal society has the most to offer the individual man; but, he says, "The order of freedom is a most difficult one, since it demands free sacrifice both when it is still ahead and must be conquered, and later on, when it is given, but struggling for existence."

—C. SINNOTT, '49.

SILENT IS THE VISTULA

Irena Orska

New York, Longmons, Green & Co., 1946. (275 pps.)

This unforgettable narrative deals with the Warsaw uprising in 1944. The Germans, at that time, had been in control of the city for five long years, but across the beautiful Vistula River the Russians were advancing rapidly. From the west the allies were pounding at France. To speed up the liberation of Warsaw the Russians has asked the people in the city to rise up against the Germans, promising them assistance when they would do so.

The story opens on the morning of August 1st. This was to be D—Day for the people. Confident of an easy victory because of the promise of the Russians, the Home Army struck fast and furiously over all parts of Warsaw. But each day the fighting and dying continued and still the Russians did not bring help. Strangely, at this time, the Russians were forced to retreat. The big Soviet guns spoke no more; Red planes no longer flew over the city. Had the Russians forsaken them? or—and they hardly dared to think about it—had God? On the thirteenth day the allies sent over a few planes and dropped supplies, but the Reds would not allow the planes to land on their fields for refueling. The papers carried the story of the Soviet refusal to give shuttle-bomber bases and in our own complacent way we thought that it was just another means the Russians used to antagonize their allies. But to the people in Warsaw it meant something very different. It meant that they would have to go on fighting, starving, and dying, while their scanty supplies of food and ammunition were rapidly being exhausted.

The author, Madame Orska, an officer and nurse of the Home Army, spares nothing in the telling of her story. She recounts in unforgettable human terms the nauseating journeys through the sewers; the complete annihilation of 500 Boy Scouts by the Germans; the tragic love story of a Polish nurse and a German soldier; the awful horrors of the prison camps; and, over all, the great fortitude of a betrayed and forgotten people in their lonely and magnificent struggle.

The book is well written; its tale of humour and pathos, love and despair cannot but move the heart of the reader. The title itself tells the whole story: the silence of the Russians guns across the Vistula then, and the silence now of the city that is no more.

Irena Orska was born in Warsaw. She graduated from the University of Lublin Law School, and, at nineteen was left a widow with a young daughter to support. During the first Siege of Warsaw (1939) she was awarded the Cross of Valor, and continued as an active member of the underground during the five years of German occupation. She was captured during the Warsaw uprising and sent to a German hospital camp, but not before winning a second Cross of Valor. After having escaped, she left Poland as the wife of an American citizen and came to America in 1945.

—JOHN S. MacDONALD '49.

THE GREAT FRIEND: FREDERICK OZANAM

Albert Paul Schimberg

Milwaukee, The Bruce Publishing Co., 1946. (335 pps.)

Genuine enthusiasm and a diligence for exactitude are the outstanding features of this latest work of A. P. Schimberg. The book, being a biography of Frederick Ozanam, whom the author affectionately terms "the great friend", gives us an account of the life and office of that great apostle of the poor. Particular emphasis is placed on such events as help to make us understand the reason why and how the Society of St. Vincent de Paul took form and flourished. To Ozanam goes the honor of being the prime mover of this society; his heroic example of devotion to the cause aroused in the hearts of his faithful followers a desire to emulate his works of charity and self-sacrifice.

Frederick Ozanam was born in Milan, Italy, in 1813, but it was to the service of France that his life was devoted. It was providential that he should appear at such a time to champion the cause of the Catholic and Apostolic Church. His early life saw the restoration of the Bourbons to the French throne, following the downfall of the Napoleonic regime. The slums of France at this period prompted that generous heart to begin a work, which, under the influence of later men imbued with the same christian motives of their leader, was to permeate many countries of Europe, and shortly to spread to other continents. The third and fourth decades of the nineteenth century saw the rise of the bourgeois king, Louis Phillipe, to the throne, and also his abdication, followed by the bitter days of '48 and the establishment of the French Republic. Through such times Ozanam lived and shed his rays of intellectual light and boundless charity wherever he went.

With simplicity, but with the exactitude of an historian, the author portrays incidents in the life of Ozanam which bring out the fine qualities of his mind and heart. Events of his early life give us an account of a boy, mature beyond his years, starting out on his brilliant but short life under the impetus of God-fearing and self-sacrificing parents. Possessing his father's dogged determination and his mother's stern sense of duty, he was able to triumph over many obstacles. As a teacher he was loved; as an orator he was famed. Apart from this he was devotedly attached to his home. With all these demands on his time, he nevertheless pursued the cause for which he believed himself divinely called: the defense of the Catholic Church against the materialistic trend of the time, and the uplifting of the lower social strata to material and spiritual betterment. The keynote of his life was to serve God and to bring other souls to Him, for in his own words "when a voice says do this, can you bid it be silent"?

The first part of Schimberg's book appears less attractive since it recounts the period when Ozanam, feeling his faith tried, is afraid and unsettled in his purpose in life. With the passing of this, Ozanam grasps the reason for his existence, and from this stage on the book is absorbing. There are no heights of drama in this biography; there are no monotonous parts; there are 335 pages of pleasant and of edifying reading. The style is simple, exact, and unpretentious, and one gets the impression as he reads the book, that the power which prompted Ozanam to such heights of love and zeal is truly felt by his present day disciple and the narrator of his life, A. P. Schimberg.

—J. J. MacISAAC.