values that More believed the first efforts of educational reform should be directed. The great need in institutions of higher learning, he insisted, was "to restore to their predominance in the curriculum those studies that train the imagination... the imagination in its power of grasping in a single firm vision, so to speak, the long course of human history and of what is essential therein from what is ephemeral."

"... The enormous preponderance of studies that deal with the immediate questions of economics and government inevitably results in isolating the student from the great inheritance of the past; the frequent habit of dragging him through the slums of sociology, instead of making him at home in the society of the noble dead, debauches the mind with a flabby, or inflames it with a fanatic, humanitarianism. He comes out of college... narrow and unbalanced, a prey to the prevailing passion of the hour, with no feeling for the majestic claims of that within us which is unchanged from the beginning. In place of this excessive contemporaneity we shall give a larger share of time and honor to the hoarded lessons of antiquity.

More's conservatism, as Mr. Lambert says, was not of the philistine variety. He was at once too proudly reactionary and too humbly self-critical to be a Bourbon. He was liberal in the traditional sense but not in the sense of embracing doctrines which have their origin in positivism. Thus he was in the current vernacular a conservative, and his conservatism indwelt with "the sense of a mysterious presence out of the invisible world." He was in the high sense of the word imaginative. He asserted that... the instinctive distrust of uncontrolled human nature and the instinctive reliance on imagination are the very roots of the conservative temper, as their contraries are the roots of the liberal and radical temper, the lack of imagination, if any distinction is to be made, being the chief factor of liberalism and confidence in human nature being the main impulse of radicalism.

Mr. Lambert has made and arranged his selections from More's writings so as to capture the essence of his thought in the various fields in which he labored. The chosen categories are "Philosophy and Religion," "Literature," "Education and History," and "Politics and Society." It will be seen, then, that this compendium goes well beyond the literary criticism for which Paul Elmer More is best remembered. As Mr. Lambert tells us, More always insisted on the testimony of all history in the consideration of any question that might be raised. He was independent of his age as no "relevant" critic can hope to be. Mr. Lambert has done an invaluable service in relighting this unspent candle.

Reviewed by Tommy W. Rogers

Stalin versus Lenin?


Roy Medvedev, a Soviet educator and philosopher, presents an indictment of Stalinism which even Trotsky's bitterest diatribes do not equal. He wrote this history of Stalin's impact on Russia "to restore the idea of socialism," by proving that Stalinism was the antithesis of Leninism, and to attack the Chinese Communists, by showing who the "genuine" Marxist-Leninists are. Medvedev argues that Stalin was never a Communist, but rather a vengeful and ambitious despot, endowed with an essentially rational personality in spite of paranoid
tendencies. He contends that neither Lenin nor socialism can be blamed for Stalin's rise to unprecedented power, but Medvedev repeatedly demands the punishment of unnamed "Stalinists" in the Soviet Communist Party. Such remarks apparently irritate the Brezhnev-Kosygin régime, for Let History Judge has been refused publication in Medvedev's homeland.

Stalinism seems to be the tar-baby of Communism. Communists who offer no real alternative to Stalinism tend inevitably to perpetuate Stalin's legacy of despotism and terror. Yet party members who try too hard to break with Stalinism run another risk: that of undermining the legitimacy of the regime they seek to strengthen and of themselves becoming "enemies of the people." Roy Medvedev and his brother Zhores have sharply attacked Stalinism and the reluctance of Khrushchev's successors to continue the "de-Stalinization" campaign. The Soviet government has retaliated with extra-legal punishment, briefly confining Zhores Medvedev in a psychiatric institution and expelling Roy Medvedev from the Communist Party.

Let History Judge first describes Stalin's "usurpation of power," then presents a Marxist-Leninist explanation of Stalinism, and finally examines Stalin's impact on Soviet society. Medvedev's main theses are familiar to Western scholars, but he presents some fascinating new details, including excerpts from unpublished works, archival materials inaccessible to non-Communists, and interviews with witnesses to the events he describes. The book is well translated, although its editorial notes and introduction are often misleading. For example, Stepan Bandera is identified merely as "A Ukrainian collaborator with the Nazis." Editor Joravsky distorts the biography of this nationalist leader, ignoring his effort to establish an independent Ukrainian government, the deportation of his group to a Nazi concentration camp, and his assassination by a Soviet agent in 1959.

Medvedev criticizes Stalin for not converting more countries to Communism. He modifies somewhat the usual Soviet interpretation of Stalin's policy toward Germany, hinting that Stalin helped Hitler into power. Medvedev then reverts to a thesis established by Khrushchev, condemning Stalin for his failure to fortify Soviet borders before the German invasion of 1941. If Stalin had taken adequate defensive measures, Medvedev contends, millions of Soviet lives would have been saved and the Red Army would have "liberated" Western Europe before England had recovered from its defeats. He is equally aggressive with regard to the Orient, praising Soviet delivery of captured Japanese weapons to the Chinese Communists in Manchuria as "the crucial turning point in the national democratic and agrarian revolution in China." Unfortunately, in Medvedev's opinion, Stalin then underestimated the prospects for Communist victory in China and allowed Communist "defeats" in Greece, Berlin, and Korea. As for current Soviet policy, Medvedev claims that the Chinese are now as dangerous as the Germans were in 1941, stressing "the possibility of irrational adventures being attempted by the Maoist leadership." To bolster this veiled threat, he hints at anti-Mao activity in the Chinese Communist Party, condemns Mao's "monstrous crimes" against Communism, and castigates the Chinese for refusing to break with Stalinism. Here, as elsewhere, it is unclear whether Medvedev simply does not know that it is China, not the Soviet Union, which is being threatened, or whether he espouses the official line on foreign policy as an effort to satisfy the censors.

Medvedev condemns Stalin far more harshly than did Khrushchev. He rejects Khrushchev's euphemisms, decrying "despotism" rather than "the cult of the personality" and describing "crimes" instead of "mistakes." He also surpasses Khrushchev by explicitly attacking Stalin's forcible collectivization of the peasantry in 1928-1933. Let History Judge is most valuable on the Great Purges of the 1930's, when Stalin betrayed his "historical mission" by using

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against party members those brutal methods which a true Leninist should reserve for enemies outside the party. Khrushchev said the same, but with less detail and no desire at all to explain why Stalinism occurred. Medvedev's explanation of Stalin's rise and the establishment of Stalinist despotism is extremely complex. He frequently presents the standard Soviet interpretation of events, only to contradict or modify it later in the book, and quotes the most penetrating passages of authors whom he professes to reject. Such literary devices allow Medvedev to present both sides of highly controversial issues. Indeed, Medvedev advances so many unorthodox views that one wonders if he is really the faithful Marxist-Leninist that he claims to be.

Medvedev draws heavily on a body of ideas comprising the concept of Oriental despotism. Joravsky describes this concept as having been "common among earlier generations of Western observers." He fails to add that those observers included Marx, Engels, Plekhanov (founder of the first Russian Marxist party), and Lenin. (For the fullest discussion of this concept, see Karl A. Wittfogel's *Oriental Despotism*.) Medvedev himself quotes one of Plekhanov's most thoughtful applications of this concept to Russia:

> If the people, Plekhanov declared, approach power when social conditions are not yet ripe, then "the revolution may result in a political monstrosity, such as the ancient Chinese or Peruvian empires, i.e., in a tsarist despotism renovated with a Communist lining."

Medvedev implies that the restoration of despotism was inevitable in Albania and China, but he asserts that this disaster could have been avoided in Russia. To regard Stalinist despotism as inevitable "would be a historical justification of Stalin, not a condemnation."

History must judge Stalin, and, as happens so frequently in Communist courts, political considerations determine Medvedev's verdict. If Medvedev were to absolve Stalin even in part, then Lenin would stand condemned. Medvedev proposes several ways to end Stalinism: using only "moral" methods of building socialism, establishing constitutional "guarantees" against the rise of despot, and tolerating different points of view within the one-party state. He does not, however, inform the reader of Lenin's own "guarantees" against the rise of a postrevolutionary despot. One of Lenin's "guarantees" included the creation of a radical "democracy," without those coercive institutions of social control on which all despot's rely. Lenin, of course, violated his own "guarantees" shortly after seizing power by reestablishing the secret police, a standing army, and a state bureaucracy. Medvedev never compares Lenin's prerevolutionary theories with his postrevolutionary practice, perhaps because he knows that such a comparison might find Lenin partly responsible for the rise of Stalinism.

*Let History Judge* reveals that dissident Soviet intellectuals are thinking seriously about the problem of Communist despotism, although the harassment of the Medvedev brothers and the suppression of this book suggest that Stalinism is still alive and flourishing.

Reviewed by G. Paul Holman, Jr.

**Ransom's Ars Poetica**

**Beating the Bushes: Selected Essays, 1941-1970,** by John Crowe Ransom,

*New Directions,* 1972. $7.95 paper $3.45.

Set against the world of affairs, to which this journal is properly dedicated, what claim can poetry have on our adult attentions? The question and its partial answers begin, for English literature, with an attack on poetry by a Puritan named Gosson, and a spirited but gentlemanly reply by Sir Philip Sidney, in the sixteenth century: the problem is as old as our modern age.