

BOOKS and REVIEWS

The Coming Of the New Deal

By Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. 688pp. Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co. \$7.50.

Reviewed by AMY HAMMER

If, as such a stout critic as Dr. Samuel Johnson said, the chief value of a book is interest, "The Coming of the New Deal" is indeed a valuable book. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., Pulitzer, Bancroft, and Parkman prize winner for history, has written a book which will interest readers regardless of their attitude towards this landmark in our political history. The author has a thesis which, even in his objective approach to the material, he cannot well hide. Schlesinger is an avid admirer of Franklin D. Roosevelt and believes that the New Deal was a genuine assault of practically all Americans on the Great Depression. But this thesis is developed with incidents, personality profiles, facts and figures, and historical moments which hold interest whether or not the reader agrees with it.

IN THE pages of this second volume of an historical work generally entitled "The Age of Roosevelt," the author makes life again for those who went through it the great events of the early 1930's. And if you are one who does not remember the original Roosevelt administration, you will find a vibrant quality in the writing which makes you see and understand those stirring days.

Take a few of the chapter titles. Even in their brief words, the reader gets the sense of the combination of politics, struggle, evangelism, and showmanship which formed up the attempt to pull the nation out of the slough that followed the market crash of 1929: "The Hundred Days," "The Politics of Agriculture," "The Blue Eagle," "The

Decline of NRA, The Dollar Dilemma, The Fight for Public Works, The Birth of Social Security, Remaking the Tennessee Valley, War Against Rural Poverty, The Travail of Labor, The Alienation of the Financial Community, The Rise of Conservative Opposition, The Dynamics of Decision, and Behind the Mask.

THESE chapter headings connote the breathless plunge of the New Dealers as they sought to put 15 million people to work and, at the same time, build a political party which would endure out of Democrats, Progressive Republicans, left-over Bull Moosers, and Farmer-Labor dissidents.

The shadow of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, of course, falls across the entire book. But it's far from a biography of this country squire, as he liked to name himself, who became President; yet there are little sketches which show him as a clever politician, as a leader of men, as a man of astonishingly inept guesses and hunches, and as the man who led the first real revolution in American political and business life since Andrew Jackson.

ALONG with Roosevelt appear many half-forgotten names that once filled the headlines, men and women whose word carried weight but who are now pretty much relegated to the back pages of history: Hugh S. Johnson (the "Iron Pants" of the NRA), Donald Richberg, Frances Perkins, Rex Tugwell, Raymond Moley, Cordell Hull, "Missy" LeHand, Henry Wallace, Russell Leffingwell, Henry Morgenthau, Jr., and a score or two of others who rose as part of the fireworks display which was the coming of the New Deal.

Even though Mr. Schlesinger has a thesis and drives it, he attempts to be objective. After all, he is an historian of repute. For example, he says that without a shadow of a doubt that the NRA was a political necessity but of very dubious value in helping the country out of the depression.

HE points out that the silver policy of 1934 was the most remarkable special interest triumph of the period. "A minor industry held the government in ransom, extorting nearly a billion and a half dollars." The author willingly admits that the early Agricultural Adjustment Administration was close to being a failure, and that the Resettlement Administration was "doomed to failure" from the start.

And as though he were sure that much of the material, particularly quotations from sources, in his book might be questioned, Mr. Schlesinger has included 80 pages of notes and index (in the finest of types) in a book of 689 pages. This is a well-authenticated work, a true history; careful, dispassionate, objective, and well-written.

IT IS this quality of the prose that contributes to the interesting significance of the book. Look at a few quotations: From the first chapter: "Late in the afternoon, as the streets of Washington fell silent after the excitement of the day, the cabinet gathered with Roosevelt once again, now in the Oval Room of the White House.

There they stood, a quiet serious group, inexplicably brought together by the crisis. As Justice Benjamin N. Cardozo administered the oaths, precedents fell; never before had a cabinet been sworn in at a single stroke, never before had the swearing-in occurred in the White House. Roosevelt with a smile called it 'a little party' and handed each one his commission of office."

AND from the last chapter: "The essence of Roosevelt, the quality which fulfilled the best in him and explained the potency of his appeal, was his intrepid and passionate affirmation. He always cast his vote for life, for action, for forward motion, for the future. He responded to what was vital, not to what was lifeless; to what was coining, not to what was going away."

Yes, "The Coming of the New Deal" is an interesting book for many reasons, chief of which perhaps is that it is history... history which seems a long time ago, and yet history which still holds us by the hand.

The Pistol

By James Jones, 158 pp. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, \$3.00.

Reviewed by TOM PHILLIPS

In "The Pistol" James Jones returns to the point at which he left off in his famous first novel, "From Here to Eternity." The first book ended with the infamous Dec. 7, 1941 Japanese attack on this country. "The Pistol" begins with its man character, Pfc. Richard Mast, eating breakfast "when the first bomb lit at Wheeler Field."

The bombs signaled this country's entrance into World War II, but the war itself never dominates the progress of this well-written,

powerful little novel.

The story centers on a pistol—a .45 caliber pistol which was issued to Mast during a tour of guard duty and which he failed to return.

AT FIRST regarded as just another weapon, the pistol attains symbolic stature in the mind of Mast and in the minds of the soldiers with whom he lives and works.

"The world was rocketing to hell in a bucket," Mast thinks, "but if he could only hold onto his pistol, remain in possession of the promise of the salvation its beautiful blood-steel, bullet-charged weight offered him, he could be saved."

To retain the pistol, Mast must beat the men who try to take it from him physically, outwit those who are always ready to steal it by stealth or stratagem and also defy authority.

All those who covet the pistol, including Mast, are obsessed with the thought that someday they may be lying wounded in combat. Unable to move, they visualize a Japanese officer rushing upon them, sword unsheathed, ready to behead them. With the pistol they can shoot and kill the onrushing enemy. Thus, to each man, the pistol becomes a symbol of personal salvation, and they are willing to stoop to almost any means to take it from Mast.

HOW Mast manages to keep the pistol for himself only to lose it in the end to a power greater than (See BOOKS, Page 8-B)

REGISTRATION NOTICE Biennial Spring Election APRIL 6, 1959

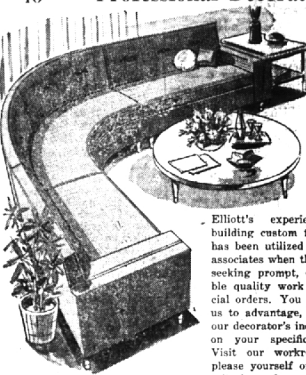
TO THE QUALIFIED ELECTORS OF THE TOWNSHIP OF SOUTHFIELD. NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT I will be at the Southfield Township Office located at 13500 W. 13 Mile Road (Fire Station) to receive for registration the name of any legal voter not already registered in the Township of Southfield.

MONDAY, MARCH 9, 1959 — LAST DAY TO REGISTER before the Election from 8:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M. on said day.

NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN THAT THE Township Office will be open TUESDAYS through FRIDAYS from 8:30 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. SATURDAYS, FEBRUARY 28 and MARCH 7, 1959, 9:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.

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