communications and from the unrestricted use of corporate resources for lobbying, propaganda, political corruption, and debasement of public values. It is more dangerous than economic power, for it undermines the democratic process, prevents necessary institutional reforms, and induces popular acceptance of irresponsible private power. If the supremacy of political over economic power is to be maintained, then corporations must be stripped of the social power they now exercise by arrogation. Professor Reagan concedes that the success of his *Managed Economy* depends on the resolution of this issue.

Three possible lines of development are visualized: (1) increase of corporate power with virtually no public control; (2) diminution and diffusion of corporate power; (3) retension of the corporate power structure, subject to greatly expanded public control. He regards the first as intolerable, being anti-democratic and fascist; the second as preferable in terms of traditional ideology but unrealistic and impossible of attainment because of business opposition, and the third as most feasible and probable. His prescriptions relate to this third possibility in which "power is not reduced but put under explicit control." To this end he suggests regulation by Federal charter, public review boards, public representation on corporate boards of directors, direct wage-price controls, a government-industry investment council, increased public control over manpower, industrial location and automation, an economic Bill of Rights for individuals, over-all economic planning under Presidential direction, and Congressional reform to expedite action on economic policy decisions. Institutional reforms of this character, he feels, would suffice to subordinate corporate power to the public interest, provided that, as indicated above, corporations are excluded from the exercise of social power.

There is a contradiction between Professor Reagan's idealistic politics and his deterministic economics. Although he scorns institutional determinism in politics, he accepts it in economics. Concentration of economic power, he asserts, is inevitable; "there can be no industrialism without concentration of property;" "the inexorable tendencies of technology" require concentration; competition is obsolete, anti-trust is a delusion, free enterprise is a myth; corporate power cannot be reduced; society has no alternatives except regulation of already concentrated private power.

How an economic power structure based on the deterministic principle of inexorable necessity can be subordinated to the political free will of a democratic state is beyond the comprehension of this reviewer. There is no instance in the history of modern monopoly capitalism where this feat has been accomplished with any notable degree of success; invariably concentrated private economic power dominates the political state and subverts the sovereign powers of the state to its service. Our present system—aptly described as the New Mercantilism—with its extreme concentration of power, buttressed by an elaborate array of privilege, protection, and subsidization, is an excellent example.

His addiction to economic determinism leads Reagan to discard the traditional weapons by means of which democracy can protect itself against the aggressions of monopoly: the right to compel competition, to apply severe sanctions against monopolistic practices, to reorganize and fractionate concentrated power, to abolish privileges, to create alternative economic institutions, to provide services through public undertakings, to socialize certain facilities and functions if necessary for the public good. Having thus accepted concentration as inevitable and thrown away the defensive weapons of democracy, Reagan, notwithstanding his political liberalism, lands in the camp of the "progressive Tories," to use a British term. Their standard response to the challenge of corporate power is: Do not reduce or nationalize this power; the same, or even better, results can be achieved by regulating it.

Although he arrives at this same conclusion, Reagan is obviously not a party to the self-serving counsel of the "progressive Tories." Rather, he is trapped by his reliance on the false doctrine of economic determinism, and is thus driven to seek realization of his ideals by the dubious technique of public management of private power. He can escape from this uncomfortable position by disavowing the dogma of inevitable concentration and devoting his talents to reorganization and decentralization of the power structure in a manner consistent with the democratic tradition. He admits a preference for this course. It is the road back to the liberalism and away from the dangerous neo-fascism inherent in public regulation of concentrated private power.

THE REVIEWERS

BART BERNSTEIN, who teaches American history at Bennington College, is writing a history of the coming of World War II. He has contributed to the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists. URBAN WHITAKER teaches international relations at San Francisco State College. REO M. CHRISTENSON is a professor of government at Miami University in Ohio. HORACE M. GRAY is a professor of economics at the University of Illinois. He is co-author, with Walter Adams, of "Monopoly in America." JAMES E. McDONALD is a senior physicist at the University of Arizona's Institute of Atmospheric Physics. LUCY JOHNSON is a free lance reviewer. WILLIAM McCANN reviews paperbacks regularly for The Progressive. He edited "Ambrose Bierce's America."

Our Nuclear Future

THE ATOMIC AGE, edited by Morton Grodzins and Eugene Rabinowitch. Basic Books. 669 pp. $10.

Reviewed by

James E. McDonald

THE PAST two decades have witnessed so many harrowing episodes of nuclear brinksmanship, have left us so deeply fearful for our uncertain nuclear future, that it has been difficult at times to avoid pessimistic fatalism. It is one of the many merits of *The Atomic Age* that it not only permits us to review those two decades of trepidation in somber reflection on what we have come through but also, cautiously yet positively, offers grounds for hope that, if we work hard enough, we might make it through the next two decades.

Morton Grodzins and Eugene Rabinowitch have judiciously selected

more than sixty important articles published during the past decade and a half in the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists,* plus four from other sources, and have woven them into a fascinating story of the period in which science and scientists entered the arena of national and world affairs. In *The Atomic Age,* we witness some of the world's most distinguished scientists struggling to get their fellow men to help in putting the genie back into the bottle. We are reminded, in reading this collection of documents, how big the genie is, how small the bottle.

The editors have arranged their selections in approximately chronological order, beginning in 1939 with Albert Einstein's letter to President Roosevelt, respectfully suggesting that the President might "think it desirable to have some permanent contact maintained between the Administration and the group of physicists working on chain reactions in America," and ending with Rabinowitch's tentative statement of hope that perhaps man has won a little time in his battle with the forces of destruction. The book can be read an article at a time in browsing fashion, or read topically in the sections arranged by the editors with their germane introductory comments. A few may read it from cover to cover in one long sitting; but it invites rereading and leafing back and forth to compare one writer with another and to match particular predictions with later outcomes, since there is an enormous amount of factual information and commentary in its six hundred pages.

I found it astonishing to read what the editors aptly term "the prescient documents of 1945," the letters, petitions, and predictions of the Manhattan District scientists who foresaw in startling detail in 1945 what could (and eventually did) happen in the nuclear arms race in the absence of international control. Anyone who thinks all scientists are out of touch with reality might ponder Leo Szilard's communication of March, 1945 (three months prior to the first atomic bomb test at Alamogordo), in which almost every major difficulty of the atomic age was predicted in detail.

The failure to achieve international control is documented in a number of articles which remind us that America's record generally, on that score, was a good one. We tried. And we tried chiefly because so many of our leading scientists came out of the experience of Hiroshima and Nagasaki bitterly determined to avoid more nuclear destruction.

After the failure to achieve international control of atomic energy and atomic armaments, there began the difficult years of peril, recorded in one article after another in this book. Foreign policy dilemmas, disarmament and arms control efforts, fallout and nuclear test-ban problems, espionage and security woes are reviewed through the contemporary writers' contribution to the *Bulletin.* More gems are found scattered along the way, such as Michael Polanyi's letter-by-letter account of how he was denied a visa to enter the United States in the early Fifties. Our "paper curtain" was too much for Polanyi and many other outstanding scientists kept out by a stupid witch-hunting era. Several articles recall the peak of McCarthyism and remind us of the spy trials and the Oppenheimer hearings. There is much to reflect on in all of this, and readers will probably return to this section of *The Atomic Age* again and again for its sheer reference value.

Finally, the editors hold out hope. They recount the slow progress in the Pugwash Conferences, which are seen, in retrospect, as most significant events, despite their appearing unproductive at the time. One theme is found to thread through much of the writing in this last section of the book: international scientific cooperative programs may hold the key to relaxing international tensions. Science is, by nature, international in outlook. Science prospers only in an open system. Any progress made in the course of international collaboration in science benefits all of the world. Each step forward in scientific collaboration can serve as a reminder to all men that ours is really one world after all, and that mankind, not national sovereignty, must be our concern. Thus, the hope that is held

out to us seems to be a hope tied to catalyzing the reaction between conflicting world powers by developing ever stronger programs in international scientific collaboration, in order that still broader cooperation may grow out of such beginnings. I wish every Congressman, and every one of his opposite numbers abroad, could read this message in the form slowly spelled out by the various writers whose views are assembled in this last portion of *The Atomic Age.*

Grodzins and Rabinowitch have given us an excellent selection of readings, much food for thought, much basis for intelligent decision, as we try to live out and live through our atomic age.

Out of the Past

THE LITTLE GIRLS, by Elizabeth Bowen. Alfred A. Knopf. 307 pp. $4.95.

THE WAPSHOT SCANDAL, by John Cheever. Harper & Row. 309 pp. $4.95.

Reviewed by
Lucy Johnson

HERE ARE two novels in which the past plays a significant part. In each, however, the conception of the past is completely different and its treatment by the two authors is in sharp contrast.

Elizabeth Bowen is a creator of atmosphere and mood. It is the feel of the people and the places that conveys her story. The plot is a graph charting the slight but significant changes of temperature both inside and outside her characters. *The Little Girls* starts out as if it were one of those games I imagine house parties of clever English men and women playing, where from one attribute or belonging each player's personality is analyzed to shreds. But no. Dinah Delacroix, at sixty-one a charming widow and grandmother, is collecting meaningful articles from her friends to entomb in a cave for the future. She is doing this, however, not as a character analyst, but in response to a submerged memory of having done the same thing when she was a child of eleven. She locates the two women who as girls buried a coffer with her and proves more or less that the child is mother of the woman and that the little girls of the past have not altogether disappeared.

A beautifully lucid and shining flashback follows—to the summer of 1914 when the three girls were in school together, in and out of each other's houses, swimming, sunning, inventing an Unknown Language, and finally burying the coffer containing bones, a chain, and an extra-secret, undeclared object from each one. The changing, tentative friendships among the three children and the shimmering relationships between the girls and their parents and among the adults themselves are conveyed with an irony and a tart, amused understanding that cuts all sentimentality from this vivid memory.

As the three women disclose themselves again in the present, it becomes evident that to Miss Bowen it is the submerged things of the past—a refusal to love or to commit oneself, the shameful ability to show only false emotion and to hide true, the characteristic of always asking more of others