

**WAR AND THE
LIBERAL CONSCIENCE**
by Michael Howard
Rutgers, 1978, 143 pp. \$8
L of C 78-50655
ISBN 0-8135-0866-5

"Mars, the stupidest of the Gods," railed Erasmus. Judging from this survey of four centuries of effort to abolish him, the god of war may be also the most intractable. In the 16th century as in ours, war has been blamed on the vanities of the powerful, on the repression of peoples, on ignorance of one's true interest. In this book, the Oxford Professor of the History of War defines liberals as people profoundly dissatisfied with their world and confident of the power of reason to change it. But whatever these people hope for, he writes, they have to begin with the world they find; as threats multiplied and evolved, liberals have often gone to war for the sake of peace—occasionally, as in 1914, against one another. "At the root of the dilemma of liberal thinkers lies the habit of seeing war as a distinct and abstract entity about which one can generalize at large. . . . But 'war' is simply the generic term for the use of armed force by states or aspirants to statehood to achieve their political objectives." Howard shies away from what remains implicit in his argument: Liberals are torn between love of peace and love of justice; however great their desire for peace, in the crunch they discover causes they hold yet dearer. From this frequent incompatibility of cherished values, the pangs of the liberal conscience arise.

Contemporary Affairs

**THE EMPTY
POLLING BOOTH**
by Arthur T. Hadley
Prentice-Hall, 1978
179 pp. \$8.95
L of C 78-16966
ISBN 0-13-274928-9

The Case of the Missing American Voter has long intrigued the Holmeses and Watsons of political science and journalism. In the last presidential election, some 65 million members or 46 percent of an electorate of 150 million chose *not* to vote, thereby constituting themselves the largest enfranchised political group in America. Hadley, a former *Newsweek* political writer, eliminates many theories about the nonvoter, refuting popular assumptions that more often than not the "refrainer" is (a) a rural Southerner or a resident of a Northern city's slums; (b) black; (c) young; (d) cynical about life and government; (e)

poorer than the voter; (f) less educated than the voter; (g) prevented from voting by archaic regulations, fraud, difficulty of access to facilities, or threat of violence (the belief most fervently held in "the Boobus Americanus stereotype," according to Hadley). Citing statistics and delineating profiles of nonvoters gleaned from a poll that he and Robert Teeter conducted in 1976-77, the author proceeds to identify a decidedly different (often middle-class white-collar urban) composite refrainer. Since Thomas Jefferson's time, the belief has persisted that the country is best served when only a small group of educated and concerned citizens go to the polls. Hadley asks if we really want the nonvoters to vote (his own answer? a resounding "yes") and concludes with suggestions on how to get refrainers to exercise their rights. Among them: postal card registration; making "V-Day" a holiday in federal election years.

**EGYPT'S UNCERTAIN
REVOLUTION UNDER
NASSER AND SADAT**

by Raymond William Baker
Harvard, 1978, 300 pp. \$16
L of C 78-18356
ISBN 0-674-24154-1

SHAHHAT: An Egyptian

by Richard Critchfield
Syracuse, 1978, 258 pp.
\$12.95 cloth, \$6.95 paper
L of C 78-11945
ISBN 0-8156-2202-3
0-8156-0151-4 pbk

Egypt's modern leaders, in the view of Baker, a Williams College political scientist, have embraced "bureaucratic feudalism." Egyptians as a people have escaped "a situation of colonial dependency only by a new dependency on the cleverness of their authoritarian rulers." He finds both the late Gamal Abdul Nasser, who led the 1952 coup against the monarchy, and Anwar es-Sadat, who succeeded Nasser in 1970, fundamentally distrustful of the masses. Their failure to provide an ideology or working political institutions has left life in Egypt disrupted but not transformed.

The Aswan dam on the Nile has ended thousands of years of annual flooding in the villages of Upper Egypt where Shahhat, the impetuous young peasant vividly portrayed in Critchfield's book, pursues his life. Yet neither this nor various other forms of government intervention have substantially improved his lot, and new layers of seemingly irrational regulation have been imposed on him and his neighbors. Life to the sturdy Egyptian *fellah* has always seemed to lack order and reason, however, writes Critchfield,