

W. Z. Foster Comments On Aptheker's New Book

Editor, Feature Section:

I have read with great interest and enjoyment Aptheker's latest book, *History and Reality*. Although the several essays that go to make up the book have appeared during the past several years in *Political Affairs*, *Masses & Mainstream* and *Science & Society*, their inclusion in one book gives them a new unity and force. I would say the book is indispensable reading for all those who want to know what is really happening in the United States. This is true also of Aptheker's booklet, *Laureates of Imperialism*, which really constitutes one of the series of historical and analytical essays that go to make up his present book.

It is not my purpose here to try to review the book; but I would like especially to praise the first chapter, from which the book takes its name, *History and Reality*. This essay answers in the affirmative, with great power and certainty, the basic question of whether or not history writing is a science. It is a smashing rejoinder to those who try to reduce history to a series of disappointed events. I think Aptheker does a splendid job here in presenting the Marxist position on

history, in the specific American economic and political setting. It is a major contribution to understanding the history of this and other countries.

Another of the many basic elements in this book, and in *Laureates of Imperialism*, that I would single out for a few words is the author's powerful analysis of the determined and widespread efforts now being made by monopoly capital in this country to prostitute the intellectuals into its service, particularly in the realm of history. That Big Business has made dangerous progress in this respect is all too obvious from the political degeneration that has set in among Social Democrats and Liberal intellectuals. The way Aptheker tears the hide off the trimmers, opportunists, and renegades, as the Hooks, Schlesingers, and the many others of the same kidney, constitutes some of the sharpest and most brilliant of American polemics. In analyzing the counter trends to the above degenerative tendencies, his book also does a real service. We need more of such incisive writing.

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