

**THE SEXUAL LABY-  
RINTH OF NIKOLAI  
GOGOL**

By Simon Karlinsky  
Harvard, 1976, 333 pp. \$14  
L of C 76-16486  
ISBN 0-674-80281-0

The 19th-century Russian writer Nikolai Gogol (*Dead Souls, The Inspector General*) was a veritable cornucopia of psychological and sexual obsessions. Once the Victorian tendency to see him as an earnest realist and social critic began to wane after 1900, the Freudians went to work on him. They brought to light his flight from women and his self-described "inner filth" of homosexuality. One might think that there wasn't any need for a book on his "sexual labyrinth." Simon Karlinsky believed there was—and proves himself correct. Without regard for the conventions that stifled much earlier scholarship, he scrutinizes the tortured world of Gogol's mind and demonstrates the relevance of his personal Minotaur to his literary masterpieces. The resulting book is clear enough for the layman, erudite enough for the expert.

Science & Technology**A SCIENTIST AT THE  
WHITE HOUSE: The Pri-  
vate Diary of President  
Eisenhower's Special As-  
sistant for Science and  
Technology**

By George B. Kistiakowsky  
Harvard, 1976, 448 pp. \$15  
L of C 76-19013  
ISBN 0-674-79496-6

Duke University historian Charles S. Maier in his introduction calls this diary "a documentary contribution of the first rank." Ukrainian-born chemist Kistiakowsky served in the White House from July 1959 until Kennedy's inauguration—through nuclear-test-ban problems, Khrushchev's visit, the U-2 "incident," and other crises that kept him close to international politics. Charged, in effect, with helping Ike make policy for science and make science serve policy, Kistiakowsky faithfully recorded meetings, conversations, and maneuvers (his own and others). His acerbic, disarmingly egotistical journal entries make entertaining reading. For example: "Attended a luncheon at the Atoms for Peace Awards affair at the Academy and sat in exceedingly boring company. Had the mild satisfaction of embarrassing Bob Wilson, the new AEC commissioner, for whom I have no special love because of his views on science, nuclear test ban, etc. . . . he . . . asked if I had been in any way involved in the development of the implosion atom bomb during the war, so I

---

announced that yes, I was in charge of it, which so confused Mr. Wilson we had very little to say to each other during the rest of the lunch."

**ENERGY AND CONFLICT:  
The Life and Times of**

**Edward Teller**

By Stanley A. Blumberg  
and Gwinn Owens  
Putnam, 1976, 492 pp. \$12.95  
L of C 75-43812  
ISBN 0-399-11551-X

Blumberg and Owens, two Baltimore journalists, base this first full account of the life of "the father of the H-bomb" on Edward Teller's unclassified papers and on lengthy interviews with their controversial subject, his scientific colleagues, and his friends. They provide fresh and interesting material on Teller's youth and education in Europe. Their main concern, however, is Teller's major role in America's race with the Soviet Union in the late '40s and early '50s to develop advanced nuclear weapons; and their most significant argument is that "the Russians achieved not only the first experimental nuclear fusion on earth, but also produced [in 1953] the first deliverable hydrogen bomb." Unfortunately, this claim is based on the misreading of incomplete evidence. It flaws an otherwise good popular biography, which more thorough research outside Teller's circle could have made a better book.

**PENGUINS: Past and Present, Here and There**

By George Gaylord Simpson  
Yale, 1976, 150 pp. \$10  
L of C 75-27211  
ISBN 0-300-01969-6

The first European discoverers of penguins thought they were geese. Simpson, a well-known biologist, writes—for "adults who do not necessarily know much about penguins but for whom there is nothing that they do not really want to know"—a history of man's association with these beguiling birds that is also a witty treatise on their biological uniqueness. His chapter on "the basic penguin" answers many questions about their unbirdlike attributes, such as why they can't fly and why they stand up in such a formal, funny way. Other chapters cover the ecology and behavior of the 18 species—and their surprisingly wide distribution, from Antarctica to New Zealand, to Peru, to the Galápagos and the Falkland Islands, where, until recently, November 9 was a school holiday traditionally devoted to penguin-egg hunting.