
THE VIOLET DOTS

by Michael Kernan
Braziller, 1978
170 pp. \$7.95
L of C 77-94496
ISBN 0-8076-0887-4

Tom Easton, a third-generation coal miner, volunteered for France with the Tyneside Scottish Regiment in 1914. He survived the "bloodiest day in British history" when 57,470 men became casualties as the Battle of the Somme opened on July 1, 1916. He survived the last months of the war as a P.O.W.—working in a German mine. He survived the harsh life back in the Northumberland coal pits. Happily, Easton kept a diary. And journalist Michael Kernan weaves interviews, observations, other material, and excerpts from the diary into a compelling portrait of the life and times of this sturdy soldier, union organizer, community leader, and finally, past the age of 80, Member of the Order of the British Empire, invested by Queen Elizabeth II.

Contemporary Affairs

PEOPLE AND POLITICS:

The Years 1960–1975

by Willy Brandt
Little, Brown, 1978
524 pp. \$16.95
L of C 78-7595
ISBN 0-316-10640-2

In *The Other German: Willy Brandt's Life and Times* (1976), journalist David Binder wrote a fine full biography of the ex-Chancellor, from his illegitimate birth in Lubeck in 1913 through his resignation in 1974. Brandt deals only with the recent past in this first volume of a planned *Life*. The drama opens on August 13, 1961, five weeks before his election as mayor of West Berlin, with the Russian announcement that Berlin had been divided (the first rough Wall went up three days later). It moves on through the hectic Berlin years and his subsequent stint as West Germany's *Ostpolitiking* Foreign Minister. Brandt closes with reflections on what has occurred in his own country and the world since May 6, 1974, the day he stepped down from West Germany's highest political post following the arrest of one of his top advisers as a Soviet spy. Readers who look for new disclosures about his relationship with the spy, Gunther Guillaume, will be disappointed. "This was dealt with by the competent court and a parliamentary committee of inquiry," Brandt says, in his single reference to the devastating episode. "I have nothing to add here." He is somewhat less reticent when

it comes to anecdotes about VIPs. Lyndon Johnson, then Vice President of the United States, on an early visit to Berlin persuaded Mayor Brandt, whose shoes he admired, to take him shopping on a Saturday night long after closing time. LBJ bought two pairs of each style he liked, Brandt reports, because his feet differed in size.

A PRISONER AND A PRISONER

by Susan Sheehan
Houghton Mifflin, 1978
285 pp. \$10.95
L of C 78-2728
ISBN 0-395-26684-X

After the bloody 1971 prison riot at Attica, N.Y., a surge of media interest in prisoners and their plight led to ideological polemics among both journalists and sociologists. *New Yorker* writer Susan Sheehan, already widely known for her *Welfare Mother* (1976), destroys the clichés—brutal guards, innocent convicts—as she coolly examines life in New York's Green Haven maximum security prison, and, in particular, the comfortable existence of robber George ("Popeye") Malinow, 57, who has been "in and out" for 40 years. Without moralizing, Sheehan makes it clear that institutional "rehabilitation" of criminals is a costly illusion. Moreover, she suggests, the American system of justice makes it fairly easy for convicted murderers and thieves to resume their old ways.

THE TEAMSTERS

by Steven Brill
Simon and Schuster, 1978
414 pp. \$11.95
L of C 78-16610
ISBN 0-671-22771-8

Oddly enough, despite its continuing power and economic importance, the American labor movement has lately received little serious attention from either newsmen or academics. Lawyer-journalist Steven Brill's detailed portrait of the scandal-ridden 2.3 million-member International Brotherhood of Teamsters cannot fill the gap. But even as he traces the various corruptions, vacillations, and intrigues of Jimmy Hoffa, David Beck, Harold Gibbons, Anthony (Tony Pro) Provenzano, and the other Teamster chieftains, Brill does not overlook the workers' everyday lives or the Teamsters' hard-won gains in wages and benefits in a tough industry. In the end, he says, the Teamsters have produced "some good deeds, some bad deeds, and . . . a sad bottom line that it could have been much better."