

Laskov remarked. "The men behave better when the girls are around, so we keep them together as much as possible. We do separate their quarters with a good strong fence!"

Laskov's particular pride is the army's education program. The army is by far the chief agency of the nation for secondary and adult education. Newcomers from as many as seventy-three different countries have to be taught the Hebrew language, mathematics, history, and geography, along with the freedoms and the responsibilities of a democratic society. Those who have been graduated from Israel's public-school system, compulsory only until fourteen, are educated by the army for the profession or occupation they have elected and for which they reveal some aptitude. The army is the largest publisher of textbooks in Israel.

"An army is a wasteful institution," Laskov said earnestly. "We wish we didn't have to maintain one, but seeing that we do, we're determined to make it waste as little as possible. This job of education and citizenship training had to be done, and the first thing we knew we found the army doing it."

The Israeli Army performs yet another important function: it is the principal builder of roads, bridges, agricultural settlements, and reclamation projects.

LASKOV ACKNOWLEDGES that there is a marked degree of chauvinism among Israeli youth generally and in the Israeli Army in particular. But he stubbornly insists that it will never develop into militarism.

"First," he said, "the citizenry and the army are too intermingled. The officer corps is not a thing apart. Too many of our people have bitter memories of firsthand experience with militarism, and our parliament is forever raising hell with us over what little rank we do pull once in a while to get our work done."

And he added, "The test of it came at the end of 1956, when the government ordered us out of Sinai. To a man, we in the army hated to leave what we had won in a good fight, but we buttoned our lips and obeyed the government's orders. That's the way it will always be in this country."

Our Soft Sell At Brussels

MARYA MANNES

THE POINT of a World's Fair is, I suppose, to promote trade and tourism. It would be a highly expensive gesture for all concerned if it failed to do either; and the Belgians, who have paid dearly for being hosts, are not an impractical people. In the guise of a world center, which it has never been, and a festival focus, which is not in the Flemish nature, Brussels is now attracting millions who have hitherto bypassed it for Paris; and most of them will be less interested in reciprocal trade than in the artificial amalgam of nations presided over by that glittering symbol of matter, the Atomium.

For what fascinates the ordinary tourist is not the lofty concept of a world community—for my part this is singularly absent in Brussels in spite of massed flags and written legends—but the presence in one area of thirty or more separate national identities pressing for recognition. "Look at me!" the pavilions cry; "this is what I am!" The Soviet building, crammed with machines and slogans, roars, "I am Mighty!" The French one, jutting and soaring into space like some steel and glass pterodactyl, screams "I am a Great Power!" The German glass boxes, neat and passive, say "I am efficient but harmless." And the little nations content themselves by being what other people think of them. Thailand, for instance, is one small golden shrine, upturned and spiked like a dancer's fingers; and Monaco looks like a small casino, with a sailboat anchored in the pond below it.

And what of us, the Americans? Our great round building says, inside and out, "We Have Taste," surely the newest and most soft-spoken claim we have ever made. But there it is: we have. Edward Stone has made the American pavilion a joy of light and grace and air and proportion, and those respon-

sible for its interior arrangements have taken care to extend this grace and lightness to small things and to make the atmosphere of the pavilion probably the pleasantest in the whole Fair. It does not overwhelm, it does not exhaust, it does not assault. But neither, oddly enough, does it impress. For although the building itself has a grand design, what it contains is bereft of one. Everything is American, but from it emerges no real American image. Here again is the immense irony of a nation that can sell anything but itself. Either our sales talk has been too blatant, swinging between a triumphant materialism and a complacent morality, or, as in Brussels, we whisper our merits.

But What Did It Say?

"My servants and my employees all think the Soviet pavilion is wonderful," said a Belgian businessman. "But my friends—and, of course, myself—much prefer the American. It is so full of taste." And he went on to say that the reason ordinary people—the crowds—were impressed by the Soviet pavilion was not merely because of its size and the ponderous force of its exhibits, but because everything there was plain as day. In the American pavilion they were puzzled. Oh, they liked the fashion models and the TV theater and the voting booths and the "think" machine; it was all very nice. But what did it say?

I wondered about that myself as I went from case to case and section to section. The place was full of nice ideas. There was a case showing the complete outfit of pads and guards and gear a football player wears, and a note describing him as "the modern knight in armor." There was a case full of exquisite shells from the beach at Sanibel Island. There were cases showing, with witty placement, the kind of hats we wear, from Stetson to beanie, and the kind of

shoes, from space shoes to play shoes; there was one showing nothing but tumbleweed from the Western prairies, lit from beneath to make a luminous tracery. And there was a case, not far from it, full of Lincoln photographs from Stefan Lorant's collection.

There were panels studded with the campaign buttons we wear in election years, and hung with license plates from all the states. And there was a wide circle of screens displaying the double spreads from one day's edition of the New York Sunday *Times*. "People keep askin' me what it is," said a pretty young guide with a Georgia armband, "and ah keep tellin' 'em. But they just don't believe me! 'You mean a week or a month?' they keep sayin', and ah say, no, a *dayah's* edition!"

BUT THE EXPLANATION, in a soft voice or in small print, is not enough, it seems, to make people understand. It is not enough to pile a table with Sears catalogues, with no accompanying legend. Here was something that cried for dramatic projection: a book that caused a revolution in the country's economy and customs, and in the lives of farmers remote from the markets of cities; the gospel of mail-order living.

It is not enough to show the most modern of kitchens if no American housewife is seen in it, using the marvelous instruments, piling clothes in the washer, and taking them out of the dryer.

It is not enough to show a large panel studded with the dials we use to control our heat and our cold, our food and our laundry and our time. Who can grasp the electronic ease of our homes from a panel, or believe in the reality of motionless mannequins who sprawl in the gayest clothes in impossibly modern rooms?

And who, among the millions who do not know us, can understand the Steinberg murals, deft and satiric and delightful as they are, showing us in kind caricature? They belong on the walls of a smart restaurant or in the pages of a sophisticated magazine. The crowds in Brussels pass them in quick bewilderment, as if they had missed a private joke in a foreign language.

What they do understand is only what moves and reacts: the Tele-rama, the new voting booths (when will we get them ourselves?), the Brass Rail where they can buy hot dogs and sundaes, the girl guides who smile so intelligently and can speak in French and look so nice; and, of course, the models who stroll or hobble down the long, long ramp and onto the platform in the middle of the pool in the middle of the pavilion, under the round sky hole. The models are glamorous and cold (they do not smile), and the men look at their extraordinary legs, and the homely, square, gray-beige European housewives stare and sniff, and the schoolgirls sigh over the long ball gowns and giggle at the preposterous knee-high balloons. All these have effect, but there is still no design to correlate these features into an image of a people.

And what of our art? The sculpture, I would say, is in real harmony with the building and of much higher quality than the painting. Baizerman and Rozchak and Lipschitz have molded metal into stirring shapes, and Mary Callery's fountain made of turning iron wheels and twisted iron shafts plays freshly with water even if its motion is more mechanical than poetic.

A Wooden Figurehead of Justice

The paintings are another matter. I recall several attractive pictures, noting two names new to me, Lundy Siegrist and Bernard Perlin, and a considerably greater number of abstract-impressionist canvases by better-known painters that bear the distinction of being no worse and probably better than the art in the Soviet pavilion, which is unspeakably bad. If there is a choice between a gigantic chromo of happy Soviet peasants (the standard trademark of their cultural display) and a square of brazen splatters, I'll take the square. It represents at least a free expression.

In this American art section there is a long narrow case showing photographs of the artists themselves, at home and at work: a good idea that could have been infinitely more impressive if the stature of the painters and the size of the photographs had been much larger. The best of our painters were not in evi-

dence, possibly because they are over the age limit set by our jury for art: a strange criterion indeed, which has lately been modified to include older and more established painters.

As for the folk art, maligned in advance as being a trivial part of our culture, it drew far more pleased attention from foreign visitors than the modern section. It was clear and simple and honest and free of intellectual pretensions, and with a great feeling of American roots. I remember with a start of joy a big wooden figurehead of Justice, noble and strong, which I wished had been given major prominence in the pavilion. It too had the best of America in it, and the best of its unknown creator.

Yet all these things in the pavilion, good or bad, were separate items, unrelated to any major unifying theme. They were all accessories, mostly minor, to the fact of the United States, the fact of the American people. And you could see them and appreciate them without forming any conclusion about us except, again, that we are people of taste as well as of wealth. And pleasant as that is, and new as the idea of our having taste may be to the people of Europe and Asia who have for so long thought us without it, it is not enough. We are underselling ourselves.

It is easy, of course, to arrive at a negative without advancing a positive. Any criticism of what we have done or failed to do at Brussels must include the premise of a budget which had to fight for its life against the hacking machete of John J. Rooney, a Democrat from Brooklyn who views culture as a form of perversion, and which, though ultimately granted, must still have made the pavilion a temple of frustration to those concerned with its content.

Yet a broad vision might have prevailed over limited means.

What Isn't There

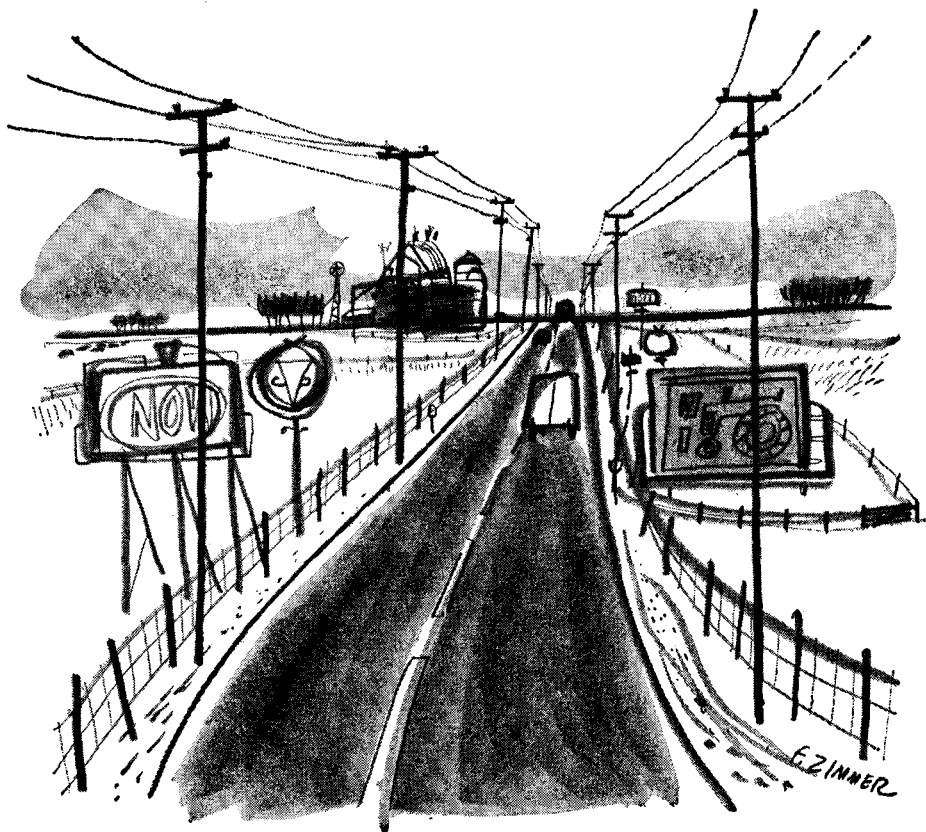
The first thing I missed was the feeling produced by the Lincoln Memorial in Washington. Whatever purists may say about its neo-classicism or the literal convention of the sculpture, the great seated figure in the half-light and the words he spoke set in stone compel in all who see them a sense of homage toward this

highest American reality. Obviously the Memorial could not have been reproduced in Brussels, but the pavilion deserved more than a small glass case of photographs devoted to the American most revered and most loved by most of the world's people. And I can think of other great men who could have inhabited, with him, a sort of "Book of the American Conscience" that would have made the Marxian patter of the Soviet pavilion betray its infinite sterility.

Missing too was any sense of the great breadth and sweep of the United States, and I would have liked to have seen a division of our country into East and West and North and South, to show the different textures of our lives. The West, in particular, has figured so large in the concept of America that has been impressed on other peoples that an exhibit showing, for instance, an example of the real West juxtaposed with one of the movie West might have amused the crowds as much as enlightened them. I know that a complete Western rodeo will be brought to the Fair grounds this summer, but I doubt if anything would have delighted foreign visitors to the pavilion itself more than a life-size replica of the old saloon bar-and-porch used in every Western ever made, complete with live or inanimate stock characters—particularly if they could see next to it some elements, say, of a modern cattle ranch in Wyoming.

There is no sense of change and growth at all in the pavilion, and no real sense of a great nation in the throes of transition. We are not moving forward at Brussels but standing still. And if this is indeed an honest reflection of our present condition, we have more to worry about than the exhibit itself.

I AM NOT SAYING that any of the ideas proffered here for giving dramatic reality to our past and our future would have been easily translated, or that some of them would not have been impracticable or controversial or prohibitively expensive. They are merely indications of how an American pattern might emerge and a message be communicated: an American statement as clear and whole and creative as Edward Stone's building.



Hog-tied Farmers In the Corn Belt

DALE KRAMER

"CONFUSION is rife, and likely to get rifer," said Herb Ring, a good-natured forty-year-old farmer who lives on two hundred acres in Keokuk County, Iowa, in the heart of the corn and hog belt.

"We've got a perfect symbol of the agricultural confusion a few miles from here," Herb continued. "In a little town of maybe two hundred, we had an up-and-coming implement and hardware dealer. After the war he built a new store, a big one. You know what is in that store today? Corn—thousands of bushels of it. He moved the implements and hardware out and leased the space to the government for grain storage. It was the only way he could be sure of making any money."

Herb turned and pointed to a huge mound of corn corseted at the base by a tall wire-and-slat fence.

"That batch is too wet to seal without mechanical drying," he said. "If I were to have it custom-dried, I still wouldn't have crib space to seal it. It has to be fed—and as soon as possible. So I breed more sows. Right now I could get a nice premium on these little pigs as feeders. Everybody wants pigs, pigs, pigs. And you know what that means: a bust next fall. Or at least a low market, with the big bust in 1959."

Herb finds himself in a dilemma. The corn, which did not dry properly in the field because of a wet autumn, would not keep well unless put through a drier. Even if he were to have it dried, which is an expensive process, he would have no place to store it because his cribs are already brimful of corn, properly dried and under government seal. Therefore he must buy more pigs to