

# Striding Down Freedom Road

**MARCHING BLACKS.** By Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. New York: The Dial Press. 1946. 218 pp. \$2.50.  
**NEGRO LABOR: A NATIONAL PROBLEM.** By Robert C. Weaver. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1946. 329 pp. \$3.

Reviewed by H. A. OVERSTREET

**T**HE first of these is a fighting book—a non-violent fighting book. It is also a victory book, for there are in its pages no doubts about the outcome. The marching blacks are marching—and the direction is not back to slavery.

On December 7, 1941 [writes Congressman Powell] America for the first time in its history enlisted upon two wars simultaneously. One was a world war and the other a civil war. One was to be a bloody fight for the preservation and extension of democracy on a world basis—the other a bloodless revolution within these shores against a bastard democracy.

These last two are not pleasant words for some white ears. For the black man to say it straight out that our democracy is illegitimate spawn will rouse fury among white-supremacy folk. Yet Mr. Powell has chapter and verse for his indictment. "The sneak attack of the Japanese upon our mid-Pacific base was no more vicious than the open attacks that had been waged consistently . . . against the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights." And, as he later shows, that are today being waged by Congressmen in their fight against the Negro's right to fair employment practices.

The author calls his book "an interpretive history of the rise of the black common man;" and he dedicates it "to the freedom fighters of the earth, at home and abroad, black and white, Jew and Gentile, Protestant and Catholic." The book is written in the context of a world fight for freedom. We are, as he rightly tells us, waging a civil war that extends all over the world—a war between those who insist upon their right to push others around, and those who, with a new passion of energy, insist that others shall no longer be pushed around.

The book tells the story of the Negro's growth "not in terms of statistics, population, and wealth, but in terms of his increasing mass power." This power, the writer says, is a new phenomenon. Negroes have hitherto failed chiefly because of divisions among themselves: differences as to

policy—between those who would appease the white man and those who would fight him; between those who would beg favors of him and those who would demand rights; between those who would resign themselves to be meek hewers of wood and drawers of water in a white man's society and those who would aspire to any level of profession or occupation of which their minds were capable. There were the divisions, too, of caste and class. Negroes imitated the snobbery of the whites, looking down upon their darker or their poorer fellows from heights of lighter color or greater wealth.

Dr. Powell tells a story of Negro unification that is amazing both as a fact and as a portent of the future. If he is correct in his account (and he brings fact after fact to support his contention), the Negro is no longer powerless. In achieving his own unification — in becoming the "mass Negro"—he has found his essential weapon of offense and defense.

But the Negro does not stand alone. A growing number of whites are marching beside him. This, obviously, is as it should be. Negro nationalism has no place where equality is the word. For where equality is the word there must be an equality of fighting valor. Whites and blacks must fight side by side. In this book they are shown, in instance after instance, fighting and moving ahead together.

For the white reader who is well minded toward the Negro but who is still unclear about the distance we must go before the racial issue approaches a solution this book should

be illuminating reading. In few books is the ugliness of racial injustice so vividly and succinctly described; in few is the case so clearly stated for the fact that race prejudice is a poison that kills dignity and decency in the souls of race haters.

In the final part of the book, Dr. Powell proposes a strategy of mass migration from the South. Here opinions will seriously differ. To some persons, a mass migration of Southern Negroes into the already congested slums of Northern cities, particularly at a time when anti-Negro sentiment has been roused among Northern whites, would appear to be a grave mistake. Successes, such as those the author describes, along political lines would seem to such persons to be far more effective.

The author's bitterness against the betrayal of Christianity by the churches should be read by all churchmen. Defiantly he asserts:

The first duty of the blacks . . . is to Christianize religion . . . Negro religionists refuse to be divided by the age-old antagonisms of the white church—Protestant versus Catholic, denomination versus denomination . . . The Protestantism of Luther was of dubious doctrine. The Protestantism of the postwar world will be a Protestantism of protest. Based upon the spirit, it will cut across all existing lines of communion. It will be a religion of one faith, one people and one world, and not a provincial ecclesiasticism. It will recognize goodness in all the religions of the earth, and will not strive to place Christianity on a competitive basis but on a cooperative one. This is the religion of the new man the world over, black and white, brown and yellow.

Mr. Weaver's book on "Negro Labor" is a valuable piece of detailed re-

## ANSWERS TO LITERARY I. Q.

Ibsen: "Hedda Gabler." O'Neill: "Anna Christie." Priestley: "Laburnum Grove." Barry: "Holiday."

Van Druten: "There's Always Juliet." Coward: "Hay Fever." Van Druten: "The Flowers of the Forest."

Barry: "Hotel Universe." Kaufman and Connelly: "Beggar on Horseback." Baum: "Grand Hotel."

Bordeaux: "The House." Dunsany: "If." Ferber and Kaufman: "The Royal Family." Chekhov: "The Cherry Orchard." Milne: "The Dover Road." Milne: "The Romantic Age," Glaspell and Cook: "Suppressed Desires." Shaw: "Arms and the Man." Mitchell: "The New York Idea." Rice: "Street Scene."

Osborne: "The Vinegar Tree." O'Neill: "Mourning Becomes Electra." Hazeltan and Benrimo: "The Yellow Jacket." Houghton: "The Dear Departed." Akins: "The Old Maid."

Ervine: "John Ferguson." France: "The Man Who Married a Dumb Wife." O'Neill: "Strange Interlude." Shaw: "Candida." Kennedy: "The Servant in the House."

Wilde: "A Woman of No Importance." Akins: "Déclassé." Riley: "Personal Appearance." Thomas and Miller: "Come Out of the Kitchen." Middleton: "A Good Woman." Wilde: "The Importance of Being Earnest." Maugham: "Constant Wife." Sheriff: "Journey's End." Chodorov: "Kind Lady." Gray and Hopwood: "The Best People."

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search in a field where the knowledge of most of us is vague or scanty or non-existent. It is the story of labor, management, and government facing the new and difficult problems of peace conversion with the added difficulty of fitting the Negro into the picture. Part I describes in careful detail the overall development, from the first reluctant admission of a few Negroes into war work to their eventual inclusion in large numbers under the President's directive against job discrimination. This part records, too, the almost complete breakdown because of inefficient vocational training in most of the schools allotted to Negroes. Mr. Weaver writes:

At the close of World War I, the Negro emerged with a foothold in unskilled jobs in heavy industry. During World War II, he acquired a foothold in single-skilled and semi-skilled jobs in many industries and a place as a worker in a wide variety of industries and plants

... This much we can now say, the Negro has improved his economic status during the war emergency.

Part II of the book takes up the interpretation of this modest statement, discussing in detail the factors which play on the Negro in the economic life of the country. Part III discusses the future of the Negro in our economy.

This volume, in its own sober way, is a backing up of what Mr. Powell writes in his more militant book. Out of the multitude of economic facts and figures the picture comes clear: The Negro presses forward. If the economy prospers, he will continue to press forward. If he is halted, it will be because the economy has turned sick.

Both books prove with utter clarity that the day is past when the white man can hope to put the Negro "back in his place." The Negro's place is by the white man's side.

## Islands Whose Names Will Live

*ON TO WESTWARD.* By Robert Sherrod. New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce. 1945. 333 pp. \$3.

Reviewed by

Brigadier General DONALD ARMSTRONG

**M**R. SHERROD proved in his "Tarawa" that he is among the foremost eye-witness reporters of the Pacific war. He sustains his preëminence in this second report that describes Admiral Nimitz's Central Pacific campaign on Saipan, Iwo Jima, and the initial stages of Okinawa. Mr. Sherrod's realism is vivid and varied and utterly without glamor. His book confirms the words of Isaiah that "every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood: But this shall be with burning and fuel of fire." For burning and fuel of fire became one of the chief weapons against the Japanese when they sought refuge in their caves and underground burrows on these islands.

The warriors Mr. Sherrod writes about are the Marines. The confusion is lessened, at least for the reader of this stirring book, by his ability to describe the battlefield, to explain the enemy and the esprit de corps and courage of the Marines, and their ways and means of annihilating the defending garrisons. The Army divisions that fought with the Marines may be disappointed to find little reference to their activities. Mr. Sherrod points out, however, that he writes "what he sees and hears and feels," that he seeks to "reflect the

mood of men in battle as those men appear and talk and fight." Consequently, he writes principally of a comparatively small sector within his own sight and hearing, and as he accompanied the Marines in their landings and advances, the other troops are only casually mentioned. Nevertheless these samples of "island-hopping" illustrate accurately the grim price of victory against the Japanese. There is enough about the rest of the fighting beyond the reach of Mr. Sherrod's eyes and ears to make understandable the conduct of these campaigns with the help of a few simplified maps.

When Mr. Sherrod reached headquarters he looked about him and gathered material for sketches of Admiral Nimitz and many of his Navy and Marine assistants. He also likes to name names of enlisted men and officers whose exploits are particularly noteworthy. Certainly the Marines will include Mr. Sherrod among their favorite authors. The layman will doubtless find that the book rouses emotions of fear and horror rather than pleasure, but he cannot escape a feeling of wonder and admiration for the few thousand men who endured this ordeal that the people at home might live their lives in safety. Mr. Sherrod points out emphatically that we had great superiority in sea, air, and weapon power when we started fighting on Saipan. His observations are ample evidence that, without superior morale, training, and leadership, material superiority is no assurance of victory.

## ART EXHIBITIONS

FEBRUARY

### AKRON, OHIO

*Art Institute:* Modern Architecture for the Modern School, to Feb. 17; If You're Going to Build a House, The Lesson of War Housing, Planning the Modern Home, Look at Your Neighborhood, Akron City Planning, City Planning, to Feb. 22; Integrated Building, Feb. 7-28.

### ALBANY, N.Y.

*Institute of History and Art:* Painting in Canada, to Mar. 10; 6th American Drawing Annual, Feb. 14- Mar. 10.

### ATLANTA, GA.

*Art Association and High Museum:* Your Doctor Speaks (Upjohn Co. and Midtown Galleries, N. Y.), through Feb.

### AUBURN, N.Y.

*Cayuga Museum:* Paintings by Frank C. Kirk; Historical Exhibit, Hats in History; Health Exhibit, Modern Medicine; Modern Prints, Popular Photography, all, through Feb.

### BALTIMORE, MD.

*Museum of Art:* Paintings by Raoul Dufy, Prints by Daumier, to Feb. 24; Definitions, Caricatures by Aline Fruhauf, to Feb. 28. Annual All Maryland Artists Exhibition, to Mar. 3; 19th and 20th Century French Paintings, current. *Walters Gallery:* Jewelry, to Feb. 16.

### BLOOMFIELD HILLS, MICH.

*Cranbrook Academy:* 1st Biennial Exhibition of Contemporary Textiles and Ceramics, Ancient Peruvian Textiles (from Textile Museum of the District of Columbia), Selected Textiles from the Museum Textile Coll., through Feb.

### BOSTON, MASS.

*Museum of Fine Arts:* Zoë Oliver Sherman Collection, to Feb. 24.

### BUFFALO, N.Y.

*Albright Art Gallery:* Feininger and Hartley, to Feb. 17; Buffalo Society of Artists, Monochrome Show, Feb. 4-24.

### CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

*Fogg Art Museum:* Treasures from the Islamic Collection, French Paintings, through Feb. 28; Graphic Work of Edvard Munch, Feb. 5 through Mar. 19; Graphic Work of Paul Gauguin, Feb. 5 through Mar. 30.

### CHICAGO, ILL.

*Art Institute:* Calvin Albert, Egon P. Weiner, Exhibition of Drawings, through Feb.; Bellows, to Mar. 10; Looking at Sculpture, through June 1. *Associated American Artists:* James Chapin, Feb. 6-25; First Anniversary Show-Thomas Benton, Feb. 27-Mar. 16.

### CINCINNATI, OHIO

*Modern Art Society:* Before, During, and After (Veteran's Show), to Feb. 25; Moholy-Nagy Exhibit, Feb. 12-Mar. 18.

### CLEVELAND, OHIO

*Museum of Art:* 17th Exhibition of Contemporary American Oil Paint-