

U.S.A. *Complacency may be the US's most dangerous enemy. This runs as a persistent theme through Duncan Aikman's recent "The Turning Stream." In it Aikman—who reviews Bert Andrews's "Washington Witch Hunt" below—wrote (and surely it is pertinent to the books reviewed below): "The USA people fell in love with the bigness of their operations, and above all with the bigness of success itself. They were so much the world's greatest nationalistic success story that too many of us nowadays come close to believing that nothing but success can happen to us." The "spoiled giant" complex, as Aikman calls it, will not overcome us as long as there are critical books like his, and Andrews's and MacIver's (reviewed below). The latter, incidentally, brings to mind Malcom Ross's excellent "All Manner of Men" on the wartime FEPC.*

Un-American Activities

WASHINGTON WITCH HUNT. By Bert Andrews. New York: Random House. 1948. 218 pp. \$2.50.

Reviewed by DUNCAN AIKMAN

THIS is everybody's book for awareness of political hysteria in Washington. And since political hysteria cannot happen in the American Government's centers of control, without danger to every American's security and liberty as a citizen, "Washington Witch Hunt" even more significantly is everybody's warning.

Not that Mr. Andrews writes like a man driving the hook-and-ladder truck down Main Street with the siren screaming. This is hard, terse, pleasingly unspectacular newspaper prose. Head of the Washington bureau of the *New York Herald Tribune* and winner this year of a Pulitzer Prize more deserved than some, Bert Andrews doesn't bother, as too many newspapermen do when gotten "with book," to step out of stylistic character.

In a quiet, toughly factual way, he plainly is excited about his theme. This includes the firing of ten State Department employees a year ago as "security risks"; the House of Representatives's Un-American Activities Committee's proceedings last fall—complete with bull-roarer and medicine men's public relations devices—against ten Hollywood film writers and directors vaguely accused of having tried unsuccessfully to insert Communist innuendos into the American cinema's art products; the strange case of Dr. Edward U. Condon, director of the Federal Bureau of Standards, who evidently neglected to let the Un-American Activities Committee dry-clean all his ideas and pick all his personal social circle for him. It also includes some self-justifications from FBI Chief J. Edgar



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Hoover, and the even stranger case of William Z. Foster, chairman of the US Communist Party in the United States, trying evasively, in answer to an Andrews questionnaire, to create the impression that there is no more connection between USSR and USA "party line" than there is, say, between the GOP's Joe Pew and members of the "King Charles the Martyr" cult in England.

Mr. Andrews lights up his subject largely by relating what happened, or what various people said, on the record. A great fraction of his book is made up, in fact, of his *Herald Tribune* accounts of the State Department cases. Some of these stories brought Mr. Andrews his Pulitzer award, and they deserve to be made permanently available on every American family's reading table, rather than be things one vaguely remembers having once read in some newspaper. Readers will have to pick up their excitement about the issues with which Mr. Andrews deals rather from the facts as he pre-

sents them than from any evangelical rhetoric of his. But this reviewer ventures the prediction that all mentally awake readers will catch plenty.

For instance, from the Andrews account of the job of expertly suave browbeating which the State Department did on one "Mr. Blank," fired from the State Department in June 1947 as a "security risk." "Mr. Blank," a personage already famous as a sacrificial character in American civil rights struggles, was obviously one of the State Department's top economists, working on European rehabilitation problems.

But when he was dropped with "potential security risk" on his official record, it was impossible for him, in any of his appeals to State's purging officers or in the official "hearing" which they finally granted him, to find out what he was supposed to be "insecure" about, or why.

Fortunately, "Washington Witch Hunt" does report some improvement over the depths of 1947's hysteria. "Mr. Blank" and the others fired with him were eventually permitted to resign without the words "potential security risk" going on their job records. A somewhat more sympathetic method was set up for hearings and appeals on similar future cases—though still without any rights being granted the accused to be confronted with the testimony against him.

In today's period of intense political struggle and whirling economic and social change, such cases are peculiarly frightening. To get through such a period at all, the US Government needs not only the best minds of the country in its service, but the highest possible flexibility in all its thinking muscles. And this kind of flexibility requires, not merely old-fashioned American tolerance for clashing views and opinions as to the aims of government and society, but a wider and more receptive tolerance to new ideas than even America has known before.

Bert Andrews's little book, simply by letting sense and daylight into the mess, is a newspaperman's public service outstanding in the history of American journalism. It comes with an even more powerful effect from a man who is personally a conservative. It should be read and absorbed by everyone interested in genuinely "un-American activities."

LITERARY I.Q. ANSWERS

1. Balzac and Saroyan. 2. Du Maurier and Thackeray. 3. Boccaccio and Keats. 4. Cervantes and Gilbert. 5. Swift and Steele. 6. Richardson and Fielding. 7. Scott and Thackeray. 8. Edith Wharton and Marcia Davenport. 9. Wordsworth and Shelley. 10. Dickens and Robert Benchley.

Throttlebottom Septet

VEN BY CHANCE: The Accidental Presidents. By Peter R. Levin. New York: Farrar, Straus & Co. 1948. 174 pp. \$4.

Reviewed by RAYMOND WALTERS, JR.

That satirical musical comedy of two decades ago, "Of Thee I Sing," for Moore created in the amiable, smiling Mr. Throttlebottom the epitome of all the Vice Presidents of the United States. For \$20,000 a year Mr. Throttlebottom presides over the deliberations of the Senate, casts the deciding vote in case of a tie, and is called in case something happens to the Chief Executive. The accident that for a while Throttlebottom now occupies the White House and seems most certain to be his party's nominee this November led Peter R. Levin to write this thoughtful and careful study of the seven Vice Presidents who succeeded to the Presidency.

On the whole, Mr. Levin's septet is a commonplace lot: John Tyler, a Virginia Democrat put into office by the Whigs, who became a general without an army; Millard Fillmore, a self-made man from upstate New York, who had no discernible principle except self-advancement; Andrew Johnson, the Tennessee Democrat, who is bested by the Republicans in his attempt to carry out what he believed to be Lincoln's plan for Southern reconstruction; Chester A. Arthur, the bane and cultivated New York lawyer, whose association with corrupt machine politics was to cause one to exclaim, "Chet Arthur, President of the United States! Good God!"; the dynamic Theodore Roosevelt, searching for a crusade to lead when the hierarchy of his party was loyal to such ambitions; Calvin Coolidge, the Vermont Puritan, whose presence in the White House salved the American people's conscience during their years of saturnalia; and Harry Truman, the affable, modest umn of Missouri courthouse politics, obviously out beyond his depth dealing with problems of global magnitude. None of the accidental presidents, with the exception of T. R., dominated his time. The result is that the political giants of each era—the Mayas, Calhouns, Stevenses, Conklings, Odges, and Vandenberges—steal the show in spite of Mr. Levin's best efforts to keep them in supporting roles.

Only T. R., in Mr. Levin's view, approached greatness, but the social climate of his period did not permit him to achieve it. (I suspect Mr. Levin underestimates the strength of the regressive movement.) Coolidge ex-

isted as a public figure by reason of the society in which he lived; "when the society decayed his reputation fell." The other five were mediocrities, but they were not among the sorriest tenants of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue by any means.

For most of his book Mr. Levin, who was trained as an historian, writes judiciously and with an erudition founded on wide reading. When he reaches the Truman Administration, the immediacy of his subject seems to have rattled him a bit. In a section that takes up fully a quarter of his book he often writes loosely, as when he implies that virtually all Republicans are isolationists. While he carefully details the weaknesses of our policy toward Russia, he is vague in his concession that the Russian attitude has not been entirely enlightened.

The most valuable section of "Seven by Chance" is that in which Mr. Levin assesses our methods of choosing a Presidential understudy. He quotes the predictions Gouverneur Morris and William Plumer made at the time of the adoption of the present method of picking Vice Presidents—that nominations henceforth would be made to balance the ticket geographically and between political factions, rarely with a thought of the man's qualifications to be President. These factors governed the nomination of every accidental President. Since, on the record, the chances are one in three that when we elect a Vice President we are also choosing a President, the question is worthy of some reflection. Mr. Levin mentions a number of ways to improve the Vice Presidential problem, but clearly none of them appeals to him very strongly. In the end he winds up with the obvious but nonetheless sage observation that Americans ought to take more care in choosing Vice Presidents.

Mr. Levin leaves one point of current interest unexplained. Not until 1904 did any party feel obligated to

nominate for the Presidency a man who had moved into that office through the death of his superior. What is it that now causes a party, the majority of whose members feel apathy or even downright disapproval for its titular chief, to give him the highest honor in its custody?

Battling Bias

THE MORE PERFECT UNION. By R. M. MacIver. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1948. 311 pp. \$4.

Reviewed by WILL MASLOW

IN recent years we have had a plentitude of books deploring racial and religious prejudice, dissecting its causes, describing its ravages, but with scarcely a word of advice about overcoming it. Professor MacIver's book supplies this lack and offers an action program for controlling discrimination.

The distinguished sociologist begins his manual on social engineering by finding our country to be caste-ridden, with 14,000,000 Negroes, 5,000,000 Jews, 2,000,000 Latin-Americans, 370,000 American Indians, 300,000 Orientals, and 11,000,000 persons of Slavic and 5,000,000 of Italian descent, not fully admitted to the membership of the community and beset by social or economic disparagement. The caste line separating them from the rest of their fellow Americans rests not on native differences but on visibility factors which by and large cannot be overcome by achievement, by wealth, or by individual capacity. If these fissure lines in our society deepen, he warns, the creed, unity, and welfare of America are menaced. Professor MacIver then offers the penetrating observation that the most promising line of attack is not on the prejudicial attitudes which sustain this compartmentalization of our society, but on the discrimination which denies equal access to the opportunity.

The direct effort to change attitudes by brotherhood weeks, good-will rituals, the wide dissemination of the facts designed to refute prejudice, and other attempts at mass indoctrination are ineffective, Professor MacIver demonstrates, after reviewing recent psychological experimentation. Attacking discrimination, however, not only promises quick and durable results in promoting equality, but indirectly alters the social conditioning which gives rise to prejudice.

Professor MacIver then surveys the terrain on three battle fronts: the economic, the political, and the educational. He agrees with Gunnar Myrdal that the Southern white is most ready to yield precisely what the

