



Wednesday Night on the Box

FOR a number of unimportant reasons I have been able to attend to my television-watching more consistently on Wednesday nights than at any other time, and as a reward I have seen Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., deliver a short history of dueling, making play with derringers and foils, and assuring us that "the challenge of modern life" calls for Rheingold beer. Apart from that, it has been my impression that Wednesday was so off an off-night that even one-dimensional movies would seem rich in comparison, all the programs looking like poor-man's versions of something else. Checking almost illegible notes written in darkness against program listings over several weeks hasn't done much to change this judgment. A few good-to-nearly-fine programs occur, but as summer replacement time approaches I begin to wonder what will happen.

At seven there has been Captain Video and half an hour later you could choose between "What's the Story" and "A Date with Judy"; the lesser Godfrey show plays opposite "I Married Joan" (the lesser "Lucy" show?); there are several half-hour filmed dramas and, while this element in programming is always a variable, the Wednesday night offerings have usually been on the vapid side; "Man Against Crime" is the night's most successful effort to prove that routine can always be counted on to be routine and, by now, if you have taken in "Strike It Rich," you are ready for the 10 o'clock bang, "This Is Your Life," a really singular program in which Ralph Edwards brings on family albums and private memories to re-create, for his guest, his or her life, the guest almost fainting with surprise when relatives, former employers, or grammar-school teachers appear in person to help tell the story of an obscure, but good, telephone operator or a famous member of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is after this point that Mr. Fairbanks appears and, the time being 11 p.m., the evening is pretty well shot.

I do not know the ratings for these programs, but they are the best known of the lot; they certainly set the tone for the evening. Not in the same general atmosphere, there are Charles Laughton's readings and the "Johns Hopkins Science Review"; Laughton charmed me by saying that "the Mott people" (I think that is

how he referred to his sponsor) had suggested omitting the middle commercial and the Johns Hopkins program both charmed and impressed me by a sort of resolute non-professionalism; after several years on the air it has the freshness and the awkwardness of the amateur.

Trying to get the real amateur, or the semi-professional, into an act hasn't always been easy. Major Bowes and Arthur Godfrey being the two most successful practitioners of the art. A program called "Stage a Number" has been going for some time, the staging being done by teachers of music, dancing, and so on, the performances, I gather, being by their pupils. It seemed disjointed, the performers missing the ingratiating quality of the true amateur, and the production running down to a point where, where an MC asked a guest some questions about her own career, the answers were obviously being read, not spoken.

I have said that the plays (on film in every case if I am not reading my notes wrong) have not been of a high order. On one program we had a convict who had submitted a book to a publisher; a letter had been received and the warden obligingly asked the convict to read it aloud. The publisher's editor wrote, "I am taking the liberty of showing your MSS. to the head of our firm" and presently we saw the head of the firm accepting the book and immediately sending for the head of the art department to design a jacket for it. (The art-man said he wanted to read it, which appeared to strike the publisher as an unnecessary detail, but he didn't actually forbid it.) With the introduction of a bored "high-society" girl, the play then went off into the usual melodramatics. Did the convict actually steal the bracelet? Will the girl confess she was wrong in her accusation? And so on.

I KNOW there are specialists on other nights who will assert that theirs are no better than Wednesday—but Thursday has Groucho Marx and the "Lux Video Theatre" and "Author Meets the Critic" and "Foreign Intrigue"; Friday has Ozzie and Harriet and "Down You Go"; Monday and Tuesday have either big dramatic hours or the Berle-Bishop Sheen conflict; the special sense of the stale or the stillborn seems reserved for Wed-

nesday and, while that would suggest to an outsider that Wednesday is just the night for throwing in a big first-rate program of any kind, sweeping in a vast audience, the professionals seem to go in the opposite direction. Since no topnotch program is on, the only thing to do is to go along with the tide and if you have a great program, spot it opposite another fine show, on some other night, splitting and irritating the audience.

Critics of the popular arts are generally taken to be moralists who cannot abide anything but perfection and are therefore inhuman. They have often laid themselves open to the charge by pointing out how much third-rate stuff is manufactured—often adding that Gresham's law will operate, and bad will drive out the good. I have done this myself to an extent, and watching Wednesday nights on the box has been a warning to me, because I know perfectly well that these inferior programs do not draw the vast audiences of the better ones, nor do I seriously fear that the quality of the best programs will be down-graded to the lowest level of entertainment.

THE concentration of so much poor fare on a single night may be accidental, it may have commercial reasoning behind it; the important thing is that in some four hours of broadcasting, the average viewer doesn't get a single fine example of the kind of thing he likes and wants. He accepts what he gets, gratefully enough to justify dozens of sponsors, but this mood of consent has become a habit and no apologist for our present standards can say that Wednesday night is really "giving the people what they want" because the people so obviously want the same sort of thing, but of higher quality, on other nights. That people want melodrama and amusing panel shows is true; that they prefer the third-rate in these categories is not true.

In these same four hours (which is really twenty hours, because five stations at least are transmitting) the intelligent well-read man, familiar with and enthusiastic for popular entertainment, gets almost nothing. That is bad. But the feeding of low-quality stuff to the faithful followers of television is worse. As it is, Wednesday night is a rather awful example of what television could become—and we should be grateful to sponsors and stations alike for isolating the other nights of the week from the contagion of Wednesday, for proving to their own profit and our satisfaction that the common denominator does not have to be low more than once a week.

—GILBERT SELDES.

Russia

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difficult to imagine. We obtain an inkling of the alteration of man under totally new conditions, where life is lived in mutual distrust and suspicion, in ruthless conflict among pretenders, in enacting roles, in identification with these roles.

Is this a new man? No, it is the man we may all well show ourselves to be under similar conditions. What is falsehood? The answer must be formulated differently if the basic conditions of our very existence involve an inescapable compulsion to falsehood. The reader of Mr. Milosz's book must perforce think of himself, for the certainties of his very existence are brought into question.

Insofar as it describes specific experiences, though no names are given, the book is to be classed with those of the "renegades" who have broken with their regime and now offer their revelations. The distastefulness of such unmasking is relieved by the instruction they afford, for only a participant can know the impulses he experienced and be in position to teach us the elements. In the case of Milosz, the distastefulness is further relieved by the attitude of a man whose profound anguish is perceptible through the clarity and artistry of his objective account. This is the language of a man who is detached from concerns with self, who has achieved perspective.

MILOSZ does not write like a converted Communist; he has none of the aggressive fanaticism for freedom whose gestures, tones, and conduct display a perverted totalitarianism.

Neither does he write like an emigre of the opposition, with a practical interest in the downfall of the regime and his own restoration. He speaks like a man profoundly stirred by a passion for righteousness and unvarnished truth, and reveals himself only through his analysis of the effects of terror.

Because of him we shall be more circumspect in our judgments of men under totalitarian regimes. Mr. Milosz does retain, as the palpable background of all that he writes, the eternal oppositions of good and evil, noble and base, true and false, but he does not apply them as ready-made formulas. The reality of the world of terror tinges these very oppositions with new shadings. The thing is uncanny.

In Milosz we have a writer for whom separation from the world of his mother tongue is an ineffaceable

pain and produces an incessant questioning of his own being. These essays give the impression of an author communing with himself, to secure his own footing. What becomes of a man who is wrenched from his soil? In our world millions have suffered this lot. Milosz is not concerned with the obvious: we know that a man without a state (but only since 1914) is a man without rights, that a citizen of the world without the passport of a specific state is less than a man in the encounters of life (as has been abundantly demonstrated by Hannah Arendt in her magnificent book, "The Origins of Totalitarianism" [1951]). Milosz is concerned with a larger issue. Even a man who has obtained another passport is cut off at the root.

WHAT becomes of him in the spiritual, ethical, human sense? This remains a question to which our century will supply an answer by the actuality created by men like Milosz who are representatives of a general situation. Their very humanity, expressed in their candid and serious experiences, will prove them to be truly citizens of the world.

Finally, this book is directed as an admonition to modern man who has grown empty and flings himself into a faith which involves lawless destruction as a result of terror, of which enslavement of the spirit is the instrument. Milosz's book adjures and warns against a faith which in practice possesses the remarkable configuration of verification through lies, of truth through lies, the configuration of a dialectic which devours the substance of humanity.

The terrifying realities which have often been recounted Milosz sets forth with peculiar intimacy. Here is the utterance of a heart which palpitates to every reality destructive of man, of an eye which searches the soul truly, of a righteousness which is beyond expression.



What Americans Think

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be given. The percentages who selected the strongest powers are impressive:

	%
Prevent any member country from starting a war against an outside country	87
Decide which country is right if two members get into a dispute	85
Decide what taxes individual member nations must pay for its support	80
Decide what military strength each member nation can have	78
Regulate the rights of airplanes of member nations to land on airfields of other member nations	70
Have a permanent military force of its own stronger than any single nation's	59
Decide what tariff rates should be charged by member nations	52
Decide which side is right if a civil war breaks out in a member nation	49
Decide minimum standards for working conditions in member countries	36

AS THE time drew close for actually setting up the United Nations in San Francisco, support for it grew even larger. When the conference actually opened in July 1945, three-quarters of the American people felt that the United Nations couldn't succeed unless the United States was in it, and the same number *wanted* a United Nations with this country in it.

Whenever as many as 75 per cent of Americans favor something, it usually means that support cuts pretty well across the boards—among most groups in the population. It is true that support for formation of the United Nations was a little stronger in some parts of the population than others. For instance, men, young people, college-trained people, prosperous people were all a little more strongly pro-United Nations than some other groups. But the differences weren't great—and the significant thing is that the United Nations was backed by majorities in all groups, whether men or women, young or old, rich or poor, Republican or Democrat, Easterner or Westerner.

The United Nations started off on a firm basis indeed, with support for it well spread across the length and breadth of the country.

Once formed, the United Nations

has not been challenged in the sense that any responsible public figure has questioned the desirability of its existence. It has been challenged in the sense that—despite its existence—the road to peace has not yet been cleared. In the seven years since its inception a good deal has happened to discourage fair-weather friends of international cooperation. Almost at the beginning the fundamental differences between Russia and her former allies became apparent. Through the forum of the United Nations the United States has been denounced for selfish, imperialist motives. Trouble spots have appeared one after another throughout the world. In many lands and among many peoples there has seemed to exist no real desire to settle problems through discussion or on a parliamentary basis. The United Nations police action in Korea has been long drawn out and has had many aspects of real war.

IT IS natural that many people—in this country and abroad—are wondering what Americans will do now. We saw the post-World-War-I generation settle back into an attitude of non-participation in the League of Nations. It happened quickly after a victory for the Republican Party. The United States has once again voted out the party that carried them through war and the first stages of the peace. Some people throughout the world are wondering if there is a parallel despite the fact that President Eisenhower has forcefully put himself in the ranks of those who believe international cooperation and action is essential to world peace.

One time that fair-weather friends of international organization might have been expected to turn their backs on the United Nations was in its early years, when the nature of the differences between Russia and the Western democracies first became apparent and before the United States had formulated positive measures such as the Marshall Plan and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Rather than turning back in those early days, Americans were disposed to move forward and seek new methods of solving the problems of peace. For example, in 1946 just after the first United Nations Assembly in London, we asked a cross section of Americans to select between three propositions with these results:

- %
- America should give up trying to build any kind of international organization and instead form separate alliances with friendly nations. .10
 - America should continue to count on the United Nations

- and do all it can to make it work55
3. America should start now to organize a world government in which we would become a member state16
4. Couldn't decide between propositions 2 and 3 3
5. No opinion15

Two years later the Politburo in Moscow had called on Communists over the world to defeat the Marshall Plan, Czechoslovakia had been forced to yield to the Russians and install a Communist government, and Berlin had been blockaded. Yet few Americans had changed their minds—and those who had were more inclined to go forward than back. Our surveys showed that: the percentage who wanted to give up international organization had only increased from 10 to 12 per cent; the percentage who thought we should continue to count on the United Nations had only dropped from 55 to 51 per cent; but the percentage who thought we should start now to organize a world government had increased from 16 to 24 per cent.

This emergence of interest in world government probably must be considered more as an indication of where people want to go than as a firmly thought-through and well-formulated concept. Up to now, the idea of some form of world government hasn't been sufficiently debated on a national scale to permit full consolidation of opinions about it. Depending on the way the idea of world government is presented to people, percentages approving of it range widely. For instance, when world government is considered as something to strive for—and to be done slowly—a substantial majority of the people say they are for it. When it is considered as something which

only the *democratic* nations might actually start to get together on now, about 40 per cent approve. When it is considered as an organization of democratic nations to which control of the atom bomb would be given, the percentage approving drops to around 20 per cent. At the same time, the fact that a considerable percentage of people in America are disposed to look beyond present forms of international organization gauges the depth of the change that has occurred since the 1920's and early 30's.

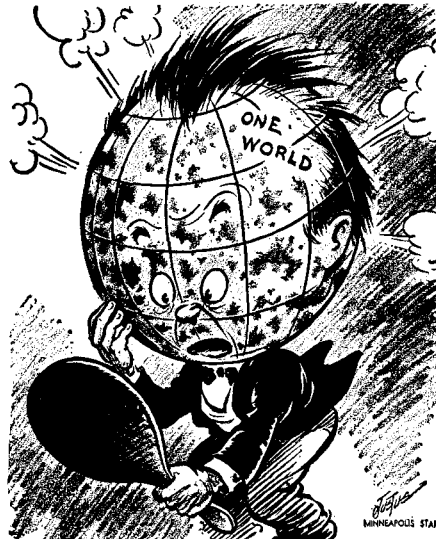
THE final decisions as to our role in the world—whether we continue in international or isolationist directions—will be determined by the reactions to specific events and what is done about them. There seems little question but what the United Nations as an organization is firmly established.

As late as 1951, 75 per cent of a cross section of Americans answered in a survey made by Gallup that they believed the United States should remain a member of the United Nations. Before the difficulties facing the United Nations were fully known the figure was somewhat higher; but it is significant that this is the same percentage as were in favor of our becoming a member when it was first founded. At the same time, it is too much to expect that in our new role in the world all actions and all policies would come through without criticisms—and they haven't, either in Korea or in Europe. The question is whether the nature of the criticisms will lead to pulling back or forging ahead.

The theory of operating the Korean War was never well sold to the American public, particularly during the period of fiercest fighting. Whether the policy of a contained police ac-



—“An Historic Moment.”



—Justus in The Minneapolis Star.
“Nationalism Rash.”

tion will make greater sense in retrospect to more people remains to be seen. But whatever else it was, the criticism of the Korean War was never in the traditional isolationist direction. Even towards the end of the first round of Panmunjom conferences, only 23 per cent of Americans thought we should have stayed out of Korea in the first place, and only 13 per cent were for pulling out and letting the Koreans settle their own problems. The criticism was rather for letting the situation come to a stalemate, and for not getting ahead with the military action fast enough. In the same way, the criticism of our program in Europe is more of ways and means than it is of the fundamental program itself. Only a sixth of the people would be in favor of our leaving the countries of Western Europe to build up their own defenses entirely. But a substantial minority (42 per cent) question the *amount* of aid we are given to Western European countries.

NEVERTHELESS, there may be the beginnings of a less solid front in the urge of Americans for international cooperation and organization as a result of divided opinion concerning

specific actions—and this may become more pronounced with Russia's new peace moves. This is the challenge to the new Administration. Despite criticisms of specific actions, a majority of Americans have approved the course the United States has taken since World War II. During the heat of the Presidential campaign when criticism of the Democratic Administration was at its height, we asked people whether they thought it a good thing or a mistake that "America took the leadership in trying to keep the peace of the world by aiding other countries through the Marshall Plan and rearming the free world against Communism." Fifty-five per cent of the people called it a good thing; only 14 per cent flatly said it was a mistake. The rest either had no opinion or mixed feelings on the subject.

There are several groups working for one or another form of "larger" government to meet the new needs created by the shrinking of space, via the airplane, and the enhanced means for self destruction, via the atom and hydrogen bombs. One group would have Western Europe federate into a United States of Europe, much as our own states did in 1787. Another group

would extend such federation to include all signatories to the Atlantic Pact—which, of course, includes the United States. Both of these groups would leave Russia and her satellites out of any plans for larger government unless and until the present Russian regime becomes a truly democratic force bent on peace rather than world aggression. Still another group believes in a universal approach, seeking to strengthen the United Nations into a federation with powers confined to the common security.

Every one of these groups is led by men whose devotion to America cannot be questioned—except perhaps by the *Chicago Tribune*; such men as General William Donovan and Allen Dulles for Western European Union; former Supreme Court Justice Owen J. Roberts and Will Clayton for the Atlantic Union Committee; Norman Cousins and Cass Canfield for the World Federalists.

The differences between these men are differences over method. All agree that economic and military changes demand that political changes take place too, that our present political set-ups are inadequate for these times—especially in the face of powerful aggression. The significant thing is that all are seeking *new* methods to peace rather than turning back to an isolationism no longer protected by two oceans.

WITH today's swift-moving pattern of events, one would be foolhardy indeed to try to predict what the directions for the future are likely to be. America's early steps in the twentieth-century international field have been taken with a broad and firm base of public support. In the face of early discouragements we have gone on to seek new methods of solution, rather than turning back to the old. Criticisms of what has been done—justified or not—have not questioned the basic sense of the steps that have been taken. At least so far, the people of the United States are standing behind their earlier conviction that, whether we like it or not, we are inevitably bound up with what happens elsewhere on this planet.

Whatever support the first Senator Lodge may—or may not—have had from his contemporaries or however much the middle generation between the two wars had come to agree with him, the second Senator Lodge has entered upon duties well approved by his countrymen. They agree with him that in his job as United States representative to the United Nations there "is a great chance to build a world in which our young men will no longer need to go off to combat."

Your Literary I. Q.

Conducted by John T. Winterich

WUPPAPER DYUH READ?



Beatrice S. Firestone of Cincinnati, Ohio, offers twenty fragments which enshrine the names of twenty newspapers or other serial publications, some present, some past. Identification of twelve of these (plus, of course, identification of the authors) indicates a moderate range of periodical knowledge, seventy an extensive, and eighty or better a surpassing. Answers on page 41.

1. The lark, the ——— of the morn.
2. Oh, ——— I cannot hold thee close enough.
3. Our ——— are in his hand.
4. The desire of the moth for the ———.
5. Like a blind spinner in the ———.
6. And ——— is never the same again.
7. The notes of the ——— ring sweet in mine ear.
8. Give me ——— or give me death.
9. Only a ——— and a voice.
10. In hopes that ——— soon would be there.
11. And ——— much older than their ale went round.
12. Yet not for all his faith can see
Would I that cowed ——— be.
13. Evil news rides ——— while good news waits.
14. To hold, as 'twere, the ——— up to nature.
15. The deep immense ———.
Is still beneath the waves.
16. King over all the children of pride is the ———.
17. I am sick of ——— and I desire to rest.
18. Capital, created by the labor of the ———.
19. He who would write and can't write, can surely ———
20. If thou of ——— be bereft
And in thy store there be but left
Two loaves, sell one and with the dole
Buy hyacinths to feed thy soul.