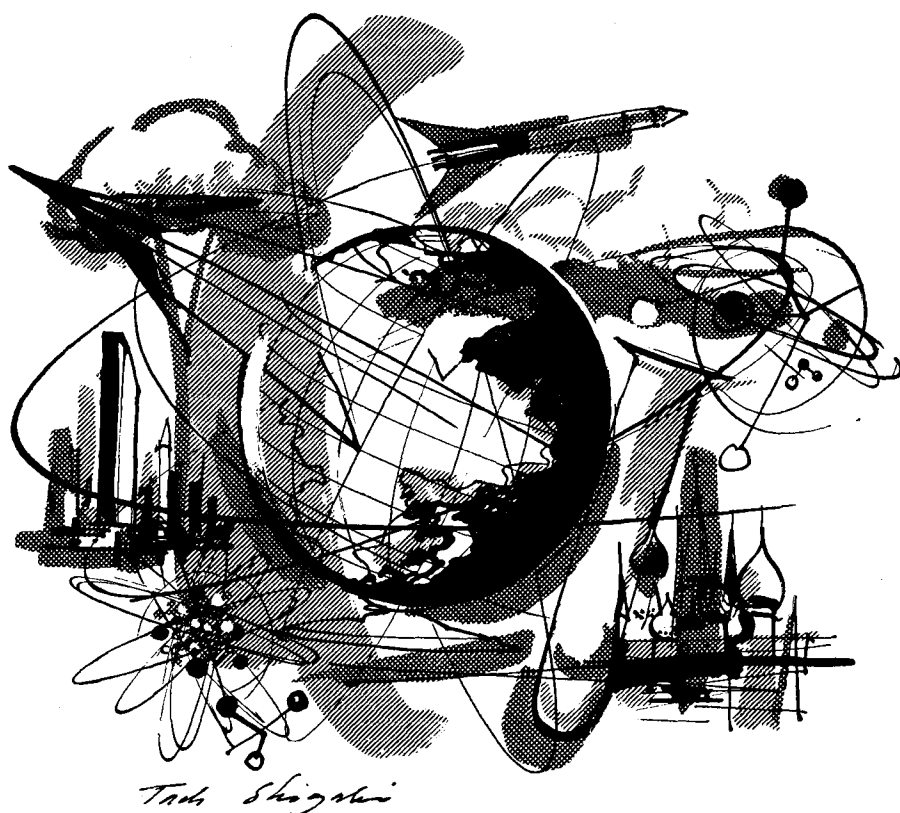


THE PAST FIFTY YEARS

... and the next



By QUINCY HOWE



Midway in the writing of his "World History of Our Own Times" Quincy Howe decided "largely as a matter of self-discipline and self-education" to put his reflections on the course of twentieth-century history into some perspective. The result is the article below which examines the prospects for world unity as of 1953. The second volume of Mr. Howe's history, entitled "The World Between the Wars," was published in September. The final volume is due to make its appearance in three years.

THE record of the past fifty years justifies at least two predictions concerning the next half century. We cannot bring back the vanished world of 1900. Neither can we expect present trends to continue forever. At the turn of the century more and more people in every land assumed that the material progress of the previous hundred years would continue onward and upward for many hundred years to come. Nor did they stop there. Faith in material progress bred faith in human progress. Science had not only enabled man to harness the forces of the universe to his own use. Science had also given man the power to change and improve his own nature. H. G. Wells expressed the hopes of millions when he foresaw twentieth-century science promoting the health, wealth, and happiness of all mankind.

World War I did more than demonstrate the power of modern science. It ended with two mighty efforts to assure the triumph of human progress. Drawing their inspiration from nineteenth-century Europe, taking for granted the limitless scope of scientific advance and human perfectibility, Wilson and Lenin set themselves up as world messiahs who offered universal programs of peace and plenty for all. But the League of Nations that Wilson inspired did not prevent World War II. The Russian Revolution that Lenin led did not sweep the world. Wilson's self-righteous refusal to compromise his principles made cynics of the liberals. Lenin's cynical compromise of every principle made gangsters of the radicals. Hitler then appealed to both cynics and gangsters, proving—even in defeat—that the spirit of nationalism which both Wilson and Lenin tried to transcend had more vitality than the spirit of internationalism which both Wilson and Lenin tried to evoke. Neither Hitler's cynicism nor his nationalism led to his defeat. Hitler failed because he appealed to only one nation and because that



—Bettmann Archive.

"Nietzsche and Dostoevsky foresaw today's world."

nation lay in Europe. And the chief force that finally laid Hitler low was not the Christian, democratic West; it was Stalin's Russia—more atheistic, more totalitarian than Nazi Germany itself.

BY THE end of World War II the world of 1900 had vanished altogether. Civilization, on which H. G. Wells was betting at the turn of the century, seemed sure to lose its race to catastrophe. Few prophets at mid-century foresaw much health, wealth, or happiness for mankind. George Orwell's "Nineteen Eighty-Four" carried more conviction. Reversing the last two figures of the year in which he wrote the book—1948—he produced a great satire of his own time, not a preview of the 1980's. But the contemporary historian who merely predicts more unreason and less freedom, more conformity and less progress, risks repeating the mistake of the historian of fifty years ago who assumed that all the major trends of 1900 would continue to run in the same direction for an indefinite period.

If it is the function of the modern satirist to shock us with a picture of a totalitarian world, it is the function of the modern historian to point out that the events of the past fifty years have shaken the optimism of 1900. Not Darwin and Whitman but Nietzsche and Dostoevsky foresaw today's world. Freud revealed dark, human impulses that Marx attributed to environment. To most of the English-speaking world the defeat of Hitler signified the defeat of the racial and national doctrines he sought to impose on mankind. The dark-skinned majority of the human race take a different view. Although the British have made noble, honest efforts to live down Kipling's superi-

ority complex toward lesser breeds without the law, and although Americans have made noble, honest efforts to end discrimination, the peoples of Asia see no great difference between Hitler and Kipling or between Nazi stormtroopers and a lynch mob in the American South. Advocates of white superiority, even of white supremacy, in the Western world have encouraged Asian and African demagogues to advocate colored superiority and even colored supremacy. The Gandhis and the Schweitzers, of course, reject all doctrines of racial supremacy, but nationalist and Communist demagogues prefer to appeal to prejudice and emotion.

As Asia has gone up in the world Europe has gone down. Nationalist leaders and movements have triumphed in Turkey, India, China, Japan. More than once religions originating in Asia have conquered or converted Europe. Today the religion of nationalism which originated in Europe has gripped Asia. This new force hit America between the eyes at Pearl Harbor. It struck again, more successfully and on a gigantic scale, when the Communists conquered China. Britain bowed to this force in India, Holland in Indonesia. France tries to fight it in Indo-China. The United States tries to come to terms with it in Korea. Since Lenin's time the Russian Communists have tried with varying success to exploit the force of Asian nationalism, but all history argues that they cannot hope to bend it permanently to their purposes.

Because only Russia and the United States have the facilities required to wage a modern war, it is assumed they must eventually fight and that the victor will rule the world. But if a Soviet-American conflict does materialize what an opportunity for the

revolutionary movement in Asia. Already interested parties in various Asian countries seek Russian or American backing for their various enterprises, as Asian Communists cry out against American imperialism and Asian anti-Communists cry out against Russian aggression. A China threatened with civil war or an India threatened with Communism might well set off World War III. But the vast costs and uncertain outcome make for caution in both Washington and Moscow. Atomic weapons give the United States and Russia the power to destroy each other. They do not give either Russia or the United States the power to conquer or control any substantial part of Asia. Just the opposite. The destruction that atomic war could create in Russia, Europe, and the United States would make the world safe for Asia for centuries to come.

The death of Stalin and the election of Eisenhower have reduced the immediate threat of Russian-American conflict. Stalin's successors have had to cope with unrest in the satellite lands and have purged Beria. Although they inherited a state many times stronger than the state Stalin inherited from Lenin, they at once felt it necessary to make substantial concessions to their own people who want something better than Stalin gave them and who believe they can get it. Beyond the Iron Curtain the new rulers of Russia are spreading the word that the time has come to settle the Cold War by negotiation—and it's a word that millions of Europeans and Asians want to believe. Although President Eisenhower and most Americans remain skeptical of Russian good faith and good will, the fear of immediate war has measurably abated. The truce in Korea has made the prospects for peace look a little brighter. The June 17 riots in East Germany have encouraged the hope that the Russian regime will collapse from the inside. This American belief may prove just as groundless as Europe's belief that we can do business with Malenkov, but it is no less passionately held.

HOW Stalin insulated the Russian people from all ideas and information that he did not want them to receive is an old and familiar story. Only now are we discovering that he and his heirs and assigns wore the same self-imposed blinders. Since Stalin's death the new rulers of Russia have shown themselves somewhat more sensitive to public opinion at home and abroad, but it is difficult to fathom their real beliefs or to forecast the decisions to which these beliefs

(Continued on page 45)

Story of the Shells

"Man, Time, and Fossils," by Ruth Moore (Alfred A. Knopf. 411 pp. \$5.75), is a popular account of evolution and the rise of Man, told largely in terms of the scientists who gave us our knowledge of them. Edwin H. Colbert, who reviews it here, is curator of fossil reptiles and amphibians at the American Museum of Natural History.

By Edwin H. Colbert

ONE hundred years ago the idea of evolution was very much in the air. Students of past and present life were groping for some logical explanation that would account not only for the many resemblances but also for the extraordinary differences that they saw among the fossils and the living plants and animals on which they were working. Was Divine Creation the answer? If so why were there so many close similarities between men and apes or, in a more general way, between horses and rhinoceroses? Why did the porpoise, a warm-blooded mammal, so closely resemble in its outward form a cold-blooded fish? Why was there such a wide variety of form in the horns of the African antelopes?

To the inquiring mind of the mid-nineteenth century the separate creation and fixity of each species was not adequate to account for the many wonders of the living world, in spite of the weight of Biblical authority. It seemed that there must have been a long past during which the many plants and animals of the world developed, advancing from the simple to the more complex, ever becoming

adapted to new conditions in an evolving earth.

Then, in the year 1859, appeared Charles Darwin's "Origin of Species," one of the most important books in the history of man. It crystalized the amorphous contemporary ideas on the subject of evolution, and in one stroke of genius, based upon many years of patient observation and hard work, inaugurated one of the great revolutions in human thought. The entire aspect of Nature as seen by Man was profoundly changed, so that life was envisaged as the result of an orderly process of evolution through the mutability of species, with Man (like all other animals) taking his proper place in this system. Today our concept of the world and its life is logical, and is founded upon a tremendous body of sound, scientific work, rather than illogical and mythical.

The growth of our modern theory of evolution, with particular reference to the evolution of Man, is ably set forth by Ruth Moore in "Man, Time, and Fossils," a book obviously designed as a companion piece to C. W. Ceram's "Gods, Graves, and Scholars" of two years ago. Ideas are inextricably linked with the men who formulate and expand them, and Miss Moore has utilized this fact as the basis for an account of some of the scholars who have contributed to the modern concept of evolution and to our knowledge about the evolution of Man. It is a good book, thanks to Miss Moore's ability as a writer, to her conscientious probing of sources, and to the generous assistance given her by some of the men now deeply engrossed in this important subject. It is a pleasing book because of its format, its large excellent plates, and particularly its effective illustrations (quite a number of them designed as pure decorations rather than as text figures) by Sue Richert.

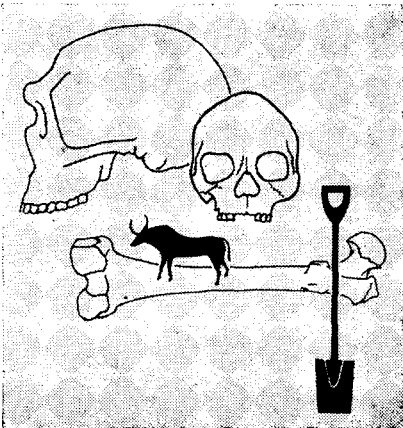
Miss Moore divides her book into three parts. Part One, "Man's Origins," deals with the growth of the evolutionary theory to its modern status. Naturally the account begins with Darwin. It then takes a backward look at Lamarck, who offered the first logical modern theory of evolution, but a theory built in part on the false premise of the inheritance of acquired characters. Then she proceeds to tell something about the work of the pioneers of evolutionary



THE AUTHOR: Ruth Moore, a woman who has been carrying on an affair with the last 500,000 years, can get pretty worked up by things like man, time, and fossils, which, as it happens, is the title of her first book. The other day in Chicago—she is a reporter on the staff of the *Sun-Times*—Miss Moore, an M.A. of Washington University at St. Louis, gushed with adjectives like "magnificent," "amazing," "wonderful," and "exciting" to describe the material on evolution from which she had extracted her story of the adventures of *homo sapiens*. "My material was magnificent," she began. "There is a sweep and a scope to it that not only stirs the imagination, but seems to lead on to undreamed-of insights into problems that we all must have felt deeply, though vaguely, and in an unformulated way. What are our origins? Why are we alike and why are we different? The material," she went on, clearly warming to her subject, "was also amazing. There were the most improbable turns and developments. What writer of science-fiction would have thought of having the bones of Peking Man disappear completely, and of turning their disappearance into a great and contentious international mystery?" So far as Miss Moore is concerned Chicago is about the only fossil around these days that can possibly upstage the Peking Man. "I cover almost any of the things that can and do happen here," she reported, noting that she had arrived in the Midwest a couple of years after working for the newspaper's Washington bureau.

Miss Moore went on to say that she lived in a tall, glass-walled building. It gives her a perfect view of Chicago, Lake Michigan, and scoops. The other evening, for example, she looked through one of her walls and spotted a scoop twenty-four stories below: cops chasing robbers. Miss Moore, abandoning science, phoned the office fast, turned in a running account. She then promptly returned to theories of evolution—Darwin's, to be exact, the subject of her next book.

—BERNARD KALB.



—Sue Richert, for "Man, Time, and Fossils."