

Korea's Selfless Fanatic



"Syngman Rhee: The Man Behind the Myth," by Robert T. Oliver (Dodd, Mead. 380 pp. \$5), is a biographical study of the President of the Republic of Korea. Below it is reviewed by Harold H. Fisher, chairman of the Hoover Institute and Library, Stanford University.

By Harold H. Fisher

SYNGMAN RHEE belongs to a small and uncongenial company of successful revolutionists who survived imprisonment and exile to become heads of state. Most of these successful rebels in this century have achieved their goal because someone else weakened or destroyed the regime they opposed. Some of them have been fortunate enough to be rid of their benefactors as well as their enemies. But Dr. Rhee still has to contend with the blindness or shortsightedness of the United States government whose support has been and still is important for Korea.

In "Syngman Rhee: The Man Behind the Myth," Robert T. Oliver tells with warmth, sympathy, and great admiration the story of Rhee's lifelong struggle against Korean absolutism, Japanese and Russian imperialism, and Communist subversion and aggression. From this telling two things stand out: his singleminded, selfless devotion to the liberation of his country and his absolute conviction that his way was the only way independence could be won and maintained. His life in the United States and after his return to Korea, as Mr. Oliver recounts it, is a succession of disappointing experiences with American officials from Theodore Roosevelt's Administration to Dwight Eisenhower's, and including General MacArthur's in Tokyo. These frustrations were relieved by many happy associations and personal friendships that in most cases endured. One such friend was Professor Woodrow Wilson, but when President Wilson would not approve Syngman Rhee's going to Paris to plead Korea's cause at the 1919 Peace Conference Rhee was "thunderstruck that

his friend and hero was planning to sacrifice Korean independence for the sake of power politics."

Like so many other Asian revolutionists, Syngman Rhee picked up his revolutionary ideas from Americans. He went to a mission school to learn English, and with English he learned about the politics of patriotism, about self-government and the responsibilities and rights of citizenship. And he became a Christian. When in the late 1890's the Japanese began the "Asia for Asians" movement, they proposed to include the Koreans in a Confederation of All the Peoples of the Great East. Like most young Korean revolutionists, Syngman Rhee was anti-foreign, but he had no faith then or later in confederations or coalitions, especially when they included Japanese. As a member of the Independence Club he became a leader in organizing demonstrations and writing and secretly publishing propaganda subversive of the regime. Like many of his Russian and Asian revolutionary contemporaries, he was imprisoned and then sent abroad as a student with a political mission. After some happy years at Princeton, preceded by some not so happy ones at Harvard, he received his Ph.D.

When he was permitted to return

to his native land after World War II Dr. Rhee found the Russians working to set up a "people's democracy" north of the Thirty-Eighth Parallel and the Americans trying to introduce American democracy in the rest of the country.

He could not get at the Russians, whom he detested, but he battled continuously with the Americans, of whom he despaired. General John R. Hodge, a first-class fighting general who had been assigned to Korea, about which he knew nothing, developed a great respect and admiration for and a determination to help the Korean people. But his fighting days were not over, for he was soon engaged in a bitter campaign of attrition with the tough old returned patriot, who was also determined to help the Koreans, and in his own way.

AS President of the Republic of Korea, Dr. Rhee has dealt summarily with his political opponents and, like some other Asian leaders, has established a kind of personal party that acknowledges the value of democratic principles but does not allow them to interfere with policies he believes are best for the nation. He has also, on occasion, dealt rather summarily with his allies. Mr. Oliver calls attention to the importance of Dr. Rhee's "decision to stand and fight" when the Communists attacked on June 25, 1950, and of his work in "alerting and inspiring the free world to rise up and stop the advancing tide of Russian imperialism." But he passes over the wider significance of the Truman-Acheson decision to lead the U.N. in upholding the principle of collective action against aggressions. This difference in points of view leads Dr. Rhee to look upon the truce as surrender to Communist aggression and the U.N. claim to have stopped aggression at the 38th parallel as "simply shallow verbalisms."

Since the truce President Rhee and Secretary Dulles have negotiated a treaty of mutual aid. To Mr. Dulles, the U.S. is committed to aid Korea in case of attack; to President Rhee, the U.S. and the U.N. are committed to fight Communist aggression until all Korea is free and united. Therefore,



—Justus, Minneapolis Star.

"Among Those Set Free."

we must get the million Chinese troops out of Korea by one means or another, or admit defeat. Clearly, as Mr. Oliver points out, Mr. Dulles and Dr. Rhee did not have a genuine meeting of minds. Clearly, as the book shows, the only way to meet Syngman Rhee's mind is to agree with him, and that, in present circumstances, means incalculable risks. No argument from our side is likely to penetrate the indomitable spirit of this brave and obstinate friend, or move him from his position that "the war in Korea was lost by the Allies, when . . . with resolution it could have been won."

Real Statecraft

"Shirt-Sleeve Diplomacy," by **Jonathan E. Bingham** (John Day. 303 pp. \$4), tells the story of Point 4, the program of building of mutual security throughout the free world, from its inception in 1949 to its present ambiguous existence. Here it is reviewed by Clarence R. Decker, assistant director of the Mutual Security Agency in the Far East in 1952 and formerly president of the University of Kansas City.

By Clarence R. Decker

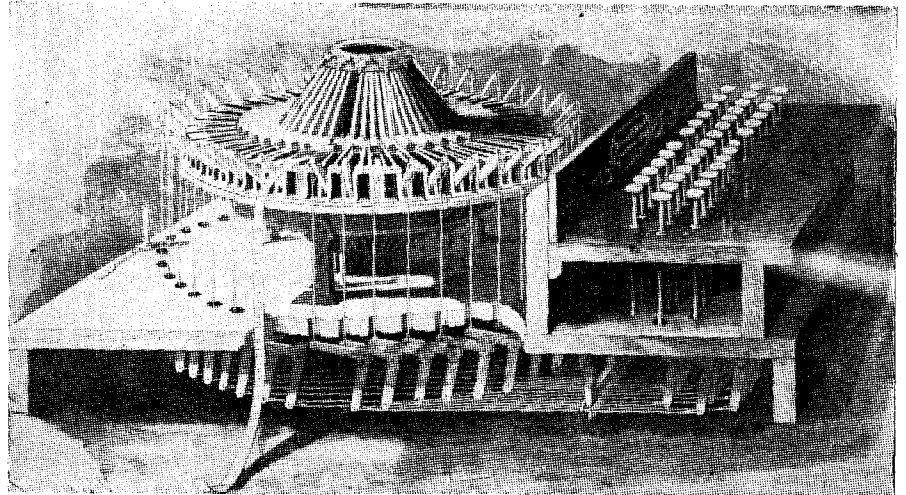
IS POINT 4—the "bold new program" of 1949—the "lost idea" of 1954? People in many parts of the world, particularly those for whom the fourth point in Harry Truman's historic 1949 inaugural address proclaimed a hopeful new conscience in foreign affairs, are seriously concerned with this question.

For all such, Jonathan Bingham's "Shirt-Sleeve Diplomacy" makes a timely appearance; indeed, no one interested in the world's welfare should fail to read it. The published works on Point 4 are numerous (Bingham lists the important ones), but no other single volume, to my knowledge, excels "Shirt-Sleeve Diplomacy" in telling the Point 4 story from the time of its troubled inception, through the five years of its rugged but rewarding development, to its present ambiguous existence.

The summary dismissal last year of most of the key members of the former TCA staff in Washington, the current drive to discourage the use of the term "Point 4," and, more important, the "integration" of technical cooperation and political and military strategy all strongly suggest that Point 4 is already the stepchild of a revived old-fashioned power diplomacy.

Official Washington, sensitive to the
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ENGINEERS' DREAMS



—From "The Wonderful Writing Machine."

The original typewriter, 1856: the invention of Alfred E. Beach of New York.

Stenographer's Spade

"The Wonderful Writing Machine," by **Bruce Bliven, Jr.** (Random House. 236 pp. \$3.95), and **"The Typewriter and the Man Who Made It,"** by **Richard N. Current** (University of Illinois Press. 149 pp. \$3.50), are accounts of the invention and development of the typewriter, the former giving some attention to the social changes it has wrought.

By John William Rogers

THE MODERN typewriter has more than two thousand parts—some of them machined to a tolerance of seven ten-thousandths of an inch—and it is assembled by something like five thousand distinct hand operations. In eighty years, Bruce Bliven, Jr., points out in his book, "The Wonderful Writing Machine," it has revolutionized communications, helped in the dramatic expansion of business, increased profits by decreasing the cost of making them, freed mankind from drudgery and illegibility of handwriting, saved incalculable hours of time, given birth to a myriad of dependent business machines, and influenced language.

Close to three million persons today are formally studying typing, while tens of millions more use the machine with an intimacy that makes them regard it as a sort of auxiliary hand. Yet none of the many kinds of machines around which our lives are built today seems to be so taken for granted. One expert has suggested typewriters are too good for people. They work too well; if they were a lot

more trouble, typists would be more interested.

Whatever the cause of our apathy, the story of the typewriter is so colorful and its impact on the world of business has been so revolutionary, it should not be forgotten. Mr. Bliven has made a useful contribution in recalling it. His volume, written in breezy journalese—sometimes descending to such slang phrases as "a swift pain in the neck" and "what burns scientists up"—is a lively example of skilful industrial prose. conceived to hold the reader's attention and at the same time to get over certain institutional values of the business under discussion. And while the volume does tell the story of how the typewriter as an invention came of age, the illustrations of the volume and its later pages suggest this book was conceived with more than a casual relation to the promotion department of the Royal Typewriter Company, "which makes more typewriters than any other firm in the world."

Mr. Bliven traces the idea of mechanical writing back to a patent issued in 1714 in the days of Queen Anne, but it was not until 1867, when the fifty-second recorded inventor tried his hand, that a writing machine turned up which demonstrated it had potentialities commercially. Chiefly responsible for this machine was Christopher Latham Sholes of Milwaukee. But even with the suggestions of others, Sholes's machine did not spring full blown from his brain. And indeed Sholes was inclined to discount its significance. It was a promoter from Meadville, Pennsylvania, James Densmore, who