

centralize the processing of books and other library materials. Local libraries will select their books and request the central service point to order, catalogue, and prepare them for use by readers. The California State Library has estimated that co-operative centralized processing for a group of eleven libraries would result in the saving of the services of one staff member per library. The time thus released could be used for the enrichment of other services to readers.

The need for public libraries to serve all the people has been described in many ways. In its report on the Library Services Bill in 1955, the Committee on Education and Labor of the House of Representatives put it this way:

"There can be no question that the free, tax-supported library, where it has been adequately supported, is an integral part of public education in the many communities where it exists. The library has supplemented and worked with the public schools so that the children of most communities have an integrated book program. These library facilities are important to school children during the school year as well as during the summer time when reading programs are provided. Actually the public library has been a bulwark against juvenile delinquency and has been a positive force against the bad effects of vicious comic books.

"The public library offers opportunity for adults, regardless of the amount of formal education, to carry on continuing education throughout their lives. With the many complex problems facing our people today, the national welfare requires that a well-stocked library, as a headquarters for unbiased fact, be available to all of our people."

Mrs. Zippa L. Hall, chairman of the Citizens Committee of the Kansas Library Association, put it another way while appearing before the committee:

"I have a vision of libraries with rooms for adult education of all sorts, with places for reading clubs for happy youngsters and story hours for the younger ones, with films and records . . . with red bookmobiles regularly covering the long miles to tiny libraries, to rural schools, to country homes. . . ." Subcommittee Chairman Landrum of Georgia asked Mrs. Hall, "Why would you like the bookmobile to be red?" and Mrs. Hall answered, "Just because they could see it farther." She conceded, however, that a red, white, and blue bookmobile would be just as welcome in Kansas. The important point is that Mrs. Hall's vision is becoming a reality.



The Challenge of Continual Crisis

By JOHN T. EASTLICK, *librarian of the Denver, Col., Public Library; president, Public Libraries Division, American Library Association.*

FOR THE majority of the 7,500 public libraries in the United States, this past year has been a time of challenges—of a rapidly growing national population, of redistribution of that population over the face of our land, of rising costs of library resources, of rising competition for financial support. But the greatest challenge has risen from the need of adults to improve their knowledge and skill if they are to participate successfully in our shifting society.

Gerald W. Johnson put it this way in his preface to "Public Library Service: A Guide to Evaluation" (American Library Association): "There is the most urgent need for our people to broaden their intellectual horizon with all possible speed, for the moment of crisis is already upon us. It is not enough to train the rising generation to meet their new responsibilities, for irreversible decisions must be made before they come to maturity. Obviously, the task will strain all the resources of mind and character that the nation can muster. The tension is greatest upon agencies of information, but nowhere is the pressure greater than upon the public library."

Here are a few ways American librarians are meeting the crisis:

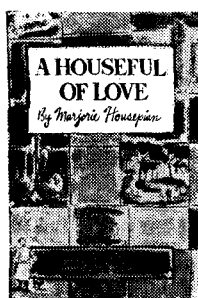
- To encourage the writing and publishing of significant books on contemporary problems and affairs, history and biography, and imaginative literature, the American Library Association established the "Liberty and Justice Book Awards." These annual

\$5,000 awards, made possible through a grant from the Fund for the Republic, were awarded for the first time in April. Recipients of the awards were: William H. Whyte, Jr., for "The Organization Man" (Simon & Schuster); Alpheus Thomas Mason for "Harlan Fiske Stone: Pillar of the Law" (Viking Press); and James Thurber for "Further Fables for Our Time" (Simon & Schuster).

- Librarians try to pattern the services of a community library on the specific needs of its community. But sometimes it is difficult to analyze community needs and to identify available community resources. For the past two years the American Library Association's "Library-Community Project," made possible through a grant from the Fund for Adult Education, has been developing techniques and processes for a library-community analysis. Through pilot studies in selected cities and counties of four states—Kansas, Maryland, Michigan, and Tennessee—the libraries are spearheading community studies to determine the nature and extent of educational resources needed by the adults of each community. The evaluation of the results of such surveys are expected to culminate in an expanded and dynamic library-centered adult education program which will utilize the discovered and identified community resources, and which will be directed toward specific community needs.

- In recent years, and especially in 1956, momentum has developed for citizen support of public libraries. The movement is spotlighted by "Operation Library," a project adopted in the fall of 1956 by the United States

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SR's Spotlight on Fiction:

"A HOUSEFUL OF LOVE"

Author: Marjorie Housepian

By BENJAMIN APPEL

LOVE, love, love! Many novelists have gone to the literary patent office and taken out their claims on love. Bogus claims, many of them. It's good to report that Marjorie Housepian really likes people and can see them with a gentle and humorous eye.

The people in her new novel "A Houseful of Love" (Random House, \$3.50) are some Armenian-Americans resident in the New York City of 1929 when the narrator was a girl of ten. There is Uncle Pousant who owns a restaurant on Lexington Avenue, a true artist of the kitchen, horrified by such American dishes as the poached egg. There is his wife Hadji, self-enlisted in the age-old guerrilla war between practical wives and impractical husbands. There is Marta-mama, the old one who knows six words of English: "Uptown, downtown, no good, okay, and bum." And dominating all the others, Marta-mama's son, the fabulous Levon Dai who never appears on the scene, but whose adventures in "the province of Iowa" bind the other characters together.

The old American fairy tale of friendly strangers and business opportunities dropped down out of the big blue sky, is retold in the story of Levon Dai. A true fairy tale, for don't we all know Someone who actually located the golden sidewalks of the immigrant legend? Once more the ladder of luck is climbed by this new American—and there is a smile with each rung that Levon Dai ascends—as it has been climbed by so many other new Americans of Irish, Italian, Scandinavian, Jewish, Greek stock. Up he climbs, the great Levon Dai, while his relatives and friends and friendly enemies on Lexington Avenue follow each adventure with admiration or the secret hope that some day even Levon Dai will slip on the banana peel of life.

Levon Dai meets a "Mississlater" (Mrs. Slater) on a Chicago-bound train, and after treating her to some of his Armenian lunch, wins her wild enthusiasm for all things Armenian. He must come to her home town,

Council Bluffs, Iowa! "Mississlater" gushes, and tell Everything! In Council Bluffs, Levon Dai is a seven-day wonder. The various ladies' organizations compete for his services as lecturer, and eventually a dry-cleaning magnate kindly offers Levon Dai his friendship and the opportunity to start learning a business by bearing a sandwich sign through the streets of Council Bluffs.

Although many of these good citizens have given money for "the starving Armenians," they haven't thought very much about Armenians as people. In Levon Dai's words; "How generous these Americans are. . . And how naive about any culture outside their own."

For Levon Dai, the sandwich sign will lead to testimonial banquets; he will become one of the town's leading citizens, a dry-cleaning magnate him-

self. So, as he prospers in Council Bluffs and marries a Miss Shirley Adams, his awed fans in New York build his legend, golden brick by golden brick, and await his triumphant return. His mother Marta-mama is very old and would like to see her great son before she dies. When will he come? Marta-mama dies without ever seeing Levon Dai—but the parents of Shirley Adams visit New York, and to the surprise of little Armenia on Lexington Avenue they are not "cold soup" but nice likable folk who actually enjoy Uncle Pousant's wonderful dishes.

Poor Uncle Pousant who in the past has served so many ketchup-type Americans: "Ketchup! Do you know how I spent this morning? Let me tell you. I spent the morning, coaxing, basting, imbuing that exquisite meat with the subtle flavors of heaven. My soul went into that lamb. 'Ketchup!' she says."

There is a delicate flavor in this novel, and delicately it records the dreams and hopes of a people newly come to America, no longer fearful of persecution but afraid that their three thousand years of proud history will be swallowed up by gigantic and democratic America. America, where all the second generations learn the use of ketchup!



—George Cserna.

ABOUT MARJORIE HOUSEPIAN: The night last year before her five-day visa for Moscow expired, Marjorie Housepian, Barnard '44, went with CBS correspondent Daniel Schorr to a Thai embassy party, and, after shaking hands with Mr. Malenkov, said in Armenian to the man next in line, "Hello, Mr. Mikoyan." He was delighted to greet an American in his own tongue, and when she explained with disappointment that she had come all the way to Russia just to see Armenia, he said, "Well, why not?"—then dropped the subject. Marjorie, who was traveling alone, shied at asking him to change Intourist's *nyet!* to *da*, but, taking the advice of some friendly ambassadors, sent him a note. "In your country," they said, "everyone writes to President Eisenhower, but in this country, No. Probably yours is the only letter he will get tomorrow." The next afternoon she was granted a visa to visit the land of her forefathers, where she was showered with roses like Elizabeth Rex. In Kirovagan, one of the largest cities in Russian Armenia, they had never before seen an American, and when the Armenians in Kessab, Syria, learned she was the daughter of the Dr. Housepian who had fought local typhus epidemics, their hospitality bubbled over. Although she herself is brunette, most of the 500 inhabitants there—like Marjorie's eleven-year-old-son—trace their blond hair to fraternizing Crusaders. Someday the young New Yorker (whose name is pronounced "How-SEP-ean," meaning Josephson) may write all about it, but to date the body of her work comprises three short stories about Armenian-Americans done as exercises for Martha Foley's course at Columbia University (which were published in the *Paris Review*, *Tomorrow*, and *Charm* and subsequently formed the nucleus for "A Houseful of Love") as well as an adult-problem story that proved to a skeptical classmate that she could write about people who weren't Armenian. It was accepted by *The Atlantic*. The novel, her first, is not autobiographical. "What I tried to do," she says, "was to give composites of people I have known to bring in every Armenian type I could think of." For her next book she expects again to get into stride with a few preliminary sketches. But they will concern different nationalities. "Frankly," she admits, "I would like to get away from Armenians."

—ROCHELLE GIRON.