

## After Potsdam

**"The Price of Power," by Herbert Agar** (University of Chicago Press, 200 pp. \$3.50), is a searching appraisal of America's political progress, both domestically and internationally, since World War II. Sidney Hyman of the Washington Post and author of "The American President," reviews it below.

By Sidney Hyman

IN HIS recently published book entitled "The Price of Power," Herbert Agar lays bare the heart of American international and domestic politics. His concern is with America's performance since 1945 when our foreign affairs and parish politics became almost indistinguishable. The realities of this period, he says, are these: that "for the powerful there is no security"; that America must "carry the burden of civilization until the next barbarian revolt"; and that we shall live in "perpetual danger of defeat and annihilation." But in this new context, he asks, do the very elements which are the purchase price of our internal union—the elements of "obstruction, evasion, and well-nigh intolerable slowness"—threaten our performance in the long and fateful work ahead of us?

To give form and focus to this question, Mr. Agar reconstructs the salient episodes that affected our national life from the Yalta Conference to the end of President Eisenhower's first term. Superficially varied, the episodes he sets forth actually divide into two camps. On the one hand, they show a nation rising bravely and imaginatively to meet the realities of a challenging new world, whereas on the other hand, they reveal a nation reluctant to "face reality when reality becomes harsh."

Representative of the nation in its finest light, writes Mr. Agar, was the Marshall Plan, whose fate was decided not on the Senate floor but by the American people. "There has never been a better example," he writes, "of how public opinion, in a sprawling federal union, can inform itself and bring pressure to bear, once it has been aroused to make the effort of thinking." Nobler still was America's entry into the Korean War. "This painful war," Mr. Agar says, "which came to seem so useless to so many misled people, was accepted with open eyes, with no illusions, for a purpose that any famous nation in history would praise."

But what about the other side of the



—Lotte Jacobi.

Agar—"there is no security."

nation's history since 1945? As Mr. Agar sees it, "we were too selfish" to pay the price of keeping our strength when the shooting war was over, "too emotional to take the long view of Germany and forgive her sensational crimes, and too innocent to understand that a war is not worth winning if its political purpose is sacrificed to military expediency." In consequence of this, our political leaders were rendered powerless to stay the Russian march into the vacuum created by the demobilization of American military strength. And worse still, the stage was set for the sickness of "McCarthyism" when it was at last discovered that the military "settlement" of World War II settled nothing.

Mr. Agar writes that a dangerous moment for American democracy occurred in 1948 when Republican leaders and many important citizens were angry and bewildered by their inexplicable defeat. The proud men who thought they belonged by nature in the seats of power and found themselves excluded once too often by an opponent for whom they had no respect, were prepared to feel vaguely and irrationally that "someone has been messing around with my America." The episodes involving Alger Hiss, Klaus Fuchs, the collapse of Chiang's China, the Russian A- and H-bombs, were all made to order for demagogues who could feed popular fears and then goad them.

In striking a balance between the two Americas he portrays, Mr. Agar writes: "We may boast that in the testing days since Potsdam the free world has not done badly." But any such boast, he adds, must be made in the shadow of two great fears: the

bomb, and "the fact that in desperate times democracy is subject to the danger that evil men may seize power by persuading anxious, decent people that the times need not be bad after all, that the nation has simply been betrayed."

What can save us? Mr. Agar's answer: "An appeal to a long-neglected form of power—the power of thought." In his role as a gadfly bestirring thought, a somber Herbert Agar serves the nation well with his new book.

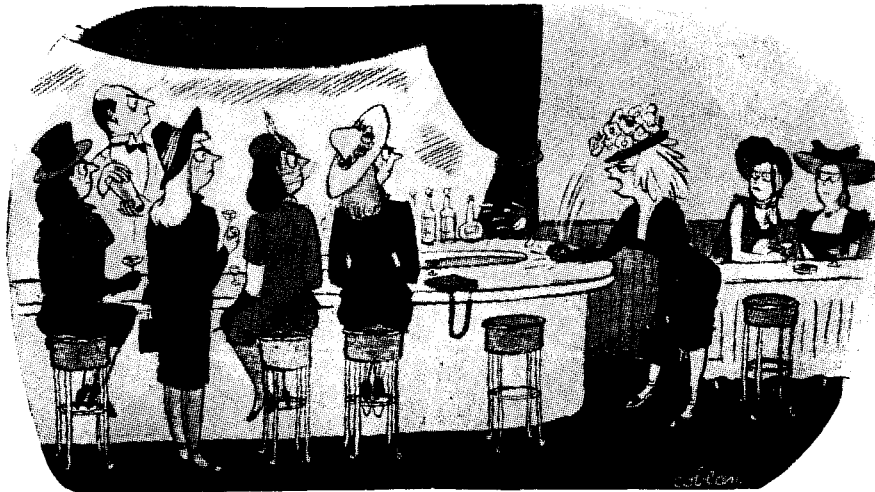
**RED SEMANTICS:** R. N. Carew Hunt's "Guide to Communist Jargon" (Macmillan, \$3.25), explores the corruption of language which is one of the most disarming features of our machine age of mass semi-literacy. Though the followers of Lenin and Stalin did not introduce the practice of using words to mean their opposites, they have been among its most indefatigable practitioners. Year after year it has become more difficult for Communism to square its terrorist class dictatorship with egalitarian, socialist slogans.

The fact that the Budapest rebels did not hoist the slogans of Horst or Franz Josef, but rose in the name of the very socialist, democratic, and equalitarian slogans to which Communism has paid lip service makes the subject of Communist semantics relevant today. Today's Communist rhetoric has at least two aspects: on the one hand, Communists in power use these terms to glorify that power; on the other hand, dissenters in Eastern Europe attempt to restore words like "democracy," "socialism," "internationalism" to their original meanings.

Unfortunately, this second aspect finds scant exposition in Mr. Hunt's book. He is interested in showing what fifty Communist terms have meant in the works of the Kremlin orthodox. He takes the Stalinist pronouncements strictly in their own terms—an attitude that may have been useful in 1950, but is scarcely conclusive in the era of Gomulka, Nagy, and Djilas. His vision of Communism as a closed, monolithic system thus prevents him from doing justice to words and slogans which have masked conflict within the Communist movement.

Biased and incomplete as this work is, it might have tempted the general reader if it had been written in the breezy manner of such anti-socialist polemicists as John T. Flynn. Unfortunately the book is quite as tedious as the Communist jargon it purports to interpret.

—ANATOLE SHUB.



—Drawing by Cobean, © 1947 The New Yorker Magazine, Inc.

"I can lick any woman in the house!"

## The Man In Her Life

**"Women, and Sometimes Men,"** by **Florida Scott-Maxwell** (Alfred A. Knopf, 207 pp. \$3.50), the latest of a plethora of books on modern woman's place in the world, attempts to explore the author's thesis that inside of every woman exists a dual nature which is half feminine, half masculine. Our reviewer, **Helen Beal Woodward**, is the author of a collection of sketches of some lively American ladies of the past entitled *"The Bold Women."*

By Helen Beal Woodward

**T**HE waning of militant feminism, now that its victories are largely won, has brought forth a near-surfeit of literature advising or scolding or dissecting modern woman. We have had the whither-are-we-drifting books of Marynia Farnham and the attagirl-but-watch-it writings of Ashley Montagu and the sensible how-to-be-a-woman handbooks of Sidonie M. Gruenberg. Among these authorities now, apparently, belongs Mrs. Florida Scott-Maxwell, the author of a new book entitled *"Women, and Sometimes Men."*

Not only is Mrs. Scott-Maxwell seventy-four years old and six times a grandmother but (we learn from the dust jacket and from the foreword of her book) she has recently retired after nearly twenty years of practice

as an analytical psychologist in the school of Jung. She also writes like a psychologist over seventy, sweetly and wisely, but what she has written is quite different from the usual collection of case histories of womanhood. It is a philosophic inquiry into the status of woman today, this "half the human race, now rising into great prominence, undergoing a striking change, and warranting our most serious attention."

Wildly oversimplified, this is what Mrs. Scott-Maxwell seems to be saying:

The new thing happening to woman is that the masculine side of her dual nature is getting out of control. Summoned to cope with the new problems created by her independence, this "inner man" in woman begins, if not to dominate, then to create painful conflicts. The independent woman becomes formidable. The soft woman, who lives via her relationships with others, grows restless and resentful and vents her impotent rage on her husband and children. This is bad, says Mrs. Scott-Maxwell, but it is, she says, also good, for woman's latent masculinity or will has been so long repressed that perhaps only through experimenting with excess masculinity can woman arrive at balance.

Mrs. Scott-Maxwell's style has a gently ironic serenity laced with wit, like Santayana spiked with Jessamyn West, and, therefore, her present book

often makes provocative reading:

- On the modern pace of women, she writes: "It almost seems that work has come to have a value that is unreal, and we take it as a drug, exciting and deadening. Women drive themselves when they are not driven by necessity, and everyone insists upon being exhausted."

- On woman's education she writes: "She is educated as though she were a man, with the hope that if she marries quickly her education will not have done her much harm, and if she does not marry she will need all she can get."

- On the behavior of women in professions, she writes: "Drained by conflicting claims" the very exhausting persistence of these women in their professions "shows what a strain women are willing to endure in order to live both sides of their nature."

Now, as Mrs. Scott-Maxwell herself might say, how good all this sounds! But generally the author is obscure about that "fascinating fellow," the man in our nature, and in her search for truth she retracts or qualifies every thought to such a degree that her conclusions appear to be constantly canceling out each other. Therefore, I must admit that, despite its demonstrable virtues, I found *"Women, and Sometimes Men"* an exasperating book, and my guess is that most women, despite its dust-jacket encomiums from Pearl Buck and from Anne Morrow Lindbergh and from President Sarah Gibson Blanding of Vassar, will suffer the same embarrassment as mine. If one heard the chapters read aloud over the radio one might well be charmed and stimulated (and in this connection it is interesting to note on the authority of the jacket that Mrs. Scott-Maxwell broadcasts for the B.B.C.). But on paper the sibylline quality confuses. What the lady is saying she is obviously saying with elegance and with brilliant side-effect. But what exactly is it?

**HOW TO FIND A HUSBAND:** Aboard the *Ile de France* en route to Europe, Rehna Cloete, who was then Miss Rehna Thatcher from Somerset, New Jersey, saw a sign which said "gymnasium" and proceeded to wander in. It was, of course, as she quickly discovered, the men's gymnasium, but this did not faze her because she was looking for men—in particular, a husband. Although she didn't find one in the gym, she did find several companions who were delighted to teach her boxing and judo and to buy her champagne. "There is no difficulty in making things happen," concludes Mrs. Cloete in recounting this some-