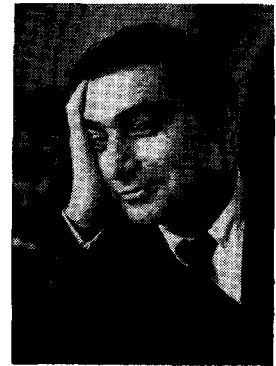


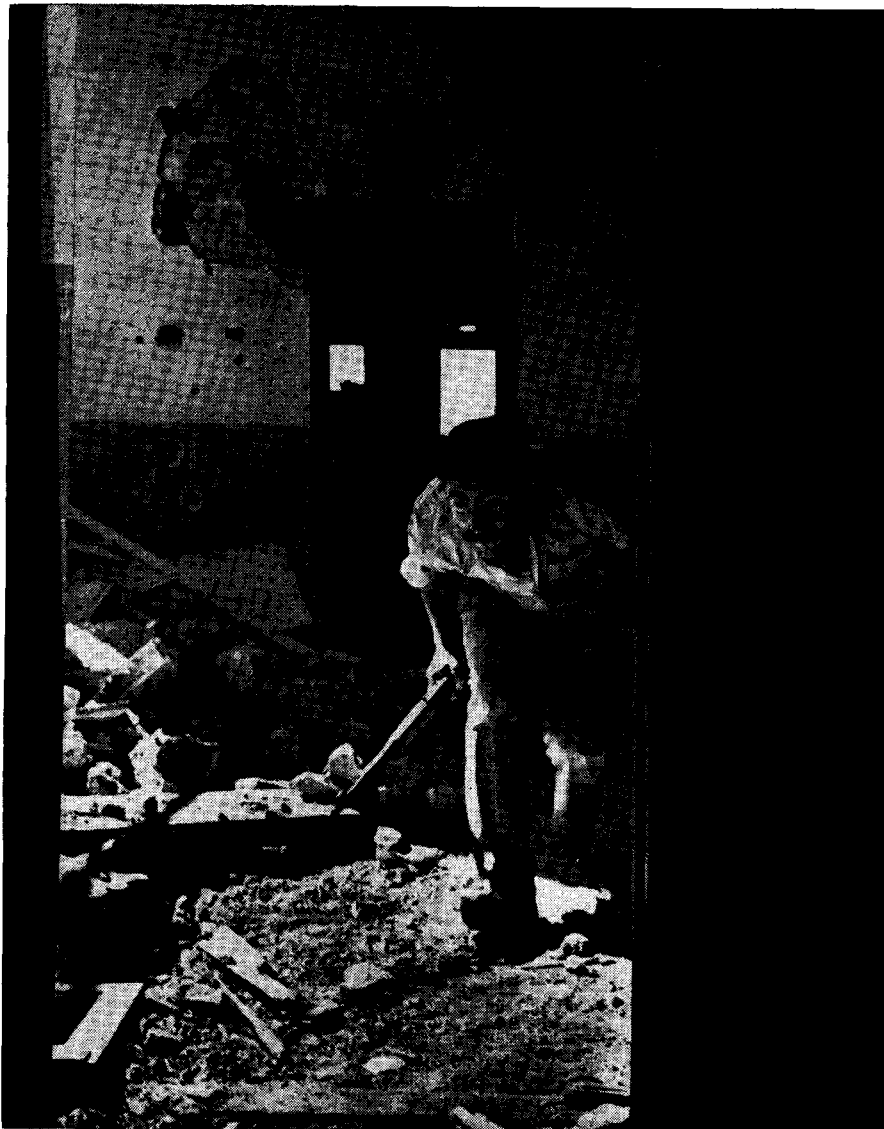
A WAR MEMORIAL

Recording a personal vision in pictures, a combat photographer revealed the many faces of battle.



—Ruth Orkin.

Robert Capa.



Israel—Sniper, rifle, a home in ruins—unholy symbols in Holyland warfare.

By MARGARET R. WEISS

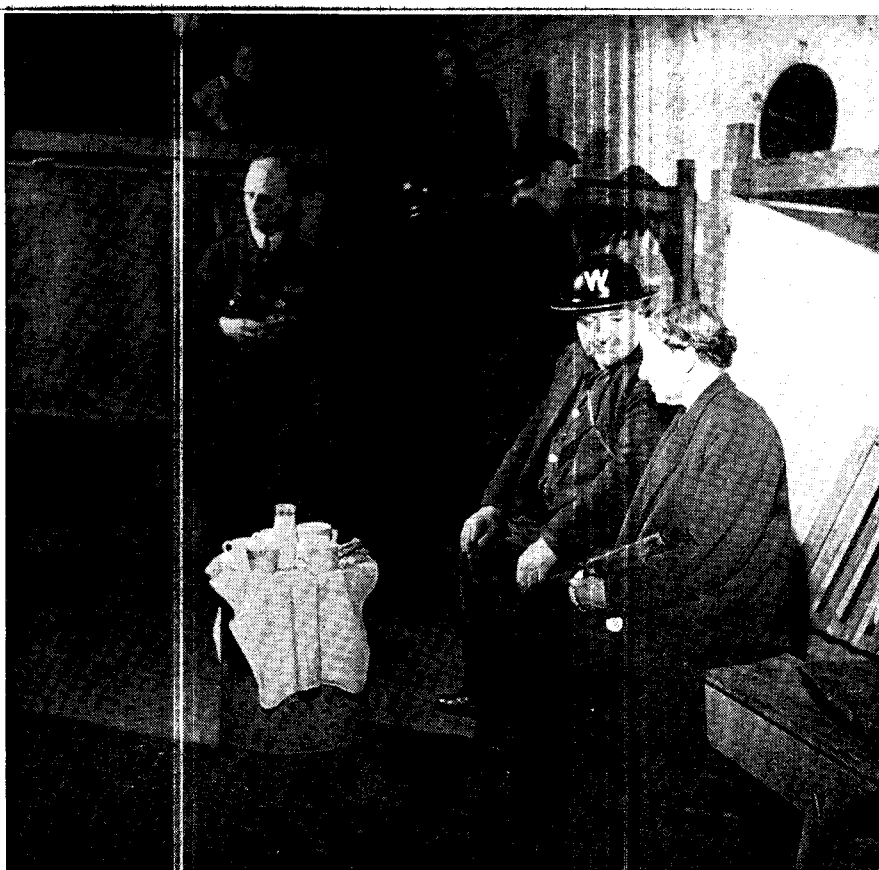
ROBERT CAPA's *Images of War* (Grossman, \$15) could appropriately have been subtitled "In Memoriam." For it serves not only as a tenth-anniversary memorial to the young photojournalist who died while on assignment in Indo-China, but as a lasting reminder that war is the least gainful of man's occupations.

No one knew its wanton wastefulness better than Capa; no one recorded it at closer range. His camera was on active duty in the Spanish Civil War, in China, on the beachheads and battlefields of World War II, in Israel, and in Indo-China. From 1936 to that May day in 1954 when he was killed by a land mine in North Vietnam, he documented his personal polemic in pictures that revealed the mingled bravery, bravado, and boredom of men at the front, the terror and the tears that flowed through the ravaged villages in the wake of each campaign.

Capa sought truth and found it in the center of combat—the deadly truth of hate and destruction; the stark truth of bereaved families, the homeless, those humiliated by surrender; the strange truth of valor born of fear. All these were his "images of war," the photographic record of insights gained from staying close to the front lines. "If your pictures aren't good," he argued, "you aren't close enough."

Not even a quick, glossy Magyar wit and the relaxed bohemianism that was part of the Capa legend could mask his sympathy for human suffering, nor hide the intense loathing he felt for

England—Refuge and a cup of tea
in an air-raid shelter during the Blitz.



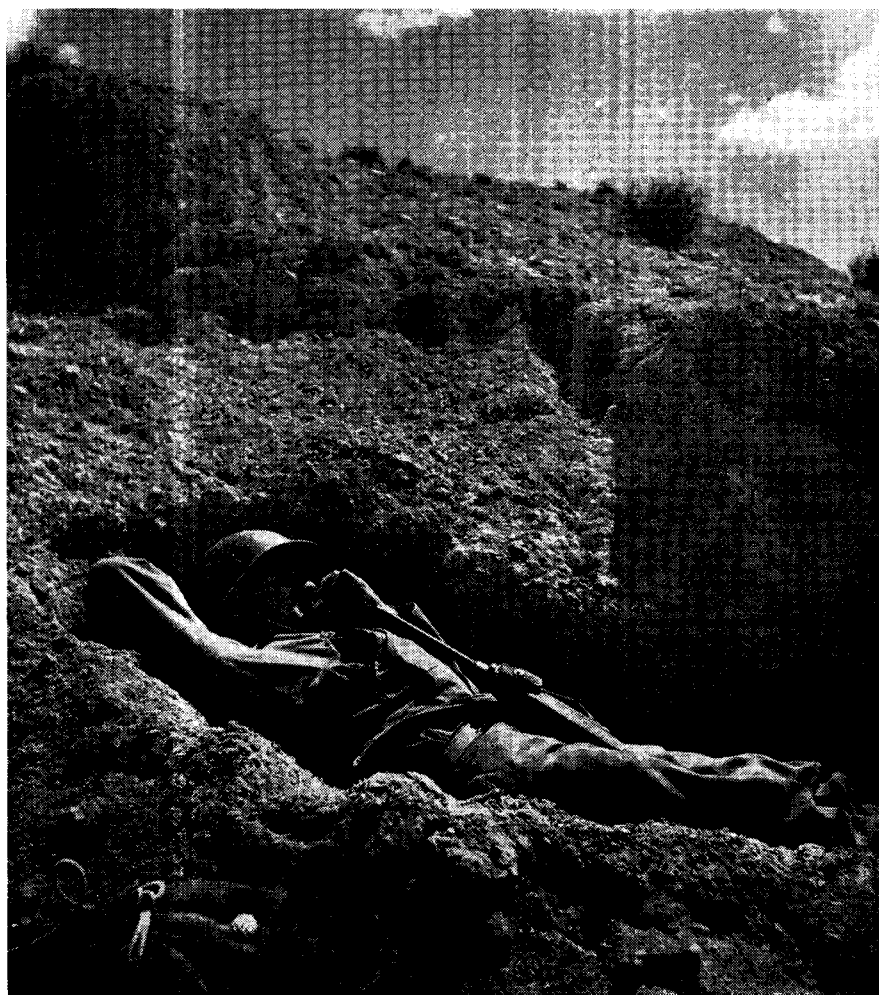
war's massive, meaningless toll. It was the need to communicate these feelings that orbited him to the scene of battle wherever a new area of conflict flared.

At the close of World War II, Capa confessed he was ready for permanent status as an "unemployed war photographer." But he maintained that status only long enough to establish with Cartier-Bresson and several other photojournalist friends an agency called Magnum Photos, the international co-operative that now includes twenty of the world's foremost photographers. He went to photograph the promise of peace and the building of a new nation in Israel, and remained to document still another war; a few years later his camera was on its final ominous assignment covering French combat troops in the Red River Delta of Indo-China.

In a foreword to the book, John Steinbeck says of his friend and co-worker: "Capa knew what to look for and what to do with it when he found it. He knew, for example, that you cannot photograph war because it is largely an emotion. But he did photograph that emotion by shooting beside it. He could show the horror of a whole people in the face of a child. His camera caught and held emotion."

We see this in the body of work preserved in *Images of War*. And we see, too, the universal face of war and the frightening vulnerability of the individual in a world of conflicting political faiths.

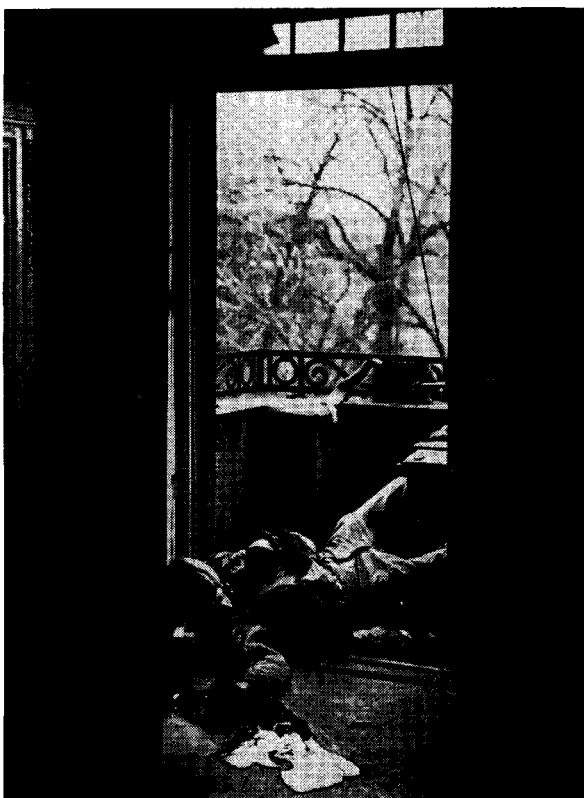
North Africa—On an El Guetar hill-
top a GI relaxes between rounds
of C-rations and German strafing.





Spain—Only a family photo identifies the fleeing or the dead.

Germany—“I had the picture of the last man to die. The last day, some of the best ones die.”



Normandy Invasion—“I decided to go in with Company E in the first wave. . . .” Of Capa’s 106 invasion pictures, only this one and seven others survived a darkroom assistant’s bungling.



Indo-China—A Vietnamese woman mourns—and another classic image reveals the universal face of war.

Totem in the Tephillin and Tallis

Pagan Rites in Judaism, by Theodor Reik (Farrar, Straus. 206 pp. \$4.50), hears heathen echoes in contemporary Hebrew ritual. Seymour Siegel is assistant professor of theology and assistant dean of the Herbert H. Lehman Institute of Ethics at the Jewish Theological Seminary.

By SEYMOUR SIEGEL

ACCORDING to the traditional account, Judaism has 613 commandments. To these many rituals and rites were added during Talmudic and post-Talmudic times. Even in the Middle Ages—especially in the works of Moses Maimonides—it was recognized that a number of these commandments antedated the Mosaic dispensation. The rituals of Judaism contained some that were revisions and even borrowings from ancient, primitive, pagan times. However, it was not the similarities to paganism that were deemed to be important; rather, it was the drastic revisions which adherence to the new, monotheistic faith demanded. Animal sacrifices, Maimonides taught, were brought by pagans. Jews adopted these rituals—but transformed them and purged them of their pagan elements.

In a series of volumes (this is the fifth) Theodor Reik proposes to use psychoanalytic hypotheses to illumine the origins of some of the rituals of Judaism. It is his contention that many of the rites observed by Jews are in reality palimpsests possessing remnants of ancient, pre-Mosaic pagan times. Armed with the knowledge of how the human psyche operates and aware of such mechanisms as displacement, regression, and repression, the psychoanalyst is uniquely qualified to read these palimpsests and to bring to the light of day that which centuries of piety, deliberate forgetting, or ignorance have hidden.

With this method he comes to some startling conclusions. In his opinion, the *sukkah*—the hut in which observant Jews eat their meals and even sleep during the autumn Feast of Tabernacles—has its prehistoric origin in the house of primitive tribes where young men were initiated into the mysteries of their ancestral heritage. This is plausible, according to Reik, because the hut

has to be separated from the house, is used by men, and is decorated in a special way—qualities which the Men's Hut also had. The *kaddish*, recited by mourners during the synagogue service, is a throwback, he says, to the "strong ancestor worship" that the Jews adopted during the sojourn in Egypt—a form of worship, repressed by the Mosaic reform, which reappeared many centuries later and transformed an ancient prayer, which does not mention death, into a mourner's devotion. The custom of some Jews of putting pebbles on the graves of dead relatives is a "displacement," he writes, of the primitive custom of putting a "big block" before the entrance of the grave, thereby protecting the living survivors from the "envy and hostility" of the dead. The longest study is devoted to the *tallis* (prayer shawl) and *tephillin* (phylacteries) worn by devout Jews during their morning devotions. Dr. Reik believes that the *tephillin* (made from the skins of animals) and the *tallis* (made of wool) are related to the ancient bull totem of the Semitic tribes. These tribes killed the totem animal and dressed themselves in the hides of the slain beast in the belief that they thereby gained some of the potency inherent in the totem. This, asserts Dr. Reik, is why Jews wear *tallis* and *tephillin*. In the same fashion he analyzes such other customs and rituals as the regulations surrounding the menstruous woman, the sanctification of the new moon, and the priestly blessings.

DR. REIK possesses a vivid imagination. His conclusions, however, are by and large so speculative that they can hardly be taken seriously by students of religious phenomena—especially of Judaism.

It is a commonplace that the rites and rituals of a living religion cannot be adequately understood unless the investigator in some way participates personally in the life of the community that he studies. Dr. Reik relies on his childhood memories—especially those connected to his grandfather. This leads him to make serious errors, which call the whole enterprise into question. Thus, he relates that his grandfather once forbade him to enter a *sukkah*. From this incident—which happened many years ago—he mistakenly infers that it is forbidden for children to enter the *sukkah*. This leads him to the

notion that the ceremonial hut is in some way related to the Men's Hut, which was barred to pre-pubescent boys. But children and women were never barred from the *sukkah*. It was not obligatory for them to be there. This is true of many rituals in Judaism—a far cry from saying that they were forbidden to be in the *sukkah*. The Talmud presents contrary evidence (even new-born children were brought into the *sukkah* by the great Talmudic sage Shammai). And any practicing Jew would know how prominent women and children are in the celebration of the festival. What probably happened was that Reik's grandfather did not want the boy to go into a hut belonging to some private family.

Putting pebbles on graves is a relatively modern ritual. It is not mentioned in the Talmud or in the codes, and seems to have grown up in Europe in the past several centuries. If this is a reappearance of a ritual that antedates Moses it is somewhat puzzling that it took so many millennia before it came to the surface.

IN another report the author recalls his grandfather ordering his grandmother to leave the table. Reik assumes that the reason for this was connected with taboos surrounding menstruous women. Whatever regulations Judaism ordains concerning women in this state, leaving the table is not one of them. These and other errors of fact and formulation merely illustrate the weakness of a method that is not controlled by rigorous scholarly attention to detail and proof.

Reik and his colleagues seem to hold that if the origin of some rite or ritual is shown to have pagan roots, the obligation to observe them will be undertaken only by the "naïve" believer. This is a grave error. It is not the origin of a custom or ritual that is wholly determinative but the meanings that have become attached to it in the course of the centuries. No one stops shaking hands because it was done originally to show the absence of weapons. The rites and commandments of Judaism are ways in which the believing Jew lives out his life in God's presence. It may be that he makes use of paths that have their genesis in foreign and strange places. But that is a minor consideration when they lead to the Throne of God.