

of speech when it serves his purpose:

Dostoevsky at his best writes like a hunted man who, for the moment, has fooled the bloodhounds and has time to confess and to laugh before the bay-ing drives him on again. He is laughing hotly from the midst of experience. He is not laughing in order to forget it.

Without specifically replying to those critics who have said that the novel was dying, if not dead, Pritchett affirms the vitality of the form. (He is himself the author of six or seven novels of considerable power.) Although he spends much of his time on earlier writers, he discusses with authority the fiction of the twentieth century. He has, for instance, some fine things to say about the scientific romances of H. G. Wells. He is hard on D. H. Lawrence and Lawrence Durrell, which suggests limitations in his range of appreciation. On the other hand, he sees clearly the virtues of Nathanael West, and he writes perceptively on Anthony Powell. I wish that he talked about more American novelists—West and Edith Wharton stand alone—for we could profit from his kind of criticism.

He is thoroughly aware of the uncertainties of our age. "It is a long time now," he begins one essay, "since the earth seemed solid under the feet to our novelists." But he has an unshakeable belief in human dignity, and can look through the literature of despair and find an underlying hope. He quotes Prince Mirsky as saying that Gorky, in spite of his superficial pessimism, recognized that "the redeeming points which may and must save humanity are enlightenment, beauty and sympathy." Pritchett goes on: "This is the optimism native to all artists which is always more important than what they *think* they believe and is frequently at complete variance with it." He makes the same point in an essay on Samuel Beckett: "He is a considerable, muttering, comic writer, and although he conveys unbearable pain, he also conveys the element of sardonic tenacity and danger that lies at the heart of the comic gift."

Pritchett belongs to no school. He is as scrupulous a student of the text as any New Critic, but he by no means scorns whatever aid other critical methods may give. He is interested in authors as human beings, and he writes about them as well as their books. He is a tough-minded man, quite incapable of gush, but his essays are written with gusto. His style, which is absolutely free from jargon, is always lucid and sometimes eloquent. He is man reading and writing and doing both well.

—GRANVILLE HICKS.

## The Late President on the Podium

*The Burden and the Glory*, by John F. Kennedy (Harper & Row. 293 pp. \$4.95), has been edited by Allan Nevins to reveal, through a selection of the late President's speeches, how Mr. Kennedy tried to get the public to rethink traditional attitudes. Among Walter Johnson's books is "1600 Pennsylvania Avenue."

By WALTER JOHNSON

IN HIS foreword to *The Burden and the Glory*, President Johnson comments that "... the speeches and statements of John Fitzgerald Kennedy are among the richest legacies he left us. They offer thoughtful guidance to the solution of almost every major problem. They provide wisdom from the past which can enlighten the future. And they remind us all of our unfinished tasks—the heights we have climbed and the summits that still lie ahead."

Professor Allan Nevins has selected for this volume and commented briefly on important speeches of 1962 and 1963 that illustrate how the President tried to educate the American people about the changed position of the nation in the world, how he tried to explain the means of achieving economic growth to a people who were still largely pre-Keynesian in thought, and attempted to arouse the majority to a sensitivity for civil rights.

But, despite the admirable rhetoric, a minimum was accomplished. Richard Rovere has observed that history would judge President Kennedy not for what he actually completed but for what he set into "motion, the energies he released, the people and ideas he encouraged, the style he brought to the Presidency."

Some analysts have tried to blame the minimum of accomplishment, despite the creditable attempt to force the public to rethink traditional attitudes, on the obstinacy of Congress. (And obstinate it certainly was.) Professor Nevins states in his introduction to *The Burden and the Glory*: "At the end of his White House years some of his best hopes

were still unfulfilled, primarily because his urgent aims were so numerous, because his reach exceeded his grasp. But in how much, at the same time, he had succeeded!"

It seems to me that this point of view obscures the basic flaw in the Kennedy approach to government. Senator Kennedy rose to power quickly and with decisiveness by using the traditional methods of American politics. Then, in the Presidency, he continued to believe that progress could be made by maneuvering within the traditional system rather than by changing aspects of it. But the appointment of federal judges palatable to the Senator Eastlands could not secure a civil rights bill, federal aid to education, medical care under social security, or even a new tax bill. Such appointments could only undermine the effectiveness of his proposed progressive legislation.

Both the Congress and the two political parties have needed a revitalization for some time. There have been far too many safe one-party districts that have re-elected time after time men who were unresponsive to the urgent problems facing American society. And, entrenched through the seniority system of Congress, they have blocked or delayed needed legislation.

During the Administrations of Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy the Supreme Court in its civil rights decisions, as well as the decisions requiring the redistricting of state legislatures and the House of Representatives, has done more to carry "the burden and the glory" than the White House.

In the last few years a President was required who, through a steady campaign of education, could rally public support to force Congress to alter its ways. Most important of all was the long overdue democratization and vitalizing of the national government. As James MacGregor Burns wrote last year in his thoughtful book *The Deadlock of Democracy*, "Certainly any man who grasped the nettle by the thorn, who staked his political hopes and reputation on a major advance in democratic government, as Lloyd George did in 1910 and Franklin Roosevelt in 1937, who inscribed his ideals of democratic government on the statute books of his country—such a man would have written for himself an imperishable new profile in courage."



# How Central Is Our Intelligence?

***The Invisible Government**, by David Wise and Thomas B. Ross (Random House. 375 pp. \$5.95), explores the dark corners of the American secret intelligence apparatus. Harry Howe Ransom, Vanderbilt University political scientist, has written on the same subject in his books "Central Intelligence and National Security" and "Can American Democracy Survive Cold War?"*

By HARRY HOWE RANSOM

SIX WEEKS before his death President Kennedy denied flatly that the Central Intelligence Agency was operating independently in secret maneuvers overseas. Referring to Viet Nam, he asserted that CIA was under "close control" and was functioning "under my instructions." The President, who as a Senator had voted unsuccessfully in 1956 to establish a Joint Congressional Committee on Intelligence, also said he was "well satisfied" with existing controls over CIA.

Shortly before he died, however, Kennedy called for the creation of a Presidential task force to survey America's world-wide intelligence activities, hoping to effectuate greater coordination and efficiency. It remained for Lyndon B. Johnson, who had voted against the Joint Congressional Committee in 1956, to constitute this special task force and receive its report. Neither Congress nor the public is likely to learn details of its findings or of actions taken to remedy deficiencies. Doubts remain about the adequacy of responsible control. Similar doubts prompted the writing of this book.

America today has two central governments, according to Washington journalists David Wise and Thomas Ross. The visible one is presided over by the President and Congress and operates generally in public view. The other is the "Invisible Government." Its "heart" is the Central Intelligence Agency. Its head is the director of Central Intelligence, currently John A. McCone.

This invisible government "... conducts espionage, and plans and executes secret operations all over the globe." It allegedly hides behind and secretly

sponsors a number of commercial and educational enterprises. It occupies "restricted" floors in American embassy buildings abroad and hires soldiers of fortune for para-military adventures. All of this reportedly takes place beyond the effective control of the President and Congress and outside the public's view. Wise and Ross assert as a "fact" that "The Invisible Government has achieved a quasi-independent status and power of its own." Secretly it "is shaping the lives of 190,000,000 Americans." Furthermore, it has been spectacularly unsuccessful in many of its covert foreign maneuvers.

An "intelligence community" grown with Cold War to enormous size may accurately be characterized as a partially invisible subgovernment of substantial influence. It is simplistic, however, to label it as the single "other" government. Rather it is but one of a number of loci of power in the nation's mammoth national security bureaucracy. The intelligence system, in fact, is itself fractured into several major autonomous and competing units. Indeed, this book probably could not have been written were there not several "in-

visible" sources of power, such as a State Department, Pentagon, and an FBI, competing with each other and with CIA and thus willing to tell tales out of school.

The book's picture of invisibility is also overdrawn. Does the public really know "virtually nothing" about the intelligence establishment, as the authors claim? Surely a substantial number know something about Gary Powers's U-2 flight in May 1960; these same authors published an excellent book about it in 1962. And more than a few know about CIA's role in the Bay of Pigs and about various of its other foreign intrigues. Some undoubtedly have read one or more of the half-dozen major books published on the subject in recent years. One, for example, was by Allen W. Dulles, the not precisely anonymous former head of the "Invisible Government."

Having said this about the book's simplistic conception of power in Washington and its overstated thesis, one hastens to add that much of this volume's substance represents competent, resourceful reporting. Although claiming too much for the book's originality, Wise and Ross have pulled aside the curtain of secrecy further than ever before. They reveal a substantial amount of new information. There are fresh facts and interpretations of the Bay of Pigs and Cuban missile crises. Also described in penetrating detail are other CIA-sponsored adventures and misadventures in Burma, Indonesia,



President Kennedy congratulating John A. McCone, as the new CIA director; former head, Allen Dulles (left), looks on.

—Wide World.