

A Time for Praise

***The Legacy of Nehru*, edited by K. Natwar-Singh (John Day. 128 pp. \$3.50), contains tributes from sixteen distinguished contemporaries of the late Prime Minister of India. Joseph Hitrec lived in India for fourteen years prior to World War II. He is the author of the novel "Son of the Moon" and other books.**

By JOSEPH HITREC

THE COMPLEX personality of the late Jawaharlal Nehru makes it inevitable, I suppose, that people of dissimilar views should look into it for a reflection of their own beliefs. In this collection of tributes by sixteen distinguished contemporaries of the late Prime Minister of India, what fascinates is not the element of appreciation, handsomely tendered in most cases, but the authors' interpolations and their tendency to use the occasion as a platform. Some of the essays—by Bertrand Russell, Earl Attlee, Arnold Toynbee, and Raja Rao—have previously appeared in England and India. Those by Dr. Martin Luther King, Ilya Ehrenburg, Pearl Buck, James T. Farrell, Dr. Linus Pauling, and K. Natwar-Singh, sponsor of the anthology, were especially written for the volume. Norman Cousins's essay originally appeared in this magazine, while the remaining pieces, by U Thant, Ellsworth Bunker, and the late Adlai Stevenson, comprise eulogies delivered on different occasions. Stevenson's, indeed, combines part of a welcoming speech to the live Nehru at Chicago with part of a tribute delivered at the U.N. on Nehru's death fifteen years later.

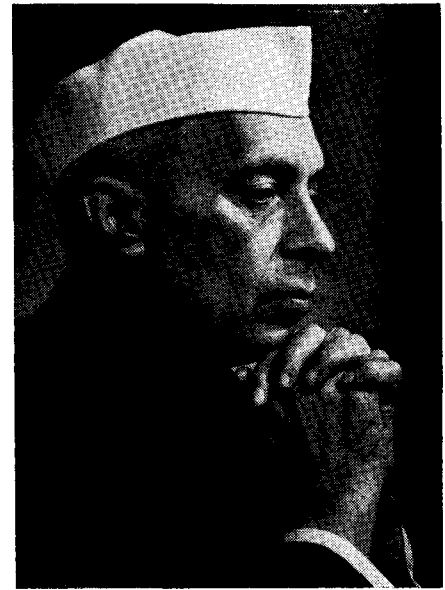
The tenor is lofty, orotund, at times pure gingerbread, as in the literary and much-italicized vignette by Raja Rao, an Indian writer and intimate of Nehru's. There is general agreement that Panditji was a great man and a world figure, a moral force and a lovable human being. After reading the various theses in support of this, our knowledge of Nehru remains intact; but we gain some new slants on the contributors.

Consider Lord Russell's startling assertion, for example, that "Nehru's reluctance to negotiate with the Chinese [over the Himalayan border dispute] was owing to his knowledge that the right wing of Congress prevented him from doing so," when the fact was that the Chinese refused to negotiate. Or his

statement that "Nehru's death has removed serious hopes of . . . settlement over Kashmir." By his own admission, Nehru had no intention of yielding on Kashmir and would not even discuss a plebiscite. "Whether this was due to his being a Kashmiri Brahmin or to some other cause, Mr. Nehru, so wise in other matters, was quite adamant on this." This last quotation is from Earl Attlee's essay in the early part of the volume. Having held many long discussions with Nehru over the "vexed issue of Kashmir," Attlee concludes ruefully: "It was the blind spot of a great statesman."

We benefit even less from Dr. Pauling's contribution, in which Nehru is mentioned twice, Gandhi once, and a case is made out of the tenuous proposition that to prevent China from becoming a nuclear menace we should admit her into the U.N., where she could then honorably take part in the negotiations for a nuclear ban treaty.

Martin Luther King, more mindful of his subject, reminds us that in Nehru the world had an "honest broker" and that the relaxed tensions of today are his legacy. The same idea is examined at greater length by U Thant, who saw in Nehru a bridge between the Western intellectual and the Eastern moral man



Nehru—"a moral force, a lovable human being."

—a happy balance indispensable to international cooperation.

The best and most affecting tributes, however, are by authors not concerned with Message. I think that Ilya Ehrenburg, despite some lapses from known fact, comes close when he writes: "A man is not like a rock. Nehru was a miraculous alloy of ages, cultures, and ideologies." And I enjoyed Norman Cousins's "fragmentary appreciation" with its blend of reminiscence, warm eyewitness detail, and thumbnail biography of a man who must be credited with the blueprint for the modern Indian nation.

Africa: A Clash of Empires

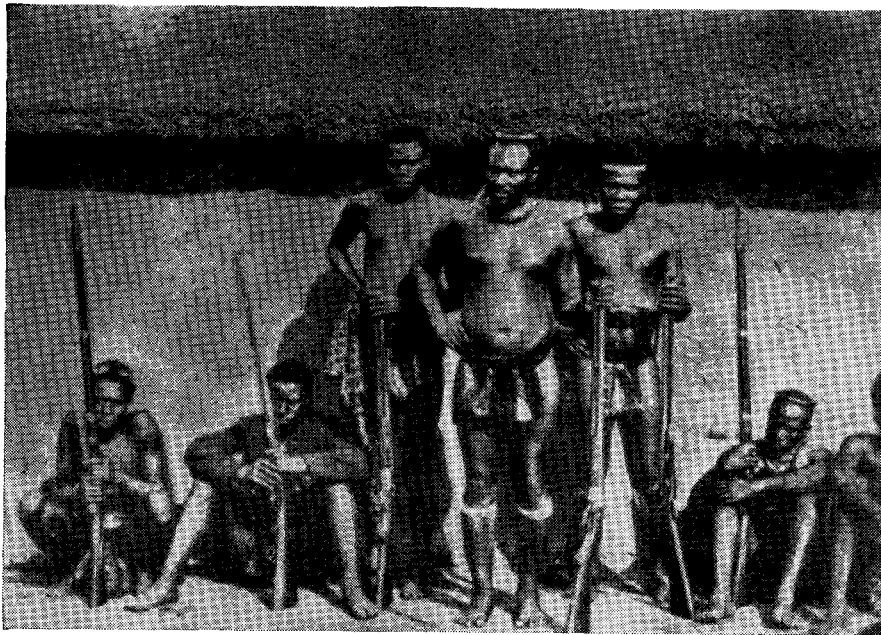
***The Washing of the Spears: A History of the Rise of the Zulu Nation Under Shaka and Its Fall in the Zulu War of 1879*, by Donald R. Morris (Simon & Schuster. 655 pp. \$12), is the epic of history's mightiest black African empire. Charles Miller is a specialist in African affairs.**

By CHARLES MILLER

AT THE beginning of the nineteenth century the Zulu nation did not exist. Only the makings were there, in the form of a vast migration that had been slowly advancing down the African continent for centuries. It was the surge of an entire people, loosely called Bantu and loosely knit into small, cattle-owning clans who were constantly feuding and shifting alliances.

All this changed in 1816 with the emergence of a ruthless military genius named Shaka, who shattered the clans and welded their lusty, belligerent youth into a war machine, the like of which had seldom been known for sheer mass and destructive force. Built on a rudimentary but devastating tactic of encirclement, the Zulu army, organized around crack regiments called "impis," rapidly propelled Shaka to the eminence (if that is the word) of an African Attila. For more than half a century this fierce, iron-disciplined juggernaut provided for Shaka and his successors the sinews of a growing sovereign state that commanded not only fear but respect throughout Southern Africa.

The brief but thundering ascent of this nation, history's mightiest black African empire, and its tragic end in a head-on collision with "civilization," are



—From the book.

Dabulamanzi, Cetshwayo's half brother, who led the Undi Corps to the attack on Rorke's Drift. Picture taken at Cetshwayo's coronation in 1873.

the subjects of *The Washing of the Spears*, a marvelous tribute to the Zulus, by Donald R. Morris.

Zululand didn't have a chance, of course. Not in the face of another mass migration: the northward movement of land-hungry Boer farmers, alternately pursued and assisted by Great Britain, in her own curiously reluctant but no less determined course of empire-building. The blow of the inevitable showdown fell on the shoulders of the Zulu king, Cetshwayo, a man of honor whom Morris describes as "within the limits of his background, reasonable, responsible and forbearing." Cetshwayo also possessed "a considerably better grasp of political realities than his predecessors" (in 1873, when the British Government "acknowledged" his sovereignty by crowning him, he immediately recognized the ceremony for the farce it was), but such virtues have seldom proved useful in staying the hands of larger nations hell-bent for *lebensraum*. In January 1879, after the usual border incidents, ultimatums, and all-too-familiar pronouncements of righteousness ("the British Government has no quarrel with the Zulu people"), a British army marched into Zululand.

By any estimate, the Zulus should have been polished off in the very first action, at the foot of a mountainous rock called Isandhlwana. Although the impis outnumbered the Imperial forces by 20,000 to 1,800, their assegais (throwing spears) were hardly a match for artillery and massed rifle fire. But at the end of the day exactly fifty-five British soldiers were still living, and the news of Isandhlwana sent "a wave of horror and shock" through England. While the disaster was mitigated somewhat on the following day, when 140 British troops

held off the assault of 4,000 Zulus at an outpost known as Rorke's Drift (their heroism won eleven Victoria Crosses), the war suddenly took on a new and disquieting aspect.

Six months, thousands of reinforcements, and many hard-fought battles later, the Zulu might was finally smashed at Ulundi, site of Cetshwayo's kraal, and Cetshwayo was himself captured and imprisoned shortly afterwards. When a caprice of public opinion transformed him into a martyred "noble savage," he was able to go to England, plead his cause at "a hugely successful luncheon" with Queen Victoria, and win restoration to his throne. But by then Zululand had been gerrymandered into a Balkanized British satellite, and formal annexation was only a matter of time. Stripped of all power, Cetshwayo died in 1884; three years later, Zululand became a British protectorate and was subsequently incorporated into South Africa. Morris tells us that the office of king still exists and that it is held by one Cyprian Bheke-zulu. But he doesn't elaborate on the extent of the royal authority: there's certainly no need to.

The Washing of the Spears is a true epic. In one sense it reaches its climax about halfway through its 614 pages of text, in the accounts of Isandhlwana and Rorke's Drift: few events in military history can surpass these two actions for sweep and drama. (Rorke's Drift, in fact, has received moderately faithful and altogether stirring treatment in the movie *Zulu*.) But Morris sustains a high level of interest throughout the entire narrative. He has done much more than tell the story of a proud people whose traditions (some quite horrifying by Western standards) gave them the will and cour-

age to retain their national identity as long as they did. For the history of the Zulu nation is inextricably bound to the whole chronicle of nineteenth-century South Africa, and to the bitter three-way struggle among Bantu, Briton, and Boer for ascendancy—indeed, for survival—in that beautiful, brooding land.

Morris also takes a close, if informal, look at British Imperial policies of the era, and in so doing sheds interesting light on a glittering array of political and military figures, from Queen Victoria and Disraeli down to the unofficial lieutenant whose death in a Zulu ambush caused an even greater shock than Isandhlwana. (He was Napoléon Eugène Louis Jean Joseph Bonaparte, exiled Prince Imperial of France, no small personage in an age that placed ridiculously high stock in titled nobility.) Two of the individuals whom I found especially intriguing were intimately involved with the fate of the Zulus. Sir Theophilus Shepstone ("Somtseu"), the arrogant, extraordinarily gifted administrator of "native" affairs for South Africa, did more than any European to help build the Zulu nation, only to betray it in the interests of political expediency. In sharp contrast, John William Colenso ("Sobantu"), the once-excommunicated Bishop of Natal, saw the Zulus as a cause, and never wavered from his dedication to their rights. Even during the panic and lynch fever that swept Natal after Isandhlwana, Colenso didn't hesitate to excommunicate his congregation as "a people who had forgotten mercy," and then go on to mourn the Zulu dead. "It was," says Morris, "perhaps the bravest act of a courageous lifetime."

Indeed, courage looms large throughout the book. Here is Cetshwayo's reply to a British ultimatum: "I do kill. . . . It is the custom of our nation and I shall not depart from it. . . . While wishing to be friends with the British I do not agree to give my people over to be governed by laws sent to me by them. . . . Go back and tell the white people this, and let them hear it well. The Governor of Natal and I are in like positions: he is Governor of Natal, and I am Governor here. . . ."

I think *The Washing of the Spears* is too long. In fact, it is positively Tolstoyan in its unending references to minor characters — individuals whose identity, when they are Zulus, becomes almost hopelessly obscured by Zulu orthography. However, the massiveness of the book is more than offset by that rarity among historical works: maps that actually help the reader. There are also seventy-seven first-rate illustrations, including several of the truly regal Cetshwayo, who has to be the book's individual hero — although the collective honor goes to the Zulu people. Donald Morris has fashioned what is likely to prove their most enduring monument.

Dark Continent in a Different Light

Africa: A Political Travelogue, by Thomas Molnar (Fleet. 304 pp. \$6.95), rejects as "mass media clichés, stereotypes and myths" current attitudes concerning the Dark Continent's new nations. Hal Lehrman, author and foreign correspondent, reports frequently from Africa.

By HAL LEHRMAN

LIKE news pictures, the quick little anecdote sometimes tells more than a thousand earnest words. Its small point can let the air out of the biggest balloons. Take Thomas Molnar's note on Algerian independence's promise and fulfillment: On the Great Day the shoeshine boys were officially summoned to toss their boxes—symbol of colonial ignominy—onto a Liberation bonfire; next morning they had no boxes, and no work. Or his observation that 200 dignitaries of the Finance Ministry in one new black African republic were jailed for graft, that the president of another young state decreed that all motorists must get out and salute him whenever he drove by, and that the leader of a third had taken the official title of "Savior." Kenya's independence was proclaimed with firecrackers imported from segregationist South Africa with whom the total trade of free Africa (and of Egypt, the Soviet bloc, and Red China) has been rising despite their thunderous calls for a world boycott against the unspeakable white supremacists.

The author of *Africa: A Political Travelogue* is a quiet professor of French employed in Brooklyn whose previous books (on education, philosophy, intellectuals, American foreign policy) did not exactly catch fire; his style of writing is a bit slow, with a tendency to ramble. Just the same, we have a possible blockbuster here or, if not that, certainly a work of intrepid pioneering across the lethal African minefields.

Armed with a year-long foundation grant, Molnar mused and meandered his way counterclockwise around the continental perimeter from Tunisia westward, south and east to the Cape, then north again to Egypt. His comments on the Mediterranean segments of this journey are perfunctory. In fact, the gap between bombastic propaganda and dismal performance in the Unit-

ed Arab Republic seemed so absurd to him that he devotes almost all his pages about that country to a touristic report on the antique splendors of the Pyramids and Sphinx, Luxor and Karnak, mischievously underlining the lack of connection between "present-day Egyptians" and the Nile's "staggering past." The sub-Sahara being his chief concern, it was there—by scrutinizing all factions, interviewing their spokesmen, testing their assertions on the spot—that he checked out what he now rejects as the "mass media clichés, stereotypes and myths" concerning past, present, and future in Africa.

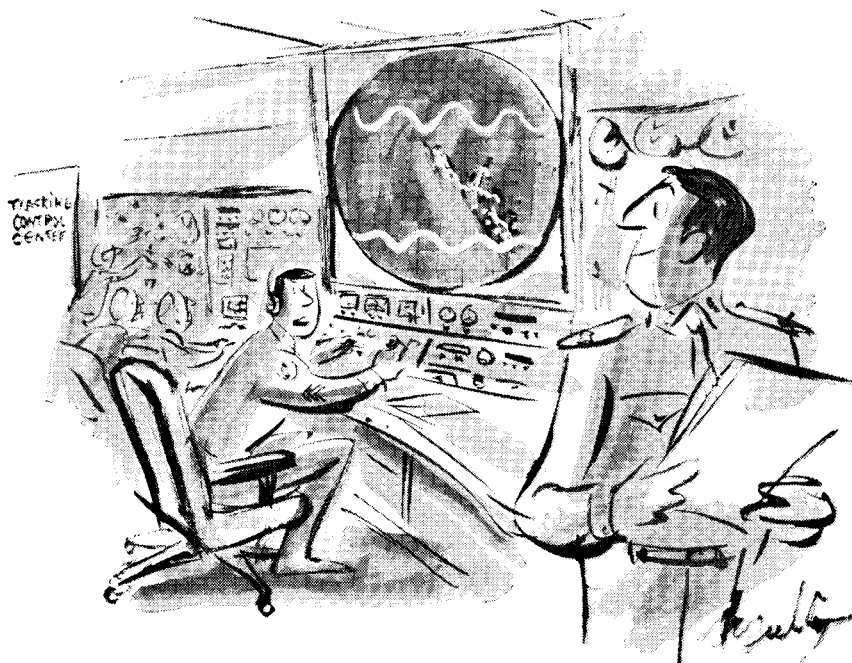
This checking-out process is likely to outrage nearly everybody, even though Molnar keeps his voice down and his arguments polite as he methodically slays a menagerie of liberal dragons.

After all, it's bad enough to be told that African history before the white man came was not an idyl but rather a slough of barbarism, that colonialism took little away from Africa as compared with the vast boons it delivered, that the greatest crime committed by imperialism was the "moral cowardice" of fleeing precipitously from Africa instead of slowly retreating until the continent could manage by itself, and that the jungle is already springing out of the pavement of every European-built

black city whence the whites have departed.

But what is a reader (whose enthusiasm for African independence rests confidently on his own tradition and the unanimous assurances of the respectable American press) to think when Molnar suggests that tribal anarchy, public corruption, private greed, envy, technological incompetence, and plain sloth are endemic in the African states? That expectations of some sort of African democracy based on Western rules are a witless dream? That the black African is just as much a racist as the white—or more—when it comes to butchering Arabs, Indians, mixed breeds, and other assorted colored folk? That Africa's heroic revolutionaries, whom Western newspapers and magazines have idealized, are in the main actually full-time demagogues—half-baked intellectuals allergic to constructive thinking, rational economics, soap, water, brooms, and buckets? That the same publications have whooped up a flea-bite rebellion in a corner of Angola but ignored the solid politico-economic progress in the bulk of that Portuguese territory, a garden-spot of multiracial cooperation? Or that—horror of horrors—stern apartheid and the establishment of physically separate but economically interdependent all-black and all-white regions may make more sense for all races in South Africa than the do-good formulae proposed from every pulpit and editorial office abroad for black dominion (and white submergence)?

Molnar wistfully gropes toward the possibility that racial variety, the spirit of the white pioneer, and European enterprise may survive in Africa. But he



"I'm in contact with a galaxy that wants to defect and come over to our side."