



## Back to Work

A GOOD DEAL will be asked of NBC News viewers on Tuesday, September 7, when the network broadcasts a three-and-a-half-hour exposition (7:30 to 11 P.M., EDT) of American foreign policy since the end of World War II. It will be the day after Labor Day, and audiences will scarcely be recovered from the summer vacation mood. Moreover, they will be looking forward, presumably with relish, to the opening of the new television entertainment season the following week. But whatever the drawbacks, foreign policy, especially against the background of Vietnam, has at least some popular relevance even in a fun-and-games culture. Many people, therefore, will no doubt watch *American White Paper: United States Foreign Policy*, which will be narrated by Chet Huntley and include a number of reports and statements by American and foreign officials and NBC correspondents.

The big question for the viewer, and one he might well give some thought to in advance, is how to get the most out of the program, which has involved an impressive investment on the part of the network. Fred Freed, the producer, estimates the cost at about \$400,000, and in the process of making it the staff scanned more than 1,000,000 feet of film, according to its own count.

What can the viewer expect out of all the effort? The producers have put together what is essentially a three-act plot that lays out the chain of events that has led us into our present deepening commitment in Southeast Asia. Act I traces the confrontation with Soviet Russia from World War II to the present. Act II traces the impact of that confrontation on the underdeveloped nations. And, finally, Act III puts the "dirty little war" in Vietnam in perspective against the shift of the Communist battle lines from Europe to Asia. What the produc-

ers seek to show is the "remarkable consistency" of our foreign policy throughout the administrations of four Presidents. And the central thread, of course, is the policy of containment of Communism—first in Europe, then in emergent areas, and now in Vietnam. They detect, on the basis of the evidence, an almost "tragic inevitability, resembling a Greek drama," in a policy that simultaneously involves both an attempt not to get sucked into a land war in Asia and a helplessness to stay out.

That, in brief, is the program's skeleton. What is the best attitude for the viewer to bring to it?

Perhaps one way to swallow so massive a dose of news background is to approach it as an audience participation show. In short, get involved. Prepare some bench marks by which to evaluate it. I suggest here but three possibilities, depending upon the age of the viewer.

For younger adults (the median age of the American population is twenty-eight), criteria for judgment come hardest. The outlines of the story they never fully shared are probably vague and blurred in their minds. By putting together the fragments of daily journalism into some coherent scheme, however rudimentary, the program may help them to grasp at least the chronology. How well does it do that job?

Older viewers, who remember the links in the historical chain and who believe we are doing the right thing by fighting in Vietnam, will undoubtedly find that the program justifies our foreign policy. They will be stirred, perhaps, when they hear President Truman at San Francisco, speaking to the newly established United Nations and declaring what a wonderful world this could be if the world's powers won the peace; but they are likely to conclude that the disappointments of recent history are more the fault of the other side than of ours. How well does the program support that conclusion?

A third group, probably a minority, will see with sadness the failure of American foreign policy to solve the social aspects of containment in Asia. They will hold that our success in containing Communism in Europe was due, in no small measure, to our willingness and ability to rebuild the industrial wealth of the continent, as well as to our military posture. In Asia we know how to use the Seventh Fleet, but can we meet with imagination the social needs of a non-industrial society, an alien culture? How well does the program explain the background of that attitude and that question?

View the NBC News audience participation game from any point of view or bias, but don't be a mere spectator. Remember, the truth you choose has consequences. —ROBERT LEWIS SHAYON.

## Your Literary I. Q.

Conducted by John T. Winterich and David M. Glixon

"EAT, DRINK, AND BE MERRY"

Judith Roche of Ypsilanti, Michigan, reminds us that the *carpe diem* theme—or "seize the moment"—has been a popular idea throughout English poetry. The question is, which poet is responsible for each of these expressions of the idea? Seize the solution on page 45.

1. But at my back I always hear  
Time's winged chariot hurrying near. ( ) Thomas Carew
2. . . . let us prove  
While we may, the sports of love:  
Time will not be ours for ever . . . ( ) Sir George Etherege
3. Come, let us go while we are in our prime;  
And take the harmless folly of the time.  
We shall grow old apace, and die  
Before we know our liberty. ( ) Edward FitzGerald
4. Ah, make the most of what we yet may spend,  
Before we too into the Dust descend . . . ( ) Robert Herrick
5. And therefore take the present time  
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino;  
For love is crownèd with the prime . . . ( ) Ben Jonson
6. Make haste therefore, sweet love, whilst it  
is prime;  
For none can call again the passèd time. ( ) Andrew Marvell
7. Pleasures, beauty, youth attend ye,  
Whilst the Spring of nature lasteth;  
Love and meeting thoughts befriend ye,  
Use the time ere Winter hasteth. ( ) William Shakespeare
8. For that lovely face will fail;  
Beauty's sweet, but beauty's frail.  
'Tis sooner past, 'tis sooner done  
Than summer's rain or winter's sun. ( ) Edmund Spenser



## From Here to Timbuktu

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Horace Sutton is on vacation. The following guest column is by Trevor L. Christie, a regular SR contributor with a well-known talent for ferreting out unusual places.*

**P**EERING into the distance, we could dimly make out the ram-parts of the fabled city that many nineteenth-century explorers had sacrificed their lives to see; it was shimmering in the midday heat as the Russian Ilyushin aircraft swooped in for a landing on the southern edge of the vast Sahara. Leaving the makeshift airport in a rickety French omnibus to make our way to town, we thought of those brave but foolhardy Europeans who had tried to reach it across desert wastelands, steaming jungles, dense forests. Their imaginations had been inflamed by tales of an African El Dorado flourishing at a caravan crossroads and their avarice had been stirred by stories of great riches to be plucked from the gold, ivory, and slave trade. Most of them had fallen victim to heat, disease, or the bitter fanaticism of the Moslem tribes.

A few minutes later we rattled into the main square of a sprawling settlement of hundreds of squalid, mud-brick dwellings baking in the sun. Our only discomfort came from a turbaned Moor sitting on our feet and our only danger was the risk of being pitched out of the vehicle on our head. This was Timbuktu, once mysterious, remote, inaccessible but now easily attainable for the price of an airplane ticket.

We had flown the South Atlantic by Pan American Airways to Dakar on the bulge of West Africa, penetrated inland as far as Bamako, parochial capital of the new Republic of Mali, hedgehopped over a bleak, arid plain by way of such curiously named villages as Ségou, Mopti, and Goundam to reach this desert outpost 5,000 miles from New York. We had hoped to find out why this city had fastened such a grip on men's minds and hearts for hundreds of years, and we did in part.

This history of Timbuktu is befogged by myth, legend, and downright falsification. It was apparently settled by the Tuaregs, a Caucasian race of nomads closely related to the Berbers, about 1000 A.D. as a summer camp. One of the first references to it, the historians tell us, is in an early Arab manuscript stating: "Soon this place became a crossroads of travelers who passed back and forth through it. They entrusted their

property to a slave named Timbuktu."

As it grew over the next 500 years Timbuktu owed its importance to its situation at the junction of the Sahara caravan trails and the Niger River "where the camel and the canoe meet." Under the *Songhai* (Negro) empire stretching for a thousand miles from the Niger to the Atlantic it reached its zenith as a commercial, religious, and cultural center late in the fifteenth and early in the sixteenth century but it never attained the importance that illusion gave it. Its population, for example, probably did not exceed 12,000 at its peak.

Late in the sixteenth century an expedition of 9,000 Moors and renegade Christians swept down from the north, conquered the *Songhai* forces, and captured Timbuktu. For the next few hundred years its prosperity waned, civil order broke down, and virtual anarchy reigned under a succession of Pashas. From time to time the Tuaregs looted the town, exacted tribute, and returned to the desert. Toward the close of the nineteenth century French colonial forces seized it and imposed a *Paix Française* until recent times. (In the first half of the last century no fewer than eighteen European explorers tried to reach Timbuktu; only two made it.)

Taken in tow by a guide in a flowing white robe, we and our companions started out in wonder to explore this community of about 9,000 souls situated near a bend of the Niger River in central Mali. As we plodded through sand up

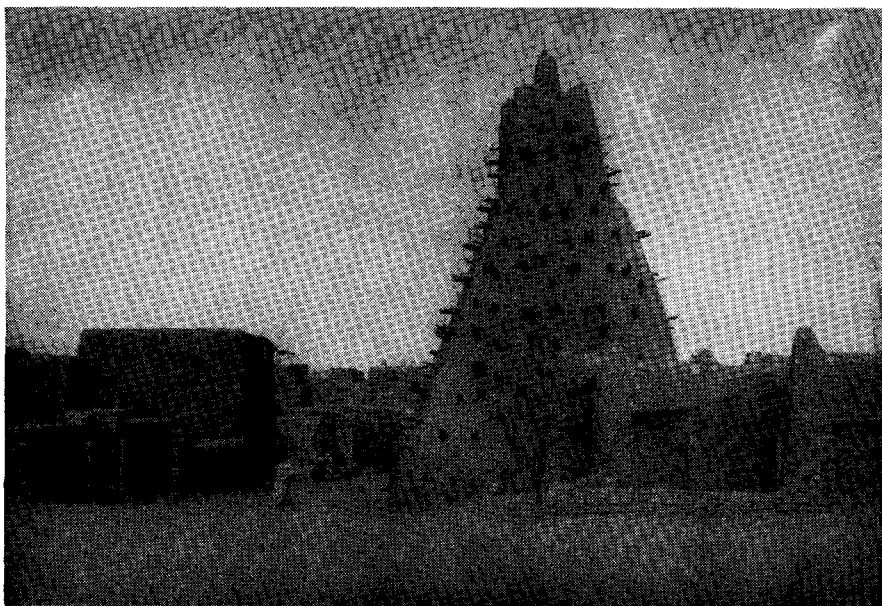
to our ankles it didn't take us long to discover that the fabulous city had no paved streets or sidewalks, no piped water supply, no sewage system, almost no electric lights, and little else of the twentieth century—that it was, in fact, living much as it did when it was founded.

That day happened to be Army Day and the people were out in the streets in carnival spirits, dressed in their best and their worst, to witness a display of Russian-made military hardware. There were black-visaged *Songhai* tribesmen, swarthy Arabs, hawk-eyed Moors, and blue-tinted Tuaregs, the proud "People of the Veil," milling about in the happiest confusion. Their costumes borrowed every color from the artist's palette and drew on every design in the couturier's book. Everything was on parade, from beautifully brocaded robes with gorgeous bandana headdresses, to plain white shifts, to filthy rags. Many a small boy wore nothing but basic birthday black.

Mingling with the human element was an outdoor menagerie of bawling camels, bleating goats and sheep, rearing horses, braying donkeys, mangy dogs, and scrawny chickens, running around in circles while a merciless sun beat down and the heat rose in waves.

The principal market, we found, was a beehive of traders, both men and women, squatting under small lean-tos covered with matting to provide a little shade. They offered for sale everything from a side of beef, to a river catfish, to watermelon, to peanuts, all swarming with black flies in defiance of every law of sanitation. Old men with wispy goatees, toothless hags, buxom "mammys," and pigtailed little girls all exuded an atmosphere of enormous good cheer.

It was not long before we wan-



Fourteenth-century mosque in Timbuktu—part real, part dream.