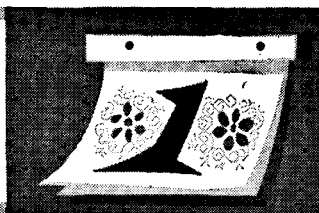


First of the Month



JUNE was the month of the Israeli Army and the hot line, of Moshe Dayan and Yitzhak Rabin, of the Wailing Wall and the U.S.S. *Liberty*, of Dorothy Parker and Spencer Tracy, of Pamela Frankau and Ted Yates.

One thing was certain in the face of the brilliant, spine-tingling victories of the Israeli Army—and that was the loss of face elsewhere. And if the Russians, next to the Arabs, seemed to have lost the most, a close second was the U.S. State Department—with the incredible statement of “State Department spokesman” Robert McCloskey that the United States “is neutral in thought, word, and deed.” By the same token, we suppose, the Department of Defense was hearing no evil, seeing no evil, and speaking no evil.

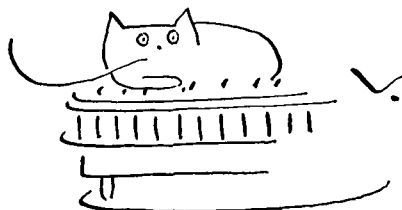
In any case, the scoop of the month was in the Republican Congressional Committee *Newsletter*—one which pointed out the 1968 budget for the State Department’s “exchange programs.” These programs included such items as \$10,161 to teach track and field to the Libyans, \$5,027 to teach track and field to the Finns, \$1,848 for a National League umpire to teach umpiring to the Netherlands Antilles, and \$1,299 to a Chicago professor of chemistry to teach volleyball to Poland. But the real clincher was the employment of a New Jersey swimming coach to instruct the swimming team of—now get this—the United Arab Republic! Gee, the way we figured it, by the time that man gets there, they won’t have any place left to swim.

The least surprised, perhaps, were people who had visited Israel in the past few years—people fortunate enough to have seen, at first hand, not only the dedication and discipline of the Israelis but also their determination to be both properly prepared and properly equipped. On our own trip, for example, we recall visiting a battlefield of the ’56 war at Safed, in upper Galilee. Here, our guide told us, so under-equipped were the Israelis that during one battle, their officers told them that every bullet would have to account for an Arab. After the battle they toted up the score—100 dead Arabs, 102 bullets.

The ramifications of it all had their amusing side — particularly from the prognosticators. *The Kiplinger Letter*, for example, appeared on Monday morn-

ing, June 5, with the flat prediction that, in the Middle East, there would be no war. Meanwhile, in Philadelphia, Joseph Dever reported that a young lady there was so upset with the news of war that on Monday morning, when the market opened, she phoned her broker. He advised her to get out of every stock she had except Philadelphia Electric. “That,” he told her, “will always be good.” The next day the Israeli Army had won and the stock market had recovered—but within the hour Philadelphia Electric had had a total blackout.

The visit of the month was that of the King and Queen of Thailand. In *Time* magazine he was King Bhumibol. In *The New York Times*, on the other hand, he was King Phumiphol. His Queen, however, was, we were relieved to see, in both places Queen Sirikit. In any case, the day we met them their entourage included, among others, Grand Chamberlain Mr. Poonperm Krairiksh; the Physician to His Majesty, Col. Mom Luang Chinda Snidvongse; as well as His Majesty’s Private Photographer, an Official Photographer, and two official camera-



men, one of whom, it was stated, was “Army TV.” Well, we suppose, these days an army fights not on just its stomach but on its TV. Anyway, our favorite of all was Miss Diba Sorakul. Her title: Maid to the Lady-in-Waiting. Gee, and over here you can’t even get babysitters.

During the month we attended a one-day writer’s conference at the University of Cincinnati—one which was sponsored by a digest magazine, *Writer’s Digest*, but which turned out, nonetheless, to be the largest conference ever held, at least judged by its proportion of writers (i.e., staff) to would-be-writers (i.e., conferees). Speaking for the novel were Vance Bourjaily, Robert Gover, Gerald Green, Arthur Hailey, Rona Jaffe, Ken McCormick, Patricia McGerr, Merle Miller, Harry Mark Petrakis, Irving Shulman, Jerome Weidman, and Milton

White; speaking for nonfiction, Bill Adler, Charles Bernard, Grant Cannon, Richard Gehman, Hayes Jacobs, Don McKinney, Victor Navasky, Kirk Polking, Ken Purdy, Ray Robinson, Al Silverman, and Maurice Zolotow. Paul Engle, Herbert Gold, and other leading writers also participated, along with such “specialists” as Rod Serling. *Esquire* publisher Arnold Gingrich concluded the affair with a brilliant address.

Mention should also be made of the start of the conference, when we were greeted by Walter Langsam, president of the University of Cincinnati. “Four of our fourteen colleges,” he told us, “are the oldest colleges west of the Alleghenies. Thank heavens for the Alleghenies.”

And, finally, it was a month of notable deaths—of TV’s Ted Yates, who loved to live dangerously, and so died; of Pamela Frankau, who wrote for so long so well on so many subjects; of Spencer Tracy, who may be remembered for his comedies with Katharine Hepburn but who should be remembered for *Captains Courageous* and for being the “Prince of Underplayers”; and of Dorothy Parker. The funeral of the latter opened and closed with a violin solo of Bach’s Air for the G String. In between there were short speeches by Zero Mostel and Lillian Hellman. “It was Dorothy’s express wish,” said Mostel, “that there be no funeral ceremonies. If she had her way, I suspect she would not be here at all.” Lillian Hellman was unforgettably moving. “She was part of nothing and nobody but herself,” she said. “Her wit stayed in no place and was of no time.” Miss Hellman also said that she felt “Dorothy looking over my shoulder now,” and that “she didn’t like to be around when other people were telling her jokes.”

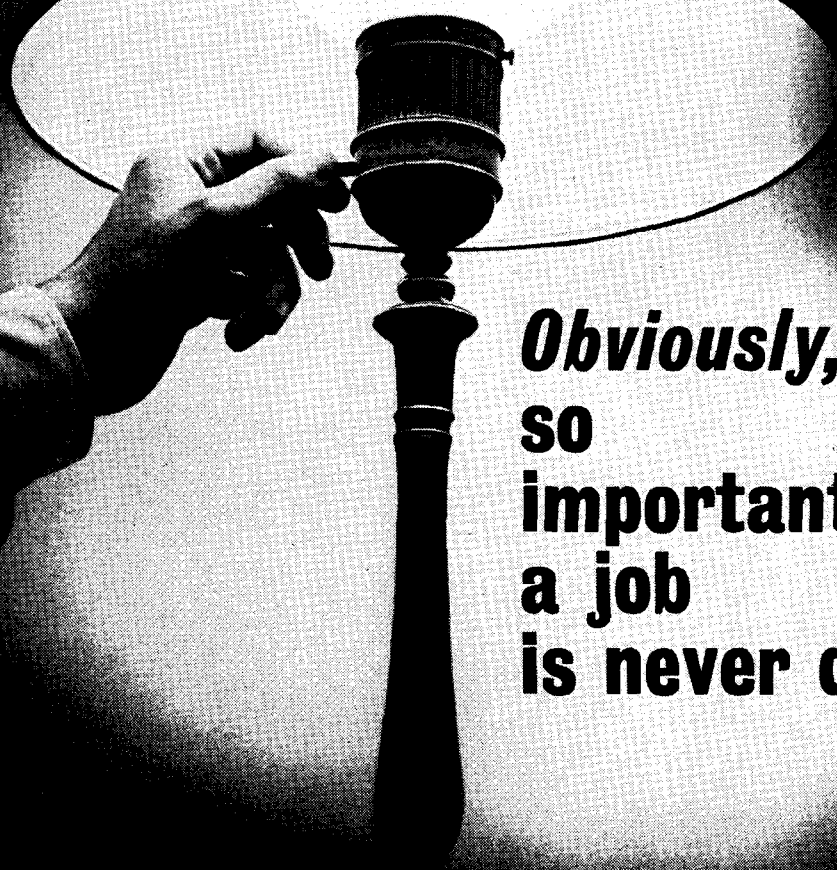
We thought at the funeral of our last talk with Dorothy, about her poetry, and how she had told us that in World War II she had given it up—because, she said, she had gone as far with it as she could. Her last poem, and the poem she loved best, was—as always with her work—as applicable today as it was when, in World War II, she wrote it. It is called “War Song”:

Soldier, in a curious land,
All across a swaying sea,
Take her smile and lift her hand,
Have no guilt of me . . .

Only for the nights that were,
Soldier, and the dawns that came,
When in sleep you turn to her,
Call her by my name.

One woman came to the funeral from Philadelphia. “I didn’t really know her,” she told us, “but from the time I first read her I felt I did.”

—CLEVELAND AMORY.



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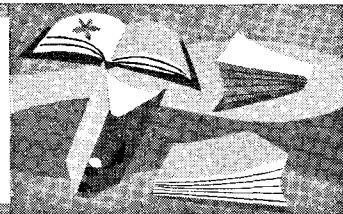
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Trade Winds



Knopf has just published *In Search of Light*. Edited by Edward Bliss, Jr., it is a collection of broadcasts and speeches made during his lifetime by Edward R. Murrow, chiefly during the years 1938-1961. The price is \$6.95. Unreservedly compelling, it is worth any price. Don't miss it.

Hypnotized, one watched and listened to the proceedings of the U.N. Security Council during the recent days of the Israeli-Arab conflict. It was squalid history in the making. Not since the world began has the word *liar* so often been spewed out. Not since it began has at least a portion of the world been able to view so clearly the vulgar machinations of presumed statesmen, presumed men of character and dignity. One shook one's head in disbelief. One's mind was overwhelmed with despair.

It is speech that is supposed to differentiate man from beast, to be his highest accomplishment and attribute. How many of us must wonder if that is so, after hearing some of those ruthless delegates—if there is any difference at all. Those speeches I heard during the week of June 4, so reminiscent of Hitler's at their worst, made me cringe with shame. Had I not had this column to write, I would have ambled over to the zoo in Central Park, and gazed at the animals there, and felt cleaner and more comfortable.

All of that vicious guff was history so vividly before us that, whatever faults may be attributed to normal television, this facet of its public service is stupendous and there is nothing like it or in any way equal to it. Yet only when all the proceedings are in print, in the years ahead, if there are any; when the speeches and points of order are neatly laid out in the pages of the indispensable book, as Murrow's are; when with whatever form the world has taken and its lands and areas of political influence are redistributed—only then will the enormity of what is going on now be fully and truly assessable.

It is just about 500 years since Johann Gensfleisch, whom we know better as Gutenberg, invented the kind of type that has made books possible. It is from it, and them, that history will be, not made, but evaluated.

"There are at the present time two great nations in the world—the Russians and the Americans. The American relies upon personal interest to accomplish his

ends and gives free scope to the unguided exertions and common sense of the people. The Russian centers all authority of society in a single arm. The principal instrument of the former is freedom; of the latter, servitude. Their starting point is different, and their courses are not the same; yet each of them seems marked by the will of Heaven to sway the destinies of half the globe."

That was written by Alexis de Tocqueville, in 1835.

Between U.N. sessions, there was opportunity to turn from world turmoil to turmoil at home. I managed to finish *Rivers of Blood, Years of Darkness*, by Robert Conot. The story of the Watts disaster in Los Angeles, from the moment of its inception to its conclusion, based on many hundreds of personal interviews conducted for a period of nine months and an analysis of every pertinent document, it is presented on an almost hour-by-hour basis; and, though it is crammed with incredible detail, I had not a minute of boredom. The book is scheduled for release on August 1, by Bantam. Price: 95 cents. If you have any influence, you, too, may be able to snatch a copy in advance.

Mrs. F. Lansing Stebbins of Elizabeth, New Jersey, perhaps aware that I enjoy specimens of literary lapses, refers to Robinson Crusoe, who has decided to swim to the shipwreck to recover supplies: ". . . so I pulled off my clothes for the weather was hot to extremity, and took to the water. . . . I went to the bread room and filled my pockets with bisquit."

And, in Eugene O'Neill's *Where the Cross Is Made*, Mrs. Lansing reminds us that, though Nat Bartlett's right arm has been amputated at the shoulder, "he goes to the table, turning the lantern low, and sits down, resting his elbows, his chin on his hands, staring somberly before him."

When you have finished the current Double-Crostic, try to make sense out of this sentence, written to a colleague by the senior certification analyst of the State of California Department of Education: "The State Board of Education is willing to consider a Master of Arts degree in teaching a subject such as English providing the degree for the master's degree contains the same amount