

lier *A Favourite of the Gods*, you will recognize this new book as a sequel concentrating on the next generation of the same family. If you have not, there's no problem; for *A Compass Error* can give as much pleasure to those with no prior knowledge of the characters.



**Friends in Need:** In *A Card from Morocco* (Harcourt, Brace & World, \$4.95) Robert Shaw, author of *The Man in the Glass Booth*, introduces us to a couple of middle-aged sad sacks adrift in Madrid, gentlemen of low self-esteem who, despite their bad behavior and all the trouble they put us to, manage to win our affection.

Arthur Lewis, retired British major, and Patrick Slattery, exiled American painter, are periodic drinking partners whose lives seem to be one hot, fly-buzzing afternoon of boozy ennui after another. Lewis is all silent pain, a gentle, discreet fellow hiding his loathsome secret with a stiff upper lip. Slattery is a fear-haunted but grossly funny guy who gets mean when he drinks. Together they are something of a quiet riot, though the laughs are bitter.

Little by little in their loneliness and boredom they expose portions of their innards, expecting at each tiny revelation to be ridiculed—as they ridicule themselves. After the American makes himself vulnerable by showing Lewis his paintings, Lewis feels free to confide in him the truth about the demon he's been wrestling with: a sick sexual obsession about his young wife. Slattery tries to talk him out of it, savagely lacerating him in the attempt, but the fantasy becomes reality as Lewis actually produces a virile young man for his wife—the sort of man he does not feel himself to be.

At this point the reader's sympathy for Lewis is strained, to say the least, for the wife is a simple, trusting girl who is happy with him the way he is; yet Shaw's skill is such that his compassion for Lewis becomes ours.

Slattery turns out to have a humiliating secret, too, revolving around pink silk panties and a desire to revenge himself on his aged father for a variety of family hurts.

In the end these two Madrid misfits part, having proved unable to protect one another from the disasters they masochistically sought. The great thing, though, is that they tried hard, and, ill-matched as they are, developed a loyalty for each other that neither was able to give to himself.

The book is extraordinarily well written, and students of fiction will be intrigued by the fulsomeness of a tale told almost entirely in duologue.

—MARTIN RUSS.

## Chronic Ambiguity

*Continued from page 38*

effort is directed to developing their own plans and policies, and how much is diverted to coping with whatever happens to be hitting them from outside." Using this criterion, he argues that the extension of Britain's global empire in the nineteenth century was one reason the British have lost the enormous technological and political advantages they held in 1850; and he shows how misgovernment led to Britain's imperial policy as well as to her later foreign-policy disasters, such as appeasement in the 1930s and the Suez crisis, not to mention the decline of her economy.

The massive and in many ways intractable problems now facing Great Britain should be sobering to Americans. Britain no longer presumes to bear global responsibilities that would justify something like our commitment in Vietnam; race relations in Britain, while tense, represent nothing like the problems of our black ghettos. Yet recent British governments can be accused, not without justice, of a massive failure to confront clearly the main policy options facing their society.

By this criterion, could one not conclude that the United States too is badly

misgoverned? To what extent have our political leaders and administrators been merely "coping with whatever happens to be hitting them from outside"? Neither Vietnam, where our military intervention is now almost universally admitted to have been a blunder, nor the war on poverty could be described as much more than hastily conceived responses to pressing crises. Much the same—or worse—could be said of our European nuclear policies, our muddling through in the dollar crisis, and the contradiction between our objective of nuclear arms control and the ABM decision.

Even leaving American domestic policies to one side, a compelling case for misgovernment can be made with respect to our foreign policy under the Johnson Administration. Whether President Nixon's European tour foreshadows a reversal of his predecessor's disastrous lack of priorities remains to be seen. Although Henry Kissinger, prior to his appointment as Presidential Assistant for National Security, showed a clear awareness of "the necessity for choice" (as he aptly titled one of his books), can one man alone reverse the deeply ingrained Anglo-Saxon habit of avoiding choice? And if not, is the United States fated to fritter away its economic and technological advantages in imperial ventures, as the British have done?

**JOHN DOS PASSOS**

**The Portugal Story**

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**DOUBLEDAY**

## Perspective

*Continued from page 33*

and villages. Farley Mowat and John de Visser bitterly blame the government of Newfoundland for the steady depopulation of its outports and for the dreadful sense of loss that these simple fishermen and their wives feel when they have to abandon their homes. Certainly not much wisdom or compassion has been shown. Optimistic growth centers that have been created have rapidly turned into dying communities of the unemployed. Uprooted and lost, the middle-aged and the old wait stoically for the end of their time; the young bolt to Canada, to Quebec and Montreal, to a new life of neon lights, pop groups and opportunity.

But government policy or no government policy, this would have happened. The world is contracting, not expanding. So in the Newfoundland outports the people are leaving, as they are leaving the Faroes, the Hebrides, the Northern isles of Norway; even locales nearer the great cities—the Auvergne in France, the Apennines of Italy's deep south, the Pennine Chain in England are emptying too. Nor is America immune—the drift from Vermont, from Maine, has long been pronounced. Modern life no longer requires the marginal lands on which our grandfathers waged so stern, so bitter a fight with nature.

To realize just how bitter and stern the fight can be, turn to John de Visser's magnificent photographs, particularly those that illustrate the chapters called "Bastions of Courage" and "It Won't Be Very Long"; linger over the last haunting picture of this group. These human beings clung like limpets to their barren rocks. They had no flowers, no trees, hardly any soil; potato patches had to



be made by hand; only the sea yielded a harvest and the bleak mountains an occasional windfall. The sense of aloneness, particularly in sickness and in death, must have been profound—and the sea, of course, constantly sucked in its victims.

**L**IVES lived so starkly, so remotely, so intimately with nature at its harshest bred trust, compassion, neighborliness, resourcefulness—qualities that contrast strongly with the delinquency and violence of our towns. Onas did not lynch each other; the outporters never locked their doors. Such communities did, of course, have their vicious sides, their ignorance and superstition. As with most isolated groups, the Newfoundlanders could get prodigiously drunk. And doubtless bitter feuds were handed down from father to son. Pity should be reserved for those who have been caught in the inexorable extinction of their ways of life and not for the ways themselves.

Nothing can stop this withdrawal from places either hostile or remote. It will go on and on until they are empty, save for an occasional temporary community of technicians—radio specialists in Thule, uranium miners in the Yukon, or here and there, where the climate is good, a tourist resort—Hiltons on the Caymans or the Cocos. But the great expansion of men and women into every corner of the earth in order to live there generation after generation is over. The great contraction has begun; the great conglomerates, the great antheaps will replace them. One can only hope that out of the upheaval which they generate will come a balance as delicate, as supremely viable as that which the Onas created for themselves in Tierra del Fuego or the outporters in Newfoundland.

## CBW

*Continued from page 31*

cause no one really knows what's going on—this may be the crux of the problem for future public action and control.


The reasons for secrecy about the details of the weapons are understandable: 1) to deny knowledge of them to the "other" side, who won't therefore learn what your offense and defense consists of; 2) to prevent proliferation of knowledge that can be incorporated into weapons systems by third countries. But the reasons for withholding general information about the CBW programs themselves, of the kind available concerning nuclear programs, cannot be similarly defended. Such secrecy has kept the central issues with regard to development, use and control of CBW weapons largely out of serious public discussion; it has permitted the Army to follow its bent without public debate, and it has allowed dangerous procedures and inefficient operations that could never stand up to objective scrutiny (the Chemical Corps Dugway Proving Grounds was, at least in the past, considered a joke as a technical evaluation test range by all GIs who were there, and by those who quickly learned via the grapevine of the utter incompetence with which the "scientific" tests were conducted).

CBW weapons are not alone in posing this problem; perhaps the most important deficiency in the American policy process today, especially that related to armaments, is the absence of a means of developing competence and information outside the government that can result in relatively disinterested analyses of issues and programs. When trying to understand large-scale, complex, technologically sophisticated systems, the press or the public or the Congress has nowhere to turn but to those most involved: the military or industry. The country must find alternatives.

But with regard to CBW the nation cannot wait for new institutions. The issues must be forced into the open by many different means. Congressman McCarthy's recent letter to Secretary of Defense Laird asking for public answers to a series of policy questions encompassing many of the issues mentioned above could be an important step if the Defense Department is forced to respond and if the answers are evaluated by people not committed to the Army's program. The collection of essays discussed here and the other books that have appeared are also most useful steps. For public skepticism toward military budgets is a rare commodity; it must continue to be fed with the sort of information and discussion Steven Rose has assembled.

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## Atoms of Irony

**Nagasaki: The Forgotten Bomb**, by Frank W. Chinnock (World, 304 pp. \$6.95), tells the story of the world's second nuclear attack. Richard Hudson, editor of *War/Peace Report*, wrote the text for "Kuboyama and the Saga of the Lucky Dragon," illustrated with drawings by Ben Shahn.

By RICHARD HUDSON

IF IN ORDER TO DO AWAY with the institution of war it were only necessary to demonstrate how horrible war—and particularly nuclear war—actually is, then mankind would have been living in secure peace for some time now. Books, plays, films and other media have made it abundantly clear that science has led us to the point where the world can quite literally be turned into a hell. So, one must ask, is it worth making the case again? I think the answer is yes, if it can be expressed in a fresh way, for man's powers of forgetfulness and rationalization are stupendous. What Frank W. Chinnock has done in *Nagasaki: The Forgotten Bomb* is to make the old statement from a perspective that may remind readers of the fears they had during the Fifties, or perhaps at the time of the 1962 Cuban missile crisis.

Chinnock's chief contribution stems from the extensive research he did before he began writing. According to notes in the book, he spent a year and a half on it, traveled 50,000 miles, and conducted hundreds of interviews. He evidently talked at length with some of the crew members of *Bock's Car*, the plane that carried the Nagasaki bomb, and with survivors and relatives of survivors of the devastation they wreaked below. Then he wrote a fast-moving yarn in a style much like that of *Reader's Digest*, on which Chinnock served as an editor for twelve years.

Ironies abound in the story. First, Nagasaki was not among the original four cities designated as possible targets; Kyoto was. But shortly before Secretary of War Stimson was to approve the targets, an acquaintance told him of Kyoto's great cultural history. Stimson struck Kyoto from the list, and Nagasaki was added. Next, when *Bock's Car* took off, the primary target was Kokura, with Nagasaki second. Smoke obscured Kokura, so the plane proceeded to Nagasaki, which was almost saved by a cloud cover. However, the pilot stretched his orders to bomb visually, and decided to use radar.

On the ground, there were endless macabre flukes: An eleven-year-old boy playing a game dived into the river to search for his sister's bell; when he surfaced, he found himself surrounded by screaming victims and flattened houses.

An old man talking to his wife by a three-foot wall bent down to pull some weeds; she stopped talking in mid-sentence, and it was only much later that the husband was able to understand what had happened: the heat rays from the center of the explosion had swept over his head and struck her down. A streetcar was charred, leaving the passengers sitting neatly in their rows of seats, "burned to cinders like little mummies." There was even a woman who gave birth while thousands were in their death pangs all around. Perhaps the ultimate irony was the case of the man who had been suffering for ten years from a stomach ulcer, and who was later told that the radiation from the bomb had somehow cured him.

On questions of the morality and the political history of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki, Chinnock does not contribute much that is new. He generally accepts the conventional view that the weapons were dropped to bring the war to an end faster, as opposed to the "revisionist" position that President Truman and Secretary of State Byrnes saw the bombings of Japan as a demonstration of power to be used in the coming Cold War with the Soviet Union. He does quote Byrnes as saying that the bomb "might well put us in a position to dictate our own terms at the end of the war." However, as he retells the story of the



meeting at which Emperor Hirohito decided Japan must surrender, it is clear that Chinnock feels the two nuclear bombings, along with the Soviet declaration of war during the three days between them, did succeed in bringing about an earlier cessation of the fighting.

But what sticks in the reader's mind is the graphic, horrible detail of the Nagasaki bombing and the courage of its victims in the face of it. It inspires the hope that the story may live not because this was the second time a nuclear weapon was deliberately used against people, but because it was the last.

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