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Editorial Book Review

Meet The Nation's Greatest Cartoonist

HERBLOCK'S SPECIAL FOR TODAY. By Herbert Block. Simon & Schuster. 255 pages. \$3.95.

As Gilbert Millstein once observed, the inclination to get cosmic over a collection of cartoons is a form of reviewer's seizure whose syndrome begins with several spastic gurgles over Cruikshank, Hogarth, Rowlandson and Daumier. "This is followed," Mr. Millstein said, "by a choked up and darkling reference to one or more obscure German monographs and Freud, repression, aggressions and the like are solid, too. Then there is a final hoodlum, or self-conscious wriggle, in which the reviewer laughs just once, knowingly and dryly."

We plan to do a lot of laughing in this review of HERBLOCK'S SPECIAL FOR TODAY and much of it right out loud. If we begin getting cosmic, or discover anything Freudian in Mr. Block's draftsman, curse us for a curmudgeon and flip right over to Pogo.

IT IS simply that Herbert Block (Herblock to you) is not only the greatest editorial cartoonist in America but also one of the few 100-proof humorists in the craft. His humor is pointed, partisan and highly seasoned. But if it is not your shirt he happens to be unstuffing at the moment it can be awfully funny in a drastic sort of way.

Editorial cartooning is meant to be drastic. To be effective it must contain a fairly simple message. Meaning must explode at first glance. Herblock's meanings do better than that — they fulminate.

He has been accused of meanness. That's nonsense. He loves small children, dogs and the "simple" concepts of life as much as the next man. But he loves his country with a somewhat keener sense of responsibility than most. He considers it his duty to use his crayons as the better editorial writers use their typewriters — to needle the national conscience. But if it is no such thing as detachment in a democracy. Every good citizen must be involved and, to some extent, committed. At best, above all, a critical independence should be among his most precious possessions.

HERBLOCK is obviously outraged that many Americans lack this critical independence; that they take too much guff from their government; that institutions which they surround too many personalities with a mysticism that is wholly unhealthy.

He makes just such a point in the prose that accompanies this collection of cartoons.

In the spring of 1956, he writes, "I did the 'How Do You Do?' cartoon on the Middle East crisis. . . It brought me a letter from a lady who was both hurt and indignant. She wrote that she was on my little game and that the figure that I was drawing labeled 'Administration' was nothing more nor less than a 'thinly veiled picture of our President.'"

"I was sorry to read that letter, which made me feel that I must have fallen down in the drawing if anyone could think that the likeness was meant to be veiled even in the thinnest way. But I was sorer still that there were those who felt that a President had nothing to do with government policies, or that political criticism must be surreptitious. . . The question was purely rhetorical because I had a pretty good idea what we were coming to — and had, in fact, arrived at. We were in a strange state where politics had become as impersonally 'personalized' as a press-agent piece in a movie fan magazine, and where admiration had, in many cases, curled into adulation.

"The egotizing of Glorious Leaders is something that cartoonists and writers on the other side of the Iron Curtain do better — and better do. But in our country, the principal function of the press is to keep a not-to-starry eye on government. It's easy to criticize, as people always say, and for quite a while

"Who would try to improve on the words of Lewis Carroll?" Who, for that matter, would try to improve on the cartoons of Herblock?

One great obstacle to marriage these days is the increasing difficulty in supporting the government and a wife on one income. — CARLSBAD CURRENT-ARGUS.

Humility has become so scarce in this country that you can't blame the fellow who has some for being pretty stuck up about it. — COLUMBIA STATE.

The newest school of art is one in which the point is thrown at the canvas, and art criticism might be a good field for the baseball writer during the winter, tabbing the artist, for example, as possessing speed but no control. — FLORENCE TIMES-UNION.

"It's A Great Performance Going On — Take My Word For It!"



Herbert Block

there I wondered why more weren't doing it."

If others hesitated to use the needle, Mr. Block did not.

All of his more recent classics are included in HERBLOCK'S SPECIAL FOR TODAY. There is, for instance, the drawing of two bureaucrats sitting in a government office studying a fat report. One, reaching for a rubber stamp, is saying: "Well, we certainly botched this job. What'll we stamp it — 'Secret' or 'Top Secret'?"

Another shows a panel of high level State Department men gathered around the conference table studying a gigantic map full of arrows illustrating Soviet penetration of the Middle East. "However," says the man with the pointer, "we've been pretty successful in keeping American newspapermen out of China."

During one of the several inter-service wrangles over missiles, there was a simple but devastating drawing of the interior of the Pentagon. Smoking rifles were poked out of doors marked "Army," "Navy," etc. Out of his own door, a thoroughly enraged Defense Secretary Wilson is emerging. Shaking a fist, he shouts: "Not in the corridors, damnit!"

After the President and top members of his "team" had boob-pooed Soviet Russia's success with earth satellites, there was a fine cartoon of two cave men watching another shooting a bow and arrow. One of the paleolithic kibitzers is saying confidently to the other: "It's nice trick but it has no significance."

THERE are others that simply won't translate into words. And, anyway, words alone do his cartoons an injustice. His deftness is so great and his subtleties with a line are so delightful that the cartoons must be seen to be fully appreciated.

Regular News readers have already seen most of the material in HERBLOCK'S SPECIAL FOR TODAY. We are frankly proud of the fact that for years we have been able to offer Mr. Block's work. But Herblock cartoons are worth viewing again and again. And, as an added attraction, he has laced his 430 drawings with 30,000 words of pungent prose.

THE prose, incidentally, is almost as brisk and delightfully stylized as his brush strokes. For example: —

"In 1958 some newspapers recalled the speeches of the 1952 campaign, when Gen. Eisenhower had said that unworthy men would not even get into an administration; and when he had promised that he would bring to Washington the best brains and men of the highest standing.

"These words about the best brains reminded me of something. In ALICE IN WONDERLAND the March Hare had oiled the watch with butter and gumped up the works. 'It was the best butter,' he sadly told the Hatter.

"There had been brought into the machinery of government the best but ter-uppers, men who knew which side their bread was buttered on, and men in whose mouths butter wouldn't melt. And, as the Hatter rumbled to the March Hare, 'Some crumbs must have got on it.'"

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"It's A Great Performance Going On — Take My Word For It!"

The Making Of World Policy Should Not Be A 'Divine' Ask

By WALTER LIPPMANN

WASHINGTON LAST WEEK at Cleveland before a conference of Protestant churches, Secretary Dulles ended his address on a note which was novel and interesting. "Today," he said, "when despotism rides high, our society is closely observed. Many find us lacking." In terms of works, we seem to be confusing freedom with moral license and our productive power is often devoted to frivolities. "In some respects, we seem to be as materialistic as the Communists but without their supporting philosophy and efficiency." But, said Mr. Dulles, there is one other way, and that is the most important, in which we are lacking. "In terms of faith, we seem unable to articulate a basic philosophy for our times which carries deep conviction and strong appeal."

REMARKABLE ADMISSION

This is a remarkable thing for Mr. Dulles to admit. For the President and he, and particularly, have certainly been untrusting in their attempts to articulate a basic philosophy. It is rare indeed that either of them discusses a public question without wrapping it up in the confident claim that the position they have taken is derived directly from the moral order of the universe. How then has it come about that Mr. Dulles, despite all the basic philosophy that he has articulated for so many years, finds that his use of philosophy does not carry "deep conviction and strong appeal?"

NOT OF 'MORAL ORDER'

The clue to the answer to this question is to be found in the fact that the very gathering he was addressing has made it manifest that it does not accept the notion that is Mr. Dulles's constant theme. It does not believe that his policies in foreign affairs are derived from and founded upon "a moral order which is fundamental and eternal." Many of the champions attending the conference disagreed with the Dulles China policy, and all of them appear to have rejected the notion that specific Dulles policies have somehow the authority and sanction of religion and of the moral order which religion sustains.

Yet the incessant claim that our policies are more than human, and have about them an aura of divinity, has been having a demoralizing effect on our prestige in

the world. Mr. Dulles, who carries a very big stick with our weapons and our wealth, seems curiously insensitive to the fact that he should therefore speak softly. In the face of the greater world, he even more than the President, is the wielder of great material power, and if only he could see himself as others see him, he would be humble and would not wield this power with moral dogmatism and any suggestion of special righteousness.

NO SURER WAY

There is no surer way for a leader of the free world to repel free men than to let it seem that in our foreign policies we make the assumption of infallibility. The more we assume that we are right, the more the world from the vast bureaucracy which forms these policies, is hedged with divinity, and that only the blind, the ignorant and the wicked can disagree with whatever the policy finally happens to be. It is right here, so I have come to believe, that lies the source of the irritation which is frustrating the hopes of the President and of Mr. Dulles that they can rally the people of the world in a moral crusade against communism. For far from articulating a basic philosophy which is different from communism, the pretense to know and to speak for the universal order, as when seen at a distance, in Asia and even in Europe, too painfully similar to the central view of the Communist philosophy. For the Communists, when they are true believers, are certain that they know the inner secrets of all human experience, and that whatever they happen to be doing is a manifestation of destiny.

AN OLD & BAD HABIT

The tendency to transform our mundane and secular matters, as for example what to do about Quency or Berlin, into religious and moral dogmas is an old and a bad habit of the human race. Freedom has one of its deepest roots in the realization that the business of states is the business of fallible and altogether human persons, not of gods and heroes and military establishments and what to do in Lebanon and Cyprus and the rest, cannot be deduced directly and neatly and obviously from the moral principles of any religion. The spirit of freedom is an emanation of the human experience in which men have learned to distrust politicians who, lacking humility, are too sure of themselves, and are therefore, in some special kind of inspiration.

'Ah Yes—We'll Take It Up At The Very Highest Level'



Moon Stamps Her Foot

Orbit Me No Orbits

By ROBERT C. RUARK

I SHOULD very much like to believe that the Russians are correct in their story that there has been a violent volcanic eruption on the moon. The British says it's all a lot of poppycock, and are using the Americans to train a king-size telescope on the moon to see if she's got any new pebbles on her keiser.

The reason I prefer to believe the Russians is that I think the moon is getting dazed sick and tired of being sniped at, and this is an early warning signal, sort of like a stamped foot. Leave me be says the moon, and fire your rockets at each other, or I will blow up in your face. Then what will happen to romance?

CURIOUS CHEMISTRY

There must be some curious chemistry in the game of space, because this science fiction business sends me not at all. I would rather read about Kil Caron than about the moon. The moon has been doing great as a symbol of love and beauty for many a million years, and like her long time when she streams a silver path down the water.

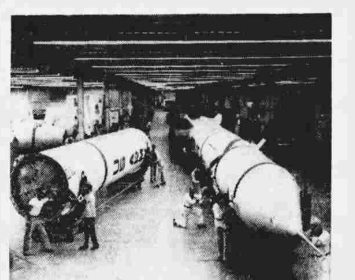
With man's talent for ruining what he touches, he's bound to mess up the moon's normal function, if he hasn't already, and the old girl into his hands, enough of which we have. Sometimes the arrogance of this little bug man, with his formulas, is almost disgusting.

MUCKING WITH MOONGLOW

He can't run a government, as witness today's news. He can't suffer the little children to go to school together. He can't get along with his neighbors, and fights a completely senseless war, and he can't get along with his own people. He can't get along with the theocratic and traffic snarls helplessly. He has difficulty keeping aircraft from colliding with one another in this space. What happens to him in outer space?

If he can't get from one side of town to the other during the theocratic war, what business has he at mucking around with moon-glow?

We cannot get along with our allies, much less our enemies, and our divorce, murder and mayhem rates rise. People get so



The Rockets Made Her Erupt

complicated on earth even the psychics can't keep their heads from dropping dead of heart attacks in their forties and fifties. We are generally a mess, and Togetherness is a myth.

ICE CUBES FIRST

We cannot control economies or currency or politics with any degree of intelligence, and nothing serious yet has been done about the weather. I mean the weather doesn't vary, no the weather up there. Orbit me no orbits until somebody makes a really functional ice-cube tray.

You really would think that man's pathetic history of coping with everyday existence on his own terrain might discourage him from taking on another vast field for further error and confusion. But if common sense, kindness and reason were largely left out of man's make-up, he at least was overwinded with limitless arrogance.

ROUND TRIP

I suppose someday when somebody does make a round trip to the moon that'll be mildly curious as to what he found — if you can believe him. But in the meantime I don't care a fig if you don't make it in my lifetime.

There is trouble enough, insecurity enough, on this globe. I

Hard-Boiled

HARD-BOILED persons get their title not from ketchup to an over-cooked egg but from washday habits of American housewives. Homemakers of frontier days used lye soap and often washed in an open stream. Clothes tended to gray, very quickly, so at least once a month the fastidious woman boiled her wash in a black iron pot. Then she starched the best pieces with a paste made in her own kitchen.

It was inevitable that she sometimes got her husband's Sunday shirts too stiff. Trying to make the best of the situation, he would jokingly accuse his wife of having boiled the clothes so long they became hard. Passing from stiffly starched clothing, the colorful term attached to persons, and the hard-boiled American male emerged as a stock character. — Webb B. Garrison in "Why You Say It." The Fascinating Story Behind Over 700 Everyday Words and Phrases.

People's Platform

Legislature Will Kill Court Reform Plan

CHARLOTTE EDITORS, THE NEWS: THE court "reform" is heading for either a show-down or round-up. It is beginning to look like a case of the bar association getting religion and confessing their sins while a wolf is looking down their throats, and that when the wolf goes away, they lose their religion and deny everything they said.

The bar has long regarded the courts as its private domain, and has been busy in the "Public Be Darned." The source of the bar's power is control of public business. The bar, by controlling the courts, is in a position to defend its power over public business. Expecting the bar to reform the courts is like asking Al Capone to throw away his Tommy-gun.

The "reform" will be killed in the legislature. It will never get past the Judiciary Committee. There is not enough public demand for reform; in fact, there is an active mental demand for information about the court system to justify the newspapers jeopardizing their interests to tell the public about the plucky "reform." The so-called ball carrier, J. Spencer Bell, is completely out of character in his role of crusader. He is neither a crusader, a character gentleman, nor reformer. He is, in fact, attorney for the bar. The play has already been called by the bar's high com-

mand. Mr. Bell, and the newspapers, might think that Mr. Bell is carrying the ball, but he is actually only carrying the water bucket. The outcome of the game has already been fixed by the boys in the back room—the general staff of the bar association.

There have been other crusades for court reform. An outstanding example is the State of New Jersey. Today, New Jersey has a field with reform like a WPA leaf-raking project when they were supposed to be building a foundation. The bar, by its own doing, is fooling around by the bar, rodded out the leaf rakers, and did the job against the opposition of the bar. Today, New Jersey has a system that is a credit to the legal profession and to those dedicated individuals who risked their social, personal, mental, moral, and physical welfare to oppose the bar association.

The question is: Do we want reform or not? The way things are going now, we will never make it. We can't get up an organization with some mental strength, separate the men from the boys, and go to work. The bar has been brain-washed, so well-meaning but weakly organized groups. Clean courts are the key to clean government. There is enough at stake to justify strong action. The bar's trade secrets — use of the courts as a political weapon — is at stake. It is in the public interest to make and keep the courts independent. That is the issue. — JOHN C. BENNETT

Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round

WASHINGTON THE nation's capital is full of so many a powerful lever that when a bureau goes up a power-cubby hole ahead of his time. It's news also when the last Trumanite retires.

The last lone Trumanite is Adm. James K. (Jake) Vardaman of Mississippi, who most coveted jobs in Washington, governor of the Federal Reserve Board, approximately two years before his term expires.

Last Of The 'Cronies'

Vardaman is the last member of the so-called "Truman cronies"—Republican newspapers called them "Missouri gang"—who molded American policy during the dynamic, colorful days immediately after World War II.

Vardaman graduated from the "cronies" to a position which influences the fate of Wall Street. He is leaving that potent position to run a little bank in Albany, Ga.

Evening The Score

When Vardaman first came to Washington I was unfair in some of the things I wrote about him. I'd like to even up the score today.

The Missouri Gang' Is All Gone Now

On the Federal Reserve Board Vardaman has been a somatic inflator, always courageous but against turbulent and for the little man. He has campaigned against the encrusted aristocracy of the Federal Reserve bankers who have been running the country's financial operations and sometimes dictate to the government. He has maintained that the Treasury should dictate fiscal policy, not be dictated to by the big banks.

His lone voice drawing out dissent on the board was missed by other board members. But it will be missed by those on Capitol Hill who concern themselves with finance and inflation.

How Truman Stayed

Adm. Vardaman is the only man in government today who knows the full story of the famous Truman deep freezes and how Truman got re-elected to the Senate.

In 1949 Vardaman got a phone call from Harry Vaughan, then Truman's assistant in the Senate, telling him that they didn't have a nickel for campaign expenses.

Not A Sou

"We haven't got a sou," said Vaughan. "We haven't even got enough to lick a postage stamp."

Naval Aid

After three tough war years in the Navy, including landings in Africa, the Philippines, and Okinawa, Vardaman came back to Washington as naval aide to the man he had helped re-elect to the Senate and who now was President. At that time the Navy purchased food for the White House and Vardaman found that 18 pounds of bacon were consumed weekly, supposedly by Truman, Margaret, and Mary. Most of it, he concluded, was being stolen by servants.

Enter George Allen

It was at this point that George Allen, now the bridge-playing partner of Pres-

ident Eisenhower, got his start toward writing the book, "Presidents Who Have Known Me." Allen, a Mississippian, was then managing the Wardman Park Hotel and was brought to the White House by his fellow Mississippian, Vardaman, to make a study of White House housekeeping. He was there for a time, he became the "White House Jester" until Truman found he was involved in too many lobbying deals and cooled on him.

Six 'Referees' Found

When Truman went to the Potsdam conference, Mrs. Truman planned to move back to Independence, Mo., which involved a food problem for the Navy. Mrs. Truman had no deep freeze, so, instead of trucking food to her every day, Vardaman tried to find a "referee" or deep freeze which could be borrowed from an Army base near Kansas City.

Harry Hoffman of Milwaukee, present in Harry Vaughan's office when this problem was being discussed, volunteered that one of his clients manufactured deep freezes and he would get one for Mrs. Truman. Instead of one he came up with six, which were sent to Mrs. Truman, Mrs. Fred Vinson, the White House, Mrs. John Snyder, Adm. to the White House and Vaughan himself. Vardaman sent his out to Shangri-la (now Camp David) until he left the White House.