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Editorial Book Review

Exploring The Mind Of The South

THE SOUTH: A Documentary History. By Iva Wuestemeyer Van Noppen. D. Van Nostrand Co. Inc. 564 pp. \$6.75.

ALL CHANGE, as novelist James Baldwin has written, implies a break-up of the world as all have known it, the loss of all that gave one an identity, the end of safety. And at such a moment, unable to see and not daring to imagine what the future will now bring forth, one clings to what one knew, or thought one knew, to what one possessed or dreamed that one possessed.

Many southerners, haunted by fitful memories, stand on the future's brink today with a genuine sense of precariousness. They know in their hearts that there is no turning back. At the same time, they feel cold and uncomfortable in the dawn of a new era. They lack any feeling of rejuvenation. They wonder, understandably, if they are not merely beginning again a cycle that has already ended in a heap of broken images.

THIS foreboding is curious. For no U.S. region has a more celebrated heritage than the South. It is so potent, so meaningful, that it should inspire confidence and strength rather than dubiousness and discomfort.

Part of the trouble lies in a manufactured mystique that colors and distorts the truth about the South's past. It is true that no part of the continent has enjoyed a more colorful history. But neither has any history been subjected to as much shameless tampering by later-day counterfeiters and myth-makers.

In perfecting their perspective, many southerners have simply been unable to distinguish between the fact and fiction, portrait and caricature, history and hyperbole. Their faith has not been bolstered by the pseudo-historic twaddle being retailed by contemporary commentators with an eye to grind.

The inevitable result is a certain amount of enigmatic insecurity, however boldly it may be rhapsodized into pride and defiance.

The South cannot relive its past in order to sort out the truth from the illusion. But it can revisit the past through the prose and poetry of its inhabitants.

In *THE SOUTH: A DOCUMENTARY HISTORY*, Mrs. Van Noppen provides us with an all-too-rare opportunity. She has captured in 564 pages at least a part of the heritage and the history of this vast and exciting land we call Dixie and she has done it almost entirely with the words and emotions of the very people who lived its triumphs and its tragedies.

This is the South as it really was, reconstructed with painstaking care from the diaries, letters, fiction, travel books, newspapers and magazines. Here are the customs, thoughts and manners of southerners, and of non-southerners who came to examine this "other Eden" during the primary pangs of discovery, settlement, flowering, war, Reconstruction and later-day transfiguration.

THE story—it does almost assume narrative form—is tied together with brief explanatory notes by Mrs. Van Noppen, professor of history at Appalachian State Teachers College.

If the result is not entirely satisfactory and if great sections of southern thought are left unexplored it is not too terrible. It would, after all, take many volumes of this type to cover all of the ground and examine all of the nuances of this vast and complex subject. This is the publishers emphasize, the first book ever devoted to a documentary study of the South. Mrs. Van Noppen is to be congratulated for her diligence and enterprise in collecting so much fascinating source material—much of it refreshingly new to the eyes of contemporary students of southern history—between these two covers.

The story begins, appropriately, with the Spanish explorers in 1528 and ends with a hopeful look at the New South in 1956.

In between is a treasure house of first-hand probes into southern problems. The book's major strength lies in its careful examination of antebellum days, the Cotton Kingdom, the War and Reconstruction. Some of its passages are

truly unforgettable, such as actress Fanny Kemble's indignant description (in a letter to the editor of the *LONDON TIMES*) of the death of a Negro slave on a Georgia plantation where she went to live as the wife of Sen. Pierce Butler: "On the plantation where I lived the infirmity was a large room, the walls of which were simply mud and laths; the floor, the soil itself, damp with perpetual drippings from holes in the roof; the open space which served for a window was protected only by a broken shutter, which in order to exclude the cold, was drawn so near as almost to exclude the light at the same time. Upon this earthen floor, with nothing but its hard damp surface beneath him, no covering but a lathered shirt and trousers, and a few sticks under his head for a pillow, lay an old man of upward of 70, dying . . . and so, like a worn-out hound, with no creature to comfort or relieve his last agony, neither Christian solace nor human succor near him, with neither wife nor child, nor even friendly fellow-being to lift his head from the knotty sticks on which he had reposed, or drive away the insects that buzzed round his lips and nostrils like those of a fallen beast, died this poor old slave, whose life had been exhausted in unrequited labor; the fruits of which had gone to pamper the pride and feed the luxury of those who cared neither for his life nor his death."

SURELY worth the price of admission alone is the fine, cold, blue flame of Lt. Gen. Wade Hampton's fury as expressed in a letter written to the field in February 1865 to Maj. Gen. W. T. Sherman of the Union Army. Sherman had complained to Hampton that the Confederates were "murdering" his foraging parties. In South Carolina after capture, adding that he had "discovered" a similar number of prisoners in his hands to be disposed of in like manner. Hampton accused Sherman of disgracing the profession of arms by allowing "the thieves whom you designate as your foragers" to put the torch to private dwellings. He vowed that Union house-burners would be shot on sight and furthermore: "I beg to assure you that for every soldier of mine 'murdered' by you, I shall execute at once two of yours."

THE mind of the New South is scrutinized with less skill and selective care than that of the Old South. The book is distressingly short on examples of the new awakening of southern liberalism, sure that the region's most interesting social and political developments of the last half century. It is difficult to understand how the influences of W. J. Cash, H. C. Carter, Ralph McGill, the young Virgil Dabney and others of real importance could be so underrated in any serious treatment of the modern South. The great Howard Odum is represented not by anything from his monumental study, *SOUTHERN RECONSTRUCTION*, but by his less consequential *RAINBOW ROUND MY SHOULDER*, a tale of a wandering Negro. It is a shame, too, that the chapter on literature of the New South could not have been a bit more representative of the great 20th century literary renaissance during which a large share of America's best fiction was being produced below the Mason-Dixon line. William Faulkner is represented (an excerpt from one of his lesser efforts, *ABSALOM, ABSALOM!*), and so is Ellen Glasgow, but there is nothing from Eudora Welty, Tennessee Williams, Thomas Wolfe, Paul Green, Erskine Caldwell, Katherine Anne Porter, Carson McCullers or Richard Wright. And although the book draws perhaps too much on North Carolina sources there is little to indicate the tremendous influence of the University of North Carolina in the development of the modern South.

THESE are minor reservations, however. For this book should be judged primarily by what it does offer rather than by what it does not. Much of what it does offer is very fine indeed.

However, the book does deserve a better introduction than Francis Butler Simkins gives it, in which White Supremacy seems unaccountably to be bracketed with biscuits as an agreeable hallmark of Dixie's charm.

Neutral Nations Nibble Hungrily On Soviet's Peace Bait

By MARQUIS CHILDS

WASHINGTON
THE OFFICIAL reluctance in Washington to agree to a summit conference has been advertised, and persuasive arguments can be made against any summit show heads-of-government meeting that in a few days could never begin to resolve the basic differences between the two halves of the divided world.

Secretary of State John Foster Dulles fears have so often been expressed that such a conference would create the illusion of peace, with the threat of aggression as great as ever; that it would lead to total relaxation in the West and a break-up of the NATO alliance; that all this would happen while the Soviet Union remained heavily armed behind the barrier of total security.

But how does the proposed summit conference fit in with the inevitable summit conference look to the neutrals and to those countries close to the Soviet bloc but not actually in it? It is important to understand a viewpoint which finds so little expression in this country and which represents not only governments but at least some public sentiment in Poland, Yugoslavia, India and other Asian and Middle-Eastern countries.

CENTRAL POINT
It is central to this view that Nikita Khrushchev really wants peace. He must deal with a kind of public opinion in the Soviet Union represented by the 40 million or so Russians who have had some degree of education and who are moving up in the Soviet system and who want peace with security.

Khrushchev must also, however, deal with another element. His position is not nearly as strong as that of the old dictator, Stalin. Those whom he forced out of power, Vyacheslav Molotov, Georgi Malenikov and the others, are still very much alive and they are following inside Russia.

In the neutralist view, if these men came back to power, they would resume the aggressive Stalinist line. They would push so hard, take such chances, as to create a far greater danger to the world than the present situation. Therefore, the West has no alternative but to try to come to terms with Khrushchev on the basis of the world as it exists today.

To refuse or to go to the summit with the purpose of proving that no agreement is possible is to risk the nuclear annihilation that both sides live in dread of. It is to court the overthrow of Khrushchev and the return of "adventurers" believing in the inevitability of armed conflict between communism and capitalism.

WHY THE FEAR?
"Why should you be afraid of peaceful competition?" the neutralist asks. "Is this because you are afraid you cannot win that competition?"

"With 10 years of peace you will find great changes taking place inside the Soviet Union. It will not come all at once and it may seem to come gradually, but living standards must rise for those who have been educated and who now hold jobs in science and technology. This is the change that Khrushchev wants to bring about."

However misguided this view may seem from the perspective of the West, it is widely held.

Partly, the motivation is fear—fear of a nuclear war that could be triggered by an accident. Khrushchev has skillfully played on this fear. Partly, the motivation is the same desire for peace and an end of cold war tensions that is so prevalent among many Russians who have had a taste of a better life.

This view also has great attraction in Socialist-leaning Britain, in West Germany, and to a lesser degree, in France. European opinion is definitely shifting. If an election were held today in Britain, a government would almost certainly come to power prepared to arrive quickly at terms with Khrushchev.

Here is the threat on the not-too-distant horizon: America's partners will make their own peace with Moscow after a series of governmental changes not too hard to forecast. Even in France, where there is a greater resistance to the neutralist view, Soviet representatives are whispering that Algeria really belongs to France and a government in Paris is based frankly on that assumption could get along with Moscow and not have to put up with "American meddling."

The facts of world opinion, and particularly opinion in Western nations allied with the United States, cannot be ignored, no matter how attractive is the case in theory against negotiation with the Russians. Dulles has lately shown signs of adjusting the American position to these facts. But the pace of change in relation to the rapidly mounting pressures must seem painfully slow.

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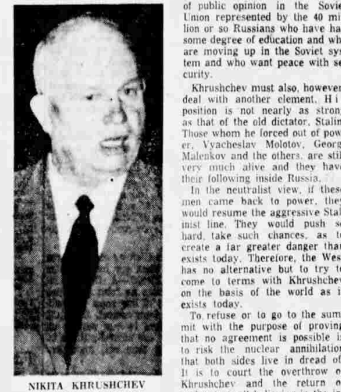
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NIKITA KHRUSHCHEV
What Does He Want?

Unwanted 'Cures'

By DORIS FLEESON

WASHINGTON
THE PRESIDENT has not accepted Vice President Richard M. Nixon's political judgment about the recent election. The President has not accepted the view of the world which many government economists, past and present, agree Nixon will, in fact, be a South American as the White House and Congress move into the clinch on a tax cut and other proposed economic curbs.

The President has also blandly knocked down suggestions that he ought to give the vice president a real executive real experience. It is an odd circumstance that Nixon has never spent a day in an executive office, but it is true.

BIDDING HIS TIME

The vice president, who works every day at politics, is thought by many to be a shrewdly unshaky about these developments, but he can only hide his time. They, at least, the White House and Congress move into the clinch on a tax cut and other proposed economic curbs.

It would be difficult to suggest decisions more important to the Republican future than those he has taken with respect to the economic decline. In the background of every GOP official's thoughts must be the Hoover years and the great depression which led to so many votes of no confidence in that party.

FUTURE IN MIND

The vice president, of course, has his own immediate future in mind. He can and does to a measure disassociate himself from Eisenhower positions, but he knows he must run, if nominated, on the Eisenhower record, exactly as Adlai Stevenson had no choice in 1952 but to embrace Harry Truman's record.

The question arises why, in a situation with such deeply political overtones, the President does not give greater weight to Nixon, the politician. Repeatedly Eisenhower has praised Nixon's capabilities and he has never questioned his techniques. Often the President has seemed to advocate the role of leader of the party to the young vice president, who likes it and devotes tireless energy to it.

BUSINESS PROBLEM

The answer seems to be that the President looks upon the recession purely as a business problem and has turned to businessmen for the answers. Congress understands that the most effective single voice at the White House on this issue is that of former Treasury Secretary George M. Humphrey.

The President's Council of Economic Advisors supports a tax cut. So does the most effective voice of the party, Arthur Burns, in whom the President once had great faith.

One politician determined to handle the recession issue with regard to his cutting edge everywhere is Truman. He was sorely tempted to split with some of his pet enemies on Capitol Hill, the conservative Republicans of the House Ways and Means Committee, but he resisted the temptation.

Instead he read a sober document, written with the help of what he called "my smartest friends," and he refused to stray far from it. He wanted the stripes of his testimony on deal with his proposals, not his policy, and he arranged it that way.



Fix Earth First This Moon Talk Will Wane

By ROBERT C. RUARK

PALAMOS, Spain
I'LL BET you a short beer, Mac, I'll bet you that next September the moon'll wane as much as the East Side of the West Side at theater time in less than a year. Orbit me, oldie, deconstructed or not. Ask any light shouter, such as Bernie Baruch, where you can get a good half-trillion pointer these days.

YAKING IT UP
Mac, we are living in an age when everybody is yaking it up. I mean about the day after tomorrow when we ain't even got yesterday beat in its knees.

We can't handle a bunch of young thugs who prevent decent people from walking the streets, and decent kids from being called. We can't handle traffic or hoodlums or overseas aid or sick Presidents or the common cold. All this yake-about stuff is about to bore the drawers off me.

NOT LONESOME
And, Mac, I ain't lonesome. There is at least one physicist, President Lee DuBridge of Cal Tech, who said the same thing a while back, including a very pertinent point. Why bother to fret about launching weapons from the moon—when you can drop an egg on the earth—when you can do it today with equal violence

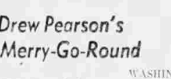
on a target that, only 5,000 miles away, is in the first place? Dr. DuBridge mentioned that it would take five days to get your warhead back to earth from the moon and in that space of time the war might well be over."

PRESSING CASE
I mention weather as a pressing case in common. Before we give all our attention to being off with the birds, on a Super-Cloud X, can we not do something about unseasonable snow, continuous droughts, floods, and the other little homey circumstances that prevent the great thinkers from getting from home to office? One storm of rain kills movement in big cities, and snow immobilizes practically everyone. If you can't keep the rains moving in Washington, what happens when outer space is so loaded with writhing objects that you can't fight your way through the stratosphere? Where is the plumb line when the celestial pipes burst to drain on Mars, maybe?

A whole new language is being built all over this outer space stuff with which we occupy ourselves today, and in the meantime, nobody speaks basic English. Whatever happened to the good five-cent cigar, or the balanced budget? The music goes round and round, oh ho ho ho, and it comes out nowhere.

And, Mac, I ain't lonesome. There is at least one physicist, President Lee DuBridge of Cal Tech, who said the same thing a while back, including a very pertinent point. Why bother to fret about launching weapons from the moon—when you can drop an egg on the earth—when you can do it today with equal violence

on a target that, only 5,000 miles away, is in the first place? Dr. DuBridge mentioned that it would take five days to get your warhead back to earth from the moon and in that space of time the war might well be over."



GEORGE HUMPHREY
The Vice Lion

Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round

WASHINGTON
EVENTS which five years ago would have been considered unbelievable occurred in Moscow and New York this week. They illustrated the new look in American-Russian relations.

In New York, a jam-packed crowd filled the Metropolitan Opera House as 1,500 waited in the street outside to cheer the Moscow Ballet. Russian young men, dressed in the style of the beautiful native dances, got curtain call after curtain call. The Soviet flag hung beside the Stars and Stripes. Tickets for \$15 apiece, yet were undiminished. The Opera House is sold out for a solid three weeks.

Roaring Plaudits

Simultaneously, in Moscow, a young Russian crowd, thousands strong, came out to hear Van Cliburn, one of an elite company official, play his own heart's desire, the Russian people and even the Russian for himself, the International Tchaikovsky Piano contest.

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