

but also ignorant of the recurrent swings of history. He did not understand that the system of nations produces fresh enmities each generation as interests change, and that it is the business of statecraft to guard as much as possible against raising new enemies while subduing contemporary ones. Having invented the United Nations, having touched glasses with Stalin, Roosevelt perhaps thought that

the future would run with his trivial optimism.

With another President pitting his understanding, his acuity and his steel against another adversary in Moscow, *Roosevelt's Road to Russia*, showing us again the calamities which Presidential diplomacy has brought upon us, has an urgent timeliness. It could also be an object lesson for Eisenhower.

Black and White, Read All Over

JOAN DIDION

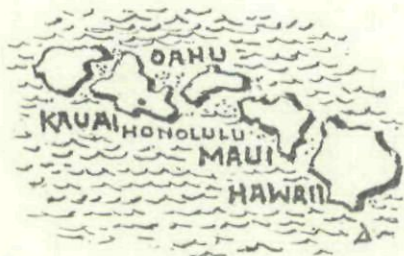
ONCE UPON a time, when popular fiction admitted both Good Guys and Bad Guys, evil was a palpable force, waiting beyond the cottonwood trees in the draw. These days we have a more permissive universe, peopled only by Good Guys, a few of whom do not see the light until the closing chapters. Sin is asocial, and decidedly *infra dig*. There can be no real snakes in Eden any more; there must be instead, to account for unpleasantness and violence and Seconal, a Problem. A Problem is like a defanged snake in a bag, and can be exorcised, as sin cannot be, by A Liberal Education (words and music by Mark Van Doren). Since a Problem implies a Solution, the only task before us is to educate the benighted in that Solution. The idea of racial intolerance, precisely because it is fraught with undeviating simplicity, is an ideal Problem. If we are to believe what we read in the papers, large numbers of people live wrapped in the rosy knowledge that were we all to get along like tea-colored birds (the adjective belongs to Philip Wylie, an old-time social evangelist) in a nest, life from here on out would be blue skies, Salk vaccine, and two MG's in every pot.

This Getting-Along-Together is the main tenet of James Michener's faith, a social philosophy of such relentless intellectual difficulty that Oscar Hammerstein was able to encompass it in all its complexities in the lyrics for *South Pacific*; and man's intermittent resistance to Getting-Along-Together is the Problem in Mr. Michener's new epic of the islands, *Hawaii* (Random House, \$6.95).

Rest assured that even the most

recalcitrantly wrong-headed come around in time for the fadeout. Page 936 reveals Hoxworth Hale, scion of the *haole* aristocracy, congratulating young Shigeo Sakagawa on his election to the Territorial Senate. "You'll forgive me," Hale says, crowning the Japanese boy with a lei, "if I don't kiss you." "I'll do that for you, Dad," says Hale's daughter—who "studied politics at Wellesley"—and damned if she doesn't.

Hawaii is a Book-of-the-Month, a Reader's Digest Condensed Book Club selection, a movie property (acquired by the Mirisch Company for \$600,000 and 10 per cent of the gross), and an index to America's most popular attitudes. Its sheer bulk lends it



the illusion of ponderous achievement; one feels somewhere deep that nobody, not even James Michener, could have invested so much interesting material—the account of an insular society that woke from reveries of Tahitian gods to the electric-eel shock of Harry Bridges and Henry Kaiser—with what appears to be so little intelligence. Because Mr. Michener knows the names and the places (believing in his *Mauna Loa*, for instance, is as easy as believing in the Matson Line's *Lurline* or *Matsonia*, and the names and careers of his mis-

sionary-entrepreneurs, Janders and Whipple, Hoxworth and Hale, ring as true as the real ones, Alexander and Baldwin, Castle and Cooke), one tends to expect that he might also know what they were about. The immense sweep and spurious accuracy of Mr. Michener's material cast so potent a spell that it takes an effort of will to recall where we have met these people before, and it wasn't in any history of the Pacific.

Consider Kelolo Kanakoa, dispossessed heir to the Hawaiian throne and kind of beach-boy next door. His friends call him Kelly. He messes around with mainland divorcees from places like Tulsa and Montgomery and Atlanta. (Mr. Michener never overlooks an opportunity to score one off on the South, and it is, anyway, part of the catechism that divorcees do, just as war widows don't.) But he takes only good girls, from Smith College, home to Mom ("Muddah, dis wahine Elinor Henderson, Smith"), and is at last saved by a good woman's love. The match is, as so much *lagniappe*, interracial.

Consider Wild Whip Hoxworth, as untamedly masculine a hero as any who ever crossed the pages of *McCall's*. Wild Whip ("tall and lean, with knife scars across his left cheek and black hair that rumbled in the wind . . . flashing white teeth and slow, penetrating eyes") is given to women and pineapples, endearing passions both. "We ought to plant these in Hawaii," says one of Wild Whip's women as he feeds her a pineapple. "I propose to," he replies. Consider Goro Sakagawa's bride, a Japanese Carol Kennicott, who "loves Bruckner and Brahms and was fighting to set the Japanese girl free." She longs to return to Tokyo, where the talk, Mr. Michener reports with approval, is "all about Paris and André Gide and Dostoevski." Goro, who fights with the Nisei in Italy, tells Ernie Pyle: "We fight double. Against the Germans and for every Japanese in America." "There goes an American," says an onlooker, a Princeton man.

If this all sounds like a song you've heard before, it's because *Hawaii* turns out to be inhabited by some of our most popular folk characters, traveling incognito as Tahitian monarchs, missionaries, magnates and labor leaders. Meet Clyde V. Carter,

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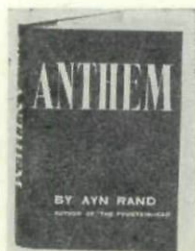
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a Texas congressman to warm the cockles of any Liberal heart. Mr. Carter "hated to the point of nausea anyone who wasn't a white man," and "knew from experience that rich men were the saviors of the republic." Meet the War Widow (the aforementioned *wahine* from Smith, Elinor Henderson), whose husband, characterized as "one of the men God puts his special finger on," died "covered with medals." "He had a thing about happiness," says Mrs. Henderson, whose dialogue appears to have been ghosted by Sheila Graham. "God, if the world knew what that man knew about being happy." The island women have their genesis in the lush dreams of a Matson Line copywriter ("Has she been here," a *haole* asks himself, "under these breadfruit trees, all these last empty years?"); and the Chinese Matriarch of the piece, Wu Chow's Auntie, turns out to be none other than the island Ma Perkins, who at 104 briskly fills her men in on the tax-loss structure, and at 106 becomes An American. "When you are a citizen," she says, "the earth feels different." The whole vast Pacific, in fact, sudses up like daytime radio.

Adult daytime radio. With the subtle irony that once characterized the "Lincoln High" series, Mr. Michener educates us to the Solution. "With all the fine girls I told you about from Hiroshima," a Japanese mother cries, "why do you ride home with a *haole*? It's almost as bad as if you married a Korean." "How different things are now," a Hawaiian muses. "The problem is: will a leading Chinese family like Hong Kong Kee's allow their daughter to marry a Hawaiian? We have fallen so swiftly on the slide of history." The inbred, white-on-white families are, naturally, ravaged by homosexuality—"women sitting upstairs in the late afternoons" (unless I misunderstand Mr. Michener and all the Southern novelists whose property that line originally was, it means mad, mad, mad), and fumbling gentlemen who can't help wondering out loud what "Japanese field hands" are doing in their offices. Hoxworth Hale's daughter—that's Noelani, the Wellesley politico—sums up *their* dilemma: "I've been living a long time," she says, "with worn-out people."

Noelani, you don't know the half of it.

No Intervention, No Problem

FRANK CHODOROV

ERE THERE no intervention, there would be no farm problem."

Thus, in a single sentence, William H. Peterson, in *The Great Farm Problem* (Regnery, \$5.00), diagnoses what has become a chronic national disease and suggests the only remedy: the government must get clean out of the agricultural business. The entire book is devoted to proving the incompetence of government in any field of economic endeavor. Using agriculture as a shining example, it clearly demonstrates that the "farm problem" is only a problem in politics.

Since the beginning of the country—perhaps since the beginning of organized society—the agriculturist has resented the urbanite, maintaining that his lot is made harder by the avarice and advantages of the city dweller. There was more than a modicum of substance in his complaint. The tariff system—political intervention—did in fact work hardship on the farmer because it compelled him to pay more than a competitive price for

the goods he bought even while the price he obtained for his produce was set in a free world market. The injustice was patent, and should have been righted by the discontinuance of the special privilege granted by government to the manufacturing interests. But the farmer, whose knowledge of economics is on a par with that of the rest of the population, rarely asked for the abolition of the tariff privilege; rather, he sought from government some privilege to offset the advantage of the industrial producer. And the politician, equally ignorant of economics and concerned only with the prerogatives and perquisites of office, was quite willing to propitiate the farm vote.

But what could the politician, in the early days, do to win the good will of the farmer? A tariff on farm products would not do, because the American farmer could undersell the farmers in the world market and therefore suffered from no foreign competition in the domestic market.

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