

it really is. Lewis once said, "The true image must be put down," and that is how Chambers felt about it also.

The life of Whittaker Chambers covered almost exactly the first sixty years of this century. It can be said without exaggeration that few men experienced more deeply and with greater awareness the whole spectrum of what this period had to offer than he, or that few if any better understood the forces that shaped it. Anyone who wishes to understand our frightening, puzzling time will find it most helpful to become acquainted with Whittaker Chambers—he was there, and no one thought more profoundly about it, or wrote about it with more understanding than he. *Witness*, of course, is the indispensable book, but in the present book Chambers bares his soul and speaks from his heart in a way which would scarcely be possible except in letters to a friend. We are greatly in Mr. Buckley's debt for having inspired them, and for letting us read them. They are a part, an illuminating part, of the story of our sorry times.

Acheson's Apologia

Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department, by Dean Acheson, *New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1969. 798 pp. \$15.00.*

ONE WHO KNEW nothing about Dean Acheson's previous record might conclude, from an examination of his recent speeches and contributions to periodicals, that he would make a great Secretary of State. The thesis of his *apologia pro vita sua* is that he was a great Secretary of State, but his gloss cannot conceal the ugly facts of history, nor erase doubts that even John Kenneth Galbraith could have been worse.

The "new" Acheson considers himself

"far to the right." Certainly he is far to the right of the "old" Acheson. He is a hawk on Viet Nam, which puts him beyond the pale of toleration by the liberals. Eloquent-ly and with magnificent scorn the new Acheson disposes of those who still cherish illusions about the United Nations, oppose the deployment of an anti-ballistic missile system, support sanctions against Rhodesia, and believe there are liberalizing tendencies in the Kremlin which we can encourage by constant assurances of our understanding and good will.

Alas, there is no repudiation of the old Acheson in this book. Acheson is a son of a bishop, and he embellishes his writing with as many quotations from the Bible as Latin maxims; but he cannot bring himself to say with Job, "Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." On the contrary his arrogance approaches what the Greeks called *hubris* in a book that takes its title from the remark of Alphonso X of Spain that he would have given some useful hints for a better ordering of the universe had he been "present at the creation." Acheson says he shared responsibility with others for the creation of a new world out of the chaos of World War II and that their task was just a bit less formidable than that described in Genesis. And he saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good; and in the seventh decade of his life he rested.

The late Senator Joseph R. McCarthy was not alone in identifying Acheson with a pro-communist cabal in the State Department, including Alger Hiss, who was convicted of perjury after swearing that he had not been a spy for the Russians. Adolph Berle, an assistant secretary of state, testified that "men in Mr. Acheson's group, of course, with Mr. Hiss as his principal assistant," were pro-Russian. Berle said he "got trimmed" in a fight with that group in the fall of 1944 and was sent to Brazil as ambassador. J. Anthony Panuch, a state department security officer after the war, testified that "Mr. Acheson and Mr. Hiss at the time I was in the department were

sympathetic to the Soviet policy." He said he told Acheson that past membership in the Communist party should create reasonable doubt about an employee's loyalty and that Acheson said this would be "thought control." Spruille Braden, assistant secretary of state for Latin American affairs, testified that in January, 1947, Hiss prepared a report for the United Nations on the Panama Canal Zone as an "occupied territory." When Braden stormed into Acheson's office to protest, he said, Acheson upheld Hiss and refused to hear any argument about it. Bernard Baruch, as Acheson acknowledges, told his friend General George C. Marshall, when Marshall was secretary of state, that Acheson was "soft on communism" and pro-Soviet and could not be trusted.

Acheson dismisses these charges as contemptible. He denies that he meant to condone disloyalty in any way when, on January 25, 1950, after Hiss had been convicted, he said: "I do not intend to turn my back on Alger Hiss." Actually nobody accused Acheson of condoning disloyalty; the point was that he refused—and so did virtually the whole liberal establishment—to accept the jury's verdict that Hiss was guilty as charged by Whittaker Chambers. Braden, Acheson says, was "a bull of a man . . . dealing with the objects of his prejudices by blind charges, preceded by pawing up a good deal of dust." As for Panuch, Acheson says "a new day had clearly dawned" when he got General Marshall to sign an order accepting Panuch's resignation, which had not been submitted. Acheson mentions William Christian Bullitt, one of the earliest opponents of the appeasement clique in the State Department, gratuitously, just to sneer that Bullitt had a "singularly ironic middle name." With considerably more justice, he remarks that Baruch's reputation was "without foundation and in fact entirely self-propagated."

Despite all the revelations of communist infiltration of the government during and after the war, Acheson says our internal security system probably was "as good as

an open, democratic society can have and unequaled anywhere." He mentions in passing that Harry Dexter White, of the Treasury, with whom he worked closely at the Bretton Woods conference, was later accused of "communist sympathies." Communist sympathies? Acheson well knows, of course, that Attorney General Herbert Brownell said White was "a Soviet spy."

Acheson asserts that Senator Millard Tydings, chairman of a subcommittee appointed to investigate Senator McCarthy's charges against the State Department, was maneuvered by McCarthy into holding open hearings, thus providing "a feast of privileged slander" of the alleged Communists. The opposite was true. McCarthy requested closed hearings, to avoid injury to those who might be able to prove their innocence, but Tydings opened the hearings in the hope of embarrassing McCarthy. Acheson relates that Nathan M. Pusey, president of Harvard University, who lived in Appleton, Wisconsin, when McCarthy lived there, sat next to Mrs. Acheson at a dinner table and told her that "fellow boarders in the boardinghouse McCarthy lived in and patrons of the same barber shop he used had reported that McCarthy would produce *Mein Kampf* and read from it, chuckling and saying, 'That's the way to do it.'" This third-hand boardinghouse and barber shop gossip is cited by a great international lawyer as evidence that McCarthy was pro-Hitler.

Acheson clearly was deluded and used by Communists; he was almost as naïve as Henry Wallace or the preposterous Joseph E. Davies about Stalin's postwar intentions and the character of Mao Tse-tung's "agrarian reformers." But he was no communist sympathizer. He was and is a zealous Anglophile. He ascribes the American revolutionary war to Britain's "not unreasonable view that the colonies should contribute more substantially to their own defense" and says we became independent only with the "indispensable help of Rochambeau's troops and de Grasse's ships at Yorktown." He has unrestrained admira-

tion for British institutions, customs, and manners, and affectionate memories of British politicians, even such nonentities as Clement Attlee and Anthony Eden. President Truman spoke of Churchill as the greatest figure of our age, but Acheson regards this as an understatement. "One must," he writes, "go back four centuries to find his equal," back to "the great Queen" herself. It is not surprising that such an Anglophile snob describes former Congresswoman Jessie Sumner of Illinois as the "worst of rabble-rousing isolationists" but "a grand old girl" who reminded him of "the madam in *Cannery Row*." Nor is it any wonder that he knows so little about his own country west of the Potomac and the Hudson that he can say "Mayor Thompson of Chicago used to run against King George VI." Thompson was dead when George VI became king.

General Marshall was an accomplice in decisions and actions that produced more disasters than any other man in American history can be charged with, including the destruction of our fleet at Pearl Harbor, the infamies of Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam, the communist conquest of China, and our retreat from victory in Korea, the prelude to Viet Nam. Yet Acheson asserts that Marshall has only one equal in American history: George Washington. "It was, indeed, an act of God that made him chief adviser to the President and head of the state department" in the critical winter of 1947, Acheson writes. His exaltation of Marshall in this book is equalled only by his venomous abuse of General MacArthur, who has been described by Field Marshal Lord Alanbrooke, chief of Britain's imperial general staff in World War II, as "the greatest general of the last war." Lord Alanbrooke regarded Marshall as "a very dangerous man," among other reasons because he fought for a cross-channel invasion of Europe in 1942, which probably would have lost the war for the allies.

Acheson rebuked MacArthur as early as September 19, 1945, after the general had said the occupation force in Japan could

be reduced to 200,000 men in six months. Acheson issued a statement saying the occupation forces were the "instruments" and not the "determinants" of policy and that the policy called for the use of "whatever it takes" to carry out desired changes in Japan's economic and social system. Acheson admits that he wanted to depose the Japanese emperor and was opposed on this question by Joseph C. Grew, whose view prevailed. Grew preceded Acheson as under-secretary. Acheson says he later "came to see that I was quite wrong," but he does not tell the whole truth about this controversy. Eugene H. Dooman, chairman of a State-War-Navy committee on occupation policy, testified that the "Acheson-Vincent" program for Japan called for removal of the emperor, destruction of capitalism, and development of a communist system in Japan.

John Carter Vincent, head of the State Department's far eastern division, was identified in sworn testimony before the Senate Internal Security subcommittee as a member of the Communist party, although he denied it. Acheson acknowledges that Vincent was the principal author of General Marshall's instructions for his mission to China. He concludes that Marshall's mission failed because "we were, in effect, seeking the reconciliation of irreconcilable factions," but he puts far more blame on "the Kuomintang extremists" than upon "the people's democracy of Mao." Chiang Kai-shek, he says, was "given a great chance in China and threw it away . . . His armies and what support he had in the country faded away." It is interesting to contrast this judgment with that of John F. Kennedy, when he was a young congressman and had not accepted the mythology of orthodox liberalism. In Salem, Massachusetts, January 30, 1949, Kennedy said:

Our policy in China has reaped the whirlwind. The continued insistence that aid would not be forthcoming unless a coalition government with the Communists was formed was a crippling blow

to the national government. So concerned were our diplomats and their advisers . . . with the imperfections of the political system in China after 20 years of war, and the tales of corruption in high places, that they lost sight of our tremendous stake in a noncommunist China.

For one who has never had any military training or experience, Acheson is remarkably self-confident as a strategist. He recalls that General Lucius Clay and his political adviser, Ambassador Robert Murphy, wanted to break the Soviet blockade of Berlin in 1948 with an armed convoy. "To say, as Murphy has done, that the decision to use the 'airlift was a surrender of our hard-won rights in Berlin' seems to me silly," Acheson writes. It was equally silly, he argues, to interpret his speech to the National Press Club on January 12, 1950, as a signal to the Communists that they could attack South Korea without fear of intervention by the United States. In that speech he said the "defensive perimeter" of the United States ran south from Japan through the Ryukyus to the Philippines, thus excluding South Korea from our protection. Yet he describes the communist attack in June, 1950, as "an open, undisguised challenge to our internationally accepted position as the protector of South Korea . . . under the very guns of our defensive perimeter," etc.

Acheson charges that MacArthur's reports from Korea were evidence of schizophrenia, one of the worst forms of insanity. He says the messages reflected alternating "manic" and "depressive" states. MacArthur's Inchon landing, he writes, would be "regarded today as one of the classic military victories of history had it not been the prelude to the greatest defeat suffered by American arms since the Battle of Manassas and an international disaster of the first water." And for this Acheson blames MacArthur, not Washington's orders forbidding him to bomb the Yalu river bridges or to strike at Chinese communist

forces in their Manchurian sanctuary. MacArthur said his forces were put under "an enormous handicap, without precedent in military history." Acheson defends his share of responsibility for these restrictions, which were necessary, he argues, to avoid the danger of general war with Red China and the Soviet Union. His only regret is that he waited so long to urge President Truman to sack MacArthur. Acheson's implication that responsible military leaders did not agree with MacArthur is, of course, false. General Mark Clark, the last commander in the Korean War, said that if he had been in MacArthur's place he would have "screamed to the high heavens for authority to bomb the bases, airfields, and other installations in Manchuria and China from which these aggressors derived their source of strength and power."

Acheson's book no doubt will convince his grandchildren that he was a combination Metternich, Castlereagh, and Talleyrand, as he fancied when the Austrians entertained him in the Ballhausplatz, where the Congress of Vienna met. And because of what passes for history in our colleges today, the grandchildren probably will never know better.

Reviewed by CHESLY MANLY

For a Black Studies Course

My People, My Africa, by Credo Vusa'mazulu Mutwa, *New York: The John Day Company, 1969. 257 pp. \$6.95.*

ONE OF THE MOST interesting features of this remarkable work by a Zulu witch-doctor is the author's defense of the South African government's policy of apartheid and his scorn for those white liberals "who talk loudly about equal rights in public, but in private do nothing whatever to make life easier even for their own Bantu servants." Inequality and apartheid, he ar-