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WILLIAM J. LEDERER
and
EUGENE BURDICK

THE Ugly American

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A NOTE FROM THE AUTHORS

THIS BOOK is written as fiction; but it is based on fact. The things we write about have, in essence, happened. They have happened not only in Asia, where the story takes place, but throughout the world—in the fifty-nine countries where over two million Americans are stationed.

At the end of the book we have added a documentary epilogue which we hope will convince the reader that what we have written is not just an angry dream, but rather the rendering of fact into fiction. The names, the places, the events, are our inventions; our aim is not to embarrass individuals, but to stimulate thought—and, we hope, action.

BILL LEDERER
EUGENE BURDICK

Pearl City, Oahu
Territory of Hawaii
1958

The Ugly American

1

Lucky, Lucky Lou #1

The Honorable Louis Sears, American Ambassador to Sarkhan, was angry. Even though the airconditioner kept his office cool, he felt hot and irritable. He smoothed out the editorial page of the *Sarkhan Eastern Star*, the most widely distributed paper in Haidho, and studied the cartoon carefully.

I don't give a damn what the Prime Minister and all those little advisers of his say, Ambassador Sears said to himself, that damned *Eastern Star* is a Red paper, and that cartoon looks too much like me to be an accident.

He jerked his head away from the paper, with a tic of anger, and turned toward the window. The lawn of the Embassy swept down to the main road of Haidho in a long, pure green, carefully trimmed wave. On each side it broke into a froth of color . . . the red and purple of bougainvillea, the softer colors of hibiscus, the myriad orchids hanging in elegant parasitic grace from banyan trees, the crisp straight lines of bamboo trees. At the end of the lawn the pickets of a wrought-iron fence separated Embassy grounds from the confusion and noise of the road.

From the countryside an unbroken line of women were moving into Haidho, as they did every morning, carrying on their backs faggots of wood, or baskets of vegetables—radishes, spring onions, and beans laid out in simple perfection on moist leaves. Occasionally a woman went by with a basket of fish on her head, the tiny silvery bodies catching the early morning sun. Whenever a man passed he was on a bicycle, making his way along the chattering lines of women.

Strange little monkeys, Ambassador Sears thought, forgetting for a moment his pique at the cartoon. Women do all the work, men have all the fun.

The only motorized vehicles he could see were trucks which had been given to the Sarkhanese government by the American military advisory group. They went down the road at a fast clip, their horns blaring steadily as if they had been turned on when the engine was started. They carried military supplies toward the north; neat boxes of hand grenades, bundles of barbed wire, barrels of gasoline and oil, big rectangular boxes which contained disassembled 50-calibre machine guns.

And all of it made in America, Ambassador Sears thought. At once his anger returned and he looked down again at the *Eastern Star*. The cartoon was obvious. Although he could not read Sarkhanese beyond a few words forced upon him by constant repetition, the point was clear. The cartoon showed a short, fat American, his face perspiring, and his mouth open like a braying mule's, leading a thin, gracefully-built Sarkhanese man by a tether around his neck toward a sign bearing two of the few Sarkhanese words the ambassador could recognize—"Coca Cola." Underneath the short fat man was a single English word: "Lucky."

Ambassador Sears wished to hell some American in the Embassy could read Sarkhanese. He hated to interrogate the native translators attached to USIS about the meaning of cartoons. He suspected that the damned little monkeys always lied. But they couldn't soft soap him on this one, not when the fat character was called "Lucky."

Lucky, Lucky Louis had been Ambassador Sears' nickname when he was in politics in the United States. For eighteen years he had been a popular and successful senator; but it was said about him that he always won his elections by a lucky fluke. When Sears, a Democrat, first won, Drew Pearson had said that he had been elected because he was lucky enough to be a Democrat in a Democratic year. In his second race his Republican opponent had dropped dead ten days before the election, which even Sears had recognized as luck. His opponent's wife had got involved in a scandal during his third campaign. But, as Sears had noticed wryly, no one had thought it was bad luck when he lost the fourth time up.

Actually Sears had not been too much worried when he lost this last election. He had been in politics long enough to know that the party owed him something. Two days after the election, with his voting record under his arm, he called on the National Committee.

The political strategists were ready for him.

"What kind of a job would you like, Lucky?" they asked.

"A Federal judgeship with a nice long tenure," he answered promptly.

"Okay, but there won't be an opening for two years. In the meantime, Lucky, how would you like to be an ambassador?"

"Me, an ambassador?" said Sears, immediately picturing

himself appearing in a morning coat and striped trousers before the court of St. James, or running the big handsome embassy building in Paris. Sears was a shrewd enough politician to keep any look of expectation from crossing his face. "Now look, boys, an ambassador has to spend a lot more than he makes. That's all right, if you've got a philanthropist who might stand the gaff for me; but you know my personal situation. After eighteen years, everything I've gotten has gone into the party."

The strategists nodded without comment. It was a remark they heard often, but it never failed to touch them.

"There's an ambassadorship open in Sarkhan," the strategists said. "It pays $17,500 and you ought to be able to save money on that. There's an entertainment allowance of $15,000, and you can buy liquor tax free. There's also an ambassador's mansion which you get rent free."

"Where the hell is Sarkhan?"

"It's a small country out toward Burma and Thailand."

"Now, you know I'm not prejudiced, but I just don't work well with blacks."

"They're not black, they're brown. Well, if you don't want it, we can fix you up as legal assistant to . . ."

"I'll take it."

At first Ambassador Sears had liked his assignment. It was true about the cheap liquor, and the ambassador's mansion was the most spacious and beautifully furnished house he had ever occupied. Mrs. Sears was in ecstasy over it. However, soon after his arrival, the cartoons had started and Ambassador Sears had been profoundly hurt by them. In America he had never minded being kidded about his stoutness and his red face. In fact, at Rotary meetings he always started out his

speeches by saying, "Now, for a fat man I think I'm doing all right by you boys in Washington." It had always gotten a laugh. But Ambassador Sears felt that it was a bit uppity and quite another thing for natives to joke about his physique.

He was still looking at the cartoon when the door opened. It was Margaret Johnson, the embassy's press attaché. She was flushed with excitement, and began talking without even saying good morning.

"Ambassador, a mob of people beat up John Colvin—that powdered milk man—and dumped his body on the embassy steps some time last night," she said in a rush. "We called the doctor and he thinks the man will live, but we'd better prepare a statement for the papers."

"Oh, for Pete's sake," Ambassador Sears said angrily. "Why does this kind of thing always have to happen so early in the morning? Why did they beat him up?"

"We're not sure," Margaret said. "There was a note pinned to his body which said something about his molesting Sarkhanese girls."

Ambassador Sears sat back in his chair and laughed.

"Well, I'll be damned," he said with pleasure. "I always thought that guy Colvin was a little too serious. I tell you, Maggie, it's always those quiet kind that when they can't get a piece of tail they resort to a little force."

Margaret's face showed her distaste for the Ambassador's words, but her voice was calm when she spoke.

"This might turn out to be a pretty serious thing, Mister Ambassador," she said. "You never can be sure when one of the political parties might pick up something like this and blow it up all out of proportion."

"Aw, come off it, Maggie," Ambassador Sears said. "Since

when is a boy meets girl affair something that involves big politics? If you want something to worry about, worry about this cartoon. Get me that Prince Ngong, or whatever the hell his name is, the one responsible for protocol. When we get this newspaper business cleared up, then I suppose I'll have to go to the hospital and see that fool Colvin."

Miss Johnson nodded politely and left the office.

In the midst of vague and unremarkable dreams, John Colvin became aware of his bandages. He came back to reality slowly. The hospital room emerged, sunny and quiet. The washstand in the corner took its place firmly, and his bed appeared before him. Finally, he realized that he was part of the scene himself. He was in the bed, swathed in gauze, and aware of pain behind a soft barrier of drugs.

The memory of the events which put him in the hospital returned to his consciousness until finally the events were in order and established as fact. He even remembered his disbelief of them while they were happening, and his thinking that it was impossible that Deong, a man who had been his friend, who had saved his life ten years ago, who had shared terrors with him, was now holding a gun in his back. He had met Deong shortly after he had parachuted into Sarkhan in 1943. It had been a meeting which had saved his life.

Colvin had been dropped into Sarkhan with two other Americans. They had been carefully selected. They all knew the Sarkhanese language perfectly, and they all had approximately the size and stature of the average Sarkhanese man. Their faces had been dyed the light brown native Sarkhanese. They were OSS agents, and all three were tough enough and

competent enough to think they would live forever. Two weeks later Colvin was the only one still alive—and he had had four narrow escapes from Japanese patrols. Only his friendship with Deong made it possible for him to survive.

Colvin was running down a jungle path in what he knew was a futile effort to escape the fourth Japanese patrol which had encircled him, when he had come out into a small clearing where Deong was watering the family water buffalo. They had stared at one another for a long moment, and Colvin had instantly decided to trust Deong.

"I am an American intelligence agent here to fight the Japanese," Colvin had said rapidly in Sarkhanese. "I am surrounded by a Japanese patrol and if I cannot find a hiding place in a few moments they will capture me. Can you help me?"

Deong, from his seat on the water buffalo's shoulders, looked down at Colvin for a moment. Then he slid off the water buffalo and walked over to Colvin.

"I will help you," Deong said, his eyes shining with excitement.

Colvin nodded and at once Deong took his arm and started to run with him toward a broad shallow ditch. With one hand he snatched three hollow reeds from the edge of the ditch, and with the other hand he pushed John into the water.

"Breathe through the reeds, do not move your head even the least bit, and do not come out of the water until I pull the reeds from your mouth," Deong said.

He pushed Colvin into the water and put a large stone on Colvin's chest to hold him under. The ditch was two feet deep and held enough water so that John was covered by six inches.

For a few seconds he felt real panic. Then he relaxed and discovered to his enormous relief that he could breathe through the reeds.

Five minutes later, three of the soldiers from the Japanese patrol came into the clearing. John could dimly hear them talking, and was able to tell when they had left. He stayed where he was for ten more minutes; and then he felt a gentle tug on the reeds. He sat up, muddy water dripping from his face and body. Deong was grinning at him.

In the next eight months the two men roamed over most of Sarkhan. In that time they blew up twelve Japanese munitions trains, demolished six military bridges, and put time bombs on the hulls of eight armed Japanese river patrol boats.

During that time, as if the chance of death made every impression more penetrating, Colvin came to know Deong and also to know the people of Sarkhan. Once the two of them had to hide from a Japanese patrol in the mournful and exquisitely beautiful Plain of the Tombs where generations of Sarkhanese lay buried under intricately carved pieces of rock. Ringing the plain was a magnificent fringe of cypress trees. For eight hours they had crawled among the tombstones, always keeping a row or two of the stones between them and the Japanese patrol, until, at dusk, the Japanese patrol broke off the search.

On another day they hid in a Sarkhanese temple on the shores of the beautiful Orange River, this time from no ordinary platoon of Japanese troops, but from a special detail of antiespionage troops that had been flown in from Indonesia for the specific purpose of running Colvin to ground. Colvin didn't want to hide in the temple; its back was on the river, which closed off a possible avenue of escape. Deong didn't

argue; he insisted, with complete confidence, that the temple was the safest place for them.

The temple was presided over by two monks in saffron-colored robes. They were kept company by an enormous number of sacred monkeys who swarmed in and out of the magnificent, decaying stone of the temple. The two priests were in the midst of a long morning prayer when Deong and Colvin came trotting into the temple. They did not look up when Deong and Colvin climbed high up into the temple and hid themselves among the heavy stone rafters where normally only monkeys dwelt, and they did not look up when the Japanese patrol arrived. The two priests, their shaven heads gleaming in the sun, continued to bend over their folded hands, and their chant continued on above the harsh questions of the Japanese lieutenant. Even when the lieutenant, his face contorted with anger, placed a pistol against the head of one of the priests, their voices did not cease. When the lieutenant pulled the trigger and the brains and bloody fragments of bone shot in a savage gout across the steps of the temple, the other priest did not stop praying. In the presence of such single-mindedness, the Japanese lieutenant was helpless. He led his detail away from the temple after a fruitless and perfunctory search.

They remained among the stone rafters long after the Japanese had left, talking softly. Deong patiently explained the beauty and grandeur of death in the land of Sarkhan; but he also explained, with equal patience, why he did not wish to die that day. Deong was a country boy and he came from a simple family, but he wanted to live in a city and to find out about bigger and more exciting things.

In his eight months in Sarkhan Colvin came to love the

people of this strange country. They were small, delicate people, their skins a lovely shade of brown, all of their motions graceful and restrained. Even people of the meanest caste had a dignity and charm which impressed Colvin enormously. They were all very generous. They had given him food, and information, and help. They had run great risks on his behalf, and the only request they made was that he discuss philosophy with them. The word *philosophy* in Sarkhanese, Colvin learned, covered questions of life and death, cruelty and generosity, good manners, the rearing of children, the delights of strong wine, and the possibility of a life after death.

Just before the liberation, John taught Deong about ipecac. They received instructions via radio to meet a submarine in an isolated cove. The submarine arrived on schedule and the captain told them that the United States Marines would land in Sarkhan in five days. He gave them a 25-pound tin of ipecac, and told them to make every effort to introduce the powder into the food at the Japanese army camp the morning of the landing.

John explained why to Deong. Ipecac was the most powerful emetic known to medicine. Until it was eliminated from a person's body he had energy for only one thing: vomiting. If he were given enough of it, a person could actually die from the spasms.

With the aid of the Sarkhanese cooks in the Japanese army camp, they were successful. The next day they waited in a clump of bushes outside the camp. At 7:30 a.m. the Japanese ate breakfast. At 8:00 a.m. the Marines landed. At 8:10 a.m. the Japanese came staggering out of the camp.

For a few moments it had been funny—a road full of soldiers who stopped running to vomit. But the exertion com-

pounded the effects of the ipecac, and men began to stagger and fall. Their bodies heaved and racked and twisted as they vomited with nothing left in their stomachs. An hour later, when the first Marine patrols approached the camp, the road and the grass beside it were covered with bloody and exhausted men too weak to lift their heads.

It was the last thing Deong and Colvin did together. Three weeks later Colvin was flown back to the United States. A year later he had resigned from the O. S. S. and was running his family's business in Wisconsin, buying bulk milk, drying it into powder, and packaging the powder. It was a good business and a sound one, and Colvin ran it well.

About 1952, the newspapers reported that the country of Sarkhan was having internal difficulties and was leaning toward Communism. Colvin could not believe it. He wrote long letters to his Congressman explaining the elaborate fabric of Sarkhanese culture; and suggesting how the Sarkhanese should be handled. He got back polite letters informing him that his suggestions had been forwarded to the State Department. But the policy of the United States did not change. When the border difficulty with the Communist country to the north of Sarkhan began, Colvin could not restrain his impatience.

He was convinced that the Sarkhanese situation was being handled badly. He was also convinced that he had a personal responsibility in the situation. He came up with an ingenious plan.

The rainy hillsides of Sarkhan were covered with a tough, low growing, and very thick grass. This grass was so rugged and its root structure so detailed that it was often imprac-

tical to clear it from otherwise usable land. Colvin sent for samples of the grass and discovered that it was edible by a short-legged, agile, and fast-growing breed of cattle that had been developed in Texas. If the people of Sarkhan could be taught to use milk and its by-products, there was no reason why the cattle would not prosper on land that was otherwise useless. Also, there were good markets in Asia for the by-products. The butter could be reduced to *ghee* and sold to India, the leather could be tanned and made into finished goods by the artisans of Sarkhan, the entrails could be used in the native medicines preferred by non-Christians.

But first the Sarkhanese had to be exposed to milk. Colvin did this part himself. He was in Sarkhan to sell milk made from powder. When the Texas cows began arriving a year later, the switch would be made to fresh milk. Once the business was established and running, Colvin intended to sell out his shares and leave.

Colvin knew that the thing was risky; the first thing he did when he got back to Sarkhan was to try to locate Deong. Deong had vanished. So Colvin, without Deong's help, set up the first milk-distribution center outside of the city of Haidho. He had been operating it only two weeks, and it was a success despite the embassy's saying the project was impracticable. In fact, Louis Sears, the American Ambassador, had, after several conferences, washed his hands of the whole thing.

Then suddenly, Deong appeared from nowhere, and pulled a gun on Colvin. Lying in the sun and quiet of the hospital room, Colvin remembered how he had felt the muzzle of the gun pressing cold against his skin, and how unreal it had seemed in the normal routine around him. The soft jungle breeze moved through the open warehouse, and outside the

long queue of Sarkhanese women waited patiently for their milk, their voices a low and undeniably real murmur beyond the door. Next to Colvin stood the huge Atlas Automatic Milk-Mixer ready for the 100-pound tin of powdered milk. But in the midst of these ordinary sounds and sights were unrealities—the package of ipecac on the floor behind the mixer, and Deong, his old companion, behind him with a gun held against Colvin's ribs.

Deong broke the silence.

"Come on, John. Start your machine and put in the milk and ipecac."

"Deong, you're crazy," Colvin said. "Put away the gun."

"Perhaps whenever a man is about to die he always thinks his executioner is crazy," Deong answered softly. "But you're wrong. There's a reasonable time for everyone to die, and this may be your time."

"What's reasonable about it?" Colvin asked. "I'm not in politics, I'm just trying to organize a milk distribution center for your country. Your people need it."

"John, powdered milk and cattle are part of politics, and therefore part of history," Deong said. "Hurry up. Put the powdered milk and the ipecac in the machine. I don't have much time."

"No," Colvin said. "I won't put ipecac in the milk, you know what it does."

"Of course I know," Deong said. "You taught me."

"Deong, those people might die from the ipecac," Colvin pleaded. "They're your people."

"You can't make an omelette without breaking eggs," Deong said. "Come on, John. Don't stall. Start the mix going. If I knew how to work it, I'd do it myself. But if you

don't do it by the time the doors are opened in about three more minutes, I'll shoot you and tell everybody that *you* were planning to mix the ipecac in the milk."

"But what good will it do? Who will it help?"

"Look, John, I told you milk is part of history. If you get this crazy milk and cattle scheme of yours going, it could in time change the economic balance in Sarkhan."

"What's wrong with that? That's what I want to do."

"Nothing. It's a good idea. Out in the bush we've talked it over a lot. But you're the wrong person to be permitted to do it. If it succeeded, the Sarkhanese would believe that America was their savior."

Colvin understood.

"Deong, you're a Communist," Colvin said.

"As if there were a choice," Deong replied softly. "Look, John, you took me off the back of a water buffalo and taught me about the big outside world. And I learned that the side with the most brains and power wins. And, John, that's not your side anymore. Once it was, but not now. America had its chance and it missed. And now the Communists are going to win."

"Look, Deong, you trusted me once," Colvin said quickly. "I can tell you that our side is going to win. We've still got the power and the will."

"No, you haven't got the power or the will or anything," Deong said, and his voice was rock hard with assurance. "You've done nothing but lose since the end of the war. And for a simple little reason: you don't know the power of an idea. The clerks you send over here try to buy us like cattle. You people are like the fable of the rich man who was an idiot."

Colvin knew then that there was no chance of persuading Deong. He realized sickly that he could now only save himself.

"Hand me the ipecac," Colvin said bitterly.

"Pick it up yourself and put it in the mixer," Deong said.

For the first time Colvin felt the muzzle of the gun removed completely from his back. With a quick whirling motion Colvin spun his body and hacked his hand through the air, aiming for the base of Deong's neck just where it joined the shoulders. If he hit in exactly the right place, Deong's gun-hand would be paralyzed. But although the blow lit with a terrific force, it was slightly off the mark. Colvin came to his feet in a half-crouch—but the gun was still in Deong's hand and now it was aimed at Colvin's chest. There was a look of excruciating pain on Deong's face, and he appeared to be trying desperately to keep himself from fainting. Colvin dove for a stack of powdered milk drums and at the same moment Deong fired. In that split instant, as he was falling to the floor, Colvin was aware of two things. First, that the bullet had hit him in the right forearm and had probably broken the bone. Second, that Deong was about to drop the gun because of the accumulated pain of his blow.

The moment that he hit the floor Colvin scrambled again to his feet. He darted down the row of barrels and came around them without any attempt at deception. Either Deong would drop the gun or he would be able to stalk Colvin in the narrow warehouse, so there was no point in hiding. Deong was staring at his hand, his face contorted as the reaction to the blow registered. Deong's hand opened convulsively, the .38 revolver hung for a moment on his trigger finger, and then it crashed to the floor.

Colvin lunged toward Deong, his right arm hanging helpless at his side, and crashed into him with his left shoulder. The shock of the contact erased the effect of the earlier blow, and instantly Deong was struggling furiously beneath Colvin. Colvin had to keep Deong away from the gun without using his arms. He wrapped his legs around Deong's middle and tightened them in a powerful scissors grip. For a moment there was almost a dead silence in the emptiness of the warehouse. Colvin heard the breath being forced from Deong's lungs. Deong, however, had seen Colvin's damaged right arm, and he hammered it twice with his fist. The pain came roaring up out of Colvin's arm in a white-hot bolt, and Colvin's legs relaxed. Deong took several sharp breaths. Then Colvin twisted his legs so that Deong could not reach his injured arm, and the pain, like some sort of mist that had gathered inside his head and obscured his view, slowly lifted.

Colvin saw, with a sense of dull surprise, that the line of Sarkhanese women had moved up to the door of the warehouse and were peering curiously in at Deong and Colvin. In the front of the line was a deeply wrinkled, sharp-eyed woman of perhaps seventy years. Like all the rest she was staring in confusion, but it was also apparent that she was a leader.

"I shot him because he was about to put *cocol* in the milk," Deong shouted shrilly. "Help me get away from him, and we'll turn him over to the police."

For a moment Colvin's numb mind did not comprehend fully what Deong had said. Then the levers of memory shifted and he felt an enormous outrage. *Cocol* was a native drug derived from coca beans; it was supposed to be a powerful

aphrodisiac. There were numberless folk stories in Haidho about virtuous girls who had lost their maidenhood through *cocol*, and other tales about its use as the fatal technique by which virgins were persuaded to become prostitutes. The Sarkhanese believed in its swift and complete action, and consequently feared it greatly.

"He's lying!" Colvin screamed. He was dizzy now, and underneath his rage he felt something like humor welling up. It was as if he were in the midst of a dreadful comedy. "This man was trying to persuade me to put ipecac in the milk."

For several seconds the men remained locked in the same position, both of them studying the face of the old woman. Then Deong gasped out the same accusation. Colvin tried to shout his denial; but with a sense of utter futility he realized that his voice was so weak that the women were not hearing him correctly. He also saw that the women had been deeply shocked by the mere mention of *cocol*.

Colvin had only five more minutes of consciousness, and they were minutes of a wild and violent nightmare. The tiny, delicate women of Haidho, the women whom Colvin had regarded as friends, fell upon him like a group of outraged hawks. Small hands tore at his legs and sent tiny stabs of pain through his body. Fingers scratched through the material of his shirt and drew bright red lines across his chest. Hands, suddenly violent with anger, slapped his face and added to his confusion.

"I am a friend," Colvin said, in a voice so weak and small that he was the only person who heard it. With an awful clarity he was aware of the inadequacy of his words and of the helplessness of his body.

The blows of the women fell upon him with increasing viciousness and violence. One of the women was standing directly on his shattered forearm and had turned it into a huge single throb of pain. The white mist of pain and shock was not only behind his eyes and inside his head, but was rising slowly like a vapor through the warehouse. Colvin dimly perceived the disorganized mass of women screaming and shouting above him. At some point he stopped feeling the pain, even the pain that came from having his head gripped by both ears and banged savagely against the concrete floor. The noise was shrill and harsh and indescribable.

The fingernails, the tiny scratching angry nails, came at him from all sides. Each little wound by itself was bearable, but so multiplied they set his body afire. He felt as if he were being scratched to death by strange chicken-like claws. But even in the midst of the pain, he felt something worse—the loss of the vision he had had of himself and the people of Sarkhan, and their friendship.

At last relief came. His eyesight faded, his hearing grew dim, and a dull release slipped over him. He felt his tongue start to bulge from his mouth. Blood flowed from his nose and ears, and Deong escaped from the grip of his legs. Colvin embraced the unconsciousness which seemed to be nothing more than a thickening of the mist of pain and terror.

Two hours later Colvin's unconscious body was deposited on the steps of the American Embassy in Haidho. He was entirely naked and his body was covered with hundreds of tiny scratches which had hardened into ridges of dry purple blood. He was breathing, but just barely. Attached to his left breast, by a large pin which had been driven twice through the flesh, was a note in English. The message said, "Here is

an American rapist. You can have him back. The same thing will happen to other Americans who attempt to seduce our daughters."

Prince Ngong was in Ambassador Sears' office. He had been through these interviews before.

"A few more cartoons like this and I'm going to have to report to Washington that your people are not very sympathetic to American representatives," Ambassador Sears was saying. "It doesn't mean anything to me personally, but cartoons like this are damned disrespectful, and hurt relations between our countries."

Prince Ngong was one of Sarkhan's most distinguished poets and drama critics; but like all Sarkhanese intellectuals, he was expected to serve his country where his talents were needed most. Right now, he was needed as a protocol officer.

"Mr. Ambassador, I will not try to deceive you," Prince Ngong said. "I think that the *Eastern Star* has, perhaps, become somewhat critical of our foreign policy. In particular it is reluctant to have us grant air bases in this country in exchange for foreign aid. But as the representative of a democratic country, you can surely understand our reluctance to interfere with a free press."

They talked for a few more minutes, during which time Prince Ngong told Ambassador Sears that he understood the ambassador's irritation, and admired his forthrightness. When he left, Prince Ngong estimated the situation correctly—Ambassador Sears was offended.

That afternoon the special advisory committee of the Sarkhanese Cabinet met in executive session. Prince Ngong spoke first.

"Gentlemen, I think we've never deceived ourselves about our relations with the United States and the Soviet Union," he said. "We don't want to be in the camp of either of these nations. What we desire is Sarkhan's independence and development. This means that we'll take aid and assistance from anyone who will help us, but not at any price. And not at the price of the loss of our independence."

"So the Communists accuse us of being 'lackeys of the colonialists' and the Americans say we are 'neutralists,' " the Prime Minister put in.

"We'd like to be helped but without any strings; but this, apparently, is almost impossible," Prince Ngong went on. "As a result we do what any small nation surrounded by powerful nations must do: we bargain. I think we're agreed that there are only two types of men with whom one can bargain with profit: with the wise man who can see one's problem clearly and is without vanity or pride; or with the stupid man. The Americans, for reasons which are not clear to me, have chosen to send us stupid men as ambassadors."

"Tell them of your conversation with Ambassador Sears this morning," the Prime Minister said.

"Lucky Louis is not in a happy frame of mind," Prince Ngong said without smiling. "Do not underestimate this man. He is more stupid than most, but he is quite capable when it comes to protecting himself. He was deeply offended by the cartoon this morning in the *Eastern Star*. There was no way to joke him out of it. I think that the twenty-million-dollar loan we're trying to negotiate with the United States will be in serious jeopardy if Ambassador Sears' feathers aren't smoothed."

No one in the room said anything. The Prime Minister

made a signal and full cups of hot tea were served. Still no one spoke.

"Gentlemen?" the Prime Minister asked. Everyone sensed what had to be done, but it would have been impolite for the Prime Minister to have asked directly for action.

"I suppose that we could ask the publisher of the *Eastern Star* to run a flattering cartoon and editorial on Ambassador Sears," U Nang said reluctantly. Nang's brother-in-law was the publisher of the *Eastern Star*.

"I should think that would be a very excellent solution of the problem," the Prime Minister said. Then, to save U Nang's feelings, he went quickly on to the next order of business.

Late that afternoon Ambassador Sears went to the hospital to see John Colvin. He was in an excellent mood. The publisher of the *Eastern Star* had called only a half-hour ago and read to him over the phone the substance of a flattering editorial that paper was going to run on him the next day. Ambassador Sears had thanked the publisher, and had promptly instructed his secretary to send him a case of whiskey.

Sears paused as he came into Colvin's hospital room. Colvin's eyes were open; his face was covered with a multitude of tiny scratches. The Ambassador walked over, and leaned forward in a confidential manner.

"Well, son, you must have picked yourself a real hellcat," he said cheerfully. "You look as though you tangled with a buzzsaw."

Colvin closed his eyes.

"Do you know what happened to me yesterday?" he asked.

"Why, sure, my press attaché tells me you tangled with the wrong girl. Now, son, remember I warned you about free-

wheeling here in the hills. This kind of stuff puts America in a bad light. I'm going to arrange for you to go back to the States as soon as you can be moved."

Colvin did not open his eyes again. The ambassador waited a few minutes, then turned to go. When he was halfway across the room Colvin spoke with such intensity that it stopped the ambassador short. "Sears," he said. "I won't go."

2

Lucky, Lucky Lou #2

Louis Krupitzyn was born in Ivanovo, Russia, in 1917, the son of a farmer. One day when he was still a boy he saw both of his parents shot. It happened almost casually. Louis stood in the window of the sod hut and listened to his parents argue with a lieutenant in charge of a group of soldiers. His father shook his head and turned away. The lieutenant took his short ugly revolver from a leather holster and shot Louis' father in the back of the skull. Wheeling, he then shot the mother.

It happened too quickly for Louis to feel anger or loss. All he felt was fear. He recognized what perfect safety would be: holding the short ugly pistol, or a substitute for it.

He was sent to the Orphans' Educational Center at Murmansk, where his peasant body grew tall on the coarse food. Louis found he had a good mind. By the time he was sixteen he had also found a foster parent: the state. He learned that his parents had been killed because they were guilty of "willful obstructionism of state agricultural policy." They were "kulaks," a group whom Louis had already come to hate.

In 1934 his essay "The Dynamics of Soviet Dialectics"

won the Lenin Prize for Komsomol Literary Achievement. Everyone knew that young Louis Krupitzyn was a comer. Some of his colleagues began to call him "Lucky," but not to his face.

In 1935 his diplomatic career began: he was assigned to the Soviet Trade Commission in New York as chauffeur. All diplomatic servants—chauffeurs, valets, charwomen, and scullerymen—were chosen from the Foreign Service Apprentice Corps. They worked half-time as servants, and spent the rest of their time at assigned studies. This way the Russians avoided having aliens in their embassies or commissions, and at the same time were able to train their young foreign service officers.

While he was stationed in New York, chauffeur Krupitzyn studied the organization of American unions. At night he took Professor Alexander Willard's course in "The Psychology of the American Elite" at Columbia University.

In 1937 he went to Prague, again as chauffeur. In 1938 the Foreign Office sent him to Pekin as the clerk for a cultural commission.

In 1939 he was recalled to Moscow and spent the next two years in the Foreign Institute Academy. At night he worked as a decoding officer.

There is no record of what Krupitzyn did between 1941 and 1945, although it is definitely known that he was not in military service.

In 1945, now 28 years old, he was assigned as observer on the staff of Mao Tse-tung. Mao sent him with a battalion to Yunnan to see "how the military arm is used as a political and economic instrument." Except for three home furloughs

of six months each, Krupitzyn was in China for three years. On his last home furlough he married Nada Kolosoff, a fellow foreign service careerist.

In 1949 he returned to Moscow and held a position in the Asia Section of the USSR Foreign Office.

Both he and his wife sailed on the surveying ship *Gorki* which was employed by the Sarkhanese Government to survey and chart the Southeast Asian waters adjacent to Sarkhan.

They then returned to Moscow, where they attended the Moscow School of Southeast Asian Areas. On the class roster Louis Krupitzyn was listed as "Ambassador-designate to Sarkhan." This position was defined as a first-class ambassadorship, not only because Sarkhan was a rich country with over 20,000,000 people, but also because of its strategic position. Beside "Sarkhan" the Soviets had placed the number 30, indicating that they hoped to bring it within the Communist orbit within 30 months.

At the Moscow School for Asian Areas, both Ambassador-designate and Madame Krupitzyn went through two years of rigorous studies to prepare them for their new job. They learned to read and write Sarkhanese. They learned that the ideal man in Sarkhan is slender, graceful, and soft-spoken; that he has physical control and outward tranquility; that he is religious (Buddhism is the prevalent religion); and that he has an appreciation of the ancient classical music.

The Ambassador-designate molded himself into this pattern. He dieted and lost forty pounds; he took ballet lessons. He read Sarkhanese literature and drama, and became a fairly skillful player on the nose flute. And he regularly attended lectures in Buddhist religion and practices.

Ambassador Louis Krupitzyn arrived in Sarkhan exactly one week after the new American Ambassador, Louis Sears, had presented his credentials.

Only a few officials were at the airport to meet Ambassador Krupitzyn; and after greeting them courteously in their own language, he got into his automobile and drove to the Soviet Embassy. The next morning he presented his credentials to the Prime Minister. In the afternoon he traveled to the great monastery on the outskirts of the capital, where he called to pay his respects to the Chief Abbot, who was the leader of all Buddhists in the area. Krupitzyn's arrival caused confusion because it was unusual for white men to come to the monastery. The monks in the outer hall looked at him curiously, some of them smiling and nodding their heads. One of them scurried away to find a superior who would know how to handle this strange situation. Finally a young man in a bright robe—apparently a newcomer to the monastery—came hurrying in, walked to the Russian Ambassador, and asked in English, "May I help you, sir?"

He replied in English. "I have come to pay my respects to His Reverence, the Grand Master," he said, and presented his calling card which was printed on one side in Russian and on the other side in Sarkhanese.

The young monk excused himself and left the room. Returning in about ten minutes, he said, "The Master will see you now. But he speaks no foreign languages, so I will accompany you as interpreter."

After winding their way through long, dim corridors, they entered an enormous room which had nothing in it except a large gold chair at the far end in which an elderly monk was sitting. When they were in front of the monk, Louis Krupit-

zyn bowed very low and said in classical Sarkhanese, "It is very gracious of Your Reverence to accord me this privilege."

"You did not tell my secretary that you spoke our language."

Krupitzyn, still bowing low, replied, "It is traditional, Your Reverence, that one saves his best words for the master."

Krupitzyn sat cross-legged on the floor and the Grand Leader of all the Buddhists of Sarkhan and Louis Krupitzyn, the Russian Ambassador, began to talk. At first it was chit-chat, and then it turned to philosophy. They sat there for the rest of the afternoon until it became dark.

There was some bad fortune that year in Sarkhan. Several typhoons blustered over the land just before the harvesting period, and destroyed most of the crops. Several months later, there was famine in the southern areas. The mobs already had ransacked the granaries of the rich.

At the Russian Embassy they learned from one of their informers who was employed as translator at the American Embassy that the United States was shipping 14,000 tons of rice to the stricken area. Soon after, the Russians learned from another informer—the American Ambassador's chauffeur—that the first of the American grain ships would be arriving in two days.

Krupitzyn acted with initiative and boldness. He bought up several tons of rice at black market prices in the capital, loaded the rice into a truck, and drove 300 miles south to the area where the famine was most intense.

When he arrived at Plutal, the main city of the south, a large crowd was gathered. The Communist newspaper there

had come out with a special edition whose headlines announced that Russia, the friend of Sarkhan, would relieve the famine; and that the Russian Ambassador would personally arrive that day with the first token contribution of rice.

And then Krupitzyn himself came.

Speaking over a loudspeaker system and over all available radio stations in the area, Krupitzyn said that Russia was bending every effort to help her friends. The five tons of rice which he had brought along with him were all they could find locally. But be patient, he told them, in excellent Sarkhanese; several Russian grain ships would be arriving in a few days with thousands and thousands of tons of rice which would be distributed free. He then went on to say that Sarkhan and Russia were friends and allies and had to stand by each other because it was obvious that the colonial and capitalistic countries would not assist another nation unless they could profit from it.

The first American grain ship arrived two days later in the harbor of Haidho, the capital of Sarkhan. The USIS was there with cameramen and tape recorders. The Prime Minister was present to accept the relief grain from His Excellency Louis Sears, the American Ambassador to Sarkhan. The sirens blew and there were a few fine speeches. When the speeches were over, the stevedores began unloading the bags of rice, carrying them down the dock, and placing them into the American trucks which were waiting to take the rice to the stricken area.

Half-way down the dock, each stevedore stopped at a weighing station so that his bag of rice could be weighed.

It is customary in Sarkhan for stevedores to be paid by how much they carry, not by the hour. As each bag was removed from the scale, the checker came up to it and stencilled a few words in Sarkhanese on each of the white bags.

When the trucks arrived in Plutal, they were met by a crowd of perhaps 10,000 people. A loudspeaker announced that here was the rice which had been promised them a short time ago by the Russian Ambassador; and here was proof that Russia keeps her word.

There were objections from the crowd. "But these are American trucks and they are driven by American drivers."

"We have hired them from the Americans," answered the Sarkhanese Communists. "Didn't the Russian Ambassador warn you that the capitalists would do anything for profit?"

The crowd was still doubtful. They had heard that the ships which brought the rice were flying the American flag; and the rice had been delivered by American trucks. But when the trucks were unloaded and the rice was handed out, then the populace knew that what the Communist propagandists were announcing over the loudspeakers was true. The Russian Ambassador had carried out his promise.

On each bag of rice there was stenciled in Sarkhanese for every citizen to see and read for himself: "This rice is a gift from Russia."

The Americans took pictures of the distribution of the rice and the smiling faces of the now happy people. There were no comments from any of the Americans present. None of them could read or understand Sarkhanese and they did not know what was happening.

About a week later, the American Embassy found out what had happened. Ambassador Louis Sears made a fiery

speech; and from Washington came angry rumblings about instant retaliation. Subsequent American grain ships were properly safeguarded, but the people of Sarkhan continued to believe that Russia was their friend and provider.

About a month after the grain incident Ambassador Louis Krupitzyn made his first report to Moscow. He wrote a long letter telling Moscow that the Communist activities and programs were progressing ahead of schedule in Sarkhan. The report went into details of every activity of the Communists' coordinated effort, discussing the cultural, economic, political, religious, and military aspects of Russia's struggle to acquire power in Sarkhan.

Near the end of his report were two short but interesting comments.

"The American Ambassador is a jewel. He keeps his people tied up with meetings, social events, and greeting and briefing the scores of senators, congressmen, generals, admirals, undersecretaries of State and Defense, and so on, who come pouring through here to 'look for themselves.' He forbids his people to 'go into the hills,' and still annoys the people of Sarkhan with his bad manners.

"I note with concern, however, that the American press has been very critical of Ambassador Sears for his inability to counter the tricks we played on him with the grain ships. If these American press attacks continue, it is possible that in time he will be removed. It is to our advantage to have him remain here. Therefore, during the next week or two I will see to it that editorials in the local newspapers will praise him for being an understanding American and a brave fighter. I also suggest that Pravda attack him bitterly. This combina-

tion will be all that is necessary to convince the U. S. State Department and the U. S. public that Ambassador Sears is doing a superb job.

"There is another matter which I view with great concern. An agent's report from Burma describes the activities of an American Catholic priest who works in one of the provinces there. His name is Father Finian. If the report is accurate, this man is an agitator of the most extreme skill, and combines with this the typical Jesuitical command of dialectics. The priest is rumored to speak Burmese, eats native food, and is obviously engaged in some sort of Papist plot. I need not remind you of Lenin's warnings about the skill of the Papacy when its interests are threatened. I should appreciate receiving whatever *dossier* material you might have on this man."

3

Nine Friends

FATHER JOHN X. FINIAN, SJ—Born 1910 in Worcester, Mass. Parents, John X. and Marie Finian. Three sisters, three brothers. Graduated A. B., Boston University, 1934. M. A. Catholic College, Rome, 1941. Professor of Apologetics, St. Mary's, 1943–44. Chaplain, United States Navy, 1944–47. D. Phil. Oxford University, 1947–50. Thesis: *The Social Doctrines of St. Thomas Aquinas.* Special Assistant to the Archbishop of Boston, 1950–51.

Publications

Articles: "The Agony of St. Therese: An Essay on the Modernity of Humility"; "The Visions of St. Bernard: The Insights of Modern Psychology"; "The New Deal and Catholic Social Theory"; "Some Thoughts on the Strengths of Godless Communism"; "Is Communism Godless?"; "The Rising Threat of Communism."

Books: *The Medieval Religious Visions: A Social Interpretation; The Challenge of Communism* (1951).

In 1952 Father Finian was ordered to Burma with the positions of Overseer of Catholic Missions and Advocate for the General of the Society of Jesus.

As Father Finian read the document which ordered him from comfortable New England ten thousand miles to Burma, he smiled with satisfaction.

Father Finian was a big man—six foot three inches; perhaps from hunching forward to listen to smaller men, he had developed a stoop. His hands were big; and although they were now smooth, they still looked strong. When he was a boy he had delivered ice, hauled crates at the Railroad Express, picked over tons of coal looking for the grey gleam of slate; when he was at Oxford he had rowed on the Merton crew and was recognized as the best stroke they had ever had.

A man knowing the frailness of all men, Father Finian welcomed the assignment to Burma. Although he enjoyed the scholarship of religion, and knew, calmly and without arrogance, that he was considered a promising intellectual among members of the Society of Jesus, the priest felt that a special task awaited him in Asia. With an intensity that was almost physical, he wanted to grapple with it.

He knew of the terrible trouble there, the political plague which infected people who were susceptible because of hunger, poverty, or political disunity. The memory of his own experience with this political plague was bright in his mind, each detail perfect and precise.

It had happened during the war when he was a Navy chaplain. He had been talking to combat-seasoned Marines who were gathered on a small hill in the Russell Islands. Below them, framed in the coconut palms and the white crescent of sand, were the blue-grey hulks of the LCI's which would take them into battle on New Georgia that night.

One young Marine had listened to the priest with unusual interest. He stood quietly with his lips barely parted and his head turned so as to catch every word. Finian became more enthusiastic than usual. He talked volubly of dedication to

God, of the need for humility, and of the assurance of everlasting life if one but had faith.

When he had finished, filled with more emotion than he usually allowed himself, he walked quickly around the group to the attentive Marine. "May God go with you on this invasion."

The boy jerked his head up sharply, almost startled. The priest thought for a moment that he might be a Protestant and was embarrassed at the attentions of a Catholic.

Then the Marine spat, coolly and arrogantly. Finian realized that he had misjudged everything. The boy's eyes were cold and hard; and he spoke from a tight-lipped mouth.

"There isn't any God that's going to watch me or anyone else on that LCI, father. You know it, and so do I."

The Marine flicked his finger against the chaplain's gold cross. "I'm a Communist, father. And I'll go into that goddamned miserable island and chew hell out of those Japs . . . but not for you or those fat-assed Rotarians back in the States, but because Communism is worth it."

"My son, Communism. . . ."

"What you ought to be telling us, father, is why we haven't opened a second front. Tell us why a bunch of greedy capitalists don't want to go into Europe until Soviet Russia is bled white. Don't tell us about a make-believe god. He won't help. We have to help ourselves."

The hard-faced boy looked older, wiser, infinitely tougher than any man Finian had met before; he was utterly beyond the appeal of words or logic or sentiment.

Father Finian had never forgotten that incident. He had recognized that the zeal in the boy's eyes and the dedication

in his face were what made saints of men. Yet this boy was dedicated to something evil.

After that meeting with the Marine, the priest oriented his energy. He began to read Communist literature. At first he merely read the speeches of Stalin and Bulganin and Zhukov as they were reported in the press, puzzling over their vulgarity, obviousness, and lack of subtlety. Their illogicality pained so well-trained a Jesuit as Father Finian; but apparently to millions of people the logic was flawless, the appeal intense.

Slowly the priest concluded that these Communist speeches were a form of secular ritual. The crude slogans were only symbols which meant much to the converted; the incredible promises of an abundant future were as real to them as the Stations of the Cross to a Catholic. Finian learned that the faith of a Communist was no more shaken by news of a bloody purge of "right-wing deviationists" than is the faith of a Catholic by the news that the Inquisition was brutal.

The discovery was decisive. The priest realized that here was the face of the devil. The Communists had duplicated the ritual, faith, dedication, zeal, and enthusiasm of the Church. There was the same emphasis upon training, the same apostolic energy, the necessity to see beyond facts to a greater truth. The only difference was that the Communists served evil. They served it so well that the priest knew that both faiths could not exist in this world at the same time.

Later he read Lenin's *What is to be Done?* and Stalin's *History of the Communist Party*, Engels' *Anti-Duhring*, and finally, Marx's *Das Kapital*, and much more. Through all the tedious reading through economics and politics, sociology and philosophy, the priest never wavered. Others might think

that Communism was a result of class conflict, of long-range economic change or political fanaticism; but Finian *knew* that Communism was the face of the devil, altered slyly and shrewdly, but still the devil's face, put on earth to test again the morality of men. Finian meant to meet the test, even if he had to do it alone.

Finian was a practical, tough-minded, and thoughtful man. When he left for Burma he was well-armed. On his long trip via Manila, Saigon, Bangkok, and finally Rangoon, he crystallized his plan of attack. During his two-week stay in Rangoon and his journey up a thousand miles of the Irrawaddy River by slow launch, he studied the Burmans and reviewed his notes on the culture, the history, and anthropology of the country. There was nothing haphazard about Finian.

Because of the Burmese heat, the windows in the residence of the Archbishop of Mokthu had no glass. Instead they were covered by fine wire screens; at night, bamboo shades were lowered inside to assure privacy. Looking through the screens Finian saw many strange insects pressed against the wire mesh.

Beyond the bodies of the insects, which by some trick of the eye seemed to fill the middle distance, Finian saw the lush green rolling of the Mokthu Valley. At the edge of Mokthu Town the tin shacks, the roads, the tiny streams of sewage ended, and the jungle began, green and thick and threatening. It seemed as if the town balanced at the very edge of survival; and that at any moment the eternal, powerful, lazy jungle might come sweeping over the town and bury it like a soft and tropical Pompeii.

"I should like to get out into the country soon," the priest

said, quietly. "I would appreciate whatever help you can give me. A jeep perhaps; a tent, a sleeping hammock, some food."

"You are going to stay out for more than a night?" asked the Archbishop.

"Yes. For a few months."

"Father, we have closed our three missions between here and China. The Communists burned one and threw phosphorous bombs into the other two. It is impossible to stay out there."

"Nevertheless, can you assist me?"

"Yes," the Archbishop said, stiffly. "If that is what you must do."

"With your permission, then, I will leave by the end of the week. For three months." Then, because he could not resist it, he added, "Nothing is really impossible." At once he felt a stab of guilt, for he had said it only to bait the Archbishop.

Finian drove north, bumping and slithering along the narrow cart road through the jungle. He knew he had to do three things very quickly. First, he had to find at least one native Catholic who was courageous. Second, he had to learn the language. Third, he had to learn to eat the food . . . which meant he might have to endure several weeks of agonizing dysentery while his intestinal tract developed an immunity to the bacteria in the native food.

Five weeks later Finian stood under a fir tree in the tropical jungle of the area where the Kachin plateau joins the mountains of Assam. The giant tree flung itself out of the steam and smell and heat of the jungle floor toward the clean, in-

finitely removed, asceptic blue-whiteness of the sky. He had vastly underestimated the difficulties of his three basic tasks.

He still had a fever from the dysentery, and he was forty pounds lighter. His face was white and sweated, as if his vitality had been leached out of his flesh. His bowels were tender and painful. When he moved, his viscera came together with a roughness that was incredibly painful. His tongue was dry from fever, and his teeth felt chalky. His bones ached, and once, in his delirium, he had imagined that the marrow had been replaced by gelatin.

But he could eat native food; at that very moment his overtender intestines were digesting two handfuls of rice, half of a mango, and a cup of very impure water. He knew that he would keep it down. He was immune.

Finian had also learned the language. He had chewed into it like a cold chisel driven into granite. From the first day in the up-country he spoke nothing but Burmese. He asked the name of every object he saw, by pointing at it. Leaf, tree, water, big, little, walk, hop, jump, down, sideways, lizard, river, sea, cloud, yes, no, fire, food, feet, nose, mouth . . . he was astonished at how few were the essential words of a language. Even while he was sick with dysentery he practiced. The grammar came quite unconsciously; and in four weeks he was speaking simple sentences. He made no effort to learn complex or difficult expressions. He wanted complex needs to be put in simple sentences and was convinced it could be done. His Burmese was the only way he could search for dependable associates.

After he had found the first Burmese Catholic, it had been less difficult to find other good men. He had not required that they be Catholic; only that they be anti-Communist and that

they be honest and have courage. "Come to think of it," Finian said to himself, "that was asking quite a bit."

He pushed himself away from the fir tree and felt the pain stab in his intestines. But pain or no pain, it was necessary for him to be standing when his eight new associates arrived. He thought for a moment of the difficulties he had had recruiting them. All his training as a Jesuit, all his alertness, every available trick and wile had been necessary; and he had had to look for them while he was still miserably sick. The main problem had been finding the first one, a Burman who was surely and beyond mistake a dependable man. His name was U Tien.

U Tien was a jeep driver on the staff of the Archbishop, and had been ordered to go with the priest. His home was in the north, in the mountains about fifty miles from the Chinese border. This was the area where the priest had decided to work. U Tien was thirty-nine years old, married, had three children and said that he was a devout Catholic. He said it evenly, without fervor; and Finian felt he was telling the truth. But still he had tested U Tien.

First Finian left his briefcase with U Tien while he went away on a short trip. Later, when he examined the briefcase, the thin almost invisible thread which he had twisted through the clasp was unbroken. So he knew, as a minimum, that U Tien was honest.

Secondly, he had told U Tien that he was thinking of negotiating with the Communists so that they would allow the mission schools to reopen. Finian had told him that they could re-open the schools on the condition that they would not teach anything against the Communists. U Tien's face showed

no expression. Finian went on to say that Communism was politics and Catholicism was religion and there was no reason why they should conflict. Good Burmans could be good Communists as well as good Catholics, he said. There had been much misunderstanding; it was possible to be a good patriot and a good Communist and a good Catholic. What, he asked, did U Tien think of this?

Agony showed in U Tien's eyes. Finian knew that most Asians dislike saying anything that is unpleasant. Intuitively they say what they think their listener wants to hear. Finian also knew that a Communist would have hesitated, played for time until he could check with higher authority on what he should say. For what Finian was proposing was a capitulation. U Tien wet his lips.

"I think it would be a mistake," he said, and his voice was low and dejected. "I think it would not be possible to be a good Catholic and a good Communist. Somehow, in some way that I cannot tell you clearly, they are not things that can be mixed." He paused, seeking for the right words. "To say it differently: if one way is right, then the other cannot be. That is the best I can put it. I am sorry."

There had been other tests. Some of them were slight and quick, some more deliberate. Finally Father Finian had done what he knew was a cruel thing, but necessary. Finian had gone to the bazaar in Mokthu and had shopped industriously for a leather pouch. He had asked for such a pouch at four shops, and at each he had said, "It must be stout enough to hold a pistol and fifty rounds of ammunition. I want it for my driver so that he can guard the jeep in these troubled days."

The next day U Tien had been late for work. When he appeared, driving the jeep, his face was covered with a long purple welt that ran across his eye and down to his lower jaw. Blood was crusted in the corners of his mouth. Finian asked him what had happened.

"The Communists came last night and beat me," he said. "They thought I had a pistol and ammunition. They said they knew it for a fact. They almost destroyed my room searching for it." He paused and his eyes were bewildered and angry. "You have not been wise in what you have said, sir. It is not wise to say such things."

At that moment Finian dropped his air of innocence.

"It will not happen again, U Tien," he said, placing his hand on the man's shoulder. "This is the end of a time of testing. Now we know one another. It was necessary because there are spies everywhere. I had to find one man with whom I can trust God's work. Now, find out who the spies are."

Within a week U Tien told him. And he also told him who the dependable men were. Some of the dependable men were not Catholics, but they hated the Communists; and U Tien told him the reasons in each case.

"Now," said the priest, "we will start our work."

Four men, U Tien among them, came flitting through the trees, nodded at Finian, and stood quietly in front of him. They waited without talking; and in a few minutes four more men appeared. All nine of them crouched to begin talking.

Now it starts, Finian thought. Now the whole work and training of years comes to a point, as if one had worked endlessly on a nail and now, with a few blows, were trying it

on tough wood. He felt calm. His physical weakness was enormous, a pervading and maddening softness. But the weakness was only something of the body, something that would yield before food and sleep and exercise. Otherwise he was strong.

He closed his eyes for a moment, asked for guidance so that his strength would not be misused, and then, opening his eyes, began to talk very slowly to the eight Burmans.

"This thing is hard to say," he began slowly, speaking the words he had distilled down from twelve years of work. "But it must be said." He paused. "In usual times the Church cares not what the State does. Each is concerned with different parts of man: one with his soul and the other with his political life. A great saint once said that as long as the sword of the Church is left free to fight sin, it will do nothing to tarnish the sword of the State."

He hesitated, wondering if St. Augustine would quite approve this way of putting it. "But these are not usual times. The men calling themselves Communists say that the soul and the state are identical. The price of being a Communist is that you must also give them your soul and your will. They are trying to make themselves gods on this earth."

They were listening intently. These men had lived long with the threat of violence and death just at their back. They could not be deceived by soft words. They would recognize the truth, even if it were hard.

"The first thing is that we must decide very surely and exactly what it is we want. Before we make the smallest move we must agree on that," Finian said. And then he asked them, with absolute openness, "What is it that we wish to do?"

There was an electric moment in the clearing, a thin tense shred of silence. About each of the men there was a tautness, an expectation that was almost palpable.

"Tell us what is to be done?" U Piu asked. He did not look up.

Finian knew that this was a critical moment, a point of balance. U Piu, he sensed, was testing him.

"It is not for me to say," Finian said flatly. "It is for all of us. It is your country, your souls, your lives. I will do what we agree upon."

Subtly, so subtly that it was beyond the capacity of the eye to tell what was happening, the line of men seemed to become straighter, more firm. Their backs went straighter, their hands stopped playing with twigs and pieces of dirt; they looked up at Finian. The tiny invisible things that make up a posture of decisiveness, Finian could not detect. He only knew that it had happened.

This was, he was sure, the first time that these men had ever been told by a white man that a big and important decision was entirely their own . . . and would be followed by the white man.

"The big thing? That is what we must name?" one of the men said softly, his mind revolving around the question. "The big thing we want is that all of our people become Catholics."

A few of the Burmans looked at Finian for his reaction, but his face was impassive. His pain had come back, but no expression crossed his face. He was taller and more clumsy than any of the Burmans, and he knew it was important that he crouch as they did.

"No, that is not the final big thing we want," U Tien said. He spoke slowly, reaching carefully for the right words. "I

do not care if there are Buddhists or Anamists among us. Or if there are Methodists or Baptists, or even nonbelievers. Before the Communists came there were such people among us and they did not forbid me to worship the way I wanted or to raise my children in my faith. But the Communists have made all worship impossible except the worship of Stalin, Lenin, Mao. In the areas the Communists control everyone must believe in one *single* thing: Communism."

Again there was a moment of silence, as the men thought of what had been said.

"U Tien is right," one of the Burmans said. "I too am a Catholic, but I do not require that all of us be Catholics. What this means, I think, is that the thing we want is a country where any man can worship any god he wishes; where he can live the way his heart says. That, I think, is the final big thing."

There was some more discussion, some of it heated. Once or twice the Burmans looked at Finian, but he merely stared back at them. Finally they came to agreement and they fell silent . . . their silence indicating their agreement with U Tien.

"If you wish, I will sum up what you have said," Finian said. "The important thing, the big thing, is a country where any man may worship and live as he wishes." Then he added, humbly, "It is not my right to approve or disapprove, but I agree with you."

The Burmans' faces lighted, and the tiny wet clearing rang with laughter. U Piu, who was more exuberant than most Burmans, smacked his hands together with pleasure. Finian, for the first time in five weeks, was unaware of the sullen pain of dysentery.

"Now, the next step is harder, more difficult to think through," he said quietly. "It calls for great honesty and much information and much thought. It is this: Why do we not now have the freedom to worship or live as we please? Why is this?"

"Because the Communists do not permit it," one of the men said quickly, almost automatically. "They burn the churches; they beat men who follow the politics of U Nu; they ridicule confession and confirmation. The Communists deny us all freedoms."

"But why do Burmans believe what the Communists say?" Finian asked quietly. "Once the Communists were only a few. Now they are many and they control many areas. They are Burmans like you. It means nothing to say Communists deny us freedom. Why do we allow them to deny us the freedom?"

"Mostly because many of our people believe in what they say," U Piu answered.

"But *why?*" Finian asked stubbornly, and his posture made it clear he would not attempt the answers.

The argument became so heated that Finian could not always follow it. Several times one or more of the men were angry. One man, Toki, who was a withdrawn and silent man, stood up, walked over to a tree, and pulled off a branch in his hands as if the intensity of what he felt could only be dissipated through his fingers. But in all the wild, loud talk Finian could tell that there was a pride and a sharp sense of discovery. Finally the talk quieted. Then men looked at U Tien as if he were their spokesman.

"What we think . . . and the words may offend you, Father . . . is three things," U Tien said slowly. "First, the Communists can deny us freedom because many Burmans have

become Communists. Secondly, many Burmans have become Communists because they think that the Communists are against the white man . . . the Westerner. I apologize, Father, for saying this. It is hard, but most of us feel that the white man has not always been just. It is a hard thing, but it is true. Thirdly, many Burmans are for the Communists because they think the Communists will do good things for the people . . . for the peasants and cheap-pay workers. Give us land and more food and maybe automobiles and radios and cheap medicine. That, we agree, is why the Communists are able to deny us freedom to worship."

"That seems to me sound and true," Finian said, as if he were merely summing up their statement. "First, that what we want is freedom to worship and to live. Secondly, that we will not have that freedom again until many Burmans stop being Communists; and they will only escape when they realize that Communism is evil for all. I am sure in my own mind that the Communists care nothing about white men or brown men or black men, but only for power. But you must not take my word for any of this. Together we will look at the facts and see what we discover." He paused and his teeth came together sharply from the pain.

"Tomorrow, if you wish, we will meet again at the same time and will read together what the Communists say they want and how they go about getting it," Finian said. "We will read and find this from things that the Communists themselves write and from things they themselves do. Then, perhaps, we will have the truth and will know what we must do."

He stood up and the pain was suddenly so great that he felt he would faint. His face paled and the beads of sweat broke out on his face and rolled with a salt taste into his mouth.

U Tien made a movement toward him, a quick gesture of support, but Finian shook his head. He slowly shook hands with each of the men and thanked them for coming.

The next afternoon the Burmans were back. This time they were eager to talk, full of enthusiasm and words. They had thought since they left and they were, in a quiet way, desperate to communicate their views.

"Father, before we do anything we must have all the information that it is possible to have about the Communists in this area, I think," one of the Burmans said. "It is right to know what we want in a faraway day, but first we must know the difficulties that lie in the way."

Finian held back a smile of excitement. What the Burmans were proposing was exactly what Finian was going to propose as the third step: the gathering of intelligence.

The rest of the Burmans nodded agreement. Eagerly and in great detail they began to disclose the extent of local Communist power. They told of merchants who were secret Communists, revealed which students were leaders, and which democrats, who were propaganda carriers, where the arms were cached, the extent of guerilla warfare. They talked steadily for two days. They drew sketches in the ground, pointed out locations on maps. They were astonished at the extent of their knowledge and also somewhat frightened—for no single one among them had realized that the Communists were so powerful. There was no village which did not have a shadow apparatus of Communists, no Western organization which was not spied upon. In some villages the Communists dominated everything with a chilling ferocity. Elsewhere they merely propagandized endlessly on the two themes of the

evil of the Western white man and the love of the Communists for the common people.

"Now we know all that we can possibly know of the Communists and we know it equally. Each of us is as informed as the rest," Finian said. "We are not like the Communists who carefully conceal information from their people. Now we must decide what can be done. What shall we do?"

The argument raged every afternoon for two weeks. Ideas, words, enthusiasm, anger, commitment, and excitement boiled in their meetings. And finally, painfully and chaotically, agreement came.

Many months later Finian summed up in his report what they had done. By then it was possible to see things more clearly.

"What we discovered," he wrote, "is that men are persuaded of things by the same process, whether the persuading is done by the Catholic Church, Lutherans, Communists, or democrats. A movement cannot be judged by its methods of persuasion for, short of violence, most successful movements use the same methods. What we discovered in our long discussions in the jungle were these things:

1. We desired a community in which choice of life and religion existed.

2. But this was impossible because many Burmans had been deceived into believing the Communists.

3. Therefore, we had to demonstrate to the people that the Communists had no interest in them, but were interested only in power.

4. This had to be done skillfully, but without force. It had to be by a process of persuasion. Therefore, we had to make ourselves experts in persuasion.

5. We had to persuade in terms of events which are known to Burmans.

6. We had to persuade in words which would be understood by everyone.

7. Complex ideas had to be put dramatically and powerfully.

8. The persuasion had to be done at a time when the audience would be receptive. And it had to be done on all levels.

"Once the eight Burmans had agreed on this, the rest seemed almost easy. The hardest part was the waiting and the planning. We had to wait, for the time was not right; and we had to plan, for we were only nine against three thousand active Communists.

"The first thing my eight associates did was publish a small, cheap, newspaper on the ditto machine I had brought with me. They called it *The Communist Farmer*. This was cunning, because the title could mean anything. Initially the Communists did not know whether to support or oppose the newspaper, which appeared mysteriously and suddenly in marketplaces, stores, doorsteps, village squares, buses, and streets. In each issue there was an article by a famous Communist—Stalin, Marx, Lenin, Mao Tse-tung, Chou En-lai, Plekhanov. One issue had an article by Karl Marx in which he attacked the stupidity and backwardness of the peasants. Another issue offered a speech by Stalin in which he justified his slaughter of 'kulaks' on the grounds that agriculture must be collectivized. The rest of the issue was a simple reporting of facts about farming difficulties in Russia, the agricultural progress in the United States, hints on how to increase farm production, advice on how to use fertilizer.

"The Communist Party was confused for only two issues. Then they attacked the paper savagely in speeches, by radio, and in other papers. They pointed out that *The Communist Farmer* was reporting only part of Communist theory; but they could not effectively deny that what was reported was authoritative. They roared in their own papers that Stalin loved the peasants. But this was oddly unconvincing in the light of his murder of the 'kulaks.' Within a month, the Communist press was printing almost nothing except replies to *The Communist Farmer*.

"Then they made an all-out effort to suppress the paper. But this only made the paper more desirable, and copies became prized. Then they threatened to kill the men who printed and distributed it; but here, for the first time, their espionage failed and they could never discover who we were. The Communists slowly became buffoons in the eyes of the local Burmans. People actually laughed at statements made at Communist rallies. In Burma a party may be feared, respected, efficient, fierce . . . but if it is antic, it is hopeless.

"Communist leaders in the northern province were replaced. Then the new leaders were purged . . . and their replacements were in turn removed. A joke began to circulate that the quickest way to die was to be made a high official of the Communist Party.

"And then the climax came. The man from Moscow arrived in Anthkata, a Russian expert on Burma. He was tall, wiry, hard-faced, a veteran of purges, conspiracies, plots, and counterplots. He had never failed. His name was Vinich.

"Vinich had made elaborate plans before he smuggled himself into Anthkata. He had developed a thorough plan for the extermination of *The Communist Farmer*. And he took steps

to assure that his presence in Anthkata would not be known. He had discovered long ago that natives should do their own political work . . . foreigners should come in only as a last resort, and then always as quietly as possible.

"His plan was so good it almost deserved to succeed. There was only one thing wrong. The Communist apparatus had been penetrated by a spy: Toki. Toki was thorough and inconspicuous, and his memory was infallible.

"Three weeks after the arrival of Vinich, *The Communist Farmer* began to appear almost daily in bars, teahouses, offices, public toilets, boats, oxcarts, country villages, courthouses, everywhere. And each day it advertised that on June 10, at 2:00 p.m., there would be a radio broadcast of great importance from Myitkyina with a message of importance even to non-Communists.

"On June 10 there were few people in Anthkata, if any, who were not listening to the radio. Somehow the broadcast had become a critical event . . . everyone felt that it was important.

"Promptly at 2:00 p.m. on June 10 the voice of the announcer stated that the following half-hour had been bought by an organization called the Burmese Educational League. Then a rough country voice, heavy with Anthkata accent, came on.

" 'We think that the Burmans of Anthkata have been badly misled by vicious propaganda directed at Soviet Russia and the Communist Party,' said the local voice, speaking slowly. 'We think that this is a bad thing. So today we are allowing the official spokesman for the Soviet Union and the Anthkata Communist Party to speak. You will hear the voice of Vladimir Vinich of Moscow, Soviet Russia, who is living in the

village of Ton Mou in secrecy. Last week Mr. Vinich called a meeting of the local Communists to discuss what Communist policy in Anthkata would be. To make sure that Communism is presented fairly, we of the Burmese Educational Society tape-recorded that conversation; and I am now going to play part of it for you. Communists, like everyone else, deserve to be judged by their own words, not by the words of any vicious detractors. Friends, the next voice you will hear is that of Mr. Vladimir Vinich of Moscow, Soviet Russia, speaking on Communism's aims.'

"There was a scratching, the whirring sound of a tape recorder, some static, and then a loud, harsh voice speaking excellent, but Russian-accented, Burmese.

" 'You have been arguing for three hours and I have not spoken during that time,' said Vinich's somewhat tired voice. 'It doesn't matter what's happening here. I'm not asking your advice. I'm telling you the facts . . . and the only conclusions that can be drawn from those facts. First, stop talking about Russian tractors and promising we will send some here. We can't do it. We've got all we can do to supply military hardware to Ho Chi Minh in Vietnam. Second, bear down on the owners of property. Don't talk about "socialist ownership of lands." That only scares the peasants. Peasants are backward types. They want private property, not collective farms. Later they'll see the necessity for common ownership, but not now.'

" 'What about the anti-American propaganda, Comrade?' a voice asked.

" 'You've gone too far on that,' Vinich snapped. He was obviously at the edge of losing his temper. 'You push anti-Americanism so far it becomes a form of chauvinism and the Burmese begin to overlook the deficiencies of the Burmese

government. Don't blame everything on the Americans, save some blame for the local opposition.'

" 'It is hard to criticize our government right now . . . a Burmese voice said.

" 'Of course it is,' Vinich cut in. 'But you've got to remember that the worse things are, the better they are. Lenin said that. Which means that the mulberry and rice crops have to fail here. Which means that the road transport scheme has to fail.'

"The whir of the tape-recorder grew louder, then stopped. The local Burman's voice, innocent and almost unctuous, came up strongly.

" 'We are sure you are grateful for hearing about the principles and standards of Communism and the Russians' plans for Anthkata from a high Russian spokesman,' the voice said without sarcasm. 'We hope that you feel armed not to believe in the silly lies which enemies spread about Communism.' "

A day after the broadcast the nine men met in the jungle clearing again. For the first time Toki did not tear at small pieces of twig. He was a fulfilled man and he laughed softly at the joking remarks made by his friends.

"What we must do now is to make the same effort in other provinces in Burma," Toki said firmly. "And beyond Burma also. In Sarkhan, for example, the trouble is beginning. Their language is almost the same as ours. We can show them how to fight the enemy before the enemy is too strong to conquer."

He turned and looked at Father Finian. He wasn't looking at him for approval. Toki and his friends had made their own

decision and their own way. The look which Toki gave was one of friendship and equality

Father Finian felt a flush of pleasure The pain in his bowels had finally disappeared, and he was already calculating the distance to Sarkhan and hoping that the food was not too much different from that of Burma.

Before leaving Burma, Father Finian added a paragraph to his personal diary "It is reassuring to learn that what is humane and decent and right for people is also attractive to them," he wrote. "The evil of Communism is that it has masked from native peoples the simple fact that it intends to ruin them. When Americans do what is right and necessary, they are also doing what is effective."

4

Everybody Loves Joe Bing

The best authority on Father Finian's Burma trip was Ruth Jyoti, the editor and publisher of the *Setkya Daily Herald*, one of the finest independent papers of Southeast Asia. It was Ruth who first heard and broke the story of Finian's adventure, and who made a month's trip into Northern Burma to document it.

Ruth Jyoti was a most unusual Eurasian. Her fair skin and blonde hair were Anglo-Saxon. Her other features were Asian, and so were her attitudes. She had been raised and educated by her Cambodian mother. This is not to say that she did not know a great deal about Europeans and Americans. Her reputation as an Asian editor brought her into contact with many foreigners. And she was attractive, single, and twenty-eight.

Ruth knew many Americans. The city of Setkya, where she published her paper, was one of the important American foreign aid centers and fairly crawled with ICA technicians, USIS press agents, and cultural at-

tachés. Most of these Americans called upon her frequently for help and advice, so that it was inevitable that the USIS would invite her to America.

In 1952 Ruth accepted an offer of a three months' trip to learn about the press in the United States. Her first contact with America came in Hawaii. She was impressed by its beauty and charm—after she was finally able to see it. She was held up for hours in an Immigration and Customs waiting room for aliens. This room was neither dirty nor shabby; but obviously no one had ever given it much thought. And the officials were cold almost to the point of insult.

Ruth was too experienced a reporter either to waste time or to ignore first impressions. She picked up her notebook.

They may not believe it, but Americans have poorer facilities for visitors than Communist China, she wrote in her notebook. *At every factory, village, or sports center—wherever you are—in China, there is a guest house. The house is often crude, but it is always the best one available. And this is very effective propaganda.*

In San Francisco she waited at the airport until her State Department escort arrived. Buying herself copies of the *Chronicle* and the *Examiner,* she sat down in the Pan-American guest room and began to read. She went through both papers rapidly without finding the specific news she was looking for. A frown of disappointment crossed her face, and she reached for her notebook.

Today, in Setkya, she wrote, *the chiefs of seven major Asian nations are meeting. This conference may have profound effects upon Asian-American relations; yet there is no mention of the South Asian Bloc meeting in either of the two large San Francisco newspapers.*

I wonder why the American papers do not report this Asian news? I notice that about 70 per cent of the paper space is taken up with advertising and comics. But I must read more papers in different cities before I begin to generalize.

Now, about the average American woman I see here at the airport. A great many of them are wearing slacks and . . .

"Miss Jyoti?"

"Yes," she said, looking up. A debonair man of about fifty stood in front of her. Removing his black homburg, he bowed slightly.

"I'm Joseph Rivers of the State Department. Welcome to America. I very much enjoyed reading your articles on Father Finian."

"Thank you, Mr. Rivers. You are too generous."

"Of course, Miss Jyoti, as a private citizen Father Finian had a good deal more freedom of action than a person who works officially for our government."

"Of course. Which might suggest that America should encourage her private citizens to do more of the sort of thing that Father Finian did."

Mr. Rivers looked at her sharply, and Ruth smiled at him. They did not mention Father Finian again.

"Mr. Rivers, could you get me a copy of the *New York Times?*" she asked.

"You bet," Mr. Rivers said, leading her through the busy terminal. "Say, Miss Jyoti, I was in Setkya for a few days not too long ago. You know Joe Bing there?"

When she shook her head, Mr. Rivers was genuinely astonished.

"Why you must know him! He's chief of information for

the ICA in Setkya. Everyone knows him. There was an article on him in *Life* a few weeks ago."

"We don't see much of *Life* in Setkya, Mr. Rivers. It's a frightfully expensive magazine out there."

"But you have to know Joe Bing. He's six feet tall, fat, wears Tattersall checked vests. Lots of charm. Absolutely a male Elsa Maxwell. Knows everyone. I can remember him sitting in the café at the Hotel Montaigne. Nodded to everyone who went by . . ."

"Nodded to everyone who was European, Caucasian, western-educated, and decently dressed," Miss Jyoti said coldly. "I know the bastard now. He drives a big red convertible which he slews around corners and over sidewalks. And he's got exactly the kind of loud silly laugh that every Asian is embarrassed to hear."

"Oh, come on now, Miss Jyoti," Mr. Rivers said. "Old Joe is an expert newspaper man. He gives out all the copy on our aid program."

"He mails it out, or sends it by messenger," Miss Jyoti replied firmly. "And he has one hell of a big party every month where he brags that every chunk of food and every drop of liquor comes from the good ole U.S.A. And at wholesale prices right out of the commissary store. There hasn't been an Asian at one of his parties for two years. At his first party he only had liquor, when Buddhists and Moslems drink only fruit juice or water or milk. And the word got around."

"I'm truly sorry that you don't know Joe well enough to understand his good points," Mr. Rivers said lamely. He was somewhat frightened by the intensity with which Miss Jyoti spoke. Also he wondered how she could be a friend of Amer-

ica and still say such things about Old Joe. After all, everybody loves Joe Bing. The Department loves him. The newspaper people love him. They chose him to set up the protocol for Nixon's trip. Where the hell does she get off, saying things like that about Joe?

"You know, I heard about Joe Bing from Father Finian," Ruth said sweetly as they got into the limousine for San Francisco. "Father Finian had written him to see if Joe could send him some American ballpoint pens from the American Commissary in Setkya. Father Finian showed me Joe's reply: 'Commissary privileges are extended to American governmental employees and their dependents only' with the relevant government regulation. That was all."

"Well, you have to draw the line somewhere, or everyone would be piling into the commissaries," Mr. Rivers said.

"Oh, I agree. And after all, Father Finian wanted to use the pens for a private purpose—as prizes to the natives who did the best job of distributing their newspaper. At first it was an underground newspaper; but lately it's become one of the best rural newspapers in Burma."

"We couldn't allow individuals to use commissary items to support private business," Mr. Rivers said earnestly.

"Oh, I agree with you," Ruth said.

Mr. Rivers sat back and began to point out the sights of San Francisco.

The San Francisco press gave Ruth a dinner two nights later at which she was asked to say a few words about Americans stationed in Asia. After a few pleasantries about the good food and American hospitality, she dug into her subject with vigor.

"Generally Americans in Asia are not effective. They are what I call the Intellectual Maginot Line. They feel that if the nice rich respectable people like them, they must be doing a good job. I can understand that. You look at foreign faces, hear strange languages—and you just feel more comfortable at the Press Club or the American Club or the Officer's Club. Or anywhere where quiet people are wearing collars and ties and talking in English. The Asians who wear collars and ties and speak English are a special class, and most Americans have real difficulty meeting any other sort. And I regret having to say this, most of you don't make the effort. I could stand here all night and tell you stories about one American mistake after another. But perhaps it will be more helpful if I tell you about an American who was effective.

"He was Bob Maile of the USIS. Now I'm not saying that all USIS men are effective. Far from it. But Bob Maile was. He did more to raise American prestige than anyone else over there—the ambassador included.

"Bob was in Setkya for about five months before any of the editors even heard about him. Usually the first thing a new USIS official does is to come barging in on us. They fawn all over us—if we talk English—and start making big plans for our country—without knowing anything about it. It's become such a pain in the neck that almost every editor has orders that no American is to be allowed in his office. And if one forces his way into my office, I just pretend I don't speak English.

"Bob was different. I met him and his wife Dorothy at a party given in his honor by the typesetters. You see, instead of barging in at the top with the air of an ambassador, Bob Maile started off by trying to become familiar with our lan-

guage and country. He made friends with the typesetters, the reporters, the photographers, the circulation boys. He showed the photographers how to raise the ASA speed of their films so that they could take candid pictures without flash. He helped them get chemicals. He got a fan for the dark room and he made the light trap in his own home.

"He did these things without asking for credit or telling anyone. In return, he wanted tutoring in our language, lessons in our cooking for Dorothy, and help in getting his children into our schools. He was humble about everything, and he made it clear that he thought he was getting more than he was giving.

"Now, not all of this is easy. I know enough about western standards to understand that sending an American child to a native school takes some courage. Asian schools are dirty, rowdy, noisy, and infectious by your standards. But Bob Maile's kids did all right. They caught impetigo once, and got mixed up in a couple of fights—but they also got a good education, and they came to understand a different kind of life.

"Let me tell you a story that as newspaper men you'll appreciate. About a year ago a story broke that an American soldier had raped a girl in a temple. The temple part made it the story of the century. If it had hit the headlines we would have had a religious war against the Americans on our hands. The chief American public information man in Setkya, a man whom many of you probably know, just holed up in his office. He never touched what he called 'native controversies.' That meant he hadn't time to buck it up to Washington for an answer.

"Bob Maile, on the other hand, called on the editors of the

biggest papers and news services in Setkya. He didn't threaten anyone, or conceal information, or say that the story would be unfriendly to the United States. He just asked if we had checked it out thoroughly.

"This is the kind of question you take from someone you trust. So we checked it out—and it was wrong. An American had gone to a brothel, refused to pay when he left, on grounds that are unmentionable here, and got into a brawl. Not worth a paragraph in any paper.

"Bob never brags about what his office does. He doesn't have to. In my country good deeds are publicized all over by the bamboo telegraph. And Bob Maile is the best known American in my country.

"I wish the other Americans were all like him. If they were, the Communists couldn't last long in Asia."

5

Confidential and Personal

From: Ambassador Louis Sears (Sarkhan)
To: Mr. Dexter S. Peterson, Sarkhan Desk, State Department, Washington, D. C.

Dear Dex,

I'm writing this to you personally (even typing it myself) because I need help and I want to make sure you know what the score is out here in Sarkhan. Honest, Dex, these Sarkhanese are really tricky. Sometimes I think they're all Commies. And to tell you the truth, I'm not so sure about the loyalty of some of the Americans here, either.

I guess that by now the Department's been reading all the press lies about Sarkhan. The stories that reporter for the *Times* wrote are false. My relations with the Sarkhanese couldn't be better, and the enclosed editorial from the *Eastern Star* proves it. And his stories about my neglecting that crackpot Colvin because I was ignorant of the circumstances is pure hogwash. I personally saw Colvin right after he got into trouble. Also enclosed are clippings from the Sarkhanese

papers published the day after. Colvin has a lot of drag in Wisconsin and may be raising hell through his senators and congressmen. Just show them the clippings.

We got another crackpot here, too—Father Finian. This priest has to be handled with kid gloves. I don't want to get into a beef with the Roman Catholics. But this Finian has just come from Burma where he started a small revolution; now he's organizing here in Sarkhan way up north, and the local papers are beginning to raise hell. If Cardinal Spellman is for him, I can tolerate him, I suppose. But if the Catholic bigshots are down on him, I'll get him shipped back to the States.

Now Dex, aside from those two things—and despite the newspaper lies—everything is on an even keel out here. The Sarkhan politicians keep squawking that if we don't bail them out the country will go Commie. Don't believe it for a damned minute. I get around at one hell of a lot of social functions, and official dinners out here, and I've never met a native Communist yet. And even though the Russian ambassador screwed us for a little while on the rice deal, I had a hundred thousand handbills distributed saying that it was the good old USA who supplied the rice.

In general, we're in good shape out here.

But what I need in a hurry for my staff are some people I can trust who have initiative. I'm getting damned sick and tired of having to do everything myself. For one thing, we need a new public affairs officer. This girl Maggie Johnson is all right, but she agrees with the native press too much. And she keeps bringing newspapermen—especially Americans—in to see me. They pester hell out of me about problems which are none of their business, and which Miss Johnson should handle on her own.

Dex, do you remember Joe Bing? He made a big impression on me when he appeared before the Senate Committee. He's a sharp cookie with his eye on the ball. See if you can get him assigned out here, will you? He was stationed in Setkya for a while, so he should know the Asian picture. Also a few good looking girls as secretaries. They'd be a good advertisement for America, and would help morale.

You can read between the lines, Dex. I don't want to be torpedoed by a bunch of crackpot internationalists who don't know which end is up. And I want a staff we can be proud of. Get someone in personnel to do some active recruiting for us. Thanks.

Lou

6

Employment Opportunities Abroad

"Employment Opportunities Abroad" was printed in bright red across the top of the placards. Maybe 1500 of the handsome cards appeared throughout Washington on bulletin boards in government offices, university halls, Civil Service offices, boarding houses, and the cheap dormitories in which so many "government girls" live. The placards made it clear that there was a shortage of trained people to work abroad; and that if one worked overseas the pay would be good, advancement was possible, and it would be patriotic —as well as an opportunity to see exotic and interesting parts of the world. The placard also said that a meeting would be held in a conference room at American University which would be addressed by "experienced Foreign Service officers who have themselves lived and worked abroad." There would also be a question period.

The conference room was crowded by the time the meeting began. The main speaker was Mr. Hamilton Bridge Upton who had served as a consul in seven different countries.

He looked like Brooks Brothers, Dartmouth, confidence, poise, good cocktail conversation, no dirty jokes, and a representative of the United States . . . all of which was true. Sitting with him behind the table was a very fat, warm, jolly man named Joseph F. Bing. He looked like a traveling salesman, Northwestern U., a "big man on campus," an inside dopester, a good journalist, and a man who knew his way about . . . all of which was true.

Mr. Hamilton Upton spoke first with skill and dignity. His information was precise, and his audience felt that he was a worthy representative of a great power . . . a man who knew how to handle tough situations and tricky foreigners.

"Each of us would like to stay home, develop his profession, widen his friendships, and rear his family," Mr. Upton began. "But in times of such momentous crises, when our country faces challenges unlike any she has ever faced, we must also realize that we have duties as citizens. And not only as citizens, but as members of the world community. In all lands we are beset by an evil world-wide conspiracy. We need our best people abroad to help contain this clever and malignant conspiracy."

I like the way he doesn't call them Communists, those conspiracy people, Marie MacIntosh thought. She was there with her three girl friends, all of whom worked in the Pentagon stenographic pool; they shared a small apartment close to Rock Creek Park.

Mr. Upton talked for fifteen minutes, giving the impression of a discussion between one superior person and another. Marie felt impressed and involved just by being addressed in such a way.

"And now I would like to introduce Mr. Joe Bing," Mr. Upton said when he had finished. "Mr. Bing is a public information officer and an expert on Asian affairs. He has served for several years in Setkya, and served with distinction. He has requested duty in Sarkhan, and will probably be leaving for that country in the near future. Here is a person who is an expert at meeting natives face to face as equals."

Mr. Upton sat down and Mr. Joseph Bing pushed back his chair, hefted his body up, and walked around the table. He sat on the edge of the table and at once the entire audience relaxed.

"My name is Bing, but I'm a government public relations man and you can call me Joe," he said. Everyone laughed. A few people in the audience said "Hiya, Joe," and he waved his hand. "I work for men like Mr. Upton, and let me tell you it's a pleasure. Foreign affairs is big business and it's important business. You all know that. Now maybe I can tell you a few things about working abroad for Uncle Sammy that you won't read in the handouts. After all, even when you're doing big work and important work, you still have to relax, and I know you'd like to know about the informal side of living and working abroad."

Joe spent a few minutes describing the simple business of getting to an overseas post. Air or ship, he said, but first class. Nothing but the best. Then he winked and the audience shifted in their seats. Marie MacIntosh inched forward and listened intently.

"Now I know what's on your minds. At least on the minds of some of you," Joe said jovially. "Your social life. O.K., let's talk about it. You'll have to work among foreigners, but we don't expect you to love 'em just because you work among

'em. I don't care where you go to work for Uncle Sammy, you'll be living with a gang of clean-cut Americans. And a lot of 'em are single people, so you won't be lonesome if you're not married."

Mr. Upton very carefully was looking over Joe's head at some distant speck on the wall. But there was the faintest trace of a smile on his face, with which everyone in the audience was pleased. They knew that Mr. Upton enjoyed what Joe was saying as much as they, and it made foreign duty seem like a family affair. Mr. Upton was the proper but protective father; and Joe was the uncle who always shows up at Christmas with whiskey on his breath and gifts in his suitcase.

Joe went on for twenty minutes. He was expert at using the concrete example and answering the practical question. He knew about the price of alligator shoes in Brazil, the cost of Scotch in Japan, the availability of servants in Vietnam, the pension one could expect after twenty years of faithful service. He told about commissaries which stocked wholesome American food for Americans stationed all over the world. "You can buy the same food in Asia that you can in Peoria. Even, say, in Saigon they stock American ice cream, bread, cake, and, well, anything you want," said Joe Bing. "We look out for our people. When you live overseas it's still on the high American standard."

"Sounds good, doesn't it?" Marie MacIntosh whispered.

The other three girls nodded. Marie guessed that they were all thinking about the two-room apartment the four of them shared. Two of them slept on a foldaway couch in the front room, and had to get up early so that the table could be opened for breakfast. Their only luxury was a bottle of

whiskey every Friday night which they drank with ginger ale because none of them liked the taste.

Joe Bing finished his informal talk and then announced that he or Mr. Upton would be glad to answer questions. No one asked Mr. Upton a thing; but Joe talked steadily for another half-hour.

"What about learning to speak a foreign language?" a small wiry girl asked. "I understand you have to learn the language of a country before you go there."

"Now, just a minute," Joe said, his voice full of good humor, "someone gave you the wrong dope. Uncle Sammy is not crazy. How many people do you think we could round up in this country who can speak Cambodian or Japanese or even German? Well, not very many. I don't *parlez vous* very well myself, but I've always made out pretty well in foreign countries. Fact is, we don't expect you to know the native language. Translators are a dime a dozen overseas. And besides, it's better to make the Asians learn English. Helps them, too. Most of the foreigners you'll do business with speak perfect English."

"I hear everything's expensive overseas," said another listener. "Can we ever save money?"

Joe Bing laughed. "Look, your housing's all paid for. Your only expenses are food, liquor if you drink, clothes, and servants—and you can buy a whole family of servants for forty dollars a month."

Sixty-seven people put in applications, among them Marie MacIntosh, Homer Atkins, a retired engineer, and a newspaperman named Kohler. The newspaperman was rejected because he had once written some articles criticizing the govern-

ment. Joe Bing was particularly interested in these three because they had all indicated that they wanted to go to Asia. In fact, two of them mentioned Sarkhan.

"You know," said Mr. Upton a week later, "there's something wrong with our recruiting system. With the exception of Atkins, that engineer, every applicant will be making more money with the government than he does in the job he has now. Frankly, I think we're getting slobs."

"What about that old engineer?"

"I think maybe he'll turn out to be a screwball. He put down that his present income from investments is $150,000 a year."

7

The Girl Who Got Recruited

Marie MacIntosh was twenty-eight years old and she had a private cry about once a week. She was drab, and she knew it. Her life was drab, and she knew it. What she needed was a husband, and she knew that too. The one hope she had for a change in her routine life was her application for overseas duty.

Although Marie had interesting bosses and a responsible job, life was dull. She left her apartment at six-thirty in the morning so that she could get a seat on the bus, and also so that she could eat breakfast in the government cafeteria. Usually she stayed in her office until almost five-thirty, and would then have dinner in the government cafeteria. This routine meant she avoided the crowded buses; and it was much cheaper and easier than eating in the crowded apartment.

Marie's nights were almost all the same. After doing her share of the apartment cleaning and her own laundry, she sat in front of the TV set with her three roommates.

Then Marie received a letter of acceptance to her applica-

tion for overseas duty. She was to go to Sarkhan. Three months later she landed at Haidho airfield.

A month later she wrote her ex-roommates a letter:

Dear Mary, Joan, and Louise,

The trip to Haidho was wonderful. I flew first class all the way —the real deluxe treatment—all paid for. It was great. (Remember the time we flew tourist class to Chicago and packed our lunches in our handbags, and how we had to stand in line?)

Well, naturally I was scared when I stepped off the plane at Haidho (the capitol of Sarkhan). Everything was new and I didn't know what to expect. Well, girls, there was a chauffeur-driven car waiting for me at the airport along with a reception committee. I didn't have to go through customs or anything. When I asked about my luggage, Mister Preston (the man who came to meet me) said never mind, Tonki will look after it. Tonki is a Sarkhanese who works for the embassy here.

Two of the girls who met me are also secretaries and they said that I should live with them if I wanted to; and I'm staying with them now.

You should see our house (picture enclosed). We each have our own bedroom—and there's an extra for guests. There's a dining room, a living room, and maid's quarters.

And there are built-in servants! Honest. We have three servants to look after us. It's a family of them, father, mother, and a fourteen year old girl. They do the cooking, cleaning, laundry—everything. Oh how they baby us! When they wake me in the morning, they bring a glass of orange juice and a cup of tea. This is real living.

The Americans here are very friendly. They all give parties and plenty of them; there's at least one cocktail party or dinner every night. It's easy to do, of course, because everyone has help. All I have to do is check with my housemates to see if it's okay, and then call the servant. "Ehibun," I say, "we're having ten for dinner next Tuesday. Can you handle it?"

"Yes, mum," she says, and that's all there is to it. And what a dinner for ten it turns out to be! Just like in the movies.

Liquor over here in the government liquor store is dirt cheap. There's no tax on it—so Johnny Walker Black Label, Old Grand Dad, and Beefeater Gin are all less than two dollars a bottle. And we also have a Commissary and PX.

And speaking of things being cheap, I'm buying a new Hillman. I can get it for much less than the U. S. price. It's duty free, and there's some special arrangement so the government brings it over for me from England for nothing.

There are only about a thousand Americans here, and we stick together. That means that we girls get asked to everything. I've been to the ambassador's parties several times; and to lots of dinners at the MAAG (Military Assistance and Advisory Group) and the USIS and the ECA (Economic Mission).

Well, it's time to go to the office—I see my car is waiting in front. We're driven to work and back in a government car pool. I have to get to the office early today so I can take a long lunch hour, because I have an appointment with my dressmaker.

The best thing about being here is that for the first time in my life I can save money. Of course, my rent is free. My basic salary is $3400, but on top of that I get a $680 increase in pay because of location. You see, this is defined by the Department as a hardship post.

Love to you all,
Marie

8

The Ambassador and the Working Press

It was a year after Ambassador Sears had arrived in Haidho, and it was the Month of the Boar, the middle of the wet season. All day and all night the tropical rains fell with a steady drone. The only people out were the peasants, who splashed through the muddy streets in straw raincoats and enormous straw hats. The smell of dampness—like the odor of mushrooms—was everywhere. Even the airconditioned rooms of the American Ambassador were not truly dry.

In the wet season foreigners wearing tight western clothes suffered from various skin irritations, mostly a kind of fungus growth. Tempers became raw. In this particular wet season occurred the incident of the Royal Sarkhanese Air Base.

About fifty years before the United States government had purchased a thousand acres on the outskirts of Haidho. What the plans had been for the tract, no one remembers; and the land lay idle until 1947. During the rainy season of that year the Sarkhanese Air Force had requested the use of the prop-

erty for a training area; it was high, hard, flat ground which could be used all year round. Permission was granted and the Royal Sarkhanese Treasury spent many millions improving the land. It was only natural for fashionable suburbs to spring up around it; and the American tract came to be one of the most valuable pieces of real estate in Sarkhan.

The incident began when a newspaper hostile to America printed a rumor that the Royal Sarkhanese Air Force was to be evicted from the American property, so that American land speculators could sell it for building lots. The next day every other paper in Sarkhan picked the story up. So did the Pan Asia Press, the United Press, the Associated Press, the International News Service. So did Tass, Reuters, and Press France.

The hostile paper kept the story alive in its headlines day after day.

"Our tip must be true," they wrote, "because no one at the American Embassy denies it."

The editor of the English language paper, an American, called up the USIS.

"Look," he said, "this silly story—which I know must be a lie—is hurting the United States. This afternoon I'm going to round up the editors of the four leading dailies and bring them to see the ambassador. I'm going to ask him point blank about the Air Force Training Area. The minute he says it's untrue, the story will die. Also, it will make the Commie press lose a lot of face. Okay for two o'clock?"

Joe Bing, the new public affairs officer, was on a cultural trip to Hong Kong; and his assistant, the press attaché, had to carry the ball. When he told Ambassador Sears that he would be interviewed that afternoon, the ambassador's face got red, and his eyes bulged.

"No, by God!" he shouted, banging the desk, "you're not going to foul me up at this stage of the game. You see this?" he yelled, holding up a letter. "This is from the President. And he says that a federal judgeship will open up in four months and he would be pleased if I took it. And I intend to. And I don't intend to get mixed up with a bunch of skunks between now and then. Tell Joe Bing to handle it!"

"He's in Hong Kong, sir."

"Then you take care of them."

"They want to see you, sir. I've already tried to stall them."

The ambassador flopped back in his chair and a cunning look came into his eyes. "All right," he said. "Let 'em come. You can bring your radical friends here at two. I'll be ready."

At two that afternoon the five editors entered the ambassador's office.

"Sit down, gentlemen. What can I do for you?"

The American editor said, "Mr. Ambassador, there's a story making the rounds that the United States is about to evict the Air Force from land lent them by the United States. This would mean that all their millions of dollars of building would have to go. The property is supposed to be turned over to American real estate salesmen to sell as subdivisions."

"Yes, gentlemen. I've read the story."

"Well, sir, is it true or is it a lie?"

The ambassador hesitated for a moment. He poked the end of a pencil into his ear, then smoothed his gray hair, then looked at the ceiling.

"Gentlemen," he said finally. "I have no comment to make."

The four Asian editors looked at each other in amazement, thanked the ambassador, and left. The American remained behind. When they were gone, he shouted, "For God's sake,

you've got to comment. This is the same as saying it's true. Hell, it'll be all over the world. You know that eviction story is a goddam lie."

"Tell you the truth, son," said the ambassador, "I don't know if it's true or not."

"Then cable to Washington and ask them if it's true!"

The ambassador pressed a button on his desk. A moment later the deputy chief of mission came in.

"Yes, sir?"

"Say, Charlie," said the ambassador. "Smith here has a darn good idea. . . ."

On February 13th the following message was received at the U. S. Embassy in Sarkhan.

Personal for Ambassador from Dexter Peterson X This will be advance notice to you that your judgeship has been approved by the President and will become effective immediately on your return X Believe your replacement will be Gilbert MacWhite X Congratulations

Once his judgeship was assured Lucky Lou was somewhat saddened at having to leave Sarkhan. Almost at once he felt a warm glow of affection for the place.

His affection was not so intense, however, that he forgot practical political matters. He did the following three things before throwing one of the most liquid parties in the history of Haidho.

He refused to extend protection to one Father Finian on the grounds that he intended to "participate in the domestic politics of another power."

He again recommended to the Sarkhanese government that they refuse a visa to one John Colvin, who, having recuperated at Johns Hopkins Hospital, now wanted to return to Sarkhan. He did this by phone, as he did not like matters such as this to become a part of the official record. They never did anyone any good.

He wrote a long careful report to the State Department pointing out the gains which had been made in Sarkhan during his tenure in that country. He pointed out that "there are always those who pick away at sound policies or tend to exaggerate normal internal political frictions. Sarkhan is more firmly than ever on the side of America."

9

Everyone Has Ears

The Honorable Gilbert MacWhite, Ambassador to Sarkhan, was a fit man. At the age of forty-four he weighed exactly the same as he had when he graduated from Princeton with the class of 1934. He had red hair; his body was hard and muscular. When he was in the States or in England he played squash at least three times a week, and in other countries he always managed to play tennis. He smoked little, and always fine, thin, handrolled Havana cigars. He held his liquor well. He preferred martinis, and only one or two each evening. But he could, if he had to, drink immense quantities of vodka, sake, or Scotch; and his tongue never thickened and his mind seldom dulled.

MacWhite was, from his first day in the State Department, a professional foreign service officer. He needed no breaking in. He was competent, exact, and highly efficient. He also was courageous and outspoken, and he had imagination. During the McCarthy excitement he kept his head and ran his desk smoothly. By 1952 he had served as Consul General in four large foreign cities, as Deputy Chief of Mission in two cities, and was regarded by his superiors as a comer.

In 1954, the Honorable Gilbert MacWhite was made Ambassador to Sarkhan. It was an assignment that pleased him deeply. He knew that the Sarkhan government was new, inexperienced, and shaky, and that the eighteen million Sarkhanese were restless. He knew that the Communists in Sarkhan were strong, competent, and well organized; he had not the slightest doubt that they would attempt a coup against the government. MacWhite's knowledge of Marxism and Leninism, and the Titoist and Maoist versions of the faith was enormous. He was a recognized expert on Soviet theory and practice.

Ambassador MacWhite prepared for his new assignment with a thoroughness in the best traditions of missionary faith. He learned the Sarkhanese language in fifteen weeks of incredibly difficult work. He read every book he could find on Sarkhanese history and political life. He talked to anthropologists, sociologists, political scientists, diplomats, and businessmen who had visited Sarkhan in the last several years. He read the reports of his predecessor, Louis Sears.

Haidho is almost unbelievable. The city rests on a high plateau which overlooks the Pacific; although the forest presses in around the buildings with a heavy green persistence, each of the buildings is distinct and intact. The people of Sarkhan did not erect monumental buildings. Most of the public buildings and almost all of the private homes were made of a light yellow volcanic stone, which the tropical climate and the constant jungle rainfall covered with a light green patina. The effect was subtle, subterranean, almost a vision of a city seen under the sea.

Haidho was hot, but neither Gilbert nor his wife Molly were dismayed by this. They were prepared to endure the

heat of the tropics, and neither they nor their boys had ever complained of hardships. Indeed, as the Honorable Gilbert MacWhite looked from the upper window of his embassy out over the plateau and the ocean beyond, he was aware of how absorbed he had become in his job. In the six months he had been at Sarkhan he had hardly noticed the climate. In those six months Ambassador MacWhite had drawn his lines of battle against the Communists—shrewdly, patiently, with infinite imagination, after almost endless consultations with native leaders, and, he thought, with a certainty of victory. The planning had been in absolute secret; in fact, only three members of the U. S. Embassy staff knew about the swift, ruthless campaign which would soon take place. To ensure maximum security, MacWhite had had all his secret discussions in the privacy of his residence.

MacWhite was enthusiastic about the battle. He did not underestimate the strength of the Communists in Sarkhan, but neither did he underestimate his own strengths and capabilities. In fact, Ambassador MacWhite regarded his anticipated combat with the Communists as the capstone of his career. He saw it as a battle in which the shrewdness of the businessman, the tactical ingenuity of the military man, and the intelligence and persistence of the diplomat would all be combined to achieve a victory which was, although Ambassador MacWhite would never have said it in so arrogant a way, almost a personal victory.

This afternoon he meant to cement another fragment into the wall of his strategy against the Communists. He was waiting for the Honorable Li Pang. Mr. Li was a representative of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. Ambassador MacWhite had invited Li to come to Sarkhan to meet with the local

Chinese leaders. Most of the local Chinese had lived in Sarkhan for five generations. They considered themselves native Sarkhanese and highly patriotic. And in a way which was baffling to the Occidental mind, they also considered themselves patriotic Chinese, and saw no conflict in this dual obligation.

Li and MacWhite were old friends. They were both businessmen; and although they had left business for quite different reasons, they both left rich. They were both soldiers. And, by a curious coincidence, they were both Episcopalians. They understood one another. MacWhite was sure that Li would help commit the local Chinese to the battle against the native Communists. When he was sure of this, MacWhite was ready to move.

As he looked out of the plateglass window of the Embassy Residence, Ambassador MacWhite was aware of the fact that Donald and Roger were in the room behind him. Somehow the small pitter-patter noises that they were making were a comfort to him. Donald and Roger were both elderly Chinese. The only English words they knew were the names given them by their American employers and a few necessary household terms. They had been trusted servants of the Embassy since an American ambassador to Sarkhan had hired them in 1939. They worked with an efficiency, dedication, and kindliness that never failed to touch Ambassador MacWhite. They often helped Molly with the boys. They were both excellent cooks and superb butlers. They were, somehow, a symbol of the decent Asian, and they made the entire struggle in which Ambassador MacWhite was engaged meaningful and important. They represented the honor and morality which had been taught by Confucius.

Ambassador MacWhite turned and walked toward the stairs as Mr. Li approached.

"Your Excellency, I have prepared a pitcher of very dry and cold martinis in your honor," MacWhite said, smiling.

"Your Excellency, I am prepared to drink the entire pitcher," Li said and smiled back. "Did I ever tell you, Ambassador MacWhite, the story of the woman who got stuck in the lavatory on the thirty-fourth floor of the Waldorf-Astoria, and who lived on martinis because they were the only things that could be siphoned in through the keyhole?"

Ambassador MacWhite laughed, and poured martinis into extremely large and cold glasses. They drank and talked quietly for ten minutes. In another half-hour Molly would join them and they would have a long and pleasant dinner. Before Molly came down, MacWhite had to talk to Li. When Li had finished a story he was telling, MacWhite leaned toward him.

"Li, I have been frank with you and you have, I think, been frank with me," MacWhite said. "I should like to discuss with you a subject which I think is of the utmost importance."

"If it's anything I can do for you, Gilbert, you may be sure of it." Li said. MacWhite paused while Donald filled their glasses with martinis; then he spoke.

"The problem is simple, Li. With your military background, you'll understand it quickly," MacWhite said. "It's a matter of strategic intelligence. I should like to know which of the Chinese leaders are sympathetic to the Communists. I have an absolutely flawless plan for getting them out of the country . . ."

Li did not stop smiling; but in some subtle, quick way his entire expression changed. He was still smiling, he was still

sipping the martini, he was still poised. But his eyes had gone icy hard, and he was looking over MacWhite's shoulder at Donald and Roger who were standing at the serving table about fifteen feet away. He laughed softly, but MacWhite was aware that there was a warning in the laugh. The entire mood of the conversation had changed. MacWhite, a sensitive person, knew that he was in trouble.

"Now please understand me, Li, I would not use this information to hurt any good Chinese in Sarkhan," MacWhite said. "It would be for my ears only; but I think you can see that it would be critical in the coming struggle against the Communists in this country."

"I am aware of that, Gilbert," Li said. "I can see at once the importance of the question."

"But somehow it disturbs you?"

Li finished his martini in a long slow steady sip, and put the empty glass on the table. Then he lit a cigarette, inhaled deeply, and ground the cigarette out in the ashtray. When he looked up his face was utterly foreign to MacWhite. For the first time in his life MacWhite saw a completely furious Oriental. MacWhite was shaken.

"Gilbert, you are a fool. A great fool," Li said. "I am speaking softly so that only you will hear my voice. But to discuss matters of such importance with servants in the room . . ."

MacWhite interrupted him, "Donald and Roger are old and trusted. They don't understand a word of English. And they're on the other side of the room behind the pantry screen."

"No one, Gilbert, is to be trusted, whether he is an old servant or not," Li said. "Whether he is next to you or in the basement."

From the white marks around Li's nose and mouth MacWhite knew that he was not joking.

"Let me reassure you, Li," MacWhite said. "Neither Donald nor Roger can understand a word of English. Before I hired them I had their credentials checked with the Sarkhan national police authorities. My predecessor vouched for their integrity and honesty. In 1941, these men buried the Embassy valuables when the Japs came. After the war they came back and returned them. That silver service over there is one of the things they saved."

When Li spoke his voice was still flat and cold and the lines had not vanished from his nose and mouth. "Gilbert, I must say it again, I have just seen you do a foolish thing."

There was nothing that Li could have said that would have been more offensive to MacWhite. Li was accusing MacWhite of being neither tough-minded nor security conscious, things that he prided himself he was. In fact, although he would not tell Li this, MacWhite had laid elaborate traps to see if Donald and Roger spoke only Chinese. He had often called peremptory commands to them in English; when their strides never broke, and their faces never changed expression, he had been satisfied that they knew no English. He was also certain that they could not write. He had never seen either of them with a pen or pencil in his hand, nor had either ever sent a letter from the house.

MacWhite scowled, his face reflecting his thoughts. *These two Chinese are my friends. They have served America for almost twenty years. During the war they risked their lives for us.*

The expression on Li's face did not change in the slightest. He walked up to the bar, picked up the pitcher of martinis.

and refilled MacWhite's glass and his own. Then he sat down and faced MacWhite.

"You are a clever man, Gilbert," Li said. "Now, if you wanted information from the American Embassy, where would be the perfect place to have your spy?"

"As the ambassador's secretary."

"And next?"

"As his valet," said MacWhite with reluctance.

"And after that?"

"As his switchboard operator."

"Would your spy be a suspicious character, or someone who would earn his boss's trust and confidence?"

MacWhite looked up sharply. For the first time he felt a flash of doubt, a tiny gnaw of anxiety. All of these positions in his embassy and many more—the translators, the messengers, the chauffeurs, the clerks—all were filled by Asians. And he suddenly realized that in every U. S. Embassy in the world, and in all the USIS offices, the military assistance missions, the economic missions, these vulnerable positions were held by aliens. He began automatically, but with panic, to analyze how he allowed this to happen in his embassy.

"How much time do we have before Molly will join us?" Li asked softly.

"Almost twenty minutes," MacWhite answered.

Li leaned back in his chair and roared a command in Chinese. Almost at once Donald and Roger came trotting forward. Donald looked quickly about the room for the martini pitcher, picked it up, and splashed gin and the barest suggestion of vermouth into it. Then he stood in front of the two men and quietly filled their glasses. Li finished half of the fresh martini, placed it on the coffee-table, and stood up

slowly. Something about his posture, some slight menace in his face, caused both Donald and Ambassador MacWhite to watch him closely. And as he stood up, Li changed. The smile fell away from his face, his body tensed as if under some enormous strain. Although he was six inches shorter than Donald, Donald drew back sharply as if he had been threatened. Speaking in Sarkhanese, Li ordered Roger to leave the room. Then, with eyes as black and hard as bits of chilled steel, Li turned to Donald. He spoke in Chinese, slowly, and MacWhite was able to follow the conversation easily.

"The American Ambassador tells me that things are being stolen from this embassy," Li said in a low, hard voice. "A valuable wristwatch is missing. Four bottles of Scotch whiskey are missing. The Ambassador is determined to find the person that stole these things, and we know, you cunning scum, that you are the thief."

Donald protested shrilly. He had never stolen anything, he wailed, and he looked beseechingly at MacWhite. Li stepped forward and slapped Donald across the mouth.

MacWhite was shocked. Li's fingers left four red marks on Donald's cheek. Donald's old and kindly face was twisted in surprise, his jaw open.

Li turned to MacWhite as if nothing had happened. He spoke distinctly to MacWhite in English.

"He denies stealing the whiskey and watch," Li said, "but he is lying. Once we establish that he has stolen them we can ask him about the typewriter and the briefcase. Those are what we really want."

MacWhite nodded, going along with Li's deception, but he was angry. Also, he was startled by the change in Li. Li had always struck him as Anglicized, as open and straight-

forward. Li knew American jokes, English ballads, Irish dialects. He was as American as a tractor salesman. But now he looked menacing, hooded, tight with cruelty. Every word Li spoke was like a whiplash.

MacWhite had seen interrogations before. During the war he had earned a reputation as a skillful interrogator himself. But he had seen nothing like this. It was not so much an interrogation as the deliberate destruction of a person. What Li did was like a physical assault aimed at destroying Donald. It was all MacWhite could do to keep from interrupting.

With exquisite detail Li was telling Donald what the informal penalties for lying were. He told of a Sarkhanese police sergeant who specialized in battering a single testicle to a pulp, of a police corporal who had maimed a common thief for life. He told these facts as if they were commonplace, ordinary, and well-known; and this gave them an awful authenticity.

"Now, Donald, you know the penalties of lying," Li said, quietly. "I have warned you. So tell me the truth. That's all . . . just the simple truth. When you have done that, you can go." His voice ended soothingly, but then changed into a commanding harsh tenor.

"You say you come from Moukung," Li went on. "That is in Western Szechwan province. Did you ever hear of Peng Teh-huai? Answer quickly, at once."

Donald hesitated and licked his lips.

"Yes, I have heard of him," Donald said.

"Did you march with Peng and his Communists to Shensi in 1934?" Li asked.

"No, I did not."

"Where were you in 1934? You have been to school. You speak with an educated accent. But you are the son of a pig peasant in Szechwan and there is nothing so poor as a pig peasant in that province. How did you get the money to go to school?" Li said, and his voice was heavy with loathing.

Donald flushed with anger.

"Even a pig peasant's son can go to school . . ." Donald began, but Li cut in sharply.

"If he is given money by the Communists to go through school?"

"I did not say that. I was trying to say . . ."

"You were trying to lie. You have told Ambassador MacWhite that you could not write, but already you confess that you went to school in Moukung."

Donald's eyes blinked, a quick involuntary tic of surprise.

Li abruptly changed the questioning and began to interrogate Donald about his family. He never allowed Donald to finish an answer. Whenever Donald hesitated, Li supplied the answer; and each of Li's answers damned Donald. Li insulted Donald and teased him about being a Communist; then he suggested that any honest Chinese should properly be a Communist, interpreted Donald's silence as agreement, and attacked him on that. He ridiculed Donald's family ancestors, and threatened that Donald's children would be hounded to death by Chiang's agents. Donald's answers became more tense, more confusing, more protective. MacWhite had a first suspicion that part of what Li had concluded might be right.

Then abruptly Li looked terribly tired. He seemed to shrink in size, to become more harmless. His voice became pleading. He seemed to wish the interrogation were over.

"Help us all out, Donald," Li said quietly. "Tell us where the whiskey and wristwatch are. That's all we want. Then you can go."

Donald straightened, seemed to grow in strength as Li weakened. MacWhite felt his confidence in Donald return. He felt a flash of admiration for the courage of the old man. Donald was even smiling slightly.

"I know nothing of the wristwatch or the whiskey," he said easily. "But I know that the typewriter and briefcase were not stolen. They are both in Ambassador MacWhite's study. I saw them there."

Li wheeled, as quick and sharp as a mongoose, as terrible as a tiger about to kill.

"Who said anything about a typewriter or briefcase, Donald?" he screamed. "Who? Where did you hear that?"

Donald's face was stricken.

"You heard that because I mentioned it in English to Ambassador MacWhite," Li said, and now he was speaking in English. "You understand English. And for months you have been overhearing what the ambassador says as you serve martinis and pick up trays and clear cigarette butts away." He put his face close to Donald's and his intensity was so awful, his presence so menacing, that Donald went rigid.

"Yes, I lied," Donald said in English. It was not flawless English, but it was English, and his voice held both horror and humiliation. "I did it only because the Communists hold my children in Moukung. They will kill them if I do not supply them with information."

"And you have told the Communists of Ambassador Mac-

White's plans to smash them in Sarkhan," Li said, and this time it was not a question.

Donald nodded dumbly.

"You may leave the room, but do not leave the house," Li said. "We will want to talk to you later."

Donald left, and MacWhite watched him go. MacWhite knew that all of his careful work, his spending of millions of dollars, his cunning strategy, were all wasted. He knew that he, the Honorable Gilbert MacWhite, had made a terrible mistake. Somewhere in his carefully trained mind, in his rigorous background, in his missionary zeal, there was a flaw. It hit him very hard. Beneath the humility he had always, consciously kept on the surface, and which he had always believed in, not only as a necessity in dealing with the world, not only as a requirement of the social human, not only as a prerequisite of the receptive mind, but also as a reality of himself—beneath that humility there had been a rigid core of ego which had permitted him to place a fatal amount of faith in his own, unsupported judgement. He did not know where it was or how it got there or even how to remove it. But he knew that it was there, and he hated Li for showing it to him. But he was too tough-minded and analytical to remain stunned.

He looked up slowly. Li was standing in front of the window looking out over the beautiful countryside of Sarkhan, up at the snow white clouds of the Sarkhanese sky. Li swung around and faced MacWhite.

"I am sorry, Gilbert," he said softly. "It is not an easy thing to be cruel to an old man. Nor is it an easy thing to put

doubts into a man as skilled and dedicated as you. But it was necessary. But necessary things are not always nice. This was very, very bad."

They were both standing there quietly, looking out over the landscape, when Molly came down the stairs in a simple, light blue, expensive dress from Saks Fifth Avenue, and gaily called for a martini.

MacWhite had learned long ago that recriminations are a kind of luxury, and he never let himself afford such a pleasure. He knew he had made a mistake, and he knew that it was a mistake both of judgment and of information. For two days he sat quietly in his office, analyzing his errors of omission, the nature of his problem, and the alternatives open to him.

He recognized that he did not know enough about the Asian personality and the way it played politics. There was a strain of coldness, an element of finality, about the whole thing he had never encountered before. Politics in Asia were played for total stakes. He also recognized that he could learn from the experience of others.

The evening of the second day MacWhite sent a cable to the State Department.

Request permission travel Philippines and Vietnam to study firsthand their handling internal Communist problem X Am convinced my fullest effectiveness hinges on broad knowledge Asian problems X Have already made one serious mistake and wish make no more X George Swift fully competent to serve in my absence X Have checked with Sarkhan Foreign Office and trip has their support X

Twelve hours later the State Department replied that the proposed trips were approved.

The first person MacWhite saw in the Philippines was Ramon Magsaysay. As the Minister of Defense, Magsaysay had led the long and fatiguing battle against the Communist-dominated Huks in the Philippines. Later he led a unified government that efficiently ruled the huge archipelago.

Magsaysay and MacWhite talked long and earnestly, and MacWhite's notes on the conversation became the substance of a long (and well-ignored) report that was sent to the State Department. But there was one point which Magsaysay made that MacWhite did not have to put in writing, and never forgot.

"The simple fact is, Mr. Ambassador, that average Americans, in their natural state, if you will excuse the phrase, are the best ambassadors a country can have," Magsaysay said. "They are not suspicious, they are eager to share their skills, they are generous. But something happens to most Americans when they go abroad. Many of them are not average . . . they are second-raters. Many of them, against their own judgment, feel that they must live up to their commissaries and big cars and cocktail parties. But get an unaffected American, sir, and you have an asset. And if you get one, treasure him—keep him out of the cocktail circuit, away from bureaucrats, and let him work in his own way."

"Do you know any around?" MacWhite asked wryly. "I could use a few on my own staff."

"I do," Magsaysay said. "The Rag-Time Kid—Colonel Hillandale. He can do anything. But I hope you don't steal him from here."

MacWhite noted the name.

"What else would you do if you were I?" MacWhite asked. "I'd go up to Vietnam and take a look at the fighting

around Dien Bien Phu," Magsaysay said without hesitating. "I know you're a diplomat and that warfare is not supposed to be your game; but you'll discover soon enough out here that statesmanship, diplomacy, economics, and warfare just can't be separated from one another. And if you keep your eyes and ears open, you'll start to see some of the connections between them. It's not something you can learn from textbooks. It's a feel for the thing."

10

The Ragtime Kid

In the Air Force there is a man with the improbable name of Edwin B. Hillandale. The "B" stands for Barnum. Colonel Hillandale is one of those happy, uninhibited people who can dance and drink all night and then show up at eight fresh and rested. However, the Colonel seldom dances and drinks *all* night. About two in the morning he usually joins the orchestra in a jam session, playing his harmonica close to the mike, improvising like Satchmo himself. When he plays with a good combo, it sounds like a concerto for jazz band and harmonica.

But jazz is not the colonel's only pleasure. He enjoys eating, and he loves to be with people. Any kind of people.

In 1952 Colonel Hillandale was sent to Manila as liaison officer to something or other. In a short time the Philippines fascinated him. He ate his meals in little Filipino restaurants, washing down huge quantities of *adobo* and *pancit* and rice with a brand of Filipino rum which cost two pesos a pint. He embraced everything Filipino—he even attended the University in his spare hours to study Tagalog.

Colonel Hillandale became Manila's own private character.

The politicians and the eggheads fondly called him Don Edwin; the taxi drivers and the *balut* vendors and the waiters called him the *Americano Illustrado;* and the musicians referred to him as The Ragtime Kid. The counsellor up at the American Embassy always spoke of him as "that crazy bastard."

But within six months the crazy bastard was eating breakfast with Magsaysay, and he soon became Magsaysay's unofficial advisor.

In the summer of 1953, Magsaysay was campaigning for the presidential election. He barnstormed the Philippine Archipelago, and was greeted with enthusiasm everywhere he went. Everywhere—except in one province north of Manila. Here the Communist propagandists had done too good a job. The Reds had persuaded the populace that the wretched Americans were rich, bloated snobs, and that anyone who associated with them—as did Magsaysay—couldn't possibly understand the problems and the troubles of the Filipino.

The political experts predicted that Magsaysay would lose the province.

One Saturday Magsaysay's friend, Colonel Hillandale, went to this province. When he arrived in the capital about half-past eleven, the people of Cuenco saw something they had never in their lives seen before. A tall, slender U. S. Air Force Colonel with red hair and a big nose drove into Cuenco on a red motorcycle, whose gas tank had painted on it in black "The Ragtime Kid." He chugged up the main street and stopped at the most crowded part. He parked his cycle, and smoothed out his uniform; then he sauntered over near a large pool hall and sat down in the street—on the curb. After waving and smiling at everyone. he took out his harmonica and be-

gan to play favorite Filipino tunes in a loud and merry way; he played the first few stanzas in the classical manner, and the last two or three in a jazzed-up style. Within about fifteen minutes a crowd of about two hundred people surrounded the colonel. They enjoyed the music, but they were suspicious of this man who represented the richest of the rich Americans.

Colonel Hillandale began playing *Planting Rice is Never Fun.* After going through a stanza he stopped, looked around at the crowd, and said in Tagalog, "Come on, join in." In a thin tenor he sang a few words; then, jamming the harmonica up to his mouth, he played as loud and sweet as he could. The crowd began to sing—about three hundred Filipinos standing in a tightly-packed circle singing their heads off, and pushing to get a look at this strange man.

At twelve o'clock the church bells sounded the Angelus. The Ragtime Kid put his harmonica in his pocket and stood up.

"Well, I sure am starving," he said. "I'd sure like some *adobo* and *pancit.*"

The Filipinos looked at each other shyly.

The Ragtime Kid in colonel's uniform let his eyes go around the circle. "I'm hoping someone here will invite me to lunch. I'm broke."

"You don't have any money?" said one of the Filipinos.

The colonel put his hands in his pockets, dragged out his wallet, opened it, and showed that it was empty. He thrust his other hand into his side pocket and pulled out some change.

"Sixty centavos."

"But Americans are rich."

"Not me."

"You're fooling."

The colonel was still speaking in Tagalog, "We have poor people in America just like you have in the Philippines."

"But you're a colonel in the American Air Force. I know you get about two thousand pesos a month."

"That's right. And that's a lot of money. But I have big expenses. I have a wife and three children back in America. How much does a bottle of rum cost here?"

"Two pesos."

"In America it costs six pesos."

"Honest?"

"Yes. And how much rent do you pay a month for your house?"

"Forty pesos."

"Mine in America costs two hundred and forty pesos—and it's a very small house. I can't get any for less."

"It seems impossible."

The crowd stood silent. "This is undignified," said the colonel quietly. "Never before have I met Filipinos who would turn down a hungry man."

One of the Filipinos thrust through the crowd. "You will eat at my house!"

"No, come to my house."

"I own a restaurant on the corner; you will come with me."

And that's where the colonel went, with about ten Filipinos. They ate *adobo* and *pancit* and rice, and they washed it down with Filipino rum and San Miguel beer; and they sang many songs to the accompaniment of the Ragtime Kid's harmonica. And when lunch was through, the Filipinos invited him to come up again next Saturday, which he did. And the next Saturday after that. And the next Saturday after that, too.

And so, after a while, no one in that area believed any more that all Americans were rich and bloated snobs. After all, their Ragtime Kid who played sweet music on his mouth organ was one of them, and he was a colonel in the U. S. Air Force.

The Communists in the hills and the barrios objected; but the other Filipinos outshouted them. They said, "Do not tell us lies. We have met and seen and eaten and got drunk and made music with an American. And we like him."

And 95 per cent of the inhabitants of that province voted for President Magsaysay and his pro-American platform in the 1953 elections. Perhaps it wasn't The Ragtime Kid who swung them; but if that's too easy an answer, there is no other.

11

The Iron of War

MAJOR JAMES (TEX) WOLCHEK—Born March 12, 1924, in Fort Worth, Texas. Son of Mr. and Mrs. Solomon Wolchek.
Graduated Sam Houston High School, 1941. Enlisted United States Army 1942. PFC to Second Lieutenant in Paratroopers, 1st Division. Thirty-five practice drops at Fort Benning.
Broke left ankle twice. Three drops in combat during Normandy and Southern France invasions. Awarded Silver Star, Purple Heart with cluster.
Regular Army after World War II. Assigned to Command and General Staff College, 1947–50. Ordered to Korea in November, 1950. Platoon, Company Commander, Battalion Executive Officer. Awarded Purple Heart; Bronze Medal.
Permanent address: 11897 South Lane, Fort Worth, Texas.

"Major James Wolchek, United States Army, reporting for duty as Observer with the 2d Regiment Amphibie, Légion Étrangère," Major Wolchek said crisply.

He drew himself up sharply in front of the French officer sitting behind the desk and saluted. Major Monet was a small man, and he was obviously tired. He looked up from his desk, and examined Wolchek. Then Major Monet smiled.

"Major, you look like what I have heard Texans call 'whang

leather.' I hope that's not an insult; it's not intended so." Major Monet spoke excellent English.

Major Wolchek smiled. "Thank you, sir. I do happen to be from Texas."

"And, of course, your nickname is 'Tex,' " Monet said.

Wolchek nodded. They smiled at one another for a brief second and then Monet began to go through a drawer, explaining that he had Wolchek's orders.

Tex stared out the open window while he waited. Monet's office was on the outskirts of Hanoi, and Tex could see the long columns of trucks, jeeps, and half-tracks moving out towards the lowlands where the Battle for the Delta was being fought. On both sides of the road, heading in the opposite direction, were lines of Vietnamese natives. They were fleeing to the city.

Tex smiled as he thought of Monet's use of "whang leather." Tex had heard the phrase applied to himself before, though never by a Frenchman. In a way, he thought, it was ironic that he should look so much like the imaginary Texan. His parents had come to Fort Worth from Lithuania two years before Tex was born; they were short, dark, and small-muscled people.

They had always dreamed of the American frontier; they found the American magic in Texas. Something about the sun and the food and the climate made their children grow tall and muscular, and all six of the Wolchek children were models of what Texans thought Texans looked like. Father Wolchek had invested his savings in Fort Worth real estate and had made a fortune. He no longer worked with a needle. He was openly proud of the fact that his oldest son was an officer and a fighter. And the knowledge of his family's love and support

had helped Tex through many almost intolerable situations.

Tex's body held bits of the iron of two wars.

The first time he was hit had been in Normandy. He was one of the paratroopers who were dropped in the early darkness of D-Day behind the Normandy beaches. A German flare burst just over his parachute, and on the way down he caught seven machine gun slugs in his legs. By the time he hit the ground his boots were full of blood and he could no longer walk. But he could crawl; and in the next five hours he crawled three miles.

A disorganized platoon of Germans, retreating down a small road, came upon a tall American leaning casually against a tree. The American was Tex. He had a confident look on his face and a carbine in his hands. He did not speak to the platoon —merely signaled for them to throw down their arms and put up their hands. The German officer attempted to bolt; but before he had gone three steps, Tex shot him. A half-hour later the German platoon realized that their captor was leaning against a tree because he couldn't use his legs, but by that time it was too late. Doctors later removed six of the slugs from his legs; the seventh they had to leave in because it was embedded in the bone. Tex received a Silver Star for this action.

He got his second wound on Pork Chop Hill in Korea, when he led a reinforced patrol over the parapets and into the misty ground between the American and Chinese lines. It was impossible to see, but Tex heard sounds of fighting. They had gone only 100 yards before he realized that the Chinese were launching a massive attack. He knew that his hilltop redoubt could not stand against so many men. He had no choice but to move ahead with his patrol and disrupt the

attack. Tex led his patrol through the Chinese like a haymower through a fresh field. He cut through to the divisional headquarters' bunker of the Chinese lines, put it under a heavy grenade attack, and captured it. They killed every man in the bunker, including one general and two colonels; and they also killed 120 other Chinese. But a haymower cannot run backward, and Tex was unable to return with his patrol. They shattered the Chinese attack; but what was left of his patrol, including Tex, were captured.

Tex had two dozen needle-sharp pieces of grenade steel in his back. He administered morphine to himself, and politely asked permission from the Chinese officer in charge if one of his men could cut out the splinters. The American, who had been a butcher in civilian life, did a very efficient but not too delicate job. Consequently, Tex's back was marked by a fantastic tangle of scars. Several tiny bits of Chinese steel had been left in his flesh by the amateur surgeon. On extremely cold nights they felt like jagged chunks of ice, so that Tex had a frantic desire to scratch them out.

Tex escaped from a Communist aid station and returned to the American lines. His regimental commander had recommended Tex for the job of Observer with the French forces operating outside of Hanoi. Later, when the Korean fighting was still in the skirmish stage, Tex went to Vietnam.

The French major laughed, and Wolchek turned toward him.

"Tex, you must excuse me if I use your nickname from the very start," Monet said, "but this is a pretty informal situation, and we might just as well get used to it. Also, I have some bad news for you. Your orders attach you to my

company and call for you to drop into Dien Bien Phu with us."

"What's wrong with that?" Tex asked.

"Although the newspapers don't know it, yesterday Dien Bien Phu was completely encircled. There was some talk of relieving it over land, but this has been abandoned as impossible. My company is going in by air drop the day after tomorrow. Even if our High Command would be willing to have a foreign observer drop with our troops, I'm sure that under the circumstances at Dien Bien Phu, you would prefer to remain here."

"Major," Tex said, "how many jumps have you made?"

Monet was busy with the papers, and he answered without looking up. "About two dozen."

"And how many have you made under enemy fire?"

"None. There has never been an opportunity."

"Major, I've made over a hundred practice jumps and I've jumped five times into enemy fire," Tex said softly. "Maybe you'll need an experienced hand along."

Monet looked up from his desk and his eyes went to Tex's upper left-hand breast pocket looking for the parachuter's insignia. There were no medals of any kind on the shirt. Over Monet's face there came an expression which Tex recognized as a look of humiliation. Monet looked down at his desk.

"I am very sorry," Monet said, his voice just barely under control. "There was no way of knowing. I would be very glad if you would jump with us; and I'll make sure that the notification to headquarters of your jump doesn't leave this office until our plane is in the air."

Tex and Monet spent the next two days together in Hanoi. In almost all ways they were opposites; but they did have an important thing in common—they both saw themselves as

soldiers and as fighters. Monet came from a family in which there was always at least one son who was a graduate of St. Cyr; in the last three centuries there had been no war in which France had fought in which a Monet had not been a general. Monet was infinitely sophisticated in the art and literature of war. As the two of them went from bar to bar looking for bottles of Hennessey, and from one munitions dump to another gathering materials for their drop, Monet talked as a connoisseur on the history of war. Tex was enchanted. They argued about theory; and both of them worried about the drop into Dien Bien Phu.

On the second day Monet took Tex to visit his company of Foreign Legionnaires. The men were lined up for inspection. Tex understood at once that this was a professional outfit; and he also became aware that the men had an enormous respect for Monet. Like any good officer, he always saw that his men were fed and housed before he himself ate or slept; but more than that, the men had been through action with Monet and knew he was courageous and decisive.

Monet was the only French legionnaire. Among the men were middle-aged blonde soldiers who had been officers in Hitler's army. There were also Poles, Ukrainians, Russians, Argentinians, and even a few Britons. In the middle of one of the lines stood a tall, skinny Negro; and something about his face at once attracted Tex's attention. He stopped and looked sharply at the man, then turned to Monet.

"Major Monet, I have the honor to inform you that among your troops is at least one American," Tex said in a sharp voice. "Maybe this man told you he was an African or something like that, but I can tell you right now that he's really an American."

The tall Negro smiled, but kept his lips firmly together. Tex knew at once that he was right.

"I wouldn't know, Major Wolchek," Monet said quickly, speaking formally in front of the men. "All I know is that this man is a very good soldier. There is a tradition in the Legion that we do not make inquiries about a man's background."

"Well, there's a tradition among Americans that they shake hands whenever they meet one another," Tex said.

He stuck his hand out toward the Negro, and for a tense moment the two men stared at one another. Then the Negro smiled, and his hand came out. While the rest of the Legionnaires stood at rigid attention, the two Americans spoke briefly and with enthusiasm. The soldier's name was Jim Davis, and he was from Los Angeles. He had gone to UCLA for three years, and had joined the Legion just to see what the excitement was all about. Tex knew at once that he was a man who, for the same reasons that drove Tex and Monet, wanted to be a soldier. They talked for perhaps two minutes. Then the French major moved, and instantly Davis snapped back to attention, saluted, and his face became immobile.

Tex and Monet continued their walk down the columns. Tex decided that it would be silly to tell Monet how he had recognized Davis was an American—that he had noticed that when Davis had heard Wolchek's Texas accent, the trace of an unfriendly smile had flitted across his face. Tex had stopped to make sure that the next smile would be friendly.

"Davis is a good man, Tex," Monet said when they were back at the CP. "He is superb on patrols. And the Vietnamese natives love him, despite their hate for our French North African troops. We have a couple of Viets permanently as-

signed to the regiment as guides, and Davis is the only man they'll make a night patrol with. He's never lost a Viet yet, and he always comes back with good intelligence."

The next morning the entire company drove in lorries to the airfield to load aboard the planes that would drop them over Dien Bien Phu. The moment they passed through the guard post, Tex knew that something had gone wrong. The guards were tense, officers were excited, too many planes were lined up on the hardtops, too many men were standing around. Tex said nothing to Monet, but he knew the French officer also sensed trouble.

A half-hour later Monet discovered what was wrong. He came walking back from the headquarters building, accompanied by a man who was wearing khakis, but who was obviously an American and a civilian. His face was ashen. The Legionnaires, who were sprawled under the lorries in the shade, took one look at him, scrambled to their feet, and even came to attention. Monet walked up to his group of men and came to a stiff attention.

"Last night," Monet said flatly, "Dien Bien Phu fell. There is no possibility of relief, and all radio communication has been cut off. It is the judgment of higher command, a judgment in which I concur, that we have completely lost the battle."

Tex felt admiration which was mixed with pity. Monet had guts. Most officers would have sugar-coated the pill. Also, Monet had the intelligence and integrity to identify himself with the melancholy news which had to come down from higher command. Tex had learned that officers who dissociate themselves from higher commands are invariably poor officers.

Monet walked over to Tex and introduced the tall man.

"Major Wolchek, this is Gilbert MacWhite, the American

Ambassador to Sarkhan," Monet said stiffly. Tex was aware of Monet's personal anguish. "Ambassador MacWhite is on temporary duty from Sarkhan to see how Communists operate. He had managed to obtain a *laissez passer* from our officials, and was planning to go to Dien Bien Phu. Now he would like our views on why we lost the battle."

Tex looked sharply at the ambassador. He felt a quick flash of anger, and then realized it was groundless . . . there was no way for the man to know.

"Major," Tex said, "why don't you let me talk to the ambassador while you get the troops started back."

Monet flashed Tex a look of gratitude and spun on his heel. He started to bark out commands. The Legionnaires filed back into the lorries. One after another the lorries roared, and then crawled into the line of retreating vehicles.

"Mr. Ambassador, I understand your interest . . ." Tex began.

"Just call me MacWhite," the tall man said. His voice was crisp and assured.

"Okay, MacWhite. I'll tell you the truth. We don't know why the French are losing. Neither do they. But Monet is not the man to talk to. He's dying right on his feet from mortification."

"All right. I'm asking you, not him," MacWhite said. "What are we doing wrong?"

In the next few minutes, Tex discovered that MacWhite understood tactics and fighting. He asked tough questions and expected hard answers. They stood on the side of the road, in the midst of exhaust fumes and dust, talking strategy and tactics.

"There just isn't any simple answer," Tex finally said.

"We're fighting a kind of war here that I never read about at Command and Staff College. Conventional weapons just don't work out here. Neither do conventional tactics."

"Well, why don't we start using unconventional tactics?" MacWhite asked. "Apparently the Communists have some theory behind what they're doing."

"Armies change slowly, MacWhite," Tex said. "All our tanks and planes and cannons aren't worth a damn out here. We need to fight the way they fight . . . but no one is quite sure how they fight."

From behind them came Monet's voice. "Well, we're going to find out in a hurry. The Communists will keep moving in on Hanoi; and we'll have plenty of chance to see them in operation."

"I'll stick around for a few weeks, then," MacWhite said. "Don't worry, Major Monet, I'll get the proper orders, and you won't have to be concerned about my safety."

"Why do you want to watch all this?" Monet asked.

"Because it may happen next in Sarkhan and I want to be ready for it," MacWhite said, simply.

For a long moment the three men stood quietly in the sea of dust, with the smell of defeat all about them.

"All right, let's go," Monet said. "Tex, drive so we can overtake the lorries. We've already got orders to occupy a defensive position for tonight."

In the next few weeks the Communists seemed to come sweeping in from everywhere. The tangled, dirty, pathetic mass of refugees grew in Hanoi. Monet and his company of Legionnaires went slashing into the attack at least two dozen times. They would get a report that the Communists were moving up on a distant village. The company of Legionnaires

would swoop into the village and take up a well-planned deployment around it. Tex, who had seen it done a hundred times, had no criticism of their communications, armament, or training. But always the deployment was a failure. And always it was a failure for one of two reasons. Either the Communists knew the defensive deployment made by the Legionnaires perfectly, and would shell them with horrible accuracy, or, even more horribly, would send squads of two or three men, armed only with knives, and hand grenades, into the individual foxholes. Or, the Communists would harass them from the rear with carbine and grenade fire. And the moment the Legionnaires turned to meet this fire, they would be fired on from another position.

The Legionnaires fought with enormous courage, and Monet used them with an incredible skill; but each time they lost. Over a period of several weeks, Tex had the experience of serving with a company of seasoned and experienced fighters under skilled leadership, who lost twenty villages to the enemy. But even more frustrating than constant defeat was the fact that at the end of three weeks of fighting, they had not once seen the enemy. The fire-fights always took place at night and were over by dawn; the enemy always slipped away, taking his dead with him; and the men felt they had participated in phantom engagements. The only thing that made it real were the dead Legionnaires.

Meanwhile, Hanoi had become a sick city. It was full of confusion and hunger and swept by fantastic rumors. The worst thing of all was the feeling of impending defeat which was shared by everyone—Vietnamese, French, and American.

One day, after three weeks of desperate, exhausting patrols and futile defenses, Tex had a long and relaxed afternoon

with Monet and MacWhite. The Legionnaires had been given a rest period of two days; by the afternoon of the second day Monet had solved all his problems of supply, and was prepared to rest. Tex was cautiously and carefully beginning to talk to Monet about an idea he had had.

"Monet, have you ever had a nightmare and had the feeling that it was something you'd gone through before?" Tex asked. "When I was a kid I remember having a nightmare about leaving a range fence open and letting ten thousand cattle get loose. In the nightmare I sat stupidly and watched the cattle escape because somehow I had the impression that it had all been planned long before and that I was helpless."

Both Monet and MacWhite turned and looked with a puzzled air at Tex. They were sitting in a tiny bar, and had already finished two bottles of very strong cognac.

"Yes, I've had a sensation like that at times," Monet said. "For example, right now; I feel I'm living in a nightmare, but I don't know what the plan or key to it is."

Tex was encouraged by Monet's words. "You're right—this has been one long goddam miserable nightmare. It's like trying to fight a mountain of syrup blindfolded. Look, Monet, you handle men well. You know how to deploy them and how to use fire power and how to run a real hot fire-fight. By all the rules of the classic western warfare you ought to be winning; but you're not. And I know why."

Monet was looking at Tex with dawning anger.

"It doesn't have a thing to do with the quality of the French fighting, or with your Legionnaires," Tex said quickly and carefully. "It's just that the Communists are fighting by a different rule book. And, like a damn fool, it's taken me almost

a month to remember that I once read it. When I was in Korea, I picked up a book by Mao Tse-tung. Now, Monet, don't kid yourself about this. Mao is one hell of a bright guy. I hate what he stands for, but he does have a kind of genius."

"I've never read Mao's military writings," Monet said wearily. "But everything that can be written on war was already written long before him. Clausewitz and Jomini went over the whole thing. It's impossible to write anything new on war."

"Maybe Tex is right, Monet," MacWhite said slowly. "Mao is a clever man. I've read his political things. He's a Communist to his fingertips, and he's also a shrewd student of men. The kind of fight he made in China may have become the model by which all Asian Communists fight."

"I don't mean to be disrespectful, gentlemen, but I doubt very much that Mao has written anything new about war," Monet said.

Tex sighed. He understood that Monet did not want to be forced to learn a new kind of warfare.

"All right," Tex said, "maybe you're right. I haven't studied military history the way you have. Listen while I run over some of the ideas that Mao had in his book, and then tell me where he found them. First of all, take this thing of always finding some of the enemy in your rear. What Mao said to do is send a couple of agents ahead into any village in which the Communists conceivably might fight. If possible these agents should be men who come from that village. They settle down in the village and live like everyone else, except that they have a few sacks of hand grenades and a few burp guns which they keep hidden. While they're there, they line up the villagers

who are sympathetic with them. If no one is sympathetic they put it on the line: fight with us or die. It's as simple and direct as that."

Monet was listening, and nodding occasionally.

"Monet, whenever the Legionnaires go into a village, there are already a half-dozen of the enemy behind them. These enemy don't wear uniforms; they don't even dig their weapons up until the critical moment has arrived. But can you imagine the advantage that just five or six people in their position give you in a fire-fight? Imagine if you could have a half-dozen of your own men, looking exactly like the Communists, operating back of their lines?"

"What else does Mao say?" Monet asked. He took a cigarette from a pack and lit it.

For eight hours and a bottle and a half of cognac, they discussed Mao's military strategy and tactics. Both Tex and MacWhite felt that Monet was several times at the point of admitting that they should try Mao's tactics. But he always stiffened and fell back on arguments about Clausewitz and "centers of defense" and "liquid offensives," even though his tone of voice showed he did not fully believe them. Finally he stared at them, his face pale.

"That's enough, gentlemen," he said in a soft voice. "Even if you're right we don't have time to change our tactics. We're losing too fast." He stared down into the glass of cognac and spoke in a voice that was almost inaudible. "Imagine a nation which produced Napoleon, Foch, and Lyautey being beaten by so primitive an enemy."

"But, Monet, don't be a fool . . ." Tex began.

"He's right, Tex," MacWhite said sharply. "We've talked enough."

Tex wheeled on MacWhite, and then paused. MacWhite's face was full of warning. Tex realized MacWhite was right. At that moment, Monet was beyond convincing.

Ten minutes later a runner came in with a message for Monet. The final stage in the defense of Hanoi was beginning. Out in the hill country and plains behind Hanoi thousands of Communists were slipping over paddies, around rocks, down ravines. For Monet and Tex and MacWhite and the Legionnaires the next three weeks were unmitigated hell. Monet tried to send MacWhite back, but he wouldn't go. The Legionnaires lacked munitions, food, and reinforcements; and most of all they lacked sleep. Their eyes were redrimmed and tender, and their tempers were drawn thin. They suffered fifty per cent casualties, and then the survivors again suffered fifty per cent casualties. They fought in the thick brown mud around the paddies; when a man was hit he simply slid under and disappeared forever. Mud-clogged rifles ceased to function, and there was never an adequate base on which to mount a mortar. The least ill of the men had dysentery; it was a shared minimum affliction. Some of the men had fever, some hookworm, and some had huge horny scabs on their arms. There was never enough to eat, and they had long ago given up trying to purify their water. They simply drank whatever water was available, and accepted the agonizing cramps.

Both Monet and Tex were injured. Monet had taken a burp gun bullet in his left elbow; after the bones had been set, he continued to command the company. Tex was hit by hand-grenade fragments in the buttocks; with a sigh he told the French corpsman not to bother taking a probe to him. Tex now had the iron of three wars in his body and in some dim way he knew he had expected to all along.

One day Monet changed his mind about using Communist tactics. He changed his mind because the Viet Communists played a trick. It was not much of a trick. Things like it had happened before and would happen again, and it was, Monet knew, a trick that the French were not above using. But this was the first time it had ever happened to Monet's men.

Jim Davis and a Viet the Legionnaires had nicknamed Apache had been sent out to patrol the area in front of a small village the Legionnaires were defending. They left at dusk and were to return at dawn. They carried only burp guns and a signal flare gun.

They returned at dawn, but without their weapons, crawling up to the edge of the first CP on their bellies. MacWhite, Tex, and Monet saw them suddenly stand up and start to walk into the village. Mud dripped from their clothes, and there was something about their huddled posture which indicated that something had happened. The three men walked out to meet them.

Davis was leading Apache. From fifty yards they could see that there was a gout of blood on Davis's cheek. At twenty-five yards they could see the mangled remains of his left eye, hanging in a cluster of tiny glistening cords and muscles. The dead eye hung level with Davis's nose, and seemed to be staring at the ground. His right eye was firm and brilliant in his black face, and was burning with rage.

"What happened, Davis?" Monet asked.

"They caught us, Major," Davis said, and his voice was low and cool. "There has to be a first time for everything and this time they caught us. They let us go, but first they had to play a trick. Part of the trick was gouging out my eye."

"What did they do to you, Apache?" Monet asked quickly in Vietnamese.

Apache's eyes were glazed and almost shut, narrowed into slits of purest agony. He opened his mouth, wet his lips with his tongue, and made a sound which came out a subhuman, mutilated, horrible twisted moan.

"Shut up, Apache," Davis screamed, and the sound trailed off and stopped.

Davis reached over and pulled Apache's hand away from his throat. Squarely in the center of his throat there was a twisted hole. Far back in the hole the muscles and cords of his neck glistened. Blood welled out of the bottom of the jagged wound.

"They cut away his vocal cords," Monet said. His voice was almost casual. "It's a treatment they save for Viets who help the French."

"They left my right eye so that we could find our way back and show ourselves as a lesson to others," Davis said. His good eye rolled slowly back in his head, and he pitched forward in a faint. Monet caught him, twisted him around, and laid him on his back.

"Tex, send for a corpsman," Monet said softly. "And then you and MacWhite join me in the CP. We're going to fight tonight using Mao's tactics against his own people. I'm convinced."

12

The Lessons of War

The next day MacWhite went back to Hanoi to look for a copy of the booklet on war by Mao Tse-tung, and Monet ordered the Legionnaires to relax. They bivouacked in a dirty little group of tents; the Legionnaires, without taking off their clothes, dropped in the shade of the ragged tents and slept like men who hoped never to awaken again.

Late that afternoon MacWhite returned with the Mao pamphlet. His method of procuring it had been simple: he had stopped at the first newsstand he saw and asked the proprietor to get him a copy. The proprietor, obviously alarmed, said that he knew nothing of works by Mao. MacWhite did not argue with him. He merely said that if the pamphlet were delivered in two hours he would pay the sum of 800 piasters, and no questions asked. Within an hour he had the pamphlet.

The three of them gathered in Monet's tent and MacWhite read aloud for an hour and a half. Neither MacWhite nor Tex looked at Monet during this session. The words in the pamphlet destroyed a way of life and a tradition in which Monet believed deeply. Monet did not stir during the reading. He

sat with his hands together in his lap as if by holding himself together physically he could compensate for the destruction of part of his world. When MacWhite had finished there was a long silence.

"On the whole, Mao is right and we have been wrong," Monet said in a steady voice. "Please, let's not talk any more about our traditions. Let us talk about what part of Mao's writings we can use to our advantage."

"Most of what Mao recommends is too long-range for us to use," MacWhite said. "It's the kind of thing you have to accomplish over years. For example, when he recommends sending political organizers ahead of the army, he is talking in terms of years. These organizers never announce that they're Communists; they just keep putting the views of the Communists before the villagers. Then when the fighting starts they organize resistance behind the enemy lines and disrupt as much as possible."

"That explains why we keep getting fire from both the front and rear whenever we have a night fire-fight," Tex said.

"Also it explains why they always have perfect intelligence on the village which we are attempting to defend," Monet added.

"Forgive me for giving an opinion in your area, gentlemen," MacWhite said. "I suggest we forget everything that's going to take a year to accomplish. We have only a few days. Later and in another country perhaps we can use Mao's strategy. Right now we have to concentrate on his tactics."

For hours they argued over the pamphlet. Night came, they ate a cold meal from packaged rations, crawled under the mosquito nets, and continued their discussion until dawn.

From the dozens of ideas which Mao had suggested, they took two.

In rough terrain, Mao said, retreat and disappear until the enemy is strung out in pursuit. Then concentrate on one weak point. Time, space, and retreat are the instruments of combat victors. When fighting an enemy who has superior equipment and numbers, success lies in mobility and the use of darkness.

The second idea involved guerilla warfare. Mao suggested that in a sustained guerilla action, the groups of guerillas can only be successful if they have a rigid and completely centralized command. The central command post directing guerillas in operation should never be further from the actual fighting than a man can trot in a half hour.

Monet said, "It's obvious—even though we've never used it."

MacWhite put down the pamphlet. He grinned at Monet and Tex, and they began to smooth a large detailed map of the Hanoi Plain out on the table.

The village they decided they were looking for was located in the midst of a swamp of paddies; two miles beyond it was a large area of firm ground on which stood a clump of bamboo trees. Both Monet and Tex nodded when they saw it. Any field commander would be insane to choose any spot for a command post other than the bamboo trees. A hardtop road ran like an arrow from the trees directly through the village. And, best of all, just before the village was a small hill behind which the reserve troops could be hidden.

"All right, gentlemen, that village will be it," Monet said decisively. His eyes were excited. "Three days from today we'll try to cure our illness with the hair of the dog that bit us."

It was Tex who suggested the surprise weapon. He had

seen it used once in Korea with great success. It was quite simple. The bed of a large truck was covered with a thick layer of sheet iron to which were fastened the barrels of twenty 5-inch rocket launchers arranged so that when the rockets were fired simultaneously they all fell in a circle roughly a hundred yards in diameter. Tex assured the other two men that there was very little chance that anyone would remain alive inside the circle.

On the fourth day they made the move up towards the village. For the first time in weeks the Legionnaires were laughing and joking. Monet left with an advance guard of two lorries of men. A half-hour later MacWhite and Tex set out with the main body of troops. Tex rode on the rocket truck and was in radio communication with Monet. MacWhite was riding in a jeep directly behind the rocket truck.

As dusk fell, the main body moved off the highway on to a road that cut across the paddy fields. Tex called Monet on the radio to make sure he had reached his position. Monet's voice came in clearly.

"We're deployed to the south of the village," he reported. "Two Viets left the village a half-hour after we set up positions. They were walking north, but I'd guess they've circled back and are heading for the bamboo grove. It should be another hour before anything happens."

The main body of lorries proceeded as quietly as possible. Tex deployed them in a long line behind the hummock which separated them from the village, and they sat down to wait.

Almost an hour later they heard thin far-away rifle fire, followed by the chatter of a heavy machine gun. Monet's voice came up on the radio.

"I think they've fallen for the bait. They probably think

we're weak, and they're moving the troops directly down the hardtop road from the bamboo grove. Just the first patrols have hit so far. They haven't used machine guns yet, although we've opened up with our 50-calibres. Take a weapons carrier with a quadruple 50-calibre machine gun mount on it, and cut your way through the troops on the road. Then make straight for the command post."

"We're on our way," Tex said, and clicked the receiver off.

Moving fast, Tex ordered the quadruple mount 50-calibre vehicle to the head of the column. Directly behind it was a lorry of riflemen. Third in line was the rocket truck.

"Leave your lights off until the machine gun fires," Tex ordered softly. "Then open up with everything you've got. As soon as the rockets fire, get the quadruple mount turned around for the run back on the road. If we have to leave any vehicle we'll leave the rocket truck, so I don't want any men on it after it fires."

They came around the hill as quietly as a column of vehicles can move. At fifty-yard intervals Monet's men were marking the right-hand shoulder of the road with shielded flashlights. The column did not reduce speed when it reached the village, but ground steadily past the tiny thatched houses.

Suddenly they were out of the village and on the plain. Tex was sitting beside the driver of the quadruple mount vehicle, peering ahead. He saw a blur of frantic motion on the road, leaned back, and calmly ordered the machine gunner to fire straight down the road.

The quadruple mount went off with an enormous racket; four streams of tracer rows poured ahead. At the same moment Tex switched on the carrier's lights. Fifty yards in front

of them were a group of about fifty Vietminh troops. They froze, as if bewildered by the light; then, in a collective rush, they headed for the right-hand side of the road. The machine gun swung with them and the bullets hit. Clots of mud, shreds of uniform, and broken bits of rifles exploded into the air. The bodies of the men pitched off the road into the ditch. Although the vehicle was moving fast, and took no more than seconds to close the gap, the action was like a brilliantly-illuminated nightmare in slow motion. Then the wheels of the vehicle bumped over the bodies of three men who had fallen on the road, and they were past the enemy group. A moment later Tex heard the rifles on the lorry begin to open up.

The machine gun clicked off above his head. Tex left the lights on, and they roared down the narrow road. He had only two things in his mind. First, he was praying that the road would support the weight of the column. Secondly, he was calculating exactly when the rocket truck would be 500 yards from the grove of bamboo trees. The night before he had measured the distance at which headlights would first pick up bamboo trees in total darkness. It measured out at 600 yards. If he drove at twenty miles an hour for fifteen seconds after the headlights picked up the bamboo trees, the rocket truck should be 500 yards from the grove. At that moment the headlight touched the white and green stalks of a mass of bamboo trees.

"One, two, three, four, five . . ." Tex counted aloud.

At ten, he stood up, and at fifteen gave the signal to the rocket carrier. Two things happened almost instantly. The truck came to a shrieking halt—and while it was still moving slightly, the rockets let go. For a second the entire truck looked as if it were on fire, and the hissing sound was deafening. Then

came a cleaner sound from the zip of rockets cutting through the air. Two seconds later they hit. There were flashes of light among the bamboo trees—and then, in one great yellow patch of fire, the grove exploded. For several seconds the cone of flame hung over the grove, and in it the bodies of half-a-dozen men turned like puppets. Then the light disappeared, and there was the vast harsh sound of things returning to earth.

"All right, dammit, let's get this carrier turned around," Tex shouted.

The driver backed and filled in quick, desperate jerks. In less than a minute he was edging around the rocket truck to get back to the road.

"There's no need to abandon the truck," Tex said to the driver of the rocket truck as they passed. "Back it down the road with your lights off. You'll be able to see where you're going from our rear lights. When you get to the village you can swing around and drive out."

They rumbled heavily back down the road. The fire-fight around the village had stopped completely. Later Monet told Tex that when the grove exploded, the Viet Minhs had instantly stopped firing and had scattered.

They paused in the village only long enough to pick up the advance guard; and then the entire group headed back toward Hanoi.

"I never heard such damn nonsense in my entire life," the American major general said harshly to Tex. "First you violate the rules of war by engaging in combat when you're supposed to be a neutral observer. And then you have the gall to come

in here and tell a bunch of experienced general officers how to run their war."

Tex, MacWhite, and Monet were seated in three chairs at one end of a large conference table in a room on the third floor of the Citadel in Hanoi. At the other end of the table were two French Admirals, four French generals, and the American who had just spoken.

"General, I was not personally engaged in combat," Tex answered quietly. "All I did was ride along in the carrier. I didn't touch a weapon. I didn't fire a shot. What I was doing is permissible under the rules which govern the conduct of neutral observers."

"Now look here, Wolchek, don't try to play cute with me," the general said, his voice rising. "Don't try and tell me that some Frenchman dreamed up that idea of the rocket truck. I've been around here . . ."

The senior French general cut in with a chill voice.

"General, we are not interested in the problem of the neutrality of your observer. What interests us more is this fantastic suggestion made by Major Monet and Ambassador MacWhite that the French army revise its operations in accord with the military writings of a Communist bandit."

"General, as you know I was the one who requested this session," Gilbert MacWhite said calmly. "Since December of 1946 the French have been fighting a war which has been maneuvered by the Communists precisely along the lines which Mao outlined in this pamphlet. You are a military man —you will please excuse my bluntness—but you made every mistake Mao wanted you to. You ignored his every lesson for fighting on this type of terrain. You neglected to get the po-

litical and economic cooperation of the Vietnamese, even though Mao proved long ago that Asians will not fight otherwise. Gentlemen, I have one simple—and possibly embarrassing—question. Has any of you ever read the writings of Mao Tse-tung?"

There was a moment of silence. The senior French general, a man of wisdom and excellent connections, turned slightly red. The other French generals blanched. MacWhite leaned forward in his chair waiting for an answer.

"If you are suggesting, Ambassador MacWhite, that the nation which produced Napoleon now has to go to a primitive Chinese for military instruction, I can tell you that you are not only making a mistake, you're being insulting," the senior French general finally said.

"That's not what I said," MacWhite answered. "I asked if any of you had read Mao?"

"Hell no, they haven't read him," the American shouted. "And neither have I."

And he bit his lips as if he were keeping himself from saying more. MacWhite knew that only his personal fortune and his political connections were keeping the general from ordering him out of Hanoi under armed guard.

MacWhite shrugged. "Apparently you gentlemen refuse to use your own eyes and ears."

Monet pushed back his chair and stood up. He was pale and his hands were trembling.

"Gentlemen, I am entirely responsible for the operation which we have just described to you," Monet said in a steady voice. "It contradicts everything that I was taught at St. Cyr and everything that this American general was taught at West Point. But it worked. I tell you, it worked. If I had the

opportunity, I would multiply this operation a thousand times. In the months of fighting in Vietnam, it is the only complete victory I have commanded. Multiplied a thousand times it might give us a total strategic victory rather than an unimportant tactical success. If anyone is to be punished, it should be me. But, I beg of you, do not ask me to change my mind on something that my own eyes and my own experience teach me is what should be done."

After that there was nothing to be said, and a nod from the senior French general dismissed the three of them. MacWhite, Monet, and Wolchek left, and without a word headed for the nearest bar. There they paid an outrageous price for two bottles of superior French cognac, and drank in silence. When they had finished the first bottle, MacWhite picked it up by its long narrow neck and with a single blow smashed it on the edge of the table. Then he grinned.

"I just felt like doing it," he said. "Gentlemen, don't worry about disciplinary action. Nothing is going to happen to you. We have stupid men on our side and we have proud men on our side; but they would never be allowed to punish you for simply saying that it is possible to learn from an enemy."

A short time after the French evacuated Hanoi. After months of battle, the consumption of mountains of supplies, and the loss of far too many lives, the French had finally been forced into an armistice with the Viet Minhs. In the armistice they agreed to turn over the city of Hanoi to the victorious Communist army.

MacWhite, Tex, and Monet were there to see it. The French departed as if they were leaving town for a magnificent and colorful parade assembly. Fifes whistled, drums ruffled, and

air was cut by sharp and ancient commands. The uniforms of the Legion were neat and well-pressed, their high paratroop boots were beautifully shined. They marched in straight smart lines through the almost empty streets of Hanoi. The inhabitants of Hanoi looked at the magnificent parade with astonishment. So did Monet, MacWhite, and Tex. This was the parade of a victorious army.

Behind the parading troops were lines of huge, fast tanks; then columns of self-propelled guns, countless trucks filled with squads of men carrying the latest type of American rifles. Overhead an almost endless stream of French planes performed a fly-by.

"It's a beautiful sight to see," Tex said with admiration.

"It's beautiful, and it's utterly senseless," Monet said. "No one bothered to tell the tankers that their tanks couldn't operate in endless mud. And those recoilless rifles never found an enemy disposition big enough to warrant shooting at it with them."

When the parade ended, the French tricolor was hauled down from buildings and installations all over the city. The last truck swung around the corner. The square where the three of them stood was silent. No one was in the streets; and both shutters and doors were locked tight.

The Communist vanguard were well-dressed and smart looking troops in Russian trucks. They then saw the first regular Communist soldier arrive—an officer on a wobbling bicycle, wearing a padded suit, tennis shoes, and a tiny forage hat. He had a rifle slung over his shoulder. Trotting behind him came a platoon of men dressed in a mixture of uniforms. Some merely wore breech-cloths and what looked like captured French blouses. Many of them were barefooted. Per-

haps half of them had rifles; but almost all of them had a string of crude hand-grenades tied around their waists. Each of them also carried a rice-bag over his shoulder.

"Look carefully, Tex, and tell me if you see what I see," Monet said in astonishment. "Three of those men are carrying guns made from pipes."

It was true. Three of the men were actually carrying nothing but home-made rifles. Tex had the feeling that he was looking at people who were fighting a war that should have taken place three hundred years before. These men traveled on foot and carried their total supplies on their backs. They looked harmless and innocent, indeed they almost looked comical. But these were the men whom he and Monet had been fighting for months, and whom they had defeated only once.

The officer on the bicycle held up his hand. The line of men paused, and then, as fast as the slithering of lizards, they disappeared into doorways and gutters. The street seemed empty except for the officer. Monet shouted to the officer in Vietnamese that they were a rear guard, and were leaving at once. The officer smiled and waved his hand. He shouted something, and at once his men appeared from nowhere and began to move cautiously down the street. Tex was aware that around all of Hanoi a huge, silent, and featureless army of men, each of them no more impressive than these, were oozing into the city which they had conquered. There was no point in staying longer. Far off in the distance they heard the sound of the retreating French Army.

"All right, let's go," Tex said harshly. "It's the end of another round, and we've lost again."

Even clerks acted as if they were chiefs of mission. The wages of servants, the rentals of houses, rose to fantastic prices; and your privates lived better than our generals, so to speak. That hurt our pride.

All we saw was tinsel. A few years ago we heard a lot of talk about how the United States aid was going to help Burma. Hordes of United States press agents—all on the government payroll—swarmed to Rangoon to shout from the housetops about what a wonderful thing United States aid was for Burma. Maybe there was lots of aid: but the people never saw it; and a few of the things in which the press agents rubbed our noses didn't pan out well.

Can you remember any examples?

I remember a few years ago there was a lot of fanfare over a three-quarter of a million dollar dredge the United States was bringing to Burma. This mobile floating dredge, the press agents shouted, would be a great boon for Burma. It was going to dredge rivers so that transportation and trade could flourish in inland areas which had never been within reach of markets before.

This was something the country really needed, and we were delighted at the prospect. Middle-class farmers upstream hoped to have an outlet for their produce; boat builders were instructed to draw plans for deeper-draught boats which could carry greater loads.

Finally the day came when the dredge was to be delivered. The Prime Minister himself was persuaded by the Americans to come to see its arrival. The local press sent reporters and photographers. USIS came down with tape recorders so that the event could be broadcast on the radio.

Well, when the dredge was towed into the harbor it turned out to be a 25-year-old, reconditioned British dredge which had been rusting in Japan. It was a stationary dredge, which needed land connections. This was disappointment enough; but to cap it all off, the American experts who came with the dredge were unable to get it to work. They even flew some Japanese experts in, but they couldn't get it to run either. Everyone involved lost face. Experiences like this made many Burmans doubt the effectiveness of U. S. aid.

In 1953 Burma was in critical need of money and technical assistance. Yet you terminated all United States aid. Why did you do this?

In the first place we were offended by the superior airs and what even Americans called the "razzle-dazzle" of the Americans in Burma. Secondly, there were several incidents like that of the dredge; and although American money was flowing into Burma, we couldn't see that it was helping us very much. And, third, we became very angry over the KMT incident. It all added up to more than Burma was willing to swallow just to get dollars.

What was the KMT incident?

When the Chinese Reds defeated the Nationalists in 1947, about 10,000 of Chiang Kai-shek's troops fled from China into Burma, and remained in the northwest part of our country. We were a new nation then, and had so many troubles that we were unable to do much about these alien troops in our territory. The Chinese Nationalist troops were living off the land; and troops who live off the land in a foreign country have to get money one way or another. These men started

trading in opium, and sometimes turned to banditry. In 1952 Chiang Kai-shek began supplying them by air. I can understand his point of view—he was trying to harass the Chinese Communists. Nonetheless, his troops had no right to be in our country. Then we learned that they were wearing United States uniforms and using United States equipment. I know that the United States was not supplying them; Chiang Kai-shek was.

Burma wanted to bring the matter up before the United Nations, and America agreed—provided that the troops were not identified as Chinese Nationalists and that no mention was made of the American uniforms. And yet, everybody in Southeast Asia knew about it. Everybody knew about it except the American people. They were never told.

When we said that we didn't see why the countries involved shouldn't be named, it was hinted that if they were named, perhaps U. S. aid would be cut off.

That was all we had to hear. Even though we were desperate for economic and technical assistance, we told the Americans to take their aid and go away. It was a matter of pride—face, as we Asians call it. Face, incidentally, is an element of our life superbly well understood by the Russians.

Would you welcome United States economic and technical assistance now?

Yes. I suggest that technical aid be administered the way the Ford Foundation did it in Indonesia. The Ford people noticed that when they brought their own automobiles to Indonesia, they always had to go to a Dutch garage to have them overhauled. The Indonesians didn't know how to repair cars. When the Ford Foundation later brought a group of Indo-

nesians to the United States, instead of telling the Indonesians what they should study or what kind of equipment they ought to spend their money on, they told the Indonesians to look around and pick out what they felt they needed. The first batch of Indonesians pointed to a garage and said that was what they wanted. A replica of the garage was set up in Indonesia, and American mechanics worked side by side with the Indonesians until the Indonesians were able to operate the equipment and overhaul automobiles by themselves. Then the American technicians went home. That is the kind of help we want.

If you were the President of the United States what would you do to improve the prestige of the United States in Southeast Asia?

Let me tell you a story. Some years ago two Americans—a married couple named Martin—came to Burma as short-term advisors. They were quiet people about whom nobody seemed to know much, and they quietly went up north to the Shan States, which are pretty wild. They brought no pamphlets, brochures, movies, or any of the other press-agent devices which are so offensive to most of us and on which most Americans rely. They had no automobile and no servants. They just moved into a small town and settled down in a modest house and began living there.

Since the Martins spoke Burmese—a most unusual accomplishment for Americans in Burma—Burmans began stopping in at their house and talking with them. These visitors to the Martins' house were amazed at two things. One was the tremendous size of the vegetables they were growing in their garden; and the second was the size of the garden itself. They

wanted to know what two people were going to do with such an enormous amount of food. Surely they couldn't eat it all—and the rest would spoil.

Mrs. Martin took them into the kitchen and showed them a small home canning outfit. The Burmans had never seen anything like it, and didn't know what it was. They came around day after day to watch fruit and vegetables being canned. And then, as the months passed by, the Burmans saw that when the cans were opened the vegetables were still edible.

These two Americans distributed high-quality seeds to all of the townspeople and helped them organize a community canning plan. The people of the village still do most of the growing individually, and a good deal of the canning is done at home; but now they not only put up things for their own use, but for all of Burma. This village is the canning center of the nation, and processes meat, vegetables, and many favorite Burmese foods.

In this section of the Shan States everyone is pro-American because of the Martins. They came to Burma to help us, not to improve their own standard of living.

You don't need publicity if the results of what you are doing are visible and are valuable to the people. The steam from a pot of good soup is its best advertisement.

You asked me what I would do if I were the President of the United States. This is what I would do: I would send more people like the Martins to Burma. That's all you'd need. You could forget about the hordes of executives, PX's, commissaries, and service forces which are now needed to support the Americans abroad. And then, of course, you could save

many of the millions of dollars Americans seem to think essential to any aid program.

You implied earlier that the Russians who went abroad seemed to operate effectively. Can you explain why this is?

The Russians are professionals. They keep many of their men in Burma for as long as five years. They all know Burmese. They study quietly and live quietly. They employ no Burmese servants, and hence there is nobody to spread gossip about them. All their servants are Russian.

The Russian Ambassador is their social lion. He's the one who attends the cocktail parties. But that's about all he does. The Russian team always has a professional expert who not only knows the area thoroughly, but also has authority. Here in Burma it was a man named Victor Lassiovsky. He had some minor title—I believe it was second secretary. He always opened the door for the ambassador and walked behind him. He didn't waste much time at parties. He was the real tactical leader of the Russian task force, and he ran the entire Burmese effort for Russia. Lassiovsky was recently transferred to Thailand. I predict that America will be having trouble there soon.

Is Russian economic aid better than that of the United States?

No, it is not. But it is much more obvious, and so more effective as propaganda. For example, our Prime Minister flies in a Russian transport plane—a gift from Stalin. This gift made a deep impression not only on the Burmans, but on all Southeast Asians.

The Russians have promised to build us a sports stadium—

you know we're all sports crazy—and also a hospital and a graduate school for engineers and doctors. We don't have them yet. But these are projects which the people understand and would like to have. And even though we are all suspicious of the Russians and the Chinese Communists, still, both the man in the street and the young intellectuals discuss what the Russians are doing.

Also, the Communists are extremely skillful in their cultural projects. The Tenth Anniversary of our independence was a tremendous celebration. You could compare it to Christmas, New Years, Easter, the Fourth of July, and Purim, all rolled into one. We had great parades. All the Communist nations participated in these parades with floats, acrobats, and folk dancers. They carried big banners congratulating us on our independence from colonialism. There were no marchers from the United States.

If any of you Americans ever left Rangoon and went upcountry, you would see that there are Russian circuses and Chinese entertainers everywhere. True, you send some stars like Benny Goodman, and some opera singers, and they're very welcome—but they play only in Rangoon and only a few of the élite get to see them. Oh yes, I forgot, you also had a cut glass exhibit. We're a nation fighting for survival, and you send us a cut glass exhibit.

I hope I've answered your questions. I'll finish by saying that what America needs in Asia is good, well-trained, and dedicated Americans. They *must* be well-trained and dedicated. The subordinates can be mediocre, but the leaders must be top-notch, with the ability to make their subordinates fit in with Burmese culture, community habits, and needs.

I've known almost every American ambassador, military leader, top economic advisor, and USIS man sent to Southeast Asia in the last ten years. This includes both career people and amateurs. I can recall only two ambassadors, one USIS leader, and one admiral who were trained and dedicated professionals. Ninety per cent of the Russian executives are professionals—no matter what else they may be. You're bound to lose in competition with them until you learn from them.

And yet, I believe firmly that the Americans could drive the Communists out of Asia in a few years if you really tried and were willing to live life out here on our level. And if you had a definite policy. But most important—act like Americans. We love Americans—the kind we meet in America.

When the dinner party was over U Maung Swe and Gilbert MacWhite went for a walk. It was one of those soft nights when every sound carries a great distance and the perfume of flowers comes floating in from the jungle.

"What about Sarkhan, Maung?" MacWhite asked. "What should I do?"

"About what?"

"About anything, big or little."

Maung paused for a moment. The breeze brought the sound of distant gongs.

"Gilbert, I heard once of an American who was working on a powdered milk plant in Sarkhan," Maung said. "He planned to develop a taste for milk in the Sarkhanese, and then bring in dairy cattle and set up the business on a sound, self-supporting basis. No concession for foreigners. The whole thing simple and easy to run."

"I remember reading about him in reports," MacWhite said. "He got caught in a scandal. Rape or drugging girls. Something like that."

"Gilbert, those were lies. I never met the man, but I took the trouble to find out the truth of his story. The Communists framed him. He spoke Sarkhanese, he was dedicated, and the people liked him. His idea was sound. His name is Colvin; I think if you brought him back he would do a job for you."

"I'll do it, if I can get him cleared," MacWhite said.

"They're little things, perhaps, but ideas like Colvin's are basic. When we've licked the basic problems, we can move on to grander projects. But we have to start with the little things which are Sarkhanese."

For three more hours they talked of little things.

14

How to Buy an American Junior Grade

THOMAS ELMER KNOX—Born April 1, 1920, Sheldon, Iowa. Son of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Knox. Unmarried.

Graduated from Sheldon High School, 1937. Attended State University of Iowa; B. S. in animal husbandry and poultry husbandry, 1941. Enlisted as private, first class, in U. S. Army. Rose to staff sergeant by discharge in 1946. Participated in Allied invasion of Europe; served in a tank company. Decorated with Purple Heart and Bronze Medal.

Described in Sheldon High Year Book as follows: "Dead-serious, big-footed Tom (hates to be called Elmer) made letters in football and shot-put. Reputed to be antifeminine, but ask Emily Chester about the Class Picnic! Ha, ha! His heifers and chickens have won every 4-H contest for last three years, but Tom says he hates beef and eggs. Ambition: To make a hen lay 365 eggs in a year. Prediction: He'll do it! Ha, ha."

Managed Knox farm from 1946 until 1952. In 1953 accepted invitation to go to Cambodia as Consultant on Poultry for Economic Cooperation Administration.

Publications: "Influence of Commercial Calcium on Egg Production of Rhode Island Reds," *The Iowa Poultryman*, September, 1955.

There were three interesting things about Tom Knox. First, he was the only American anyone knew of in Cambodia who had spent all of his salary while he was there. Secondly, he knew more Cambodians than any other Westerner in the entire country. Thirdly, his capacity and enthusiasm for Cambodian food was at least three times greater than that of his closest competitor.

By the time Tom had been in Cambodia for a year, he was easily the best known American in that country. No village was so small that it had not heard Tom's booming laugh, seen his prodigious appetite in action, and benefited from his knowledge of chickens. Day after day Tom drove his jeep into the countryside. When the road dwindled into a path, he unslung a collapsible bike from the rear of the jeep, and pedaled off. When the path became impassable by bike, he walked.

"Hey there, feller," Tom would say to the first man he saw in a village. "Who's the Number One man around here? My name is Tom Knox. Sheldon, Iowa." Tom would then stick out his huge hand and vigorously pump the small bird-like hand of the Cambodian.

Ten minutes later everyone who could walk, hobble, or crawl would be gathered around Tom. He spoke a chaotic mixture of Cambodian, French, and farmyard English. But no one failed to understand him, and everyone valued the sincerity of his efforts to communicate.

"Now look here, people, you've got a chicken problem in this village," Tom would say. "You've got a bunch of teeny little scrawny chickens, and I'll bet you don't get fifty eggs a year from each one. Now I'm a chicken raiser from Iowa myself, and we've picked up a few tricks that I'm going to pass

along to you. But before we do that, I'd like a little food." As the group moved off toward the headman's house to eat, Tom established his credentials, by making sure the villagers knew he was a farm boy.

In one place he watched the Cambodians take boiling syrup distilled from cane sugar and pour it into big pot-shaped sugar forms. He noticed that when they knocked the sugar out of the forms, they invariably lost a good part of it when they broke it loose. Tom sat down and designed a wooden sugar-cake form with hinges on the bottom which could be swung open so the cake could be removed intact. In another town he watched Cambodians putting piglets in little bamboo cages to take them to market. Usually one or two pigs would hang his head through the bars and strangle on the way to market. Tom, showed the villagers how to tie a twine harness around the chests of the pigs which made it impossible for the pig to strangle.

He was no less impressive when the time came to eat. In no time at all he had become a formidable expert on Cambodian food. He could tell the district from which different types of rice came. He knew dozens of different condiments and mixtures to go with rice. Cambodians watched with delight when Tom took over the cooking chores. He cooked with the sure hand of an artist; and whether it were river eel or lake fish, he prepared it expertly. Tom made a point of bringing enough food with him so that despite the enormous quantities that he ate his host was better off after Tom had left.

After the meal, Tom turned to business. He would snatch a squawking chicken from the ground, inspect it carefully—push back its feathers, look in its eyes, pull its claws wide, and feel for internal damage.

"Now, what this little feller needs is a bit more calcium in its diet," Tom would say. "Calcium, you know, it's that white stuff that you get from the earth. I saw a vein of it in a hill just off the trail about a mile back. Take five or six pounds of that and mix it with a hundred pounds of chicken feed, and you've got a good diet for a chicken; or at least it would be a good diet for *this* chicken."

When the chickens were diseased, Tom either dusted them with powders that he brought, or gave them injections. And he left pamphlets in Cambodian on how to care for the chickens to keep them well.

Tom's success, although minor by the standards by which military aid or big economic aid were calculated, was impressive. Word spread from village to village, until finally Tom's appearance in a new village became the sign for a carnival. Villagers began storing up prize pieces of fruit, a pot of superior smoked eel, especially good twigs of cinnamon, or a bag of exceptionally good rice in anticipation of Tom's next visit. And the production of eggs soared rapidly. In fact, Tom got a reputation for working magic with chickens. A scrawny and featherless chicken, at the very edge of death, would revive just from being touched by Tom. Five minutes after he had arrived in a village he could tell almost exactly what was wrong with the food being fed to the chickens; and he was invariably helpful on other things too. He was a walking encyclopedia of Cambodian and American folklore on chickens, and there was very little that he did not know about farming in general.

One night Tom was sitting in front of the home of the headman of a hillside village. He had worked twelve hours that day with the people of the village. He was pleasantly

tired, and he watched contentedly as the moon came up and turned the green of the jungle below into a rolling sea of darkness. The broad shaft of silvery moonlight was occasionally broken by a flock of birds like a cloud of motes. The headman came over and squatted silently beside Tom.

"Why does a big strong man like you leave his country?" the headman asked softly and politely. "You are a very good man, but we wonder why you left your own country to come help us."

It was said with infinite courtesy, and Tom knew that he did not have to reply. His mind automatically recapitulated the formal lectures delivered to all economic cooperation people abroad on the objectives of foreign aid. He ticked them off in his mind, and then felt disgusted.

"Oh, crap!" he said softly.

"What is that word?" the headman asked just as softly.

"Oh, nothing. It's just an expression of anger," Tom said. "I could give you a lot of formal answers, but the simple fact is that I just like people and chickens, and besides I wanted to get away from the farm for a year or so."

It was inadequate, but it was the truth. For years Tom had had a dream made up of things so soft and intangible that he had never been able to discuss it. Because of this dream he had never married; and because of this dream he had come to Cambodia. When he was a small boy, Tom had discovered that certain words meant enchantment to him. Words like "cinnamon," or "saffron," or "Malacca Straits," or "Hindu" or "Zamboanga" had magic in them. They suggested strange countries, mysterious reaches of green water, smells that he had never yet smelled, and people he had never yet seen. Later, when he learned what the words meant, he wanted to see the

places and things for which the words stood. As he grew older he collected other words and stored them deep in his mind. "Raffles Hotel," "monsoon season," "upland plantations," "mahogany forests," "rice paddies," "Yellow River,"—hundreds of names of places and objects of the Far East. He even learned the meanings of very unusual words like "paryanka," which is one of the sitting positions in the Buddhist faith. In fact, as he talked to the headman, he was sitting in precisely that posture, and he was fully aware that the headman attached great significance to it.

"Look, old man, it's very hard for me to talk of these things," Tom said. "I do not use words very well. But for many years I wanted to see a country like this. So I came and saw it."

"And do you like it?" the headman asked.

"Yes, I like it very much," Tom said. He realized that he had almost said he loved it. "I like the people in the villages, but I do not like the officials in Phnom Penh. And I do not like the ways of the Americans that work for my mission or in our embassy."

"I do not know these people; but I think that I and my people like a fellow like you very much," the headman said shyly, but firmly.

Tom had been in Cambodia long enough to know that he had just been paid a tremendous compliment. It was one of the happiest nights that he ever spent in Cambodia, or, for that matter, anywhere else.

Two weeks later Tom appeared in Phnom Penh for the yearly conference which appraised the results of the American Aid Mission to Cambodia. Tom was not happy. For eighteen months he had been slogging through the jungles and he had

formed some definite impressions about what the village people needed. His reports were received by Mission headquarters, but action never seemed to be taken on them. Tom wanted to import a few thousand Rhode Island Reds and other breeds of poultry to improve the Cambodian stock. Tom did not delude himself. He agreed at the staff meetings that the road from Phnom Penh to the new sea town of Konponga Som would be valuable for the country. He also agreed that the massive canal building program would be useful. He had no objections to the ambitious military plans which the Mission supported. But he kept insisting to everyone who would listen that most of the millions of people in Cambodia lived off the land, and anything that would help them to live better—even to the extent of a few more eggs a day—was the thing to do.

The day before the conference began, Tom met with all the American agricultural experts, the Cambodian experts, and four French officials to review the work of the year and decide what recommendations to make to the conference. Tom listened to a proposal for a new canal to cost two and a half million dollars, and to another proposal to replace eighteen square miles of mangrove swamp with a mechanized farm. He listened while an American expert proposed the importation of two hundred thousand tons of commercial fertilizer per year for four years. Then the chairman of the conference nodded at Tom.

"My recommendation won't sound like much after the money we've been kicking around this table," Tom said with a grin. "I want to do two little things that won't cost much, but will sure as hell help the chicken and egg production of Cambodia. First, I want to bring in a few thousand American chickens and roosters to improve the native stock. Second, I

want a couple thousand dollars to develop a machine which could be used to pulverize and treat sugar cane tops so that they could be used for chicken feed and for cattle . . ."

"Tom, you told us this last year," the chairman said wearily. "What our two governments want is something big, that really helps people right away."

"Now, look. Three million people in Cambodia live in villages and what they eat depends on what they can raise themselves," Tom said, and anger started to rise in his chest. "A big source of protein and meat is chicken and eggs. Oh sure, they can get fish, but not everyone lives near enough. . . ."

"Okay, okay, Tom," the chairman said irritably. "We've heard that before, and we've made recommendations. The higher-ups haven't moved on them, and I think we ought to give them up and concentrate on really important things."

Tom's face turned red and his back started to arch like an angry bull's. In his mind he saw clearly the thousands of villagers he had talked to. He remembered their friendliness, their gratitude, their ignorance, their willingness to learn, the pathetic condition of their chickens, the scarcity of their eggs. Suddenly he felt, with a pang of guilt, that he was not representing his people well. Only later did he come to ask himself why they were *his* people. Tom smashed his fists on the table, and the entire group looked up with startled faces.

"Now, listen, goddamn it," he roared. "You people have been sitting on your asses here in Phnom Penh and you never get out to see a real person. I'm telling you right now that if we could increase the egg production of this country two hundred per cent we would do as much to help the average Cambodian as we would by building that damn expensive highway or that canal. Now, I'm not going to ask you chair-

borne commandos or the officers here what you think. *They'll* agree with me." Tom turned and pointed an angry finger at the Chief of the Cambodian Aid Committee.

The Cambodian looked at Tom, then glanced quickly around the table. He looked down into his hands, and for several seconds he did not speak.

"Well, come on, tell us what you think," Tom insisted angrily. "You know how the people in the villages live. You know how damn long it will take anything from those highways or canals to improve their living standards. What about my chickens?"

"I consider chicken and egg production to be very important," the Cambodian said carefully.

Tom swung around in triumph.

"There, I told you!"

"Now don't get excited, Tom. I'd like to know what our friend thinks is most important," the chairman said. "If we have money to develop either the mechanized farms or a chicken program, which would you support?"

Tom knew the question was unfair. The Cambodian government was firmly committed to the mechanized farms, and the expert could not express an honest opinion without violating government policy. When the Cambodian spoke, he did not look up from his hands, and his voice was very low.

"I would have to support the mechanized farms," the Cambodian said.

The chairman turned to Tom and shrugged.

Tom knew that he should keep quiet, but he could not. He felt as if the villagers were his constituents, and if he didn't speak for them now, he would have betrayed their trust.

"I'm going to say something just once, and then I'm

through," he said, his voice, unsteady, low, and dangerous. The chairman's head came up sharply. "If we don't get this damn chicken appropriation before the conference, I'm going to resign and go back to Washington, and raise hell. Unless you fellows get out into the sticks, you won't know what the score is. There are a lot of congressmen who know about chickens and farming, and I think I can persuade them you're making a big mistake."

It was a threat, and no one at the table misread it. The chairman stared at Tom while he quickly calculated how his own superiors might react if they were approached by Tom. He decided that they'd stand firm; and that in any case, they could rally more support among congressmen than Tom. He smiled.

"Okay, Tom, if that's the way you want it. As of this moment, I accept your resignation unless you want to reconsider."

Everyone in the room was silent. The Cambodians were not only silent, but deeply embarrassed. The Americans only watched curiously. They had seen this kind of thing happen before.

Tom got up, looked once more around the table, and left the room.

Two weeks later Tom was ready to fly home. He had already written letters to congressmen from agricultural states and outlined his complaint. He had not yet had replies, but there had not been time for airmail to make the round trip. He firmly intended to fly to Washington and put his case before them personally.

The day before he left Tom had a visitor—a high-ranking French diplomat. The Frenchman explained that he had followed Tom's work carefully and had heard excellent reports from the villages which Tom had visited. He regretted that

Tom had had a difference of opinion with the American chief. Tom listened impassively.

"As an indication of our gratitude, would you allow us to route your trip home in such a way that you could visit the rest of the Far Eastern countries, India, the Middle East, and France and England?" the diplomat asked him smoothly. "I understand that you flew here over the Pacific—so you would have traveled around the world by the time you return home. As you know, Cambodia pays for such trips out of counterpart funds. We would be delighted to have you take this trip. We are embarrassed over your dilemma, and it would be gracious of you to accept."

Tom was both bored and suspicious. He wanted only to return to the United States as quickly as possible, and he had long ago discovered that when diplomats make a concrete proposal they usually have some firm objective in mind. As Tom was trying to make up his mind, the Frenchman showed how well he understood American personality.

"I have always felt, sir, that you have great sympathy for Asian countries and peoples," the diplomat said softly. "The trip I'm suggesting would give you a chance to see the magnificent old temples in Bangkok. You could stop off in Indonesia, and I'm sure our diplomatic people in India could arrange for you to see much of that country. It would be a wonderful opportunity. I can tell you from personal experience that there is no sight more stirring than the Taj Mahal in full moonlight."

For Tom it was irresistible. All the exotic words, the suggestions of exotic scenes welled up in his mind. In another five minutes he had agreed, and arrangements were made for Tom to fly to Paris via Air France.

The trip home started very well. The special Air France

plane carried a reduced passenger load, so that they could be given luxury service. The first meal Tom ate aboard the plane consisted of a generous slice of *pâté de foie gras*, a tiny loaf of French bread, a bottle of champagne, and a large pat of fresh butter which had had his name impressed on it—and that was only the beginning. Later he had a huge steak with Bearnaise sauce, with which he was served a half-bottle of a magnificent Chambertin; a spinach soufflé delicately flavored with fresh butter and crushed garlic; and for dessert, Brie and crackers.

At Jakarta in Indonesia, Tom was met by a French Embassy official, and a French merchant. Arrangements had been made for Tom to spend several nights at the embassy residence, and they had outlined an itinerary for him while he was there, of which Tom approved eagerly. That afternoon they took him to a tiny village on the outskirts of Jakarta. Even after the beauty of Cambodia, Tom was staggered. The village was like a jewel. Magnificent flowers in more colors than he had ever seen before poured over fences, hung from trees, and climbed up the walls of the native huts. In the largest of the huts, a troupe of Balinese dancing girls were performing. The girls were tiny, and naked to the waist. Behind their ears they wore large red flowers which were like flames against their jet black hair. The sarong-like wraps they wore emphasized their incredible muscular control. For three hours Tom sat transfixed watching the girls dance. The graceful girls seemed utterly boneless. Their bodies flowed into impossible positions, then dissolved into entirely different stances. They danced to an unearthly music played by a line of Indonesian musicians. Tom was very close to tears when he left. He hadn't thought about Cambodia the entire afternoon; and some of the fine edge of his anger had disappeared.

That night in the Embassy he was served a banquet in nineteenth-century Indonesian style—a *rijsttafel.* There were twelve people present; Tom and the ambassador were the only white men. First an Indonesian boy brought each guest a huge bowl of boiled rice. Then a procession of servants carried in condiments to be put on top of the rice, each of which was more succulent than the last. When it was time to eat Tom faced a mound of rice almost buried under dozens of fragrant preparations. One of the servants kept his glass full of good strong beer. The moment they started to eat, two girls from the dancing troupe came into the room. They did not dance, but played two tiny stringed instruments which made a high, piercing sound. At first this music was almost unbearably shrill, but after a while took on practically heavenly purity and precision. Both the food and the music were like something from another world, and Tom several times had to shake off a sense of unreality. It was, he thought, the closest he had ever come to his boyhood dream.

The rest of his stay in Jakarta was equally fascinating, and when he boarded another luxury Air France plane, he welcomed the chance to get some sleep. He awoke eight hours after they had taken off, and was flattered to discover that the French merchant had put a case of imported beer aboard the plane and instructed the steward to serve Tom a bottle as soon as he awoke. By the time he had consumed five bottles of beer the plane was circling for a landing outside of New Delhi in northern India. Indonesia had been lush and rich and bright. India was dusty, hot, and hard. But Tom enjoyed his stay. Again two Frenchmen met him at the airport and arranged for him to stay at a French rest home. They also had planned an elaborate itinerary. Tom visited magnificent cen-

tury-old ruins, watched a troupe of Indian dancers recreate ancient ritual dances which had formerly been done with cobras, and attended a funeral burning at the river edge. Months later he could still recall the smell that rose from the pyre, compounded of ancient butter, strange perfumes, and burning flesh.

Tom also ate well while he was in New Delhi. When he left, again on a luxury flight, he was given a collection of intricate Indian silver jewelry, a gift from the French Embassy of India. And during his entire stay various people made flattering remarks about his skill in Cambodia.

On the long flight from New Delhi to Nice, Tom tried several times to write up his criticisms of the American agricultural aid program in Cambodia. Somehow he found it difficult to find the right words with which to express his indignation. In fact, he found that his indignation was very difficult to rekindle. He assured himself that once he had returned to the United States he would be able to write up his complaint accurately and soundly; he resolved to go as quickly as possible to Washington after his return.

When his plane landed in Nice he was again greeted by the inevitable Frenchmen. This time they had arranged for him to stay as long as he wanted to in a hotel just outside of Cap d'Antibes. On the rocks below the hotel were a half-dozen women wearing bathing suits smaller than Tom had ever imagined could be legal.

Tom stayed seven days at the hotel, and when he left he discovered that there was no bill to pay. The management assured him that both they and the French government were delighted to have had as a guest so distinguished an American diplomat. The Frenchmen from Nice gave him a present when

he left—a suitcase made of Morocco leather, the finest piece of luggage Tom had ever seen.

In Paris Tom was met by a Cambodian who had large agricultural holdings in Cambodia. He had arranged for Tom to stay at a small hotel. He apologized for the fact that it did not have an international reputation, but assured Tom that the service and food were excellent. This recommendation was something of an understatement. Tom discovered, to his astonishment, that the hotel had no established rates. A guest was simply given whatever he asked for, and was then presented with a single unitemized bill at the end of his stay. When Tom asked for Scotch in the bar, the waiter brought him a full bottle of Johnny Walker Black Label and a few bottles of Perrier water, and left. For so small a hotel the menu was incredible. Tom literally could order whatever he wanted—from fresh Beluga caviar to squid soup.

Meanwhile, the Cambodian land owner kept Tom busy with trips to every art gallery in Paris, an evening at the opera, tastings at famous wine cellars, small cocktail parties, carriage rides through the Bois, and a gift-buying expedition which turned out, in some mysterious way, to involve Tom in no expense whatsoever.

One evening he tried to raise the question of agricultural aid to Cambodia. The Cambodian listened courteously as Tom described his plans for increasing chicken and egg yield in that country, and Tom had the feeling that the Cambodian already knew the details of his plan. The Cambodian could not have been more honest or diplomatic.

"Mr. Knox, I'm afraid that you and I differ on this idea," he finally said with great grace. "There is only a limited amount of aid money; and before the golden goose stops laying, I

think it would be wise for Cambodia to get permanent installations like roads and canals and ports. Your idea is important and good; but I do not feel that this is the time for it." Tom started to protest; but somehow to protest to so polite and generous a person seemed unreasonable.

Two days later the Cambodian told Tom that through a lucky fluke they had been able to get him a suite on the *Liberté* sailing for New York. And happily he was able to tell Tom that the suite would cost him nothing, because, for a reason which was never quite clear to Tom, the suite was free to them.

When Tom left his hotel his experience on the Riviera was repeated. The hotel was so pleased to have him as a guest that they could not think of taking payment. The manager pointed out confidentially that other people—businessmen and brokers, for instance—could well afford to pay the cost of the small services that the hotel had given Tom. He intimated that Tom was one of a group of people so valuable and important that they were above paying hotel bills.

The suite on the *Liberté* was luxurious without being ostentatious. Every morning fresh flowers were put in his cabin; there was always a note attached to them which expressed the gratitude of the Cambodian government. Also, there were several visits from a Cambodian diplomat who was traveling to the United States; this gentleman made Tom gifts of French wine and a length of the finest French silk.

When the *Liberté* was two days from New York, Tom sat down to write up his thoughts so that he could present them to congressional committees and to newspaper people in Washington. He discovered, however, that not only had his feeling of anger and outrage been blunted, but that it was very difficult

to recreate it at all. To his astonishment Cambodia seemed a long, long time away, and glazed over with wonderful memories. These were not so much memories of the village life, as of the generous and courteous attentions he had been given by so many Cambodians on his trip home. The anger, which in Cambodia had seemed so sure and honest a weapon, in his suite on the *Liberté* seemed somehow almost ridiculous. After working for three hours and covering only a half a page, he resolved to wait until he had landed.

Eight months later, when Tom was back on the Knox farm in Sheldon, Iowa, he again saw the half page of paper. When he read it over, he thought for a moment that it must have been written by another person. The handwriting was his, but not the words. The anger he had felt in Cambodia, so hot and bright and curiously nourishing, now seemed childish. Tom folded the paper, and put it away.

In Haidho Ambassador MacWhite had a caller—a farmer who was head of the Midwest Poultry Association. He was making a world tour with his wife, and he came into the embassy with something on his mind.

"Look, Mister MacWhite," he said, for he had never learned diplomatic protocol, "I'm on to something hot. Listen for a second and don't say I'm crazy."

MacWhite pushed a box of cigars towards the man. He took four, lit one, and stuck the other three in his shirt pocket. He puffed up a white cloud of smoke and then talked through it.

"What this country needs, mister, are some good chickens," he said, his voice explosive with excitement.

"I thought there were plenty around," MacWhite said cautiously. There was no disapproval in his voice, for he had learned not to be either disapproving or surprised.

"Dammed right there are, but they're sickly," the visitor said. "I found out they only lay about thirty eggs a year. Why, if we could get their egg production up to 200 eggs per chicken per year, and their weight up just 20 per cent, we could save $2,000,000 on food imports a year. Look, I figured it out."

The excited man pushed a dirty piece of paper over to the ambassador. It was covered with a sprawl of figures; at the bottom, with a circle around it, was written $2,000,000.

MacWhite had the figures checked by his research staff. They were correct.

He then wrote a letter to the American Aid Mission in Phnom Penh in Cambodia, which had the largest number of American agricultural experts of any mission in the immediate area. He asked if they had a chicken expert they could lend to the Sarkhan government.

The letter he received from Phnom Penh was disappointing and it also led to MacWhite's making his second major mistake—one he never discovered.

Dear Ambassador MacWhite, (wrote the Chief of Mission in Phnom Penh)

I don't know what you're doing down there, but it sounds as if you're trying to make sure of a good eggnog supply for the Christmas holidays.

Whatever your motives, I can't help you. We had an egg expert out here, name of Thomas Elmer Knox. There's something about that profession that seems to make them a bit odd. He just didn't work out. Always out in the countryside, always popping off about things he knew nothing about, always threatening to go to Congress if we didn't import some Rhode Island Reds.

He finally left in a huff, why, I never fully understood. The French and Cambodian officials were a bit perturbed at first because they hate to have Americans go away unhappy; but they seem all right about it now. They don't want any more egg experts though. Neither do you. Give it up.

Cordially
Rowe Hendy

And MacWhite did give it up—which was his second major mistake.

15

The Six-Foot Swami from Savannah

Playing his harmonica softly, Colonel Edwin B. Hillandale of the U. S. Air Force and Savannah, Georgia, ambled down the Street of the White Crocodile in Haidho. He was trying to learn *Nging Gho Hrignostina*, which is Sarkhan's national anthem. Every few minutes the colonel would stop a Sarkhanese and play a version of *Nging Gho Hrignostina*. Then, with gesticulations, appealing grimaces, and laughter, he would persuade the Sarkhanese to hum the anthem.

But learning the national anthem of Sarkhan wasn't the only thing the colonel was doing. He was, as he expressed it, "Seeing what makes this burg tick before MacWhite comes back from his trip." Ambassador MacWhite had gotten him on loan from Manila for two months. The colonel noticed that there were a great many pawnshops, and concluded that the city people were in bad economic straits. He observed the shops which sold betel nuts, tobacco, and native medicines. He had seen a clerk in one of them pass something from under the

counter, and had guessed that opium was also being sold. He went by fruit stands piled high with red pomegranates, yellow pomolos, pink-brown bananas, and green apples, and passed walking flower vendors carrying great baskets of sweet fragrance. The thing which the colonel noticed most, however, was the large number of signs advertising palmistry and astrology establishments. These places had a clean, elegant, respectable look which made them resemble the offices of fashionable physicians in America. And the shingles which the astrologists and palmists hung outside their places of business all indicated that these practitioners had doctors' degrees.

Well, thought Colonel Hillandale, at last I've found a place where my hobbies will be welcome. I'm sure glad I brought my Ephemeris and log tables with me. And that slide rule. Oh boy, if I can find my diploma from that Chungking School of Occult Science, I'll really be in business here.

He then played *The Little Whistling Pig* on his harmonica, a tune he reserved only for special occasions such as the day he had put the donkey in the general's suite, or last March the 14th, when he had been promoted to full chicken colonel.

After he had seen enough of Haidho to get the feel of it, he returned to the American Embassy and began to read. He went through biographies of all the Sarkhanese politicians, and many different analyses of the current political situation He submerged himself in these studies for several days, and probably would have continued for longer except that he was interrupted by the Embassy Protocol Officer.

"Colonel, is your nickname 'The Ragtime Kid'?"

"That's what they call me in Manila."

"Then you're the one. The Philippines Ambassador is giving a dinner tomorrow, and requests that you attend. I've

already accepted for you. Ambassador Rodriguez seemed particularly eager . . ."

"So, Don Phillippe wangled himself that job after all, the old buzzard. Sure I'll go. I hope he's brought a couple of cases of *tuba*, a wagonload of San Miguel, and those two good looking maids he kept in Manila . . ."

"Eight o'clock," said the protocol officer hastily. "Black tie. And be a little early. The Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister and several other Sarkhanese dignitaries will be there."

"You have a guest list?"

"I'll get you one."

The Philippine Ambassador's dinner party was fully attended because Don Phillippe had already established his reputation as a good and charming host. It was rumored that he paid his chef thirty thousand pesos a year, and that he had stolen him from the Waldorf. Regardless of how much he was paid, or where he had been stolen from, the chef had made Don Phillippe's table famous throughout the Orient.

After about an hour of cocktails and hors d'oeuvres, a servant came up and whispered something to Don Phillippe. A cloud of disappointment shadowed his face, and his forehead furrowed. Don Phillippe thought a moment, then went over to Colonel Hillandale and beckoned him to one side.

"Kid," he said, "a terrible catastrophe. The first course for this evening is *sole escabeche*. I had the fish caught this afternoon from my own boat. But Henri just told me he doesn't have any ginger, and it'll take a half-hour to get it. So I've got to stall. Do you remember the palm-reading stunt you pulled at my house at Baguio? Do you think . . ."

The melody of *The Whistling Pig* began to drift through The Ragtime Kid's mind.

"Why, Don Phillippe," he said, "I'd love to. I'm in a great palm-reading mood tonight. The humidity is just right and it so happens that Venus is in conjunction with the moon . . ."

"Come on then," said Don Phillippe, looking five years younger. "I don't care what lies you tell these people, just amuse them for a half hour."

"Lies? Don Phillippe, you've hurt my feelings."

The Philippines Ambassador tapped on a glass with a spoon and when he had everyone's attention, introduced Colonel Hillandale.

"Ladies and gentlemen. We have with us this evening a most distinguished palmist and astrologer." He paused. During the pause the Americans present laughed and a few, including George Swift, the chargé d'affaires, said "Fake! Fraud!" The Sarkhanese leaned forward with interest to hear the remainder of the announcement, somewhat embarrassed by the Americans' comments.

Don Phillippe continued. "This distinguished man is my old friend and associate Colonel Edwin Hillandale of the U. S. Air Force. He is the only living Caucasian who is a graduate of the Chungking School of Occult Science. I have seen him perform many times, and the things I have heard him say have been both fantastic and miraculous. I remember the day he read the palm and cast the horoscope of our Secretary of Defense, Ramon Magsaysay. The Ragtime Kid—as we affectionately call the colonel—told Ramon that the sixteenth of the month would be his lucky day, but only if he were in the vicinity of Barang. Out of curiosity Ramon went to

Barang, a small town in Ilocos Norte Province. And on that day and in that town Ramon surrounded and captured the leaders of the terrible Huks, in an action which broke the back of the whole Huk movement."

The Sarkhanese Prime Minister and his foreign minister nodded at each other appreciatively. George Swift laughed and slapped his knee.

"I asked the Kid if he would read some of your palms after dinner, but he told me that astrological conditions are perfect right now when Venus is in conjunction with the moon. The next half-hour is the best time to read palms, and my chef says he can hold dinner up for that length of time, so . . . I give you Colonel Hillandale."

"Bravo! Bravo!" said the Prime Minister, clapping his hands.

Swift turned to his wife and whispered, "I wonder why MacWhite shanghaied this amateur performer. Can you imagine, vaudeville tricks at a state dinner!"

Colonel Hillandale stood up, raised his hand. "Now, ladies and gentlemen, frankly, I don't like to do this in public. When I read palms I must tell exactly what I see. Sometimes the information is the kind you don't want others to know. I must tell you this ahead of time."

"Start on me, Colonel," said Swift sarcastically, holding out his hand. "I've got nothing to hide. Come on, I dare you."

They sat down under a light. The colonel spread Swift's hand flat on his knee. Everyone crowded around.

The colonel said, "When were you born?"

"You tell me, Mister Prophet."

The colonel peered closely at Swift's hand and then said gently and without reproach, "I know that you were born on

the 28th of April, 1913, in Santa Clara, California. I was hoping to get the exact hour and minute, since it would have helped me. But never mind."

The chargé d'affaires didn't say anything.

"You came from a poor family. Your father ran a saloon; I'm not sure, but there are indications that he went bankrupt and deserted your mother."

Mrs. Swift sucked in her breath.

The colonel continued, "You wanted to be a doctor, but you couldn't pass the entrance exams for medical school. You left college after your third year because . . ." The colonel raised his head and looked at Mrs. Swift, saw the anguish in her face, and skipped to the next subject. "You got a job as the office manager for a real estate company, and held it until 1944 when a client of yours got a big job in Washington. He took you along as his office manager and you did lots of little liaison jobs with Congress. Then you went to the State Department in the same capacity. This is your first assignment overseas. I can see in your hand that you don't read much—not many books, magazines, or newspapers, I mean—but you have a capacity for scanning reports and for putting them in proper order. This is your great talent. You hate being scolded and when you are—according to your hand—you take it out on your wife. I could easily tell you what will happen in your future, but as long as you don't want to tell me the exact time of your birth, well . . ."

Swift started to blurt out when he was born, but Colonel Hillandale had already let go his hand and moved on to the next person.

The Prime Minister said, "I would like to have my palm read. But I would prefer it to be in private."

"Your Excellency," said the Philippine Ambassador, "of course." He put his hand on the Prime Minister's elbow and led him into the study. The Ragtime Kid followed.

The Ragtime Kid and the Prime Minister closed the door of the study and stayed there for half an hour. What went on inside the study none of the other guests knew. But when the door opened, the two men came out arm in arm, and the Prime Minister was gazing up at The Ragtime Kid with obvious awe.

Dinner was announced, and everyone went into the dining room to enjoy Henri's celebrated cooking. The meal was superb, and the conversation was spirited and clever; the general subject was palmistry and astrology. The Philippine Ambassador made a mental note that he was considerably obliged to The Ragtime Kid and some day would do something for him in return.

Three days later Ambassador MacWhite returned to Haidho. He stepped briskly off the plane and saw that his Deputy Chief of Mission was waiting for him. He put his hand on George Swift's shoulder and said, "Everything in good shape, old boy? Where did you get that shiner? What a beautiful mouse! You look as though you did fifteen rounds with Marciano. How'd you get it?"

Swift's face flushed with anger. "That vaudeville colonel of yours from Manila . . ."

"Hillandale?"

"Yes, sir. I have an official letter of reprimand ready for your signature . . ."

"Tell me about it."

And Swift did.