

PHOTOGRAPHY

Panorama of the war

A photo-journalist is a recorder of history in the making. His photographs depict the momentary event which become the index and the document of things past for us to ponder and remember. One such lensman who in the estimation of his colleagues has few peers is Carl Mydans. As one of "Life" magazine's first photographers, he has mirrored for more than three decades the life and times of his generation. His work had also brought him to the Philippines, where he recorded, vividly and dramatically, momentous events during the war years.

For four days this week, in recognition of his talent in covering a



US prisoners of war.

"period of trial and triumph in the (Filipino) Nation's life" and on the occasion of Bataan Day, three government agencies and two private organizations sponsored an exhibition of Mr. Mydans' works at the Ramon Magsaysay Center Memorial Hall.

The photographs brought back clear, if bitter, memories of those who experienced the war in the Philippines. To viewers who were not yet born when the pictures were taken, it was most likely a discovery of the grim aspects of the war they never saw.

The exhibit provides a documentary of the war, from the jungles of Bataan in 1942 to the "liberation" of Manila in early 1945. The photographs portray the terror of civilians caught in the war, the determination and raw courage of Filipino and American soldiers in the battlefield, the desolation and the ruins left in the wake of bombings and shellings, and the hope expressed in the faces of Filipinos anticipating better, happier times.

Not only are the unforgettable scenes of war preserved in Mydans' photos. Famous places and personalities in the Philippines at the time were also recorded by his lens. To name a few: Manila Bay, Gateway to



The Death March in 1942: the picture speaks for itself.

Intramuros, Manila Hotel, Lingayen Beach and Defenses, American Bomber Pilots in Clark Field, all taken in 1941; Tacloban airfield, 1944; Balete Pass and Camp O'Donnell; prisoners in the University of Sto. Tomas, 1945; President Osmeña on his return to Manila; and General MacArthur re-establishing the Commonwealth government in Malacanang in 1945.

Mydans and his wife, Shelley, were covering the Philippines for "Life" magazine when they were captured and imprisoned for 21 months—first, in the University of Sto. Tomas internment camp and later, in the Chapel Prison Camp in Shanghai. They were eventually released and in 1943, Mydans returned to the United States. The following year, he was

accredited as one of the four correspondents to join General MacArthur's Command and cover the re-taking of the Philippines.

Several awards attest to Mr. Mydans' artistry. These include the U.S. Camera competition grand prize, which he won in 1940, and the Gold Achievement Award in 1950. In 1960, he received an honorary degree in humanities and, the following year, was designated the Ernie Pyle lecturer at the University of Indiana.

Now based in Singapore as a freelance photographer for Time Publications and Reader's Digest (since the demise of Life last year), he continues to cover with sympathy and insight events in Asia.

BOOKS

A revolution from within

THE DEATH OF THE FAMILY

by David Cooper
145 pages, Vintage House
September 1971

The Death of the Family, a series of eight essays by South African psychiatrist David Cooper, qualifies as a minor time-bomb, useful for planting in the staid pastures of sociology and psychology departments as Philippine universities know them. Taken in parts, the book registers several telling protests against that most intimate of threads with which society is inexorably woven—the family. Taken as a whole, Death is a call to arms, to rip apart the whole fabric and allow the emergence of the New Man, described with some poignance as a rootless familyless being who only in this state can be loyal to his dreams, his sense experiences, his telling psychotic disturbances, in a word, his precious human existence.

"Blood is thicker than water," Dr. Cooper writes in chapter one, "only in the sense of being the vitalizing stream of a certain social stupidity." "The blood of consanguinity," he writes in chapter last, "has already flowed through the gutters of suburban family streets."

Impetuous wordplay is the main weapon of the metaphorical logic Dr. Cooper employs throughout the book, a technique that undoubtedly owes a debt to the uncharted seas of the human mind encountered in his psychiatric practice. The result is a book one

reads uneasily, a marriage of the poetry of rebellion and the traditional straight-jackets of theory—psychiatric, philosophical, political theory suddenly spouting what looks like a lot of inspired nonsense.

If you can wade through a welter of seemingly disconnected thoughts for what Dr. Cooper is probably trying to get at, then Death becomes very stimulating indeed. It becomes an adventure for both of you, in fact, because the man himself admits that in using a language he finds archaic and essentially discrepant with his thinking, he finds that he has to play tricks, "until finally we generate a certain vertigo in ourselves through which words, falsely assumed to transmit knowledge, lose their apparent meaning, and a more real discourse is possible." To his credit, the book's language and the book's thesis travel on the same radical wave-length, form following function in the assault on Fortress Tradition.

And what of his main thesis? Well, simply that the family is nothing but the "ideological conditioning device to perpetuate an exploitative society." If anyone protests that Marx has said as much, and Freud and Marcuse and Norman Brown in their turn, Dr. Cooper seeks to offer new insights by way of psychoanalysis, an area he has mined with R.D. Laing, that most recent of counterculture heroes. What the two of them, as practicing London psychiatrists tuned to the wheezing of the Old World and its institutions, come up with are countless examples of personality distortions wrought by the traditional family unit:

- Because the family is merely a "gluing together of people based on the sense of one's incompleteness."

- Because "the family specializes in the formation of roles for its members rather than in the laying down of conditions for the free assumption of

identity."

- Because "the family, in its function as primary socializer of the child, instills social controls in its children that are patently more than the child needs to navigate his way through the world."

- Because "there is an elaborate system of taboos instilled in each child by its family."

We have maladjusted children and broken homes, anomie for whole societies and untruth in human relationships, a criminal narrowing of possibilities for a personality to discover and explore the spectrum of its potential.

And so to begin again, says Dr. Cooper, the beginning being with oneself, a revolution from one's center. To realize that one's life and destiny go far beyond family through prebirth and postdeath. To understand that the self one thinks one knows is only one of the many other selves, suppressed or unrealized, one carries around in a seemingly finite, limited existence. Beside this, the most radical of revolutions, bomb-throwing demonstrations and withdrawal into quietistic eastern religions become mere mime. True mystics, he says, have always been intensely aware of the nature of circumambient society and, in this sense, have been truly political men.

To bring about this revolution, however, entails nothing less than ruthlessly throwing two sacred notions into the impersonal, irreverent dustbins of history. The first is marriage as it is currently practiced.

"A man marries a woman whom he will never leave, and because she knows he will never leave her, she will never leave him. She accepts the conditionality of her situation because there is a social bribe built into it, in the sense that her husband can only opt out of the conditional system if he, as the apparent initiator of the whole scene, accepts guilt that may be

lethal or nearly lethal to him."

A social stability built on fear can only perpetuate a tradition of unfreedom, a lack of respect for the human potential that chafes uneasily under artificial controls.

The other institution that must go is the current educational system as it is practiced. "Education is nothing less than a self-totalizing movement of interplay between the person's unending formation of his self and the formative influences from other people acting on him throughout his life." Education, therefore, covers a time-span that starts from intra-uterine experience to that of death. Anything less than this is a waste of time.

Throughout the book, Dr. Cooper has left a lot of loose-ends that perchance someone else may tie together. In lieu of marriage and formal education, for instance, he only has vague suggestions of what other structures can fill the vacuum. He talks of communal living, he talks of free universities but refuses to be specific on how precisely they are to be set up on a wide scale.

But Death of the Family, true to its style as half-rave and half-rap, is really not the place for a scholarly, orderly presentation of options to replace the holy order of things. Because it makes a claim to original vision, one easily justifies its pell-mell recitation of conditions that will make a New Society wherein will dwell New Men:

- Where solitude will be a human right.

- Where all men will register each other with total attentiveness and deepest respect.

- Where all teachers will be prophets, looking into all our pasts and all our futures.

Wherever anonymity and conformity threaten, the beginnings of Utopia are always welcome.

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