

## Do You Know —

*— that, according to the AFL's Free Trade Union Committee, the Chinese Communist regime has executed or caused the death of more than 14 million people in the last five years, including more than 500 United States prisoners of war captured in Korea?*

R. LA PLACA  
OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

*— that today, seven years after World War II, more than a million German, Italian, Japanese, and other prisoners of war, as well as thousands of civilians deported to the Soviet Union, are still missing?*

LEE J. MACINTOSH  
JERSEY CITY, NEW JERSEY

*— that although the Constitution of Guatemala specifically prohibits the existence of any political party with foreign or international connections, the Communist Party there publishes an official daily newspaper, and is running a slate of official candidates for Congress in the current elections?*

JUAN GOMEZ BLANCO  
MEXICO CITY, MEXICO

*— that with scarcely a voice of protest from Capitol Hill, the Department of State has rigidly maintained official silence on the distribution of \$18 billion thus far allocated for military and economic aid to our Allies? But that throughout the Lend-Lease program of World War II details regarding the Lend-Lease distributions were made public in quarterly reports?*

R. F. WELLS  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

*— that the McCarran Act, which goes into effect at the end of this December, contains no provision barring the immigration into the United States of people with records of membership in the Nazi, Fascist, and Falangist parties?*

FRANKLIN H. HARTS  
NEW YORK, N. Y.

*— that more than four thousand British servicemen have been killed in the war against Communist forces in Malaya?*

EUGENE F. BARKER  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

In this space each month the MERCURY will publish what we judge to be the most important facts submitted by our readers. These must be facts, not opinions. Elsewhere we publish readers' opinions as well as our own. We invite the submission of such facts and will pay \$5 for each one published. Each submission should carry the notice "Facts" and should be accompanied by an authoritative reference. Unfortunately, we are not able to acknowledge or return submitted material.

Bernard Wolfe

# The Man With the Rubber Nose

OR

## ONE SOLUBLE SPOON AFTER ANOTHER

ONCE, watching the news flashes chase their shining tails around the Times Building, Al Kiefer, Broadway ghostwriter, was moved to a lyrical outburst:

“See? There you are. Sign of the times. Prosody by Mazda. Who’s our new patron saint of letters? Consolidated Edison. Need a new kind of illuminated text, boy. The novels of the future’ll be written on that sign with a soldering iron, with spliced cables, mark my words. First there was the goose quill, then the Corona portable — now the telegrapher’s key. And the punched tape. American lit’s gonna have a real punch on tape. The next Herman Melville, he’ll make with the staccato amperes. Henry James’ll give out in lilting ohms. Letters losing their fetters. Coming of age, friend, getting downright electrifying. More

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*Bernard Wolfe, whose novel Limbo has just been published by Random House, is a frequent MERCURY contributor.*

bulbose than verbose. American lit’s well lit.” (Kiefer was himself remarkably well lit at the time: not an excuse but an explanation.)

These prophetic remarks were made in the doorway of a Broadway shop called FUN, INC. (JOKES, TRICKS, GAGS, NOVELTIES, SOUVENIRS). They were addressed to the proprietor of the shop, Danny Atlas, the Salonikan who introduced the soluble spoon into American culture; Danny smiled appreciatively. More: laughed out loud, almost in homage. Not to Kiefer’s careening rhetoric, which Danny doesn’t follow, but to the *Times* sign, of which Danny is well-wisher, advocate, tout, aficionado. And student: he knows all about the sign, its inner workings. The punched tape which controls the stampede of bulletins. The man who takes the news off the ticker and prepares the tape. Anatole, the pimply-faced kid who helps with the tape. Danny Atlas knows all about Anatole. Anatole