

One Dedicated to Crises



—Leo Rosenthal-Machal—from *Pia*

Dag Hammarskjöld (right) with Patrice Lumumba—The stakes were high.

“Dag Hammarskjöld and Crisis Diplomacy,” by Richard I. Miller (*Oceana*. 344 pp. Hardbound, \$6. Paperback, \$2.25), and **“Dag Hammarskjöld: Custodian of the Brushfire Peace,”** by Joseph P. Lash (Doubleday. 297 pp. \$4.50), limn the late Secretary-General’s mission and personality. Ernest A. Gross, an international lawyer, has been Deputy Representative of the United States to the U.N.

By Ernest A. Gross

RICHARD MILLER’S “Dag Hammarskjöld and Crisis Diplomacy” is a self-styled “case study.” It emphasizes the tasks that the late Secretary-General confronted and the methods by which he tackled them. The man is seen through his work. Joseph Lash’s book, on the other hand, is the study of a personality, moving through his mission. The work is seen through the man. Both books were completed shortly before Hammarskjöld’s death, and published as soon as possible thereafter. Except for a brief postlude, with which Mr. Lash closes his book, no change was made in either manuscript to take account of the tragic event.

Mr. Lash’s biography of the late and

great Secretary-General is excellently written and highly perceptive, both as to the nature of the office and its working requirements. A veteran among United Nations reporters, Mr. Lash exhibits in this book a blend of critical insight and sympathetic understanding. It was a trait by which he earned the respect of the subject of his biography.

The full dimension of Dag Hammarskjöld, and the ultimate significance of the “fires all around the horizon” that he fought, cannot fully be evaluated by his contemporaries. Moreover, there is an inherent risk in any attempt to create a portrait of a still-living personality through interviews with his friends, neighbors, and former schoolmates. Natural reticence and a sense of tact inhibit frankness on a matter as intimate as character analysis for publication. The resulting picture is bound to be more or less than life-size. Nevertheless, Mr. Lash overcomes the dilemma through a sense of human values and rigorous honesty. The Secretary-General’s character emerges in terms of his work and his purposes.

His life of celibacy and austere intellectuality centered upon his tasks. His wide reading and disciplined recreation, his love of poetry and art, his quiet humor—these all served as primary resources to strengthen a capacity for fulfilling his one essential dedication: work.

In a chapter entitled “Vox Populorum” Mr. Lash penetratingly describes Hammarskjöld’s personality in action: in “antiseptic” press conferences, in sometimes “obscure” dialogues with associates, in public speeches without “staged effects,” and in his “nuances” of diplomatic exchange. As Mr. Lash aptly says: “It is only a step from the nuanced statement to the obscure one.” Hammarskjöld combined a gift for imagery and crispness with an occasionally elusive method of expression. At times he resorted to obscurity as a poet would—a form of “intellectual calisthenics,” in his own phrase. People who talked often with him would no doubt agree that in his speech he cast nets with which to retain large ideas, allowing the smaller ones to escape.

This quality of mind and temperament reflected a deeper truth about him: even in his close friendships, there was, as Mr. Lash says, “always one part of him withheld.” Yet, he also had large capacity for “warmth and genuine affection.”

The “case book” of Mr. Miller is a catalogue of crises. Studies in depth, elaborately footnoted and documented, of Hammarskjöld’s principal missions, confirm the fact that the maturing of the Office of the Secretary-General was no historical accident. The executive function was forged on the anvil of necessity, even though tempered by the skill and wisdom of the man himself.

In his Introduction Mr. Miller candidly declares that “a book about the turbulent, contemporary scene cannot satisfy the canons of detached scholarship.” His avowed objective is the more limited one of contributing “a ready source of information” for the scholars who will come later. Such an effort places a high premium on differentiating between fact and opinion. In several instances the two are regrettably blurred in his book.

Thus, in evaluating the case of Lebanon-Jordan, and the controversial United States military intervention there, Mr. Miller quotes Hammarskjöld’s report to the Security Council on July 16, 1958, that the United Nations Observation Group in Lebanon “is fully equipped to play the part envisaged for it” and that he hoped “no later developments will cause a setback,” thus implying dissent from the unilateral American action.

Mr. Miller questions the validity of Hammarskjöld’s conclusions as to the effectiveness of the U.N. Observation Group and—without documentation or citation—imputes to the Group dereliction in their duty, charging them with being “seen in the bars and at parties on the beach,” thus discrediting them-

selves and their mission in the eyes of "most people in Beirut." Future scholars, looking to contemporary source material, will find it difficult to evaluate Mr. Miller's comments concerning the attitudes of "most people" in Beirut or, as he enlarges upon the point in the same context, "most Lebanese." This important event in the history of the Organization and the development of the concept of the "United Nations Presence" is analyzed by Mr. Lash with greater insight and dimension.

Another illustration of the risk of confusing fact with questionable opinion may be found in Mr. Miller's comment that when Khrushchev banged his shoe upon his General Assembly desk, the "new members were puzzled more than anything else. Their proper English and French education said this was not the thing to do, but their tribal roots said quite the opposite." Such carefree disparagement of the undifferentiated "new members," again without citing the evidence, does not enhance the value of the work as a "source of data for more detached studies."

Indeed, Mr. Miller's analysis appears to this reviewer to be quite wide of the mark. Khrushchev's desk-pounding demonstrations were gestures of frustration, tinged with contempt. There were few, if any, in the Assembly Hall who were "puzzled"; nor did it require the ancient wisdom of "tribal roots" to see who had won the day.

The conclusion of Mr. Miller's book, written in July 1961, suffers more than does that of Mr. Lash from the hasty publication following Hammarskjöld's death, without opportunity for revision to meet the basically altered circumstance. Allowance must always be made for some obsolescence in a contemporary chronicle, by reason of the inevitable lag between authorship and publication. Nevertheless, one cannot escape a sense of disturbance upon reading, posthumously, such comments as: "Today Mr. Hammarskjöld probably understands more fully what Trygvie Lie had in mind when . . ."

There is particular poignancy in Mr. Miller's unwitting prophecy in his concluding remarks concerning the Congo: "The stakes in the Congo are high. They involve not only the fate of Mr. Hammarskjöld . . ."

The "Custodian of the Brushfire Peace" was himself consumed in one of the fires. A bereaved survivor of one lost with him in the final mission cried in anguish: "Surely, some phoenix must arise from this . . . It *can't* have been in vain!" Dag Hammarskjöld neither worked, nor died, alone. It is left for all the rest of us to say whether he worked, or died, in vain.

Rising Star of the P. M.

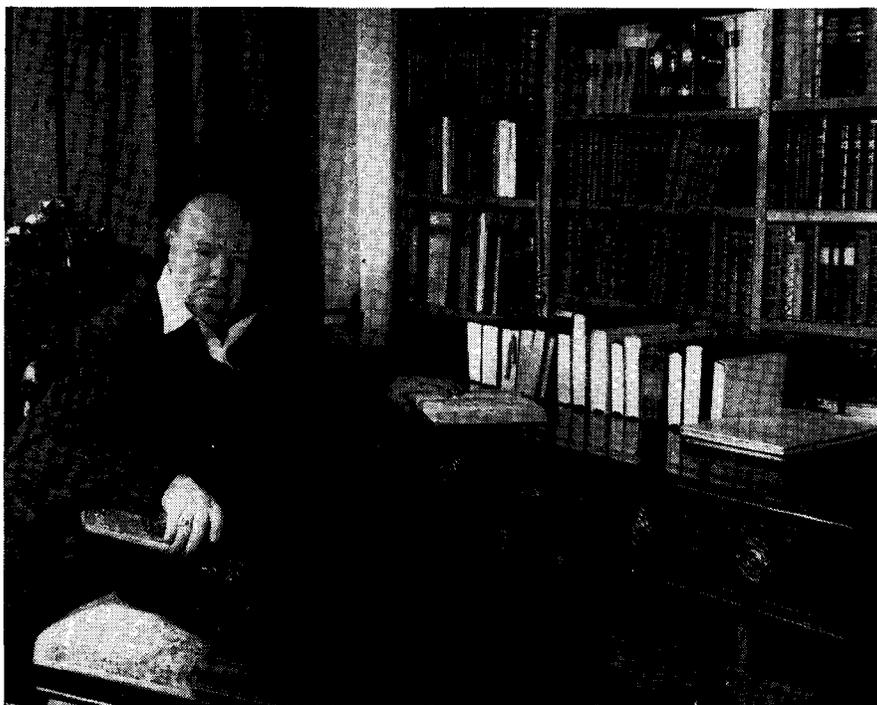
"The Age of Churchill: Heritage and Adventure, 1874-1911," by Peter de Mendelssohn (Knopf, 650 pp. \$8.95), begins with the youth who was considered backward by his family, ends with Sir Winston installed at the Admiralty. John Clive is associate professor of history at the University of Chicago; his specialty is modern Britain.

By John Clive

THE GREATEST service performed by this massive first part of Peter de Mendelssohn's planned trilogy is to remind us that the Churchill of "blood, sweat, and tears," of "the Nahzi menace," of "some chicken—some neck!" represents only the magnificent concluding chapter of a career that had its beginning when Queen Victoria still sat on the throne of England, and when "fall out" meant nothing more ominous than leaving one's place in the ranks. Descended from the great Duke of Marlborough, whose biographer he was to become, son of a famous American

beauty, Jennie Jerome, and of that brilliantly gifted and ill-fated Lord Randolph, who flashed cometlike across the late Victorian political firmament, Winston was for some time regarded as backward by his family. He did very badly at Harrow; and when, as something of a last resort, he chose the army as his career, he twice failed the entrance examination to Sandhurst, and his performance the third time around sufficed only to give him a cavalry cadetship and not, as he had hoped, entrance into the infantry. But his talents soon were revealed. They were not such as could be circumscribed by the institutional framework of a public school or military academy: love of action and adventure, independence, blazing ambition, a sardonic sense of humor, a burning curiosity about men and ideas that sought its own channels. Here, if ever, was the prototype of the inner-directed man (though his sensitivity to the English language, the one accomplishment he took away from Harrow, would have made him shudder, then and now, at this formulation).

These qualities drove him into the vortex of events, wherever it was to be found—into the North-West Frontier



Winston Churchill—"prototype of the inner-directed man."

—Vivienne, *Piz*