

ever, to assume that this sort of behavior was simply a consequence of a desperate desire to remain alive, though undoubtedly this was a crucial factor. As the following incident suggests, perhaps equally important was that in the atmosphere of bestiality many men lost all sense of proportion, all sense of reality as they had normally conceived it: One day a Jewish concentration camp inmate lost his shoes in the mud and asked his SS superior what to do. The SS man told him: "Go hang yourself!" The Jew thereupon "took off his belt and obediently hanged himself." This psychic transformation of the inmates, often involving the adoption of the attitudes of their persecutors, was in some ways the most tragic and gruesome consequence of the Nazi terror.

The third general impression derived from the book, like the first two, is not new but often overlooked: the utter fanaticism with which the Nazis pursued their aim of liquidating the

Jews. Even towards the end of the war, when any rational person must have realized that all was lost, the Nazis still were concerned to eliminate as many Jews as possible, and took every precaution to move Jews out of areas about to be occupied by Allied troops even though the German Army desperately needed all means of transportation. It is unlikely that fanatics of this kind would have been deterred from their destructive course had the Jews shown signs of resistance a year or two before the Warsaw ghetto uprising. General Stroop's artillery, used so devastatingly against the ghetto in April, 1943, could easily have been turned against it two years earlier.

There are infelicities in Donat's book, most notably in the next to last chapter in which his son's experiences are related, but these are minor. The over-all impact is shattering. It is a book that should be read by all who are troubled by man's capacity for inhumanity.

ABRAHAM ASCHER

The Question Is Not Answered

WHO SPEAKS FOR THE NEGRO?, by Robert Penn Warren. New York: Random House, 1965. xi, 454 pp. \$5.95.

Robert Penn Warren, ex-Southerner, novelist, literary critic, and one-time apologist for segregation writes here about the civil rights movement. Such a combination of author and subject should, one imagines, produce a perceptive and exciting volume. But it doesn't.

One's reaction to this book will depend upon how much one knows about the subject. For readers of the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Time*, even the *New Yorker*, it will make fascinating reading—reading apparently jammed with insights and trenchant analysis. But for knowledgeable readers it will

seem a poorly organized, impressionist rehash of what we already know. I found it boring.

Verisimilitude is sought through lengthy descriptions of physiognomy that reveal, in the outcome, extraordinarily little about the persons involved, and by writing that consists chiefly of long excerpts from taped interviews. "Depth" is obtained, generalizations suggested, by asking different respondents the same set of questions, and by a pseudo-"stream-of-consciousness" technique in which Warren constantly interrupts his accounts of interviews to say that while a particular person was talking to him it reminded him of what another respondent had said. The result is repetitive and distracting.

The book makes clear that no one person or organization can speak for all the Negroes but that underneath the variety of viewpoints there is a unity of goals. Neither these facts nor the particulars of the wide range of views among civil rights leaders, will be news to readers of *DISSENT*, though they may be to the businessmen and politicians who are bewildered and dismayed by their discovery that neither the Urban League nor the NAACP can speak for all Negroes in their communities.

Not only is there nothing new in this book, but what is said is not especially profound; and it is not always even correct. One can overlook such errors as the remark that Du Bois died in Nigeria, but one cannot overlook the superficial coupling of him with emigrationists like Garvey. One can overlook the fact that Aaron Henry is listed in the index as "Reverend," but in a book that aims to give incisive character analysis it is harder to over-

look the author having missed the extraordinary phenomenon of the Clarksdale, Miss., pharmacist living relaxed in the midst of constant threats to his life and property. Of course this sort of superficiality is to be expected, given Warren's limited knowledge of the movement and his journalistic approach (which is not to say that there aren't a handful of reporters who every month give more perceptive analyses of the civil rights movement than Warren has done anywhere in this book). What people told him for the tape recorder was, as Warren himself notes, not necessarily their real thinking, but what they wanted the public to hear. In at least two cases the respondents clearly succeeded in deceiving Warren as to what they really believed. In other cases Warren's questions succeeded only in eliciting the most obvious ideas. For example, the probing quality of Bayard Rustin's mind is altogether missing from Warren's account.

Who Speaks for the Negro? is the title Warren gives his book. But in spite of the massive quotations from numerous interviews, one receives the impression that the whole business is really a platform from which Warren himself can speak. In the final chapter, instead of pulling together and analyzing his data, the author attempts to interpret the civil rights movement to whites, and to advise them as to how they should regard it. Warren's views—especially on the question of the white man's guilt—are of interest in themselves, bearing as Warren does the burden of his own past defense of segregation. But Warren's personal opinions do not help answer the question posed by the title of his book.

The trouble I suppose, is that Warren is simply not addressing himself to people knowledgeable about civil rights. Yet even for them there are a few passages of high value—the illuminating interview with Ralph Ellison; the forthright remarks of Kenneth Clark (though some of the best ones are from the manuscript of Clark's *Dark Ghetto*); and especially the gem of an interview with which the book opens. Because Rev. Joe Carter of West Feliciana Parish, Louisiana, lacked the sophistication of the more experienced

leaders, Warren obtained from him a genuine account of what it was like to attempt to register in the rural counties of the Deep South.

The real significance of this book, lies not in its analysis of Negro thinking and leadership but as a reflection of the advance that Warren and other sensitive men of southern background have made in liberating themselves from what C. Vann Woodward has called "The Burden of Southern History."

AUGUST MEIER

Overorganized and Overroutinized

PEOPLE OR PERSONNEL: DECENTRALIZING AND THE MIXED SYSTEM, by Paul Goodman. New York: Random House, 1965. 247 pp. \$4.95.

IN A FEW HANDS: MONOPOLY IN AMERICA, by Estes Kefauver (with assistance of Irene Till). New York: Pantheon, 1965. 239 pp. \$4.95.

American liberalism has traditionally been of three kinds: reforming and thus oriented toward government; muckraking, with or without some specific political orientation; and anti-governmental pastoral utopian. The last two, which at times have had an affinity for each other, are always considered by those who write our "official" histories to be hopelessly unstylish and obviously inferior to their more solidly respectable relative. For those who need the evidence, two recent books by Estes Kefauver (published posthumously) and Paul Goodman

demonstrate how questionable is this official version.

Kefauver's *In a Few Hands*, prepared from the voluminous records of his Antitrust and Monopoly Subcommittee hearings, is along with Robert Engler's *The Politics of Oil* the best example of muckraking in recent times. Most of his targets are by now well-known examples of oligopoly and monopoly in industry. Documented here for popular consumption are the familiar cases of administered prices and deliberate scarcity in the steel industry; of the exorbitant profits