

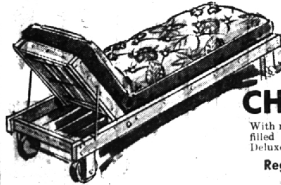
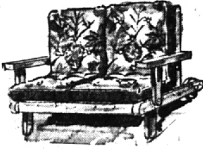
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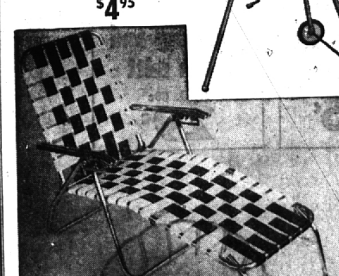
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# BOOKS and REVIEWS

## Algeria, The Realities

By Germaine Tillon. 115 pp. New York. Alfred A. Knopf.

Reviewed by BYRON FARWELL

"He who has a bicycle will one day have a car, and he who has an icebox can hope to get a refrigerator. But from whom who has nothing, there will be taken away even that which he thinks he has." Such is the philosophy of Germaine Tillon, in the opinion of civilized France and the United States toward Algeria. Algeria has nothing, has been given not enough, and is consequently worse—this is the thesis of the latest book on one of the world's most perplexing international situations.

To a problem of incredible complexity Tillon has raised additional complexities and has shown some of the light in a new light. From an ethnologist's point of view, Algeria is an archaic culture that has not succeeded in catching up with the swift advances of civilization, but has been trampled by them.

"The sudden and unprecedented increase in population, the simultaneous depletion of resources, the collapse of the economy, and contact with the heartbreaking suffering of foreign techniques are rocking to their foundations the archaic civilizations that have been subjected to their combined offensive."

EVEN THOSE efforts to assist the people of the underdeveloped countries have only fed the poverty, not the poor. "A few tubes of antibiotics and vaccines will suffice to capsize a centuries-old biological balance."

One of the problems of Algeria—as in other underdeveloped countries which have felt the touch of civilization—is the increasing population. In the new civilizations wealth is increasing, but not population; in the old, it is the population that is increasing, but not the wealth. Beneficent France has brought doctors and healing drugs; sprayed DDT, drained the marshes and outlawed tribal wars. The population has increased from two million in 1830 to its present nine million. Nor is birth control the answer, as Miss Tillon takes pains to point out.

IT IS NOT enough to keep people alive; they must be given education and jobs and the food and prosperity that comes with them. The author estimates it would take \$100 billion francs—which is a lot of anything, even cowrie shells—to save Algeria.

Since it is doubtful if France, the United States or the United Nations is going to invest much of anything in North Africa in the near future, the fate of Algeria looks bleak indeed. The book has little good to say about the policies or plans of the French government, the Algerian nationalists or the United States. Perhaps it is symptomatic of both the immensity and complexity of the problem that an ethnologist offers to solve what is, basically, a political situation. "Algeria, the Realities" is a thin (115 pages) book, provocative and disturbing in its presentation of a problem that belongs not only to France but to the entire Western world. It deserves to be read.

## The Northern Light

By A. J. Cronin. 308 pp. Boston. Little Brown & Co. \$4.00.

Reviewed by ROBIN BAHR

A. J. Cronin is a Scottish born doctor-turned writer. His books, 13 to date, have generally been very popular and well received, particularly "The Citadel" and "The Keys to the Kingdom." "The Northern Light," his latest, is also successful and is currently a best seller. The hero of the story is Henry Page, hard working, conscientious editor of "The Northern Light"—a small town English newspaper widely respected for its high standards and quality reporting. When a big London newspaper syndicate attempts to take over the paper, the ensuing struggle threatens not only Henry's paper, but his health, his marriage, and his children.

IT IS DIFFICULT to pin down just what is wrong with this story. The situation is credible and potentially dramatic. The story telling is competent and sincere. But the book is rather dull. Perhaps it is that the characters lack complication. Henry is just a little too honest, courageous, and fair. Nye, his adversary, just a little too conniving, cynical, and unscrupulous.

There is an attempt to explain Nye's malevolence with the description of his unloved childhood, but even that is too clearly defined. There are no interplay of forces, no subtleties, no conflicts within either man. They are simply good and bad. Although there is not a clear cut victory for good, the fight is colorless because the action of both sides is so predictable and consistent.

Author Cronin has written a readable book, but a book which lacks original and imaginative treatment.

ing educator to whom the praise he can garner. Were I in the envious business, it would be a dusty secondhand bookstore rather than sleek universities.

BUT ON TO the tests. Having no one to test but myself, I strapped my subject to an easy chair and began. The first test was on "Agriculture, Botany and Horticulture." Although Montagu assures the reader that the tests are not intended to make one feel inferior in any way, I felt an attack of inferiority after reading the heading of that list of questions, for no one knows less than I on this subject.

Although I had never heard of a cotyledonous plant and had blissfully forgotten what a pistil is, my overall score was "good"—which is better than "better than average" on Montagu's scoring chart. The next test was on "American Literature." Here I scored even higher, rating an "Excellent"—in spite of the fact that my wife regards me (correctly, I fear) as a complete dolt in this area.

THE EXPLANATION to all this is that some of the questions are on knowledge and some are on attitude, one way. This was all new to me. Now I understand how one does not need to know anything to be cultured—not much difference between a cultured person and a pedant, actually. Go through this book and you too, may find, like your reviewer, that you are stupid but cultured.

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