

# A calmer look at the nation's N

By KEMPER DIEHL

Confronted with Vice President Spiro Agnew, newsmen tend to lose their cool. They either despise or admire him beyond normal bounds.

Given this sort of interplay, it would seem impossible to find a probing, yet finely-balanced appraisal of the vice president during a campaign year. But that is just what Theo Lippman Jr. has achieved in *SPIRO AGNEW'S AMERICA* (Norton), a painstaking piece of research and calm interpretation which deserves wide attention—but which is likely to be obscured by better publicized hatchet jobs.

This is not to say that Lippman's portrait of Agnew is flattering.

An editorial writer for the Baltimore Sun, Lippman details Agnew's lacklustre early career, his bumbles as county executive of Baltimore County and his combativeness with opponents after he became governor. But he also tells of Agnew's initiatives in housing, gun control, urban renewal, constitutional reform and aid for Baltimore City—all of which were politically hazardous.

Lippman sees suburban America as an emerging center of decision in the political process and he views Agnew as a natural

spokesman for suburbia with all the strengths and weaknesses this implies.

The reader gains insight into Agnew's quarrel with the news media and the reason he

has been able to identify with deep seated complaints of suburban America; yet Lippman also illuminates Agnew's inability to communicate on the same wave length with activist blacks and students.



Vice President Agnew talks to the voters

*Order Book - ordered 4-10-72*

## Uncrowned queen and frontier

By CLARENCE J. LA ROCHE

She was christened Marie Dolores Eliza Rosanna Gilbert with some Irish and Spanish in her ancestry; and it was this ancestry that moved this beauty to take the name with which she comes down to us in history: Lola Montez.

She was in the United States only a decade, 1851-1861, but her years in California left an imprint on the Old West and gave her a place among the legendary women of the frontier. Over a hundred pages of Ishbel Ross' biography, *THE UNCROWNED QUEEN: LIFE OF LOLA MONTEZ* (Harper & Row), is devoted to her activities in the United States, principally in California and the west and New York State, where she died in Astoria, Jan. 17, 1861.

Meticulous research has gone into the volume, and the author, while bringing sympathy to her work, has done so without sentimentality. With the research, Miss Ross adds keen appraisal

and incisive evaluation. All this is tied together with a writing style that is both fast and fascinating. Ishbel Ross knows Scotland, where the Lola Montez story begins, for she was born there. She began newspaper work in Canada, later worked in New York City for the Herald-Tribune, was with the U.S. Office of War Information in World War II and has authored 22 books, most of them about famous women.

Lola Montez was born in Ireland, went to India with her young parents where she grew up fluent in Hindustani and Bengali, as well as English. At eight she was sent to Scotland to be educated, but her wild, fiery streak—already evident to her parents in India—brought rebellion at school. At 15, she was brought back to India by her mother, who announced she was to marry a wealthy 60-year-old, a supreme court judge. Lola's reaction was to smash tea sets, destroy the trousseau her mother had prepared, and elope with a young lieutenant.

She was off and running, and before she stopped some of the most prominent male figures in the world had felt her influence and romantic attachment—Franz List, Alexandre Dumas had her as mistress; the Russian imperial family was her friend; she knew Disraeli, Palmerston and Brougham, and came by her title "uncrowned queen" honestly, by being the friend and adviser of King Ludwig of Bavaria: he built her a palace and made her Countess of Landsberg.



Lola Montez

Portrait of "the uncrowned queen," from the book by Ishbel Ross and published by Harper & Row.

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## Diamond cartel plot for thriller

By STERLIN HOLMESLY

Gerald A. Browne, a well-traveled American author, has written a fairly good suspense novel in *11 HARROWHOUSE* (Arbor House), a yarn centered on the world diamond monopoly.

From 11 Harrowhouse St. in London's Mayfair district operates *The System*, which controls most of the world's diamond supply from the mines to wholesalers. To keep prices high, *The System* keeps about \$13 billion in gem-class stones locked in its Harrowhouse vault and off the market.

Enter J. Clyde Massey, an

American billionaire, who wants the hoard stolen. He chooses Chesser, an expatriate American who is a lesser dealer for *The System*. Chesser includes his Swedish mistress, Maren, and an exiled black militant from the States.

Browne mixes this strange crew with masters of the cartel, an intricate plot for the gigantic theft, the theft itself, a big doublecross, escape and flight across Europe.

The plotting is suspenseful but lags in spots, the characters mostly believable, the dialogue choice and the action varied.

## Travels in Canada

There are excellent descriptions of beautiful country by William Hillen in *BLACKWATER RIVER* (Norton), a story of travels along a Canadian stream still not spoiled by too much civilization.

Some of the stories of animals and the fishing along the stream are outstanding.—B.C.

# ook at the nation's No. 2 man

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has been able to identify with deep seated complaints of suburban America; yet Lippman also illuminates Agnew's inability to communicate on the same wave length with activist blacks and students.

And, if anyone is wondering, Agnew is not a creation of his writers. In fact, he crafted the gut portions of his 1969 New Orleans speech himself, including the blast at "an effete corps of impudent snobs who characterize themselves as intellectuals."

Readers preparing themselves for the 1972 campaign will find two recently published guides to be of considerable assistance.

One is **POLITICAL BROKERS** (Liveright), a collection of studies of important pressure group organizations and their special effect on the political process—especially in races for the House and Senate. The research was performed by National Journal experts and their essays examine in detail such organizations as Americans for Democratic Action, Americans for Constitutional Action, the American Medical Political Action Committee, Committee on Political Education and Common Cause.

Another new reference aid is **THE ALMANAC OF AMERICAN POLITICS** (Gambit) which is the work of three young Harvard graduates who have hit a deep vein of interest, especially in the Washington area. They have put together a political roadmap which examines in detail each Congressional District and provides an exhaustive battery of key vote ratings on each and every senator and congressman.



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# queen and frontier woman

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Mysterious, beautiful, captivating, wild . . . these are only a few adjectives to describe Lola, whose trademark was a small hand whip to go with her lashing tongue. She may have died young at 43, but she was very old in the wide experiencing of living to the fullest.

## Excellent work by black poet

Good poets are hard to find, but Mari Evans, young in the field, has proved with **I AM A BLACK WOMAN** (Morrow) that she fits the picture.

The slim volume of poetry has tremendous rhythm and pertinent subject matter. Miss Evans writes about herself sometimes—but with profound perspective that extends her vision to the total community, and the black community.

Take this sample:

'I am a black woman  
the music of my song  
some sweet arpeggio of tears  
is written in a minor key  
and I  
can be heard humming in the night'

Or this:

"There is no beauty  
to the world I see  
save moments stopped in  
time  
preserved  
in unreality"

Miss Evans, meanwhile, is working in television as producer-director of "The Black Experience," a weekly presentation in Indianapolis. She is also currently writer - in - residence at Indiana University - D.W.

## BEST SELLERS

1972 New York Times News Service

This analysis is based on reports obtained from more than 125 bookstores in 64 communities of the United States.

### FICTION

1. The Winds of War. Wouk.
2. The Word. Wallace.
3. The Exorcist. Blatty.
4. Wheels. Hailey.
5. The Assassins. Kazan.
6. The Day of the Jackal. Forsyth.
7. The Blue Knight. Wambaugh.
8. Message From Malaga. MacInnes.
9. Monday the Rabbi Took Off. Kemelman.
10. The Betsy. Robbins.

### GENERAL

1. The Game of the Foxes. Farago.
2. Eleanor and Franklin. Lash.
3. Tracy and Hepburn. Kanin.
4. The Defense Never Rests. Bailey with Aronson.
5. The Moon's A Balloon. Niven.
6. The Double-Cross System. Masterman.
7. Bring Me A Unicorn. Lindberg.
8. Open Marriage. O'Neill.
9. Souls on Fire. Wiesel.
10. Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee. Brown.



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