



CONTENTS

EDITORS' NOTE

OPINION AND COMMENT

Editorials	4
A role for Japan to live up to Negro Olympics boycott is off target	
Reviews	8-20
Book: Henri Troyat's <i>Tolstoy</i> , reviewed by Webster Schott	
Movie: <i>Far from the Madding Crowd</i> , reviewed by Richard Schickel	
Theater: <i>There's a Girl in My Soup</i> , reviewed by Tom Prideaux	
Letters to the Editors	30A
The Feminine Eye	30B
More monsters, please! By Shana Alexander	

THE WEEK'S NEWS AND FEATURES

McNamara Goes—Big Shoes for the U.S. to Fill	34
Exclusive White House pictures of the Defense Secretary at work. "You can have anything you want," said L.B.J. By Hugh Sidey	
On the Newsfronts of the World	42
A requiem at Dak To. A new dam in Pakistan. A flood in Portugal. A speech by De Gaulle	
Close-Up	49
The world's best-paid writer, Harold Robbins. "There's no question—I'm the best there is." By Thomas Thompson	
Modern Living	67
Sweden tries rocket mail—and ends up in a swamp	
Fashion Strictly from Hungary	72
Some stylish surprises from east of the Iron Curtain. Photographed by Norman Parkinson. The girls of Budapest. By Sally Kirkland	
Medicine	87
For student doctors, it's Sim the deathproof patient	
Special Report	94A
Aden: case history of a terrorist campaign. By George DeCarvalho	
Rulers	101
Franco of Spain turns 75—and goes fishing. By Bill Wise	
Toynbee on America	108
The eminent British historian surveys the U.S. scene: Vietnam, race relations, hippies, dissent	
The Drama of Masada	120
In Israel, archaeologists' finds recall an ancient night of terror. "Not a man failed in his terrible resolve." By Marion Steinmann	
Theater	128
A new company brings a big new deal for <i>Dolly</i> —Hello, Pearl! A bedrock Christian makes the show a rousing love-in. By Tom Prideaux	
Miscellany	138

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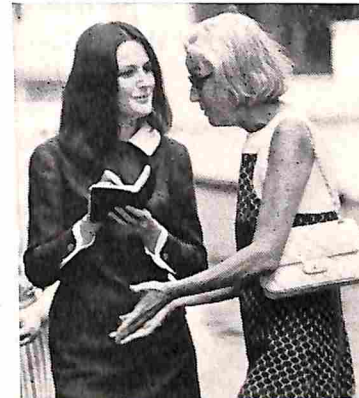
COVER—JOHN DOMINIS 3—NORMAN PARKINSON 42, 43—CO RENTMEESTER 44—STAN WAYMAN
44A—TERENCE SPENCER 44B—LES REPORTERS ASSOCIATES exc. rt. cen. EDDY VAN DER VEEN
49 through 63—LOOMIS DEAN 67, 68—PRESSENS BILD from BIRNBACK 87, 90—J. R. EYERMAN
94A, 95, 96—ENRICO SARSINI 101, 102, 103, 104—DOMINIQUE BERRETTY 108 through 119—MAR-
VIN LICHTNER 120, 121—courtesy PROF. YIGAL YADIN 122—ELIOT ELISOFON exc. bot. courtesy
PROF. YIGAL YADIN 124—t. lt. BOB GOMEL; rt. courtesy PROF. YIGAL YADIN 128 through
132—JOHN DOMINIS 135—SAM SIEGEL—JOHN DOMINIS 136—JOHN DOMINIS 138—JOHN WUMMER

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'You're All Insane
But She Says Yes'

The essay on Hungarian fashions in this issue is the work of Fashion Editor Sally Kirkland, Norman Parkinson (a well-known English fashion photographer), Nadine Liber of our Paris Bureau and Parkinson's assistant, Barry Weller. Sally chose Hungary partly because its up-to-date fashions would surprise the West, and partly because it is the home of Klára Rotschild, the most famous couturier in Eastern Europe. Mme. Rotschild promised to supply a dozen pretty models and the LIFE team went to Budapest—where their troubles began.

Fashion photography in Budapest is uncomplicated and swift ("They just stand them in a corner and snap them with a flash," says Parkinson), and Mme. Rotschild had assumed Norman could take all the pictures he needed in a single day. Norman and Sally wanted to photograph the models on location and needed more than a week. But the models were under government orders, and after the first day's shooting they left for a state-sponsored fashion show in Bulgaria. "What was there to do?" says Sally. "Next morning Norman and Nadine and I simply went out on the streets and started buttonholing pretty girls. We couldn't speak a word of Hungarian, but we had an interpreter." "The worst of it was," says Norman, "the interpreter was never around when you needed her. I'd tap a pretty girl on the shoulder and she'd spin around and look scared. Then I'd spin around—and no interpreter." It was nerve-racking, but it worked. Of the two dozen girls they talked to, only one failed to show up at the hotel. The rest came to drink ceremonial coffee with Sally, and the story began to take shape. "Once we got going everyone was delightful," Sally says. "We were taking pictures in a little railroad station outside Budapest. Norman had a mirror set up on one track to reflect sunlight into the room. The stationmaster suddenly got excited and said that a train was due on that track. Before we had time to move the mirror he came back and told us, never mind, he'd switched the train instead."



SALLY (RIGHT) FINDS MODEL

One of the pictures (last one in the color essay) shows a lovely young actress on the banks of the Danube at dawn. According to the plan, she and the interpreter were to meet the LIFE team at a nightclub near the river at 3 a.m.; Norman would photograph her at 3:45. But at midnight Sally and Nadine went to the club to reserve a table and, to their horror, the actress walked in accompanied by a young man. How to ask her to wait until three? Sally speaks English, and some French. Nadine speaks English, French and Russian. The young man speaks German and Hungarian. The actress speaks Hungarian. "We sat around for an hour," says Sally, "smiling and nodding at each other, feeling like fools until Norman and Barry walked in. They couldn't help." "I got out a pad and pencil," says Norman, "and, with drawings, started telling the longest story I know. It's about three turtles. Takes 20 minutes. They seemed to think it funny." At last, Barry, who had been canvassing the other guests, came up with a man who spoke English and German. Norman explained the problem in English, the man explained it to the actress's escort in German, the escort explained it to the actress in Hungarian, and she assented graciously through the same channels. "I think you're all insane but she says 'Yes,'" said the man to Parkinson, and hurried back to his table.

George P. Hunt
GEORGE P. HUNT,
Managing Editor

