

support for shaky regimes. But how much participation can there be in countries whose economies, oil-rich though many now are, extend in a real sense to only a fraction of the citizenry? Hudson does not say. His capsule surveys of the politics of individual Arab states have some shortcomings: Tunisia, which now faces a struggle over who shall succeed Habib Bourguiba, is cited as the most stable of all Arab countries; the Palestinians' views are uncritically accepted and their unity exaggerated; failure to examine the role of the non-Arab southern Sudanese makes the description of Sudan short-sighted. However, the portraits of Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, and Saudi Arabia are excellent. And in sketching the recent politics of such little-known new states as the People's Democratic Republic of South Yemen and the United Arab Emirates, Hudson is an enlightening guide. His book, a good start, should encourage successors.

LYING: Moral Choice in Public and Private Life
by Sissela Bok
Pantheon, 1978
326 pp. \$10.95
L of C 77-88779
ISBN 0-394-41370-0

Her main task in this book, as blunt as truth, was not, writes Harvard Medical School ethics teacher Sissela Bok, "to produce a sordid catalogue of falsehoods and corrupt dealings." Nor was it "to go over once again what each day's newspaper reveals about deception in high places." Her interest is in the "vexing dilemmas of ordinary life . . . which beset those who think that their lies are too insignificant to matter much, and others who believe that lying can protect someone or benefit society." Appendixes skillfully excerpting works by Augustine, Aquinas, Bacon, Grotius, Kant, and others occupy 38 pages of the text, but the remaining argument is Bok's own. A moralist who avoids moralizing, she analyzes the effects on trust of lies of various kinds. She examines the excuses and justifications put forward by public officials (including honest ones) for lying "in the national interest"; by physicians, lawyers, and other professionals "protecting" patients, clients, and peers; and by social scientists practicing deception in the name of research. Her conclusion: "Some lies—notably minor white lies and emergency lies rapidly acknowl-

edged—may be more *excusable* than others, but only those deceptive practices which can be openly debated and consented to in advance are *justifiable* in a democracy.”

Arts & Letters

**THE PAINTINGS OF
CHARLES BIRD KING
(1785–1862)**

by Andrew J. Cosentino
Smithsonian, 1977
214 pp. \$22.50
L of C 77-608258
ISBN 0-87474-366-2

Charles Bird King is remembered today for his series of 130 portraits of American Indians, with and without their war paint. These sophisticated, ethnologically accurate studies, commissioned by the Department of War, were done mostly in Washington, D.C. as various tribal delegations visited to press their claims against the U.S. government or be feted by their White Fathers. Most of the paintings were destroyed in a fire at the Smithsonian in 1865, three years after the artist's death. Fortunately for posterity, King himself had made replicas of many, and others were preserved in lithograph copies. They were shown in a 1977–78 exhibition organized by the National Collection of Fine Arts. The show also included—and this book presents—King's *other* portraits (Mrs. John Quincy Adams at her harp, Daniel Webster, John C. Calhoun, President James Monroe comfortably disposed in the East Room) with some romantic landscapes of Harper's Ferry, W. Va., and the environs of Milan, Italy.

PETERSBURG

by Andrei Bely
Indiana Univ. Press, 1978
356 pp. \$17.50
L of C 77-74442
ISBN 0-253-34410-7

The “greatest masterpieces of the 20th century,” wrote Vladimir Nabokov, “are, in this order, Joyce's *Ulysses*; Kafka's *Transformation*; Bely's *Petersburg*; and the first half of Proust's fairy tale *In Search of Lost Time*.” Until now, English readers had no way of judging for themselves why Nabokov accorded so high an honor to Andrei Bely's forgotten 1916 novel—in which the central figure is the city of Petersburg as perceived during the ticking of an anarchist's bomb. The bomb, secreted in a sardine tin and intended for a high czarist official by none other than his own son, eventually explodes in the