

table sharing of income; the patterns of government-fostered redistribution before and after the 1968 Revolution did not change much. Workers within the modern sector of the economy saw their living standard improve, but their incomes were already higher than those of subsistence farmers.

—*Susan Kaufman Purcell ('77)*

**BLACK CULTURE AND
BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS:
Afro-American Folk Thought
from Slavery to Freedom**

by Lawrence W. Levine
Oxford, 1977, 522 pp. \$15.95
L of C 76-9223
ISBN 0-19-502088-X

Challenging the long-accepted academic view that slavery destroyed black culture, Levine holds that black oral tradition, folk heroes, legends and other lore, sacred and secular music, all flow together into a rich cultural stream. The idea of a historic black culture is not new; black intellectuals have been insisting on it for years. What is original and fresh is Levine's use of the techniques of the folklorist and anthropologist in the cause of writing a history of the minds of the mass of Afro-Americans rather than of the often-studied black elite. An important example of the newest of the "new history" of popular and mass culture, Levine's book extends even to black humor, including such variants as "playing the dozens"—a game of verbal taunts in which the winner is the one who keeps his cool.

—*Thomas Cripps ('76)*

DEFENDING AMERICA

by James Schlesinger et al.
Basic Books, 1977
255 pp. \$13.95
L of C 76-43479
ISBN 0-465-01585-9

The most thorough critique of the Nixon-Kissinger policy of détente available today, this collection of essays from San Francisco's Institute for Contemporary Studies is unified by a common conservative philosophy and a prevailing pessimism. James Schlesinger, Theodore Draper, Walter Laqueur, Gregory Grossman, Albert Wohlstetter, and Leonard Schapiro are among the 13 contributors to sections on the political and economic implications of détente, on the current U.S. military posture, and on human rights. Robert Conquest bluntly concludes that "a stable [Soviet-U.S.] truce based on mutual distrust is preferable to delusions of friendship accompanied by and encouraging political and military initiatives by the Kremlin, which increase the dangers of both war and totalitarian victory."

—*Samuel F. Wells, Jr. ('77)*