

## Off The Shelf



## SERAPH ON THE SUWANEE

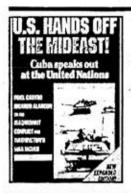
Zora Neale Hurston HarperPerennial New York, \$9.95

It may be unfair to say that by the time Zora Neale finished this novel—her last accepted for publication—she had stretched her talent to the breaking point. Unlike her previous novels, which were anchored in Black folklore, Seraph is a radical departure; employing white characters and their pallid culture.

Arvay Henson and Jim Neserve are the protagonists in this tale that unravels in a turpentine town in west Florida around the turn of the century. Endowed with a sizable inferiority complex, Arvay seeks fulfillment through sexual fantasies with her sister's husband. As the years go by these daydreams are overtaken by her commitment to religion which is subsequently replaced by temper tantrums. All of these neuroses serve to keep the men at bay, at least until big Jim enters the picture. He pours turpentine in her eyes, rapes her and: then marries her.

Deconstructionists could have a field day with this novel, especially with the names and the sexual ambiguity. After a while you wonder who's zooming who, though all such pondering is hardly worth the effort in this largely experimental enterprise. Only those who are determined to devour all of the Hurston canon need struggle through this morbid quagmire.

Was Zora zonked out or just trying to make a fast buck? Whatever the motive, it is a good thing she left behind such treasures as Their Eyes Were Watching God and Jonah's Gourd Vine, because Seraph on the Suwanee would have been better off in the Suwanee.



## U.S. HANDS OFF THE MIDEAST!

Cuba Speaks Out at the United Nations Pathfinder New York, \$9.95

here has been an outpouring of books on the Middle East but few have the immediacy of this one from our man in Havana and the Cuban ambassador to the United Nations. When the UN Security Council voted back in January on whether to support the U.S. aim to invade Iraq, only Cuba and Yemen voted "No." In this little book you get some of the low-down on Cuba's longstanding opposition to U.S. imperialism and particularly its most recent swagger into the Middle East.

In veteran socialist Mary Alice Waters' Introduction, the ground rules are established and she thoroughly outlines how the U.S., through its control and manipulation of the UN, has shaped world opinion and systematically prepared for war against Iraq. This point and others are expanded on by Castro and Alarcon as they present a series of resolutions and show how the U.S. violated each one of them in its march toward aggression.

Along with several pages of notes, the book offers an extensive chronology of the events leading up to the war, from July to November 1990. All in all the book is a prophetic preface to a war that from the U.S. viewpoint was inevitable, and one that Cuba did all she could to forestall.



## VOICES IN THE MIRROR

An Autobiography Gordon Parks Doubleday New York, \$22.95

For more than fifty years Gordon Parks has been enshrined as a national treasure. His photographic genius (the gripping portraits from the pages of Life Magazine) earned him the first notice of acclaim. And this gift of imagery was subsequently extended to filmdom where his directorial skills were instrumental in the success of The Learning Tree, Leadbelly and the Shaft movies. Not content to rest on these accomplishments, Parks branched out into music, creating large orchestral suites and popular songs.

Having written the book upon