

Theodore Roszak's model for a monument to *The Unknown Political Prisoner*: like all 199 models entered in the American section of this international competition, it is 22 inches high, with final scale and medium to be decided after the site has been determined. Roszak's is one of eleven works (on show at the Museum of Modern Art) picked by the U.S. jury to compete in the final judging in London this spring.

By Henry McBride

# UNKNOWN POLITICAL MONUMENT

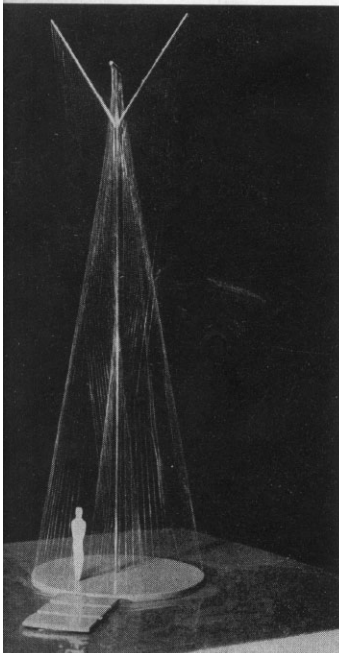
**A**t first contact with the idea of the proposed monument to "The Unknown Political Prisoner", one's eyebrows unconsciously rise. Not in protest, of course. In inquiry. What kind of a political prisoner is this, thus to be canonized? Naturally, it must be one of our own kind imprisoned by the enemy, for—just as naturally—we should not be apt to restore to grace the enemies we may have captured ourselves. But is there some veiled insinuation in the project against the imprisonment of any publishers of opinions however contrary they may be to the interests of the State? No, that could not be. The title for the new monument does not imply that in the least. As one's fears, upon acquaintance with the idea, gradually subside, one has to smile, a trifle uncomfortably, to be sure, at the threat that lingers in that word "political" in these days. One's temperature immediately increases the moment it is employed. However, in the present case, its usage appears to be comparatively innocent.

One has all the more confidence in the plan since it emanates from London. Albion is not so *perfidie* as it was once thought to be. It's another case of getting to know the accused. This time certainly the English are not up to tricks. They simply couldn't be, not with honest Henry Moore on the committee for the competition; along with A. J. T. Kloman, Sir Herbert Read, E. C. Gregory, Roland Penrose and Sir John Rothenstein. It is the Institute of Contemporary Arts of London, which is conducting the contest. \$32,200 (in sterling) in prizes will be awarded. Four winners will receive \$2,800 each, and from these four the final winner of the grand prize of \$9,800 will be chosen. In addition there are eight honorable mentions at \$700

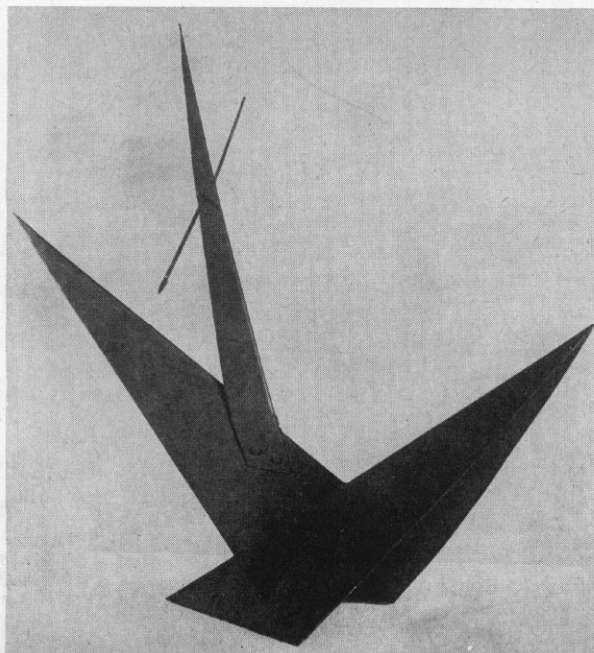
each and eighty "accepted entries" who get \$70 each. Such sums of money are attractive, even to sculptors, who are generally well paid if they are paid at all, so the response has been enthusiastic. There have been 607 applications from Germany, 512 from England, 400 from America, 304 from France, 296 from Italy, 135 from Japan, 112 from Austria, 55 from Australia, 38 from Chile, 44 from the Argentine, and so on from most of the known countries of the world—with the exception of Russia. Russia was asked not only to participate in the competition but to be represented on the international jury of awards, but did not reply to the invitation. There may eventually be some explanation for this silence and then again there may not. And anyway we must wonder amazedly at the vast number who did respond. We were scarcely aware that there were so many sculptors in the world.

And did they respond to the money or the subject? One must be generous and believe it to be the subject, and yet, looking at it as hopefully as possible, the subject does seem strained. A horse, a horse, a kingdom for a horse! But mere wishing produced no horse for King Richard III. Nor does mere wishing produce entirely satisfactory subjects for modern war monuments. Not that we lack heroes, but that we have too many of them! Thousands of young men did wonderful deeds and died for their country, but a monument commemorating thousands practically makes each hero anonymous. That, so far, has been the result. We wound up with monuments to Unknown Soldiers. These again with a sense of strain have been put to political use. Every visiting governor of a state [Continued on page 64]

Lippold's cage-like wire construction includes a little paper figure to indicate his projected scale.



Calder's iron gallows-like model was also approved by the U.S. jury for the \$100,000 competition which is sponsored by the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London.



Model of wire and plastics submitted by Naum Gabo, Russian-born pioneer Constructivist.

