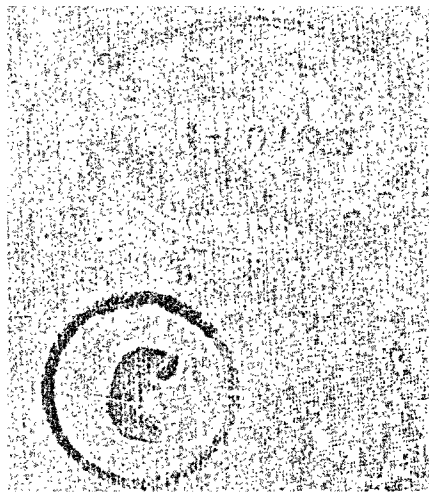
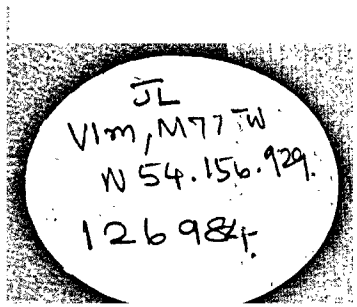



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THE TWENTIETH Century

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THE TWENTIETH CENTURY
26 BLOOMSBURY WAY, LONDON, W.C.1

12-6-1984



EDITORIAL

Comparatively few people noticed that the fiftieth anniversary of the *Entente Cordiale* was celebrated recently. The ceremonies remained almost private. A French delegation came across to London and, although there was a meeting at Westminster, a cocktail party at Buckingham Palace and a few pleasant occasions at the French Institute, the interest aroused never rose above the tepidly official. The anniversary of the *Entente Cordiale* was, in fact, celebrated by the fall of Dien Bien Phu. That filled the headlines. It was, in the first place, a French disaster; but it was also symbolic, indirectly, of the real nature of Anglo-French relations. We stumble along, side by side, each pained at the blunders of the other and, on the face of it, as far apart as we have ever been. Officially, we have a treaty of alliance; never before have such numbers of Englishmen studied French or so many Frenchmen known something of England and English; we keep telling each other that we are the true representatives of Western civilization; yet on no single issue is there solidarity between France and England, although everyone declares what a good thing this would be if it could be achieved.

We have assembled the articles which follow in an honest, if fragmentary, attempt to mark the anniversary of the *Entente* in our own way. They are written by English and French people passionately interested in Anglo-French relations, who do not necessarily agree with each other, but who do not attempt to cover up the difficulties or discrepancies in their thought with pious sentiment. There is little point in mentally singing the *Marseillaise* and *God Save the Queen* one after the other, as some well-disposed people do on both sides of the Channel, and then sinking back into platitudes about French moral corruption and English hypocrisy. The French are not simply morally corrupt and the English are not simply hypocritical. If, as has so often been said, Anglo-French relations are like a long-drawn-out, intermittent, unsatisfactory love affair, the complexity of the situation can be better expressed by saying that the English Francophile is in love with an old and beautiful schizophrenic, a loose woman with *bourgeois* virtues, a

republican with a despotic sense of grandeur, an internationalist whose universality is profoundly French, a great intelligence which is often at the mercy of fools; whereas the French Anglophile is trying to embrace a rather bewildering mermaid, whose pretty pink face is marred by a self-righteous pout, who is strangely mute and commonplace when she is not intensely poetic, who tails off into cold fishiness when the lover presses his suit, and who obstinately and rightly refuses to come out on to dry land.

This being so – one might say – there is not much to be done about Anglo-French relations. We shall go on living at cross-purposes until the end of time or until the Third World War. But the fact is that international relations have hardly begun to exist as yet. The *Entente*, in so far as it was a reality, was an old-fashioned ceremonious liaison, without any true intimacy. And so it will remain as long as Frenchmen like M. Bidault confuse true national feeling with an archaic chauvinism, or an Englishman such as Lord Hailsham can write in the Press that the spectacle of French moral turpitude is 'very moving and in a sense very gratifying to British pride'. But, as the following articles testify, there are Frenchmen and Englishmen more enlightened than M. Bidault or Lord Hailsham. Such Frenchmen and such Englishmen know that France could not be France without England, and that England could not be England without France. Anyone who really gets to know the two countries can never again limit himself to either.

But this is not to say that France and England should cuddle down together in a warm nest of 'Western civilization', whil the cold winds of 'barbarism' blow outside. In an astonishing lapse, Sir Harold Nicolson spoke, at the French Institute, of coming closer to defend ourselves against 'the Scythians and the Cherokees'. This is simply to multiply M. Bidault's chauvinism or Lord Hailsham's insularity by two; it is also tantamount to a parent denying his own children. America was a European invention, and all the revolutionary movements in the world, including the Russian, can be traced back to France and England. Let us be rude about our children; let us hold our own against them; let us even admit that they have, in some respects, left us behind; but let us retain some parental dignity and not deny that they are our blood relations. It is stupid to be British without being pro-French; it is just as stupid to be Anglo-French and anti-world.

FRANCE THE DISAPPOINTMENT

D. R. Gillie

France plays so important a part in the imaginations and hopes of civilized men that she is inevitably the occasion of disappointments all the more bitter for the enthusiasm she has previously aroused. The France of the Marne became ten years later the France of the Ruhr and of Poincaré. The New France of 1944 has become the tired France of 1954, unable to find a stable Government. But the disappointment of thirty years ago was at least caused by two positive attitudes – both marked by resolute pertinacity. We were shocked that the magnificent *poilu*, or his surviving brother or father, was trying to reconstruct Europe on the basis of what we considered an inhumanly legalistic demand for a pound of flesh. Since then we have become more critical about our own policy of the '20's and come to realize that the softer attitude of subsequent French Governments was not altogether as advantageous as we thought at the time. Our present disappointment is of a different kind. It contrasts the behaviour of an élite in a crisis with the behaviour of a nation under conditions which we have come to consider normal, a hope with insufficient achievement. It is a much more serious disappointment, though from its very nature perhaps an unjust one. No nation can fairly be equated with a heroic élite, nor probably do most of its members ever wish it to be so emphatically New. But in this case some at least of the French felt more keenly than any foreigner the hope and are feeling much more keenly the disappointment. Each in his own way, most Frenchmen are feeling the discontent.

It is natural and right that if France gets the benefit, as she has done since the war, of books expressing the hope she has inspired, she should also take the literary consequences of the disappointments. The disappointed books are not necessarily inspired by less affection. Mr Ronald Matthews, in his *Death of the Fourth Republic*,* has given one of the most readable accounts

* Eyre and Spottiswoode, 18s.

of France in the last fifteen years, and also one which reflects vividly changing emotions of those years, his own as well as those of the French. The effect is all the more depressing because he nostalgically calls up the persons and situations which encouraged his hopes, without submitting his original or remembered judgment to the reassessment that later events might suggest. Is it really true, for instance, that if Léon Blum had been in France in the winter of 1944–5 instead of in a concentration camp in Germany, he could have cured the Socialist Party of its sectarian anticlericalism and so made possible a French Labour Party capable of governing by itself? Léon Blum's hold on his own party at the best of times can easily be exaggerated. The man who, when Prime Minister in 1937, told a public meeting that he and his fellow-Ministers were in office to 'satisfy your desires' was not made to do battle with the complacent bigots of his organization. Besides, the Socialists who had succumbed to the blandishments of Pétain were precisely those who were least attached to the old-fashioned fundamentalism of rationalism. It was those of us who expected this characteristic strain of French thought and feeling to have disappeared who were wrong and brought our disappointment upon ourselves.

Mr Matthews's portrait of General de Gaulle is eminently sympathetic, though critical. But it is none the less the General who is his prime disappointment. Like many other people, he is deeply impressed with the lost opportunities of his premiership, with his failure to establish contact with the French people and to have done much more than he actually did. This view is so widespread that it is becoming urgent that it should be re-examined. The General was certainly bound from the first by his own limitations, but he was also, surely, limited in his range of action by other factors. It was not only France's system of transport that was fragmentary when he came into power, but almost more seriously the executive mechanism. Vichy had been a terrible temptation for efficient bureaucrats thwarted during the last years of the Third Republic. While the Resistance threw up some brilliant men, it also produced a great many incompetent though well-meaning amateurs, whose subsequent elimination has been no loss. Apart from that, the General's relations with the Consultative Assembly do not at all suggest that he could rely on acquiescence in his opinions because of the enthusiasm he inspired as the

Frenchman who never lost hope, preserved France's place in the alliance and organized her participation in victory. The Resistance groups were not meek either at the centre or in the provinces. It should be possible for a preliminary assessment to be made from evidence already available. It is important for the perspective of all the subsequent years that we should have a more exact picture of how difficult it was to govern France at all from 1944 to 1946.

The failure to apply in France the rigorous financial medicine with which M. Gutt successfully consolidated the Belgian franc is rightly treated as a turning point by Mr Matthews. It was in March 1945 that the General finally chose between the milder – and in fact ineffective – policy recommended by his Minister of Finance, M. René Pleven, and the stringent proposals of his Minister of Economic Affairs, M. Mendès-France. Mr Matthews certainly does not leave the impression that M. Mendès-France's policy would have been easy to carry out, but he evidently thinks that it was within the realm of practical possibility. There are, in fact, good judges who think M. Mendès-France was reasoning on right lines and that M. Pleven was mistaken, but still believe that the General could not have made a different decision, because only for M. Pleven's policy was a detailed administrative plan available. The fact that French Governments are so short-lived seems to incline Frenchmen to believe that great changes of policy can be carried out far more quickly than is often the case. Otherwise how maintain any hope that changes can be made? This self-sustaining view does lead to some unjust judgments on men for not doing things that they never had time to do. M. Gutt's policy in Belgium was prepared in detail, and not only in principle, long before liberation. It may well be that the day in March 1945 when the General finally approved M. Pleven's plan, and M. Mendès-France resigned, brought in fact only the formal ratification of a course that a combination of circumstance and inclination had long made inevitable.

It is worth dwelling on these points because our assessment of what is now obviously wrong with France depends on our view of how France reached her present condition. How far are we angry because our wishful thinking has proved unsound? How far because a justified expectation has not been fulfilled? How far should we be feeling not anger at all, but grave concern? For the older generation of British observers, the problem

of France still crystallizes in the question: why was the France of 1940 so different from the France of 1914? It is necessary constantly to remind ourselves that the biggest determining factor in the behaviour of 1940, and again of 1954, was that of 1914. In the 1914–8 war France lost 18·2 per cent. of the men of military age, Germany 15·5 per cent. and the United Kingdom 8·8 per cent. Yet while many of those who had fought in the First World War were still of military age, Germany was again a menace to her neighbours. This has been so often advanced as a ground for sympathy that its importance as a factor in a whole range of social, economic, political and moral problems is often forgotten. A Frenchman does not have to know these statistics in order to be subtly inclined by this experience towards the conclusion that great efforts do not pay. The same sad conclusion was inculcated by the events of 1940, when it was France, the country whose citizens had made the sacrifice of military service in peace time, that paid the main penalty in the West for Hitler's initial victories. Many young men who had been in uniform in 1937–8 and had been called up again after the German occupation of Prague in the spring of 1939, found themselves amongst the million prisoners of war who spent the years 1940–4 in Germany. The demoralizing safety-first strategy which played so big a part in bringing about the defeat of 1940 was itself the consequence of the appalling blood-letting of 1914–18. In the Gare de l'Est, from which more French soldiers have gone to their deaths than from any other railway station, an enormous picture, painted and presented by the father of a young man killed in the First World War, used to hang above the entrance to one of the platforms. It showed the conscripts setting out in August 1914, some in tears and some in wild excitement; the total impression of this bad but vivid work was of an immense burst of national energy. The picture was removed a few years ago because it was in danger of falling to pieces, but it might easily have been taken down because it had become exasperating. The mobilization of 1939 took place in an atmosphere almost of mourning, sweetened, in Paris at least, by a very memorable kindliness of people smitten by a common disaster. Something of the old vitality of Paris exploded again at the moment of liberation after four years of the constraint of German occupation. But Parisians and Frenchmen in general could not but be aware, when they saw the Allied armies stream across France, and

then saw the endless train of their supplies following them, that for the moment France was outclassed.

The tremendous blows, first to France's vitality in the First World War and then to her self-esteem and self-confidence in the Second, left her body politic debilitated. This debility brought out all the weak points of her social and political morality. It encouraged self-protective instincts as against initiative, and comforting short-sighted illusions as against resolute realism. Already before the war a peculiar combination of nationalism and neutralism was noticeable, an aspiration towards a happy out-of-the-world Scandinavian condition (Scandinavia was still an uninvaded elysium) to be achieved with flags flying, but with the renunciation of all obligations. Marshal Pétain's prestige before the war was based not on his ability to win victories, but on his reputation – as Paul Valéry put it when introducing him into the French Academy – of being the general who knew that bullets killed, and therefore did not expose his soldiers to them. His person united the satisfactions of militarism and pacifism. In a country which offers naturally so much *douceur de vivre* these were particularly dangerous states of mind.

Already in the '30's there were reactions against this downward course. No one who lived in France could fail to be impressed by the sustained individual energy in a society which was showing serious signs of decay. It was easy indeed to attach too great hopes to this in a world where organization was playing an ever greater part, but at least it gave promise that when organized a source of power would not be lacking. Unfortunately for Western democracy, it was almost inevitable that the reactions against national decline should also be against *bourgeois* parliamentarianism, that they should feed Communism on the left and the 'Leagues' on the right, that is, various semi-Fascist and Fascist organizations. The Popular Front, under Léon Blum's leadership, was an attempt to make the old Republic once again the vehicle of hopes and enthusiasm, and foreshadowed in some respects the hopes and failures of the new Republic of 1944. The Jacobin tradition uniting patriotism and social revolution was refurbished. The stale atmosphere was to be quickened by a revival of all the romantic revolutionary imagery typified by Delacroix's great picture of 'Liberty leading the People on the Barricades' in the Louvre and Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*. It was in preparing the 1936

elections that the Communist Party finally broke with international pacifism and re-discovered the Marseillaise. When the Popular Front began to break down the Communists attempted to monopolize the right to speak in the name of the French people, as they were to do ten years later; there was the same disparity between the Socialists, who, even if white-collared, represented the salaried outlook, and the Socialists' allies to the right of them, who represented the democratization of property rather than of income. There was also the problem of relating the romance of French politics to its realities. The romantic element of British politics is to a great extent above party. In France, since the Revolution at least, it has been closely associated with political battle, and therefore comes into more direct conflict with daily trivialities once the stage is reached of putting a programme into force, with all the compromises this involves. The conflict is all the greater because of the multiplicity of French parties and the instability of French governments. Most major changes need time. This is exactly what the French politician has not got. He is forced to attempt a rushed job, and enough of his handiwork results in failure to make it easy to overlook what has succeeded. Although the Popular Front was by no means all failure, it fell sufficiently short of dreams for the nation to have relapsed into a mood of scepticism before the war broke out. This scepticism was doubled by an increasing awareness of the damage that the First World War had done to the physical stuff of the French nation. It was from 1935 onwards that the Army had to rely on the miserably diminished age groups born in the years of the First World War. Since these age groups also provided the young mothers, the fall in the birth rate was accelerated until in 1938, for the first time in a year of peace, the number of French babies was smaller than the number of Frenchmen who died.

The France which ran into the disasters of 1940 was therefore already penetrated with a sense of her own weakness. Defeat provided the perfect excuse for relaxed ambition, the Marshal the most dignified cover imaginable for withdrawal from the status which had been France's throughout the history of modern Europe. But the establishment of a régime at Vichy which accepted this decline for France threw into the opposite camp all those whose reaction to France's growing weakness had been the determination to change it; and since

Vichy had abolished the Republic, the infant Resistance movement could not be anything but Republican, although many of the first men to rally to General de Gaulle, both inside and outside France, were from the Right. As the movement developed it was no doubt the Left that made the bigger contribution, but the Resistance was necessarily organized in small conspiratorial groups; these resembled the illegal side of the Communist Party or the combative Right-wing groups of pre-war days rather than the mass parties of the Popular Front. The Resistance movement was necessarily far more romantic in its ideology than the Popular Front had ever been. At the same time it was developing the most romantic of institutions, small élite groups, setting themselves a moral standard higher than that of the majority of the population, forced to rely upon themselves in undertaking dangerous tasks and deliberately challenging self-evident reality. It is true that the General's thesis that France had lost a battle but not the war was a rational one, but in the dark night of 1940 such dead reckoning needed a very romantic soul to sustain the hypothesis. The Resistance movement itself soon assumed a shape which by French standards was improbable – an attempt to revive the Republic under the leadership of a Catholic General.

To the foreign spectator the ardour of the Resistance was most attractive; the union within its ranks of opinions so diverse under leadership so unexpected was most encouraging. But the pre-war problems had not grown less urgent during the war years; they had grown bigger. The further decline of the birth rate had increased the threat to the nation's substance. Capital had dwindled. Law-breaking and tax evasion had received fresh stimulus. The Communists were much more strongly entrenched. The middle classes were more embittered. It was true that the General and the Resistance leaders brought a fresh dynamic to the solution of problems, but all this was to be needed for the effort to get the ship under way, and it brought with it a whole series of new problems. A General had sanctified by his own example indiscipline and disobedience. Small groups had been encouraged to identify the 'Nation' with themselves and to be a law unto themselves. *A priori* assertions had been made about the feelings and attitudes of 'true Frenchmen' which were simply untrue when tested by those of a great many genuine examples of the species. This put a premium on hypocrisy. Above all, the rift between the ideal and the real,

the aspiring and the humdrum – always a peculiarly French problem and one seriously aggravated already by the weakened national vitality – had become very much worse. To begin with, a whole series of judgments about reality had become morally suspect. It had been immoral, an act of betrayal, to believe in the defeat of 1940. At what point was it permissible to believe that France must readjust her estimate of herself as a world power and abandon territories of the French Union? M. Bidault began his speech to the Assembly before the fall of the Laniel Government by asserting that the issue was between fidelity and facility – a truly Resistance doctrine. He did not mention the feasible. The whole theory of the French Union is in danger of proving barren because it is being interpreted with such little regard for what its members want. It is not an ungenerous conception and it provides a useful complement to British ideas, since it faces the problem of maintaining an organic relation between emancipated territories, to which Britain has made little contribution. But applied as a Procrustean bed it is exhausting France and destroying the goodwill of those who are intended to sleep in it.

Throughout the Third Republic the gulf between 'mystique' and 'politique' had been painfully felt, and the wear and tear on public men's reputations unusually great. But under the Fourth Republic a whole new team of public men have in ten years become 'discredited politicians'. Of those who came to the fore in 1944 only M. Mendès-France retains prestige – as his current rise to eminence has demonstrated. None of the new public figures has proved himself outstanding, but their general level of capacity and morality is certainly creditable. The quite exceptional decline in prestige seems to be due to the contrast between the expectation of a new dispensation and the unromantic realities of French politics. More serious than the decline in public men's reputations is that of the public's interest in politics. The attraction of alternatives to rule by the present political leaders under the present political system seems to grow less as scepticism and disillusion with what is already established increase. The prestige of Government has rarely been lower in France and its capacity for taking difficult decisions less great. Its one virtue seems to be pertinacity, whether in the right or the wrong course. But never has Gaullism been weaker. And the Communist Party has lost half its members.

The fact is that the medianism of France's re-establishment

in 1944 was an overdraft on her credit with herself. We should have seen, but did not, that her disappointment with herself and ours with her was bound to follow. But the question is how much has been re-established and what hope there is of a gradual restoration of France's substance as a basis for further progress. There are two healthy factors, one of which Mr Matthews acknowledges and one of which he spurns in paroxysms of indignation. The first is that the French post-war policy of big family allowances has permitted a relatively high birth rate. France is not likely to recover her place as one of the most populous countries of Europe, but she will cease to be a middle-aged country. In fifteen years time there will be more young Frenchmen than young Englishmen, although the population of England and Wales is greater than that of France. This is no guarantee of recovery, but it is an essential condition.

The second encouraging factor for political health in France is the emergence of politicians who do quite respectably represent the humdrum in French life. After all, political life should be about ordinary citizens' lives as much as about great ideas and high ideals. Mr Matthews has buried the Fourth Republic; but the dream to which he gives the name could not die, because it could not live. If the Fourth Republic is to survive it will partly be because it comes into the hands of commonplace, competent politicians. It is to be hoped that there will be more of them.

HOW EUROPEAN IS FRANCE?

Robert Mengin

The words – *Compagnie internationale des Wagons-Lits et des Grands Express européens* – in gleaming copper letters on railway carriages of varnished wood acted strongly on my imagination as a child. I was glad that they were French words. And it was in French that, soon after the war of 1914–18, I heard Guglielmo Ferrero arguing with German experts in Florence and M. Titulesco, a little later, expounding his views in Mr Wickham Steed's London drawing-room.

Impressions such as these and the Treaty of Versailles, and those of Trianon and of Neuilly and of other places in the neighbourhood of Paris, could well give a child the illusion of belonging to the pre-eminently European country.

On closer examination this proved to be an illusion. I became aware of it about 1930. That was the year in which two books appeared, one by a Frenchman, the other by a German, which were remarkable in their time and are even more remarkable to read again today. The Frenchman was M. André Siegfried; the German was Friedrich Sieburg.

In his book *Dieu est-il français?* (*Is God a Frenchman?*) Sieburg accused France of being by no means European. Although Sieburg later turned out to be a complete Hitlerite, his remarks about France were not necessarily untrue. Indeed, he lamented with Germanic sentimentality the choice of becoming European, as he called it, that he himself was in the act of making, and he wanted 'to perpetuate the tear he shed on taking leave of an obstinate France before he enrolled without enthusiasm, willy-nilly, as an active member of the European community'.

This must have been the first time I read those words: the European community.

Before launching out actively, therefore, on the Nazi adventure he wrote: 'France, clinging to the skirts of humanity, slows down a race of which no one can say whether it is carrying the world towards the stars or towards the abyss.'

He hesitated for a moment 'because an antiquated and

neglected paradise attracted him more than a model but despairing universe'. Yet it was a shock to him to realize that 'every Frenchman is a born crusader and that this quality sometimes makes him quite an awkward citizen of Europe'.

M. Siegfried's book is entitled *Tableau des partis en France* (*France: A Study in Nationality*). 'Some French people,' one may read in this work, 'continue to believe that the civilized world still hangs on our thought, as it did in the last century.' But, in fact, 'like all highly developed organisms we do not take kindly to change and in certain respects we have even grown hard, like something old.' Through an optical illusion France confused herself with Europe and did not perceive that she had neither the power to dominate it nor the flexibility to adapt herself to it. M. Siegfried asks himself, indeed, with anxiety: 'Is there still room in the world for traditional France?'

Two fundamental obstacles stood in the way of France becoming European in the sense in which that word is used at Strasbourg today. From the economic point of view 'France presented the peculiarity of having little need of the outside world either as supplier or as customer.' So that, far from being European or from desiring, for instance, the abolition of customs barriers, 'the French producer is usually a protectionist who thinks above all of the home market'. In the second place, psychologically the French are individualists, passionately anxious to preserve their independence. Now, as M. Siegfried again remarks, 'the peasant toiling earnestly and ceaselessly in his fields, the passion for independence which possesses him, run counter to modern developments which consist wholly of co-operation'.

To the testimony of two men as different as M. Siegfried and M. Sieburg (so much so that I should apologize to M. Siegfried for having placed him in such embarrassing company), I should like to add that of a particularly discerning French historian. At about the same date M. Charles Seignobos wrote:

> It can be said without exaggeration that up to 1914 foreign relations were confined to a private enclosure reserved for professional diplomats or entered at most by the President of the Republic, the Foreign Minister and occasionally the Prime Minister. Neither the electors nor the deputies sought admittance to it. They scarcely knew the names of foreign states. Their foreign policy consisted simply in a horror of war without any thought as to practical methods of avoiding it.

But the opinions of writers are not the only evidence; there are also the facts. Quite shortly after this year 1930, the French people, through the medium of their successive Governments, behaved as exceedingly bad Europeans. The peace treaties had created a whole series of minor states which might be termed the satellites of France, if that word had not acquired such an unfortunate connotation today. Now, everything happened as if France considered that these states existed to defend her, whereas it should have been for the French to defend them. They were swallowed up one after the other. Punishment was bound to come to France, and it came indeed.

* * * *

All this amounts to saying that France is from the outset somewhat ill-endowed with the qualities necessary for becoming an active and wholehearted member of a European community. She was truly European only at the time when, wielding dominion, she was not interested in co-operation. She considered in all good faith that her dominion, far from being selfish, ensured the wellbeing of Europe, which was itself the centre of the world. Without race prejudice of any kind, granting French nationality 'like baptism', France felt herself to be not only European but universal. *Gesta Dei per Francos:* such was the motto of the old order. When Napoleon ascended the throne of the Bourbons he only changed the language: 'the real strength of the Republic,' he said, 'must consist in permitting no idea which is alien to it ever to raise its head.'

While it must be admitted that France has thus made herself intolerable, particularly to European peoples such as the Germans, who readily suffer from an inferiority complex or a sense of humiliation, it is also generally conceded that, from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, France did not make too bad a use of her power and that she has deserved well of humanity. But it certainly does not mean that because in the past she was qualified to dominate she is today qualified to co-operate.

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For the first time in their history the French people find themselves in the position of not being self-sufficient. Economically, it is true, they can still make ends meet. Militarily they

are incapable of defending their frontiers unaided. This painful discovery dawned on them after the costly victory of 1918, yet during the 1939/40 campaign it was French soldiers who held three-quarters of the front and, during at least two-thirds of that period, it was French arsenals that supplied all the equipment. But the facts had to be finally recognized in 1940. The French Army, supported only by seven British divisions, was completely crushed. No doubt survives today in the mind of any Frenchman: for the defence of France co-operation is necessary. Not only co-operation with tried friends but, because of the demands of those friends or of facts, co-operation with the former enemy.

One can imagine how perturbing such a necessity must be to this old nation – the oldest, the most set, the most adult in Europe. It means going against all the habits of the past. *Gesta Dei per Francos* is now merely a motto to be hung in the *Invalides* beside the standards that were won, of old, all over Europe. The deepest humiliation of all is that this advice to co-operate, to merge ourselves in one community, is given to us by the two great Powers, the United States and Britain, who will not accept this solution for themselves. It is rather as if they said to us: 'It is good enough for you in your situation. Thank God, we have not yet come to that!' Their advice springs from good intentions, but, in the interests of success itself, these Powers would do better to remain silent.

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The foregoing remarks touch only on one side of the question. They leave out of consideration the familiar problems presented, for instance, by the disparity of power between France and Germany or the defence of the overseas territories. Their object is to make known the difficulties of a psychological and historical nature that the French have to surmount in order to become, one day, good Europeans.

There is no doubt that they will achieve it. But in my opinion it can only be the work of a coming generation. Only the young people or, better still, the children of today, who have not known the old France, with her hard-set splendour, which was finally shattered like glass, will have minds fresh and vigorous enough to succeed.

(Translated by Jessica Ware)

A LAST PLEA FOR CO-OPERATION

Marc Benoit

The problem of agreeing or disagreeing on their respective policies regarding overseas expansion and colonial policy has been and is still probably the major problem of Anglo-French relations.

France and Britain for the last 300 years have been the only major European powers constantly engaged in expanding, maintaining, adapting and defending their political control and influence on territories situated outside Europe. During these three centuries they have been in conflict most of the time, and even after 1904 their agreement was much more in the nature of a 'non-intervention policy' than a policy of positive common action. Not only has this long tradition of mutual antagonism engendered suspicion and distrust in the services which were the agents of overseas expansion, such as the Navy, the Colonial Service and religious missions; it has also made the philosophy and the rationalization normally invoked to cover colonial practice develop within closed systems of mutually incommunicable thought.

Since the Second World War, these fundamental misunderstandings have resulted, in Africa, the Near East and South-East Asia, in conflicts of methods and timing, with important consequences on the future of European control and influence in the areas concerned.

It has not been sufficiently emphasized, for instance, that the tragic events in French Africa after the German *blitzkrieg* in the summer of 1940 were the result of Anglo-French distrust with regard to overseas problems. The main argument used in France by the partisans of an immediate armistice leading to a peace of compromise with Germany was that the interests of France and Britain were directly opposed in Africa and Asia, and that the victory of the Anglo-Saxons would mean the absorption of the French territories into their world empire. This argument would not have had such an effect on the attitude of Army and Navy commanders in French overseas

territories if, before the war, the two Governments had tried to go beyond the 'agreement to differ' and the 'non-intervention' policy. It was readily believed in 1940 that British colonial policy was still fundamentally expansionist, that the secret aims of this policy were the destruction of the French Empire in North Africa, the economic and political assimilation of French West-African territories into the Gold Coast and Nigeria, the junction of the Moslem emirates with the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan (which meant the occupation of the Tchad) and the re-establishment of the Anglo-Protestant protectorate in Madagascar.

It is now clear that on the British side influential circles, while harbouring no such intentions, felt a corresponding distrust of the attitude of their traditional rivals and relatively recent allies in the French Navy, and were completely ignorant of the possible reactions of the Colonial administrators in the field. Mers-el-Kebir, the abortive attack on Dakar, and the occupation of Madagascar, are concrete proofs of the extent to which lack of confidence and mutual ignorance were carried on both sides.

As regards the Near East, it is well known that notwithstanding the complete agreement between London and Paris on the principle of non-intervention in each other's affairs after the failure of the Lawrence policy, local political agents never reconciled themselves to the consolidation of the French Mandate and had the time of their lives when the British forces were ordered to occupy Syria and the Lebanon. The memoirs of Glubb Pasha and of Colonel Stirling make interesting reading in this respect. There again the negative policy of agreement at the diplomatic level, because it was not followed up in the field by a joint examination and appraisal of methods adopted and local reactions to these methods, had a tragic outcome.

In the Far East there was more mutual consideration, and it seems that France and Britain had their hands so full with their respective Asian empires that they were practically immersed in the task of coping with enormous and politically conscious populations which had little in common. British policy in India was widely admired by the French administrators, but considered as not applicable to Indo-China. Conversely, the British found in French Indo-China (as in Dutch Indonesia) interesting examples limited to the technical and scientific field. Nationalism was to the British Raj a very immediate

problem to be solved by progressive political and administrative devolution. It was considered by the French as an artificial movement fostered by Communist agitators and disgruntled students. At no time until the European collapse of 1941–2 in the face of Japanese aggression was it imagined that what happened in Indo-China, or Indonesia for that matter, might have direct consequences for the security of the Indian Empire, or that Mr Nehru might have anything to say about the fate of Viet-Nam.

The differences in handling local nationalist régimes which had established themselves in the vacuum left by the paralysis of European administration in Dutch Indonesia and French Indo-China are to be explained by military necessities rather than by any deliberate policy on the part of the Supreme Commander for South-East Asia of eliminating the Dutch and keeping the French in.

It is probably vain to imagine what would have happened if the European Powers responsible in India and South-East Asia had evolved a common understanding as to the appropriate methods of maintaining a permanent link with the newly-awakened Asian peoples. In fact, the concept of Asia was an abstract one and had no concrete significance. The Indian, Indonesian and Indo-Chinese worlds were separate, had different historical backgrounds, and had never before been threatened by the same enemy at the same time. Only in Asia and only at that time had the policy of non-intervention any foundation in facts.

On the other hand, while practical administrators in India and Indo-China had similar experiences, political philosophers in France and Britain were able to develop widely diverging approaches to the problem of bringing into the European fold, and keeping there, the newly-Westernized élite and leaders. The British believed in giving the maximum amount of responsibility to these new leaders in their own country. France did not trust them so much and wanted concrete proofs of total loyalty to the French Republic before they were given responsibilities at a high level. It was difficult to imagine that the outcome of what seemed to be a slight difference in emphasis and in appreciation of timing would be the total emancipation of India in 1947 and a war in Indo-China which would nearly bring the United States and other Western Powers unwillingly into open conflict with China and Russia.

At the end of the Second World War, the situation in Africa and Asia was somewhat simplified from the Anglo-French point of view by the elimination of two of the main sources of friction. The French Colonial Administrations in Africa and Madagascar were finally convinced that the British had no intention of substituting their authority for French control. Indeed, an opposite fear was expressed that the British would leave their own territories too soon. In the Near East the French had to give up after an unpleasant display of Anglo-French antagonism; they did so with the bitter consolation of seeing the British, in turn, abused by their Arab friends.

Some measure of technical and economic co-operation was effected in Africa south of the Sahara. Britain, France, and the United States jointly guaranteed the new territorial divisions in the Near East after the Arab-Israel war. Progressively, South-East Asia was brought up to the level of world politics. The temptation was strong, therefore, to consider the problem of Anglo-French understanding as of secondary importance and as being a relatively minor aspect of the world-wide problem of maintaining Western influence in Africa and Asia. On the face of it, separate understandings with the United States of America seemed more important both for Britain and France, so that each country might further its own individual purposes.

Yet the truth is, no doubt, that no separate understanding on a bilateral basis can be reached between the United States and Great Britain, or between the United States and France, before France and Great Britain have thoroughly re-appraised together their respective policies in overseas territories and their impact on non-European peoples, while also taking into account the fundamental challenge of Soviet claims to leadership of the reawakened masses of Asia and Africa.

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It is, of course, much easier to define objectives in the expansionist stage of imperialism than at a time of basic challenge to the very existence of Western influence over the future development of Asia and Africa.

It has often been said that the European colonial Powers no longer believe in their 'mission'. It is no longer fashionable to mention the white man's burden. Public opinion as a whole in Britain and France is not in favour of imposing on alien peoples

the British or French way of life. It is open to question if it has ever been so. There were long periods during the last two or three centuries when at any rate the mood was of passive acceptance at the worst, and of active nationalistic support at the best. There is a striking parallel in the attitudes of the French and British Parliaments towards overseas problems, as distinct from foreign policy in the traditional sense. The average Member of Parliament in the two countries is not objectively concerned with these questions, and the attendance at colonial debates, for instance, is usually poor, although it may increase when colonial issues can be exploited by the opposition against the party in power. The British or French taxpayer is ready to contribute to a limited extent to the welfare and economic progress of the overseas populations, but not disposed to accept the full implications of a re-distribution of income between the mother country and overseas territories.

If a difference is to be found, it is the fact that, for several reasons, the average Britisher has a clearer conscience; he approves of the present policy of colonial self-rule followed by his government, whereas the average Frenchman is not too sure that the official policy in Indo-China and North Africa is a good one. In practical terms, this means that Britain can send National Servicemen to Malaya and Kenya, whereas France does not dare to ask any but volunteers to go to Indo-China.

It is better to face the facts squarely, and to say that in both countries public opinion is passive. It is willing to let governments take the lead, provided they do not ask too much in the way of money, economic subsidies and man-power. It leaves the governments full responsibility for their policy and a clear definition of their final objectives, it being understood that these cannot for any length of time come into direct opposition with long cherished traditions of liberalism and respect of human beings as such, without distinction of race, colour, and creed.

It might be maintained that there is no need to go any further in the attempt to define objectives and their degree of identity. Indeed, official pronouncements are limited to vague generalizations, which are aptly expressed in the preamble to the United Nations Charter, and which constitute the lowest common denominator of political thinking. Conversely, there

is a growing tendency to agree upon negative attitudes and accept another lowest common denominator, which is resistance to Russian and Chinese imperialism under the cloak of world Communism. There is a grave risk that the uncritical acceptance of such a dogmatic and easy response to the challenge simultaneously presented to the two nations will, in practice, become a substitute for hard thinking, especially at a time when the United States is usually required to foot the bill as soon as overseas commitments are proved to be beyond the national ability and willingness to pay.

Beyond these generalities, or rather at the back of them, there is the obvious and perfectly justifiable wish to survive in a competitive world as first-class world Powers. Neither France nor Britain is ready to accept the usual thesis of a world fundamentally divided into two, with two giant Powers disposing of a practical monopoly of atomic weapons, competing for world supremacy and committing their satellites to policies about which they have no say whatsoever. One of the objectives of Britain and France is, or should be, to use their position overseas as a position of strength, from which it is possible to negotiate, to compromise, and to maintain peace. In this context, overseas territories, whatever their degree of association with the mother country, should represent essential contributions to national independence, which is in turn a guarantee of the balance of power and of world peace.

If one of the two were to lose sight of this common objective, as might very well be the case in Indo-China, the immediate result would be a misunderstanding between British and French policy with far-reaching consequences on the American and Russian attitudes. In the event, a government making such a mistake would be very quickly called to reason through the pressure of public opinion, which is not ready to agree to overseas territories being used as pawns in a game played at world level.

The second common objective is doubtless to keep open the gates of Asia and Africa to the flow of trade and ideas coming from the West. It is now widely realized in France and in Britain that it is no longer practicable to project on to overseas territories the protectionist policy favoured or propounded at the beginning of this century by the most ardent imperialists. The business circles most directly concerned in overseas expansion are conscious of the fact that it is not

possible both to pursue a policy of world expansion of trade and to keep, as private reserves, areas in Asia or Africa that happen to be included in their monetary or political orbit.

From the cultural point of view, the stage has been reached where no one in the two countries seriously believes that the decline, let us say, of the English language in India, would mean an advantage for the French language.

The more fundamental common objective, however, consists of ensuring that the unavoidable consequences of the will of the non-European races in Asia and Africa to negotiate on a footing of equality and mutual respect are gradually accepted and can be reconciled with the maintenance of some connections implying a basis of confidence; in other words, the common objective is to prevent a mortal cleavage, which can but mean a war of extermination.

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It is surprising how little objectivity can be arrived at or expressed in the field of relations between Westerners and non-Europeans. A good example of this is provided in the United States, where, during the fateful years following the capitulation of Japan, any student of the Chinese scene who reached the conclusion that Chinese Communism was bound to succeed, at least in a short-term policy of controlling the whole country, was suspected of lack of loyalty. It is safe to suppose that any Chinese historian trying to convey the idea that the United States was not after all attempting to swallow 500 million Chinese would be submitted to an even harsher treatment. Any situation where Westerners happen to be in direct conflict of interest with Asians and Africans is immediately loaded with passion, if not hatred.

It is important to find out whether resistance to change, in areas where British or French subjects of European extraction happen to be in direct conflict with non-European groups, and the support such resistance obtains in the respective mother-countries, permeates the national outlook as a whole.

In Britain the traditional practice of dealing with various areas and problems as special entities, almost in watertight compartments, has obvious drawbacks, but it has the great advantage of allowing the pursuit of a liberal policy in certain areas where it is possible, while at the same time giving in to the United [illegible] common decisions in other areas.

On the other hand, there are complaints in Britain about the irruption of home politics into colonial questions. In fact, it is sometimes maintained that there should be a gentlemen's agreement to leave such questions to the people who know most about them. The claim for self-government is tantamount to the exclusion of Parliament's competence in all fields except the field of joint Commonwealth responsibilities in foreign affairs and defence. More and more Britain has to guide rather than instruct and give orders. Even if they had a clear idea of priorities and time factor, the Colonial Office, and obviously the Commonwealth Relations Office, would not be free to give an objective assessment of the requirements of any local situation where European interests and the claims of the non-European inhabitants are in open conflict. They have to negotiate, to compromise; even the use of force is limited to the gaining of time and of better terms. There is a grave danger in this method, although it seems a reasonable one. It is nobody's business to worry about the cumulative effects of what are, in practice, a series of uneasy and incomplete compromises.

In France a rather more rigid conception of the unity and inter-dependence of the so-called 'French Union' is having the unfortunate result of paralysing political advances in one given area, lest these should be used as precedents by nationalists in other areas where the local European elements are opposed to such advances as threatening their privileges. The French system, which is based on what seem to be different premises, has practically the same results as far as the wider issue of the relationship of European peoples and non-Europeans is concerned. No separate compromise is reached. The direct participation in domestic politics of representatives of *some* non-European groups tends to reinforce the idea that the concept of the French Union is sufficient to insulate the small proportion of Asian and African peoples in it from world-wide influences. There is a constant and rather pathetic effort to integrate local situations into neatly defined constitutional formulae and a tendency to prefer written contracts, sometimes forced upon a partner, to unwritten agreements based on goodwill.

If an objective assessment of a local situation should run counter to legal views and call for a drastic revision of the existing, closely defined, relationship, there is little doubt that such a move would be considered dangerous and unpatriotic.

THE FRENCH ON INDO-CHINA

REVIEW OF REVIEWS

Anthony Hartley

The national disaster of the fall of Dien Bien Phu is not referred to directly in all recent numbers of French reviews (many of the articles were obviously written before the surrender took place), but nevertheless coming events cast their shadow before them to such effect that comment on matters like Indo-China and Geneva has not been seriously outdated by the consummation of a tragedy for which the stage had been set for some weeks. The crisis, indeed, is reflected in more ways than one: readers of *Les Temps Modernes* will have noticed that the April number of their favourite review carried in its list of contents an editorial which failed to materialize. It is not too difficult to imagine what a leader entitled 'We Won't Go Crusading' might be about, and in the May number Jean-Paul Sartre in person informs us of the reasons for its withdrawal:

> Our last number should have contained an editorial on the war in Indo-China denouncing the blackmailing exploitation of heroism by the Government and taking a stand against the 'warning' which Mr Forster Dulles intended giving China. We were of the opinion that such a step would necessarily be the prelude to a widening of the conflict, and we gave our undisguised opinion of the French statesmen who wanted to associate themselves with it. This editorial did not appear; at the last moment we censored ourselves. We owe our readers apologies and explanations.

M. Sartre goes on to refute rumours of disagreements on the editorial board of *Les Temps Modernes*, and to say that, in any case, since Mr Dulles had been led by the British attitude to abandon the idea of a warning to the Chinese, the editorial was a trifle out of date. 'It is always a little ridiculous to protest against a crime which its future authors have decided not to commit.' M. Sartre then continues:

> However, we would have published our article if 'someone' had not told us that there was a 'risk' of its causing the number to be confiscated. There was no question of a threat, no: it was simply an opinion, a piece of good advice communicated to us through indirect channels. The danger was not certain – perhaps they wished to intimidate us – the risk was not very great: it was only a question of a financial loss which our publisher had resolved to bear. Yet we yielded to this shadow of blackmail: we do not *want* to have our review confiscated. . . . What the public asks from our review is not to agitate but to report events, to analyse situations, to clarify their meanings, if possible, in short to comment and to convince.

And M. Sartre concludes:

> All our readers know that we regard the Government's policy as disastrous and the men who inspire it as despicable: but our task is to prove this time and time again. It is only by proving it that we can hope to be of service. We shall continue: if it is forbidden to call Bidault a criminal, we shall say that he is guilty; if they deny us the right to speak of the blood on his hands, we shall talk of the scales over his eyes. It is only a matter of terminology.

M. Sartre is too little of a romantic to wish to have his review confiscated for the sake of an abstraction. His thought, deeply tinged by Marxism, leads him to value the results of action rather than its means. However, an English reader is likely to begin talking about the freedom of the press at this point, and M. Sartre's flexibility should not disguise the fact that freedom of information is obviously menaced (potentially at least) by the rather arbitrary procedures of the French administration. The weekly, *L'Express* (to which François Mauriac has emigrated from *La Table Ronde*), really was confiscated and its offices searched by the police for publishing a version of the report to the French Cabinet by the group of three generals sent to investigate the situation in Indo-China. Moreover, since other papers apparently published the substance of the same report without measures being taken against them, there are some grounds for suspicion that the Laniel Government was taking advantage of an opportunity to annoy an influential organ of opinion which had consistently opposed its policy. These incidents are another example of the continuing dialectic between an arbitrary centralizing State and an anarchic individualism which dominates so much of French life. The editor of *L'Express* would have no legal remedy against the confiscation of his paper, given the slow processes of French law, but neither would the Government have any

proper remedy against the publication of secret official documents. The individual is not protected against the State; the State is not protected against the individual. In the one case the last court of appeal is illegal action, in the other *droit administratif*. The normality of this kind of situation, repeated at many levels of French life, is such that the resulting police action excites more comment than real indignation. M. Sartre is not alone in his calm.

However, these skirmishes, if they show nothing else, demonstrate the sensitivity of the French Government over the question of Indo-China. This sensitivity, one way or another, is indeed fairly general. Such of the reviews as talk politics deal with the problem of the Indo-Chinese war from widely differing points of view, but with certain significant conclusions in common. In the April number of the right-wing review, *Hommes et Mondes*, Jacques Chastenet writes under the heading 'How to End the War in Indo-China?' M. Chastenet is a convinced anti-Communist, which makes his diagnosis the more revealing. He begins by recalling the events of the Indo-Chinese war: the Japanese occupation, the agreement reached in 1946 with the Viet-Minh, the breaking of that agreement over the question of Cochin China, the bombardment of Haiphong and the massacre of French civilians, the installation of Bao-Dai at the head of the state of Viet-Nam, the Viet-Minh offensives, the improvement in the military situation due to the efforts of De Lattre de Tassigny, the various attempts at negotiation, the siege of Dien Bien Phu. M. Chastenet is talking of events unfamiliar to most English readers and, though he has his prejudices, his chronological presentation of this confused piece of history would be useful to anyone wanting to get up the facts quickly. He is still more interesting when he goes on to examine the present situation in Viet-Nam and to express his doubts of the value of French-trained Viet-Namese troops:

> Lastly, the strength of an army is partly made up of its morale. Now it must be recognized that this morale is probably higher in the Viet-Minh camp than in the other. . . . The morale of troops depends largely on their attachment to the cause they are defending. And if, like most Indo-Chinese peasants and coolies, the soldiers of Viet-Nam are not naturally inclined to Communism, they do not reject it in any systematic way. What they want is to be left alone to cultivate their rice or maize fields in peace and also, of course, not to be obliged to pay heavy rents to the landowners. Hence a certain lukewarmness.

M. Chastenet goes on to say that, while in Viet-Nam Bao-Dai has little popular support, in Cambodia and Laos the political situation appears even more confused and hardly offers much help to anyone concerned to resist the Viet-Minh. From these facts he deduces the necessity of some sort of negotiation with Ho-Chi-Minh:

> Good diplomacy is not carried on by people hypnotized by evil memories. Ho-Chi-Minh is certainly a Communist, but he is also a Viet-Namese patriot. As such would he accept the replacement of French by Chinese suzerainty over his country? We must find out and we can only find out by talking to him. Similarly, it will only be in the course of conversations that it will be possible to discover if he is really pulling the strings or not. Doubtless his proposals have been more than vague up till now, but it is the job of diplomats to force their opposite numbers to become more precise.

And M. Chastenet goes on to suggest that Chinese consent to a peace in Indo-China could be bought by American concessions regarding trade and the recognition of the Communist régime. He criticizes American policy for considering French troops as expendable, while refusing to commit their own ground forces in Indo-China, and finally proposes a peace which would be based on the creation of an independent Nationalist Government of Viet-Nam (including both Bao-Dai-ists and Viet-Minh), the maintenance of French cultural interests and also of French military bases. He concludes by saying that, if the war is to continue, other nations than France must take part in it:

> Internationalization of the Indo-Chinese war? Why not? Once again: from the moment when it becomes a question merely of the defence of a sector, an essential sector of the anti-Communist front, there is no reason for France to fight alone. She has neither the means nor the duty to do so.

It will be seen that M. Chastenet's answer to the question 'What is to be done in Indo-China?' is 'negotiate with Ho-Chi-Minh', and this in essentials is exactly the same answer as is to be found in articles written by writers of the left. The May number of *Les Temps Modernes* puts the proposal rather differently and with a good deal more emotional *verve*:

> Peace, yes, they say: surrender, no. But who is it who will

surrender? This war was not our war and this defeat is not ours. It is not the defeat of France: she has never been associated with it. It is not the defeat of the soldiers: many of them did not choose it. As for those who for eight years have prevented peace after having brought about the original break, those who lie to cover up their lies and who only yesterday were begging for American intervention at the risk of generalizing the war, the most ignominious capitulation would be less than they deserve. . . . We must not abandon Viet-Nam to the Communists, they say. Better to destroy it with napalm: thus heretics used to be burnt to save them from the devil. But where is the independence we claim to grant if we reserve the right to dictate the use made of it? No one disputes that free elections would confirm the power of President Ho Chi-Minh. Therefore there is no possible peace except in the direct or indirect recognition of the democratic Republic of Viet-Nam and the withdrawal of the expeditionary force. For that we need men other than the walking shadows of defeated politicians.

However far this language may be from M. Chastenet's talk of preserving French cultural interests in Indo-China, *Les Temps Modernes* and he are really speaking of the same thing. For a negotiation with Ho Chi-Minh, if seriously undertaken with a view to ending the war, would be bound to involve some form of recognition of his Government, and it is quite clear that the one thing that would not happen would be for the French to keep military bases in Indo-China. It also seems unlikely that French cultural interests would be safeguarded. M. Chastenet's proposals, therefore, mark a surrender hedged about with various devices for saving face.

But if the war goes on? What about American intervention? What about the policy to pursue at, and after, Geneva? It is here that differences between left and right show up more clearly. Thierry Maulnier (*Hommes et Mondes*, June number), while agreeing that Indo-China is already lost for France and the French Union, is more worried than M. Chastenet by the general effects on South-East Asia:

In any case, the immense Asiatic peril threatening the key positions of Malaya and Indonesia is a danger which concerns the whole of the free world. From the French point of view, whether a rather theoretical bond is or is not maintained between the States of Viet-Nam and the French Union, Indo-China was lost many months ago. The defeat of Dien

Bien Phu was not suffered by France in a war waged on her own account, but in a war waged by France for the Western coalition to preserve South-East Asia from Communist expansion. From this point of view, we can hope that, however painful the consequences of the defeat of Dien Bien Phu may be for us, they will be limited in their extent for the simple reason that the construction of a defence pact in South-East Asia is a vital necessity for the free world, whose disastrous hesitations may delay its coming about, but which eventually will not be able to avoid it.

M. Maulnier then goes on to discuss the effect of defeat in Indo-China on the rest of the French Union, in particular on French North Africa. Dien Bien Phu was an indication of weakness which will be used by the enemies of French rule. How can the damage be repaired?

First, probably, by a policy limiting or repairing to a certain extent the consequences of the defeat in Indo-China itself. If we succeed in avenging Dien Bien Phu in Indo-China, if at least, by throwing back attacks on the essential positions which remain to us, we allow it only a local significance, if, while making the peace that everyone wants, we succeed in obtaining terms which do not put us in the position of the beaten side, we will be able to save a large part of our prestige with the Africans as a governing nation. In Africa itself it has become extremely urgent to affirm and justify our presence in a striking manner. We must show ourselves capable of maintaining order. We must also undertake indispensable reforms, that is: take the initiative in generosity and daring and not let reforms be torn from us with a bad grace by pressure and agitation on the part of peoples becoming more and more impatient and, unless we take care, more and more hostile. We shall not keep Africa if we do not show that we are the strongest and the most just of peoples and that we are necessary there.

Here M. Maulnier is using a type of argument which has been invoked time and time again to justify the continuance of the war in Viet-Nam. What will the Senegalese *tirailleur* or the Moroccan *goum* think of a defeat which they themselves have witnessed? What will they say about it back in Morocco or French West Africa? Won't it encourage the nationalists? Won't it fatally shake the prestige of the régime? M. Maulnier is the only commentator on Dien Bien Phu to deal with this question, but, in view of the fact that he apparently regards

> on the fear of France's being dominated by Germany. N A T O does not protect us against this domination any better than E D C; just as much as E D C it would deliver Germany and the neighbouring peoples to the dangers of military restoration in a country where democracy still only possesses fragile foundations and whose frontiers remain undetermined. It is not, therefore, a question of choosing between E D C and N A T O. It is a question of knowing whether a conquered Germany is to be recognized as worthy of serving against one of her conquerors, if, after having demanded capitulation, repentance and re-education, the Western democracies are to reawaken in Western Germany the forces of hatred and conquest which they struck down after unprecedented massacres. Woe to Europe if it is to be built on such a renunciation!

The arguments of *Esprit's* editorialist against E D C would be more convincing if there were any evidence that he had considered the possibility that Western Germany cannot be prevented from rearming. As it is, they merely represent another manifestation of that profound distrust of American policy which seems to be common to most writers in current numbers of French reviews. With the exception of M. Maulnier, who has a very independent mind, the reaction to Dien Bien Phu as seen through the French reviews would appear to be two-fold. First, a general feeling that the war in Indo-China must be ended – probably by negotiations with Ho Chi-Minh and on whatever terms can be secured. Secondly, the feeling that by fighting in Indo-China, France is pulling America's chestnuts out of the fire for her. A right-wing writer like M. Chastenet will, of course, look at it from the point of view of French nationalism, and a left-wing writer like M. Sartre from that of someone opposed to the principle of colonialism and dreading the possibility of a new war arising out of the conflict between capitalism and Communism, but the result will in both cases be anti-Americanism. And, since American policy would seem to demand continued resistance against the Viet-Minh in Indo-China, it can be seen how these two general reactions complement and support each other. The missing reaction in these reviews is, oddly enough, that of anguish: anguish at the humiliation of France, anguish at the impotence of her Government and the divisions among her people. Some of the articles mentioned above are angry, but there is a curious

feeling of their not being angry enough. Only in the June number of *Esprit* is a deeper note struck:

> In this limitless confusion is it impossible to unite Frenchmen in a common hope? For it is also a question of that. Defeat divides – even before it we were divided – but: 'There is a threat of death: I will not add to these divisions by throwing the responsibility for the disaster on to those of my countrymen who think differently from myself. There is nothing to gain from trials without a judge.' (Saint-Exupery)

And the writer concludes with something which is perhaps too often forgotten or not made explicit by political commentators:

> Here we are writing, there they are dying.

More than forty years ago Péguy wrote:

> Heureux ceux qui sont morts pour la terre charnelle,
> Mais pourvu que ce fut dans une juste guerre.

The qualification has always been important in France. The anguish comes when it is ignored and the dead denied their just death. The thirst for justice that possesses so many Frenchmen has been left unsatisfied by the doubtful manoeuvres of politicians and the *trafiquants* of Saigon. The tragedy of Dien Bien Phu is that of a heroism which should not morally have been in vain – but was.

THE FRENCH NOVEL TODAY

Cecily Mackworth

Anyone who has followed the vast output of the French literary critics since the end of war and occupation, will have no doubt detected the existence of a key word: *audace*, or daring. It is applied in general to novels and especially to the works of young writers who have not yet established a secure place for themselves and must still be judged according to some common criterion. Sooner or later they are found either to have, or to lack, *audace*, and if they lack it they will have very little chance of sending their sales up to the 100,000 mark by winning one of the big literary prizes, or even of being considered by the general public as members of the French literary team. The result is that French novelists today tend more and more to be judged by much the same standards as those applied to boxers – the harder they hit, the better they are.

It may be said at once that the younger French writers are responding bravely to what is expected of them. The punches rain so thick and fast that it seems as if each must produce the final knock-out by making it impossible to go further or say more. Here, for the sake of example, are some of these literary uppercuts from a few novels chosen almost at random among those that have received special praise from the critics during the last few years:

René Etiemble's *L'Enfant de Chœur* appeared shortly before the war, so it is something of a pioneering effort. It describes the life of a boy who, when the book begins, is a boarder in a provincial school, where he has a number of unpleasant and carefully described sexual experiences. At the age of fourteen he returns home to spend the holidays in the company of his widowed mother, whom he finds in bed, suffering from a venereal disease with extremely repulsive physical symptoms. He is thereupon raped by her and, discovering the nature of her malady just too late, is not unnaturally alarmed for his own health, and indeed, ends up as something of a psychological wreck. However, M. Etiemble weakens a little at the end, since

Jean does not catch the disease himself. The knock-out punch the reader has been expected is withheld at the last moment.

Hervé Bazin followed this up, some years later, with another study in family life: *Vipère au Poing*, in the course of which two little boys make a well-planned though unsuccessful attempt to murder their mother. As in *L'Enfant de Chœur*, the *audace* of this novel is enhanced by the fact that it is undisguisedly autobiographical.

Georges Arnaud's *Le Salaire de la Peur*, which has reached a wide public, since it was made into a film, belongs more to the upper-cowboy school of pure toughness. It is situated in a Latin-American desert township. The down-and-outs who have drifted there have one single purpose – to find enough money to get away from it – and are ready to serve this purpose with total courage and total unscrupulousness. Two years later, the same author tried a new type of punch in *Lumière de Souffre*, throughout the whole course of which the development of the hero's buccal cancer is described in minute clinical detail. Disease proving a fruitful line in *audace*, Hervé Bazin sprang back into the ring with a study in paralysis, *Lève-toi et marche*, in which the girl who recounts the story is slowly rotting away, her fingers plopping one by one on to the floor in an odour of decaying cadaver. Jean-Charles Pichon has discovered, in *Il faut que je tue Monsieur Rumann* and *Sérum et Cie*, the possibilities of sadism and masochism as romantic themes. Pierre Klossowsky, in *Roberte ce Soir*, tells of a theologian, Octave, who obliges his wife, in the name of a complicated philosophical theory, to show the most comprehensive kind of hospitality to all his guests, and persuades their schoolboy nephew and adopted son of the moral necessity of sexual intercourse with his aunt. (However it must be admitted that *Roberte ce Soir* can hardly be considered tough, since its astonishing obscenities are enveloped in language so obscure that the reader who has not taken a degree in philosophy would risk missing some of the choicest bits, if the critics had not provided some useful pointers.)

Surely all this reminds us of something . . . ? Pre-war America . . . Henry Miller . . . Dos Passos . . . Hemingway . . . all the hard-hitters of the Far West and Deep South during the 'thirties. . . . They made a tremendous impression on French writers, and indeed, it is interesting to speculate just where these would be today if Henry Miller had never existed. However, the effect has lasted long beyond its original cause, for

American novels since the war seem to be growing increasingly dreamy or analytic. Hemingway has been superseded by Truman Capote; the world of strong, laconic men who speak with their fists in the intervals of downing their whiskey, has given place to the shadowy universe of William Goyen. The French novel – in so far as the examples quoted can be considered typical – approximates much more closely to the contemporary American film, as Geoffrey Wagner recently described it in this review. The absence of censorship allows it far wider scope than even the most daring of films can hope to have, but the two are about on the same level of toughness.

It would, however, be a great mistake to imagine that there is not often a fundamental seriousness at the back of all this *audace*. Several of the novelists mentioned are men of intellectual eminence. Klossowsky, for instance, is the principal commentator and interpreter in France of the philosophy of negation invented by the Marquis de Sade, and Etiemble is the author of an immensely learned and destructive thesis on Rimbaud. So it is not surprising that once we have recovered our breath after so much incest and murder, rape and disease, we should begin to detect a number of trends and preoccupations that have little in common with Hollywood.

Nearly all the French novelists of the *audace* school express, either directly or indirectly, a hatred for established society and many of them reveal a religious nostalgia they cannot satisfy because they consider that religious institutions have capitulated to the bourgeois social order. The good priest comes high on the list of habitual characters in the 'daring' novel and indeed almost rivals the wicked mother for top place. Etiemble's choirboy is almost saved through such a priest, who ranges himself on the side of the child against the established order of society and seems to indicate that religion may be only apparently, but not fundamentally, implicated in the upholding of that order. The same idea is stated much more explicitly in Gilbert Cesbron's novel about the worker-priests, *Les Saints vont en Enfer*, in which the hero brings about a synthesis between the worlds of toughness and daring and that of religious experience, and opposes that synthesis to the values of burgeois society and the religious institutions that reflect them. Georges Arnaud, whose picaresque life and picturesque personality seem at first sight in tune with the ostentatious daring of his novels, is really describing, less the odyssey of the truck-drivers

with their load of explosives, or the efforts of an art-lover to get his Van Gogh authenticated before he is destroyed by cancer, than the voluntary renunciation of hope. Pichon's violence covers the repeated and hopeless attempt to solve the problem of the true relationship between man and woman. This type of novel is rarely materialistic, though it often appears to be so on the surface. It very often conceals either a mystical anarchism or a non-materialistic atheism, in which sacrilege is obviously only the reverse side of belief.

If we go deeper still, it seems as though what many of these writers are essentially trying to do, is to express a sort of despair both in the human condition and in the situation of the novel, which is their chosen form of expression. Sartre and Camus have left little to be said about the 'absurdity' of human life, which seems, for some reason, to be felt much more strongly on the French side of the Channel than in England. As for the novel *en soi*, a great deal is being talked and written in France about its imminent decease, and it is fashionable to suppose that, as a form of art, it is already in its death-pangs. This assumption, of course, is by no means confined to France or the present day, since people have been predicting, ever since Fielding and the Abbé Prévost, that the form was doomed by its own inviability. However, the problem does seem to be acutely present in the minds of contemporary French novelists, and to give them an added sense of insecurity, or even of guilt. A brilliant article by E-M. Cioran in the *Nouvelle Revue Française* recently analysed the position:

> Every modern novelist [says Cioran] descends into himself to search for what he himself has projected there, inventing a personal life and with it innumerable secrets in which no one believes, least of all he who claims to possess them. . . .

Then he explains that it is inevitable that the modern novel should concentrate on personal problems important only to the writer, because we live in an age of intelligence rather than feeling:

> At the present stage of man's mental evolution, no one can escape from this exacerbation of the intellect, accompanied by a corresponding decrease in instinct. That which is grandiose, monumental or unguarded has become impossible. There has never been a time when the 'creative artist' has been so conscious of his personality.

All this is specially true of the French, who are probably the

most 'intelligent' people in the world and the most highly civilized, and thus the most conscious of their own individualities. Others before Cioran have put their fingers on this weak spot in the novelist's conscience and forced him to ask himself whether he is merely the serpent biting his own tail, circling endlessly around petty problems that have become obsessive only since Freud. Malraux was reacting even before the war against this preoccupation with the individual. He has demonstrated repeatedly that man learns to know himself, not by thinking, but during moments of intense action. For two literary generations he has symbolized the man of action, the literary adventurer, the heir of T. E. Lawrence. His declared aim is to make men conscious of the unsuspected greatness within them. 'In my eyes,' he has said, 'the modern novel constitutes a privileged form for expressing the drama of mankind, not an elucidation of the individual.'

Malraux is the man who does first and writes after, and writes about doing rather than being. He is the conscience of the younger writers, just as Gide was that of their elders. And his rôle, like the rôle of every conscience, is to accuse. Just as the voice of the Gide-conscience used to murmur: 'You are failing in lucidity, your examination of your own mainsprings and motives is not pitiless enough', so the Malraux-conscience demands: 'Why do you continue to circle endlessly round petty personal problems of interest only to yourselves, dressing them up as literature and forcing them on the attention of your readers?' In fact, Malraux is accusing contemporary novelists of helping to bring about the death of the novel – and not by any fine, explosive end, but by lingering anæmia.

And the young writers listen uneasily and resolve to do their best, but they know that all the preaching in the world will not change the fact that they have become irrevocably conscious of themselves as individuals and that no one will ever recover the sublime unconsciousness of the Greeks or Shakespeare. Each of them is the centre of his own universe and every novelist is the heart of his own novel. Whatever problem he deals with, whether it is social or religious, it will always be his personal problem, centred, whether he likes it or not, on his own personality. The result is that – specially if he has been listening to Malraux or Cioran – there will always be a gnawing doubt as to whether it is really of interest to anyone except himself. In fact, he has become terrified of boring his readers.

Luckily, the Americans are there – or at least, they used to be. Sex and violence are the finest camouflage for introspection and there is nothing like *audace* as a cure for boredom. The novelist may suspect that his public will not be deeply interested in his metaphysical doubts, but he knows it will respond to the stimulus of rape, murder, and so on. Jolting readers out of their apathy has proved to be both a way of sending up sales and of alleviating the guilty Malraux-conscience that protests against the habit of portraying life in minute detail and 'degrading our stupefactions to the level of anecdotes'. Etiemble, Arnaud, Pichon and the rest are engaged in operating an *apparent* substitution of the act for the individual.

The *audace* of the French novel covers a multitude of things, from the metaphysical despair of Etiemble to the underlying 'rose-water' morality of Hervé Bazin. Sometimes it covers nothing at all, being there for its own sake. This seems to be the case with an epidemic of novels by very young girls that have been amusing and scandalizing the French for the last couple of years. In *Le Rempart des Béguines*, Françoise Malet tells of a fifteen-year-old girl who has a Lesbian affaire with her father's mistress. In *Bonjour Tristesse*, Françoise Sagan's Cécile manœuvres her father's mistress into suicide so that she herself may be free to pursue a liaison which she foresees will be the first of many; Danielle Hunebielle's heroine attaches herself to a married couple in the hope of appropriating the husband for herself but, failing to do so, breaks up the marriage by taking the wife instead. These, and a few other terribly competent eighteen-year-olds, are exploiting all the possibilities of *audace*, and the very fact that they have fundamentally nothing to say, makes their punches even more efficacious than those of their elders.

One thing is certain: the gap between the tastes of the French and English reader has never been wider. The typical English novel of the Bowen school, with its delicate analysis of sentiment and building up of effects from apparently insignificant details, appears merely insipid to readers who have been weaned on Malraux and reared on Sartre. Perhaps that is the explanation of the immense success of Graham Greene, who approximates much more, with his philosophical and mystical preoccupations and their overlay of violence, to what the French are used to. In France itself, a number of quieter novels get overlooked for the same reason. Excellent writers like

Jacques Perry, Marguerite Duras, Jacques Lemarchand appear a little tasteless to palates accustomed to so much strong meat. However, it rather looks as though a reaction is impending. *Audace* really seems to have been stretched to breaking point. There is very little left to invent in that line and the era of futile repetitions seems likely to set in at any minute. It may be that the French novel has reached the same turning point the American novel arrived at some years ago. There is a reaction ahead, but it would be hard to prophesy what form it will take. Will it rejoin that strange nihilistic literature represented today by Maurice Blanchot, in which there are neither characters nor situations, neither beginning nor end, but an atmosphere, a bizarrerie, in which the known world seems to dissolve as if in a bath of acid? Or will it return to the uninhibited introspection of pre-war days? Or become a sort of cross-breed out of the eighteen-year-old cynics by Peter Cheyney, who is a tremendous best-seller at practically all intellectual levels throughout France? Anything might happen now.

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor of THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

SIR, – Miss Ninetta Jucker, in her article 'Italy after the Scandals', presents an interesting series of suggestions which taken together, point to two things: (i) the existence of a close link between the main figure in the scandals, Ugo Montagna, and some leading Christian Democrats; and (ii) the wanton destruction by the Christian Democrat Executive of a real possibility of detaching Signor Nenni and his Socialist Party from the Communists to the extent of allowing the formation of a 'normal parliamentary Opposition' under Nenni.

Both of these charges, if as true as Miss Jucker would have us believe, are so serious that a non-Italian public might well be dismayed at this new light on the Italian scene. But are they quite so watertight as all that? Do they, at any rate, give us the whole picture, or even a quite undistorted part of it? It is extremely difficult for anyone, let alone a non-Italian audience, to weigh the pros and cons of the incomplete and conflicting evidence brought forward by the spectacular witnesses in the Montagna case, which is still *sub judice*. But one cannot help wondering whether Miss Jucker is not at times forcing what evidence there is to fit into her picture. For example, the net of Montagna's acquaintance in Roman influential circles, wide enough in all conscience, appears to have included some leading Christian Democrats; but can one go on from there to conclude that the Christian Democrats 'appeared as greedy and corrupt as the Fascists' and that 'the scandals had the effect of confirming the electorate in its judgment [of the Christian Democrats]'? One would have imagined that Baron Montagna could have found some more remunerative fish to fry than the sober bourgeois politicians who have been the backbone of Italy's post-war governments.

When we come to the possibilities of an 'opening to the Left' which the Christian Democrat Executive are said to have destroyed, the ground is at least as speculative. The chances

of detaching Signor Nenni from the Communists have been discussed ever since the new Italy emerged from the war. They may have come a shade nearer last autumn, despite all the difficulties – of finance, organization, personnel – which would now be involved in such a breakaway. But the immediate stumbling-block to a genuine détente, then as now, was the Government's policy in relation to the Atlantic alliance and E D C – and here we are told that 'Nenni represented the moderate Churchill line in foreign policy', a statement probably equally surprising to both protagonists.

Finally, Miss Jucker's article is, in effect, a wholesale indictment of the Christian Democrat régime. That is implicit throughout. But in that case, are there no good points at all to be taken into account, or do the Montagna scandals really weigh heavier in the balance than, say, the development of the South or Italy's present financial stability?

Yours faithfully,
MURIEL GRINDROD.

45 LANCASTER GROVE, LONDON, N.W.3.
June 2nd, 1954.

Miss Jucker replies:—

To appreciate the political bearing of the scandals one has only to consult the Italian press of every political tendency and the parliamentary reports of the last six months. Their electoral implication surely does not need to be emphasized. Their influence on home as on foreign affairs is reflected in the delays and hesitations manifested in facing up to every major issue of foreign and domestic policy; last but not least, the delay in presenting the de Caro report.

The parliamentary situation to which I referred was not the 'opening to the left' now advocated by Gronchi and other left-wing Christian and Social Democrats. The shift of emphasis within the Opposition had at least a sporting chance of succeeding at the time when Nenni's conception of foreign policy, as outlined in his brilliant speech of October 1st to the Chamber, was explicitly based on the line proclaimed by Sir Winston Churchill on May 11th, 1953.

Finally there are many reasons why the years of Christian Democrat domination will probably be judged by history on their political rather than their economic record. Not least the fact that the great economic reform of the South was avowedly undertaken for political motives and guided, at all events in its first phase, by political criteria.

ROME.
June 9, 1954.

To the Editor of THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

SIR, – May I be permitted to deal with one or two points of very general interest raised by Mr Hudson in his review of my book, *Malaya: Communist or Free?*

'Could a half-Chinese Malaya [Mr Hudson asks] remain independent for long if British control were withdrawn in the circumstances of the present international situation?' My argument is that if self-government were granted at once to Malaya, the 'moderates' (probably the U M N O–M C A Alliance in the first place) would come into power and they are likely to wish Malaya to remain within the British defence system while reinforcing it with a national army. The longer self-government is delayed, the more to the Left the government that succeeds the present ' colonial ' one is likely to be and the more likely it is to pass into 'neutralism' or, at worst, into the Communist bloc. What Malayans demand primarily is the right to control their own economy.

The comparison of Malays and Chinese with Jews and Arabs is not, in my opinion, justified. There is no long-standing or deep-seated enmity between Malays and Chinese as there is between Jews and Arabs. Although the Malays before the war were uneasy on account of the economic pressure from the immigrants, the races lived harmoniously side by side. There were no armed clashes between them until the Japanese occupation when the invaders used Malay police to coerce the Chinese and, at the time of the surrender, the Chinese retaliated. Friction between the communities was renewed with the outbreak of the present Emergency in which Malay police and troops have been used to fight the bandits and to dragoon the Chinese (*and* Malay) 'squatter' population. If Malayan economy were to be reorientated under a Malay-Chinese coalition government (I have reason to believe that considerable progress towards this end is being made in the internal discussions of the U M N O–M C A Alliance) many of the present causes of friction would disappear. It is, in my view, present British policy which is largely responsible for the inter-communal differences.

In an article in the same issue of your journal, Mr Lowenthal says, '. . . any collective defence pact for South-East Asia must clearly be confined to the defence of Asian states at their own request. It must be free from any taint of "colonialism".' While the 'taint of "colonialism" ' remains, Malaya will be a very doubtful link in the chain of Communist containment. In my view, the continued physical presence of the West in Asia, is, in the existing state of Asian sentiment, an assistance to the advance of Communism and not a barrier against it. The defence line, therefore, for Australia, etc., would be more effective if it could be withdrawn to a position where it did not run foul of this sentiment.

Yours faithfully,
VICTOR PURCELL.

10 LYNDEWODE ROAD,
CAMBRIDGE.
May 31, 1954.

To the Editor of THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

SIR, – May I remind Mr Sutherland that Peeping Tom spied on naked beauty. Perhaps he was indiscreet. All discovery is indiscreet. Like all scientists Peeping Tom was a voyeur, and voyeurism whether of mesons, marital infidelities, or the cosmic rhythm must be cherished and transmuted into knowledge.

Doubting Thomas also, who probed the wounds of God with his sceptical hands, is a scientific archetype whom we disown at our peril. Knowledge, however acquired, may lead to understanding. Mr Sutherland possesses these qualities and they set him aside from less endowed people. Was it discourteous of me to say so?

Had he not shown an unusual awareness of the formidable obstacles that are encountered when we try to investigate these strange aspects of human nature, I should not have bothered with his review. It stimulated me. If I was over rough I ask forgiveness, but I am only boisterous with those who are sinewy and strong. I doubt whether he has suffered lasting hurt from my blows. Maybe they will speed him on the road of experience and exploration.

Yours faithfully,
HUMPHRY OSMOND.

THE SASKATCHEWAN HOSPITAL,
WEYBARN, SASKATCHEWAN, CANADA
May 31st, 1954

To the Editor of THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

SIR, – I have read with interest Mr Davie's generous and considered article, 'Is there a London Literary Racket?' in your June number. I agree with his general conclusion, which appears to be that there is always the machinery for whomever cares to use London literary life as a racket. Writers know one another by their Christian names, critics review books by writers who may, in turn, come to review *their* books.

Quoting a review I have not seen, by Mr Wagner, Mr Davie writes: 'No one ever rebuts the charges that are implied by Mr Wagner, which Dr Leavis has for so long levelled quite explicitly.' Later, he gives a sample of one of Dr Leavis's unrebutted charges. '*Scrutiny*,' he writes (and I assume that *Scrutiny is* Dr Leavis), has described the 'movement' of Mr Auden and Mr Spender and their associates in the 'thirties as 'a gang movement if ever there was one'.

I am going now to 'rebut' this charge, which I have heard for the first time in Mr Davie's quotation. But before doing so, it is worth asking – why does one hesitate before making rebuttals? Partly, because one thinks that time should be spent in doing the best possible work within one's circumstances, and rebuttals waste time. Partly because one thinks that the lot of Dr Leavis is indeed a hard one, and if he is denied the pleasure of moral indignation, what is left to him? Partly because it is difficult to answer the charge of belonging to a gang without seeming to play the game of a gang. Partly also because it is extremely difficult to rebut a charge of a general kind which is based on no particular examples.

I may though perhaps be allowed to draw attention to the relations between 'Mr Auden and Mr Spender and their associates'. At Oxford, I printed on a hand press the first poems of Mr Auden. There were 'about thirty copies' of this edition, which were distributed by the author to his friends. Not a single copy was advertised or sent to a newspaper for review or to any prominent person with a view to enlisting his support of a movement.

After he had left Oxford, Mr Auden went to Germany. Then he returned to England, but during his English years when he was schoolmastering, I was in Germany. Thus we saw very little of one another for some years after Oxford.

Auden has never reviewed (as far as I know) any con-

temporary poetry (unless one counts his recent review of David Jones in *Encounter*). In all his writings, apart from the dedication of *The Orators*, the only references to myself I can recall are an ironic one in *Letters from Iceland*, and a sentence quoted in the introduction to *The Poet's Tongue*.

As a critic, autobiographer and journalist I have written a great deal about Auden. But I have always done so as one would write about a person whom one considered the foremost poet of his generation, who was also a friend. I have often strained our friendship by writing in a spirit of criticism which to many people has seemed hostile to him. To give one example, when I lectured at the University of Cincinnati there was a lady who refused to attend my lectures on the grounds that 'she was on Auden's side'! If I examine my own conscience about these matters, I would find myself guilty on the counts of meanness and envy towards those who are my friends, but not at all of trying to promote their interests in gang warfare. Nor have they promoted mine.

Throughout the whole of the 1930's a great deal was made of the trio Auden, Day Lewis, Spender, to which, after the appearance of his poems, the name of MacNeice was added. It may therefore be relevant to point out that the first occasion on which Auden, Day Lewis and Spender were together at the same time and place was in September 1947, at a meeting of the International Pen Club in Venice. Yet anyone who thinks in terms of gang warfare must surely imagine frequent meetings throughout the 'thirties between these three – meetings in which they decided on common campaigns of their united front.

Again, I must regretfully admit that I have written very little about Day Lewis, and that what I have written is for the most part in a carping spirit, as anyone who cares to look up the references in *The Destructive Element* and *New Verse* will ascertain. To dons who consider it a virtue to be venomous and self-righteous, these passages should do a good deal to establish my reputation for 'integrity'. To myself, they merely seem ill-considered. And I am glad to take the opportunity here to apologize to Day Lewis.

What basis then was there for considering that there was ever such a thing as a 'movement' of Auden, Spender and their associates? Well, we had it in common that we were contemporaries at Oxford (although I never met Day Lewis at

Oxford). Day Lewis, MacNeice and I also all had it in common that we fell under the spell of Auden. It is also true that to ourselves we dramatized the 'newness' of the aims we represented, and we thought of ourselves as the heirs to the rather fallen estate of English poetry. Later, the Spanish Civil War provided us with a cause, extraneous to literature, but still enlisting our passions and in whose service we were prepared even to divert our talents.

Early in the 1930's I received a curious letter from Mr Michael Roberts, asking me for a contribution to his anthology, *New Country*. In this latter, Mr Roberts mentioned – if I remember the metaphor exactly – the 'creeping fire' of Mr Geoffrey Grigson's *New Verse*. This was – I think – the first I had ever heard of Mr Roberts and his anthology or of Mr Grigson and his magazine, and I can remember disliking the metaphors, drawn from warfare, of Mr Roberts' letter.

What happened was that three editors – Mr Lehmann with *New Signatures*, Mr Roberts with *New Country*, and Mr Grigson with *New Verse* – all discovered at the same time that there were a number of quite young writers with attitudes and producing work which seemed to have something in common. Looking back at *New Verse*, *New Country* and *New Signatures*, I think that these perspicacious young editors did an immense service to literature in bringing together diverse talents and giving them the appearance of a common direction. I wish that there were the talents and the editors to do this to-day. But to suggest that because some editors might come together and make an anthology of the works of young writers living in London and the provinces which suddenly made us all sit up and realize that there was a new impulse in English literature – to suggest that such an editor would be a gang leader seems to me an idea worthy only of a donnish Malvolio.

Now let me turn to the other side of the picture – the pure, the disinterested, the virtuous, the self-righteous, who denounce the gangs of Mr Auden and Mr Spender and their 'associates'. Any reader of all the numbers of *Scrutiny* will note that throughout the years reviewers in its columns have conducted a campaign of marked consistency against the Sitwells, Auden, Day Lewis, Dylan Thomas, and indeed almost every contemporary younger talent – except that of a few Cambridge poets (e.g., William Empson and Ronald Bottrall) during the years when they appeared to benefit from proximity to the pure radiance

of Dr Leavis. Alas, though, even Empson and Bottrall, when removed from the fountain-head of unremitting light, soon lost their aura and became objects of the same moralizing attacks as writers who have been to Oxford. It would be interesting to go through the numbers of *Scrutiny* and make a list of the names and achievements and qualities of the reviewers unleashed by the editor on poets like Dame Edith Sitwell and Dylan Thomas. To do so would be to instruct oneself in the methods of literary gang warfare.

Early in the 1930's I received a letter from one of the editorial associates inviting me to write criticism in that magazine. To my utter astonishment, the writer told me that my literary criticism was 'an oasis in the desert of modern criticism'. To my recollection I replied that I thought it the virtue of oases to exist in deserts, and that therefore I proposed to continue to make water where I was most needed. What shocked me about this unctuous invitation was that it came from those who have always written about me as though it was a sad sign of the extraordinary debasements of all standards in modern life that I should ever have been allowed to publish anything at all.

The reader of Dr F. R. Leavis's interesting book *New Bearings in Modern Poetry* may think that the way in which Mr Ronald Bottrall – at a time when he was an extremely young man – is produced as a kind of *deus ex machina* at the end of this volume is a procedure which is open to objection in exactly the same way as is any other teacher's or editor's production of a very young man as 'leader'-who is going to lead an army to a victory over the rest of literature. Apart from this, anyone less overcompensated with self-righteousness than Dr Leavis would surely have reflected that he was perhaps doing Mr Bottrall a very grave disservice by singling him out as the only certificated young talent.

I do not want to be led away by the revulsion I feel at the (to me) almost incredible remark of Dr Leavis quoted by Mr Davie, without adding that as recently as last summer I re-read all Leavis's criticism, that I find a great deal to admire in it, and that I regret the circumstances which have produced this letter. The truth surely is that excessive self-righteousness has the unfortunate result that the self-righteous have even less scruple than that which they attribute to their opponents. And unscrupulousness when attacking supposedly unscrupulous opponents seems to be an occupational weakness of dons. At

present there is a great invasion into journalism and broadcasting of dons advertising the fact that they are academics who despise broadcasters and journalists. Dr F. R. Leavis, among his many very real virtues, will have nothing to do with mass media he despises, but all the same the accusations quoted in Mr Davie's article show a journalistic indifference to facts which Dr Leavis – like other dons – brings into play when he is dealing with living writers and not dead ones.

Now that I have written this letter I see that it does read like an action in a warfare between literary gangs, and thus it demonstrates the truth of my argument that to refute charges like those quoted by Mr Davie almost inevitably seems to justify them. However, Mr Davie's question – why are there no rebuttals? – is a challenge, and I think that there are reasons why it should be answered. One very powerful reason is that some young people reading about the 1930's may think that they themselves ought to form a movement or gang. The point I should like to make to them is that any effort in such a direction is a waste of time and energy. If they are a 'movement', other people – critics and editors – will point this out to them, and then there will be Dr Leavis (who is always with us) to denounce them as a gang.

Yours, etc.,

STEPHEN SPENDER.

ENCOUNTER,
25 PANTON HOUSE, S.W.1.
June 13.

SEX SPEAKS OUT

Dorothy Hopkinson

In the year 1895 a bombshell, in the form of a book called *Studien über Hysterie*, fell in Europe. Even its authors – two unknown medical men, Breuer and Freud – were unaware of the revolutionary nature of the force they were letting loose, or imagined that its repercussions would still be felt to-day throughout the whole Western world.

Writing about the book many years later when he was world-famous, Freud said in his Autobiographical Study,

> the theory was unpretentious. . . . It did not seek to establish the nature of hysteria but merely to throw light upon the origin of its symptoms . . . it laid stress upon the significance of the life of the emotions and upon the importance of distinguishing between mental acts which are unconscious and those which are conscious.

Thus innocently were laid the foundations of a new therapy, which was destined to have a profound and far-reaching effect not only on psychiatry, psychology and the mental sciences in general, but also on thought and language.

Much of the secrecy and false modesty surrounding the subject of sex was dispersed. It was no longer necessary for doctors to perform contortions of ingenious evasiveness in discussing ailments with their patients. A completely new understanding of the relation between mental and physical began to be accepted. Authors welcomed with relief the freedom to treat the lives of their characters with a measure of openness unknown since the eighteenth century, and with a knowledge which had never previously been codified.

Yet these were only some of the outward signs of what was nothing less than a moral revolution. Seventy years ago, authors took pains to make clear that their works were 'suitable fireside reading for the family', 'would not bring a blush to the most modest cheek' and so on. To-day, the qualities publishers most emphatically stress are their authors' 'frankness', 'outspokenness', and all the rest of it. The proud claim to be altogether above the concerns of sex would be to-day as thoroughly suspect an attitude as to have professed a serious interest in it seventy years ago.

Three books* published in recent months pin-point our own particular situation. They differ widely in their approach, but each of them has sex as its theme. None of them could have been published at all fifty, perhaps even twenty-five, years ago.

Two of the books, Dr A. Kinsey's *Sexual Behaviour in the Human Female* and Donald Webster Cory's *The Homosexual Outlook*, are by Americans, and are investigations into two of the most important aspects of sex in the contemporary world. The third, Gordon Rattray Taylor's, is British, and his book *Sex in History* is an attempt to give a picture of the rôle sex has played historically, the effect it has had on the nature and development of men and women through the centuries, and of how they in turn have given continually changing meanings to the whole idea of sex.

From all this it might well appear that we live in an enlightened, balanced and outspoken age – a true age of freedom. This is the appearance. Is it also the reality?

Let us begin with Dr Kinsey. Dr. K[illegible]sev is Professor of Zoology at the University of Indiana, [illegible] as been on the faculty there for thirty-three years. Hal[illegible] ur spent on the opening chapter of his book would have [illegible]ced any sincere reader that this is a work of serious inte[illegible] backed by years of laborious research. Nonetheless, on [illegible]rrival here, the book was condemned as pornography by a great part of the popular press – not, however, before they had served up to the public a lavish helping of the matter they were invited to condemn.

At Doncaster, the book was pounced on by the police and brought before a bench of magistrates, who were invited to condemn it as obscene. The six magistrates - four men and two women – refused to take this view. From America there have been reports that Kinsey was likely to find himself in trouble, not because his book was 'obscene' but because it, or he, or both, were considered 'Un-American'.

Sex in History, Gordon Rattray Taylor reports, met, not with

* *Sexual Behaviour in the Human Female*. Dr. Alfred Kinsey (Saunders. 50s.); *Sex in History*. Gordon Rattray Taylor. (Thames & Hudson. 21s.); *The Homosexual Outlook*. Donald Webster Cory. (Peter Nevill. 18s.).

prosecution, but with a form of trade censorship not uncommon in this country.

> One of the largest firms of booksellers in the country has instructed the majority of its branches not to stock the book, while a large lending library has advised its branches not to obtain the book unless specifically requested by a subscriber and in any case not to place it on the open shelves. Other booksellers have hesitated to carry more than a few copies at a time. Perhaps even more significant is the fact that the publishers have received a considerable number of orders by post from persons who were reluctant to obtain the book from a bookshop in the ordinary way.

I understand from the publishers of Donald Webster Cory's book *The Homosexual Outlook*, that they have had difficulty in advertising it, as most papers refused to accept advertisements and that only *The Listener* and the *British Medical Journal* reviewed it, all other papers, including the *New Statesman*, ignoring it.

It is clear from all this that the battle is far from having been won. No matter how ready we moderns may claim to be to allow, and in the name of science even to insist, on 'scientific thinking winning out over magical thinking', there is at least one sphere of life the sexual, in which both forms of thinking exist side by side.

These repressive and resistance factors which can be placed under the head of 'magical thinking' were always fully recognized by Freud. Indeed, it was precisely in order to find a means of dealing with them in the individual that he formulated his whole system of therapy. In a beautiful and moving phrase he referred to himself as 'belonging to those who have disturbed the slumbers of the world'.

Natural humility, combined with a caution born of painful experience, protected him from claiming that he had done anything more than disturb it. At first alone, in the teeth of the most bitter and violent opposition, and then with a few early followers of whom he said, 'They have learned to endure a bit of the truth', Freud fought to produce a real awakening.

His story of isolation and opposition is very different from Dr Kinsey's. In explaining how he was led to begin his work, Dr Kinsey says that, in the course of his teaching, he was approached by his biology students with questions concerning sexual behaviour. . . . They came to him because they hoped

that he as a scientist would 'provide factual information . . . . not biassed by moral, philosophic or social interpretations . . . which they might consider in working out their patterns of sexual behaviour'.

In attempting to answer some of these questions, Dr Kinsey goes on to say

> we drew upon our general understanding of animal biology and . . . the medical, psychologic and other literatures where one might have expected to find the desired data. We discovered, however, that scientific understanding of human sexual behaviour was more poorly established than the understanding of almost any other function of the human body.

Dr Kinsey thus became convinced of the need for a comprehensive survey of sexual behaviour based on interviews with many thousands of persons.

For this project he received not only the staunch and generous support of the administration of Indiana University, but also that of the National Research Council, an agency of the National Academy of Sciences. In addition, he had the co-operation of some hundreds of specialists in various fields of medicine.

Such ready co-operation reflects credit on all concerned. We feel that Dr Kinsey's statement in the first chapter of the Female Study, 'There is an honesty in science' which can lead to 'a certain acceptance of reality' is indeed true. Unfortunately, in the foreword by the National Research Council we read this:

> Comparison of Freud and Kinsey is not implied, for the two men differed greatly in temperament, professional training and experience, and in their objectives; but what should be noted is the fact that Freud . . . proposed theories which laid the foundation for a task he was not fitted by nature or training to carry on. This is the great task of fact-finding through careful, patient and long-continued objective research which Alfred Kinsey, the laboratory- and field-trained biologist, is now engaged in doing.

A few pages further, we come to this:

> There cannot be sound clinical practice, or sound planning of sex laws, until we understand more adequately the mammalian origins of human sexual behaviour, the anatomy and

> physiology of response, the sexual patterns of human cultures outside our own, and the factors which shape the behavioural patterns of children and adolescent youth. We cannot reach ultimate solutions for our problems until legislators and public opinion allow the investigator sufficient time to discover the bases of those problems.

This is depressing, and could be frightening. Freud's scientific honesty, natural modesty and acquired caution saved him from such flights of fancy. He would have been the last person to claim that he had provided, or could provide, mankind with 'ultimate solutions' to its problems. He knew, however, that, in extending treatment of them from purely somatic causation to include emotional and mental, he had taken us many necessary steps nearer to the possibility of a solution being reached.

Are we now, after Freud's heroic fight, to be returned via Kinsey to a belief in exclusively biological causation?

It is profoundly ironical that Kinsey, in accordance with this biological outlook, having reduced the sexual act to an activity almost equivalent to that of drinking a cup of tea – some like it strong, some like it weak, some with sugar, some without, some with lemon, some with milk – should now have fallen a victim to those very forces he has so complacently and arrogantly dismissed, and to deal with which psycho-analysis came into existence. These are the utterly irrational, sometimes hysterical and even violent, emotional/mental reactions of the unconscious – the unconscious either of the individual or of the general public. Let us hope that Dr Kinsey takes any persecution which may result from these irrational reactions to his well-meant and arduous endeavours with the same fortitude as his courageous predecessor.

Kinsey prides himself on his scientific outlook. But it is his lack of psychiatric knowledge and experience, resulting in too naïve an appreciation of the many factors involved in his undertaking – combined with 'specialist' complacency – which prevents his work from being truly scientific.

His method is the simple one of asking questions and tabulating the replies. He makes certain arbitrary allowances for error, but has completely failed to realize that the method itself may be at fault. The factors of ignorance, repression and resistance – which have surrounded sex with so many mysteries and taboos – inevitably come between the person questioned

and the response. A man or woman may wish and intend to speak the truth. But, in the first place, he may very well not know the truth about his or her own sexual behaviour, or, if he partly knows it, may be utterly unable to declare it. Nor can those enormous unknown factors of masculine vanity and feminine hypocrisy be reduced to percentages of error.

What, for example, are we to make of Kinsey's statement that a certain female had masturbated to orgasm one hundred times within a single hour?

Moreover, when it comes to making deductions from his material, an entirely new factor of error has come in – through the personal interpretations of this material by Dr Kinsey and his staff. How far afield they can be led, a single example will serve to show.

> Clinicians, including psychoanalysts . . . clinical psychologists and marriage counsellors, have expended considerable effort trying to teach their patients to transfer 'clitoral responses' into 'vaginal responses'. Some hundreds of the women in our own study and many thousands of the patients of certain clinicians have consequently been much disturbed by their failure to accomplish this biologic impossibility.

This biologic impossibility indeed! This is where we women must instruct the biologists. Woman is so constructed that she is capable of two forms of orgasm. I have heard women patients refer to them as their 'outer orgasm' and their 'inner orgasm', and all are unanimous in stating that the inner orgasm is more deeply satisfying than the outer. Whether or not, as Dr Kinsey suggests 'the satisfaction obtained from vaginal penetration must depend on some mechanism that lies outside the vaginal walls themselves' the fact remains that, whether from mechanisms outside or inside, it is within the vaginal walls that woman experiences this deeper satisfaction.

The inordinate appetite of a certain type of woman has its roots in the longing to find this deeper satisfaction. The clitoral response, though better than nothing, leaves a woman incomplete. If she has not had the inner response which would enable her to make a comparison, she may well of course be unaware of this – and so will confirm Dr Kinsey's statistical fantasies. Her sense of something missing will none the less, be with her, coming out as irritability, disappointment with life, nervous tension, nagging and rapacity. Hence the expenditure

of considerable effort by mental therapists when dealing with such cases.

The sexual unawakenedness of the female in comparison with the male is due in part to the negligible development of herself in realms other than the maternal and purely feminine. As this development and application of her powers proceeds, woman is showing an increasing unwillingness to be bound by all those limitations from which she has suffered in the past, and is, of course, still suffering.

Very soon, the sexual limitations imposed on her by ignorance, custom and man's exploitation of her in his own interests will be thrown off. Less and less will she tolerate these continuous attempts, always masculine, to reduce lovemaking to the purely physical.

It is understood that the instinctual part of the human stems from animality. But our complexity is the result of our attempts to fulfil the demands made on us in the name of the family, society, the state, and our own aspirational urge for material and moral progress and expansion.

In this adaptation of ourselves to the demands of progress, we have extended sex from the seasonal activity of the animal to an all the year round one, on the one hand, and heavily restricted it with taboos and a system of repressive laws on the other. Side-by-side extension and restriction – both of which are outside animal experience – naturally affect and influence our human sexual behaviour.

This may mean little or nothing to the biologist, whose job after all is biology and not history, but to ordinary men and women, who are suffering in one way or another from its effects, it is very real.

The result of these efforts to become conscious is that the cerebral part of man has been developed at the expense of his physical and emotional nature. Pre-occupation with his fruits has placed him in great danger of losing his roots. It is for this reason that a re-incorporation of the biological now has value as a balancing corrective.

Dr. Kinsey, however, goes too far when, in the security of his scientific status and exploiting it to the full, he fails to see that he represents only one specialized branch of the tree, and that only harm can result from his lopping off all the other branches and arrogating to himself all the answers.

It is this progression from primitive simplicity to modern

complexity which now makes the many problems, with which man finds himself faced, impossible of solution by any one specialized approach, no matter how scientific its grounding. Whilst in the interests of reality it is necessary that scientific thinking should win out over magical thinking, it is equally important that scientific specialization, and the reduction of man to a number, to be classified, tabulated and compartmented in the interests of statistics, do not become the new magic. This could only result in the cure being more crippling than the disease.

It was inevitable that, with the opening up of the psychological frontiers of the human sexual problem via Freud, there should be a Kinsey to open up the physiological ones. Just as it was also inevitable that those who try to open up these frontiers should be persecuted.

Though Dr Kinsey is not only a conscientious scientist but also a man of wide sympathies and broad outlook, actuated by a genuine desire to help his fellow creatures, much more is required to justify his claim to provide mankind with an ultimate solution to a basic problem.

What Dr Kinsey has done is heavily to over-accent one part of man at the expense of his other parts. We therefore still await the genius who can help us to a harmonious functioning of our being, through a synthesis of all our parts.

Gordon Rattray Taylor makes it clear from the beginning what his approach to his subject *Sex in History* is to be.

> The treatment of sex as merely a biological urge is sadly inadequate. Sex is both more complex and more metaphysical. . . . More complex because it can demand strange and highly unbiological modes for its fulfilment; not just any man or woman, but this man and that woman; not just the archetypal act but a specialised stimulus. . . . More metaphysical because it can be sublimated into creative activities or denatured into aggressive and destructive ones.

The concentrated common sense of this increases one's astonishment that Dr. Kinsey could work for fifteen years, and produce two massive volumes, without taking into consideration any one of these obvious factors.

In taking his stand on the psychological, Mr Taylor is fully aware of the risks he runs

> since people resent the exposure of their unconscious motives

> and are apt to relieve their anxiety by attacking the writer who has threatened their peace of mind. . . . How still more dangerous then is the position of the writer who ventures to apply the psychological method to historical material . . . he risks the displeasure of the professional historians who have decided that no such thing as psychological history is possible.

This is lamentably true, and emphasizes the weakness of specialization. The biologist ignores both psychology and history, and the historian, in his interpretation of historical figures and events, lacks only too often any psychological insight.

This involves the historian in the invention of mysterious influences to account for what he cannot explain. Such a mysterious influence is what he calls 'the spirit of the times'. 'It is said, for instance, that the puritans failed to retain power in 1660 because the "spirit of the times" was against such extreme austerity'.

An understanding of psychology, Mr. Taylor suggests, might enable this vague notion to be reduced to a more precise form. Psychology has, in recent years, cast a flood of light on how the attitudes of individuals are built up. Our attitudes to sexual matters are fundamental to our nature, and highly indicative of personality. Just as a man or a woman can be understood completely from their attitude to sex, so, Mr. Taylor argues, can a civilization or a period in history.

Through medieval sexuality two strongly contrasted attitudes – 'one inhibited, ascetic and sex denying, the other spontaneous, indulgent and permissive' – can be traced; and from this the author develops a fascinating theory. The former attitude is placed under the heading 'patrist' and the second under the heading 'matrist'. (Incidentally this bears no relationship to patriarchal and matriarchal ideas.)

Patrists are those persons who have modelled themselves on their father, and matrists those who have modelled themselves on a mother-figure. The various changes and contrasts in European sexual behaviour can then be systematically accounted for in terms of these two identifications.

For example, the medieval moral system appears to have been made by the father identifiers, who have a restrictive attitude to sex and depress the status of woman. In contrast to this, the pre-Christian Celts were permissive about sex and accorded a high status to women. 'Significantly enough, the first group worshipped a father-deity . . . whilst the second worshipped a mother-deity'.

Particularly illuminating is the table of comparisons on page 83, showing that the patrist values chastity more than welfare, and the matrist welfare more than chastity. Patrists favour plain sombre clothing; matrists delight in rich colourful dress. Probably the most stimulating contrast, opening up a rich field for research, is that between the patrist's deep fear of homosexuality and the matrist's deep fear of incest.

During the past two thousand years the pendulum is said to have swung twice from matrism to patrism and back. Where do we stand to-day? If the status of women is a fair index of society's location on the patrist/matrist scale, it is argued that 'though women do not generally receive the same rate of pay as men, they have nevertheless obtained a considerable measure of social and political equality'. By this criterion Mr Taylor believes our own age to be noticeably matrist. It is certainly the age of the Welfare State.

The ideal however, is neither patrism nor matrism, but a judicious balance between the two – since under extreme patrism spontaneity is too strongly repressed, and under extreme matrism there may be insufficient discipline.

The same problem may be stated in a different form – how does man come to terms with sex?

> Bottle it up and there will be a catastrophic explosion. Free it, and it will dissipate itself uselessly or harmfully. . . . The task is to transmute it to a constructive form, for only when it is transmuted into forms of social and artistic value can civilization survive.

Finally,

> the test of success is not simply the creative works it produces but also the satisfaction we derive in producing them. The problem of sexual control is the problem of what we do with our creative powers. The society which provides adequate outlets will have few sexual problems.

Mr Taylor's main theme is, of course, an over-simplification – as any one way of looking at history must be. But he has written a witty, wise, scholarly and enlightening book, and I would like to see it given to every intelligent young man and woman for a twenty-first birthday present, along with that proverbial key. In my opinion, however, it was a mistake to

make such extended use of the language of psychoanalysis, even though his argument was one based on psychology.

How many ordinary readers will really know what is meant by 'the dangerous and powerful forces of the " id ",' or 'There is Eros, which is love creativity but also lust, and there is Thanatos which is hate and destruction but may also become the power to control . . . for useful purposes.'

For Donald Webster Cory's book *The Homosexual Outlook – A Subjective Approach* it is claimed on the cover that 'Except for the statistical disclosures of the Kinsey report, this is easily the most important . . . book on the subject, and is worthy of a place on the shelf beside Kraft Ebbing, Havelock Ellis and Freud.' Let us see how far this claim is justified.

Mr Cory tells us in his preface that although he had been aware of the homosexual problem since early adolescence, it came as a deep shock to him when, as a senior in high school, a teacher drew him aside and explained to him that there were people called inverts. In the years that followed he struggled against his homosexuality but without success. Wishing to have a full and complete relationship with a male he came up against homosexual promiscuity and inconstancy. 'Passionate infatuations that seemed permanent were torn asunder after only a short period of time'.

Disillusioned, he married at the age of twenty-five, after determining that he was capable of consummating a marriage, a girl he had known from childhood.

Marriage did not reduce the urge for gratification with men. Compelled to solve the problem, he went to a psychoanalyst.

> As the long analysis proceeded [he says] it became apparent that he was going to help me overcome my feelings of shame, guilt, remorse, rather than the impulses which brought forward these feelings.

After a long, bitter fight, however, he became aware that

> By feeling guilty and remorseful I exonerated myself of all responsibility, proving to myself that homosexuality was a compulsion carried out against my will . . . this exoneration made it possible to continue . . . homosexual life. But the price I was paying was severe.

After many years of successful marriage, with a happy home and children, he relates what it means to be a homosexual. '

ope [he says] it will contribute toward ameliorating a deplorble social condition and will give encouragement to those who, being homosexual like myself, are seeking answers to the nany questions they face in life.'

In his final chapter, Mr Cory addresses himself to an maginary youth bewildered by the realization that he is omosexual. Mr Cory says:

> First I urge you turn inward and accept yourself. . . . Once and for all relinquish the thought that in this world or in another, you will ever be different. . . . You will not outgrow it . . . change on the couch of an analyst. Next year, next decade you will be 'gay' (apparently the American term for homosexuals, heterosexuals being known as 'straight') just as you are to-day and as you must be until the last breath leaves your body.

he youth must understand the destructive nature and uselessess of the guilt feeling he may harbour for being 'gay'.

> Always beware lest you have accepted the values imposed on you by those who are hostile to your way of life. If you carry within you, even to the slightest extent, the feeling that you are doing something wrong, then you will succeed only in preventing yourself from partaking of the pleasures of your actions.

o divest himself of these guilt feelings, he must re-evaluate s entire way of life. 'This involves a realization that your pulses have never been anti-social'.

If blackmailed, probably by a 'straight' or a 'two-way man', Do not fall into any traps . . . go to a lawyer or directly to he police and explain, in self-righteous words . . . that you re a virtuous and law-abiding citizen'.

Toward the condemning portion of society 'display a compassion born of deep sympathy. . . . Their condemnation is disease and we cannot help but be sorry for those who are ll, although their ailment does great harm to many. . . . 'Forgive them" it is written, "for they know not what they lo".'

It should be clear, even from these few extracts, that Mr Cory as most effectively lost both his sense of guilt and of shame, nd collected a number of compensatory justifications. Of hese justifications, we will examine only one. It is crucial, nd the rest fall into place when this is clarified. ' Your

impulses', says Mr Cory to his young pupil, 'have never been anti-social'.

Now nature has but one purpose – the continuation of the race. To achieve this, she spends herself lavishly and uses pleasure as a decoy. If we look upon childbirth as pain, and parenthood as an acceptance of the results of pleasure/pain, we begin to have some insight into the peculiar position of the homosexual. (This applies to the female as well as to the male.) He has evolved a technique for cheating nature. Hence the phrase 'against nature', 'contrary to nature'.

This capacity to cheat nature is not the prerogative of a minority. Bi-sexuality is latent in us all. Probing – deep in some cases, less deep in others – reveals homosexual tendencies in every man or woman. However, in the interests of the family, society and the state, the 'straight' majority have accepted the repression of these tendencies, in exactly the same way as they have accepted the repression of incest.

And with the acceptance of repression, goes the acceptance of burdens – lifelong relationship and the upbringing of children. These the 'gay' homosexual sloughs off. He now – and in this Mr Cory speaks for the great majority of homosexuals everywhere – wishes to lay a further burden on the back of the heterosexual; to make the world a happy place for homosexuals to live in.

If Mr Cory would be a little more objective, and a little less subjective, he would see that the inconstancy and promiscuity of the homosexual, which he found so disillusioning and which, incidentally, led him to the discovery of his own bi-sexuality, derives directly from the fact that the homosexual aim is to achieve pleasure and avoid responsibility.

One may and should understand his difficulties, and view his activities without any moral reprobation; but sympathy has its limits. Mr Cory has made up his mind not to give up his pleasure drive; his pupil is urged to abandon every effort to change. What justification has he then for assuming that the world will be willing to do what he will not – to alter its attitude?

WHO WROTE 'DON LEON'?

G. Wilson Knight

In 1866 there was published in London, under the publisher's title 'Printed for the Booksellers', a work apparently printed in Alençon and bearing on the title-page:

> *Don Leon:* a poem by the late Lord Byron, and forming part of the Private Journal of his lordship, supposed to have been entirely destroyed by Thos. Moore. To which is added *Leon to Annabella,* an epistle from Lord Byron to Lady Byron.

To the second poem is prefixed a statement describing how the lines were discovered in a cottage near Pisa. The poems are in rhymed couplets and extend to 1,455 and 330 lines respectively. To the first are added 63 pages of notes ranging from obvious pornography to research among the poets of the ancient world (though these headings are not mutually exclusive). No editor is named, nor is the author, or authors, since there are probably more than one, of the notes. In his *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* (London, Privately Printed, 1877), 'Pisanus Fraxi' (i.e. H. S. Ashbee) says that W. Dugdale, whom he names as the publisher, showed him the MS., which appeared to have been 'written some years previously', but 'was evidently not the original written by the author', having been copied by some 'illiterate person' with many errors among the Greek and Latin quotations. He also records that he pointed out to Mr Dugdale that *Don Leon* refers to events which happened after Byron's death.

The 1866 volume appears, apart from a single letter in *Notes and Queries* asking for information regarding it, to have attracted little notice. In his bibliography of Byron, T. J. Wise describes it as 'of course, spurious'. There was a reissue, unedited, in 1934, but it was regarded as spurious, sales were prohibited, and since then no critical attention seems to have been focused on it.

The first poem, *Don Leon,* contains: (i) a powerful attack on the prevailing laws, which included the death-penalty,

against homosexual practices, with attacks on statesmen such as Mackintosh, Sidmouth and Peel; (ii) a supposedly autobiographical account of Byron's youthful anxieties regarding his own instincts and the passionate friendships to which they led him, together with some vivid descriptions of the East; (iii) a large number of references to men of public note in connection variously with statesmanship, literature, Byron's own affairs, and homosexuality; and (iv) an intimate description, supposedly by Byron, of an irregular relation with his wife during her pregnancy, leading on to the second poem, *Leon to Annabella*, which tells the story of the marriage break and Byron's gradually formed conviction that knowledge of this irregularity must have been drawn from Lady Byron by the opposing party, who are regarded as responsible for poisoning her mind with respect to it, and so ruining the marriage. These themes we shall notice in turn.

(i) The attack lies in the great tradition of English satire. Here is part of the opening movement:

> And shall the Muse, whilst pen and paper lie
> Upon the table, hear the victim's cry,
> Nor boldly lay her cauterizing hand
> Upon a wound that cankers half the land?
> No! were the bays that flourish round my head
> Destined to wither when these lines are read;
> Could all the scourges canting priests invent
> To prop their legendary lies, torment
> My soul in death or rack my body here,
> My voice I'd raise insensible to fear.
> When greedy placemen drain a sinking state,
> When virtue starves and villains dine off plate;
> When lords and senators, untouched by shame,
> For schemes of basest fraud can lend their name;
> When elders, charged to guard the pauper's trust,
> Feast on the funds, and leave the poor a crust;
> When knaves like these escape the hangman's noose,
> Who e'en to Clogher a pardon would refuse?
> Who would not up and lend a hand to save
> A venial culprit from a felon's grave?
> Sheer indignation quickens into rhyme,
> And silence now were tantamount to crime.
> I know not in what friendly breast to pour
> My swelling rage, save into thine, dear Moore,
> For thou, methinks, some sympathy will own,
> Since love, no matter in what guise 'tis shown,

> Must ever find an echo from that lyre
> Which erst hath glowed with old Anacreon's fire.
> (*Don Leon*, 19.)

That sets the stage for a lengthy apologia, with many references to great men of ancient, medieval and Renaissance times, including Shakespeare, who possessed homosexual tendencies.

(ii) In my study of Byron* I set down the story of Byron's romantic friendships with Robert Rushton, John Edleston, Nicolo Giraud, William Harness, and others (*C.V.*, II, 67–74). This had not, as far as I know, been done before. Separate instances had been noted by biographers from Moore to Quennell, but they had not been allowed to take the stage-centre, and there had been no apparent consciousness of the sequence as an important and cohering unit; nor perhaps could there have been without use of the new biographical technique which I was using. My account was composed before ever I read *Don Leon*, which tells the same story with all the attendant detail and vivid extensions that might be supposed to characterize an autobiographical treatment; and that would have been an amazing *tour de force* for a mid-nineteenth century biographer, working on the published sources at that time available. Here are some lines introducing John Edleston, the Cambridge chorister:

> Oft, when the evening bell to vespers rung,
> When the full choir the solemn anthem sung,
> And lips, o'er which no youthful down had grown,
> Hymned their soft praises to Jehovah's throne,
> The pathos of the strain would soothe my soul,
> And call me willing from the drunkard's bowl.
> Who that has heard the chapel's evening song,
> When peals divine the lengthened note prolong,
> But must have felt religious thoughts arise,
> And speed their way melodious to the skies?
> (*Don Leon*, 201.)

Byron's relations with Edleston and Nicolo Giraud are exactly handled. Of this strain in Byron's emotional life there is more evidence than has yet been pointed out, including his alteration of a title and the veiling of a designation in *Childe Harold* (see *Works*, Poetry, ed. E. Hartley Coleridge, I, 18–9, and II, 162–3, with notes); and also Augusta's anxiety on one occasion

* *Lord Byron's Christian Virtues*, (1952) referred to this article as C.V.

(to Augusta, September 14th, 1816; Lovelace, *Astarte*, XI, 268) as to his actions on the Continent. All this is scarcely surprising. Had Byron not shown such a tendency we might, having regard to others of comparable powers, have nevertheless suspected it.

(iii) The references to contemporaries of Byron are numerous. They are names which occur elsewhere in his writings. I have checked them with his own authenticated comments, in prose or poetry, and the correspondences in judgment and tone are correct.

(iv) The mystery of Byron's marriage-disaster has never been satisfactorily explained. Whether or not incest had occurred earlier, it is known not to have been the immediate cause of the separation. Richard Edgcumbe long ago argued from internal evidence that Byron's letter from Venice of May 17th, 1819, was not addressed to Augusta at all (*Byron: The Last Phase*, 1909, III, 368–73); Samuel Chew accepts his conclusion (*Byron in England*, 1924, XV, 338–9); but the argument does not appear to have been faced, and in *Byron: a Self-Portrait* Peter Quennell's annotation merely states that it 'has been assumed' to be addressed to Augusta (II, 451). More than incest is involved, since, if Edgcumbe was right, why did Augusta pretend to be the addressee? Either way, the behaviour of Lady Byron and Augusta after the separation has hitherto remained inexplicable. But from the start dark hints were thrown out of something worse than incest (Hobhouse, *Recollections of a Long Life*, II, xv, 290, 301, 349–52; and see Lovelace, *Astarte*, V, 103); and to this Moore might have been referring when he wrote of the uselessness of judging by 'ordinary standards' the 'passions untamed' of such a man as Byron (*Life*, I, 656, or XXV, 298). Beside Walter Scott's reported remark on the destruction of the *Memoirs*, 'It was a pity, but there *was* a reason – *premat nox alta*' (*Astarte*, VI, 122), we may place certain of the Maniac's lines in *Julian and Maddalo*, read according to my recently argued and firmly substantiated interpretation (*C.V.*, V, 251–3), with the Maniac as an aspect of Byron. From this interpretation *Julian and Maddalo* becomes, for the first time, evidence regarding the separation. The Maniac speaks, addressing the lady who has rejected him:

> That you had never seen me – never heard
> My voice, and more than all had ne'er endured

> The deep pollution of my loathed embrace –
> That your eyes ne'er had lied love in my face –
> That, like some maniac monk, I had torn out
> The nerves of manhood by their bleeding root
> With mine own quivering fingers, so that ne'er
> Our hearts had for a moment mingled there
> To disunite in horror . . .
>
> (*Julian and Maddalo*, 420.)

That is addressed by the Maniac to his lady, and may be supposed to correspond to 'that one slip of my poor silly tongue' in *Leon to Annabella* (264). There has been a 'deadly change in love' from 'one vowed deeply' (527–8), and the lady is said to rain 'plagues of blistering agony' (453) on him. The secret is divulged by Maddalo's daughter at the poem's conclusion, which reads:

> I urged and questioned still; she told me how
> All happened – but the cold world shall not know.
>
> (616.)

The operative word is 'cold'. Col. Stanhope's reference to Hobhouse's destroying 'from motives of high honour' one of Byron's last and finest works of which he himself refuses ever to divulge the nature (*C.V.*, I, 32) may be apposite. In one of the best discussions yet advanced on the subject John Drinkwater suggested that the elusive nature of the riddle behind the correspondence of Lady Byron and Augusta 'so plausibly taken to be incest' might turn out to be 'a yet more obscure secret than is commonly allowed'; he suspects that 'the circumstances, themselves', may be 'out of our reckoning'; and says that his own view is, 'that the conclusive last word of the story has yet to be revealed' (*The Pilgrim of Eternity*, I, 70–1, 75–6, 77).

Neither Byron's break with London nor the weight of his invectives against British 'cant' can be explained in terms of ordinary sexual freedom, since he does not appear to have been a peculiarly licentious man (*C.V.*, I, 42–3), and his record in Regency society was, according to Hobhouse, merely that of 'a man of the world' (*Recollections*, II, xv, 196). Nevertheless, in a less accessible passage listing his great qualities, Hobhouse made a reservation regarding his 'many failings' (*C.V.*, II, 94). That is typical; Moore and others have said the same; but *no one tells us what they were.*

Was the cause of all this mystery-mongering less a matter of good and evil than one of *embarrassment*? Even if Byron did not write *Don Leon*, its facts may bear some relation to the truth. Do *Julian and Maddalo* and *Don Leon* together answer to the 'x' of our equation, throwing everything into significant pattern? Was incest played up by Lady Byron's party *as a mask*?

The instinct in question appears to have been a constituent in a number of men of poetic genius, from the ancients down. That *Don Leon* should speak out on the general matter of homosexuality more boldly than its predecessors or successors, is only what we should expect from Byron or anyone deliberately aiming at a Byronic effect. But the poem offers no simple thesis. The defence is strongly countered by words or phrases of traditional condemnation, such as 'weakness' (276), 'infirmities' (376), 'infamy' (392), 'morbid lust' (17), 'depravity of mind' (381), 'these inclinations rank and strong' (243). This address to Peel is typical:

> A single scratch of thy reforming pen,
> Had from our code erased a peccant lust,
> And left its punishment to men's disgust.
>
> (*Don Leon*, 1334.)

Such phraseology appears beside the idealism. We have both, presented in sharp contrapuntal, or dramatic, opposition:

> Look, how infected with this rank disease
> Were those who held St Peter's holy keys,
> And pious men to whom the people bowed,
> And kings, who churches to the saints endowed;
> All these were Christians of the highest stamp—
> How many scholars, wasting o'er their lamp,
> How many jurists, versed in legal rules,
> How many poets, honoured in the schools,
> How many captains, famed for deeds of arms,
> Have found their solace in a minion's arms!
> Nay, e'en our bard, Dame Nature's darling child,
> Felt the strange impulse, and his hours beguiled
> In penning sonnets to a stripling's praise,
> Such as would damn a poet now-a-days.
>
> (*Don Leon*, 305.)

'Rank disease' holds irony. But it is not all irony. Such phrases are variously used. The defence is fully aware of, has taken into account, lived through, and surmounted, moral condemnation and abhorrence. This extraordinary balance and control of emotionally charged opposites might well seem in itself to constitute evidence for Byron's authorship.

But there are difficulties. Though the emotional impulse and accent is Byronic, the poetic surface is not exactly his. Indeed, I know nothing in rhymed couplets quite like it. Pope's influence is present, and the central cæsura of his earlier manner occasionally found, as in the fourth of these lines:

> Then tell me not of sex, if to one key
> The chords, when struck, vibrate in harmony.
> No virgin I deflower, nor, lurking, creep,
> With steps adult'rous, on a husband's sleep.
> I plough no field in other men's domain;
> And where I delve no seed shall spring again.
>
> (*Don Leon*, 247.)

The general movement at times recalls the swing and impetus of the later Pope, but is perhaps nearer Byron's *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* or *The Age of Bronze*, though the poetry shows a more rounded solidity of phrase, or rather of *word*, and in general a weightier impact, than those. There is, too, a dark anger beyond anything in Byron's poetry elsewhere, except, significantly, for his *Sketch*; but this would be understandable, since his deepest personal instincts would have been engaged, as in the terrible letter on Sir Samuel Romilly discussed in my *Byron's Dramatic Prose* (University of Nottingham Press, 1954). Such are the emotions which give us this couplet on, presumably, since he is mentioned elsewhere, Lady Byron's other legal adviser, Dr Lushington:

> Behold yon reptile with his squinting eyes:
> Him shall my curses follow till he dies . . .
>
> (*Don Leon*, 1042.)

If such lines are not Byron's, who in the nineteenth century could have written them? It is as though they combined the fire of Byron's poetry with the verbal weight of his prose; certainly the impact of a total personality is behind them.

Yet, again, there are qualities that are not Byronic. In Byron's couplets words do not so assert themselves as integral, weighted, units. Besides, words are used, and repeated, that do not belong to Byron's work, as we know it, and there is no Byronic parallel to the masterly punning of the obscene passages. Moreover, as 'Pisanus Fraxi' observed, incidents appear

to be mentioned which occurred after Byron's death. Analysis suggests that the date-limit lies somewhere about the year 1833. The incidents are of three sorts: (i) certain references to Peel regarding matters of legislation; (ii) correct forecasts of trouble to come in respect of homosexuality to people of note living in Byron's day; and (iii) a warning to Moore, as from Byron, not to *burn* these confessions, which appears to presuppose a knowledge of what actually happened to the *Memoirs* after Byron's death. That these are additions is theoretically possible, but there is no variation whatsoever in style.

That some charlatan later in the century could have shown so brilliant an insight into Byron's story and steered his course among a number of themes and persons without a slip in reference, opinion, and emotion, is, as we have already suggested, most unlikely. Nor can Byron be the author of, at least, the first poem, as it stands, though *Leon to Annabella* contains no late references. We are left with only one possibility: a contemporary and intimate of Byron, who lived beyond the year 1833, and whose mastery of language and general outlook were of a kind that could have written the poems.

Such a candidate, however, is not so easy to hit on. Scott, Moore, and Crabbe must, for obvious reasons, be rejected. It was not until George Colman the dramatist, who died in 1836, was suggested as a possible candidate, that light began to dawn. Colman was one of those whom Byron urged in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* to 'awake' and chastise the age as it deserved. Afterwards, the two became friendly. Byron spent convivial evenings with him and Sheridan. In his *Detached Thoughts* (107) he wrote that 'Sheridan was a Grenadier Company of Life Guards, but Colman a whole regiment – of *light Infantry*, to be sure, but still a *regiment*'. Knowing Byron's admiration of Sheridan, we can call that high praise. It would seem that *Don Juan* owes something to Colman's light verse. Here is the opening of *The Knight and the Friar:*

> In our Fifth Harry's reign, when 'twas the fashion
> To thump the French, poor creatures! to excess –
> Tho' Britons, now-a-days, show more compassion,
> And thump them, certainly, a great deal less –
> In Harry's reign, when flush'd Lancastrian roses
> Of York's pale blossoms had usurp'd the right;

> As wine drives Nature out of drunkards' noses,
> Till red, triumphantly, eclipses white; –
> In Harry's reign – but let me to my song,
> Or good King Harry's reign may seem too long.
> (*Broad Grins*, 1807; p. 40.)

Colman's verbal resource is remarkable, and his more bitter satiric thrusts, levelled against pomposity and pride, draw close to *Don Leon*. He is, after all, best known for his study of pedantic pomposity in Dr Pangloss in *The Heir-at-Law*. In his *Two Parsons, or the Tale of a Shirt* (*Poetical Vagaries*, 1812) he writes of Bow Street officers and

> Those infinitely grander Drudges,
> The big-wigg'd circuiteering Judges
> (p. 116.)

and

> The Vice-Suppressing, starch'd Society –
> That tribe of self-erected Prigs – whose leaven
> Consists in *buckramizing* souls for Heaven;
> Those stiff-rump'd Buzzards, who evince the vigour
> Of Christian virtue by Unchristian rigour;
> Those Quacks and Quixotes, who, in coalition,
> Compose the Canters' secret Inquisition;
> Dolts, in our tolerating Constitution,
> Who turn Morality to Persecution,
> And, through their precious pates' fanatick twists,
> Are part Informers, Spies, and Methodists.
> (p. 116.)

Though this is earlier work and comes from a light poem, there is nevertheless something of the same punch and pungency, the same easy use of well-loaded single words, the same bitterness, the same moral valuation, as in *Don Leon*.

A cursory glance through his pages shows a number of parallels in vocabulary and thought. With 'the Key-keeper of Chandos Street' occurring in *Two Parsons* (*Poetical Vagaries*, 116) compare the references to 'the Key' at *Don Leon*, 877, and the note on it as a brothel in Chandos Street. The word 'urchin' is used in relation to 'Hymen' and amorous 'play' in *The Knight and the Friar* (*Broad Grins*, 48); and we have 'Hymen' and 'the playful urchin' (i.e. sexual organ) together in *Leon to Annabella* (280–90). With 'He bit him in the part where honour's placed' in *Low Ambition* (*Poetical Vagaries*, 31), compare the similar connotations in *Don Leon* of 'Where honour, sensi-

tive, a shelter seeks' (1439) and 'Health, ease, and honour centre in that spot' (1445). In' A Reckoning with Time' in *Low Ambition* we have:

> Grains of the grammar, which the flails
> Of Pedants thresh upon our tails,
> (*Poetical Vagaries*, p. 17.)

corresponding to 'Boys, tickled by the tail, in wisdom grow' in *Don Leon* (1415). We have an association of Bashaws and tails in *The Lady of the Wreck* (*Poetical Vagaries*, 95), the play *Blue-Beard* (I, i; II, v), and *Don Leon* (1416).* In both *Don Leon* (844–5) and the play *John Bull* (II, ii), we find a carriage in St. James's Street associated with the life of a kept mistress. Some of the notes to Colman's poetry recall the notes to *Don Leon.*

The plays themselves, superficially so different from *Don Leon*, are nevertheless basically akin. *Don Leon* contains passages of remarkable punning, and Colman and his plays were noted for puns: Jeremy F. Bagster-Collins in *George Colman the Younger* (New York, 1946; I, 34) says that they were for him 'a life-long devotion, both on and off the stage'. The oriental settings and ceremonies of such plays as *Blue-Beard*, *The Mountaineers*, *The Africans* and *The Law of Java* would have given Colman the equipment for the oriental descriptions of *Don Leon.* As for his serious themes, these show a general satire against selfish nobility, the heartless rich, a business society where every one tries to ruin every one else (*John Bull*, II, i), tyranny of any kind, brutal justice, humbug of all sorts, with an especial horror of executions, the slave-trade, and imperialism in general. All this suits the author of *Don Leon*:

> Now turn your eyes athwart the Speaker's chair:
> A pious orator is seated there.
> In vain the negro's cause he nightly pleads;
> Tells how the gangrened back with lashes bleeds . . .
> (*Don Leon*, 978.)

The plays show regularly a firm support of the lowly, simple country-folk, and savages, and all in whom the vices of civilization and sophistication are not present. Love is central, suffering or succeeding in relation to these themes and values; though it is, of course, love of a conventional kind. We can

* Two, or three, horses' tails were carried before these Turkish dignitaries as a sign of honour.

say that a central emphasis falls on emotional integrity, expanding to generosity and gratitude as natural powers; and on the other side, there is horror at false friends, money-greed, ingratitude, and time-servers. Colman's serious work is to this extent Byronic, and also on the exact wave-length of *Timon of Athens*, his embittered recluse Orzinga in *The Law of Java* being a far from unsatisfying replica of Shakespeare's hero. The spectacular scene of the forbidden blue room in *Blue-Beard* might be regarded as a psychological symbolism relevant to our discussion; but, apart from any such interpretation, it will be clear that the mind-structure and emotional sympathies of the dramatist are close to those of the author of *Don Leon.* It may be significant that the persons who represent Colman's considered wisdom in two of his most important works, Steadfast in *The Heir-at-Law* and Peregrine in *John Bull*, are old bachelors.

But what, then, was Colman's purpose? Clearly, he cannot have expected Byron's authorship of *Don Leon* to be accepted; but he is equally clearly claiming to tell the truth of Byron's life. He might well have been, as, no doubt, were many others of Byron's friends, in a position to know the truth; *Julian and Maddalo* appears, as we have seen, to tell, or rather hint, the same facts; and we may suppose him, with all the abhorrence of hypocrisy so evident in his work, to have been deeply shocked by the burning of Byron's *Memoirs*. Moore is ironically warned:

> And, nor for filthy lucre, nor to dine
> At Holland House, erase one single line.
> (*Don Leon*, 51.)

The poet fears

> Lest, under false pretences, thou should'st turn
> A faithless friend, and these confessions burn.
> (*Don Leon*, 1273.)

That is being written by one who had known the *Memoirs* burned, and who, as have others, blamed Moore for allowing it. Moore's *Life of Byron* had appeared in 1830, with the assertion that the *Memoirs* cast no light on the separation. Was the author of *Don Leon* revealing the truth?

Whether he was working from his reminiscences of Byron's talk, or from letters or poems of Byron now lost, must remain uncertain. He diverges from Moore on the matter of Nicolo

Giraud's parentage, and it would be interesting to know who is right. Certainly *Don Leon* must henceforth be faced as evidence. It is unlikely that a friend of Byron's, a kindred spirit whose sincerity rings in every couplet, was deliberately lying. The poems are honest. Had he wished them to be accepted as Byron's he would have avoided errors in date: the very first line of *Don Leon* is given a note, which seems to be the poet's, deliberately, and half-humorously, pointing to a discrepancy. What we have is really an imaginative reconstruction not unlike Shelley's *Julian and Maddalo*, only far more dramatically convincing, Byron's very accent being again and again captured with amazing skill. Nor is the author only out to interpret Byron's story; he is also using that story as a basis for a general challenge.

And the challenge is one of considerable power. On a literary judgment alone, I know nothing of the sort of so sustained a mastery outside Pope; throughout it is, as Byron said of Pope's, 'poetry without fault'. Handling in deadly earnest substances, both *risqué* and satiric, which can be felt behind the themes of Colman's humorous pieces, *Don Leon* blends indecency of reference with moral valuations of the noblest kind. Its refusal to pass by the injustice which 'hangs the pennyless and spares the lord' (929) is in direct line with both Colman's satiric outlook and Byron's horror of legal cruelty (*C.V.*, IV, 200–2; and see V, 232, quoting Lady Blessington); the psychology, especially certain advice to parents, is profound; even the vigorous punning of the obscene passages, in the manner of Petruchio's wooing of Katharine (*The Taming of the Shrew*, II, i, 196–217), marks no relaxation of high seriousness. *Don Leon* ranks among the great satires of our literature, and its plea for those who, in every age, are driven to suicide by fear of society deserves respect:

> Britons! and will no penalty suffice,
> Except the gibbet for a lecher's vice?
> To lose his country, to behold the chain
> That linked his best affections snapt in twain,
> To find no refuge for his stricken head,
> Where'er he goes to know his shame is spread,
> And is not this enough, without he's cast
> By judge and jury? Fiends would cry 'Avast!'
> Blot out the crimson leaf! the glaive forbear!
> Count o'er the wretched victims of despair,

> The panic flight, the suicidal beam,
> The knife, the bullet, do they trifles seem?
> Thirst ye for blood? and will no punishment
> But what old Bailey metes, your hearts content?
> (*Don Leon*, 988.)

The attack is mainly against England, reminding us that 'that little spot which constitutes our isle' is not 'the world' (1377). Again:

> God of the universe, whose laws shall last,
> When Lords and Commons to their graves have past,
> Are good and evil just as man opines,
> And kens he thy inscrutable designs?
> (*Don Leon*, 1391.)

As in Pope's *Essay on Man*, we are reminded how one nation's heresy is another's creed.

It has not been possible to indicate the extent of the evidence supporting the view that *Don Leon* is the work of someone intimately acquainted with, and attuned to, Byron's life and opinions; nor the arguments against his authorship of the poem, as we have it; nor those which support that of Colman. Whatever be the truth, the poetry exists and challenges attention; it may be bold, but it is honest; and we, today, can surely appreciate its worth. There is, indeed, no satiric work in English of greater force:

> My fears were just! Infatuated maid
> And have their arts your innocence betrayed?
> How couldst thou go, *opinions* vile to beg,
> And hang thy conscience on a lawyer's peg –
> Some lisping fool, with empty dictums big,
> Proud of his LL.D. and periwig.
> His mind was not the crucible to try
> The deep arcana of love's alchemy . . .
> (*Leon to Annabella*, 239.)

We are reminded of those 'big-wigged circuiteering judges' in our passage from *Two Parsons* and of the absurd and pompous Dr Pangloss in *The Heir-at-Law*, Colman's most famous single creation, who regularly introduces himself as 'LL.D., A double S' (for *Artium Societatis Socius*).

The *Don Leon* poems are disturbing; some might call them dangerous; but they are great. Their poetry is all solid bronze, and their valuations just. In *Don Leon* a new planet swims into our ken.

A WARSAW QUARTET

David Penderyn

I arrived in Warsaw a few days before Easter in 1947 and it was on Easter Sunday that a mutual acquaintance took me to Dr K.'s flat. Thereafter I was to meet Dr K. regularly for nearly two years, and as often as not his friend Dr M. was also present. These two doctors indeed became my closest Polish friends. When the time came for me to leave Poland I think the keenest regret which my wife and I felt was at saying good-bye to them, and, equally, their wives, two women as utterly unlike each other as were their husbands: these two pairs of contrasting personalities combined on occasion to form a perceptible unity which taught us to understand much in the Polish character and in the post-war situation of Poland's professional classes. For some time after our departure my wife and I looked forward vaguely to some future reunion with this strange quartet, until the news finally filtered through to us that the gale of the world had blown our hope away. All four were intensely living creatures and utterly fearless; three of them certainly, if not also Madame M., who was Polish only by adoption, were more than a little mad: I must try and describe something of them and their surroundings as we knew them.

* * * *

Dr K. had been uniquely lucky among his medical colleagues because the large modern building which accommodated not only the clinic of which he was the head, but also his private residence, incredibly survived the war, in need only of 'cosmetic attention'. This term was the current house-agent's jargon for that degree of repair which hardly went beyond the installation of new windows and roof and the removal of hidden arms and explosives from the cellarage. Speculators in real estate sardonically extended the application of the term as far as the rehabilitation of any building that had four walls standing; but Dr K.'s clinic, and more particularly his duplex

apartment, with its interior so unexpectedly reminiscent of a rather badly run Kensington junk-shop, was indeed a genuine 1939 survival, a veritable museum piece in post-war Warsaw. It was obvious at once that its contents and arrangement, with one notable exception, reflected not the antiseptic principles of the doctor but the flibbertigibbet spirit, itself not without its strain of heroism, of Madame K. Heroic indeed; for it was surrounded by this accumulation of dubious antique and bewildering bric-à-brac that she had broken the force of wave upon wave of German investigators and marauding requisition officers; and their Russian counterparts had in turn been equally baffled by the genius of Madame K., who had only to speak one sentence in what certainly sounded to the hearer like his own language, whether German or Russian (and half a dozen other European languages were in reserve if the need for them should ever arise in similar circumstances) for him to be seized with a mental confusion amounting to complete paralysis of the will; and immediate retreat was the only course if even the vestiges of sanity were to be retained. No uninvited foreigner had ever penetrated beyond the dim vestibule: it was to be left to Madame K.'s own countrymen to destroy what lay behind.

* * * *

Madame K. and I talked politics endlessly. K. would stand, his face expressionless, one hand in the air with fore-finger and thumb together as if poising a dart for flight, and pontificate as befitted a physician strongly tipped for a Nobel Prize, until the absurdity of his own pompousness overcame him and he shook with uncontrollable giggles. Then the dry clatter of M.'s ominous gossip would break out from his little child's skull of a face and his skeletal, surgeon's fingers flickeringly lit the next of his endless cigarettes. In the background Madame K.'s atrocious French shrilled the ravaged glories of her paternal *grande propriété à la campagne*. Madame M. usually sat in silence resembling the French judge whose daughter she was, even to the shape of a black hat which she invariably wore; her eyes never left her husband but her mind was on the Loire – all her inner reserves were needed to replenish the exhausted nerves of her 'boy', who had in all probability performed three major operations during the day. (Dr M. took no food or drink on working days. Frequently I would en-

counter him, however, immediately on his return from the hospital in what, until I learnt to know him better, I took to be advanced and high-spirited intoxication. It alarmed me a little then to watch him drink off rapidly half a bottle of strong vodka. But under its influence he became calm and relaxed, the wit and high spirits delightfully remaining as he then more leisurely disposed of the remains of the decanter and was finally prepared in the early hours of the next morning for a good meal of cold meat, eggs and cheese.)

Madame M.'s predicament was simple and completely insoluble. Utterly devoted to the husband of her childless marriage, she had, beyond his welfare, only one interest at heart, to return to France. At the time of which I speak she had at least an even chance of obtaining an exit permit for herself alone. Had she applied for permission to accompany her husband when, as he was still able to do from time to time, he travelled to the West for a medical congress, she would certainly have been refused, and his permit would probably have been withheld also. What was beyond all possible doubt was that if she had gone to France alone she would never have been allowed to return to Poland, nor would her husband ever again be allowed to leave it.

The one totally incongruous article in Madame K.'s treasury of junk was, characteristically, an enormous refrigerator which dominated the dining-room (itself of considerable size), and was quite the largest I have ever seen outside a butcher's shop. Dr K. would explain, a little laboriously as if he were not altogether convinced himself, that he was obliged to keep this piece of clinical equipment under his absolutely personal supervision, on account of the priceless value of the sera and cultures which it contained and the temperature of which must constantly be checked day and night. During his absence Madame K., being herself a qualified chemist and physician (a sensational piece of news to those who had not previously been accorded this quaint relation), was able to maintain the routine. What was more important, however, to their guests was that by a fortunate coincidence the temperature best suited to the sera, etc., was exactly that at which vodka was best served, and the vast receptacle did indeed contain every strength and flavour. Like all self-respecting Poles Dr K.'s splendid variety of vodkas originally blended his own, adding fruit juices, vermouth or spices to spirits of varying

alcoholic strength, so that in the course of an evening many different concoctions could be produced to match the mood of the company or an individual's taste. As it happened, Dr K. drank sparingly himself, for his own exhilaration rose automatically with that of his guests. His personal taste was curious – indeed I have never known anyone who shared it – neat Angostura Bitters, of which he would drink several liqueur-glassfuls and then proceed to develop his political theories with soaring fantasy and merriment.

* * * *

It was soon apparent to anyone who talked with either of the two doctors at any length that both felt a compulsive obligation to establish a definable attitude towards the Bierut régime in Poland, and it was equally clear that such an attitude would have to fulfil conditions of realism on the one hand and conscience on the other which were almost certainly irreconcilable. Neither had ever engaged actively in politics, and it might therefore seem to someone familiar only with the intellectual climate of the Western democracies that, in their profession as doctors in a war-stricken country, the taking up of an exact political attitude for mere conscience's sake was either unnecessary or could at least be indefinitely postponed. They were unwilling to look at their situation from such a standpoint.

On the contrary it was their very profession which obliged them to regard their country as a sick patient, and this obligation involved diagnosing the sickness exactly and prescribing the correct treatment. Another manifestation of the more than slightly megalomaniac pretentiousness which is as familiar to us in Polish history as summer lightning over the Polish plain? Perhaps; but whether maniac or moral the compulsion was there, and the two surrendered to it in ways which were consistent with the two branches of the profession to which they belonged.

K. was a physician specializing in dermatology, which in European medicine, unlike British, includes the treatment of what he always referred to with fine delicacy as 'the social diseases'. K.'s home was in the chemical and biological laboratories and the main instrument of his calling was the hypodermic syringe. When I come to think of it, it was probably not a dart (how could it be?) but a syringe which he

held poised in the air when he pontificated. M., on the other hand, was a neuro-surgeon and his instrument was the knife. For this reason M. found it harder to make a diagnosis than, diagnosis once made, to prescribe the operative treatment. For K. diagnosis was comparatively simple, but while, given means and opportunity, the cure of an individual was also comparatively simple, the far more difficult, and more important, problem was to prescribe treatment for the social disease of which the individual was but one victim.

At the time M. had been carrying out in a number of mental cases the operation known as pre-frontal leucotomy. Leucotomy, he explained, means the cutting of the white conducting fibres of the brain. The fibres dealt with in this operation form a band known as the fronto-thalamic tract, which connects the forward area of the frontal lobe of the brain with the thalamus. The former, we must suppose, is connected with thought (although its precise functions are obscure), the latter is concerned with feeling and emotion. Now when the fronto-thalamic fibres have been cut a portion of the thalamus called the nucleus medialis dorsalis atrophies. The purpose of the operation is, therefore, to relieve mental tension and take the sting out of experience. If emotional tension is lessened by leucotomy, the patient, while retaining his ideas of ill-health, his obsessions about dirt or infection, his hallucinations or delusions, all of which are symptoms of the mental disease from which he had been suffering, nevertheless ceases to care about them: he is thus freed from their overwhelming power and can take up at least some everyday activities. If all goes well he should then lose his remaining symptoms and go on to recovery. It is easy to see how a man like M. would apply his surgical experience to what he could grasp of Poland's, even Europe's, political troubles and conclude that the only and inevitable remedy was the application of force at the nerve centres.

Dr K. was, I think, something of a prig, constantly jostling places with the buffoon in him, but he was undoubtedly the more profoundly idealistic of the two men, and the cut-and-dried methods of the operating theatre were not his. He preferred to think that it was not the application of force but its removal that would alone enable Europe to solve her problems, or, more exactly, establish conditions in which a search for a solution would be possible. Unlike his colleague

he would speak occasionally of the necessity for *some* compromise with the régime. It is significant that he was personally acquainted with several members of the government, at least one of whom had been his patient. M. on one occasion exclaimed almost angrily 'I know one of the government is your patient. *All* of them ought to be *mine*'. It is possible that he enjoyed, or thought he enjoyed, some measure of protection by virtue of this association, but I think the fact was, more simply, that he could not believe that even a Polish Communist was not first and foremost a Pole. He reminded me once most forcibly that on the vital issue of the 'recovered', or western, territories the Bierut régime had the entire nation behind it. K.'s pale, prominent blue eyes glittered as he added, 'Perhaps even Bierut himself dreams of recovering the *eastern* territories!'

* * * *

From the viewpoint of personal sentiment the loss of Poland's eastern territories meant much more to the K.'s than the post-war gains in the west. It was in the eastern provinces that had been situated, perhaps somewhat enlarged by distance, Madame K.'s father's *grande propriété*, and it was in Lwow that he had practised before coming to Warsaw. On the last occasion that we visited them a special treat had been prepared for us: in a little darkened room off the dining-room we were entertained with a showing of coloured slides of Lwow, among which were many personal photographs of the K.'s and their friends. Photographically they were neither more nor less interesting than such things usually are; far the most memorable feature of the occasion was the behaviour of our host and hostess. Their own delight was uninhibited and noisy as if they had been showing snapshots of their last summer holidays. Shouts of laughter greeted a photograph of Madame K. looking coquettish in a picture hat: shrill arguments broke out about the identity of figures in a University group: hair-raising anecdotes were told of the war-time experiences of an elderly couple seen sitting in deck-chairs on a lawn in front of a white wistaria-covered house with pink and purple petunias in the window-boxes. A point struck me suddenly, after Dr K. had mentioned the subsequent fate or present whereabouts of several of his colleagues photographed at a garden-party – some dead, some vanished without trace, some now in Western

Europe or America: I realized that never, even at their most dispirited, had either K. or M. mentioned, or apparently entertained the possibility, that they could have, or should have, made their way to the West when the going was good.

Later that evening, after the vodka had flowed freely (for the hundredth time we had heard Dr K. greet the first glass, by its derivation from *woda*, as 'water's little sister') speculation about the future replaced reminiscences of the past: the mood was again hilarious as Dr K. at his most pontifical delivered a political testament. He had at last evolved the only logical solution to Europe's troubles and it was a simple one. The Western Powers must immediately surrender all their European possessions to the Russians without resistance or delay. This must inevitably precipitate a war between Russia and the U S A, which in the nature of the case would be fought in the East. Two outcomes only were possible: if America were victorious, then European civilization was clearly saved. If, on the other hand, Russia were victorious, then she would have no alternative but to evacuate Europe in order to occupy America, and again we were saved. 'Voilà, mes amis'.

I have often wondered whether this little after-dinner fantasy did not indicate parabolically that K. too had now concluded that no compromise with the régime was possible.

* * * *

In the circuitous way that communications travel nowadays, we received the news in Budapest, via Belgrade.

Dr K. was in the little room where we had seen the photographs of Lwow when the officers of the Security Police paid their call. As on many similar occasions it was Madame K. who intercepted them in the hall, but the tactics which had defeated Germans and Russians were unavailing against her fellow-countrymen. Dr K. must have come into the dining-room to listen to the conversation, for it was there that the men found him. Did he carry the deadly capsule on him, or was it that he had just sufficient time to reach his magnificent refrigerator?

BOOK NOTES

THE WORLD IN THE EVENING. By Christopher Isherwood. (Methuen. 12*s*. 6*d*.)

This is virtually the first novel Mr Isherwood has written for fifteen years. It will be remembered that *Prater Violet*, though published in 1945, bore all the marks of some years' residence in a drawer – a bottom drawer – before being hauled out, dusted down, wound up and sent to the printer. The true predecessor of *The World in the Evening*, then, is *Goodbye to Berlin*. That great book attained a level difficult enough to sustain even under ideal conditions, and when, in addition to the long interval, there are the barriers of voluntary exile and certain 'mystical' capers to be considered, it will not surprise most people who know and admire their Isherwood that *The World in the Evening* is a bit of a let-down. Nor will the kind of let-down seem strikingly unexpected, though I might perhaps restore a measure of calm at once by saying that we are let off Yoga; it (or he) hardly comes in at all. The size, or depth, of the let-down, however, may disconcert the more sanguine.

The best way to read this book, accordingly, would be to pretend it is by a new American writer who happens to share names with an English back-number of the 'thirties. It is thickly studded with American stylistics, more thickly, one can't help feeling, than any book by a native American. With something of the delight in pastiche familiar to readers of *Lions and Shadows*, Mr Isherwood works in *out the window*, *overly*, *home* (for *house*), *gotten* (rather passé, surely?) and the rest, and always puts *maybe* and never *perhaps*. The first few chapters, and parts of the others, echo the manner and moral attitudes of the more disagreeable and elementary American writers about Hollywood: Nathanael West, the Scott Fitzgerald of *The Last Tycoon*, and Mr Raymond Chandler. Sometimes we sink a little further, and get Mr Conrad Aiken reworked by the authoress of *Claudia*:

> *Stop it.*
>
> Stop talking to her. Stop thinking about her. You only give her power. You're making her stronger and stronger.
>
> What's the matter with you, for Christ's sake? No wonder she despises you. You make me sick.
>
> Come on, relax. Unclench your fists. Lean back in your seat. Breathe in deeply. Breathe out.
>
> That's better.
>
> Let's see if you can't forget all about her for a whole minute.

– or this, which I shouldn't like to allot to anyone:

> 'You know, Stephen, there is only one true reason why two people will make a divorce. That they do not love each other.
> 'You're a wise girl, Gerda.'

In the middle of the book some of the characters wander comfortably round Europe while the author discourses on the personality of places in a vein made familiar by previous authors' discourses on this topic, and, although it would be unfair to call this an American province, one is aware how similarly, or possibly how much better, this kind of thing is done by Mr Gore Vidal. From one point of view, this is a perfectly acceptable second-grade American novel, tops for readability, okay on human-interest-quotient, a bit paunchy in regard to conflict and selling short on humour; general rating *Fairly Good Entertainment*. It was more than a flight of fancy which made the author, in *Goodbye to Berlin*, see himself 'ten years hence, in flannels and black and white shoes, gone heavier round the jowl and a bit glassy, pouring out a drink in the lounge of a Californian hotel'.

There is another approach, derived from admitting that Mr Isherwood is an ex-British novelist. We see at once the depth of the let-down when we examine Stephen Monk, the hero-narrator, with whose two marriages and one homosexual love-affair the story largely deals. Monk has none of the warmth, self-deprecation, pity or irony which won sympathy and affection for Issyvoo and Bradshaw and glossed over their shadiness and habitual *suppressio veri*. He is a sentimental hysteric (very imperfectly glimpsed as such by the author), a man who inflicts revolting emotional cruelties on those who love him and then bursts out into blubbery pleadings to start again. From what pinnacle, incidentally, does he despise Hollywood? This child-figure's first wife is a mother-figure, twelve years older than he, a novelist given to long ponderous orations about her *œuvre* interlarded with long ponderous whimsicalities:

> Do you know, darling, one of my childhood dreams was actually to *live* on an elephant? I wanted to have a howdah that was really a tiny house, all made of ivory and diamonds, with very rich crimson and gold silk window-curtains. Wouldn't you love that? Of course, it would have to be an awfully big elephant; and I don't quite know how one could manage about a bathroom –

That sort of thing, and the relationship it implies, would surely have brought a fiendish grin to the face of Allen Chalmers of *All the Conspirators*. The solemnity, though not (thank heaven) the whimsy, appears equally in the homosexual episode, which is a mere clash between two rival empires of egotism and self-pity, Monk's naturally proving the stronger. There is none of the humour and sense of

absurdity that saved the figure of Otto Nowak, nor of the grotesquerie and tenderness that saved Kuno Pregnitz. And, to mention only one more of the Isherwoodian things this book has none of, there is nothing here in that special vein of the satiric-pathetic that gave us, for instance, the marvellous portrait of Lily Vernon in *The Memorial*.

There are reminders by likeness as well as by unlikeness, and these are the more distasteful. Natalia Landauer in *Goodbye to Berlin* was seen with irony, but she was seen with love too. Her counterpart in *The World in the Evening*, Gerda Mannheim, who cossets Monk during his recovery from an 'unconsciously-willed' accident, is seen with neither irony nor love; she is seen with nothing; she is not seen. She is nothing more than a generic refugee. It brings a queer twinge of pain to find her saying sceptically, as Natalia used to do, 'Oh yes, I believe!' – the sort of twinge derived from reading an old love-letter.

When one asks finally what *The World in the Evening* is about, what its centre is, one is hard put to it to answer. It is all ingeniously stage-managed and dovetailed, but there seems no good reason for any particular feature of the book being as it is and not otherwise. Why, for example, is the first Mrs Monk a novelist, except because Mr Isherwood is a novelist? What is the purpose of the two queers (one of whom has 'finely-drawn, sensitive features') who help Gerda cosset Monk? What is Monk's real trouble anyway? – or what does Mr Isherwood think it is? One always had the suspicion with the earlier Isherwood that part of the real subject was being concealed under the surface; this time it has happened to the whole of the subject. Those great twin themes of the Œdipus complex and homosexuality which it seemed Mr Isherwood would one day drag to light are more than ever hidden in darkness. And that dazzling career which was going to justify on its own the whole of the contemporary English novel – all that reminds us of that is a couple of blazing descriptions of the feeling of being in love, a 'Starnese' fantasy or so, a few jokes: the last sparks of the rocket-burst which tell us that all that is left is the stick.

KINGSLEY AMIS.

GREECE. By Bickham Sweet-Escott. (Royal Institute of International Affairs. 18*s*.)

IRAN. By Richard N. Frye. (George Allen and Unwin. 8*s*. 6*d*.)

Europe is expanding again; but this time it is expanding overland, and therefore to the East. The twentieth-century expansion is not much like that which began in the fifteenth century, except in the

case of Russia, whose rulers continue to pursue in Asia the old-fashioned methods of direct imperialism which more sophisticated countries have abandoned. The general pattern of Europe's present-day expansion is more akin to the Mohammedan expansion of the seventh and eighth centuries; that is to say, it is not the work of a single conquering people progressively painting the map of the world its own colour, but a process of penetration, assimilation and onward transmission of an *ethos*, a culture, or (in American terminology) a way of life. And American terminology is highly relevant in this context, since it is the Americans who are to-day playing the role of the Arabs in the seventh and eighth centuries: everywhere the driving force, and in some places the actual carriers, of the latter-day expansion of Europe. It is primarily to the Americans that we owe our recognition of the fact that Greece and Turkey are now part of Europe; and it is only a matter of time before we recognize the same of Iran, and of who knows what other parts of the Near and Middle East?

It is only to Western Europeans that this discovery comes as a surprise. To the Americans, who see things from a great distance and on an immense scale, even if unconsciously, there has never seemed to be all that much difference between the various elements in the disorderly patchwork of continents from which the Atlantic separated them; and to them the differences between France and England, say, on the one hand, and Greece and Iran on the other, may well not seem to be so vast in kind (or even in degree) as they seem to us. Greeks and Persians have been made painfully aware, up till quite recent times, by Western Europeans that they were backward, remote and inferior people; but they have always known that in fact they were the common (and even rival) ancestors of our civilization, and that the very concept of Europe would never have come into existence without them. Englishmen have been compelled by their system of education to pay lip-service to this idea in the case of the Greeks (though always with the mental reservation that, of course, all that has nothing to do with the Greeks of to-day); but in the case of the Persians even lip-service was not called for. It is probably only a matter of time now, even if it be a long time, before the patronizing insolence of Western Europe towards its first and second cousins in the Near East becomes a thing of the past; for the boundaries of Europe are now back on the Caucasus, and Tehran is less than twenty-four hours from London, and we are at last waking up to the heritage we so nearly lost for good. But it has been chiefly Europe's descendants in the Far West that have provided the impulses which have made Europe re-absorb the exiled (but essentially European) lands of the Near East, and persuaded us (however reluctantly) to recognize our kin.

The process of recognition is already well advanced in the case of

Greece, but scarcely begun in the case of Iran. Greece finally succeeded in re-entering Europe at the middle of the present century (being admitted into the Council of Europe in 1949 and into N A T O in 1952); unfortunately not earlier, for the creation of the Greek Kingdom in 1832 was a poetic accident rather than a stroke of conscious European policy, and it remained so in the thinking of Europe's Western Powers even through the century and the world wars that followed. To-day Greece's full membership of the European community is taken for granted; but Iran's turn is yet to come, at least in Western European eyes, though the events which have followed Dr Musaddiq's fall in August 1953 make it reasonably certain, barring further accidents, that recognition will come in time. This discrepancy of phasing between the two countries is reflected unconsciously (but very naturally) in the two excellent little books that have just been published about them. Mr Sweet-Escott's book on Greece is written for Englishmen, and covers only the fourteen years from 1939; Mr Frye's book on Iran is written primarily for Americans, and covers the whole history of the country. Yet the former of the two is slightly the longer, and presumes in the reader considerably more knowledge of the subject as well as more readiness to assimilate detail; and this accurately reflects the contrast between our present attitudes to the two countries. The time will no doubt come when English readers will want a treatment of Iran on the scale of Mr Sweet-Escott's treatment of Greece. But at present our interest in Iran (apart from exasperation about oil, which is another matter) has not gone beyond the stage of an appetite for the picturesque; and it is to Americans that we have to turn for serious non-academic studies of the country.

Mr Frye's book is an excellent example of the high-grade potting that can be done on such a subject; and we certainly have no ground for complaint that he has attempted no revision of his American approach for the purposes of an English edition. He not only assumes by implication that all his readers are Americans (for instance, in explaining that Persian deputies, 'as in some European countries', need not be residents of the districts they represent); he even bluntly states the fact (one of the few irreversible achievements of Dr Musaddiq's period of office from 1951 to 1953) that 'the United States has replaced Britain as the guardian of Western interests in Iran'. This true statement does not conflict with the argument that Europe is in process of expanding back into this part of the Near East, since in this context the United States may be said to be acting on behalf of Europe, whereas Britain was acting only on behalf of Britain. A parable of the whole process could be written round the name of a single figure whom Mr Frye quotes in passing – Jalal-al-Din Rumi: for his name is Arabic, his poetry was Persian, and he

was called Rumi because his home was in Anatolia, now a part of Turkey, which was then called Rum; and Rum means Rome, which at that date meant Byzantine Greece, as it still does to every Greek to-day when he describes himself as *Romiós*. A whole history of Europe and of its eastward expansion, from Alexander the Great to the present day, could be spun out of that single root.

But the story cannot yet be completed, for Iran is not yet a party to any of the pacts which stretch free Europe's military and political nexus under the American ægis from Portugal to Pakistan; and for the same reason also it is technically impossible to write the same kind of book about Iran as about Greece. Greece already possesses the voluminous economic and political documentation which goes with being part of twentieth-century Europe; and Mr Sweet-Escott has drawn on it with great skill, and concentrated it still more remarkably by his use of footnotes in the text and statistical tables in the appendices. Mr Frye could not have written such a well-documented compendium, because his sources are still largely made up of anecdotes and quatrains and guesswork. Moreover, he was unlucky enough to be caught in the press by the events of August 1953 – itself an evidence that Iran has not yet reached the status which Greece achieved by 1950. But until the day comes when something like Mr Sweet-Escott's admirable work can be done for Iran as well as for Greece, Mr Frye's will stand very well as an interim study.

C. M. W.

HITLER'S EUROPE: SURVEY OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS 1939/46. Edited by Arnold Toynbee and Veronica M. Toynbee. (Published for the Royal Institute of International Affairs by Geoffrey Cumberlege at the O U P. 63*s*.)

Slowly but surely the history of the war years is receiving its permanent shape. The great outpouring of memoirs and documents has come to an end; the final product is being assembled. This latest Chatham House volume has an almost judicial tone. It records some of the most horrible events in the annals of history, but it does so with a certain detachment. The exception is provided by Professor Toynbee's preface which reflects the author's indignation at Hitler's failure to live up to his role. In 1940 he had Europe at his feet. What did he make of this unique opportunity?

> The measure of the extent to which Hitler thus sabotaged his predecessors' and his own handiwork may be gauged by imagining one of the historic master-empire-builders standing in Hitler's shoes on the morrow of the fall of France, or, for that matter, on the morrow of the agreement made at Munich. If Hitler's cards had been in the hands, not of Hitler, but of Augustus or Han Liu Pang or Cyrus, what might the thoroughbred man of genius not have made of them? Assuredly he would have fashioned out of Hitler's Europe an oecumenical empire that would have lasted for at least four centuries after the founder's own day. Even Napoleon – who resembled Hitler in lacking Augustus' moderation, though he was, of course, poles apart from Hitler in the Caesarean height of his powers – might perhaps have steered his empire clear of the rocks of Moscow and Waterloo if he had held all the cards that Hitler held in October 1938 and in June 1940.

Although the exact meaning of this rather involved passage is not easily discovered, it clearly suggests that Professor Toynbee has a poor opinion of Hitler's genius; and of course he is right, though it might have been more helpful if he had expressed his scepticism of the Fuehrer at the time of Munich. But is it fair to blame Hitler for the inherent defects of the movement he led? He was, after all, the acknowledged heir of Pan-Germanism, and Pan-Germanism suffered from the character of its adherents even more than from the vagaries of its Leader. A Party drawn from the sweepings of the gutter could not easily be amalgamated with the administration of the modern State; a movement devoted to the glorification of Race and Blood had no attraction for most Europeans. Mussolini, at a time when he had not yet fallen under Hitler's spell, saw this very clearly. 'If this gang of murderers and pederasts is allowed to overrun Europe, it will be the end of civilization,' he told a visitor in 1934. The fact is that Hitler never had a chance of organizing Europe in 1940 because the movement he led was inherently destructive and criminal. Even Han Liu Pang (whoever he was) could have done nothing with such human material.

Apart from Professor Toynbee's extravaganzas this volume is a sober and scholarly piece of work which should go some way to redeem Chatham House's shaky reputation. It begins with a comprehensive analysis of German administration under the Nazis, and goes on to an examination of the 'New Order' in the occupied territories, starting with a broad survey of the so-called planned economy imposed by the Germans. This is followed by individual chapters on the decomposition of Italian Fascism, the fall of France, the Gaullist movement, and the Resistance movements in the other occupied countries, Western and Eastern Europe being treated separately. While the standard is uniformly high, the various contributors to this symposium have been allotted tasks of uneven size and complexity, Eastern Europe being given a much smaller share of the total than its importance would seem to warrant. Thus the length and excellence of the contributions dealing with Italy and France is thrown into further relief by the rather abrupt treatment of Poland. It would have been interesting to have had an

analysis of the Polish political and cultural scene similar to that devoted to Italy. The difference between the attention given to General de Gaulle and the perfunctory treatment of the Polish forces is startling. By contrast, the minor satellites are well looked after, and there is a very clear description of the Yugoslav civil war. The massacre of several million Jews is allotted a special chapter. Mr James Parkes' restrained and dignified treatment of this subject should enhance its effect upon readers who may still find it difficult to believe that the Germans, in the midst of a war for their own existence, diverted so much energy and ingenuity into a completely senseless murder campaign. What one chiefly misses in this volume is a sense of Europe's complicity in its own near-destruction. Hitler exploited the opportunities presented by the feebleness of his opponents and eventually left behind a shambles, with the American and Russian armies meeting in the heart of what was once a prosperous and unified continent. Whatever his lack of resemblance to Augustus, there must have been something in the European situation which facilitated this outcome.

G. L. A.

THE QUAKER APPROACH TO CONTEMPORARY PROBLEMS. Edited by John Kavanaugh. (George Allen and Unwin. Pp. 243. 15*s*.)

'And this I knew experimentally,' wrote George Fox after his first great 'opening'. Ever since, the Society of Friends has gloried in its empiricism; it has had, as Professor Cadbury says in one of the essays in this book, 'a strong aversion to codification of either belief or practice'. Its faith has been embodied more exactly in action – the action of a relief worker, a conscientious objector, a silent worshipper or a paternal capitalist – than in preachings or systematic theology. 'In so far as it is articulate,' writes Professor Cadbury about the Quaker peace testimony, 'it will seem to many oversimplified,' but Friends do not worry overmuch about the charge. They know – by experience again – that without their pacifism the relief and social work for which they are praised would be rootless, would wither and die. The best parts of this book therefore are those which (to quote the preface) 'show how the principles of the Religious Society of Friends are applicable to contemporary human affairs by showing how they have been applied by Friends to specific problems over the years'; the speculative and discursing sections, in seeking to persuade, are less persuasive. The book consists of a series of essays by well-known Quakers – most of them American, several English and one French. The list of contents alone reveals something about the society. There are essays on peace, relief, industry,

education, race relations, civil liberties, prisons, health, the Russians – all characteristic concerns. But there is no essay on politics, or the arts, or even theology. It is a pity about the theology. 'If the dominant secular philosophy of our day is radical empiricism,' writes Professor D. Elton Trueblood, 'Quakerism, more than any other Christian movement, is in the mainstream of contemporary thought.' But the experience on which Quakers set such store is spiritual – even mystical – and a generation needing a faith should be told about it.

F. E.

BRING ON THE GIRLS. By P. G. Wodehouse and Guy Bolton. (Herbert Jenkins. 16*s*.)

We grew up in the belief that musical comedy existed for tired businessmen and aristocratic young officers who sat in rows with congested faces, while *ces dames* jigged from right to left and from left to right, displaying the upper reaches of their thighs. This was a crude, Labour Party point of view. Sex may have been the basis of musical comedy, but it was not presented straight. It was wrapped up in a very pure and sentimental philosophy, in which the tired businessman and the young officer, bless their hearts, seem to have believed. The guardsman would go and marry the little woman and her thighs would never be displayed again, except in the privacy of some stately home. The chorus girl seems to have been a kind of geisha, in whom sex was sublimated – those forty twinkling thighs were chaste – just as the modern mannequin, who is said to be her successor, is a cold, lily-like creature, who looks perfectly distinguished in her corset and bra, when we pass her on the moving staircase. Such, at least, is the conclusion suggested by this book; the jovial salacity of the title is quite misleading.

It may be, of course, that this is not everyone's picture of the musical-comedy world, particularly in America; perhaps it is the musical-comedy world squeezed into the Wodehouse system of conventions, which automatically eliminates sex and shows us everything from the point of view of the pre-adolescent boy, who is interested in cash, food and making fun of the masters and other grown-ups. And splendid fun it is, of its kind. The book is full of magnificent anecdotes about American entertainment tycoons, seen from the English schoolboy's angle. The mystery is that Wodehouse can have spent so much time in America and still remain so completely English. It is what an ex-chorus girl would call a triumph of breeding.

J. G. W.

THE NEW MEN. By C. P. Snow. (Macmillan. 12*s*.)

The New Men is part of a projected novel sequence centring round the life of Lewis Eliot, the principal character and narrator. It is the fifth volume to appear in the series which, when completed, will be known by the title of the first novel in the series *Strangers and Brothers*.

The theme is one which has pricked the social conscience of the civilized world for more than a decade and which is stated by the Atomic Research scientists themselves when, arguing among themselves at a special meeting, they affirm that 'the fission bomb was the final product of scientific civilization' and that 'if it were used at once, to destroy, neither science, nor the civilization of which science was bone and fibre, would be free from guilt again'.

Although a great deal of the book concerns moral preoccupation with the subject, it evades the issue of attempting to fix moral responsibility and the problem is no more than stated.

The scene alternates between the first British Atomic Plant during and after the war and a government office in Whitehall, where the narrator, Lewis Eliot, is employed as a fairly senior Civil Servant. The set-up of the book, *Barford* with its team of scientists and engineers working in close harmony, or disharmony, as the case may be, inevitably calls to mind Balchin's Back Room boys, but here, the sober authenticity of Mr Snow's character fails to fire the imagination in the way that Nigel Balchin's rather larger-than-life sized characters do. Lacking in the tragic intensity which the theme might well have provoked, it is at no point redeemed from a certain savourlessness by the salt of wit. The principal female character of Irene, the narrator's sister-in-law, is utterly unconvincing; in fact, all the women suffer from this same two-dimensional quality. It is as though a fault in technique allowed the writer to rely on statement rather than the power of selection which might have brought them to life. And yet throughout the book when Mr Snow is theorizing or generalizing he shows an exceptional and sensitive psychological insight. The character of Captain Smith the M.I.5 Investigator, which at first promises a little light relief, is in fact sketched in with so few lines that unless every one of them is significant he could not be fully realized.

An indication of the rather chilly climate of the book lies in the fact that one leaves it having made scarcely a new acquaintance, far less a friend or an enemy in its pages.

It might be that Mr Snow's method requires time to unfold his characters and that when the full ten or eleven volumes we are promised are complete this particular criticism will no longer be valid.

W. H.

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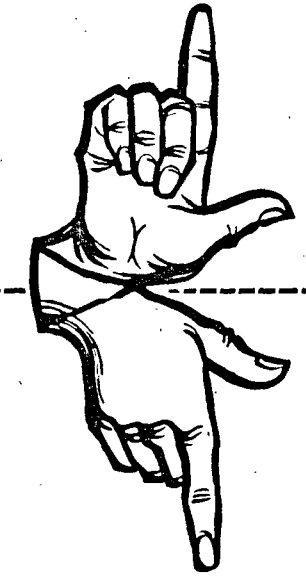
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COMMENT

The Papered Cracks

The worsening of Anglo-American relations has been checked by Sir Winston Churchill's visit to Washington, but there is no evidence that there has been any real and lasting reconciliation between the Far Eastern policies of the two countries. The differences go too deep to be overcome merely by the transient emotional effect of an appeal by a personality who can always be sure of a personal success in the United States – and in any case he is hardly likely to be available much longer in a leading official capacity to perform this particular service for his country. The real trouble is that Far Eastern affairs drive Britain and America apart as much as European affairs bring them together; the degree of their co-operation, therefore, depends not so much on general mutual attitudes as on the location of emphasis in international relations – whether it is the problems of Europe or those of the Far East that principally command attention.

The crucial question in policy is not what one desires, but the price one is prepared to pay – or the risk one is prepared to take. British and French statesmen would undoubtedly like to halt the spread of Communism in South-East Asia, but they are unwilling to take extreme measures to do so. If the pressure becomes too strong, they will yield and abandon the field rather than risk a major armed struggle. France has sacrificed many thousands of her soldiers in the prolonged warfare in Indo-China, but no French Cabinet has ever prosecuted this war as though victory were a vital matter, and the British would probably by this time have found reasons for withdrawing from Malaya if they had had to undergo there a half of the strain endured by the French. Neither Britain nor France are ready to divert a substantial part of their all-too-scanty military forces from their vital strategic sphere in Europe to reinforce their positions in the Far East to the extent necessary for winning a major war. And since in the last resort they are unable or unwilling to defend their Far Eastern territories and interests by force against hostile attack, these territories and

interests tend to become hostages in the enemy's hands. From being the dominant imperial powers disposing of the affairs of weak and passive Asian peoples, Britain and France have now become 'retreaters' seeking desperately to save by conciliation, concessions, flattery and inducements some residue of possessions they can no longer hold. There is an exquisite irony in this situation which the future historian may be able to enjoy, but in the present state of world politics it is much too dangerous to be appreciated with such detachment. The French and British stakes in Indo-China, Hong Kong and Malaya are liabilities rather than assets for the global diplomacy of 'containment'; they are the cause of weak and vacillating policies in which even defensive pacts are decried because they might 'provoke' Peking (or Delhi) and have an adverse effect on super-delicate negotiations. There is annoyance when such an attitude is called 'appeasement', but it is only necessary to compare the firmness of the Western stand at Berlin, where the three Powers were united in their will to resist further Soviet encroachments in Europe, with the course of the Geneva conference, where negotiations have taken place in the shadow of French military defeat.

But, of course, it is not only France that wishes to quit the field of battle, or Britain that refuses to intervene; the United States also has refrained from intervention, when directly confronted with the decision, and it may seem, therefore, that European and American policies are at least unified in a common will not to fight. The Americans, however, blame France and Britain for their own failure to intervene; the French are held responsible because of their refusal to grant full independence to Vietnam, and the British because of their refusal to join in an intervention. In fact, the considerations affecting President Eisenhower's decision appear to have been rather more complicated. Even if the French had done all that Washington required in the matter of Vietnamese independence, and if the British had been ready to go along with America in military support for the French, there were not sufficient British and American ground forces available to assure superiority over the Vietminh, let alone cope with the Chinese, if Peking were to send in an army of 'volunteers', as it did in Korea. With this prospect in mind, according to reports of what happened, the Chief of Staff of the American Air Force insisted that strategic air power must be used

tly against China if cover were to be given to an expedi-, and General Ridgway advised that, if this were done, the sibility of Soviet armed support for China, involving a rld war, could not be ruled out. President Eisenhower then me to the conclusion that the United States should not risk war against the Soviet Union without Britain as an ally, and should not go into Indo-China at all if the war had to be localized on the Korean model. It was, indeed, the dilemma of the Korean war all over again, and it is a situation which is likely to keep on recurring. In the Far East, Britain and America are faced with circumstances in which they cannot fight a strictly localized war except under conditions of extreme disadvantage, but dare not extend it by counter-attack, because Britain will not take the risk of war against Russia on any issue except the defence of Western Europe, and America will not take it without Britain. At least, not yet.

When the Churchillian spell has worn off and new decisions have to be taken, American opinion, both official and unofficial, is likely to revert to the outlook which was prevailing before the British visit. To judge from previous form, Britain and America may be expected to react to the outcome in Indo-China in diametrically opposite ways. The British, having made up their minds that there is nothing to be done about it, will persuade themselves that all is really for the best and forget that anything unpleasant has happened. The 'settlement' in Indo-China will be provided with a small fig leaf to conceal the nakedness of defeat, the Whitehall star-gazers who are forever watching for rifts between Moscow and Peking will daily observe signs to confirm their hopes, the Labour Party delegates will return from Peking full of admiration for the peaceful constructive activities of the new China, and everyone will be agreed that the only obstacle to peace in the Far East is the American refusal to consent to the seating of Peking's representatives in the United Nations. The Americans, on the contrary, will rub salt into their own wounds in order that they may not forget for a moment the humiliation they have suffered, and will seek to compensate for their inability to control the course of events by defiant gestures of indignation and non-recognition. If London and Washington continue in their present moods, the next United Nations Assembly may well witness an Anglo-American clash sharper than anything which has so far occurred.

G. F. H.

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Political Asylum

Most of our professional liberals have remained undisturbed by the case of Dr Cort. True, they would have wished him to remain in this country, since he appears to be a harmless and useful person. But they cannot see that any point of principle is concerned. Our liberals are getting alarmingly logical and respectable nowadays. Dr Cort disobeyed the conscription laws of his country. How then can he be supported, when his Government threatens him with loss of citizenship if he persists in his disobedience? And how is it possible to contest the view of the Home Secretary that he is not a political refugee? For though Cort was a Communist as a student and has disobeyed the draft law because he fears political persecution, his fears are obviously less real or less acute than they would be if he were a citizen of an Iron Curtain country. Everyone knows that the United States Government will not execute him, torture him or even send him to a slave labour camp. The sun always shines at noon over the U S A. 'The traditional test', the Home Secretary tells us, 'Is that the applicant's life or liberty would be in danger on account of race, religion, nationality, or political opinion, if asylum were refused'. Sir David added – and one can imagine his ironic smile as he wrote the words: 'I have no reason to think that any one of those considerations arises in this case'.

One of the problems of the Cort case was the difficulty of getting at the facts. Perhaps it is worth running over the main points in sequence of time. In 1948, Cort was exempted from military service on grounds of health. In May 1951 he left the U S A with a valid passport, to take up a research fellowship at Cambridge. In November, just after he had gone into residence there, the U S Government asked him to give up his passport and return to the United States. Dr Cort's reluctance to do so will be appreciated by anybody who knows what it was like, even at that time, to be an ex-Communist in an academic job. In any case he refused to comply with this demand. In the autumn of 1952, the Congressional Committee on Un-American Activities began investigating the universities, and Dr Cort's colleagues were asked whether he had been a member of a 'Communist cell'. After this, several American universities who had been interested in securing his services terminated the negotiations. Dr Cort saw that his future in America would not be a happy one, and looked for a permanent job here. He got one at Birmingham University, and had his Home Office permit extended till June 30th, 1954. In March 1953, however, his Government asked him to appear for induction at a military centre. They were able to do this because the rules about exemption from service had been altered in 1951.

In December 1953, the Birmingham police interviewed him on behalf of the American police, and he then learned that his refusal to attend for pre-induction examination put him in danger of losing his U S citizenship. It was now that the Home Office acted. They told Dr Cort that he could not be granted an extension after June 1954. Only by grace has he stayed a few weeks longer, while Members of Parliament have been getting the Home Secretary to look once more at his case. These efforts have failed. But are we to do no more about the situation which the Cort case has revealed? First of all, are we to accept the Home Secretary's narrow definition of the cases which will be granted political asylum? It was much broader in the days when German refugees were arriving here in vast numbers! Many fled in fear of life and liberty; but others because they could not carry on their profession. A really liberal Home Secretary would hold that a man can be politically oppressed, can be in need of asylum, even though his life and liberty are not threatened. It can be a terrible thing to live under even mild political oppression, even under a threatened political oppression. The life of an American university teacher who has been a Communist is most unenviable. If he wishes to live in another part of the English-speaking world, either permanently or until America has got over its fit of illiberal folly, he should be able to do so. Some people see political difficulties about our admitting that a man may be oppressed by an ally, especially one who sets itself up to be the leader of the free world. There need not be. Our giving asylum implies neither criticism of the regime a man is escaping, nor support for his political or religious views.

Above all, however, interest will be taken in this country in the circumstances in which the U S Government exercises the extraordinary power of depriving citizens of their nationality. It must not be assumed in Washington that the British Home Office will always be as accommodating as it is under the genial Sir David Maxwell Fyfe, and that all that is required to terminate the stay in this country of an American citizen is a threat to make him stateless.

C. H.

DOES AMERICA HAVE A POLICY?

David C. Williams

Director of Research, Americans for Democratic Action, Washington.

Does the United States Government have a foreign policy? The question is not altogether academic, and it has become quite urgent in recent weeks. Mr Joseph Harsch, the diplomatic correspondent of the *Christian Science Monitor*, tells the following story of the visit of Sir Winston Churchill to Washington:

> Two members of the Churchill-Eden party, on debarking from their trans-Atlantic plane, asked a colleague from their Embassy in Washington: 'What are the Americans most worried about, Germany or Indo-China?' The reply was: 'Neither – Guatemala.' The two expressed complete incredulity. They were not convinced until they entered a room where Mr Eden was holding his first chat with the Americans, and they were talking about – Guatemala.

The degree of excitement which the affairs of this obscure Central American republic caused in Washington is indeed symptomatic of two realities of the present American scene – a growing sense of isolation from European and Asian events, and a desire to do something decisive about Communism, without the inhibitions of a policy of alliance. As it happened, the Guatemala episode has given President Eisenhower and most of his fellow-countrymen the first real feeling of solid achievement in foreign affairs since the Republicans took power. White House officials can point to it as a textbook example of the 'teamwork' which has been a slogan, if not a reality, for the Administration. Taking reports of the shipment of $10 million worth of Iron Curtain arms to Guatemala as a cue, Mr Dulles initiated the campaign against President Arbenz through diplomatic channels. Meanwhile, it was knowingly whispered in Washington, his brother, Mr Allen Dulles, head of the capital's most rapidly burgeoning bureaucracy, the Central Intelligence Agency, was employing less orthodox measures. When the consequent shooting began, Mr Henry Cabot Lodge, the chief

American delegate to the United Nations (and, by a happy coincidence, taking his turn as chairman of the Security Council), warded off all outside interference. Mr John Peurifoy, United States Ambassador to Guatemala, rushed through the negotiations which eased President Arbenz and his colleagues out of power and an anti-Communist régime in. The whole affair was give a final comic opera touch by the discovery that the arms shipment which touched it off consisted of two, not ten, million dollars worth of obsolete German arms, of a character and calibre which need not have caused Guatemala's neighbours any concern.

Some commentators, while agreeing that Communist infiltration of the Arbenz government had made its removal essential, felt that the United States had put itself in the undignified position of using an elephant gun against a mouse. They deplored, for instance, Mr Lodge's blunt warning that the United States might withdraw from the United Nations if that organization took jurisdiction in the matter. Others, like Mr Max Lerner, a distinguished political scientist and a columnist for the liberal *New York Post*, looked to the future. Lerner, who had visited Guatemala shortly before the rebellion broke out, approved the ousting of President Arbenz, while expressing regret that the more discreet methods of dipolmacy had not been given time and scope to accomplish it. He warned that, unless the desire of the people for land reform, higher living standards, and economic independence were fulfilled, the same difficulties might recur – although finding in the weakness of the resistance to the rebellion comforting evidence that the Communists had not been really successful in enlisting popular support.

As if to answer a charge widely made outside the United States – that the severity of the Arbenz government towards the United Fruit Company, not its softness toward Communism, was responsible for incurring America's hostility, the Department of Justice has filed an anti-trust suit against the company. More convincing refutation of this charge, however, exists in the manner in which the United States has accepted the radical land reform and the nationalization of the tin mines carried out during the past two years by the revolutionary government of Bolivia.

Most Americans, it must be said, found the Guatemalan episode a cheering and satisfying one. An outbreak of Communism in the Western Hemisphere, almost on the doorstep of the

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United States, had been summarily and effectively squelched. It had been done simply, neatly, and without the tedious complications involved in dealing with stubborn and recalcitrant allies. Moreover, in this instance the Administration had visibly seized that 'initiative' in international affairs which Secretary Dulles had often claimed for it, but which until then had eluded its grasp. All in all, it seemed a refreshing contrast to the increasing difficulties which foreign statesmen, such as Sir Winston Churchill, seemed to make for the United States.

For many months powerful figures in the Administration and the Pentagon have been pressing for similar unilateral action on a wider front, and particularly against China. Since Admiral Radford's appointment last year as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, he has put himself at the head of what has come to be known as the 'war party'. In contradiction to President Eisenhower's professed requirement that the advice tendered by the Joint Chiefs must be unanimous, the forceful Admiral has by-passed the Pentagon opposition, led by the Army Chief of Staff, General Ridgway, and has carried his case direct to the White House. He has been powerfully supported within the Administration by Vice-President Nixon, and in the Senate by the majority leader, Mr Knowland. Yet, even before Churchill's visit, the 'war party' had suffered defeat in its campaign to bring about American intervention in Indo-China. After a series of public speeches and private conferences with Congressional leaders, which seemed to have no other purpose than to set the stage for intervention, this drive was halted in mid-course by the President himself.

A number of factors played a part in this decision. Mr George Humphrey, Secretary of the Treasury, has his heart set on balancing the budget and cutting taxes still further, and has constantly opposed costly foreign adventures. Republican politicians, looking forward to the autumn campaign and preparing to boast that President Eisenhower 'brought the boys home' from Korea, were reluctant to see them sent to Indo-China. The military situation in Indo-China and the political situation in France deteriorated more rapidly than had been anticipated. Perhaps most important of all, the American people made it clear, through letters to Congress and otherwise, that they were vehemently opposed to involvement in Indo-China. The leaders of the 'war party' resent this keenly, and to have Sir Winston Churchill talk of 'co-existence' was like rubbing salt in fresh

wounds. But they still have high hopes of success. In spite of Mr Walter Lippmann's advice to President Eisenhower to dismiss Admiral Radford, he is still chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He has a simple and, superficially, a plausible case. The United States, with a tremendous stockpile of atom bombs and a strategic air force capable of delivering them anywhere in the world, now has the preponderant power at its disposal necessary to enforce its will. But the Soviet rulers now have the hydrogen bomb and long-range jet bombers. Within a very few years they may fatally narrow the present gap, perhaps overcome America's advantage. Now is the time, Admiral Radford and his supporters contend, for a much tougher policy toward China. Even if the atom bomb were used on the Chinese mainland, they are confident that the Soviet Union would not dare to retaliate.

It was to arouse public opinion to the pitch needed for support of such a policy that Senator Knowland, with only five minutes' notice to the President, launched his ultimatum demanding American withdrawal from the United Nations in case the Chinese Government were seated there. He was promptly supported by Senator Lyndon Johnson, leader of the Democratic minority, eager to show that he and his party are as anti-Communist as the Republicans. Pressing his point further, Knowland demanded that the Chinese question be made a major issue in the Congressional elections, and that every candidate, whatever his party, be required to take a stand against it. More moderate counsels have, for the time being, prevailed. Both the President and Mr Dulles rejected Senator Knowland's ultimatum, and the Senate has now merely asked for a review of American foreign policy in case the Chinese Government enters the United Nations. But the position of the 'war party' remains fundamentally strong because they have a clear and readily understandable policy, lack of which weakens their opponents and critics.

For a number of reasons, Sir Winston Churchill's proposal of 'co-existence' is hard for Americans to accept. In practical terms, it implies recognition of the Peking régime, an action which no American politician dares to propose. In moral terms – and Americans still persist, in spite of the advice of Mr George Kennan and Professor Hans Morgenthau, in thinking about foreign policy in moralistic terms – it seems like supping with the devil. It implies postponing 'liberation', an objective important not only for moral reasons but because of its practical impact upon

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strategic minories in the American electorate, to the indefinite future. And it has the appearance of passivity, whereas Americans are temperamentally inclined toward action. It is perhaps for this last reason that the Administration has for some time followed a line of policy which gives the appearance of action without its cost or most of its risks. President Eisenhower took the first such step when, in his inaugural address, he 'unleashed' Chiang-Kai-shek's legions against the Chinese mainland, while privately warning them, as an enterprising reporter found out months later, to do nothing without his approval. Again, at the beginning of this year, Mr Dulles announced that the National Security Council had made 'some basic policy decisions', the most important of which was 'to depend primarily upon a great capacity to retaliate instantly by means and at places of our own choosing.' Yet, for all this tough talk, the military budget was cut to satisfy the economy bloc in the Republican Party. The strength of the Army was reduced, in accordance with the Dulles policy of 'placing more reliance on deterrent power and less reliance on local defensive power.' A cartoonist aptly portrayed Dulles standing up to Malenkov and Mao Tse-tung and declaring: 'One more false move by you guys, and we'll cut our military budget by another billion dollars.'

This 'new look' in defence and foreign policy frightened America's allies more than it did its enemies. After it had been given additional emphasis in the budget message and in various press conferences, it was disowned by Dulles himself, a mere two months after he had solemnly proclaimed it. At his next press conference the President declared that there was nothing new about the 'new look' and that, anyway, he was tired of slogans. Here spoke the natural man, his voice for once cutting through the legions of public relations experts who infest the White House. The policy of bluff, which reversed President Theodore Roosevelt's advice to his fellow-countrymen 'to speak softly and carry a big stick', was effectively exploded by the Indo-Chinese crisis, which found the United States without troops to send there, even if it had been decided to send them.

The United States has now demonstrated its ability to discipline a banana republic, but in other respects the Administration's policy seems to have come to a dead end, leaving it, as one Washington wit has said, with only 'Thailand and Knowland' as dependable allies. The Democrats, who long hesitated to attack the Administration's foreign policy, because of the habits of

responsibility acquired in twenty years of power, are beginning to deal with it more frankly. But if the Administration has an 'agonizing reappraisal' to carry through, so have the Democrats. The policies of President Roosevelt and President Truman can be, and are being, defended in detail, but they lack that convincing endorsement which only success can give. Instead, the American people have suffered a series of disappointments:

(1) The failure of Great Power collaboration to outlast the War. All governments and peoples tend to believe their own propaganda, and the Americans more than most; after the years during which the Soviet Union was portrayed as a great sister-democracy, an ally to be preferred to 'imperialist' Britain, there is a bitter sense of deception.

(2) The failure of the United Nations to keep peace in the world. Not having had the chastening experience of membership in the League of Nations, the American people hoped for too much from the United Nations, and have been painfully disillusioned.

(3) The failure of the Marshall Plan to bring about European unity, the reward promised to Americans for the billions of dollars they poured into the Old World. This is perhaps the major grievance of the non-Communist Left in America against Europe's socialist parties. They could easily, it is held, have given the movement for European unity imaginative and progressive leadership, and by doing so won fresh millions of votes for themselves; instead, betraying their internationalist tradition and succumbing to petty chauvinism, they let the Catholic parties exploit this issue.

(4) The failure to secure a clear-cut victory in the Korean war. Easily the most unpopular war in the history of the United States, it is held, by conveniently overlooking or misrepresenting the war of 1812, to be the only one which was not fought through to victory. The legend that the weakness or cowardice of America's allies was to blame (reminiscent of the 'stab in the back' myth that plagued German politics after World War I) is being assiduously cultivated.

(5) The failure to halt Communist expansion, and particularly the loss of China. Americans suffer from the illusion of omnipotence and tend to think that they must in some measure be responsible for anything that happens politically in any part of the world.

Although in many respects the ideas of the Democrats, and of American liberals generally, are in a state of flux, on one point they stand firm, even if they stand alone. The idea of cutting down armament programmes to fit domestic economic limitations, first put forward by the Bevanites in Britain, then adopted in turn by Sir Winston Churchill and President Eisenhower, still strikes them as dangerous in the extreme. They continue to believe that, if America is to play its proper role in the defence of the free world, it must be strong. The heirs of generations of anti-militarists, they are now the most forthright proponents of bigger and better armies. The Democrats in the Senate voted almost solidly for a proposal to fix the number of divisions in the Army at nineteen instead of the seventeen recommended by the President, and their liberal leaders, particularly Senators Humphrey and Lehman, argued strongly for the increase. Just as they fought during World War II for a more ambitious programme of arms production than the conservatives thought wise or feasible, so now they attack as men of little faith those who think that the American economy is not strong or dynamic enough to afford armaments upon the scale which President Truman and his advisers projected.

In common with most Americans, the Democrats believe that Europeans pin too much hope upon the 'parley at the summit' so repeatedly and eloquently advocated by Sir Winston Churchill. They point to the repeated frustrations of past East-West conferences, and charge that the perpetuation of false hopes merely results in delaying the needed steps to strengthen the free world. While Sir Winston talks in terms of the interests of the Russian State as, like those of other nations, capable of negotiation, Americans think of Soviet Communism as a missionary movement which will not be satisfied with less than the whole world. How many more conferences must there be, they ask, before our European friends will recognize the facts that stare them in the face?

With regard to Asia, perhaps because the Democrats have fewer emotional commitments than the Republicans, there is a more flexible approach. Mr Chester Bowles, former United States Ambassador to India, has warned his fellow-citizens that Communist power is well entrenched in China, and that military measures against it would be extremely costly and probably ineffective. He maintains that America's inability to recognize the Peking régime increases its dependence upon the Soviet

Union. He suggests that a 'package' offer be made to the Chinese Communists as follows:

(1) Unity of Korea and Indo-China, under United Nations supervision, with guarantees against colonial domination of these countries, their conquest or subversion from any source, and their use as springboards for aggression in either direction.

(2) The recognition of Formosa as a sovereign state and its admission to the United Nations, with the United States in return withholding its veto on the seating of representatives of Communist China.

(3) Since there would then be two claimants to China's seat on the Security Council, that seat should go to some other major Asian nation, e.g. India.

(4) An Asia-wide system of agreements guaranteeing these nations against the subversive activities of any foreign power or world organization. (Although this proposal antedates the British suggestion of a 'Locarno' pact for Asia, it has something in common with it.)

Bowles does not expect the Chinese Communists to accept such an offer in the immediate future, although he believes it might create tensions within China between moderate and extremist groups, and likewise between Moscow and Peking. If the door were left open, however, it might be something to which the Chinese could turn if their relations with the Russians became difficult and unrewarding. Meanwhile he thinks such an offer would restore the confidence of the free Asian nations in American good intentions.

Whether or not the Chinese accept these proposals, Bowles believes that the United States should suggest that the free Asian nations themselves form a regional defence organization inside the United Nations, but fully independent of the Western powers. Recognizing that these nations have at present little military power, he believes that such an organization would nevertheless be a strong deterrent to aggression – just as America's own Monroe Doctrine proved to be, although it was proclaimed at a time when the United States was virtually powerless to enforce it. In any event, as Bowles sees it, the contest for free Asia is more likely to be waged upon the economic than upon the military front. He therefore proposes that the United States contribute 'five per cent. of our military budget in long-term loans and grants, without political strings of any kind, to the development of the free Asian nations.' Recognizing

American resentments against Prime Minister Nehru, he warns: 'History will be concerned, not with our disagreements with Nehru over current world problems, but with the fundamental question: Did the Indian Republic survive as a free nation?'

In his emphasis upon economic rather than military aid, and in his reluctance to become involved in disagreements with India, Bowles is in full accord with current trends in American liberal thought. High officials of the Truman Administration now frankly confess their regret that the military aspect of American overseas aid came to be so much emphasized during its closing years, and explain that they were compelled to this course of action because of the difficulty of extracting purely economic aid from a reluctant Congress.

The transition from power to opposition has also changed liberal attitudes toward India. India's reluctance to join the grand alliance against Communism was once keenly resented as an obstacle to Administration policy; now it is regarded by some as a valuable moderating influence, while others, though still critical of Mr Nehru, ask where else the United States can find the basis for the continuance of democracy in Asia. Liberals are therefore inclined to be sceptical of the proposed South-East Asia Treaty Organization, particularly if it is launched with Thailand as the only nation on the mainland of Asia taking part. Instead, they are talking of a Pacific Treaty Organization, including Australia, New Zealand, the Philippine Republic, and the Western powers, which, while not interfering in Asian affairs, will stand ready to offer help when and if it is requested.

The more liberal Democrats will therefore enter the coming Congressional campaign with some ideas about Asia distinct from those of the Administration. Europe, one fears, will be increasingly neglected, and Britain, in spite of the appeal which Sir Winston Churchill makes to the American imagination, tends to be regarded here as a part of Europe. In any event, the time has passed when America could mould Europe's destiny for good or ill. Now that the bold initiative of the Marshall Plan is coming to an end, it may be the turn of the Europeans themselves, by some bold proposal such as genuine Atlantic unity, to rekindle the enthusiasm of the American people – who, with all their faults, respond more readily to big ideas than to little ones.

THE CASE OF DR OPPENHEIMER*

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I

It has become a habit among thoughtful Americans to see the handwriting on the wall. What indeed suggests nothing but mean times ahead is not so much the events themselves as the official explanation of them. Thus the case of Dr Robert Oppenheimer has been judged entirely on the basis of his character and social conduct. Psychology has masked politics, victories and defeats essential to the future course of American history have gone largely unremarked in the general curiosity over twists in Dr Oppenheimer's character and over questions of his behaviour. These are important enough; Dr Oppenheimer's soul was searched for its deceits, its contradictions, its dubious soul-mates, and a goodly number were found. But even granting that the scientist, like the poet, is uniquely neurotic, and that therefore he must be judged more leniently than ordinary men (as some of his defenders have foolishly argued) the position held on the hard issues of American politics by Dr Oppenheimer cannot be collapsed into his character or even into his associations. His position, his place and influence in the political order, were rarely touched in the thousands of pages of published testimony and opinions. In the end, after an inquiry dating from December 23rd, 1953, to June 30th, 1954, he was condemned in an appellate decision by the Atomic Energy Commission (A E C) for 'fundamental defects of character' and for social relations with Communists extending 'far beyond the tolerable limits of prudence and self-restraint'.

Oppenheimer's soul being searched and his private

* I have depended in this article on the advice and the unpublished manuscript and material of Mr Daniel Bell of Columbia University. Although he bears no responsibility for it, I am indebted to him for whatever fullness and accuracy this article may possess.

conduct surveyed, the findings were reviewed by two separate boards of inquiry – the Personnel Security Board and the parent Atomic Energy Commission. In both decisions, with only the one scientific member of each panel dissenting, it was found that his personality was too 'complex' to carry the responsibilities his scientific position and access to restricted data inevitably entailed. He lied in order to protect friends, and some of his lies were so elaborate and unnecessary that they alarmed the normal people by whom he was judged; above all, he dined with the translator Haakon Chevalier in Paris, in December 1953 – the very man who once approached him with a treasonable proposition. The entire case was a triumph of psychological over straight old-fashioned political warfare. The charge sustained in the first decision by Mr Gordon Gray * and Mr Thomas J. Morgan,† as the majority members of the Personnel Security Board, that Dr Oppenheimer showed a notable lack of 'enthusiasm' during the early stages of hydrogen bomb research, was carefully excluded from the appellate decision. Oppenheimer, the man, the neurotic scientist who did not have sense enough to know that M. Chevalier might well have acted for Soviet agents who would spirit him away to the Soviet Union, was tried. Oppenheimer the spokesman for an alternative military and political policy for the United States never once emerged for public judgment.

The decisions of the Gray Board and the A E C Commission merit careful examination. It is something of a landmark in American political history that a man can be officially condemned for his private associations. But behind this inquiry into the character and conduct of one man lay a long battle over the facts of American military strategy. It was Oppenheimer's misfortune that he had lost the battle many months before; his lost case was a public parody of his lost battle. The open decision on his character masked the hidden decision on his policy; his exclusion from 'restricted data', whatever the fears about his past associations, was, objectively, a savage act of revenge for the long fight he waged against established American military policy.

* Now President of the University of North Carolina, formerly a Cabinet member in the Truman Administration.

† A Southerner; once President of United Negro College Fund; retired head of Sperry Gyroscope, a company contributing greatly to the American arsenal.

The public was never allowed to look at the real issues. When the Government chose to make a public examination (the release of the decisions and testimony amounted to that) of Dr Oppenheimer's character, his political role was already thwarted and with this the persistent effort of his profession to gain a voice in the councils of state. The bitter five-year struggle between science and military politics in the United States was carried on mainly in the privacy of bureaucratic offices and in the secrecy of research laboratories. And the official version of the case, as involving simply the character and personal conduct of Dr Oppenheimer, was the way in which modern victors in the secret wars of state rewrite history. Losing sides never get their position written clearly into the record; they are forced to argue on grounds chosen by the winners, and the issue is staged for public edification after the real battle is over. It is like an internecine party struggle, of which the rank and file knows nothing until the defeated leader is brought before some tribunes of the people, his person condemned and his great contributions to the cause expunged from the official histories.

Dr Oppenheimer's contribution to American history is in no danger of being forgotten or denied. If only he had remained within the ambience of scientific research and organization the entire case might never have been aired, although it is unclear how Senator McCarthy could have been kept from airing it. But the line between science and politics has grown very shadowy. Neither Dr Oppenheimer nor his fellow-scientists knew, after they had by their inventions added another long arm to the body of the state, how to remain within the limits of their technical capacities. The scientist has, since World War I, achieved a new place in the political order – a place that has given him enormous public prestige and involved him in the most serious decisions of government. The Oppenheimer case signals not merely the personal defeat of a leading scientist, but the removal of the American scientists as a group from their high place in the political order. Dr Oppenheimer's personal humiliation covers the failure of American scientists as a more or less corporate body to play a role in shaping an American military policy they themselves have made possible.

Between the first and second world wars, the relation of science and politics in America entirely changed. Mr

Newton Baker, Secretary of War in Wilson's Cabinet, found *one* chemist adequate to the needs of the military forces. Mr Charles Wilson, the present Secretary of Defence ('War' is an unsophisticated word), has an Under-Secretary in charge of research. Since 1941 the Government has spent some eighteen billion dollars for mainly military research and development. Of 155,000 persons who might be classed as natural or physical scientists in the United States (about two-thirds of 1 per cent of the working population of sixty-three millions) some 32,000 work for the Government, and many of the remainder are indirectly dependent upon the Government through industrial and university research on official projects. The importance of the scientists' connection with the Government cannot, however, be rightly measured by their involvement in such work, although this is in itself of great significance; above all there is the fact that the scientific *élite* creates the weapons of offence and defence upon which the political and military *élites* depend. Along with the concentration of control over the material apparatus of society, as described by Marx and later by Max Weber, has come the concentration of scientific skills. Science has forged great new weapons and therefore the scientific *élite* is absolutely necessary, especially at the creative stages, to the political *élite* – the military and the high policy planners. This brings the scientists directly into politics, for the planning and execution of new elements in the arms race is inseparable from other parts of the political process. And as the scared rabbits of the arms race, the scientists are continually urged to provide a lead that the military can follow to new advantage in the struggle for power within and between nations.

Élite politics characterize all mass societies, totalitarian and democratic alike; indeed, the *élites* may have greater importance in democratic societies. Thus the real decisions in the United States tend to hang in the balance between the competing aims and skills of small groups. Into this sort of politics, demagogues such as Senator McCarthy intrude as representatives of popular forces, breaking through the matrix of *élite* formations and capturing some measure of power by the public intimidation of one or another group. Nevertheless, despite these intrusions, the *élites* usually make, or fail to make, the history without benefit of much public discussion or [illegible] – which is why their increased dominance is a th[illegible] the A[illegible] mental principles of democratic politics. Thus, in A[illegible]

† A[illegible] ead of Spe[illegible] liber[illegible]al.

year, the United States was on the verge of unlimited intervention in Indo-China, but the public knew almost nothing about it; there was not even a spurious debate on intervention, such as that preceding Pearl Harbour. The American public might have wakened one morning to hear over the radio that the nation was at war with China, and immediately accepted the *fait accompli* as the necessary logic of higher powers. As it happened, the groups commending intervention lost their argument, for reasons not yet easy to assemble. But the negative public reactions to the trial balloons let off by Vice-President Nixon and others did not alone arrest a plunge into Indo-China. The decision was made within the highest circles, perhaps ultimately arbitrated, as Mr Joseph Harsch of the *Christian Science Monitor* suggested, by the President himself; we shall not know until the memoirs of the period are collected and checked. Calculations about public fears of war did influence the Administration's decision, but this public is understood as passive and fundamentally uninformed.

With the explosions over Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the physical scientist had made an auspicious entry into *élite* status. Willingly or no, the scientists found themselves beyond the realm of technique and in politics; they responded with that balanced concern for both the nation and the world that is the special virtue of the scientific morality and, in their special knowledge of the atomic bomb, with the almost Messianic fervour of men who had seen hell and wanted to do something to save the rest of us from it. The nuclear scientists organized themselves into regional and national groups, and set up a lobby in Washington. The *Federation of Atomic Scientists*, with advisors from among America's most astute and sophisticated social scientists, was an unprecedented political organization of American scientists, concerned not only with the protection of the scientist in his new political environment, but with the larger disposition of atomic energy, the great new transformation of nature that could change the social order for good or evil.

Tension between the scientific *élite*, on the one side, and the military on the other, began almost immediately. Some tension between such different personality types and levels of intellection was inevitable, but the issues ran deeper than psychological difference. Some early battles (1945–46) were won by the scientists; the McMahon bill setting up a civilian

commission (the present A E C, which ruled Dr Oppenheimer a 'security risk') was their victory, against the May-Johnson (Administration) bill which would have continued military control of the atomic energy project after the war. This was no personal victory for Dr Oppenheimer, who in fact supported the May-Johnson bill. Nevertheless, in the immediate post-war period his authority and prestige increased. From being merely scientific head of the Manhattan District and director in the construction of the bomb at Los Alamos, he became a symbol of the new status of science in American society. His thin handsome face and figure replaced Einstein's as the public image of genius. Less charismatic, although equally important figures among the atomic-researchers took lesser parts in the new pantheon. Behind this scene, in the bureaucratic labyrinth of Washington, Dr Oppenheimer's importance was greater than his public image showed. He had actually become the priest-scientist of the Comtean vision, transforming history as well as nature. His place as advisor in the State Department on matters of atomic strategy during the tenure of Mr Acheson was bound to bring him further into contact with the makers of policy. He began to play a leading role, perhaps the first scientist in American history to achieve so great an influence in government. The Acheson-Lilienthal * plan for international control of atomic energy, which the Russians rejected, was largely his work.

Dr Oppenheimer's hope was for some sort of *modus vivendi* with the Russians, to avert an atomic catastrophe. But as the cold war grew hotter and the Russians proved intransigent, the post-war flutter of public campaigns to reach diplomatic agreement was stilled. World government organizations of all sorts lost motion; the American public had in any case maintained its vigorous disinterest in international proclamations, including those by the atomic scientists. The latter's efforts to play a role in deciding American policy shifted out of public view to the operations of the *élites* themselves. Struggles over the future course of American strategy were now to take place over the heads of the public, and any shots that were fired in the open were aimed deliberately high, so that only the instructed reader could understand. A major dispute arose within the scientific group itself, over the problem of construct-

* Mr David Lilienthal, first chairman of the A E C and former head of T V A.

ing a hydrogen bomb. Mr Edward Teller, a Hungarian-born scientist, had proposed as early as 1945 a theoretical solution that would permit the construction of an H-bomb. Oppenheimer, and men such as Conant, DuBridge, Rabi, Bethe – great names in science – disagreed for technical reasons, although plainly they also considered the construction of the H-bomb a political and moral error. But in 1947, in a seminar at Los Alamos incidentally attended by Klaus Fuchs, Dr Teller came within one final step of working out the theoretical mechanics of exploding an H-bomb; the theory of the fusion of hydrogen atoms, worked out by Hans Bethe, had been long accepted. Mr Lewis Strauss,* then a member of the A E C and now its chairman, decided with Senator McMahon to push construction of the H-bomb. Lilienthal, then chairman, opposed it, as did almost all the leading scientists on the advisory council. H-bomb research dragged for various reasons, none of which can be laid at Oppenheimer's door. The Air Force wanted it, because it would mean a greater slice of appropriations, although they had no clear idea of its special usefulness. Not only were there technical and moral doubts, but the problem of recruiting personnel without injuring other atomic bomb work presented itself. Finally the Air Force, then under the Secretaryship of Mr Thomas K. Finletter, a liberal lawyer, forced the A E C to establish Dr Teller in his own laboratory (by 1952) and the production of thermo-nuclear weapons, having proved feasible, began in earnest.

II

The decision to go ahead with the H-bomb marked the official adoption of a new military policy built around the Strategic Air Command (S A C) of the Air Forces – a policy of immediate and massive retaliation from the American stockpile of atomic and super-atomic weapons as a deterrent against any Soviet aggression. As the vehicle of delivery, the S A C, commanded by General Curtis Le May, became the essential unit of American strategy. As stated to a Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce meeting last October by Mr Gordon Dean, a former member of the Atomic Energy Commission personally friendly to Dr Oppenheimer, the United States' policy takes on the therapeutic value of a shock treatment:

* Admiral Lewis Strauss, investment banker, devout Jew, Taft Republican, former Secretary to Herbert Hoover, and valuable naval bureaucrat.

> The time has come . . . to make Russia understand that if she moves in any quarter of the globe, she will be struck and struck hard, not simply at the front line of her aggressive troops but at every element which supplies these troops. Let's make it plain that if Russia moves directly or indirectly . . we not only will, but we must, destroy the vitals of such a movement – every marshalling yard, every supply depot, every contributory industrial population.

The established policy of immediate and massive retaliation – hard to distinguish in theory or practice from the doctrine of preventive war – is necessarily total, for every population in modern warfare contributes something to the war effort. Against this conception, now embodied in the perpetual readiness of the S A C to strike at targets from one end of the Soviet Union to the other, Dr Oppenheimer raised the possibility of a tight defensive ring around the American continent. Thus his opposition to the H-bomb reflected his feeling about the futility of the arms race as such, if it was not balanced with an equal concentration on defence. The sporting belief of Americans that 'the only good defence is a good offence' (a phrase popular in every sport, and essential to understanding the American style of play and politics) militated against the Oppenheimer conception as a 'Maginot Linc' and as the defeatist psychology of a hand-wringing scientist, perhaps even of a neutralist with no stomach for fighting Russia. As against him, the official school held that

> the surest way to prevent bombs from falling on American cities is to destroy those bombs, and particularly the enemy carriers designed to take them to their objectives, before they leave their bases. Offensive air power, to strike against enemy atomic facilities and stockpiles, and particularly against enemy airfields and submarine bases, is the first element of sound air defence.

Yet the position taken by Dr Oppenheimer was not a clear-cut 'defensive versus offensive' strategy, but aimed at greater emphasis on defence. Dr Oppenheimer argued that in order for the United States to negotiate from strength a far more elaborate continental defence system than the offensive-mindedness of established strategy allowed was needed. He further argued that the major problems of defence against total attack in a democracy needed the participation and understanding of the public, and that this was impossible to achieve under the heavy

cloak of secrecy wrapped around all military strategy. The basic Air Force argument was that no adequate defence against atomic attack was foreseeable. The late General Vandenberg, when head of the Air Forces, thought that American air defence might bring down 20 or 30 per cent. of an attacking force. But even if by 1957, after a substantial national investment, the air defence system should be able to bring down 50 per cent. of a Russian force, the damage from the other half that got through could cripple America's industrial capacity for war and produce millions of casualties; night attack would cause even larger havoc. It should be noted that, when the argument between the scientists and the air officers was at its height, it was assumed that a Russian attack with 100 atomic weapons would destroy well over a third of American industrial power and cause about 13 million casualties. The defence apparatus of the U S against air attack at the time consisted mainly of interceptors and anti-aircraft artillery, with some World War II style radar coverage along the continental approaches. The anti-aircraft batteries, consisting predominantly of World War II batteries of 120 mm. guns and other types, were token weapons, ineffective above 20,000 feet. In darkness the interceptor wings would lose much of their accuracy, few of them at that time being equipped with radar devices. A comparable study by the British authorities of their air defences forecast that an all-out attack on the British Isles would take a toll of two million lives.

Both sides used these grisly figures for their own purposes: the military to demonstrate the need to keep the S A C's retaliatory weapon always sharp and enlarging, the scientists to demonstrate the futility of the entire arms struggle and the need for a greater scientific and financial expenditure on defence research. The scientists' argument was really a technical elaboration of Mr George Kennan's 'containment' thesis, which affirms that the democracies must hold the line and wait for disintegrating forces to operate within the Soviet sphere. A greater emphasis on defence, however, cannot be called static any more than the policy of containment, and plainly the retaliatory thesis must veer ever closer to the preventive war thesis, now abandoned at least by the executive arm of the Government. In any event, the scientific *élite* moved to test their own defence theories. In 1951 the scientists of *Project Vista*, who had been recruited by the Air Force to study tactical and field use of atomic weapons, came up

with a report that supported the Oppenheimer thesis. Contradicting the Air Force conception of a huge heavy atomic stockpile carried by inter-continental bombers, *Project Vista* concluded that short-range tactical air forces with small atomic weapons, in addition to a small ground force, could check the Red Army in Europe. The struggle over atomic strategy soon involved General Eisenhower, who as an old ground soldier showed some inclinations toward the scientists' view when the *Project Vista* report was presented to him in Paris during the last period of his N A T O command. But General Norstad, then head of the N A T O air forces, opposed the report with its underlying thesis of a 'mutual forswearing of strategic air war', and it never received serious consideration. The argument then shifted to the strategy of air defence, which appeared to the scientists to leave the American continent virtually open to inter-continental attack. An actual increase in the American capacity to negotiate with the Russians was predicted if the United States could build a defence network that would also act as a deterrent to aggression. The Air Force strategy counted on the instinct of self-preservation among the Soviet leadership, the rational recognition on the part of the potential enemy that the retaliatory price of atomic attack on the United States would be too high. Clinging to a policy originally adopted before the Russians had developed in their own atomic stockpile weapons between four and five times more powerful than those used at Hiroshima and Nagasaki eight years before, the Air Force continued to concentrate on offensive weapons immune from annihilation, rather than on defensive networks.

As if again to demonstrate the feasibility of their own conception of defence, the scientific *élite* gathered a remarkable task force, drawn from the leading university centres of research. The controversial *Lincoln Summer Study* group of thirty scientists played war games for three months in 1952 at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and demonstrated, to their own satisfaction at least, that with an early warning system of interlocking radar stations, guided missiles, 'mother' aircraft launching smaller interceptor wings, Russian bomber penetration could be reduced to mere 'leakage'. Of course the retaliatory striking force would continue to be shielded; thus the present retaliatory-deterrent strategy would not be scrapped, but in the scientists' view actually increased in effect. The novelty of these proposals lay in plans for the defence of the 10,000 miles of

American frontier available to the Russians. Existing radar equipment cannot keep such a territory under accurate surveillance. The *Summer Study* group, organized by friends and disciples of Dr Oppenheimer, advocated a new system of radar surveillance along the Arctic circle as close to the Soviet frontiers as possible, increasing the margin of warning from an hour or less in the present system to four and perhaps six hours. The Air Force objected to the cost of such a warning system, to its drainage effect on the remainder of the air budget, and its consequent effect on American striking power, which still seemed the primary weapon of defence. Technical doubts also arose and some resentment at the aura of originality around the scientists' proposals.

The *Summer Study* had its effect in sharpening the conflict between the scientists and the military. Faced with a good motion, the standard riposte of the politician is to shelve it and get the entire problem reviewed; shelving has the value of a clinch in boxing – a chance to recover from a blow, study the opposition and learn how to meet it. The *Summer Study* findings did not reach a formal stage of discussion in the National Security Council (the President, Secretary of State and Chiefs of Staff), which is now the body ultimately responsible for the strategy of the United States. But it did push the argument into such a state of intense controversy during the final months of the Truman Administration that a new special committee of investigation (under Mr Mervin Kelly, vice-president of the Bell Laboratories) was appointed to review the entire problem of vulnerability. The Kelly Report substantially confirmed the established military thesis that the best defence was the retaliatory-deterrent theory of offence. In direct criticism of Dr Oppenheimer's attempt to alter the pattern of American military strategy, the Kelly Report

> expressed concern . . . about the recent public advocacy of a programme which would purportedly give nearly perfect protection against air attack. . . . Any such level of protection is unattainable and . . . completely impractical, economically and technically, in the face of expected advances in [Russian] capabilities.

In rebuttal to the *Summer Study*, the report urged 'continued development of a powerful United States atomic offensive capability, reasonably invulnerable to initial attack'. The deeply

ingrained American view of offence as the best defence remained invulnerable to the complicated alternative suggested by the scientists. Mr Hanson Baldwin, the military correspondent of the *New York Times*, summarized the case for an unaltered retaliatory-deterrent basic strategy in terms familiar throughout the argument.

> The surest way to prevent bombs from falling on American cities [he wrote] is to destroy those bombs, and particularly the enemy carriers designed to take them to their objectives, before they leave their bases. Offensive air power . . . is the first element of sound air defence.

(To be continued)

EECE, 1941: AN UNSOLVED MYSTERY

a Special Correspondent

Although the mystery in question is unsolved, it is very far from being unsolvable. Indeed, it is one of the easiest historical mysteries to solve that there can ever have been, and the real mystery is why so many opportunities of solving it have been neglected. The latest of the missed opportunities is the most tantalizing of all, because it is a very near miss indeed: this is the first volume of the official war history of the Mediterranean and Middle East, which covers the period to May 1941.* As will be seen, this volume lifts a corner of the veil which previous accounts have only served to make more opaque; but unfortunately it does not complete the operation. Of previous accounts, much the most important to English readers is the third volume of Sir Winston Churchill's *The Second World War*, but it is somewhat dogmatic and unhelpful. Indeed, Sir Winston's account of the episode in question can be quoted (as it was in a review of Sir Winston's last volume in *The Times Literary Supplement* on April 30th this year) as an example of the potential dangers to which his monumental work is exposed on the very rare occasions when he attempts to anticipate the judgment of history without producing all the evidence.

The campaign in Greece in 1941, which is the case in point, has more than a merely historical interest, because the circumstances in which it was fought could foreseeably be repeated. It has become even more topical in the last few months with the revival by the Greek Prime Minister (Field-Marshal Papagos, whose name will recur) of proposals to convert the political *entente* between Greece, Turkey and Yugoslavia into a full military alliance, and with Marshal Tito's visit to Ankara and Athens. Greece's position in the East European balance of power is similar to-day to what it was in 1940–41. There was the same grouping of hostile or potentially hostile

* *History of the Second World War:* The Mediterranean and Middle East, Vol. I, by Major-General I. S. O. Playfair and others (H.M.S.O. 35*s*.).

powers, then as now, to the north: Albania and Bulgaria in the foreground, and the northern Balkan states in the background. There were the same potential friends or neutrals on Greece's frontiers: Yugoslavia and Turkey; and both were connected to Greece, then as now, by some sort of treaty obligations, the strength of which in the face of peril was (then as now) by no means absolutely certain. The great powers in the outer background have changed, without changing the significance of their alliances: the U S S R has replaced Germany, and the U S A has very largely (though far from completely) replaced Great Britain. There has been a corresponding change in the war potential of the Balkan countries concerned, all of which are very much stronger military powers than they were in 1941; but the balance has probably not much altered. The relative situation in the southern Balkans, in the event of a war in the 1950's, is in fact very much what it was in the 1940's, except that in 1954 Turkey is wholly committed to active participation in the Western alliance, from which no foreseeable Turkish government could or would contract out; in 1941 the Turkish attitude was hardly less certain, but the certainty was, unfortunately, that Turkey would stand back from war. Some political speeches during the recent Turkish general election have strongly suggested that Turkey's decision to keep out of the war (at least at that time) was taken at the fall of France in 1940, and for that reason; and in the event it was not difficult for the Turks to maintain, when the invasion of Yugoslavia and Greece took place in April 1941, that the *casus fœderis* for Turkish intervention had not in fact occurred, as technically it had not.* In any case, it was clear from the beginning of 1941 that any prudent calculation of the odds had to rest on the assumption that Turkey would remain neutral; and this provided at least one element of reasonable certainty, just as the opposite assumption does to-day. In the case of Yugoslavia, however, there was then virtually no certainty at all. Yugoslavia was one of the last surviving genuine neutrals in Europe, in the sense of being still free (as Italy was in 1914, for instance) to throw her forces into the scale on either side of a future war. The Allied manœuvres of early 1941 therefore turned very largely on the key-position of Yugoslavia. It was the complica-

* C. M. Woodhouse, *Apple of Discord* (Hutchinson, 1948), p. 21.

tion of these manœuvres which led to an inter-Allied misunderstanding that has still not been openly unravelled, and on which Sir Winston Churchill pronounced an evidently somewhat unconsidered judgment in the third volume of *The Second World War*.

The strategy which despatched the Commonwealth Expeditionary Force * to Greece in March 1941 is not in dispute; that is to say, though there may be doubts about whether it was right, there should be no doubt about what it was. The object was to form and hold an Allied front in South-East Europe to contain the German expansion in that direction. There were, of course, also secondary purposes. An important one was to fulfil the pledge of support against aggression given to Greece by Mr Chamberlain's Government in April 1939, when Mussolini seized Albania; a pledge which had been fulfilled only to a very limited extent when Mussolini attacked Greece in October 1940, and which it was necessary to fulfil more handsomely against Germany, if only in the interests of keeping the respect of public opinion and potential allies throughout the world, and especially in the U S A. Another, more controversial, secondary purpose must have been to ensure that if, in the last resort, a German occupation of Greece was inevitable, it should not be taken lying down by the Greeks, so that the Germans would be compelled to hold down a hostile population instead of securing the collaboration of an acquiescent one. This motive, if it were present in the minds of the British Government, was too delicate even to be admitted in retrospect; and only the primary and the main secondary motive appear (in that order) in Sir Winston's account:

> It was our aim to animate and combine Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey. Our duty so far as possible was to aid the Greeks. (*Op. cit.*, p. 84.)

It is only necessary to mention in passing the argument, which has been responsibly urged by some, that the political motives, which have been called secondary above, were in fact primary and even decisive. The principal upholders of

* One British Armoured Brigade, one New Zealand and one Australian Division; together with seven R A F Squadrons and various specialist units already there (Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. III, pp. 194–5). Other forces were to follow, but in the event they did not do so.

this view have been the former Greek Commander-in-Chief, and present Prime Minister, General (now Field-Marshal) Papagos*; and Major-General Sir Francis de Guingand†, who was a member of the planning staff for the British contribution to the campaign. General Papagos attributes cardinal importance, in the British calculations, to the necessity of implementing the guarantee of April 1939, even though the British

> fully realized that, with the means then at their disposal and in the conditions then existing, their intervention in the Balkans was, from a purely military point of view, undesirable. (*Op. cit.*, p. 12.)

General de Guingand confirms this judgment of the military aspect, and attributes the decision to send the British force to 'political' motives, without exactly specifying what these were: the antipathy shown in his account to Mr Eden is very marked, and there is more than one suggestion of political dishonesty. But these points are here adduced only for the record. They show that personal distrusts and antipathies were to some extent at work, as they often are in such circumstances; but the important point is that these imponderables do not bear in the slightest degree on the cardinal point at issue, as it is revealed from a comparison of the accounts by Sir Winston Churchill and others.

The material part of Sir Winston's account of the Greek campaign of 1941 is spread over chapters I, IV, VI and XII of the third volume of *The Second World War*. Effectively the narrative begins in January 1941, at a time when we already had in Greece a Military Mission under Major-General T. G. G. Heywood, a few specialist units, and a token air force mainly equipped with (obsolescent) Blenheims. The need to increase the scale of fulfilment of the pledge to support Greece against Axis aggression was determined by

> a mass of information . . . from divers sources, all of which tends to show that Germany is pressing forward her preparations in the Balkans with a view to an ultimate descent upon Greece. (*Op. cit.*, p. 13.)

* *The German Attack on Greece* (London, 1946), which includes one chapter of a longer work later published in English as *The Battle of Greece* 1940–1941 (Athens, 1949).

† *Operation Victory* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1947), chapter 3, especially pp. 78–80.

These were Mr Eden's words, in a minute to the Prime Minister on January 6th: the Prime Minister's reaction was to set on foot a series of discussions leading to the conclusion that Greece should be sent 'the fullest support within our power' (p. 14). It is not necessary to the present discussion to consider in detail the succession of modifications through which this decision was to pass during the next few months, since the cardinal point is a simple one of fact which is not affected by them. But a chronological review of the main events from January to March is essential as background to the disputed matter.

On January 15th General Wavell, Commander-in-Chief Middle East Command, with his R A F colleague, informed the Greek Prime Minister (General Metaxas) and Commander-in-Chief (General Papagos) of the scale of support that could be provided in Greece, and was told that it was insufficient to be acceptable, in view of the risk of merely provoking the Germans to attack Greece without being able to strike back. The proposal was therefore temporarily dropped, and the main effort in the Middle East was devoted to exploiting General Wavell's recent successes against the Italians in North Africa. This exploitation was so successful that by February 12th the Prime Minister was able to suggest to General Wavell that he could spare much more considerable forces from North Africa for Greece, including 'the fighting portion of the Army which has hitherto defended Egypt' (*op. cit.*, p. 58). In the meantime the Balkan situation had been modified in two ways: the German infiltration of the northern states had greatly expanded, and was clearly about to pass on from Rumania into Bulgaria; and at the end of January, the Greek Prime Minister (General Metaxas) had died, being replaced by a much less dynamic character, Alexander Koryzis. The effect of these developments was to make the decision to send an Expeditionary Force to Greece both more urgent and easier to take. In these circumstances Mr Eden flew to Athens on February 22nd, with General Wavell and the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, to confer with the Greek King and Government on the revived question of an Allied front in the Balkans (*op. cit.*, p. 66). The incident which led to the still

unresolved dispute of fact occurred at a conference during the night of February 22nd–23rd, which was attended by General Papagos in addition to the above.*

It was made clear on the Greek side by the Prime Minister that Greece intended to resist German aggression, if it came, in exactly the same way as Italian aggression was already being resisted since October 1940, irrespective of any aid Great Britain might be able to give. This was a characteristic decision which undoubtedly enjoyed overwhelming public support in Greece; but as the main strength of the Greek Army was fully occupied against the Italians in Albania, where the war had reached practically a static deadlock, there was in fact very little possibility of an effective resistance by Greek troops alone to a German invasion from the North, apart from the well-constructed physical defences on the Bulgarian frontier. This did not, however, mean that the acceptance by the Greeks of any British offer of support was automatic and unconditional, since the Greek Government was still averse to mere provocation of the Germans. The acceptance of the forces offered by the British at the meeting on February 22nd was determined by the more promising scale of the offer that now seemed possible; it was in fact a larger scale than was eventually to be put into the field in Greece for a number of reasons, which do not (*pace* General de Guingand) in any way reflect on the good faith of either side. One reason was that the campaign in North Africa suddenly took an unexpected turn for the worse during March, with the arrival of General Rommel and the German Africa Corps to reinforce the defeated Italians. Another reason was that, in the event, the war moved too rapidly in the southern Balkans for the whole of the British and Allied force to arrive in position in time. But at least a contributory role was almost certainly played by the strange misunderstanding which occurred during Mr Eden's visit to Athens; for it is clear from Sir Winston's narrative that the shock to mutual confidence which this incident caused was itself responsible for the gravest misgivings about the wisdom of the decision to commit the proposed force to Greece at all.

There are three primary authorities for the meeting of February 22nd–23rd, 1941. They are Sir Winston Churchill,

* Incidentally, General de Guingand was also present for part of the meeting, but not for the part that is material to this discussion.

General Wavell,* and General Papagos,† and as all are of the highest reliability it is the more mysterious that the first two directly contradict the third. Sir Winston's secondary authority is Mr Eden, whose telegrams from Athens he relied on at the time and in writing *The Second World War*. General Papagos rests his account on the written minutes of the meeting of February 22nd, which would seem to be an incontrovertible authority, though presumably no more authoritative than Mr Eden's contemporary telegrams. General Papagos does not actually give *verbatim* quotations from the minutes, though he categorically asserts that they support his account. They have never been published, and it is not even certain in what language they were recorded: but General Papagos states that they were jointly recorded by the Greek Colonel Kitrilakis and Major-General Heywood.‡ Only the former of these last two (now a General) is still living. It may be that the minutes were kept in Greek and English, but it is worth mentioning that General Heywood was bi-lingual as to French and that Mr Eden, General Wavell, General Papagos and the Greek King all spoke French well. However, the point is not an important one, and will obviously be settled without further discussion on the day when the minutes become public in their entirety: it is at least obvious that there should have been no linguistic barriers to understanding. It is now time to compare the rival versions of Sir Winston and General Papagos, in that order.

On February 24th Mr. Eden telegraphed to the Prime Minister that agreement had been reached on all points, and specifically included the following paragraph in his telegram (*The Second World War*, Vol. III, pp. 66–7):

> From the ensuing discussion . . . it emerged that in view of the doubtful attitude of Yugoslavia the only line that could be held and would give time for withdrawal of troops from Albania would be a line west of the Vardar, Olympus-Veria-Edhessa-Kajmakcalan. If we could be sure of Yugoslav moves it should be possible to hold a line further north from the

* Despatch on operations in the Middle East from February 7th, 1941, to July 15th, 1941 (published July 2nd, 1946), especially paras. 11–13.

† *The Battle of Greece* 1940–1941 (English version, Athens, 1949).

‡ Mr A. A. Pallis says they were kept in English and Greek, but he had evidently not seen them (Introduction to *The German Attack on Greece*, by General Papagos, London, 1946).

> mouth of the Nestos to Beles, covering Salonika. It would be impracticable, unless Yugoslavia came in, to hold a line covering Salonika in view of exposure of Greek left flank to German attack.

The first line there mentioned is that to which Sir Winston refers as the 'Aliakmon line', though in fact it does not follow the line of the river Aliakmon,* but at one point crosses it at right angles. The difference between this line and the second line mentioned lies in the significance of the principal route of entry into Greece from Yugoslavia, known as the Vardar gap, the most vulnerable part of Greece's northern frontier: the first line mentioned assumes that this gap has to be defended against German attack (because Yugoslavia may be hostile or neutral); the second line mentioned assumes that this gap need not necessarily be defended in the first instance (because Yugoslavia will join the Anglo-Greek alliance), and therefore leaves it to the rear of the proposed defensive line. Obviously everything still depended on the Yugoslav decision, but, according to Mr Eden's account, the meeting of February 22nd preferred to make the cautious assumption that Yugoslavia would not join the Anglo-Greek alliance, and to plan accordingly.

Sir Winston's account here interrupts the text of Mr Eden's telegram to say:

'He then described the detailed arrangements which had been agreed'; and the account then continues with the text of the telegram. But it is not evident how much has been omitted, and the reader can only deduce what these 'detailed arrangements' were. This is unfortunate, since the very next reference Sir Winston makes to the subject is a flat statement (on the situation ten days later) that:

> The Greeks had departed in so many ways from the terms of the Athens Agreement that we could, had we so wished, have asked for release from it. (*Op. cit.*, p. 83.)

To discover what exactly this means, we have to move on from the visit of Mr Eden to Athens on February 22nd–24th to his second visit there on March 2nd (*op. cit.*, p. 87). In the meantime he had visited Turkey, where it was made clear to him that the Turkish Government did not regard the present as an opportune moment to enter the war, unless Turkey were

* Formerly Vistritsa: wrongly spelt Aliakhmon by Sir Winston.

herself attacked by the Germans. This made the attitude of Yugoslavia all the more important, since the prospect of a really united front in the Balkans was now markedly waning. Accordingly, the British Minister in Belgrade was also summoned to Athens on March 2nd to confer with Mr Eden (*op. cit.*, p. 86), and he returned to Belgrade with a strongly worded message to the Yugoslav Regent from Mr Eden on March 5th. With subsequent events in Yugoslavia, which are common knowledge, we are not here concerned. The important point is what had happened in Athens and Belgrade between Mr Eden's two visits, i.e., between February 24th and March 2nd.

Mr Eden's next report to the Prime Minister, on March 5th, is evidently the basis of Sir Winston's harsh words about the Greek failure to carry out the Athens Agreement (of February 22nd–23rd). Mr Eden's telegram begins (*op. cit.*, pp. 87–8):

> On arrival here we found a changed and disturbing situation and the atmosphere quite different from that of our last visit. General Papagos had on the last occasion insisted strongly that the withdrawal of all troops in Macedonia to the Aliakmon line was the only sound military solution. We had expected that this withdrawal to the Aliakmon line had already begun. Instead we found that no movement had in fact commenced, Papagos alleging that it had been agreed that the decision taken at our last meeting was dependent on the receipt of an answer from Yugoslavia as to their attitude . . .

There follows an account of the various measures which were then canvassed to remedy the situation, in the course of which Mr Eden describes General Papagos's attitude as 'unaccommodating'; and of the compromise that was finally reached, to which Mr Eden attached the condition (which was accepted) that 'the command and organization of the whole Aliakmon line was entrusted to General Wilson * as soon as he was in a position to take over.' This was clearly an indication of diminished confidence in the Greek High Command; and when the news was received in London, there was much heart-searching among the Chiefs of Staff, which Sir Winston describes in detail (*op. cit.*, pp. 89–90). The possibility of contracting out of the whole campaign was seriously considered (but rejected); and among, the factors which had 'considerably increased' the hazards of the enterprise, Sir Winston mentions:

* Now Field-Marshal Lord Wilson.

> the omission of the Greeks to carry out their undertaking of twelve days earlier to withdraw their troops to the line we should have to hold if Yugoslavia did not come in . . .

This statement concerns a matter of fact of vital importance to the coming campaign; and there seems no doubt that the resultant delay and hesitation and confusion contributed materially to the rapidity of the success of the German attack when it came on April 6th, even if it may be considered highly probable that the success itself was eventually certain anyway.

It is not necessary to go further into the details of Sir Winston's account of the exchanges which followed Mr Eden's telegram of March 5th. The decision to go forward with the Commonwealth Expeditionary Force was taken; and there were even moments when Sir Winston's hopes of creating an alliance of Greece, Turkey and Yugoslavia revived. (This is apparent from his telegram of March 28th to Mr Eden(*op. cit.*, p. 149), written after the Yugoslav *coup d'etat* of March 27th had overthrown the government which capitulated to Hitler.) Yugoslavia did, in fact, come into the war on the Anglo-Greek side, but it was too late to concert strategy or construct a new front; and in the first weeks of April Yugoslavia and Greece were successively overrun by the German forces operating from Bulgaria. (The adhesion of Yugoslavia to the allied side, in fact, only delayed the Germans' use of the Vardar gap by a few days, so the assumptions underlying the choice of the Aliakmon line were wise.) There was astonishingly little recrimination between the defeated Allies at the time, but the mysterious misunderstanding of February 22nd was not entirely forgotten. Sir Winston's last word on the subject occurs in a single footnote in Chapter XII of his third volume, which has something of the appearance of an afterthought:

> Papagos has since claimed that his first agreement to the holding of the Aliakmon line was contingent on a clarification of the situation with the Government of Yugoslavia, which never was reached. (*Op. cit.*, p. 195 n.)

It would be interesting to know whether the last four words are supposed to represent part of Papagos's statement or belong to Sir Winston's comment: whether, in fact, in a some languages the verb would fall into the subjunctive or the indicative. But Sir Winston has nothing more to say on the subject in *The Second World War*.

His account may be presumed to have been written during the course of 1949, since the preface to Volume III is dated January 1st, 1950. It is the latest in date of the three primary authorities, since General Papagos published his account (in Greek) before the end of 1945, and General Wavell's despatch covering the Greek campaign was published the following year. General Wavell's account need not detain us: it differs in no material respect from Sir Winston's (and it is therefore important to remember that General Wavell was present with Mr Eden at both the meetings in Athens); and it adds only the purely speculative observation that General Papagos must have changed his plan between the two meetings for 'political reasons', which no one has ever attempted to explain. This speculation was beside the mark, since General Papagos's own contention was that he never changed his plan at all, as will appear. It must be presumed that General Papagos's account in Greek was not available either to General Wavell or to Sir Winston, though it was in print before either of their accounts was published. However, two separate English versions of the material parts of General Papagos's account were available to Sir Winston, and one at least of them may perhaps have prompted the seemingly belated footnote in his Volume III. The two English texts of General Papagos's version are: firstly, *The German Attack on Greece* (London, 1946), a pamphlet which contains the relevant chapter of his Greek work; and secondly, *The Battle of Greece* 1940–1941 (Athens, 1949), a translation of his complete work, which includes the former pamphlet (in a slightly different translation) as Chapter VI of Part II. The following quotations are from the latter version.

The material points in General Papagos's account of the meeting of February 22nd are contained in three paragraphs (*op. cit.*, pp. 322–3):

> . . . I went on to say that, on the assumption that Yugoslavia would remain neutral and would not allow the passage of German troops through her territory, I had arrived at the conclusion that, given the small means at our disposal, the defence of Eastern Macedonia and Western Thrace was not advisable. I added that only sufficient forces should be left there to man the fortifications, for the purpose of delaying the enemy. The rest of the Greek divisions should be withdrawn to the Kaimakcalan-Vermion-Olympus position . . . (i.e. the so-called Aliakmon line).

> I insisted, however, that before taking such a grave decision . . . , the attitude of Yugoslavia should first be completely clarified, and I proposed that the Yugoslav Government should be informed of the decisions we were prepared to take depending on the policy they intended to adopt.
>
> This suggestion of mine was accepted, and it was decided that the British Foreign Secretary should send an urgent code message to the British Minister in Belgrade. Depending on the nature of the reply the order for evacuation and withdrawal would be issued or not, as the case might be . . .

By way of illustrating the completeness of the misunderstanding, it is worth interpolating here two sentences from General Wavell's account of the same meeting in his published despatch*:

> . . . he (General Papagos) therefore proposed to withdraw the Greek troops in Macedonia and Eastern Thrace, except for covering detachments, to the Aliakmon Line to prepare a defensive position there. . . . The Conference agreed to the proposals of General Papagos, and it was understood that he would at once begin the withdrawal of the troops from Macedonia to the Aliakmon Line.

If General Papagos was in error, he was quite uncompromising in his error, for his own account goes on to relate how:

> During the period which intervened between 22nd February and . . . 2nd March, I repeatedly enquired of Major-General Heywood . . . whether any reply had been received from the British Minister in Belgrade to the British Foreign Secretary's urgent cable. On each occasion I was assured that no such reply had been received. I was thus unable to reach a conclusion for which I lacked the necessary data . . . (*Op. cit.*, p. 323.)

So General Papagos did nothing about the withdrawal which Mr Eden supposed him to be in the process of making, for reasons which he makes abundantly clear. What is extraordinary, however, is that there is no mention in Sir Winston's narrative (or in Mr Eden's account as quoted by Sir Winston) of any such telegram to Belgrade at all. It was certainly sent, as will appear from the official history. But what happened to the reply? Only part of the answer will become apparent

* Wavell, *op. cit.*, para. 11. 'Eastern Thrace' is a slip for 'Western Thrace.'

from the official history, but it may be taken as virtually certain that at least General Heywood did not see the reply between February 22nd and March 2nd, though he knew how much importance General Papagos attached to it. It only remains to add, in order to dispose of any idea of bad faith, that General Papagos and General Heywood were on terms of the closest personal sympathy, and that since both spoke French exceptionally well there was no possibility of a linguistic misunderstanding between them.

The mystery grows still more unequivocally incomprehensible as General Papagos's account proceeds to the second meeting in Athens on March 2nd. The material part of this account reads as follows (*op. cit.*, p. 324):

> I was then asked by him (Mr Eden) . . . whether the Greek forces in Eastern Macedonia and Western Thrace had been withdrawn to the positions on the Kaimakcalan-Vermion-Olympus line.
>
> I replied that this had not been done, in as much as we had agreed at the . . . Conference of 22nd February, as expressly recorded in the minutes, that before issuing orders for the withdrawal of these forces I must know the answer of the British Minister in Belgrade to the British Foreign Secretary's cable asking for full clarifications of Yugoslavia's attitude. I added that I had repeatedly asked the liaison officer of the Imperial Staff during the period between 22nd February and 2nd March whether this reply had been received and that although I had never ceased stressing the urgency of obtaining a response . . ., I had always been told that no answer had been received.
>
> The above was fully and categorically confirmed by Maj.-Gen. Heywood, who . . . had been present together with Colonel Kitrilakis at all the meetings for the purpose of keeping minutes.

The rest of General Papagos's account is devoted to the discussions which followed, in an attempt to find a way out of the unfortunate situation. He does not refer to the misunderstanding again, nor does he quote Mr Eden's reply to the above remarks; nor does he give any *verbatim* quotations from the minutes (which he seems not to have had available at the time of writing); nor does he allude to the fact, recorded by Sir Winston, that the British Minister to Yugoslavia was in Athens at the time of this meeting on March 2nd, so that a

good deal of clarification on Yugoslav intentions was immediately accessible. In fact, General Papagos's transition from this point to the next phase of the discussion is (like other accounts of the matter) curiously abrupt; but it must be remembered that he was writing before the British criticisms of him were made public, so that he was not consciously writing in self-defence on this point.

It is now clear that there is one and only one way of settling the dispute, which is to publish the minutes of the meeting of February 22nd. This the newly published official history does not do, though it does quote one tantalizing excerpt from them. Having summarized the discussions which have already been described, the official account makes the following reference to the disputed issue (*op. cit.*, pp. 379–80):

> . . . the military representatives announced their complete agreement that in view of the uncertain attitude of the Turks and Yugoslavs it was not possible to contemplate holding a position covering Salonika; the only sound military course was to occupy the Aliakmon position. Mr Eden then referred to the political problems, namely, whether to approach the Yugoslav Government in the hope of ascertaining their intentions, and whether their reply should affect the withdrawal of the advanced Greek troops. On the first point it was decided that Mr Eden should make an approach to the Regent of Yugoslavia, drawing his attention to the danger to Salonika presented by current German activities in the Balkans and asking for Prince Paul's views on the subject. On the second point the decision recorded was 'that preparations should at once be made and put into execution to withdraw the Greek advanced troops in Thrace and Macedonia to the line which we should be obliged to hold if the Yugoslavs did not come in'. There is no doubt whatever that General Dill (the C.I.G.S.) and General Wavell were left with the firm impression that the withdrawal was to take place as soon as the necessary preparations could be made. General Papagos, however, was later to argue that it was to have been contingent upon the result of the approach to Yugoslavia.

The official account goes on to cover the same ground that has already been discussed, with some interesting additions: for instance, it reveals (p. 382) that the answer to Mr Eden's telegram to Belgrade reached him at Ankara on February 27th, and that its contents were unsatisfactory on the subject of Yugoslav intentions; but it does not reveal whether the answer

was also repeated to Athens, where General Papagos was anxiously waiting to know its contents.

There is little more that can be said at present, except by way of commentary on the above quotation from the newly published official history. It is clear that the above passage is based on the written record of the meeting of February 22nd, from which the phrase quoted comes; it is reasonable to suppose that the original is in English, though it is not expressly stated that the phrase is not a translation; but as the phrase is quoted without context, it is impossible to regard it as decisive by itself. For the crucial point is this: that whereas there is no doubt that the British generals left the meeting with the 'firm impression' ascribed to them by the official historians, it is equally clear that what General Papagos later argued was more than is stated in the final sentence quoted above. He argued not merely that the decision to move back on the Aliakmon line was 'contingent upon the result of the approach to Yugoslavia', but that it was 'expressly recorded in the minutes' that this was the case, and that this was 'fully and categorically confirmed by Major-General Heywood', who had kept the minutes himself. This statement by General Papagos clearly cannot be refuted on the basis of a single quotation from the minutes, of which it cannot even be said with certainty whether it is a complete sentence in itself, still less what precisely came before it. Equally clearly there is only one way of proving that General Papagos's recollection was wrong, if it was wrong, and that is to publish the minutes in their entirety. Now that the first corner of the veil has been lifted, there is no very obvious reason why this should not be done.

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor of THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

SIR, – With regard to the correspondence about Italy in THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, perhaps there is no need for me to explain to readers that I am of the opinion that Miss Grindrod expresses. Miss Jucker's views are familiar to me from some of my Italian friends of the Left, and from the 'neutralist' intellectual reviews. The only place in London where I have seen them expressed till now has been in unsigned articles from Rome published in *The New Statesman and Nation.*

As Miss Grindrod points out, it is not very profitable to debate the minutiæ of a situation in foreign politics, for the English public does not pretend to judge what is most authoritative in the alternative versions of the facts. Miss Jucker has as much a right to her opinions as Signor Nenni has to his. But I still see nothing to alter the conviction I formed nearly ten years ago that Nenni, by his decision to associate with the Communists, struck a deadly blow at Parliamentary democracy in Italy, especially as affecting the working classes. And even if I sound cynical I am still convinced that a wolf has only one use for lambs.

Yours, etc.,
BERNARD WALL.

VALMONDOIS, SEINE-ET-OISE
July 5, 1954.

To the Editor of THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Dear Sir,

Since Mr Donald Davie, in his article 'Is There a London Literary Racket?' did me the honour of quoting from a parody of Dr Leavis which I contributed a year ago to 'Essays in Criticism', I should like to make a brief comment. I am not for a moment suggesting that Mr Davie misrepresented me; but I feel that readers who knew no more of what I wrote than

the part quoted by him might receive a misleading impression of what I intended: might write me down, in short, as thoroughly 'anti-Leavis'. May I quote these sentences, which came after the parody?

> . . . What makes the difference [i.e. between the seventeenth century and our own time] – and I entirely agree with Dr Leavis that the difference is vast – is not the 'system' – which is always, in essentials, the same, since it is nothing but the usual human desire to get on in the world and to push on those one approves of – but the quality of the literature which is written and pushed. The fault of the 'system' in 1953 is not its organizing of self-help and mutual help, but its shockingly bad taste. Dr Leavis should keep on telling us, and proving to us, just how bad is the verse of Mr S. and Dr S. and the prose of Mr W. and Mr G.; he should not waste his time and ours on tedious expositions of the fact that they, like everyone else, like to be successes if they can.

I find myself, in fact, much more often in agreement than otherwise with Dr Leavis's critical opinions – and also, I should think, with Mr Davie's. (I am certainly in total agreement with his judgment that Dame Edith is 'no poet at all'.) What my little squib was designed to suggest was that Dr Leavis too often makes a tactical error of presentation; he makes his criticism less effective than it could be by indulging in repetitive denunciations of the 'literary racket' instead of keeping his eye on specific works of literature; and I thought it possible to make this point by suggesting that such denunciations could be made, with at least superficial plausibility, about any age of literature, including the greatest. A racket will not be defeated by denouncing it as a racket, or even by proving it to be a racket; it can be defeated only by patient, cool, impersonal demonstrations to the customers, through whatever channels are available, that the goods which the racket recommends are intolerably shoddy. I must agree with Mr Davie that nowadays such demonstrations are more difficult to get across, because the channels which will take them are fewer, than has ever been the case before.

Yours, etc.,
PATRICK CRUTTWELL.

UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH WEST, EXETER
June 19, 1954.

THE POLITICS OF EXISTENTIALISM

Everett W. Knight

Observers of current French affairs cannot fail to sense in certain quarters the presence of a new vigour and determination in political thought. Whatever it is, it goes deeper than talk of a new popular front, deeper than the hope that the death of Stalin was at the same time that of Stalinism itself. France is rich in intellectuals who after the liberation refused to go on working with the Communists, even though without the Party they could not hope to make themselves heard by those they wished to help. These men appear to have regrouped; to have regained their confidence and their voices. The rise to power of Mendès-France, which could well be a turning point for France, was no doubt greatly facilitated by their work, particularly as it appears in *Les Temps Modernes* and *L'Observateur*. Circumstances alone did not produce Mendès-France; he had to be willed. He is the first-fruit of a new kind of political thought.

I shall be accused of attaching too much importance to reviews which could suddenly cease to appear, and to a Prime Minister who may not last two months. But if Mendès-France has to go, he will be back, and *Les Temps Modernes* is becoming, like the *N R F* before it, an institution. It seemed to many of us that, if political thinking were ever again to become possible, it would have to proceed from a *mystique* at least as powerful as that out of which Communism grew; and clearly no such enthusiasm is behind recent events in France. Writers who contribute to *Les Temps Modernes* and *L'Observateur* are united, in spite of many divergences, not by devotion to what they take to be the Truth finally revealed but by the conviction that there is no final Truth.

What is most striking about these two periodicals is that the men who write for them do not seek to validate their reasoning by reference to fixed principles. This is an excessively rare phenomenon in the history of serious French journalism, which is implicitly or overtly partisan almost without exception. French 'logic', to which Occidental culture owes so much, is disastrous

when exercised in politics where only the two extremes are logical, where compromise is only practically and not intellectually defendable. Sartre irritates the average French intellectual (and, given the present state of world affairs, those of other nations as well) who distrusts what cannot be reduced to a formula. Is Sartre a Communist or isn't he? He certainly was not when he wrote *La Mort dans l'Ame* and *Les Mains Sales*. However, we cannot suppose that he has changed his mind completely since then, because there is still his 'Matérialisme et Révolution', in which his purpose is to demolish the philosophical pretensions of dialectical materialism. And yet Sartre's articles, 'Les Communistes et la Paix', constitute far more masterful a justification of the tactics of the French Communist Party than one of which any member of the Party itself would have been capable. Sartre believes that men are to such an extent products of their time that they exist only to the extent in which they consent to commit themselves to what is of deepest concern to the historical context into which they were born. Why, therefore, had Sartre deliberately deprived himself of a means of effective action by refusing to associate himself unequivocally with either East or West? He has by his own choice and to borrow his own words, 'fallen outside history'. An eminent Catholic philosopher, familiar with the group of men who write for *Les Temps Modernes*, complained to me that it was impossible to reason with them because, he said, smiling, 'ils ont la foi'. Faith in what? If these men are not Communists, they are nevertheless, in general, almost as critical of Western politics as are the Communists. But what do they have to offer in place of what they seek to destroy? If, as Sartre wrote in his presentation of *Les Temps Modernes*, the magazine has no 'political or social programme', why should it have bothered to come into existence? To publish the facts? But the truth reduced to itself alone is, in politics, notoriously inoperative, and if *Les Temps Modernes* and *L'Observateur*, far from being compelled to a life of inoffensive retirement like that of other honest and unsubsidized periodicals elsewhere in the world, are steadily expanding in influence, it is because they draw conviction from a philosophy which during the past half century has not only sapped the foundations of Occidental thought, as we have known it since the Greeks, but undertaken some impressive constructions in its own name.

The kind of defensive *union sacrée* to which the appearance of

existentialism has provoked Anglo-Saxon philosophers is a natural, though none the less discouraging event. It has been agreed, in contradiction with what the most casual student of European thought might have remarked, that existentialism is a 'fashion'. There is, however, an element of truth in the accusation, inasmuch as existentialism is a fashion in the way in which romanticism was a fashion; that is, it is less an idea than a movement; almost as much a state of mind as a philosophy. It is for this reason that the constant question 'What is existentialism?' never receives a satisfactory answer. Nevertheless, unlike romanticism, it is philosophy rather than literature which has contributed most heavily to the formation of existentialism. We will therefore be able to make a certain number of precise statements concerning it, especially since our investigation will be limited to existentialism as a political movement.

Great revolutions in the way men think come about not because old questions receive an answer, but because the questions come to be considered irrelevant and new ones take their place. From the vantage point of radically different preoccupations, and looking back upon the past, it is not the differences of the sects that strike us, but the profound unity they acquire through what we come to realize was devotion to a common cause. Our philosophy and religion have been, from antiquity to the present, a long quest for an Absolute; they were based upon the certitude, which only a madman would have questioned, that the universe had been constructed in such a way as to make the secrets of its functioning accessible to human intelligence. Descartes' first, though unconscious, certitude was not that *he* existed, but that there existed an Order which his meditation might serve to bring to light. It appears in retrospect that the perpetually renewed hostilities between the philosophic or scientific mind and the religious amount fundamentally to very little, it being no more absurd to suppose that man was created after the image of God than to believe the universe created after the image of man's intelligence. Rationalism is as much a matter of faith as are the articles of the believer.

The immense prestige of science, however, continues to obscure the fact, and the books of men like Poincaré, Duhem and Meyerson, which appeared early in the century, have remained, outside Europe, singularly ineffectual. Meyerson, in his *Identité et Realité*, demonstrated that most of the fundamental laws of science (law of inertia, conservation of matter and energy, etc.)

could not, at the time of their conception, be proven either *a priori* or experimentally. These 'laws' were, and for the most part remain, *metaphysical* expressions which reflect man's need to believe that something persists unchanged through time; for if it does not, then the world escapes us; it becomes, in the language of modern literature, 'absurd', in the language of philosophy 'contingent'. To be sure, these metaphysical hypotheses have proved immensely fruitful of practical results, but it in no way follows from this that scientific truth is *the* truth. What the scientist discovers is other aspects of matter and not another fact which, when added to those already acquired, will constitute another step in the direction of the Holy of Holies, the One upon which all the rest depends. Faith in science is not what it was fifty years ago; nevertheless, Anglo-Saxon philosophy, the greater part of which has been content for so long to live in the shadow of science, continues to conduct itself as though it believed in the existence of an Absolute. It is difficult to see on what other grounds this philosophy could justify its almost total withdrawal from the contemporary scene where the people are left to the mercy of demagogues and quacks. Thus when A. J. Ayer (to pick an example at random) writes in *Language, Truth and Logic*: 'The philosopher must be content to record the facts of scientific procedure', such a remark was to be expected, for he asserts in the same book that the problems of philosophy may be 'definitively answered'. Unfortunately, the belief in 'definitive answers' is a metaphysical one; and Ayer, like the believer, sacrifices existence to faith, act to contemplation.

Bergson, though an important critic of classical rationalism, remained nevertheless a philosopher of the old school, since the goal of his thought was the discovery of that final principle, the existence of which philosophy had seldom, if ever, brought into question. Bergson differed simply in considering that the appropriate instrument for communion with the Absolute is intuition and not reason. The philosophy of men like Bergson and James confirmed the rationalists in the comfortable idea that the only alternative to reason is unreason, that those who quit the fold inevitably develop an interest in mysticism. Nevertheless, this is not the case.

The great accomplishment of modern rationalism is to have cleared our minds of theology. For many of us religion is not a 'problem' but an irrelevancy. However, we have just argued that rationalism is to be equated with religion, inasmuch as it is

characterized by the same thirst, seldom explicitly avowed, for 'solutions', the same devotion to a supreme Order. The extent to which we continue to believe in 'natural law,' in the 'historical process', etc., as final Realities, is the extent to which we continue to yield to an impulse or a need essentially religious in nature. Consequently, if Occidental thought is to move ahead, if it is to continue the work of rationalism, then it would seem that it must seek not to invent other means of acceding to a putative Order, which can only result in continued stagnation or in irrationalism, but to investigate the practicability of denying the existence of a final Order. If we no longer believe in God, then to be consistent we must cease to believe that the world was created by Him. We must cease to scrutinize the face of nature in the hope of catching a human expression. The philosopher who set Western thought off in this new direction was Edmund Husserl – it was he and not Bergson who liberated philosophy from the sterile debates of the neo-Kantians and the empiricists.

Attempting to understand any form of existentialism in total ignorance of phenomenology (that is, of the philosophy of Husserl) is like trying to understand Kant without knowing what is meant by geometry and gravitation. All existentialist thought presupposes an important part of phenomenology, and it is thanks to their ignorance of this fact that so many commentators have been able to denounce in existentialism the appearance of a new and vicious irrationality. Of course, most of those commentators would find phenomenology itself irrational. Nevertheless, it is no longer possible for anyone to deny, in good faith, the importance of the transformations that phenomenology has brought about in almost all fields of European intellectual activity.

The immemorial tendency of the philosophers to postulate deities which they call essences or laws is naturally accompanied by the claim that everything else is mere appearance, or at least that individual things depend for their intelligibility upon the existence of these essences or laws. Unfortunately, this system results in the subordination of existence to contemplation, for existence is made up of commerce with the particular – living in a particular house, wear particular clothes, etc. However, the particular is precisely what classical thought could not take into account because it was interested only in total explanations and things taken *in themselves* cannot be forced into categories unless we deprive them of most of the qualities by which they exist for us. Husserl was the first great philosopher to argue that individuals are in themselves intelligible; that what we see, feel and hear are not deceptive appearances, but the things themselves. There is nothing 'behind' appearance, for *Appearance is Reality*. Such an idea represents an extraordinarily decisive break with the past, for it amounts to saying that philosophy throughout its history has been searching for what it already possessed. The Truth is not the object of intellection, but the condition of its possibility; it is not 'hidden' from us, but so close that we habitually look beyond; it does not await us at the conclusion of a long series of scientific or logical operations, it underlies those operations, and the business of philosophy is to perfect a method (the so-called phenomenological reduction) which will enable us to 'suspend' the activities of consciousness so that we might describe the nature of its functioning, so that we might know how things can be in themselves intelligible, entirely apart from reference to an Absolute.

Great innovators are Janus-faced. Husserl, while breaking away from most of the ideas of the past, retained the intellectual attitude that had brought them into being. The great affair of Western philosophy since the Renaissance has been, to borrow Whitehead's expression, not what do we know, but how can we know; and the philosopher has too often been a man who pretended not to know what he did know. This is essentially what G. E. Moore was saying in his famous article 'A Defence of Common Sense'. Husserl has provided a firm philosophical foundation for such remarks of Moore's as: 'In answer to this question, I think I have nothing better to say than that it seems to me that I *do* know . . . with certainty.' But Husserl, while asserting that we do know with certainty, continued to interest himself primarily in the question: how can we know? If was left to the next generation, and notably to Sartre, to understand that if we possess the truth then our whole concern should be its *utilization*. For Sartre the world is not a problem, but a task.

* * * *

Husserl's rejection of Absolutes is the equivalent on the philosophical level of one of the most common themes of modern European literature – the absurd. The sentiment of the absurd assumes many forms, but it is essentially the awareness that between the exigencies of reason and the nature of the universe there is an incompatibility that can never be suppressed. The

mediaeval world was one that could be read like a human face, every expression of which carried a message. The first step towards the 'dehumanization' of nature was taken by Renaissance philosophers who, in the interests of science, sought to demonstrate that natural phenomena signify nothing, they simply are. Thus God began his long withdrawal, becoming ever more remote in natural law, in Deism, until finally in the philosophy of Sartre not only natural phenomena, but everything that exists (the *en-soi*) signifies nothing, it simply is. The absurd may be considered the end-point of the first phase of rationalism; whether or not there will be a second depends upon whether we have the courage to accept the results of the first. The nineteenth century had not, for it is a long attempt, stretching from the Romantics to Freud, to return to some happy stability, to the tranquil communication between men and things that had somehow been lost. It is a desperately religious century, in the sense that men consider their spiritual torment a temporary state consequent upon their having failed to attain the Truth. The Truth, therefore, appears again and again, like the constitutions repeatedly drafted by certain Italian city states of the Renaissance in an attempt to revive the civic glories of the mediaeval republics. The many forms of occultism and scientism, poetry (symbolism), the 'life force', the libido, all these notions, and many others besides, are proposed as *solutions*, and even universal suffrage is often looked upon not merely as a political instrument, but as a panacea. Nevertheless, the search for a spiritual refuge, though even to-day the more frequent reaction to the absurd, is not the only possible one. Instead of looking upon our impotence to believe as a curse, Sartre suggests that we might utilize it to pass to 'the other side of despair', where life will become practicable once again. But what must be the nature of existence in a world that does not make sense?

It is popular to regard talk of the absurd as an indication of 'decadence', of intellectual and moral bankruptcy. Naturally, from the point of view of the traditionalist the absurd is inacceptable. But this point of view is not the only one. The idea of the absurd, as I have defined it, is 'irrational' only for those thinkers who more and more anachronistically continue the search for 'definitive answers'. We must not allow the manner in which the absurd frequently appears in literature to blind us to its potentialities. In the person of Martin du Gard's Antoine Thibault, in the work of Céline, in Sartre's *La Nausée* and

Camus' *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*, etc., the absurd appears as a tragic impasse. Such need not be the case, however.

In the thought of Husserl, the disappearance of Absolutes is not a catastrophe but a necessary preliminary to genuinely constructive work in philosophy. The 'return to things in themselves' (to quote Husserl) is the condition of understanding their real nature, which will escape us for as long as we continue to violate their ineluctable singleness, in order to force them into logically satisfying patterns. If existentialism is more a movement than an idea, it is in large part because modern literature and art are characterized by a return to the concrete, to the immediate, to 'things in themselves' as they exist *before* concept has organized them into something quite different from what they are. Art, for example, from Cézanne to the present, represents objects unaffected by the 'laws' of geometry and perspective, which are *human* creations imposed upon the external world to make it more practically manageable. In the 1929 preface to his 'Surrealist Manifestoes', André Breton wrote: 'The more reasons I find for putting an end to it [his life], the more I surprise myself admiring this mere section of parquetry . . .' The enchantment of things taken in themselves is the theme of Gide's *Les Nourritures Terrestres*. However, it is the political and not the æsthetic aspect of the return to the immediate that concerns us here.

If the world is absurd, then it is foolish to look upon man's political and social problems as susceptible of being regulated once and for all by the adoption of this or that political system. Indeed, the condition of an effective response to these problems is that they be treated *in themselves*, not of course apart from the total situation, but apart from considerations of system or theory for the sake of which some pressing human need is often overlooked. The existentialists seek to make thought conform to life, rather than to make life conform to thought, as has been the practice in the past. The idea that political action, to be constructive, must have before it an immutable goal in relation to which each immediate situation may be accurately interpreted is one that stems from the nineteenth century's thirst for Answers – its purpose is less practical accomplishment than spiritual anchorage. The inglorious history of European socialism is that of a group of bourgeois intellectuals whose real interest was far less the amelioration of the condition of the poor than it was the acquiring of a more intellectually satisfying ex-

planation of human affairs. The need to believe, unhappily, seems to run far deeper than the need to act. This is equally true of the Communist who, while placing greater emphasis upon action, destroys its efficacy by subordinating it to theory. The principle exists not to make action effective, but to make it automatic. One need only recall the early history of Chinese Communism to appreciate the extent to which act can be vitiated by dogma – Mao Tse-tung being one of the few Communist leaders who, putting aside theory, saw that in China the revolution would have to draw its strength from the peasantry rather than from the industrial proletariat which according to Scripture should form the spearhead of Marxist revolt. In brief, political Absolutes exist not to direct action but to render it superfluous. The rejection of fixed principles on the contrary, far from condemning us to impotence, is a necessary condition of authentic action; that is, of action as a response to the immediate situation rather than as the unthinking application of an approved procedure. The absurd is not a 'force', and cannot therefore, like Thomas Hardy's sinister God, be hostile to us. Malraux was one of the first to understand not only that the 'death of God' involved that of all other Absolutes, whatever their nature, but that an empty universe is an opportunity and not a disaster. In one of his first books, *La Voie Royale*, he wrote: '. . . the order of the world is destroyed not to the advantage of chance, but to that of the determination to profit by it.' The orthodox philosopher seizes upon the existentialist assertion that man is 'abandoned' in the universe as a lugubrious confession of impotence; whereas, at least in the case of Sartre, it is precisely the reverse, for if man is completely alone, it follows that he is completely free. If all that can be said of the *en-soi* is that it exists, then nothing but our unfortunate habit of imagining that it has the form of a God prevents us from making it more amenable to our needs.

Fundamentally, there is perhaps little to distinguish what we have advanced so far from the ideas of, for example, Karl Popper (*The Open Society and its Enemies*) or the Camus of *l'Homme Révolté*, and the recent very decisive rupture that took place between Sartre and Camus over the latter's theory of 'revolt' indicates that we have not yet reached the heart of Sartre's position on these matters. The absurd, in one form or another, is becoming a popular subject of learned dissertation, but those who discuss it too often fail to draw the conclusion which, in the

opinion of many existentialists, it imposes; namely, that the universe being absurd and therefore inaccessible to *thought*, our only recourse is to *act*. If appearance is reality, if existence is in itself intelligible, then the function of thought is to attempt to see a situation as it really is, rather than to construct a theory to explain it. We say 'attempt to see', because it is a nimble mind indeed whose ideas keep pace with events and which is prepared to jettison a good part of its contents when conditions demand. 'Education in the profound sense', says Valéry, 'consists in undoing the initial one'. The truth may become so obscured by the labours of the intellectuals that it has to be rediscovered. Thus, in an article entitled 'Réponse à Lefort', Sartre writes: '. . . it appeared to me pointless to elaborate a theory of the proletariat'. What is needed is not more theories, but an accurate estimate of the situation to serve as a basis for action. Consequently, in the second of the articles, entitled 'Les Communistes et la Paix', we read: 'I'm trying to understand what is going on in France, to-day, under our noses'. The writings of Camus, Popper and others indicate that many intellectuals are going to continue to 'contemplate' even after having persuaded their readers that there is nothing left to contemplate. If we are to prevent the intellectual from refusing to act, even in the face of the absurd, we must insist that, although there is no ultimate truth, there is the truth of the immediate; for each historical period has a truth of its own which, to minds unencumbered by system and uncorrupted by fear or selfish interest, is perfectly evident. A striking example of this was the inter-war period during which people who took the slightest trouble to inform themselves knew that war was coming and that appeasement was causing it to be lost in advance.

As far as Sartre is concerned, the truth of our particular historical context is Marxism. Marxism, not as a dogma or as a faith, but as an indispensable instrument for the amelioration of the present; Marxism considered not as the Truth but as the most nearly accurate interpretation we possess of present conditions. Such a Marxism is one that has rid itself of all the objectionable features which led, between the wars, to wholesale defections on the part of Western intellectuals. But the fact that so many of these intellectuals passed from the commissar to the yogi makes it clear to us why Marxism in this new form has little of the attractiveness of the old. Marxism to be valid must be considered as a summons to act, and not as a spiritual refuge,

as a tool and not as a religion; but it was precisely as the great benevolent God History that Marxism won devotion.

The intellectual habitually demands, as a condition of action, the possibility of a 'solution'; but since there are none, this amounts to a refusal to act. If, furthermore, the intellectual seldom feels that this refusal requires a justification, the reason lies no doubt in the obscure and very ancient confidence in the eventual triumph of the Good. The empiricist's unavowed belief in the Absolute is at the same time a belief in its omnipotence. A professor of political science once complained to me that a Continental colleague with whom he was collaborating tended to be too 'political', and a professor of philosophy expressed the fear that the great tradition of Continental philosophy might disappear altogether if the existentialists continued to squander their patrimony on literature and politics. These two men, consciously or not, were expressing the opinion that it is sufficient for the True and the Good to exist in order to prevail, and indeed they prevail to the extent to which we allow them to be, without interference on our part. The immemorial 'essentialist' tradition of Occidental philosophy has so imposed itself that it never strikes us as odd that Evil should be considered not to exist apart from its manifestations, while the Good is always there, whether we see it or not. Thus it is sufficient for our 'clergy of intellectuals', as Malraux calls them, to 'think' the Good in order to be it, whereas he who devotes himself to Evil must, as in the case of Hitler, prove in act that he really means what he says before anyone will believe him. Sartre believes that if the Good is to exist, then it must manifest itself. The truth of each immediate situation is evident. What is required of the intellectual, therefore, are not analyses and investigations, but *participation* in the never-ending struggle to ensure that the issues are not confused by those whose prosperity depends upon the mystification of the public.

Many of us fail to follow Sartre not in his rejection of Absolutes (*Le Diable et le Bon Dieu* may even strike us as platitudinous) but in the conclusion he draws – the necessity for action; for how can the goals of such action be anything but arbitrary in a world which has lost its constants? How, except by fidelity to a certain number of fixed ideals, is action to be prevented from taking the form of Nazism? Is the truth to be simply what Sartre declares it to be? In a somewhat different form Iris Murdoch, in her book on Sartre, asks the same question:

granted that Sartre has successfully demonstrated the freedom of the individual, on what grounds does he make the liberation of the group a categorical imperative? Miss Murdoch appears to me to have made the mistake of a great many commentators on Sartre: she has judged as a whole, as though Sartre were dead, a philosophy we possess only in part. *L'Etre et le Néant*, except for the ontological demonstration of the *pour-soi* as liberty, is a negative work; the positive phase is yet to come. I have tried, in anticipation, to give some idea of what I believe will be an important theme of the work on ethics which Sartre promises us at the end of *l'Etre et le Néant*. If the objectivity of classical rationalism does not exist, Sartre does not, for that, propose his own subjectivity as a reasonable substitute; he argues that though the Truth is not constant, though it changes for each historical context, it is, by way of compensation, perfectly evident to those in possession of the facts. Miss Murdoch calls Sartre's opinions on politics, that is, his opinions on what to-day matters most to all of us, 'exemplary'; and in that she is in agreement with the great majority of our intellectuals who are as accurately informed of those opinions as she is. As far as Sartre is concerned, there is no error, but only bad faith. The Nazi antisemites acted as they did not out of ignorance; they deliberately chose evil as evil, and because such a choice is at all times open to all of us, thought must be considered a poor substitute for action.

In such a world, the idea of 'duty toward' must be replaced by that of 'responsibility for', and the responsibility of the intellectual is the heaviest of all. Thought in the traditional sense leads far easier than what is now demanded because it involved the rich recompense of spiritual tranquillity. But thought, as an uncompromising description of what *exists*, is, in Sartre's opinion, simultaneously an obligation to act, because if particulars are not susceptible to logical organization, we cannot excuse our passivity by postulating the activity of the principle, yet there is no peace in act, since only in the realm of thought is anything ever 'definitively' accomplished. The malaise of the modern intellectual may be traced to the fact that conceptual thinking has lost its metaphysical foundation; and if our civilization is in the ridiculous position of being menaced by its own tools, it is largely because our intellectuals have as yet refused to reconcile themselves to a world whose only meaning can be one which we temporarily impose upon it.

AN EXECUTIVE ON THE DOLE

Boris Ford

The day I became unemployed, it seemed as if I had taken off in a balloon: anxious because there were no firmly calculable destinations, and yet soaring unrestricted into an untrammelled blue sky. The office lay behind and decidedly below me, while ahead lay all the potentialities of an uncharted future.

This being my mood, it was some three or four days before I got round to visiting the Employment Exchange, and then not to talk about Employment but simply to draw my weekly relief, assistance, dole – I found I was unsure which was the right term. At any rate, on Friday, January 4th, I took the trolley-bus for the local Office of the Ministry of Labour and National Service. As it was raining, I had to take my umbrella with me as well as my briefcase, and I was nervous that an umbrella and a briefcase might make me a little conspicuous on a mission of this kind. However, I consoled myself with the thought that at least until I was closeted in some inner offic my appearance might mark me down as a visiting Inspect rather than a prospective regular.

The local establishment turned out to be much like a schoo in that it was in dirty brick and had its window frames new painted a pleasant enough green and was surrounded by area that had once been grass but was now petrifying in concrete slabs. I walked across the area towards a door wi a large G painted above it and a group of West Indians lou ing in the way. Since visiting Inspectors presumably know door from another, I walked unhesitatingly through the and in at door G, turned right through another found myself in a large and puzzling room. It ha shape or direction or centre of gravity: there chairs in rows in one part of the room, a sbso- table in a kind of passage between one half ctitudi- other half, and a layout reminiscent of thaction; Dover, beyond. After a moment's pause rbitrary and sat down in the back row of the bl fidelity

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the front rows were full, for there were only about five seemingly immovable persons like Wordsworth's Leech-gatherer in them, but I thought it would be easier to dispose of my umbrella in the back row against the wall. I sat down, took out my *Manchester Guardian*, and read in my own immovable way for some minutes. The five Leech-gatherers in front of me remained, as Wordsworth put it, 'not all alive nor dead, Nor all asleep'. In the meantime, a number of brisker sorts of people came in and disposed of their business at the table in the passage-way and passed on into the Passport Office. Convincing myself that there was no system of queuing among the Leech-gatherers, I left my umbrella and briefcase and approached the table. It proved a disappointment, for it served only to support a blackboard on which someone (moving his hand from the wrist, I observed, and not 'writing with the whole arm') had chalked up such challenging items as Snow-clearing, Road-mending, Refuse-collecting, and the like. This seemed to satisfy the expectations of the mobile population of the room; and no doubt the seated population was waiting only for the amateur blackboard writer to enter up Leech-gathering and then it too would flow on into the Passport Office. Somewhat cast down by this, I retrieved my umbrella and briefcase and left via door G and the West Indians, my Inspection over.

Once outside, I turned to the right round the corner of the ilding and tried door B. I found myself in another large oom, but this time a room of a more meaningful structure in hat it looked like a mixture of a bank, a post office, and the n trance to a dog-racing track. A uniformed gentleman, seeing isba itate, directed me leftwards to this room's block of plain and once again I sat down to my paper. After some retu ents my neighbour took his attention out of his sporting fror er and invited my collaboration in working out racing odds. oc fore I could puzzle out some not too unproductive advice, sta turn came and off he went to the counter. After him a to con ant with a face D. H. Lawrence and a portfolio counter's in a bewildered way through the mill, and then it was Paris to nce,

job I was me to sign on,' I said to the clerk, in my brand of of job could ward voice.

The next Tue ins looked at my equipment as if to identify me by in my appeal ian what he no doubt took to be an appropriately of £4 10*s.* 10*d.* me and with a smattering of Sirs, directed me to that this repres an.

another clerk of a less classifying disposition who simply gave me some forms to fill up about Wife and Children, filled up yet other forms on my behalf, and finally enrolled me as a Member.

'You have to report here every Tuesday and Thursday, at 9.30 in the morning; you get paid on the Thursday,' he explained. To-day being Friday, it was clear that I would have to wait a week to be paid – I had vaguely imagined that I might get something at once as I had now been unemployed, albeit air-borne, since Tuesday. However, I was not unduly worried by this, for I was fortunate enough to have been provided by the Office with funds for some time to come.

Thus began my strange encounter with the Employment Exchange. On Tuesday, January 8th, I returned in order to sign my form – no waiting, no sitting, but a brief visit to the counter and to the earnest young clerk who called me Mr Ford this time and took from me my now completed Wife and Children forms. Two days later, on Thursday, January 10th, I returned again: I signed the form as usual, and waited to receive my first stipend.

'Oh, I'm afraid your claim isn't through yet, Mr Ford,' the clerk explained; 'You only brought in your Dependents' Claim on Tuesday, and they have all to be dealt with up in Newcastle, you know.' I didn't know – one never does – but there it was. I then remembered that I was proposing to visit Pa... the following week in order to negotiate a job with Unesco, s... that I would be away for the next two signing-days, the latter of them being my first pay-day, for I imagined that Newcast... would have disgorged its verdict by then. I explained this ... the clerk, who seemed quite unmoved by the thought of Pa... and only said that I should re-register on my return.

About the Parisian part of this story there is nothing to t... except that I was eventually offered a choice between jobs ... New York and Burma and asked for time to think over wh... of these jungles we would rather sail to. I was away fo... days, leaving England on the Saturday and returning ... Thursday. So the following Tuesday, January 22nd, ... in at the Exchange, duly re-registered, and then s... form as usual. On Thursday, January 24th, rather ... three weeks after becoming unemployed, I signe... was handed a slip of paper and at long last was ... a queue to wait for my money.

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... Tribunal, and
...n

At this turn of affairs, I found that I had come to accept and even to like my bi-weekly visits, for they struck me as pleasantly different from the pre-war picture: the green paint, the readiness to call me Mr Ford, the rows of chairs, the uniformed attendant, all added up to a calculated policy to put one at ease and to eliminate any suggestion of despicable charity. The queue carried me forward, I presented my slip of paper to one of two men sitting behind a grille, he read off and checked my name and number, and then pushed over the counter towards me a number of coins. I waited for the notes to follow – but no notes followed.

'That's right, eighteen shillings and tuppence,' the first man said; and then, as if clarifying the matter, explained carefully that this represented two days' benefit at 9*s.* 1*d.* a day.

'I think you must have made some mistake,' I said gently. 'I have been coming here since the beginning of the month, over three weeks ago.' As this was not the kind of exchange that was calculated to appeal to the following occupants of the queue, I was passed out to a superior official who got out my papers, recalculated them, and announced that 18*s.* 2*d.* was in order.

'You see,' he expounded, 'you are not paid for the first three (or did he say four?) days until a month later – that's in case you are only unemployed for three days, in which case you ...'t get anything. Then, you are not eligible for anything a... the day you left for Paris until you re-registered here su... ut ten days later.' Subtract also the three or four Sundays ...ing this period, and apparently that left two days at 9*s.* 1*d.*: ... ort, 18*s.* 2*d.*

...sp... this my balloon lost height with sickening abruptness and, ...heo... grasping after some safety apparatus, I asked what pro... was available for appealing against the decision. The ... ure consisted, inevitably, of a form which invited me to ... the grounds of my absence and to append two signatures ... firm this. I took the form away, filled it up and had it ... signed by two friends: I explained how I had gone to ... ry for a job at Unesco, because that was the kind of ... theoretically equipped to get and because that kind ... not be obtained through the 'normal channels'. ... sday I made my usual pilgrimage and handed ... ins... On Thursday I was paid the remarkable sum ... two day... ten times the daily rate of 9*s.* 1*d.* I gathered ... med payment for a normal week plus the four ... ar.

additional days now due from the beginning of the month.

A few days later a reply to my appeal arrived by post. It read as follows:

> Dear Sir,
>
> On 1st February, 1952, the Insurance Officer gave the following decision on your claim for unemployment benefit.
>
> From and including 12.1.52 to 21.1.52 the claimant is disqualified for receiving unemployment benefit on the ground that he failed to make a claim within the time prescribed, and has not proved in respect of the said period (a) that on a date earlier than the date on which the claim was made, apart from satisfying the conditions of making a claim, he was entitled to the benefit, and (b) that throughout the period between the earlier date and the date on which the claim was made there was good cause for delay in making such a claim.

Just that! I did my best to read it again. Sub-para (a) refused to fall into any recognizable shape. I tried tackling it in small pieces at a time, like the Smith, Jones, Robinson kind of conundrum, but found myself no nearer a solution. The only part that made sense was an expectant paragraph at the end, set up in type and not typewritten, which offered me a further right of appeal to the local Tribunal seated in Euston, on form of appeal (B.F. 39) – B F being my own initials, as well as other notable initials, this seemed to me an almost metaphysical piece of wit.

At any rate, I took off the letter and got a B F form. It explained to begin with that I was appealing in the dark, since the ruling given meant literally nothing to me (and, incidentally, would probably mean even less to other claimants such as my sporting friend). I therefore could only explain again the facts of the situation: that I had announced in advance my trip to Paris; that I re-registered on my next visit to the Exchange, as instructed; that I was therefore unable to grasp the point about failing 'to make a claim within the time prescribed'; that I would be very glad to 'prove' that I was entitled to benefit if they would explain what species of proof came other than two testimonies, they would recognize. Finally I by regretting that the machinery was of such a kind that every have left me, unwarned, with virtually no money, no longer had of about three weeks, and that it was only by luck in my unemployment that I and my wife and two children were not starving. I sent off this appeal to the long-suffering man-made

determined to castigate the enormity of their replying to appeals in this brand of English, let alone the enormity of the 18*s.* 2*d.*, first to the members of the Tribunal when I should be summoned before them, and thereafter to my Member of Parliament and to senior officials of the Ministry. I mentally seized my briefcase and re-rolled my umbrella in expectation.

On Thursday next I was paid £2 14*s.* 6*d.*, my first normal week's payment. So there now remained only the Parisian interlude and the impending literary skirmish with the gentlemen from Euston. To my great regret, it was not to be. On my next Thursday visit I drew my £2 14*s.* 6*d.* and was then invited to step upstairs to meet the Insurance Officer himself. He was out for some ten minutes and, as I sat waiting on a chair that his secretary extracted from a mound of what I suspected to be B F forms, I felt the fervour seeping out of me. The office was too small for the occasion, it was too much encumbered with the bricabrac of bureaucracy to seem a fitting battlefield for [illegible] literary holocaust I had planned. In due course, the [illegible] Officer came in, looking much like Edmund G[illegible] (or [illegible]) *Good Companions*. He seemed a trifle nervous.

'I wanted to ta[illegible] about your appeal to the Tribunal,' he began, and then, sensing my suspicions, he quickly added, 'Of course we see the Appeals as a matter of course, before sending them on. But in your case, I thought I would like a word with you, because there does seem to have been a misunderstanding . . .' Mentally I folded away my battle orders and unbuckled my heavy artillery. 'The clerk should have explained to you that you have to re-register *immediately* you return from abroad, because we can only start paying you from the actual date of re-registration. However, on this occasion I am ready to authorize benefit for all but the four days you were in Paris and for one of the days spent travelling which will give you benefit for the other travelling day.'

He went on to explain that the Act expressly rules out payment for days spent out of the country, and then to my astonishment he turned up a great volume of fictitious case-law, a prodigy. It appeared to be compiled to guide Insurance Officers in giving benefit as they saw fit, and there, sure enough, was the case of a man spending Æsthetics [illegible] and three nights in Paris (I immediately distinguished myself from those three business-manly nights) and [illegible] benefit for this period: *Claim Not Allowed.*

* Susanne K. [illegible]

† 'Syntax in [illegible]

1953.

'Of course,' the Good Companion went on, 'we have to follow the Act, and what's more, we have to give our ruling in the words laid down in the Act. In most cases the words are quite simple to understand, as when we are ruling on cases of illness or fraud, for example. But yours, I agree,' and there was pity in his voice as he made his genial concession to my illiteracy, 'yours is perhaps a little more involved than the average ruling. Mark you, if you would still like your Appeal to go on to the Tribunal, you have only to say so. I can't hold it up. But I thought we might be able to meet your case halfway, Mr Ford, and so . . .'

I thanked him, of course, took the slip of paper he handed me, and went down to the gentlemen behind the grille who gave me £4 19*s.* 11*d.* – six days' benefit as usual and five days' benefit 'in respect of the said Parisian period'. After all, I reflected in the trolley-bus, we had not starved and they were all as helpful as the Act permitted, and no doubt the clerk would have deciphered the mystical words to me if I had thought to ask him. And yet, were I a regular reader of nothing but racing-forms and a sports report, had I grown up against a background of unemployment and the Dole, I would probably never have made the first appeal, however reasonable my absence, and I would certainly never have grappled my way through the verbiage of the Act to the inner recesses of some Tribunal or even to the well meaning companionship of the Insurance Officer. I would have gazed at the clotted wo[rd] and seeing the phrase 'the claimant is disqualified', I w[ould] have dismissed the idea of making another appeal as si[mply] inviting a further dose of official mumbojumbo. And th[at] £2 5*s.* 5*d.* is hardly sufficient to keep a family alive in Lo[ndon] for long, I would no doubt have foregone with sour [and] frustrated feelings even this small amount that in the e[nd] managed to recover. That's what comes, I mused, of b[eing] able to arm oneself with a briefcase and an umbrella.

From then on the scene at the local Exchange [was] earth-bound and uneventful. Every Tuesday and Th[ursday] signed on with my racing and Lawrencian friends, [and] Thursday I drew out £2 14*s.* 6*d.* But somehow I n[ever] the sensation of sailing an untrammelled sky [as] anchored balloon. And anyway, before long [the] future closed in upon me, and we set sail for [the] jungle of New York.

THE DESERTED VILLAGE: POEM AS VIRTUAL HISTORY

Donald Davie

Mrs Susanne Langer has written a sequel to her brilliant and momentous *Philosophy in a New Key*. The new book, *Feeling and Form*,* is explicitly (see the sub-title) a theory of art developed from the earlier work. And this puts me in a queer position. For, discussing *Philosophy in a New Key* in these pages,† I tried to draw out the implications of that book for æsthetics, in particular for literary theory. Now Mrs Langer has done the job herself, and has done it much better. It seems that I underrated Mrs Langer, and that *Philosophy in a New Key* can be made to yield an æsthetics altogether more respectable than I thought.

There is, after all, some excuse for my mistake. It was unexpected enough, as I said at the time, to find a philosopher with a real grasp of what it feels like to listen to a sonata and to read a poem. I could surely be forgiven for supposing that she would not have as firm a grasp of the difference between [re]ading a poem and listening to a sonata, as she had of what [is] common to these two activities. Forgivable or not, that was [the] mistake I made. Supposing that Mrs Langer was more at [ho]me with music than with the other arts (I think I'm right [to] suspect that still, but am no longer so sure), I supposed that the [fla]w in her literary theory would come from confusing poetry [with] music. I was wrong. But then, who would have bargained [for] a philosopher-musician, who, turning to poetry, could [pro]duce a whole chapter full of admirably rapid yet subtle [ana]lyses of very various poems? Yet so it is. And there are [also] illuminating chapters on painting, on sculpture, architecture, [the] dance, the novel and the drama. Mrs Langer is a [pro]digy. I can only withdraw all my earlier criticisms and proceed, in all humility, to expound her thesis.

Æsthetics has for long been the poor relation of philosophy

* Susanne K. Langer. *Feeling and Form.* Routledge and Kegan Paul. 28*s.*

† 'Syntax in Poetry and Music.' TWENTIETH CENTURY, February, 1953.

and only an embarrassing distraction for the specialist critics of each of the arts. Mrs Langer redeems it, and chiefly by putting first things first. Instead of asking 'What is the function of the work of art for the artist who produces it?' or, on the other hand, 'What is the effect of a work of art on those who respond to it?' she asks 'What *is* it? What *is* a work of art?' She answers herself by saying that every artefact is an abstraction:

> All forms in art, then, are abstracted forms; their content is only a semblance, a pure appearance, whose function is to make them, too, apparent – more freely and wholly apparent than they could be if they were exemplified in a context of real circumstance and anxious interest. It is in this elementary sense that all art is abstract. Its very substance, quality without practical significance, is an abstraction from material existence; . . .
>
> But abstract form as such is not an artistic ideal. To carry abstraction as far as possible, and achieve pure form in only the barest conceptual medium, is a logician's business, not a painter's or poet's. In art forms are abstracted only to be made clearly apparent, and are freed from their common uses only to be put to new uses: to act as symbols, to become expressive of human feeling.
>
> An artistic symbol is a much more intricate thing than what we usually think of as a form, because it involves *all* the relationships of its elements to one another, all similarities and differences of quality, not only geometric or other familiar relations. That is why qualities enter directly into the form itself, not as its contents, but as constitutive elements in it. Our scientific convention of abstracting mathematical forms which do not involve quality, and fitting them to experience, always makes qualitative factors 'content'; and as scientific conventions rule our academic thinking, it has usually been taken for granted that in understanding art, too, one should think of form as opposed to qualitative 'content'. But on this uncritical assumption the whole conception of form and content comes to grief, and analysis ends in the confused assertion that art is 'formed content', form and content in one. (Pp. 50, 51.)

It is here, in her use of 'symbol' that Mrs Langer leans heavily on her earlier book; for 'symbol' is here defined. When she says that art forms 'act as symbols' and are expressive of human feeling', not only 'symbol' and 'expressive' and 'feeling', have rather specific and

symbol does not express a feeling, as a signal expresses what it stands for, or as a symptom expresses what causes it. In fact, normal usage balks at using 'expression' in these latter cases:

> When we say that something is well expressed, we do not necessarily believe the expressed idea to refer to our present situation or even to be true, but only to be given clearly and objectively for contemplation. Such 'expression' is the function of symbols: articulation and presentation of *concepts*. Herein symbols differ radically from signals. A signal is comprehended if it serves to make us notice the object or situation it bespeaks. A symbol is understood when we conceive the idea it presents. (P. 26.)

Hence what is expressed by an artefact conceived as a symbol in this sense is *a concept of feeling*. This lifts art out of the trough of the 'emotive' where the positivists would leave it, and it makes the feeling expressed in the artefact something distinct from the emotions of the artist in creating it, and from the emotions of the perceiver in responding to it. It also enables Mrs Langer to adopt Clive Bell's notion of 'significant form' while leaving behind his 'æsthetic emotion'.

The arts, according to Mrs Langer (and this is where I under-rated her), are distinguished one from another not by the different media they employ, but by the different abstractions they make from actuality. The first advantage of this is that she evades the pit-fall of purity ('pure poetry,' 'pure music'), which I had envisaged as yawning in her path. The particular illusion or 'semblance' which each art creates is determined by the abstraction it makes. Thus all the plastic arts create the semblance of *virtual space*. Among the plastic arts each, painting creates a semblance of virtual space in the form of *virtual scene;* sculpture in the form of *virtual kinetic volume;* and architecture, in the form of *virtual place*, or, as Mrs Langer calls it, *an ethnic domain*. These formulæ, of course, mean little by themselves. The sculptural semblance of virtual volume, for instance, differs from actual volume in several ways, notably:

> It is more than the bulk of the figure; it is a space made visible, rigid is more than the area which the figure actually occupies. The tangible form has a complement of empty space that it absolutely commands, that is given with it and only with it, and is, in fact, part of the sculptural volume. The figure itself seems to have a sort of continuity with the empti-

> ness around it, however much its solid masses may assert themselves as such. (P. 88.)

Or consider Mrs Langer's very apt and compelling example of how, in architecture, virtual place is abstracted from actual place. A Gypsy encampment is on the site of what was once a Red Indian encampment. Is it the same place, or different? It is the same *actual* place, but a different *virtual* place, for a Gypsy camp is a different place from a Redskin camp. It is place in this second sense with which architecture deals, and it is such virtual place of which it creates semblances, 'ethnic domains'.

Music creates the semblance of *virtual time*. I found this difficult, but only I think because music is the art in which I feel least at home In distinguishing virtual time from actual time Mrs Langer sometimes sounds like Mr J. B. Priestley and sometimes like Bergson. Her criticism of Bergson is very telling just because it is informed with sympathy: his notion of *la durée pure* she considers an invaluable discovery, but his prejudice against any 'spatializing' concepts forced him to maintain that *durée* could be expressed only formlessly, as mere flow, whereas music expresses the passage of time (the movement from tick to tock which clock-time cannot express) in highly articulated symbolic forms.

Dance creates the semblance of *virtual powers*. Mime is not essential to it. Gesture, normally a vehicle of self-expressi more intimate even than language, is used by the dancers express a feeling that they only imagine or conceive themsel as experiencing. The powers which seem to hold two danc in tension, now drawn together, now flung apart, are not actual powers, erotic or other, but virtual powers abstrac from these.

'Poesis' creates the semblance of *virtual experience* or *vir events*, which differ from actual experience or actual events that every item of the experience presented is an emotic factor, having emotional value. At this point occurs the ch to which I referred, made up of analyses of 'Tyger burning bright,' of a poem by Li Ts'ao translated b Bynner, of Herrick's 'A Sweet disorder in the dre other poems by Blake, Mr De La Mare, and God quarrel only with the last of these, a passage fro , and *Village*, to which I will return.

Within 'poesis', different literary forms a not now bunal, and

largely in terms of their governing tense. Lyric occurs in a virtual present, narrative (whether in verse or prose – the distinction is unimportant) in a virtual past, drama in a virtual future. If this seems queer, how do we account for the fact that, in telling over to another person the plot of a novel or a narrative poem, we invariably cast the narrative in the present tense? According to Mrs Langer this is our acknowledgment that the artistic shaping, the abstraction, comes with the casting of the whole into the past tense, in the form of *virtual memory*, which differs from actual memory in that every item remembered has a quality of relevant feeling. Again, the tense of drama is the future because every situation presented in drama is big with ominous consequence; so that 'the future appears as already an entity, embryonic in the present'. In comedy the future appears in the image of Fortune: the comic hero, continually thrown off balance by chance events, always regains his equilibrium and in doing so follows the rhythm of all organic life. In tragedy, however, the future appears in the image of Fate: the tragic hero, however often he regains his balance, is fated to be unbalanced for good and all eventually, and in thus riding for an ultimate fall, he follows the rhythm of specifically human life, conscious of the death that ends every career. it

What is so striking about this ambitious structure is not so much its symmetrical neatness, as the way in which every distinction on which it rests, like the one quoted about sculptural volume, is informed with sensibility. The symmetry, in fact, is suspect: as each new distinction comes up, one expects the theorist to show her hand and fall to schematizing, but in fact each one justifies itself as defining more nearly what we ourselves have felt in responding to sculpture, to comedy, to whatever else.

In literary criticism at any rate – and it is with literary theory that I shall now concern myself – I think there is no one current procedure which escapes unscathed from Mrs for instance's analysis If we argue from origins ('drama evolved notably from ritual; therefore drama at bottom ance, and dance ...') misquely that drama as we now have it, he tells us bri it, is something *sui generis*, and that to It is we now have no visible, e developments is at best history, at occupies. arianism, and in either case wholly irrelevant to space that it me holds or all our tracing of images to archeonly with it, a ology; having done that, we have figure itself see and mythiq

still only assembled the raw materials – what matters is the use made of them. But the other wing of literary-critical opinion is under fire no less. However the followers of I. A. Richards may differ from the followers of William Empson and those again from the disciples of F. R. Leavis, all practise a method that will not do for Mrs Langer:

> Whatever our integrated organic response may be, it is a response not to cumulative little verbal stimuli – a precariously sustained progress of memories, associations, unconscious wishes, emotions – but a response to a strongly articulated *virtual experience*, one dominant stimulus. (P. 215.)

Yet if this embarrasses the American New Critics, those who have lately arisen to challenge the New-Critical procedure (e.g. Mr J. V. Cunningham * or Miss Rosemond Tuve †) get even shorter shrift. Miss Tuve, for instance, asks us, in dealing with seventeenth-century poetry, to make a distinction between 'the thoughts a man had' and 'a man having thoughts'; but there is no room for this distinction in Mrs Langer's theory, when she says of reflective poems, 'Essentially they creat… *semblance* of reasoning; of the seriousness, strain and pro… the sense of growing knowledge, growing clearness an… viction – the whole experience of philosophical thinki… she says, 'it is not a proposition, but the entertainment… which necessarily involves vital tensions, feelings.'

Like any other critic, I have invested too heavily in … these disciplines to be able to see Mrs Langer's altern… what it is worth. The re-orientation she demands is … plete to be made on the spur of a moment. I do … know where I stand, and any criticisms I offer will … to explore some implications which, until I … no clearer to me than to anyone else.

In the first place, as might be expected … sopher, Mrs Langer seems to give little c… approach. Her own historical perspective … Ernst Cassirer, and of Owen Barfield. Sl… the human mind in terms of its gradual … thinking, which determines the form of … and furthered by language (in the shap… sage fro… forms a… and

* J. V. Cunningham. 'Logic and Lyric.' *M*… pp. 33–41.

† Rosemond Tuve. *Elizabethan and Met*…

is ultimately driven out by language, as syntax gradually begets discursive thought and so supersedes mythic thinking by scientific thinking. This shift, she says, is probably never complete, and is more nearly complete for some persons and groups of persons than for others. This is all very well; but it could be argued that this is too long a perspective to be of much practical use to the literary historian, who requires to know rather how far the shift has gone for certain groups of persons at certain times. As literary historians and as critics of any past literature, we need to know the history of language in far more detail than Mrs Langer allows for. Thus Miss Tuve might maintain, against Mrs Langer, that for Philip Sidney and John Donne alike the shift to discursive reason had gone so far that their poems move right outside of what Mrs Langer takes to be poetry. And so too Mr F. W. Bateson's case about 'A sweet disorder in the dress', which Mrs Langer dismisses in a footnote, rests on a verifiable observation about the connotations, in Herrick's time, of the word 'precise'.

In the same way, when Mr I. A. Richards treats the reading of a poem as an infinitely delicate and hazardous operation, we may agree with Mrs Langer that this view of the correct response is just as precious as Clive Bell's 'æsthetic emotion' which it was designed to laugh out of court, and we may further agree with her that, other things being equal, a poem should command our attention quite imperiously. But in *Practical Criticism*, it may appear, Mr Richards presented nearly unimpeachable evidence that at the present day other things are not equal, that our culture is at a stage of its history when – never mind for what reasons – the accurate reading of a poem *is*, for most people, a very hazardous and delicate business indeed. The classroom and lecture-hall techniques now most in use for the teaching of literary appreciation (outlined in Leavis and Thompson's *Reading and Discrimination*, for instance) were evolved in the light of Mr Richards's findings. Many teachers know by this time well that the theoretical assumptions on which they are based are rather shaky, and that this limits their effectiveness. But they are still the best available, however weak their theoretical foundations, just because they take into account the many obstacles (pulp-literature, noise, advertising, background music, and so on) which the untutored person today has to surmount before he can learn to respond to a poem. We may hope for new techniques based on Mrs Langer's better

theory. But anyone concerned with the teaching of literature will smile wryly at any technique based on the contention that a good poem will (nowadays) impose itself on the reader, demanding imperiously just the sort of attention it wants, and no other.

If I now take issue with Mrs Langer on the score of Goldsmith's 'Deserted Village', it is not so much for the sake of that poem in itself (though certainly I esteem it more highly than she does), as for the chance of thus seeing, in a specific instance, how her theory works out in practice. Mrs Langer is led to consider this poem because she is taking up the challenge of Dr Tillyard in his *Poetry Direct and Oblique*, where he contrasts eighteen lines from Goldsmith's poem with Blake's 'The Echoing Green'. For him Goldsmith's poetry is direct, in that the poet 'wants the reader to think primarily of villages when he talks of Auburn,' whereas Blake's is oblique, in that the poet, though he writes of a village, wants the reader to think, not primarily of villages, but of something illuminated by them, the whole idea of fruition. Mrs Langer will have none of this, since for her there can be only one kind of poetry. For her both poems are equally 'oblique', since both are *created virtual histories*. Just as the import of 'The Echoing Green' is not some idea standing apart from and oblique to the literal sense, so the import of 'The Deserted Village' is not exhausted by the literal sense. Each poem presents village life as a virtual history, and the import of each is created in the process of abstraction by which the actual history becomes virtual. Many readers, I suspect, will have been dissatisfied with Dr Tillyard's argument here, though they may not phrase their dissatisfaction in Mrs Langer's terms; and in fact Dr Tillyard himself seems apologetic about his own distinction. I am not concerned to vindicate Dr Tillyard, but rather to argue that a better case can be made for 'The Deserted Village' in Mrs Langer's own terms.

The passage immediately in question is as follows:

> How often have I loitered o'er thy green,
> Where humble happiness endeared each scene!
> How often have I paused on every charm,
> The sheltered cot, the cultivated farm,
> The never-failing brook, the busy mill,
> The decent church that topt the neighbouring hill,
> The hawthorn bush, with seats beneath the shade,
> For talking age and whispering lovers made!

> How often have I blessed the coming day,
> When toil remitting lent its turn to play,
> And all the village train from labour free
> Led up their sports beneath the spreading tree,
> While many a pastime circled in the shade,
> The young contending as the old surveyed;
> And many a gambol frolicked o'er the ground,
> And sleights of art and feats of strength went round;
> And still as each repeated pleasure tired,
> Succeeding sports the mirthful band inspired.*

According to Mrs Langer, the green is here established as the dancing-place to which the brook, the mill, the cot, the farm, and the *decent* church (giving 'social sanction' and 'divine chaperonage' to the dance) are related, not as contiguous in actual space, but symbolically. The references, 'beneath the shade,' 'in the shade,' 'beneath the spreading tree,' draw the Magic Circle of the dancers, and the dance itself is enacted in such phrases as 'lent its turn', 'circled,' 'frolick'd o'er the ground,' 'went round,' '*repeated* pleasure,' '*succeeding* sports.'

Mrs Langer goes on:

> The alternating partners are youth and age, the dance is the dance of Life, and Goldsmith's village is the human scene. As such, the fragment Professor Tillyard chose to treat as 'statement poetry' is only one half of the contrast which is the guiding line of the whole poem: element for element the dance is opposed to the later scene, wherein the green is overgrown, the brook choked and marshy, the church unvisited, the farms abandoned. Had Goldsmith limited the description of Auburn revisited to this antithesis, and given the reason – the encroachment of an irresponsible aristocracy on the sober, balanced, rural economy – in a few striking words, he would have written a strong poem. The moral would have been an artistic element, the shadow of unfeeling and brute force dispelling the natural rhythm of human life. But the poem is longer than his poetic idea; that is why it ends up 'moralizing', and gets lost in weak literal appeal. (Pp. 232, 233.)

In venturing this judgment Mrs Langer goes outside her own brief, since she has declared in her Introduction that her book 'does not offer criteria for judging "masterpieces", nor even successful as against unsuccessful lesser works – pictures, poems, musical pieces, dances, or any other'. Plainly such criteria are offered here, but on the whole Mrs Langer observes the

* Mrs Langer has 'youthful' for 'mirthful' in the last line.

limitations she imposes. This passage on Goldsmith is exceptional.

I am not clear about the complementary 'later scene' to which Mrs. Langer refers, for I do not find a reference in the poem to 'the church unvisited'. But the green is overgrown, the brook choked, and the farms abandoned, already by line 50; and the reason for this, encroachment on the rural economy, is given by line 75. The remaining 355 lines of the poem are therefore, according to Mrs Langer, superfluous. This is to [illegible] it back with a vengeance! But in any case the whole argument about 'the intricacy of a group dance' in or behind the lines quoted is surely a clear case of misplaced ingenuity, of reading into the poem, not reading out of it. Mrs Langer focuses on the green and makes it the focus of the village because it is at the end of the first line quoted and also, I suspect, because it certainly is the focus of the poem by Blake with which the Goldsmith passage is compared. Coming where it does in the poem, at the end of the seventh line, it draws no attention to itself, and is only one item, no more and no less important than church, mill, farm, brook, and cot. Hence the church looks down[illegible] its hill not on the green but on the village as a whole – [illegible]ins, from even be on the opposite side of the village from the gr[illegible]ooth t may for 'lent its turn', 'went round,' '*repeated* pleasure,' *al his-* [illegible]een. As sports,' their dancing pattern of turning, circling, al[illegible] some *succeeding* and so on, would not be apparent to the eighteent[illegible]so th[illegible]ternating, reader, for whom they were part of the current sma[illegible] literah-century of poetical expression. But the conclusive argumen[illegible] and[illegible]ll-change Mrs Langer's interpretation appears if we extend the [illegible]n byt against for a further six lines: [illegible]ers, Iuotation

> The dancing pair that simply sought renown, [illegible]gume[illegible] in [illegible]
> By holding out to tire each other down; [illegible]s ap[illegible]
> The swain mistrustless of his smutted face, [illegible]wind[illegible]
> While secret laughter titter'd round the [illegible]ol[illegible]pace; [illegible]he
> The bashful virgin's sidelong looks of [illegible]ove,
> The matron's glance that would thos[illegible]e looks reprove.

This makes it plain that for Goldsmith [illegible]dancing is only one in a catalogue of several activities (others [illegible]are flirtations, and horse-play with smutty faces), which take [illegible]place on the green.

It is worth considering what would happen if, having [illegible] posed of Mrs Langer's case for the poem, we should revert to Dr Tillyard's. Mrs Langer could [illegible]still find a place for it, though

not under poetry. It would come, on Dr Tillyard's showing, into what Mrs Langer calls applied art, discursive writing such as the essay, the biography, historical and philosophical exposition, all of which, she agrees, can become art. The fact of its being cast in verse form should not keep it out of this category, any more than Johnson's 'Rasselas' or Berkeley's or Plato's dialogues should be kept out of it simply by being cast in the form of fiction. ('Rasselas' is plainly not fiction in the semblance of *virtual memory*, which is Mrs Langer's name for the primary abstraction of the true novel and the narrative poem.) The odd thing is that 'The Deserted Village' would make a better showing as excellent discursive writing in verse than as the very imperfect poem that Mrs Langer conceives it to be. For having (rightly, I think) discarded the false criterion of 'purity', Mrs Langer sets up no hierarchy among her categories; and so there is no implication that 'applied art', whether in literature or in plastic design, is in any way inferior to 'fine art'. Moreover Mrs Langer herself encourages such fast work in the slipping [illegible]f awkward cases from one genre to another; it may take some [illegible]of a[illegible]ve[illegible]rs' breath away to find her, for instance, classing all the [illegible]reade[illegible]f Racine and Corneille as heroic comedies. (Incidentally, [illegible]plays [illegible]uld like a fuller account or a more elaborate system of [illegible]one wo[illegible]genres: could not comedy, for instance, here treated [illegible]literary [illegible]a dramatic form, be made to cover some non-dramatic [illegible]solely as[illegible] The very suggestive account of the nature of laughter [illegible]works? [illegible]me want to include under 'comedy' such poems as [illegible]makes [illegible]MacNiece's 'Bag-Pipe Music' or some of Cleveland's [illegible]Louis [illegible]te[illegible] bravura-pieces of heartless wit.) [illegible]brilliant [illegible]d h[illegible]re is no need to take 'The Deserted Village' on Dr

But the [illegible]fr[illegible]terms. We can agree that it is a virtual history like [illegible]Tillyard's [illegible]ng Green' without the help of Mrs Langer's un-'The Echoi[illegible]ur[illegible]e[illegible]ntasy about the dance and without rejecting, as [illegible]acceptable f[illegible]s[illegible]itht of the poem as it stands. As a virtual history of [illegible]she does, mos[illegible]Goldsmith's poem differs from Blake's only in pre-village life Golds[illegible]ife. [illegible]emblance and so a different feeling. 'The [illegible]senting a different [illegible]Get[illegible]dently expresses the rhythm of fruition, Echoing Green' confi[illegible]e gu[illegible]generation, as something robust and [illegible]generation succeeding [illegible]s she[illegible]village' expresses it as frail and thor-[illegible]hardy; 'The Deserted V[illegible]ycles of unflurried fruition to which [illegible]oughly vulnerable. The c[illegible]ha[illegible]in line 69, 'Those gentle hours that Goldsmith looks back are, [illegible]to F[illegible]w fugitive and temporary as a flower [illegible]plenty bade to bloom'. As[illegible]or he[illegible]of a fruit (line 128: 'But all the [illegible]or as the bloom on the skin

blooming flush of life is fled'), they required special conditions in which to flourish and could be blasted with ease:

> Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade;
> A breath can make them, as a breath has made:
> But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
> When once destroyed, can never be supplied.

'Bold' in these famous lines is the sturdiest, most militant epithet applied in the poem to what is more frequently called 'gentle' or 'harmless'. Yet even here the effect is thoroughly ambiguous, for if princes and lords can be made by a mere breath, there is no implication that they can be got rid of so easily; perhaps a bold peasantry, that cannot be made so easily, can be unmade with no trouble at all. And what *is* certain is that lords and princes are always in good supply, where peasants aren't. The whole drift of the passage is towards presenting the peasants, who embody the rhythms of fruition, as altogether more difficult to maintain than the gentry and the merchants who encroach on them.

This feeling is first announced in the second couplet :

> Where smiling spring its earliest visit paid,
> And parting summer's lingering blooms delay'd.

A floating petal comes to rest – what could be more fitting, more fugitive? (That logically the petal has nothing to do with the village life does not matter; it is the emotional timbre of the image which counts.) It is important to notice that rather oafish boisterplay is to be found on the green as well as dancing (and anyway the dancing itself is rather oafish – 'By holding out to tire each other down'). Goldsmith's swains differ from Blake's in being, from one point of view, yokels, clodpoles – 'And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind'; that is part of their vulnerability when once the more knowing tradesmen get among them. For this reason the vicar, good as he is, is made 'unskilled', eminently gullible, ineffectual in worldly matters like the Vicar of Wakefield; so too the pedagogue's absurd pretensions to learning, and the ease with which he impressed his gaping audience. The first passage ends with all these charms are fled' (there is an overtone of timorousness in 'fled'), to be

> charms withdrawn:
> thy hand is seen,
> ny green!

One snatch of a muscular hand, and the whole way of life crumbles. And the villagers, of course, offer no resistance:

> And, trembling, shrinking from the spoiler's hand,
> Far, far away thy children leave the land.

The encroaching powers are seen in terms of bulk and weight:

> Along the lawn, where scatter'd hamlets rose,
> Unwieldy wealth, and cumbrous pomp repose;

The hamlets, and their way of life, are crushed like flowers under a dead weight laid upon them. 'Cumbrous pomp' becomes 'long pomp' in line 259, and 'long-drawn pomp' in line 317. To sustain this pomp, in line 269, 'Proud swells the tide with loads of freighted ore', and even in its fall, the power of commercial luxury is presented in terms of mass:

> Kingdoms by thee, to sickly greatness grown,
> Boast of a florid vigour not their own;
> At every draught more large and large they grow,
> A bloated mass of rank unwieldy woe;
> Till sapp'd their strength, and every part unsound,
> Down, down they sink, and spread a ruin round.

The word 'rank', incidentally, links this domain of luxury to (The domain of fearful luxuriance in the tropics to which the dispossessed emigrants flee.) To set against this mass and weight, the rural way of life can provide only 'innocence' and 'sweet confusion', sounds 'soften'd' by distance and carried on 'sweet conspering wind', 'murmurs' that 'fluctuate in the gale', the 'whispering' house that is a 'tottering mansion', a cottage (line 329) an alehouse that shelters its inhabitants only as a thorn shelters a primrose, that shelters the

> and
> sic[k] [b]y the breezy covert of the warbling grove,
> T[h]at only shelter'd thefts of harmless love.

Where only such poor defences are available, well may the poet ask:

> [W]hen, ah! where shall poverty reside,
> Where [t]hen the pressure of contiguous pride?

To scape [t]hese [e]vils, the poet recollects the hopes he once entertained of ending his days in Auburn, he should think of it No wonder that when [t]hat, a taper, nursing a dying flame, of a in terms of husbanding [t]hat pursued by hound and horn, and of hare returning to its form [w]ith, smoothed by resignation. (That a gentle gradient into dea[th] [m]ay [b]e the ebbing life, again makes no the taper refers logically to

difference; the emotional timbre of the image contributes to the total symbolic form.) No wonder, finally, that the poet applauds the man who 'since 'tis hard to combat, learns to fly', and that, at the end of the poem, 'sweet Poetry' should be celebrated as 'Still first to fly where sensual joys invade'.

The upshot of this analysis, which is not of course exhaustive, I take to be this: that 'The Deserted Village' is a virtual history like 'The Echoing Green', and a symbol articulated more closely and intricately than Blake's. Blake's poem is perfect in its narrow compass as Goldsmith's on its much larger scale. And the only part of the poem that will not fit this interpretation consists of the four last lines, splendid in themselves but in emotional tenor out of keeping with the rest; and, sure enough, Boswell records that these lines were supplied by Johnson.

I believe that the import of this poem, considered as one symbolic form, had been borne in upon me long before I chose to confirm it and bring it into consciousness for myself, by subjecting it to analysis. I agree with Mrs Langer, in other words, that my understanding of the poem was not a process of response to successive verbal stimuli, though that is up to a point how I have had to deal with it in presenting my analysis. Hence, though my interpretation differs radically from Mrs Langer's, I can regard it as some sort of vindication of her theory. Yet if Mrs Langer's interpretation satisfied her, presumably for her the virtual history had a different import. So perhaps a poem does not impose its import quite so imperiously as she supposes, on even a very alert and sensitive mind. We can hardly afford, it seems, however much we applaud her theory, to abandon our working assumption that nowadays the proper reading of a poem is a very risky and delicate operation indeed.

THE TWO COUNTESSES

Richard Findlater

Two Countesses from the Continent have recently been seen upon the London stage, in somewhat embarrassing circumstances, attempting to enlarge the frontiers of the West End drama by the sheer pressure of their conversation. Garrulous symbols of the Life Force, these *hochgeborene* ladies, though unequal in talent, age and experience, have shown a similar taste for talking through their Habsburg hats: and though they have never been introduced, Sophie and Rosmarin illuminate the problems of the Austrian Empire and the West End theatre, as well as the predicaments of Mr J. B. Priestley, Mr Christopher Fry, and mankind. The story is divided into two parts.

* * * *

The year: 1809. The season: spring. The place: the Castle of Erdenstein in Upper Austria. The play: *The White Countess*, by J. B. Priestley and Jacquetta Hawkes.

The Countess von Erdenstein has reached the age of thirty without being sexually awakened, and without knowing the meaning of Life – to which, as a woman, she has special obligations, which cannot be satisfied in a castle in Upper Austria in the spring of 1809. For her frustration, spring and her husband (a cousin uxorious but antique) are to blame, but the Countess Sophie is enlightened overnight in matters of bed and destiny by one of Napoleon's French-er generals, who spends an eventful night at the castle. (There is a war on.) The following morning, after an adultery of apparently singular felicity, she is confronted by her first-cousin husband, who is naturally a bit upset, by her second cousin lover, a romantic German nationalist who wants to shoot the general; and the general himself, who wants to marry the Countess (he has found satisfaction for the first time in a long career of intra-national love). Each of these improbable gentlemen, asserting his masculinity in a meaningful way, Stands for Something: there is more in them than meets the eye. The Count, who wants to

keep his wife locked up in the castle of the old regime, stands for the past; the general, who wants her to share the glories of Napoleon's new order, is the symbol of the present; and the nationalist, who apparently intends to talk her to death on a pedestal, is the future. Each of them states the case for his own arbitrary division of the space-time continuum, with characteristically male indifference to the rights of woman and J. W. Dunne, but all are floored by the eloquence of the Countess von Erdenstein. Refusing to live down to any of their idealized portraits, she harangues her assembled suitors upon the innocence of guilt, the irrelevance of adultery, and the responsibility of Woman to Life (as distinct from Man); and she chooses as her partner a man of lower class but equal (well, almost equal) soul – a visiting composer who understands the timelessness of life, the loneliness of the ego, and the constitutions of countesses. He is an artist: and what is more, he has loved her from a distance for the last fifteen years without declaring his passion. Prompted, in ever such a gentlemanly way, the Countess remembers (that little melody brings it all back . . .), and together they step out into a new life.

The Countess, it is clear, Stands for Something too; but, unhappily for the authors, London audiences would not stand for the Countess or any of her lustless intangibles. *The White Countess* – as presented at the Saville Theatre – was, indeed, one of the worst plays of the year; among the works of Mr Priestley it is unique in its ineptitudes; but the absurdities of this compound of cliché and cockalorum concealed an earnest attempt at theatrical enlightenment which deserves to be taken seriously. Mr Priestley and Jacquetta Hawkes were attempting to supply food for thought, rare dietary in the West End theatre, and to transcend the limitations of dead-end naturalism and the picture-frame stage, but Sophia von Erdenstein let them down.

To some extent this was a failure of casting: Miss Viveca Lindfors is a radiant creature, but she is not the romantic star which the role demanded; she could not supply the transcendent acting required for the dissolution of fourth walls and barriers in time. Yet it is doubtful if any star could have redeemed *The White Countess*, for – apart from any problems of miscasting – the central flaw lay in the author's methods.

Throughout his career as a dramatist Mr Priestley has been a conspirator against naturalism, 'devising means', as he says, 'to conjure audiences away from the prevailing tradition after

persuading them, perhaps for the first half-hour of a play, that they were safely within its bounds.' He has often poured new wine (or ginger pop) into old bottles, or vice versa, in the belief that 'it is dangerous to try and advance on all fronts at once', but the danger of such a compromise is that it often produces an unstable solution of banality and daring, with stock stereotypes swapping new theories of the universe, or poetic symbols mouthing small talk about suburbia on an empty stage. In *The White Countess* he uses for the first time the conventional form of the costume drama, but with such maladroit solemnity that it appears to be a burlesque; and the characters – hybrids of Novello's Ruritania and what Mr Ivor Brown calls Symbolia – are convincing neither as people nor as principles.

What the authors are trying to create is the two-ply or bifocal drama – the allegorical theatre of double meaning to which prose dramatists resort as their obvious expedient when they wish to express significant and meaningful thoughts about the universe: the most conspicuous examples are, of course, to be found in the recent puzzles of Mr T. S. Eliot. Fancy dress is, in few, inimical to this attempt by Jack Priestley and Jacquetta my views, for the costume adds an additional hurdle to the Hawkes's course by distancing the characters in a limbo of the dramatist's; irony is needed as a solvent, as in the anti-romantic long ago drama or in Fry's colloquial eloquence, but the high Shavian seriousness of *The White Countess* is weakened by a deficiency of humour.

Another reason for the authors' failure is the inadequacy of their language. Mr Priestley himself has always suffered from a kind of verbal anæmia: 'he moves through a world of ready-made verbal experience, drawing on the Bible and on Eng. Lit. at the moments when a personal idiom is most urgently needed . . . at the peak moments of many of the plays he aspires to poetry – using either his own, or, more frequently, someone else's. The prose will not take the weight of the feeling.' (I quote my own words.) Hence the wife has the aspirations of a philosopher and the imagination of a poet, but both are often inarticulate. *The White Countess*, however, is afflicted not by a lack but by a surfeit of eloquence, and the language is inadequate, not so much in the high and universals, but in the lower atmosphere of ideas as such. There is only a tenuous connection between the characters and the base traffic of the stage. Heaviside layer of ideas to which they are applied from above and not created sphere of human conversation and their words, for the prose is

from within, and it fits the actors as clumsily as their symbolic surcoats: this is one reason why it is difficult to believe that Mr Priestley, expert technician that he is, wrote more than a fraction of the play.

As a play of ideas, moreover, *The White Countess* reflects not only the theatrical inexperience of Jacquetta Hawkes but also the occupational weakness of this brand of non-drama. 'It seems to me,' Mr Eliot Has Said, 'that we should turn away from the Theatre of Ideas to the Theatre of Character. The essential poetic play should be made with human beings rather than with ideas.' Mr Eliot's own difficulties in evoking human beings are notorious, but his admonition might well be taken to heart, especially by those authors who are trying to make essential poetic plays with basic English prose – in other words, dropping bricks without straw. In *The White Countess*, it is plain, there are several ideas but no human beings. Some ideas masquerade as men, and others – instead of being a seamless part of the action – are delivered by the Countess Sophia with an incongruous di- [illegible] they dactic fury, like a Habsburg Suffragette. Whatever their va[illegible], so that (and to me they seem somewhat threadbare notions), should take flesh and blood on both levels of the play, and both to they are at once personal and impersonal, relating you 54. The Upper Austria in 1809 and South Kensington in 19[illegible] ant wife Countess should seem, in this double vision, both a pec[illegible]r mon- and a prime mover – Woman, the Anima, or any oth[illegible]e of the strous shadow you may like to name; but on the stag[illegible] or a ser- Saville Theatre she appeared instead to be the pretext [illegible]least the mon. Fair shares in soap-boxes are necessary – or a[illegible] authors of *appearance* of fair shares – in the play of ideas, but the[illegible]r, indeed, *The White Countess* have failed to learn from Shaw (c[illegible]ndling the from Priestley) the need for justice and humour in ha[illegible]ttempt to general opinions of their characters. There is no [illegible]: for this create even the illusion of proportional representati[illegible] feminism is fighting talk in the sex war. The propagand[illegible] is silenced emerges with a ludicrous solemnity, and if th[illegible]ing the wrong it is because the authors of the play are en[illegible]e *Countess* is a bad means for the wrong end.

Why break butterflies on a wheel? [illegible] post-mortem indi- play which merits a peaceful burial; as a short cut to 4-D cates the dangers of attempting to c[illegible]s; of underrating the theatrical forms; of using overt alle[illegible] drama; of neglecting people for pri[illegible]

resistance of the picture-frame itself to experiment, and the incompatibility of one-ply acting with two-ply drama. Yet a theatre without bad plays such as this, a theatre without adventure, is dead; the presence of *The White Countess* in the West End was indeed a welcome sign of life; and one looks forward with renewed appetite to Mr Priestley's further experiments in and out of the naturalist drama.

* * * *

The year: 1848–49. The season: winter. The place: the country house of Countess Rosmarin Ostenburg, near the Austro-Hungarian border. The play: *The Dark is Light Enough*, by Christopher Fry.

The Countess is an elderly charmer of rare wisdom, kindness and grace, who for twenty years has enjoyed the love of her children, the idolatry of her Thursday salon, and the inexplicable wonder of Life, with which she is on special terms beyond the comprehension of most male phenomena. Her idolatrous court (three provincial bores) believe that she has 'the qualities [illegible]e divinity':

> [illegible]ves make and unmake themselves in her neighbourhood
> of tr[illegible] nowhere else. There are many names I could name
> [illegible] would have been remarkably otherwise
> Lipt for her divine non-interference.
> As
> Wh[illegible]e remade lives belongs to a cowardly, bullying, de-
> Exc[illegible]imp of a writer called Richard Gettner, to whom
> [illegible] is ready to sacrifice the happiness of her daughter,
> One of th[illegible]her son-in-law – because she loves mankind. Gettner
> spairing [illegible]from the Hungarian rebel army (there is a war on)
> the Coun[illegible]tess offers him shelter, refusing to give him up
> her son an[illegible]n-in-law Peter is taken prisoner in his place: in
> is a deserter[illegible]ar magnanimity everyone concurs, including
> and the Coun[illegible]ttner was the first, conspicuously unsuccessful
> although her so[illegible]e. The Countess perseveres in her loving-
> this act of sing[illegible] Gettner, challenged by her son, shoots him
> Peter, although[illegible] the guards not to give him away, on the
> husband of his [illegible]at, as she has already explained,
> kindness even w[illegible]
> in a duel; she [illegible]hard is harm, and harm
> dubious principl[illegible]norm to Peter, harm to everyone.
> [illegible] her
> Harm to K[illegible] for her son
> Once done is ha[illegible]

And she asks them to pr[illegible]

BOOK NOTES

STRATEGY FOR THE WEST. By Sir John Slessor (Cassell, 9*s.* 6*d.*). It has not till recent years been the fashion for British and American leaders to declare the strategy of future wars in advance. The most malevolent critic could not accuse Churchill or Eisenhower of warmongering in print on the model of *Mein Kampf*. As for the senior commanders of the armed services, their writings have generally been confined to reminiscences of past campaigns; and those few soldiers and sailors and airmen who have had something important to say about strategy have had to retire prematurely in order to say it. In some cases they have gained great distinction by doing so: the Englishman, Liddell Hart, and the Americans, Mahan and Mitchell, are cases in point; but they have almost inevitably appeared as rebels in their own day, so that their writings have revealed little more than what, at the time, their country's strategy almost certainly was not. It is quite otherwise with a book written immediately after retirement by the last Chief of the Air Staff; and it has already become apparent from official reactions that if Sir John Slessor has caused eyebrows to be raised in high places at all, it is not for quarrelling with official policy but for revealing too much of it.

There is little that is surprising about the main outline of his thesis, which is indeed almost as fashionable in Fleet Street as in Whitehall. What is new is to have it put with such authority, and incidentally in such lucid and readable form. Sir John's picture of the situation that confronts us can be summed up in a few selected sentences of his own:

> Indeed, the first thing to realize, if we are to direct our strategy wisely, is that we are engaged in World War III *now*, and have been for many years (p. 22). . . .We delude ourselves if we imagine that another great war would bear the remotest resemblance to the last. The advent of jet propulsion, the long-range rocket, and the weapon of mass destruction have completely transformed the whole dimension and scope of the problem. . . . Modern air power has made the battlefield irrelevant (p. 12). . . . War – in the sense of total world-wide "shooting" war—has abolished itself through the agency of nuclear and thermo-nuclear energy (p. 21). . . . The prospect before us . . . is not a sort of modernized version of World War II in the near future but the "long haul" under the wings of atomic power. (p. 47) . . . Air power no doubt is the real decisive factor in cold war, in that it keeps it cold . . . (but) . . . if I am right in thinking that we may see more 'Koreas' in our generation and that they will call primarily for the action of land forces, that surely disposes of any idea that we can safely look forward to substantial reductions in our regular Armies. . . . (p. 73)

With the help of these and other extracts, Sir John's thesis can be reduced to something like the following three propositions: firstly, World War III is already with us in its cold-war phase, which is likely to continue indefinitely, but not to become a total 'shooting' war; secondly, this does not exempt us from maintaining modern armaments sufficient to confront the possibility of a total 'shooting' war; and thirdly, those modern armaments have in fact, barring accidents, by their very nature brought about the return of the age of limited local wars in place of global wars.

These arguments are circular, in the sense that they follow from each other in any order; but the circle is not a vicious one, and the upshot is comforting, at least in comparison with any reasonably probable alternative that can be thought of in our present predicament. The only weakness lies in the phrase 'barring accidents', which is an unavoidable qualification. The sort of accident, and how probable or improbable it is, can be seen by asking the two fundamental questions: What happens if the Communist states are convinced of the validity of Sir John's argument? – and what happens if the Americans are not? The fatal accident would then be a conjunction of circumstances in which the Communist leaders provoked 'another Korea' with the conviction that Sir John was right in believing that the war would remain localized; and the Americans acted on the assumption that he was wrong. In other words, does not the thesis that total war has 'abolished itself', once it is generally accepted, contain the seeds of its own undoing? In the first instance, it makes things too easy for the Communists: they have only to go on trying to help themselves to one victim after another, assured in advance that the worst that can happen to them is to be compelled to withdraw from one particular venture to the point where they were before it started. But this will only be so until the fatal day comes when the Western alliance (which means in effect the United States Government) decides that the comforting thesis cannot safely be allowed to prevail any longer; and the United States Government, appreciating the situation as clearly as the Soviet Government, may well decide that in that case the fatal day had better come sooner rather than later.

It is arguable, then, that Sir John's thesis is exposed to the same sort of weakness as Gallup polls on democratic elections: their conclusions are valid only so long as they are unpublished; but they cannot take account of the change in the situation which ensues as soon as the public knows what their conclusions are. In

the same way, there is a dangerous possibility that a carefully devised official 'strategy for the West' (if this is what it is) may cease to be valid in a situation in which the potential enemy knows what it is. It cannot be supposed that the Communist leaders will ignore so authoritative a pronouncement: Hitler was luckier in knowing that, in the defeatist atmosphere of the nineteen-thirties, publishing his intentions would help to realize them, not to frustrate them. But in the nineteen-fifties, with quite a different atmosphere and quite a different enemy, nothing like Hitler's luck is to be expected again. Perhaps we were better off in other days, when books on strategy were written by rebellious visionaries, and official plans were worked out in secret.

C. M. W.

HOW RUSSIA IS RULED. By Merle Fainsod. (Harvard University Press. London, Geoffrey Cumberlege. 575 pages. 48*s*.)

Professor Fainsod's book, one of a series which has been coming from the Harvard Russian Research Centre in the last few years, is not only of great value in itself, but also marks a new stage in the study of Soviet institutions. It represents a combination of what can be gained from the study of Soviet sources together with the fullest possible use of the oral evidence of the 'new emigration'. The narratives of refugees are not treated as they sometimes are, as direct and uncontrovertible evidence possessing the only genuine validity for the subject, but are instead subjected to the full rigour of critical analysis. One approach thus amplifies the other, and the general picture is convincing and probably as near the truth as one can get in dealing with so vast and intricate a subject. Nor has Professor Fainsod failed to make use of other work of this kind which has been done in the United States in recent years. It is not too much to say, perhaps, that Soviet studies have now come of age. One has only to compare this to the kind of stuff which the Webbs put out in the 1930's to see the advance that has been made. Indeed, Professor Fainsod's difficulty is not one of understanding or of communication, but simply one of maintaining the reader's interest. The book is thorough, reliable and complete. It answers all the questions which a reasonable person might wish to ask, but it is not exciting. There is no point at which one is brought up short with the feeling that one has had a sudden illumination. This is not by any means the author's fault. Professor Fainsod writes with great clarity and with a refreshing lack of that unnecessary jargon which so often disfigures American works of a sociological kind. I am tempted to think rather that it is the subject that is at fault. The Soviet Union

exists; the Soviet Union is a great, powerful and important State; but it is an extremely dull society. It is no doubt understandable, given the present political constellation, that the various learned bodies in the United States should spend so much money on the study of Soviet Russia. Considering that the fault in this country is very much on the other side, and that the money which is available for these studies has been so generally misapplied, it is not for the English reviewer to criticize. But from the point of view of the student of humanity generally, one cannot help reflecting that there are at least half a dozen contemporary societies which present to the enquirer a much richer field for investigation of this kind. Perhaps some day Americans will enter upon their study with the same devotion, the same enthusiasm and the same means.

Professor Fainsod begins with a series of historical chapters on the development of the Soviet system. His interpretations of the historical process from which it has evolved do not differ significantly from those of Mr Barrington Moore, jun. His chief object is to lay bare the process by which 'the Party of Revolution was transformed into the Party of Order'. The second part of the work is devoted to a discussion of the role of the Communist Party and its affiliated organizations. This is both the central and the most interesting part of the work. Professor Fainsod is too good a social scientist not to be aware that the formal pattern does not necessarily correspond to the real hierarchy of power and influence. What appears to be a monolithic party is always certainly divided up into factions following personal leaders.

> The testimony of Soviet *émigrés* provides abundant indication that Soviet careers are still made by clinging to the coat-tails of the great lords of Communism, and that cliques rise and fall in the Soviet hierarchy depending on the fortunes of their patrons.

Having dealt with the Party, Professor Fainsod proceeds in Part I to discussing 'the instruments of rule'. Here again, he does not waste unnecessary time on the formal constitutional structure, but goes at once to the heart of the matter, namely, the existence alongside the Party of the other 'great bureaucratic hierarchies': the secret police, the armed forces, the administration of the State, and industrial management. It is in the interpenetration of these and particularly in the dual control over industry, administration and army alike by the Party on the one hand and the secret police on the other, that Professor Fainsod sees the foundation of the inner cohesiveness of the Soviet system. These relationships inevitably produce friction and even conflict:

> bureaucratic representation in the Soviet context expresses itself in a struggle for preferential advantage. Because each part of the bureau-

> cracy operates with an eye to the feasibility of the demands which are made on it, it becomes an unwitting spokesman for the schemes of that sector of Soviet life for which it is responsible. The dictates of survival compel it to mediate between two types of pressure, the drive from above to extract the last reserves of energy from the population and the resistance from below which seeks to tailor commitments to capabilities. In the process, Soviet administrators develop a certain agility in counteracting the squeeze in which they are caught, and the more powerful or influential manage, in some degree at least, to shift the vise-like grip to other sections of the bureaucracy or the economy.

In other words, all those who operate the Soviet system are caught by the fact that the system itself, with its ruthless demand for productivity at all costs, makes demands which are almost unbearable, and sometimes in the past have led to catastrophe, especially when, in the case of agricultural collectivization, the fundamental motives have been ideological and political as much as, if not more than, economic. Once again, what should only be called informal organization, but what, when discovered, is called corruption, comes to the rescue. The Party representative in the factory conspires with the director to conceal failures in the fulfilment of the plan. Influence with Ministries is used to secure the necessary share of scarce materials; and stocks are secretly built up against a rainy day. These individuals are bound together, as it were, in a series of interlocking conspiracies, just as the Soviet élite as a whole has an interest quite apart from that of the Soviet masses.

It is this common interest of the Soviet élite, and the ability of the State, through purges if necessary, to draw into it the best of the rising generations that prevent the tensions in Soviet society from threatening its stability. In the last section of the work, which is the one that owes most to oral evidence, Professor Fainsod examines these internal tensions as they manifest themselves both in the factories and on the farms. He investigates also the possibilities of some form of Bonapartism developing in the military sector and of what he calls the 'incipient internal Titoism' in the minor nationalities. In each case, his conclusion is that there is no reason to expect the régime to disintegrate except under the impact of some overwhelming external force, or because of a real breakdown in the cohesiveness of the inner ruling group. And one should beware of putting too much faith in external pressure since, as he shows, the German attack had, not immediately but ultimately, the effect of arousing Great Russian patriotism in the régime's favour. In fact, the only safe thing to do is to regard the Soviet Union as very much a going concern, and to treat as outside our own control the question of its future development.

On the other hand, Professor Fainsod's book raises a series of more general reflections of which the central theme must be that of

the relation of the nature of the Soviet political system, as it has now developed, to the fundamental ideological and economic presuppositions of Soviet society. Whatever allowances one makes for the differences in Russia's pre-revolutionary development as contrasted with the evolution of Western Europe, it seems, nevertheless, very difficult to relate the fundamental characteristics of the system to any peculiarities in the country or the people. If one combines a belief in a planned economy with a belief that one's own purposes or those of one's enemies demand a high degree of militarization, it is difficult to see how any of the aspects of the system, even the terror, can be avoided. Against the realities of the Soviet system the humane visions of the early Socialists fade and disappear. This *is* Socialism; come and look at it.

MAX BELOFF.

THE BRITISH IN ASIA. Guy Wint. (Faber & Faber. 15*s*.)

One recent notice of this book described it as 'a one-man "Bailey" bridge' between thoughtful minds in Britain and Asia, but to the present reviewer, reading the first edition in Delhi in 1947, it seemed more like a condemned man's speech from the scaffold. In this new edition Mr Wint examines the Last Will and Testament and shows us what the legatees have been doing with the estate.

Mr Wint's review of British rule in Asia is written with wit and sympathy, splendidly free from the syrup of the hero-maker and the statistical passion of the Marxist. But he has his motes. It is startling to read here a defence of that afflatus of imperial apologetics, the 'Raj'. Mr Wint tempers his Kipling, not with Justice, for there was very little of that in British India, but with an almost sorrowful and strangely unconvincing criticism. The British were preoccupied with the legal niceties of their position, extracting *firmans* from the Mughals, settling the land and introducing irrelevant laws, until formal rule became an obsession, until they almost came to believe, with Saint-Just, that 'Outside the law, everything is sterile and dead'. The 'rule of Law', without a sovereign Parliament, rests on a substratum of indifference to those who suffer it. It certainly did in India.

But this is a minor criticism of a book which throws off so many ideas that will be ignored by the historian and misused by the journalist. One of these which had an effect on the present writer (and for the results of which Mr Wint cannot be held accountable) was the conception of the British Empire in the East as a continental order, an Indo-British Empire, based on Indian power and British ex-

pertise, as if the British Empire were divided into two exclusi systems coincidentally centred at Westminster. The eastern half w concerned with the security of India, not the needs of the Empire a whole, and it always looked northward to the recesses of Centr Asia as its enemy. India seemed to be the embodiment of th fears of Halford Mackinder, of the ultimate dominance of the mar ginal lands by the Heartland. So much so that in 1941 Japan wa able, without much difficulty, to enter by the side door.

But what of the legatees of the Empire, what did they inherit? The British didn't leave much behind them. Irrigation works – perhaps their greatest monument – a quantity of dubious statuary, and some public buildings that, as Mr Wint says, will not be part of the pilgrimage of future generations, but might, as Clemenceau said of New Delhi, make some impressive ruins. No, the only real legacy was the division of the sub-continent and a system of government.

The salvage-men of the successor-states took what they could use of the old administration: its implications of parliamentary government and responsibility at the centre. But the present governments are not really democratic, they have ministerial responsibility but no popular participation. The lesson of the Indian General Election of 1951 is only that it is possible to have the mechanics of democracy without actually getting it. The real question is what will happen after Nehru's death. That will probably be an event more important even than the acts of 1947.

But with all criticism aside, Mr Wint's book is one of the most important works on Asia to emerge since the transfer of power, and should be read as an antidote to the nympholepsy of retired Indian Civil Servants and the discreet blue-washing of Tory historians.

M. E.

THE INVISIBLE WRITING. By Arthur Koestler. (Collins, with Hamish Hamilton. 21s.)

This, the second volume of Koestler's autobiography, is every bit as interesting as the first. Although it has weaknesses of style and tone, it confirms us in the belief that Koestler's will remain one of the great case-histories of the first half of the century. This Central European Jew, whose behaviour is so impeccably Freudian, whose natural habitat is Communist cells, cafés, trains, battle-fronts, news agencies, collective farms, prisons and an endless succession of chance beds, is as representative as Charlie Chaplin. The chosen race was chosen to suffer and bear witness. Although we may be

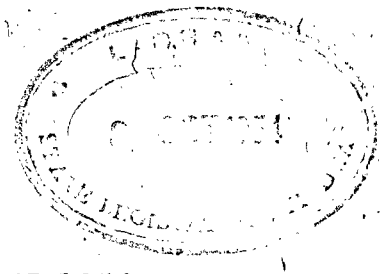
the Anglo-Saxon and have never stirred far outside Great Britain, we cannot read Koestler without feeling that he is us – the highest tribute, perhaps, one can pay an autobiographer.

There is a sincerity and a wealth of detail in the book which make it fascinating to read, although we have heard the various parts of the story before from many different people; the first entry into the Communist Party, with the delights of comradeship and its satisfying blend of secrecy and self-righteousness; the long disillusioning journey through Russia, which nevertheless leaves the traveller cheered by the virtue of some individuals; the rise of Hitler, the Spanish War, the Russian purges, the murders, the suicides, the executions, the hairbreadth escapes; the friendships broken by disagreement or betrayal, or again by madness or death. Almost as many things happened to Koestler as to Candide, and like Candide he just manages to keep his head above water and to go on wondering what is the best philosophy of life. Where he differs from most other refugee writers is in his extraordinary range of reference; in one chapter he says goodbye, on the quay at Baku, to his *ci-devant* Russian mistress, Nadjejda, whom he has betrayed to the Ogpu and who has given him gonorrhœa; in another chapter, he lunches in London with the Duchess of Atholl and the Duke shambles in to reprove him for getting Her Grace involved in politics. He can move from the East to the West and back again, in a way which is only possible, no doubt, for a neurosis-ridden Jew from one of the small central countries. He is a true citizen of the world; and what a world.

Since the body of the book is so good and Koestler himself so important a figure (he rightly points out that *Darkness at Noon* was the greatest single blow ever struck at the French Communist Party), it is a pity that here again he spoils the total effect by introducing a rather spurious philosophy. *The Invisible Writing* is just as pretentious a title as *Arrow in the Blue*. This 'Invisible Writing' – if we have grasped his meaning – is a mystic truth, or in plainer terms, God's Will, which he himself claims to have been conscious of in one or two moments of heightened awareness, and of which the virtuous people he has met have had some inkling. Like all mystic intuitions, it cannot be adequately expressed in words. We have no reason to doubt the subjective truth of Koestler's private revelation, but we cannot fail to note that it does not inform the whole book, which remains a sad recital of the woes of this world, unrelieved by any glimpse of a higher purpose. It is true that, beyond a certain degree of suffering, each one of us has to conclude, on pain of going mad (and some of us, of course, do go mad), that 'all manner of things shall be well', or to use Pangloss's formula, 'tout est pour le mieux dans le meilleur des mondes possibles'. But Voltaire demonstrated once and for all that, having said this, we have said nothing. The

heavens remain just as blank, and as the smoke rises from the death furnaces, the Pope himself must be at a loss for an appropriate thought. Given the story Koestler tells, the only conclusion is some brand of stoicism, some affirmation of human dignity with which to nail the tattered shreds of life to the mast. Such stoicism is, we feel, Koestler's basic attitude, and his 'revelation' is just a dramatic form of resignation. Still more doubtful is his occasional hinting at a kind of Providence or determinism; why should one person be significantly saved if, at the same time, a thousand others go to an insignificant death? Voltaire made this point too, unanswerably. If Koestler had been as intellectually astringent, his book would have risen more often to the level of literature. It remains, however, a first-rate document.

J. G. W.



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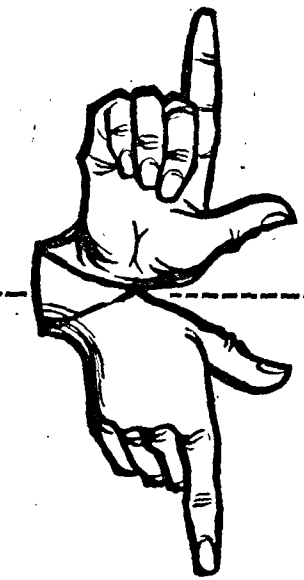
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COMMENT

The French New Deal

Political changes in France, it has often been remarked, generally look more startling than they are. Most so-called Cabinet crises are in fact mere Ministerial reshuffles. Since 1944 France has on the whole been governed by the same handful of men, and in some key posts – the Foreign Ministry and the Defence Ministry, for example – continuity has in fact been more pronounced than in Britain. Until June this year there had been only two real changes: in May 1947, when the Communists were expelled from the Government, and in the summer of 1951, when the conservative majority of the newly elected Assembly succeeded in shifting the political balance to the right. Now there has been a third major unheaval: the Mendès-France Government promises to launch France upon a New Deal experiment whose consequences will be felt whatever happens to the present Cabinet and its dynamic Prime Minister.

The emergence of Mendès-France is one of those carefully prepared, though apparently spontaneous, phenomena which students of French politics have learned to expect, and which the wider public finds both puzzling and enjoyable. For years the *cognoscenti* had been telling anxious friends and well-wishers of the Republic not to despair: if things got really bad the old guard of political leaders would have to make way for Mendès-France, as in 1940 they had to make way for de Gaulle. Last summer matters finally reached the danger point: the war in Indo-China was clearly being lost; North Africa was seething; at home the Laniel Government was drifting with the tide. It was time for a fresh start, and after Dien Bien Phu the Assembly finally gave Mendès-France the authority it had refused him exactly a year earlier. Even if it eventually rejects his modified Europeanism, or his North African policy, it has already sanctioned a fresh start in the vital economic field which no previous Cabinet had dared to undertake.

The experiment has been called a one-man rescue operation,

and some observers are wondering how long Mendès-France can keep up his non-stop performance. These doubts are justified, but not really relevant. The Government may, and probably will, be sabotaged by the old guard (the Assembly still has a conservative majority, and elections are almost two years off). But after this upheaval things will never be the same again. Since 1945, when the post-war reconstruction of France got stuck half-way, there has been a growing body of opinion in the country which awaited the kind of leadership Mendès-France is now supplying. It has been claimed that he draws his main support from the younger generation and from the intellectuals; but, though important, this is not the whole story. The hard core of his following is to be found among two groups who stand at or near the centre of the French body politic: the higher civil service and the managers of the nationalized industries, plus those economists and technicians in private industry who really understand France's problems. It is a moot point whether such a thing as a 'managerial revolution' is really possible, but to the extent that managerial tendencies are operative in France to-day they have crystallized behind the New Deal programme of which Mendès-France is both the leader and the accepted symbol. This explains the presence of Gaullists in his Cabinet, and the almost fanatical support this Jewish lawyer is receiving from nationalist quarters and the student youth. If France is to remain a great power it urgently needs an economic revolution at home, and the kind of technological renovation which Mendès-France and his brains trust of economists and writers have been preaching up and down the country for the past nine years fits in very well with the long-range aims of the former Gaullists, just as it underpins the efforts of the Socialists and the M R P-leftwingers to break the Communist hold over the working class. Mendès-France has in fact revived the fundamental programme of the Resistance movement, minus its accidental Communist accretions: a modernized France with an expanding economy and a genuine role to play in the present world. And he has done so by appealing to the deeply ingrained Jacobin tradition of patriotism, to which nearly all Frenchmen respond. Whatever the immediate fortunes of this remarkable man, he has already effected a break-through in two or three key sectors and made an end of the stagnation which had gripped public life. France is on the march once more.

Them

Atomic radiation continues to make history. Last spring one learned that it had got under the skins of some luckless Japanese fishermen anchoring within range of the H-bomb experiment. Now it is shown to have seeped into the skulls of some enterprising Hollywood producers. *Them*, a film currently showing in London, is art's latest tribute to the malign power of science. Its theme, if not its execution, is worthy of Jules Verne, grandfather of science fiction. We are shown a stretch of the New Mexican (U S A) desert swarming with giant creatures who can, and do, crush human beings in their mandibles after descending upon them to the accompaniment of a shrill, ear-splitting whine curiously reminiscent of air-raid warnings. They are Ants grown to monstrous size through a genetic mutation brought about by the first atomic explosion in New Mexico nine years ago. Led by their Queen Ants – winged monsters who successfully attack a U S destroyer on the high seas – they swarm over the American continent, spreading terror and destruction among Government officials and scientists resolved to shield the public from the awful truth. Finally they are cornered – in the sewers of Los Angeles, not far from the film capital itself – and taken into custody by Army detachments equipped with machine-guns and flame-throwers. The Nest is destroyed; the great scientist and his daughter, who have led the watchful F B I sleuth to the Nest, are able to pronounce that the last Queen has been killed, and that no eggs are left from which successors might be hatched. The danger is over. It has been a narrow escape for America and for the world: we have heard the professor tell a high-level conference of generals and admirals in Washington that these Ants are capable, given a few more years in which to propagate their kind, of making life impossible for the human race.

It does not take long, in watching this horror to end all horrors, to realize that, like other recent Hollywood offerings, it carries a Message. The Message is: trust the F B I and watch out for deadly monsters who infest America. The Ants in fact are Reds. We are told by the professor that they are highly organized, adept at social co-operation, warlike and destructive, and quite capable of battling mankind for control of the earth. The air attack on the destroyer certainly seems well

planned; there is a touch of Pearl Harbour about it. And the Nest in the sewers of Los Angeles, with all the chief monsters sitting in committee before the Army bursts in and wipes them out, might have come out of a spy thriller. At any moment one expects to hear the professor launch into a peroration about our threatened liberties. It need hardly be added that the monsters thrive on human blood – although they also show an incongruous penchant for sugar.

Americans tend to complain that British film critics take Hollywood too seriously. As it happens, *Them* has not had a hostile reception; most reviewers seem to have shrugged it off as a rather infantile horror story relieved by a few touches of technical skill. It is in fact an extremely repulsive piece of science fiction, guaranteed to provide juvenile audiences with a crop of outsize nightmares. But its real significance lies deeper. Films such as these are meant to frighten, and it is possible that in America they achieve this purpose, though elsewhere they will be treated as mere curiosities. The danger is that they may help to create a state of mind in which political problems are viewed exclusively in crime-detection terms, with the flame-thrower as the only suitable argument. If monsters are lurking in the sewers of our big cities, ready to murder us in our beds, obviously we had best throw restraint to the winds and call in the Army. *Them* is a plea for violence, as well as a coldly calculated essay in box-office strategy. It is infantile, loathsome and sadistic. It almost justifies the assertion that our civilization shows signs of decadence. G. L. A.

Music for Millionaires – and for the Million

Taking a 'cultural' holiday in England can be as expensive as a gastronomic tour of France; but it happened that a June fortnight's musical sight-seeing, or 'sound-hearing', ranged from the sublimity of Glyndebourne to the ridiculously inexpensive provincial appearances of the Sadler's Wells opera. It happened also that our peregrinating programme included the two operas based on Beaumarchais' masterpieces: Rossini's too-hasty version of *Il Barbiere*, perfectly rendered in the private opera-house on the Downs, and Mozart's more considered piece, *The Marriage of Figaro*, less perfectly – but perfectly adequately – presented to the populace which more normally throngs the Brighton Hippodrome for Max Miller. Both

audiences seemed to enjoy their fare, though the one took it with black or white ties and lobster or chicken in the interval and the other with open-neck shirts and ice-creams. Glyndebourne enlarged now seats 750, and the cheapest seat costs three guineas; the Hippodrome seats 1,850 from three shillings upwards. Bearing in mind that the Registrar General apportions one-sixth of the population to his social classes I and II and five-sixths to classes III to V, the numbers of seats and their cost seem not unreasonably proportional. Nor would it be easy to say – unless we admit that perfection is without price – which performance was better value for money.

In preface to these contrasting performances we had paid our customary court to Aldeburgh, and learned to some private regret that this young seven-year-old festival is to have a new and permanent shrine in a modest theatre of austere dimensions and design (South-Bankish model on view) to replace the accepted discomforts of the Jubilee Hall. Two years ago (THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, August 1952) we remarked on the informal and intimate country-house-party atmosphere of Aldeburgh, too unkindly and not too accurately christened by some the 'Festival of Britten'. No doubt the site for the new hall is salubriously above flood-level; but it will be just that much more distant from the *locus* of the *genuis loci*, and the stroll of Pears and peeresses along the sea-front from house to hall might suffer a self-conscious sea-change. (Certainly *The Rape* was none the less dramatic because this year the life-boat was launched during the performance, in answer to maroons, to aid a yacht in distress; and distance may steal just that much unrehearsed enchantment from the performances in the old uncomfortable hall behind the life-boat station.) The argument for the new theatre is economic – and democratic. It would seat six or seven hundred instead of the present hall's 290, thus opening the performances to a larger number of people and permitting some seats to be cheaper; and there would be room to breathe, on and behind the stage and in the orchestra, and to 'fly' scenery. All this, obviously, would make it easier to balance the Festival budget, as well as easier to put on operas. But would Aldeburgh retain its (in the best sense) amateur status? Somehow the part drawing-room, part village-hall atmosphere, the close – very close – contact and camaraderie of audience and performers, might be lost; and we might cease to see artistes and their helpers rise from and

return to their seats in the audience, or Imogen Holst squatting in the aisle of the parish church till it was her turn to conduct in a concert there. It was the Jubilee Hall, with all its difficulties and deficiencies, that saw the birth of Britten's operas, and the rebirth of English opera.

Perhaps it is unfair to sentimentalize from the safely distant stance of one who only pays, watches and enjoys and does not have to plan or perform under the present financial and physical handicaps. It is, after all, the standard that matters; and we are told that that standard is now produced and maintained under strain. Anything which enabled such a standard to be enjoyed by more people would be welcome. True, the standard set by Glyndebourne has become familiar through the Third Programme and television to many more listeners than could ever attend, or afford to attend, in person; but immediacy is lost in the process.

Is, then, no compromise possible between music, and especially perhaps opera as provided by a millionaire for the comfortably off, and the more popularly-priced performances of, say, the Proms or Sadler's Wells? (Pending such a compromise, one upper-middle class friend of mine now regularly travels up to London third class to save something towards the cost of attending, and taking others to, Glyndebourne. But one would have to travel rather far and often to make the price of seats and supper for a party.) Or does some of the essential charm lie in the very exclusiveness of Aldeburgh, Glyndebourne, and other inaccessible festivals and seasons? Aldeburgh's exclusiveness is only partly financial, for many more can and would afford the festival than can be seated. The same is true of Glyndebourne. Tickets for both command queues and waiting-lists which only hospitals could rival. And yet both have budgets which are now (in the case of Glyndebourne, after twenty years) only precariously balanced.

Presumably somebody knows what it has cost Mr John Christie, over the years, to carry his and his late wife's dream into reality before handing over to the public trust which is now to carry, and balance, the burden. Surely very few would grudge this creative use of inherited wealth. The origins of Aldeburgh lay with a small group rather than with one individual, and the underwriting of the festival has been shared by many, including now the Arts Council as well as private guarantors; presumably the new theatre, if it arises, will

lighten their financial anxieties even if it arouses different anxieties in some other minds. In both cases the originators would seem to deserve Toynbee's title of 'creative minorities'. But must their work be for the recreation of a minority? It seems so. I forget whether it was Beaumarchais' plays, or Rossini's and Mozart's operas based on them, that are credited with a share in starting the French Revolution. Certainly it is a curious inversion of history that those brilliant and timely attacks on the aristocracy of the day can only be rendered perfectly in music for an aristocratically small audience to-day. We await, without much confidence, the fall of the musical Bastille.

A. S.

NEUTRALISM REVISITED

Denis Healey
Labour M.P. for South-East Leeds

Stalin must be smiling in his grave. Apart from the obstinate refusal of the American economy to collapse, everything has gone to verify the predictions he made two years ago in the pamphlet on which the present shift in Soviet policy is based. As he expected, the relaxation of tension in the cold war has given conflicts inside the non-Communist world their first real chance to operate. In Europe the resurgence of Germany is disrupting the post-war pattern of co-operation. In Britain the Tory right wing is in revolt against 'American attempts to break up the Empire', while the Labour left wing is once more hoping to ride the Russian tiger. Everywhere the lure of Communist markets is blinding businessmen to the facts of Communist policy. And a catalyst unforeseen by Stalin has accelerated the process of dissolution: the appalling image of the H-bomb has unnerved politicians as far apart as Churchill and Crossman, putting an extra premium on wishful thinking. Thus the improvement in Soviet manners has been seized on as proof of a fundamental change in Soviet policy, while the Russian New Look has been made more attractive still by an outburst of bad manners in the U S A.

Eisenhower's refusal to be President has thrown on Dulles the whole burden of teaching Congress the facts of international life. This compulsion to pursue diplomacy simultaneously on two fronts explains much of Dulles's unpopularity with his allies. Unfortunately, public opinion in the democracies is as much influenced by manners as by policy, by speeches as by deeds. Though the actions of the Republican Administration have often been quite as liberal as those of its predecessor – witness the decision to continue unconditional aid to India – the angry debates from which such decisions emerge usually produce a few disastrous phrases which receive much more publicity in Europe and Asia than the decision itself. Even so, it cannot be denied that in some respects recent American policy has fallen far below the standard set by

Marshall and Acheson. The Guatemala affair, in which America behaved so as to attract the maximum possible odium to herself, will long remain an arsenal of Communist propaganda. And so long as Far Eastern problems predominate, the paralysis imposed on American policy by party controversy and the China Lobby will strain America's relations with both Europe and the Colombo powers. Moreover, although the Republicans are continuing without much change the foreign and defence policies inaugurated by the Democrats, the domestic compulsion to strike a new note has produced a series of slogans which terrify America's allies and appal the neutrals. Though the policy of 'liberation' received its death-blow over a year ago in Berlin, and the strategy of massive retaliation was exploded at Dien Bien Phu, Republican unwillingness to admit the fiasco leaves an ambiguity in American policy which her enemies are quick to exploit. The last few months have brought a great surge of neutralism throughout the free world, and in its new mood Soviet policy relies more on neutralism than on outright pro-Communism.

Both in Europe and in Asia, Communist propaganda no longer demands absolute subservience to the U S S R. It offers the prospect of peaceful co-existence at the price only of abandoning intimate co-operation with the U S A. Or to put it another way, it makes co-existence with Russia depend on relations with America not going beyond co-existence. This idea of a buffer-zone politically equidistant from both America and the Soviet Union has immense appeal for a wide range of opinion from extreme Left to extreme Right. It attracts both the passive and active type of neutralist – the *ohne mich* and the Third Forcer. It is surprising what varied quarters have put the idea forward in the West this year. In Germany, industrialists, Social Democrats, and extreme reactionaries, have all suggested that neutralization is a reasonable price to pay for national unity. In Britain, Tory imperialists, Bevanites and staunch Liberals have expressed similar hopes for the construction of a buffer-zone. In France, Gaullists, Radicals and Socialists have done the same. Though sometimes these views are buttressed by highly specific arguments, in most cases they rely on the general feeling that it is both morally right and practically possible for Europe – and Southern Asia – to assume a position equidistant from Russia and America. This feeling has been known as neutralism ever since Etienne Gilson

wrote his famous articles for *Le Monde*. It differs from neutrality in that it is not just a policy to be justified by arguments of expediency, but also an attitude of mind which claims a moral superiority over others.

There is no doubt that neutralism has attracted some support as a reaction against the extravagant moral claims made by some Western spokesmen in the cold war. By trying to represent Western governments as crusaders for Christian values in a war with absolute evil, these propagandists have driven prominent theologians like Karl Barth into a total refusal to take sides. In Britain, Professor Butterfield has assumed a similar position because he is obsessed by the tragic element in international conflict. As a Conservative pessimist he denies the possibility of any world order beyond a temporary balance of power; so he tends to treat all moral claims in foreign policy as pharisaism. Such warnings should lead statesmen and peoples to approach world problems with greater humility. They cannot excuse a refusal to subject the internal character and external behaviour of states to moral judgment and comparison. A Christian can scarcely assume a neutral attitude towards the totalitarian state, which combines all that most repels the Christian about other forms of government, without allowing any place for the individual spirit. Only the most total pessimism about political action as such can justify moral neutrality in a struggle where the totalitarian state is opposed by one with less far-reaching claims.

This fallacy of the false equation, as Koestler called it, also lies behind the neutralism of the Babbits of the Left. The idea that there is nothing to choose between 'socialism without democracy' and 'democracy without socialism' involves the most dangerous of all socialist heresies: it assumes that the exercise of power by the state is an end in itself for socialists, whether or not the state can be said to represent the people. In fact, socialism is inseparable from democracy while the Soviet system is, for all its economic planning and control, as the Titoists claim, a form of state capitalism similar to Fascism which it also resembles in the purely political field. On the other hand, while socialism is inconceivable without democracy, it can well be argued that capitalism as Marx described it cannot survive in a democratic state. The U S A has falsified Communist predictions because the operation of democracy has profoundly modified the character of American capitalism

– through high taxation, producer subsidies, anti-trust legislation, and direct state intervention. Certainly the result is not a socialist society; but there is no denying that it can meet the effective demand of the workers for welfare, while the degree of its immunity to the trade cycle has astonished its friends as well as its enemies.

Soviet Communism is not only incompatible with socialism: it regards socialism as its deadliest enemy, as the prisons of Eastern Europe can testify. There is no Soviet Engels to record the sufferings of the Soviet working-class. Democracy, on the contrary, not only allows the workers to organize in trade unions and socialist parties : it is in itself incompatible with the survival of capitalism as Marxists define it. Thus no socialist can commit himself morally to neutralism, even when he commits himself politically to neutrality, like the Swedish Social Democrats. Indeed, even the word 'neutrality' has such embarrassing moral implications for the Swedes that they prefer to describe themselves simply as 'alliance-free'.

In Asia and Africa moral neutralism has a stronger case in basing itself on the analogy between Western colonialism and Soviet imperialism. But here too the difference between democracy and totalitarianism is decisive. Though Western colonialism has produced horrors equal to anything that has happened in the Soviet empire, the existence in the mother country of political democracy gives colonial nationalism a *point d'appui* which does not exist in Moscow. Thus European imperialism is disappearing because it is incompatible with democracy at home. It is easy to say that the recent retreats of British, French and Dutch imperialism were made inevitable by the pressure of local nationalism. But the point is that European democracy gave Asian nationalism a chance to organize resistance which Soviet Russia has never allowed in her Asian territories. While Britain enabled the Burmese and Indian nationalists who fought against her on the Japanese side to resume political activity after the second world war, Russia liquidated the Chechen-Ingush and Crimean Autonomous Republics and deported their peoples *en bloc* to Siberia, because some of them took the arrival of the German armies as a chance to fight for national liberation. It is an interesting commentary on Soviet elections that both these peoples registered a 98 per cent vote for the Soviet régime in 1938. These facts are much better understood in Asia to-day than even a

few years ago – indeed they provoked an interesting debate at a meeting of the Anti-Colonial Co-ordination Committee of the Asian Socialist Conference last May. And it was U. Kyaw Nyein, General Secretary of the Burmese Socialist Party and a man who has spent most of his life fighting British rule, who stated

> Both types of colonialism are dangerous. In fact, the Soviet type of imperialism is perhaps even more degrading and dangerous, because it is more ruthless, more systematic, and more blatantly trying to justify itself in the name of Communist world revolution.

Thus, in so far as neutralism assumes indifference to the outcome of the cold war, it can certainly claim no moral distinction. With all its obvious imperfections, democracy is the form of society best fitted to realize moral values in political life, and totalitarianism the worst. But totalitarianism is so recent a phenomenon that its true character is still misunderstood, both by those who compare it with earlier types of autocracy and by those whose preoccupation with its economic forms blinds them to the way it organizes political power. This failure to appreciate the nature of totalitarianism undermines the case for neutralism as a practical policy. The neutralist sees the cold war as a conventional struggle between two power-blocs, and calculates his policy on the assumption that Malenkov is guided by the same sort of motives as, say, Peter the Great. Even on this assumption the case for neutralism is much weaker for Europeans or Asians than it would be for Americans. But in fact Soviet policy must be judged in the light of the doctrine which its makers openly avow, and whose relevance has been demonstrated by the whole course of events since 1917.

By using the term co-existence to describe the aim of their present tactics, the post-Stalin leaders deliberately emphasize the doctrinal continuity on which their policy is based. But if this is recognized, co-existence must be seen in the light of that ideology – as a temporary phase produced by the appearance of unity and strength in the non-Communist world, which will cease once that unity and strength have disappeared. The Soviet leaders have often stated that co-existence is designed to assist the internal contradictions of the non-Communist world in disrupting the unity produced by Communist aggressiveness, while the Communist bloc consolidates and exploits its post-war gains, so as to achieve a superiority of economic and military strength. Moreover, co-existence

implies not a general agreement between Russia and the non-Communist world as a whole, but separate agreements with the individual members of that world. When the Atlantic powers concerted their approach to Russia at the Berlin conference, they were told that this was incompatible with co-existence. A more remarkable and significant case was the Soviet reaction to the Anglo-Egyptian settlement this summer. On August 8 *Pravda* said that the agreement 'threatens the peaceful co-existence of Egypt with other countries'. Co-existence thus requires an end to co-operation between the non-Communist states, while involving no loosening whatever of the rigid bonds which make the Communist bloc a monolithic unit. The non-Communist powers are not to co-operate more closely with one another than they co-operate individually with the Soviet Union – and co-operation with the Soviet Union must stop short at 'the limits set by the nature of the conflicting systems', i.e. at the point where co-operation might imply the slightest modification in the internal organization of the two states. Thus, while the network of military treaties integrating the Communist bloc continues undisturbed, military co-operation in the free world must be limited to the type of non-aggression pact which Russia herself might join. Both in Europe and in Asia this is the basic principle behind recent Communist diplomacy.

Since these are the only conditions under which neutralism will be allowed to operate, the neutralist fallacy is obvious enough. The Soviet system already covers a third of the world's surface, and some thousand million people – more than half in area and population of the Eurasian continent, including its geopolitical heartland. The remaining fringes of Southern Asia and Western Europe are indefensible without support from the Western Hemisphere. Without the clearest guarantee of effective military co-operation from America, the integrity of these fringes would depend on lasting Soviet good-will. Even Peter the Great could not have resisted such a temptation, and those who believe that Stalin's death produced a fundamental change in Soviet foreign policy can scarcely rely on the immortality of Malenkov.

Thus neutralism is invalidated by the existence of a powerful Communist bloc with unlimited ambitions and indiscriminate hostility to all non-Communist states and individuals. There is, however, an even more radical objection to neutralism,

which does not depend on the existence of the cold war at all, though of course the cold war immensely fortifies it. The attempt to preserve peace in an anarchy of power politics by constructing balances of power has always broken down in the past, since the separate states composing any given balance have been free to change their place in the scales whenever they saw a national interest in doing so. Wars have steadily become more widespread and more destructive. To-day science has shrivelled space and time, and has put it in the power of even the smallest industrial state, if equipped with cobalt bombs, to destroy life on this planet. Quite apart from the special problems presented by the Communist bloc, which has mastered the contradictions of power politics within its frontiers by concentrating all power in the Kremlin – I cannot deal here with the important exception of China – the contradictions of power politics inside the non-Communist world are quite sufficient to produce catastrophe unless they can be controlled. And they can only be controlled by a type of co-operation between the non-Communist states which critically limits their freedom of action, i.e. goes well beyond the limits set for co-existence by Soviet doctrine.

The recent backsliding in American – and British – policy strengthens the case against neutralism. The growing tendency for the greatest power in the non-Communist world to 'go it alone' increases the need for creating a framework of co-operation within which this tendency can be influenced, if not controlled. A rejection of neutralism does not entail approval, or even acceptance, of evils in the non-Communist world, such as McCarthyism or colonialism. On the contrary, the positive alternative to neutralism requires a vigorous struggle against all the weaknesses of the non-Communist world which tend to undermine its material or moral strength. In fact it is only by rejecting neutralism that co-existence can be made permanent. It is an odd commentary on the virulence of American politics that President Eisenhower prefers to use the Soviet word 'co-existence' rather than the term 'containment' in fashion under the Democrats. But the Republicans are right in thinking that containment is not enough. The world needs 'containment-plus' – not containment plus empty promises to liberate peoples beyond our reach, but containment plus an effort to remove the weaknesses of the world on this side of the frontier we hold.

TROUBLE IN PAKISTAN

Lord Birdwood

Historians claim that the study of history holds depths of meaning unrevealed to those who merely take events as and when they are thrust upon them. If so, the least understood of methods is that chain reaction by which the results of decisions in one era are handed on to another. Just as science used to tell us that matter cannot be destroyed, so are the penalties of diplomacy and policy never lost. To trace a situation back to its origin becomes a game of some fascination.

In the case of Pakistan, her present internal difficulties cannot be separated from those first decisions concerned with her creation. From the day that Mr Jinnah concluded that nothing less than a twin State of two widely separated areas would satisfy frustrated Moslem sentiment, the sequence of events which culminated in the appointment of Major-General Iskander Mirza in control in East Pakistan was inherent in a slow but sure development. We need not look back to the great Iqbal. For our purposes the story begins in 1940 when the Moslem League, meeting in full session in Lahore, passed a resolution which was to become the basis for future claims. Hindu intransigence had clinched the matter. Much as Englishmen deplored the destruction of a functional unity they had created, it had to be admitted that the Indian National Congress in its handling of Provincial responsibility had so exasperated the minority community as to induce an element of inevitability into the pattern of the Moslem claim.

The Lahore resolution read as follows:

> The establishment of completely independent States formed by demarcating geographically contiguous units into regions which shall be constituted with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary. The areas in which Moslems are numerically in a majority, as in the North-Western and Eastern zones of India, shall be grouped together to constitute 'Independent States' which shall be the national

homelands in which the constituent unit shall be autonomous and sovereign.

Three years later I was working as a Civil Liaison Officer in that critical Punjab country where Hindu and Moslem villages were interlaced in seemingly inseparable interdependence. Mr Jinnah was paying one of his rare visits to the Punjab, which paradoxically had remained a stronghold comparatively immune from Moslem League activity. I remember asking him for a definition of the boundaries he would demand. The answer was of vital significance for the Jullundur District in which I worked. Yet he refused to be committed. 'Give us the principle and the details will follow'; and it is curious that for many months the Government of India were content with that rather baffling obscurity. When the final demand took shape it was realized that a structure for which there could be no precedent was to be launched in circumstances which might well have stifled the growth of a more normal community. In all fairness to Pakistan we should recognize that the time available for planning and the setting up of an effective Government proved far less than could have been anticipated. Only a gathering tide of enthusiasm, a release of frustrations akin to the emotional background which launched the State of Israel, could establish Pakistan in the conditions of blood and tears which governed events in 1947. It is claimed that there was no precedent. The case of Libya at first sight suggests an analogy, until it be remembered that Cyrenaica and Tripolitania were never cemented in a common loyalty to a devoted architect. On the contrary, they were reluctantly thrown into association by an international dispensation. In contrast, East and West Pakistan embarked on their joint nationhood in the first flush of an enthusiasm which found its focus in their leader, who in turn had reduced the popular presentation of the Moslem case to a fine art. The future could look after itself. The great Moslem minority would be satisfied only with its pound of flesh; and that meant the inclusion of East Bengal, despite the fact that it enjoyed only a slender Moslem majority and the hazards of history had separated it by a thousand miles from Karachi.

The conquest of Bengal by the Moslem, Mohammed Bakhtyar Khalji, was finally effected in 1202. It would be entirely misleading to claim that the hand of Islam subsequently rested unnaturally on Dravidian Bengal. It could,

however, be asserted that the imposition of Moslem culture and religion produced a synthesis in which the way of life of the people, subject to the particular circumstances of geography, was little disturbed. Bengal absorbed Islam rather than the process reverse. The cohesion of Bengal was always a reality in times when other units were but geographical expressions of political convenience. Related to the decisions of 1947 this meant that 43 million dark-skinned Bengalis of Mongol-Dravidian stock, a riverine community concerned with growing rice and jute, were to find themselves suddenly sharing nationhood with 33 million Punjabis, Sindhis and Pathans of Turko-Aryan origin, cultivating wheat and cotton. The uneven edge of argument was subsequently to be sharpened by Bengali susceptibilities concerning their numerical superiority. This, then, is the background against which recent events in Bengal must be viewed, although other strong ingredients have been stirred into the mixture to complicate the issue.

We should here note the present constitutional structure. On August 15th, 1947, those Moslem League members of the Constituent Assembly in Delhi, who had in fact been voted in for the purpose of effecting Moslem representation in an undivided India, came over to Karachi under an adaptation of the Government of India Act, 1935, where they continued to perform both normal Parliamentary functions and sit as a Constituent Assembly. The dual purpose has been most firmly supported by the Prime Minister, Mr Mohammed Ali. This is his comment:

> The task of framing the Constitution was not entrusted to the Moslem League as such, but to all members, Moslems and non-Moslems, specifically chosen for this purpose. There is no Government Party and no Opposition in the Constituent Assembly. Every member . . . has the same mandate from the electorate, namely to frame the Constitution.

That is the official view: and so, while Provincial elections continue to be recognized and the will of the people may be regarded as receiving local expression, at the Centre the original representation continues. It would certainly be anomalous to expect the central structure to conform every time a local election registered a change, and the Prime Minister quotes the cases of Canada and Australia in support of his contention. The position may well be legally unassailable.

But it is hardly a happy one, and until Provincial and Central elections are in step within the framework of a new Constitution, some sense of instability must inevitably persist to represent a challenge to the constitutional structure.

We come now to the fateful East Pakistan elections in March this year. The Moslem League, based on its old East Bengal membership before partition, had been firmly entrenched. Yet of 309 seats in the East Bengal Provincial Assembly the League secured 8 and the United Front Party won 212. The remaining seats went to Hindus and others on a system of communal representation. What were the components of the so-called 'United Front' under Mr Fazl Huq? By far the largest element was Mr H. S. Suhrawardy's 'Jinnah Awami League', which for political convenience found allies in Mr Fazl Huq's Praja Party; orthodox Koranic experts; Communists and a number of lesser obscure groups. It was united only in its desire to eliminate the Moslem League, and it swept into office mainly on a number of promises which could never have been fulfilled. The League had only itself to blame, having sat back for months in apathy and lost all touch with the countryside.

The main additional ingredients to which reference has been made, will now be seen to be the clash of personalities and the familiar opportunism of the Communists. Less evident was the play and counterplay of influences from neighbouring India. Two personalities in particular should be noted, those of Fazl Huq and Hassan Shaheed Suhrawardy.

The octogenarian Fazl Huq has had a career in which his political convictions appear always to have been subordinate to his desire for power. In 1942, when acting as Chief Minister of United Bengal, he incurred the severe censure of the Chief Justice for the part he played in the case 'Emperor *v.* Sadhu Majhi', in the Bengal High Court.* In the following year Mr Jinnah expelled him from the League in terms which left nothing to the imagination.

> . . . I say with all due deliberation and with all responsibility that he was a curse to the politics of Bengal. He was a curse to Mussalmans because he betrayed us; he was a curse to the Hindus because he served them as a puppet and their creature.

* A chapter was devoted to this case in the present writer's *A Continent Experiments* (Skeffington, 1946).

The charge is significant in view of Mr Huq's activities during his recent brief term of office. During a visit to Calcutta he made statements which left no doubt in the minds both of Indians who heard him and the Government in Karachi, that his loyalty to Pakistan as a unitary State hung on a very slender thread. His situation was not unlike that of Sheikh Abdullah in Kashmir. The temptations of a precarious independence brought about Abdullah's downfall. They appear to have been too alluring also for Fazl Huq. Subsequent to his removal from office he issued a formal denial of any intention to sabotage the twin-State conception. Autonomy and not sovereignty, he claimed, had been the goal for him and his colleagues. If the Centre could have been content to look after currency, foreign affairs and defence, East Pakistan under his guidance would have remained in loyal partnership with the West. But it was too late. He had already twisted and turned on his tracks far too many times to be in any way reliable from the point of view of the Central Government.

Mr H. S. Suhrawardy is of a different calibre. With his complete command of the English language, his forensic skill and dynamic energy, he is a future power for either good or evil. From 1936 he was an active member of the Moslem League. On the eve of the creation of Pakistan he fought a provincial election in which he lost the Premiership to Khwaja Nazimuddin. The story goes that Suhrawardy was then anxious to join Mr Jinnah and play a part appropriate to his great ability. Mr Jinnah however insisted that he should first wait until the East Bengal Ministry had settled comfortably into position before making a move which might be misinterpreted by the new Premier. Suhrawardy seems to have taken offence in his temporary eclipse and he remained in Calcutta secure in his friendship with Mahatma Gandhi. After Gandhi's assassination little tolerance was shown in India to a former Moslem League leader. Nor was East Bengal prepared to accept him, so he came over to Karachi. But there was now no question of his participation in the Administration, and behind the shelter of accusations that the League had developed into a self-interested monopoly of patronage he formed his own 'Jinnah Awami League'. His claim was that his organization alone remained faithful to the principles of the 'Quaid-i-Azam'. Within the last two years under his energetic leadership the Awami League has assumed the power and prestige of an All-Pakistan party.

It was unfortunate that at the time of crisis he lay hopelessly incapacitated on a bed of sickness and quite unable to exercise control over his somewhat bewildered followers. His significance lies in the fact that his devotion to the indivisibility of East and West Pakistan has never been questioned.

We should here note the nature of the actual crisis. Some weeks after Mr Huq's Ministry took office, serious outbreaks took place in three widely separated areas in the province. At the Karnaphuli paper mills, the rioters murdered their manager who was a Hyderabadi. At the great Adamjee jute mill at Narayanganj, generally regarded as the symbol of the nation's progressive industrialization, a sinister element in the massacre of some 400 men, women and children was that a Minister on the spot appears deliberately to have prevented the police from taking action to control the situation. In both these cases, and at the Ispahani match factory at Khalna, there were just sufficient circumstances of non-Bengali control to enable mischief-makers to play on the theme of 'foreign' exploitation. The details need not concern us. It is sufficient to note that in general terms the Huq Ministry had seemingly in a few weeks abandoned all attempt at serious government, presumably in the hope of being able to present and exploit chaos as the result of alleged indifference to their demands at the Centre. The extent to which Communist influence has effectively infiltrated the United Front should not be judged on numbers. The party probably contained only half a dozen concealed comrades and they were reinforced in the Provincial Assembly by four declared Communists and a handful of fellow-travellers in the Ganantri Dal party. Students of Communist technique know only too well that the real danger point is reached when the Communist disguises his identity and takes cover in infiltration. It is in this light that the influence of Moulana Bashani, President of the East Bengal Awami League, should be judged. After attending a 'Peace Congress' in East Germany he returned dutifully conversant with left-wing slogans. On being accused of being a Communist, his reply was reported to be 'How can that be – I am a Moslem'; which on reflection is just the kind of defence which the Communists would have wished him to make. The whole character of the disturbances is far too reminiscent of the process which shook British Guiana. Nor was the proximity of Calcutta likely to exercise an effect other than that of a convenient external focus

of confidence for the Communists. In the circumstances, the action of the Central Government was the only possible move to halt the rot which was undermining the whole structure. In India meddlesome busy-bodies were watching their opportunity. The official reaction in Delhi was strictly correct, and newspapers such as the *Hindustan Times* confined themselves to criticism of 'the iron hand' of Mohammed Ali and objective comment on the artificial nature of the understanding between the two segments of Pakistan. But the less scrupulous *Bengal Press*, with some obvious co-operation in East Pakistan, carried stories of West Pakistan intrigue: the riots and loss of life had been staged by West Pakistan to provide the excuse for interference, and East Pakistan's Hindu minority of nine million were to become a scapegoat. The scope for imaginative treatment of the situation was wide and mischief makers were quick to exploit the occasion.

On May 30th, Mr Mohammed Ali broadcast a full statement. The Central Government had decided to assume Provincial Administration under section 92 A of the Government of India Act as adapted by Pakistan, and orders dismissing the Provincial Ministry had been promulgated. The East Pakistan Governor, Chaudhri Khaliquzaman, would be replaced. His relief, Major-General Iskander Mirza, the very able Defence Secretary, flew back from England to take control. It should be appreciated that while reluctantly taking firm action, Mohammed Ali was fully alive to the fundamental reality of East Bengal grievances. There had been no question of resistance to the verdict of the people as manifested in the local elections. Indeed the Central Government had been quick to pledge their full support of Fazl Huq's Ministry, the Prime Minister going so far as to claim that the co-existence of a different dispensation in a Province from that at the Centre was a symbol of the acceptance of true democratic processes.

> We are a democratic country. Our people have the fullest freedom to choose their own Government. The East Bengal elections demonstrated beyond doubt that our people do in fact enjoy that freedom. It is a welcome tribute to our system of government.*

Thus, when later announcing the suspension of the Huq

* March 20th, 1954. Budget Speech, Karachi.

Ministry the Prime Minister was quick to add that the Provincial Legislatures would continue in being and that normal conditions would be restored immediately the situation permitted.

The new Governor, Major-General Iskander Mirza, has tackled his task with characteristic energy. Englishmen will remember him as a cheerful and successful Deputy Commissioner of Peshawar, which was possibly the most difficult of appointments in the North-West Frontier Province. He comes of an old and respected Bengal family and is therefore beyond the accusation of foreign indifference. He has initiated immediate and obvious measures, which include the banning of the local Communist party and financial aid from the Centre for urgent measures covering food purchase and distribution. But we are still left with a great question mark encircling the future destiny of the Province, and with it an equal problem for the State of Pakistan. Indeed no assessment would be wholly honest or complete without some attempt to look into the years ahead.

It is legitimate to distinguish precisely between what we wish and what we fear. As a loyal and firm believer in the mission of the Commonwealth in world affairs, the writer regards any development which might challenge its preservation with fear and suspicion. A happy family is more likely to prosper than an unhappy one, and if one member of the family is in trouble, the whole membership is in some degree affected. In international affairs the new Pakistan has entered the arena with a fresh vitality which could not have been predicted two years ago. Through clear and fearless leadership she could, if she so wished, introduce a healthy sense of reality into the drifting policies of South East Asia. Such were the indications at the recent Colombo Conference of five Asian Powers. All these developments may be jeopardized if Pakistan has continually to be on her guard for the protection of her very foundations. With this in mind it is perhaps better to face the facts now and recognize the dangers, rather than wait for truth to reveal itself in more devious and similar ways at a later date. The truth is that Jinnah's conception of East and West Pakistani partnership has received its first real challenge. Already one original principle, the supremacy of the Urdu language, has had to be abandoned. The challenge may have been manifested through false and opportunist polemics. But behind the

façade are more fundamental conditions. Mr Mohammed Ali and his colleagues are aware of this. It is a curious situation. To an outside observer it is as if good men – indeed the best men available – had inherited a situation hardly deserving of their ability. The memory of the late Mohammed Ali Jinnah is still fresh and is there to help them. Nor are the mutual economic advantages of unity likely to be easily surrendered. But if unity is to be preserved a bold policy of self-determination in East Pakistan will have to be recognized, once law and order and stable government are established. Accusations that the poor East is drained to support the rich West must be falsified. In particular one questions the future of the Moslem League as a party. The League came into existence to serve a certain purpose on an undivided Indian sub-continent. Has not that purpose been fulfilled? Would it not be wiser to consider dissolution, thereby giving dissident elements freedom to follow their own policies? Is not the attempt to preserve mere size, in fact, a source of weakness in the defence of League principles? Conversely, would not the present leadership feel more secure in the certainty of unqualified support from a reduced electorate certain of its loyalties? There need be no abandonment of principle or policy. But dissolution and a fresh start under another label would present the opportunity for a more healthy atmosphere for the operation of parliamentary democracy.

Would the present leaders be returned to power in All-Pakistan elections in the above circumstances? It is difficult to believe that the country would dispense with a Prime Minister who has ably and fearlessly faced up to great problems. Nor do we accept the prospect of losing the services of a Foreign Minister ripe in experience of international negotiation, or a Finance Minister of international reputation. But if by some queer turn of fate lesser men were to come to power we could with confidence expect the present team not to accept surrender.

Within the Commonwealth, governments come and go, and we in Great Britain have often to work with partners not of our own preference. But the structure survives in flexibility. Let flexibility then govern the survival of the components which complete the whole.

THE CASE OF DR OPPENHEIMER

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Part Two

It has been shown * that the Oppenheimer affair involved far more than uncertainty about the political and personal attitude of a leading scientist; that in fact the whole complex of American military strategy in the atomic age was involved. The first full-length journalistic account of the scientists' efforts and the position of the military was given in an article in *Fortune* magazine, May 1953, headlined 'The Hidden Struggle for the H-bomb: the Story of Dr Oppenheimer's Persistent Campaign to Reverse U.S. Military Strategy'. The writer fairly reports the history of the struggle, despite his clear animus against Oppenheimer and the scientists for their meddling in military affairs. The last sentence formulates concisely, from the military point of view, the present tension between science and politics in America: 'There is a serious question of the propriety of scientists trying to settle grave national issues alone, inasmuch as they bear no responsibility for the successful execution of war plans.'

Dr Oppenheimer's own position was best summed up in his famous article in the quarterly *Foreign Affairs* of July 1953, a rewriting of a speech he delivered before the Council on Foreign Relations, which in turn grew out of his State Department disarmament report. Here he reviewed his challenge to the foundation of American strategy: the 'rather rigid commitment to use (atomic weapons) in a very massive unremitting strategic assault on the enemy'. The Air Force strategy depended on maintaining a larger stock of weapons than the Russians. But 'the very least we can conclude is that our twenty-thousandth bomb . . . will not in any deep strategic sense affect their two thousandth'. The futility of

* See *The Twentieth Century*, August, 1954.

stockpiling and retaliation as the basis of American strategy was accented by the 'relatively little done to secure our defence against the atom'. There was also the unsolved question of how we would defend our Allies, and behind this the agonizing logic of the present strategy which would make it necessary for the United States to atomize the cities of Western Europe if they came under Soviet control early in the next world war. As a final – technical – point against the stockpiling-retaliatory strategy, Dr Oppenheimer foresaw a 'time when . . . the art of delivery and the art of defence will have a much higher military relevance than supremacy in the atomic munitions field itself'. This restated the conclusions of the *Summer Study* group.

But perhaps the major point Dr Oppenheimer had to make was not technical but political. At the end of his article he suggested a reform in official behaviour, in order to make 'available to ourselves, in this tough time, the inherent resources of a country like ours and a government like ours.' Especially, in view of the alarming tendency of the Air Defence command to concentrate on the protection of the nation's striking arm rather than on the protection of the country itself, Oppenheimer was worried about what he called the 'political vitality' of America. Of one source of political vitality – 'the interplay, the conflict of opinion and debate, in many diverse and complex agencies, legislative and executive, which contribute to the making of policy' – he had seen a great deal. But the other resource – a 'public opinion which is based on confidence that it knows the truth' – was 'not available to-day'. Public opinion was the great factor which the Government had by-passed. In the field of atomic strategy 'public opinion cannot exist'. Secrecy veiled the 'important conditions'. For the survival of democracy, for the preservation of its will to fight in the unparalleled tests to come, Dr Oppenheimer recommended 'candour' as the first reform to which the new Republican Administration should attend. Against this, the military insisted that only the Russians could possibly benefit from candour, that the American people could not understand the technicalities, and that to frighten them was dangerous from the perspective of morale.

Certainly one *Foreign Affairs* article by Oppenheimer, and the rebuttal of Oppenheimer's position in *Fortune*, was not enough to bring the struggle into the arena of public debate. And even in the open, the military and governmental *élites*

would have held a profound advantage. Air Force strategy was deeply rooted in the American ethos. The 'fortress' or 'Maginot Line' strategy could never have evoked the same appeal; it was a complicated argument, led by a 'complicated' man. In the press, only the Alsop brothers (in the New York *Herald Tribune*) carried the Oppenheimer position to their readers, and even their perceptive and sometimes hair-raising frankness failed to develop any public pressure on the scientists. The issues seemed too strategic, not moralistic enough to attract a sufficient number of do-gooders. The aloofness of the scientist from even the educated and liberal portions of the public is evident in America, for this public tends to moralize a great deal about the 'ethical failure' of science, as well as about all other ethical failures. The humanist intellectual in the United States has been retreating at a remarkable pace from his earlier interest in politics and science. This increasing isolation of the scientific *élite* is an important factor in the crisis of culture that has overtaken liberal democratic society in America. The main fact of political life in America today is that Dr Oppenheimer could never operate in the open with any expectation of significant public support. Not only is there no party that might conceivably have supported him, but no constellation of public opinion could form near him. The autonomous cosmopolitan community of science is necessarily alienated from the American public and gains no advantage in taking an argument before it. The distance between the scientist with a liberal ethic and even the educated public is perhaps greater now than in the Protestant era of American culture, when 'science' was more popular and the educated classes could more easily confront it. No significant segment of American public opinion now exists to appraise or even interest itself in 'technical' problems. The ignorance of the public no longer keeps it away from politics, but it does keep it away from science. In a technologically mysterious culture even the educated take the magic of their electric toasters and their atomic strategy for granted; they are more helpless before it than the primitive before the unorganized powers of nature, for modern man has no magic to exert. The magic is left to the scientist, and therefore in a technologically recondite age more and more issues become magical and are considered outside the orbit of public competence. This is a problem of democratic life which no argument for candour can easily turn.

III

It was cruelly appropriate that a battle fought so secretly should end not with private dismissal but with public humiliation. For the basis of attack was not the one still unknown to the American public, but the one familiar now through the last six years of public investigation by Congressional committees. Dr Oppenheimer was accused not for the policy to which he had bent his science, but for his past and his associations which remain unmendable – all family 'relations' being in the official definition 'associations'.

Dr Oppenheimer's past was well known to the Government: a number of friends, a dead sweetheart, his wife's first husband, his wife, his brother, his brother's wife – all at one time or another Communists. Nevertheless in 1942 he was asked to organize atomic bomb research. The same past could be again in question, not because new evidence had been offered, but because a conspiratorial tedium had settled even more heavily upon American institutional and *élite* life than upon the public. The Administration could not decline to compete with Senator McCarthy in the art of demonstrating its fixation on the past. Such fixations – like the revived spy charges made against Harry Dexter White, who died in 1948 – provide the nation with relief from the frustrations of the present. Dr Oppenheimer's former military superior, General Groves, pin-pointed the paranoid tendencies of the security drive – ironically, as I think – when he replied to a question about Dr Oppenheimer's trustworthiness: 'I don't know. How can you always tell if your own husband or wife is trustworthy?'

Dr Oppenheimer's past has permitted the Government to display all sorts of cleverness in catching him out, not only in the final cross-examinations but in the earlier investigations. He was exposed not so much in the few obvious lies he told to protect friends, but in the more subtle possibilities of treason. A dialectic the more resembling that of the Communists in the very fervour of opposing them has seeped into the American official mind. In the 1951 report of the California State Senate Fact-Finding Commission used by the A E C to prepare its original charges against Dr Oppenheimer, this dialectic is marvellously strung together out of gossamer inference. Since it was discovered that he was classified in secret Communist Party communications as unsympathetic to Communism, the California

report suggested that the Party was really counting on Dr Oppenheimer and that his known antipathy to them might well be a 'deliberate ruse'. Starting from this plausibility, American security forces found the facts 'quite plain that [Russian agents] were unanimous in picking Dr J. Robert Oppenheimer as the most suitable man to contact.' They judged him as a 'potential traitor'.

The case broke on March 4th this year, when Oppenheimer released to the Press his reply to a letter of charges from Major-General Nichols, general manager of the A E C. It was then made known that since the previous summer, on the personal order of the President, a 'blank wall' had been placed between Dr Oppenheimer and all 'restricted data'. For almost a year he had been barred from Government work and consultations. The letter listed an unsorted number of charges, most of them held over from the previous investigations of Dr Oppenheimer in 1946 and 1948. The only new accusation, that of opposing the hydrogen bomb, seemed the most ominous.

But this was not the charge singled out as decisive in Dr Oppenheimer's reply. He did not choose to defend his policies but his past and person – the old charges on which he had already been cleared. His letter to the Atomic Energy Commission (March 4th) avoided the homiletics on 'the god that failed' we have come to expect in such cases, for he was never a believer but only a friend and relative of believers. Nevertheless, if he did not indulge in any theoretic recantations, Dr Oppenheimer did in another sense exceed the limits of defensiveness. His response to the rehash of his past in the changed climate of America was if anything too appropriate to the pattern of attack. Dr Oppenheimer did not discuss the objective political argument which was responsible for his present humiliation. The effect of his language was to transform his case into a case history, as if a clinical understanding was the best one he could reach with his accusers (and the public). Read against the nasty brief-like letter from the Atomic Energy Commission, Dr Oppenheimer's reply was too long and too intimate for a political accounting. Such a letter is in itself an act of penance, for the total man can never be innocent. In modern politics it is not resistance but the fullness of revelation that is the standard act of guilt. A chilling sense of confession could easily be read into the letter.

Dr Oppenheimer exercised the intellectual's right of introspection in coming up against power. But the self-portrait he drew was uncomfortably general, a portrait not of an individual but of a stock academic American. When not suspect, the professor in America is invariably located a little outside the main realities. Piano-players in the brothels of Storyville (New Orleans), where jazz was born, were for their fine art and eunuchal functions honoured with the title 'Professor', a considered opinion of the few relatively sexless males at the gate to the plenitude of sexuality. The mass media are full of mad professors. (There is a new radio series about a 'Prof. McNulty' who, although he acts and talks in a perfectly reasonable way, is billed as 'whacky' or 'off beat' and therefore served buffoon laughter like that worked up for Red Skelton or other idiot-style comics.) The academies are full of men who, despite the ruthlessness of university politics, are convinced that they could not survive in the 'real' world outside. Too many of them accept the popular definition of reality as practically anywhere outside the academy, and Dr Oppenheimer could not be expected to escape the air he breathes. It is inevitable that his self-criticism should appeal to our sense of comedy. His letter reports how friends 'chided' him with being too much of a 'highbrow', and how his fault was the fault of the world in which he moved, for his friends were 'mostly faculty people . . . and artists.' Thus he studied and read Sanskrit; 'Led Abnormal Life', ran some newspaper headlines when the case first broke. Forwarded to clarify 'the context of my life and my work' by the self-examination of 'character' as well as 'associations and loyalty', Dr Oppenheimer's letter even hinted at some sort of hereditary highbrowism. Although his father was a successful businessman, his mother 'before her marriage was an artist and teacher of art.' One is left to wonder what his mother's pre-marital talents have to do with the case, unless it is part of the case-history.

There is also a more specialized *cliché* evoked by Dr Oppenheimer's defence. Although he identified himself as an intellectual (poetry and protest), in another sense he removed himself from membership of the cultured classes in general. It is not simply the joke about the absent-minded professor to which his letter appealed, but specifically the popular image of theoretical physicists confused by a short-circuit in the basement, of mathematicians helpless before this week's

grocery bill. Dr Oppenheimer stood finally as the practitioner of what used to be an unpolitical science. He reports that he

> read very widely, but mostly classics, novels, plays, and poetry; and . . . something of other parts of science. I was not interested in and did not read about economics or politics. I was almost wholly divorced from the contemporary scene in this country. I never read a newspaper or a current magazine like *Time* or *Harper's*; I had no radio, no telephone; I learned of the stock market crash in the fall of 1929 only long after the event; the first time I ever voted was in the Presidential election of 1936.

The familiar plea of innocence by dissociation marred Dr Oppenheimer's defence. The highbrow – especially the physical scientist – breathing only the rare realities available at his heights, develops a special brand of political innocence. It is from the abstractedness of his perspective that Dr Oppenheimer denominated his past. Such an account seems to request that the physical scientist, dealing in nature not history, should be treated with a special clemency. *Nolo episcopari.* But this logic makes life a little harder for those less specialized intellectuals who always did read papers and political magazines (perhaps other than *Time* and *Harper's*), installed telephones, knew all about the stock market crash, and yet also – as Dr Oppenheimer did – sympathized with the Popular Front against the rise of Fascism in Spain and elsewhere.

To understand why Dr Oppenheimer's defence was so accommodating to the means of attack chosen by his political enemies, one must understand the deep and broad acceptance of psychology in America. The popular myth of the treason of the intellectuals is now widely reinforced by the myth of the special neuroticism of the 'scientist,' as well as the artist. (Cf. the British film *Seven Days to Noon.*) Dr Oppenheimer is thus at once condemned and condoned as too 'complex' a personality. After all these years of great responsibility, he has been washed out of Government service, like a young officer candidate in training school, for showing unstable tendencies. This test of character, as distinct from 'association', in American politics indicates to some extent how the idea of the neurotic has been fused, in the official as well as in the popular mind, with the idea of the treasonably inclined. Sickness and health are fast becoming political categories, as once they were

religious categories. 'Security' is after all a significantly psychological term, and by the awful weight of psychological accusation one's opposition can be crushed even more thoroughly in public encounters than in private.

The viciousness of the psychological accusation does not of course discount the real problem which is today compromised and manipulated by the language of 'security'. The tightening anxieties expressed in the Oppenheimer opinions have to be understood against the background of shock among many of the nation's leaders at the size and depth of Communist infiltration. In response to the incomprehensible challenge of ideological betrayal, the honourable and old-fashioned men at the head of American affairs have reacted with renewed and calculated suspicion of those within the nation who appear so different in their habits of thought and in the range of their loyalties. Fear of the scientist, as of the politically cultured, becomes more understandable as a reaction to the strange new political culture in which old-line American political and military leaders find they must operate. Since it has been discovered that there are strange creatures without and within who have no price, make no deals, and talk a language of morals and tactics foreign to the popular culture which the leadership shares, Red-hunting easily incorporates highbrow-hunting. The attack upon radicals as intellectuals, and upon intellectuals as radicals, is a standard item of popular resentment since the Dreyfus case; and anti-intellectualism appears especially ominous when it is compounded with psychological investigation. Nevertheless, no criticism of the rhetoric of the attack, either in its simple-minded or vicious forms, argues away the closeness of belief and action, nor the traumatic betrayals already known.

These considerations have not yet, I think, been taken seriously enough by liberals. Despite Dr Oppenheimer's somewhat over-cooperative admissions of political ignorance and the allusions to neurotic braininess, there was some optimism about the outcome of the case. Since Dr Oppenheimer's past associations had always been known to the Government, many did not expect to see condoned, even in the present climate of 'hysteria', such 'a breach of faith on the part of the Government' (the words of the May editorial in *The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*) that calls upon a man 'to assume such heavy responsibilities in full knowledge of his

life history and then, after he has demonstrably done his best and given the most valuable services to the nation . . . uses facts which were substantially known all the time to cast aspersions on his integrity'. Some defenders of Dr Oppenheimer privately considered it a pity that his case was tried long after that of Alger Hiss. If only Oppenheimer, and not Hiss, had represented them when their generation was put on trial, liberals might feel less guilty today. Yet the Oppenheimer case portends something more sinister than that of Hiss. If Hiss was condemned for his acts and admired for his strong character (set off against the neurotic Chambers who had accused him), Oppenheimer is condemned for his character and praised for his actions. The latter may stand in history as a form of condemnation far more dangerous to liberal society than any straightforward condemnation for acts of treason.

The decision of the Gray Committee was issued on June 1st. Its members had met for eight weeks and heard 500,000 words (992 pages in fine print) of testimony; of the forty witnesses who testified, the majority (including Gordon Dean, former chairman of the A E C in 1950–53, James B. Conant, and Vannevar Bush, director of the Office of Scientific Research and Development during World War II) were favourable to Oppenheimer. The decision is, in the light of the later appellate decision of the A E C, a heavily qualified one. Mr Gray noted that if they had been able to use commonsense rather than the harsh requirements of 'security', the decision might have been different. Dr Oppenheimer's 'loyalty' was reaffirmed, but in the light of his associations and his opposition to the hydrogen bomb, he was judged a 'security risk' and denied renewal of access to 'classified material'. The decision of the A E C board made public four weeks later, on June 29th, presented a more formidable majority (4–1 instead of 2–1) against Dr Oppenheimer and a more severe and consistent verdict, solely on the basis of his character and associations. In a separate concurring opinion, one member of the commission, Mr Thomas E. Murray,* found Dr Oppenheimer 'disloyal', for failing to show 'exact fidelity' and 'obedience'

* The majority voters on the A E C, aside from Admiral Strauss and Mr Murray, were Eugene M. Zuckert, a former assistant secretary of the Air Force and Joseph Campbell, former vice-president and treasurer of Columbia University. Strauss and Campbell are Republicans, Murray and Zuckert are Democrats.

to the Government's security regulations. As the editorial in one major newspaper ran, Dr Oppenheimer

> can clear himself. To do so he will have to forsake suspect companions. He will have to work independently in his chosen field. He must prove that he can learn under this painful pressure, that he can be discreet in his friendships.

Thus while Dr Oppenheimer is not asked to change his mind, he is encouraged to change his heart. Perhaps this is a more insidious demand than any the State could make upon his mind.' It is a demand higher than any but fictional totalitarianisms have yet made. There is already a touch of this in the original verdict, in the place where the Gray Report congratulates itself on its human tenderness and psychological delicacy. 'We believe', wrote Mr Gray and Mr Thomas J. Morgan, representing the majority, 'that it has been demonstrated that the Government can search . . . the soul of an individual whose relationship to his Government is in question.' Not his scientific decisions but his lack of the proper spirit made of Dr Oppenheimer a political danger. For these reasons he has been denied further access to secret information and his role as advisor to the Government terminated. Although there is no question of his having committed any act prejudicial to national interest, Dr Oppenheimer did not have properly fervent emotions about his Communist relatives and friends.

The case for special restrictions on the life and habits of certain classes of the skilled and informed within a garrison state was brilliantly developed in the concurring opinion of A E C Commissioner Murray. 'The American citizen in private life, the man who is not engaged in Governmental service, is not bound by the requirements of the security system.' Only certain persons are subject to this 'special system of law'. A man in Dr Oppenheimer's position should 'relinquish the right to the complete freedom of association that would be his in other circumstances.' It is not a matter of action or even omission contrary to the national interest. 'What is incompatible with obedience to the laws of security is the associations themselves, however innocent in fact.' Thus the friend-enemy relationship (chiefly the dinner meeting with M. Chevalier) is the key to the Oppenheimer decision. Dr Oppenheimer cannot have for a friend anyone who can, by any stretch of the imagination, be considered an enemy of the State. No relation is unpolitical, no

level of dining politeness can continue between the Oppenheimers and the Chevaliers, even if all they did together was to go and see M. André Malraux. As a Government scientist, Oppenheimer must live under special restrictions and must observe the friend-enemy relationship in his personal life. In his case the tragic impossibility of this demand on his person is obvious: he would have to deny his brother (whose career in physics is ruined and who now ranches in the West) and divorce his wife, unless she is specially cleared.

IV

Among the scientists there has been a great public outcry against the Oppenheimer decision. From the beginning they have cried 'Shame' and 'Ingratitude' at the excommunication of so great a figure among them. In both hearings the dissenting opinion came from a representative of science on each board, the chemist, Dr Evans, on the three-man Gray Commission and the physicist, Dr Smyth, on the five-man Atomic Energy Commission sitting as an appellate board. Yet within the scientific *élite* there is much the same fear, mutual suspicion, whispering, shamming and discarding of powerful leaders, once they are beaten, as besets other *élite* formations in modern politics. Although the scientists know each other intimately and have great corporate feeling, in the present atmosphere of American life they are rent by a variety of schisms and hatreds caused by their new relation to political power.

Particularly among the younger scientists there are many who find it agreeable to combine their technical functions with a technical morality, and for whom the Oppenheimer policy-wars were simply intrusions on their established honorific relation to the political order. Actually the Oppenheimer case marked an end to the unique and necessary theoretical work related to atomic weapons. Dr Oppenheimer's services were no longer indispensable, and the fulsome thanks he got with his kicks only made the cries of 'Ingratitude' the more bitter. Another element in the scientific *élite*, the engineers, who are more tractable than the theoreticians, increases in value as the arms race nears a saturation level in point of destructive capacity. Reacting to this trend, some theorists, unwilling to submit to the aims of policy, have advocated retreat from Government service; Dr Oppenheimer himself will find it difficult to quiet the fears of his colleagues. If, between the established

Soviet reality and the developing American reaction to it, there appears to many scientists a shrinking difference, retreat from direct or indirect Government employment takes on prudent as well as moral aspects. This position has been advanced for some time now by the celebrated founder of cybernetics, Prof. Norbert Wiener. Immediately after Dr Oppenheimer was put on his long trial, Dr Wiener wrote an editorial for *The Nation* asking the rhetorical question whether those who play with fire ought not to expect to get their fingers burnt. No doubt it was as a man of high moral as well as intellectual qualities that Dr Oppenheimer could not submit to policy as a technician does. And with his figure the urgent alternatives of doom or grace were bound up in a way sensible to Americans otherwise even more indifferent to ultimate urgencies. Dr Oppenheimer spoke for 'science'; as the American inheritor of the mantle of Einstein no one else could have played this role and hoped somehow to reach public opinion. The prophetic thunder, so far as in America it sounds at all, sounds from the scientist agonizing over his entrapment in a final politics. The design on the cover of the monthly *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* (Dr Oppenheimer is the chairman of its board of directors) is a clock whose hands point some minutes to midnight. It is the scientist who has consistently prophesied, in however small and censored a voice, the real probabilities of Judgment Day. To have such a prevision is not calculated to make a scientist with keen moral sensibilities comfortable in his connection with any régime. Modern régimes in particular do not take suggestions of the Apocalypse seriously and, with perfect political rationality, seek to translate them into logistical terms or terror propaganda.

In the liberal vision, science carried along with it belief in progress (through science) towards the apotheosis of humanity. It was, no doubt, this liberal vision that brought Dr Oppenheimer into some sympathy with the Communist movement, as he understood it, in the 'thirties. The scientist's confidence in his capacity to transform nature fitted in perfectly with the Marxist confidence in a new political capacity to transform society. Sophisticated scientists could thus become naïve Marxists, for there was no transfer of training from their scientific to their political skills. But nowadays, for reasons inherent in the logic of science as well as in the logic of politics, the scientist is troubled by a decline of optimism concerning the consequences of scientific knowledge. A loss of that confidence which is an inseparable

part of the priest-scientist role has made it far more difficult for the contemporary scientist to assume a position in relation to politics more positive than alarm. Science appeared not to remake the world, but to be remade by it. Men like Dr Oppenheimer did indeed hold the keys to the arms race – thereby becoming figures of immense political relevance. But when they tried to enlarge their function and influence policy, with only fragments of the old progressivist scientific faith upon which to fall back, they were left peculiarly vulnerable to attack and internally divided. Plainly, Dr Oppenheimer has none of the self-confidence of the Communist. No doubt qualities of personal impatience did offend a number of the highly intelligent administrators with whom he dealt, but the scientists' criticism of American strategy was never offered by Oppenheimer with any theoretic arrogance that he held the secret of victory and peace. It was advanced hesitantly and with careful qualification, as befits the condition of the modern liberal who has shed any residual Marxist certainties. The immediate post-war calls of the American atomic scientists for world government were nostalgic evocations of an earlier optimism, now held in trust by dwindling numbers of do-gooders. As the realities of living in a world that includes Russia impressed themselves on the scientists, such grand solutions to the world's ills were rapidly dropped.

Nevertheless, despite a loss of surety, the faith of the scientist remains liberal. The liberal conception of intellectual and political life depends on assuming the virtue of an 'antagonism of influences'* in which no defeat is total; decisions should emerge out of a never-ending discussion in which, soon or late, all would have their say. It was the duty of participants in such an ongoing discussion to revive those positions which they noticed had been neglected for any considerable time, so that all the truths could be available in the public market-place. Not Dr Oppenheimer's certainty that he had a correct answer, but his liberal impulse to have an alternative so as to clarify the issues in public (for the public and by the public) motivated the preliminary argument for 'candour', beyond which he never got. The surprise and disappointment among the scientists at the rough treatment of Dr Oppenheimer reflects their illusion that

* The summary notion of society as a 'balance of countervailing forces' by Prof. Galbraith, of Harvard University, is a recent and no doubt unconscious rendering of Mill's phrase.

they still live in a liberal society. The intellectual *élite* never dreamed that it would be so defeated and humiliated publicly. The gratuitous raising of ten-year-old issues in the Oppenheimer case confirms their sense of shock that the rules of fair play by which controversy in a liberal society is governed have been scrapped. But the shock is too great to be accepted and there is great emphasis laid on the fairness of the entire procedure.

So far as this liberal conception of politics and culture emergent from an antagonism of influences persists, it has led to a newly trivial social role for the intellectual, who becomes the perpetual minority member moralizing for lost causes. In scholarship especially the tendency is well established: whole fields are preoccupied with marginal or safely empirical problems that cannot be taken seriously, nor leave any serious impression even on the academic world. The present revival of interest in religious heresy, precisely in a period of massive conformity, is not a symptom of intellectualized revolt but simply an intellectual safety valve, for history has fossilized heresy and orthodoxy together. It is therefore safe to make great play with protecting 'heresy', for it has no political relevance. Dare the 'heresy' become political, the game turns vicious. Still liberal in their civic pride, the scientific *élite* did not foresee that they would be defeated in such a way that they would no longer be able to argue their case – indeed, in such a way that their case would never be presented.

It is tragic that the American scientists did not have a passion more positive than horror from which to elaborate their opposition to the drift, not only of military policy, but of American politics in general. When the warfare was chiefly between science and theology a more positive emotion was easier to develop. Theology took special pains to keep science from developing along its own logic, and science resisted this in the name of freedom and progress. Now that warfare is ended. A subtler enemy faces science: for the State is without any dogma it cannot abandon overnight to catch the shifts of power. The freedom and progress of science are not necessarily interfered with by the state. On the contrary, the State is zealous for the most advanced scientific knowledge and for its practical application. The scientist is free to work, urged to work, recruited, honoured. But the opinions of the scientist may interfere with the prosecution of policy. The scientist and his *élite* may go into opposition to the other *élites*. Neither science nor the scientist,

when they serve the State, can be expected to stop short of exact obedience without inviting investigation and reprisal. What was heresy when science was under theology becomes disloyalty when it is under politics. Scientists have never held power anywhere; they have never been able to command. But as a reward for their skill and conscientiousness they thought to reserve the right to advise, persuade, withdraw, suffer defeat, and stay on. The Oppenheimer case signifies that these rights are apparently no longer theirs. Scientific opinion cannot claim that immunity from political discipline won for it by 19th century liberalism.

The social ambition of science was based on quite another image of the technological society, with the scientists as masters, not as the magicians of new masters. In a scientific age, scientists were to have duties like those of priests in the old society – duties superior to those of the warriors. By the twentieth century it was expected that in the scientist the Greek prophecy of society governed by philosopher-kings would at last be fulfilled. But something went astray, even while the expectation was at its highest in the mid-nineteenth century. With the Oppenheimer case the present relation between science and politics in America is painfully revealed. Great social consequences are bound to follow from this revelation. Such an interference with the scientific *élite*, thwarting their free associations with undesirable social and political types, can destroy the social conditions for its emergence and persistence. And the cost to American power and culture of the quick rise and hard fall of the scientific *élite* has yet to be counted.

EDUCATION AFTER BUTLER

J. E. Morpurgo

1944, and there was born at Westminster a child whose lusty and hopeful yells were heard even above the battering of the guns in North West Europe and Italy, and the chattering of allied statesmen in conference. Two saints stood vigil at his birth, Saint Rab and Saint Mob; the first, who knew what was due to a Westminster brat, called the child respectfully 7 and 8 Geo. Ch. 31; the second, ever given to diminutives, drooled over him, called him sometimes just the '44 Act and sometimes, out of affection for his fellow-watcher, Butler's Act.

This child, like the increasing one-sidedness of the noises in Europe, like the gathering volume of the statesmen's chatter, was the symbol of an end and of a beginning. The horror was ending, the idyll of peace fast on the way, and Butler's Act was to make Britain a place fit for the sons and daughters of returning heroes to live in.

Unfortunately the returning heroes had too many sons and too many daughters. Saint Rab grew horns, took over the task of paying the bills for guns and chatter already expended, for guns and chatter still to come, and found the money by picking Saint Mob's pockets. Saint Mob, his pockets almost emptied, lost interest in the child for whom he had once dreamed such rich pipe-dreams, and went back to his football coupons and to dreams which had at least a gambler's hope of coming true.

In August 1954 that child of auspicious birth was ten years old. The golden hopes of his christening robes have been pawned long ago. He has taken to petty larceny in the back-street where he lives, and has even been known to steal and fritter away profits carefully gathered by his elders, the Hadow Report and the Fisher Act. There was almost no one to celebrate his birthday: only a miserable few who believe that a puny and delinquent child is better than no child at all, that a progressive-seeming Act on the Statute Book, even if unimplemented, is better than no Act at all.

Since 1944 there have been considerable achievements in

the educational field, but, just as it is true to say that most of the problems which educators have had to face would have occurred even if there had been no Butler Act, so it is true that the achievements of the last ten years have had little connection with the mathematician's dream of the perfectly proportioned educational system which that Act was supposed to turn to waking truth. Almost 35,000 teachers were trained under the Emergency Training Scheme; at a time of miserable shortages in money, materials and men, the country put through the greatest school building programme of the century; the primary school curriculum has been revised and to a considerable extent revived; the universities have been opened to almost all of those who might benefit from their influence without too much strain upon the resources of parents. Yet in the whole range of British social legislation it is difficult to think of any law which, with the best of intentions, has run so fast and so far in reverse as the 1944 Act. From the Act itself there has come only one real practical advantage: the compulsory school age has received an extra year, the year from fourteen to fifteen.

Against this solitary advance stand all the promises made and broken, all the hopes drafted but unfulfilled. The country was offered further additions to the school age at both ends, in the form of nursery schools for the under-fives, and, for the over-fifteens, the glib hope that

> as soon as the Minister is satisfied that it has become practicable to raise to sixteen the upper limit of the compulsory school age, he shall lay before Parliament the draft of an Order in Council directing that the foregoing provisions . . . shall have effect as if for reference therein to the age of fifteen years there were substituted references to the age of sixteen years.

Nursery schools have vanished into Cloud Cuckoo Land and the bright optimism of an extension to sixteen is to-day so far from an Order in Council that it is no longer mentioned even on political platforms. Instead of these extensions the country is now threatened with the loss of what has been the first statutory year from its children's schooling, the valuable year from five to six.

Under the Act the country was promised County Colleges, an innovation which nobody quite understood, even though they were somewhat pompously defined as

> centres approved by the Minister for providing for young persons who are not in full-time attendance at any school or other educational institution, such further education, including physical, practical and vocational training, as would enable them to develop their various aptitudes and capacities and would prepare them for the responsibilities of citizenship.

The vagueness, the pomposity of the definition has not been clarified with the years, for County Colleges have remained a paper invention almost without brick exemplar.

Under the Act the nation was promised a *rapprochement* between its two systems of secondary education; the very terms of the Act and the doctrines behind its drafting have widened the gap between State-provided schools and independent schools.

Both of the major parties applauded the 1944 Act. Parliament can hardly be held responsible for its failure, unless it be regarded as a duty of political parties to practise both foresight and hindsight, unless it is considered as among the responsibilities of politicians to know the facts of life and the facts of history. Even a Parliament wise beyond the average could not have foreseen that victory would not bring with it many opportunities for beating tanks into text-books and blackout material into blackboards; amidst the optimism of 1944 it was virtually impossible to guess that in 1954 the national defence budget would continue to absorb a great proportion of such wealth as remained to the British people.

But, though both politicians and administrators have given an economic twist to the excuses they have forwarded for the failure of the Act, and though economics have in fact played a great part in preventing plans from becoming actions, behind this obvious reason there lies another, no less formidable if considerably less obvious: the philosophy of the 1944 Act.

It is one of the difficulties of educational thought that it is too easily identified with political theorizing, and on reflection it seems clear that many of the motives which directed the reforms of 1944 had little to do with schooling and much to do with politics. Democracy, the hardest word in the English language, and a word which used to be equated with equal opportunity for all, has, in the last twenty-five years, taken on a more sinister cast and has been re-interpreted as a refusal to allow any to seize the opportunities with which they have been

endowed by nature, training, family or wealth. At its best and finest it was argued that democracy in education should be, and could be, compared to a race in which all started together and no one carried additional handicap in weight; the notions proclaimed in the Education Act and its implementation give a very different picture: not only must everyone start together but there must be a photo-finish – if any runner seems likely to outstrip the rest, then he must be burdened down; if any runner seems too weak to complete the course, then the course must be shortened to suit his stamina.

Part of this programme of equalizing education has been successfully completed – it is one of the few apparent successes that have followed upon the Act – by the re-organization of secondary schools into three streams, the secondary grammar, the secondary technical and the secondary modern. All three had equivalent prestige in the eyes of the law and in the eyes of the administrators. All three had equivalent prestige in the eyes of one group of teachers, the teachers in the secondary modern schools. But fortunately for the nation, if unfortunately for the egalitarians, the eyes of legalists, administrators and secondary modern teachers are remarkably dim, the eyes of the nation at large still comparatively clearsighted. Those who wish equality see the equality on paper and shout it as a fact from the house-tops; the rest have refused to admit that the secondary modern school is what it pretends to be, a secondary school in the old and proud meaning of the word. It is regarded not as a second best for our children, but as an indubitable worst. The middle classes, above all, the classes which in the past have led educational reform, for motives both unselfish and selfish, for the good of their own children and in the hope that less fortunate children should share that good, have obstinately declined to be fobbed off with secondary modern schools. Either the State must provide grammar schools or else the middle classes will provide an equivalent education for their children, but outside the State system. Hence the skein of paradoxes which has brought about the fact that a statute designed, in part at least, to eradicate the old and snobbish prestige of the public schools has, instead, filled them to capacity – and this in a time of great financial stringency.

I have noted elsewhere that in the United States, a country more familiar with the Gadarene slopes than is this country, 'reactionaries' in education are apt to be the very

same people who stand up most courageously against all forms of political aggression. It would seem that the same situation is bound to arise in Great Britain. Certainly there has been a tendency on the part of those who defend the 1944 Act to label its critics as fascist. But again it must be urged that educational opinion is not a matter of right or left, but of right or wrong. Many of the so-called reforms envisaged and enforced by the Act were inspired not by doctrines of liberty, but by the sheer joy of iconoclasm pretending to be liberty. It is courageous to batter on the gates of privilege, but to rush through fallen gates hell-bent for massacre is an occupation which can hardly claim the glories of reform.

At the time when the Act was passed – and even to-day – though there were many influential voices raised in defence of the independence of the old-established public schools, there were few strong enough to stand up for that much larger group of schools, a group in many senses far more valuable – and the group from which so many of the public schools have risen – the old-established country grammar schools. These, for the most part, fell beneath the leveller's axe. They exist still, it is true, but as a shadow of their former selves, tied irrevocably by the strongest ties of all, the ties of money, to the apron strings of authority. Their governing bodies remain for speech days but not for decision-making. Some headmasters and headmistresses have contrived somehow to maintain the position of leadership, each within his own school, but legislatively their function has been reduced beyond recognition to that of indent and report maker to the Local Education Authority. A warily fought battle has kept for them some right to choose their own pupils, but in many schools the right is so limited as to be almost non-existent. They have lost by force their once flourishing preparatory departments. They have lost altogether their right to take fee-paying pupils.

In this, the disappearance of the fee-paying pupil from the country grammar school, lies hidden what is perhaps the greatest tragedy of recent educational history. Superficially it seems a great stride forward on the road to democracy that no child should get an education beyond his deserts, merely because his parents can afford to pay for it. Actually the triumph is not with democracy but with bureaucracy. No parent, however ambitious for his child, however willing to sacrifice, however eager to invest in his child's future in order

that the child should have opportunities at least as good and perhaps better than were his own, shall be allowed so to do without the permission of the bureaucrats: unless of course he can somehow scrape together enough money to remove himself and his children from out of the reach of the bureaucrats by sending them to a public school. The high gates of privilege remain standing and those who can afford to pay £300 a year for eight to eleven years can enter in. The good greasy *sans culottes* who guard the gates no longer pull their forelocks to the aristocrats; they turn their backs on them but let them pass. It is for the vast middle group who used to buy a good education for £30 or £40 a year that they reserve their insulting words and their denying gestures.

Money is not and should not be the key to educational privilege, and it was easy to legislate for its exclusion. But there are other less tangible differences between family and family than the mere possession of wealth. These too have been regarded as anathema: a 'cultured' background, the possession of books, gramophone records or pictures, even the eagerness of the parent to share his own educational advantages with his children by working with them in the evenings at their homework. It is difficult to prevent the child of informed and intelligent parents from rubbing off on to himself some of their information and intelligence. It is almost impossible to prevent that child from showing up to advantage among his schoolfellows. No bill could get through Parliament which attempted to make parental influence illegal, but the doctrinaire egalitarians had other allies, principally among the psychologists, and these they set to work to develop a method of ensuring that a parent should not only have no say in his child's education, but also, so far as was possible, no power to push his child past the examiners. The intelligence test was not a new weapon when the 1944 Act came into force, but it was a weapon useful and sharp in the hands of the administrators.

It is fair to say that the rebellion against the intelligence test is progressing and that neither school teachers nor psychologists have been quite happy under the regime which they themselves introduced. Nevertheless, in most of the Local Education Authorities the ability to answer rapidly, and according to a legislated pattern, a series of trick questions is still the criterion which decides for an eleven-year-old child whether in 1973 he will be wearing a white collar or a red muffler. Not that a

white collar is necessarily better or more comfortable neckwear than a red muffler, but there is at least some reason to argue that the child who has imagination, general knowledge and an instinct towards bookishness, though at the age of thirty he may not be happy working an adding machine, is likely to be even less happy working a pneumatic drill. Yet the demonstration of imagination, general knowledge and bookishness is not merely without value in the eleven-plus examination, but is, in fact, to all intents and purposes a disadvantage. Give to the steady but colourless child a question such as the following: 'Strike out in this list the words which do not belong in the group – tumbler, mirror, dressing-table, spectacles, curtain,' and he will immediately see that what is required of him is to remove the dressing-table and the curtain, to leave in those articles which are made of glass. But the child who thinks for himself will worry over the question. After all, any of the five articles could be found in a bedroom, or he might say that his father always wears his spectacles while he is doing his teeth, holding a tumbler before a mirror. But this child will have wasted his time, there is no place for his reasons on the examination paper. Down he goes!

Such criticisms have been raised vociferously (and in Hertfordshire and London successfully) against the intelligence test as the core of the eleven-plus exam, but it is not a change of method that is needed so much as a change of heart. By almost any examination technique someone is bound to be handicapped, and of the present system the handicap is deliberately thrust upon those with natural advantages. It is not the sins but the privileges of the fathers which are visited upon the children, even to the third and fourth generation. We, a nation famous or infamous in the eyes of the rest of the world for a worship of tradition, have now chosen to cut ourselves off violently from all the advantages of history. We have had to choose between a degree of seeming unfairness in educational selection and the worship of mediocrity. We have chosen mediocrity.

Some vestigial connection with our old traditions has prevented us from accepting wholeheartedly the final embrace of egalitarianism: the comprehensive school. The secondary modern school and the secondary technical school, say the legislators, are in every way the equal of the secondary grammar school. Then why give them different buildings, different and

less glamorous uniforms, different and less prestige-laden teachers? School is school, no matter whether the child is learning Latin, French and Physics as in the grammar school, mechanical drawing or dress designing as in the technical school, or nothing at all as in the secondary modern school. No one should be despised or elevated according to the subjects he is studying. Put them all into one great organization so that parents can no longer burst with pride as their eleven-year-old son puts on for the first time his crested cap and blazer, slings his satchel over his shoulder, and marches off through the wrought-iron gates of the grammar school. Give to all children magnificent antiseptic and utterly impersonal organization. It is, like so many arguments for mediocrity, despicable cynicism disguised as worthiness; and for the moment at least, a few parents, in their wonderful conceit for their children, have seen through the worthiness to the cynicism which underlies it and have held up, by their protests, the dangerous march of progress.

* * * *

A month before the Education Act came into force, Lord Fleming and his committee presented to Mr Butler their report on the Public Schools and the General Educational System.

It was a brilliant committee, a committee as nearly as is possible representative of all the shades of violence which go to make prejudice for and against the public schools; which is as good as saying that it was representative of the nation. Public school headmasters and headmistresses, industrialists, trade-unionists, a bishop, the treasurer of the N U T (and, for a while at least, Mr G. D. H. Cole), all sat down together and agreed on a report. They even agreed on a definition of the term 'public school'.

The Fleming Committee was unanimous in its view that the public schools still had much to offer to the nation, and that it was up to the nation to find a way to accept some measure of integrating the public school and the State system of education. It suggested that a quarter of the annual admission to independent public schools should be bursars appointed by the Ministry or by local education authorities. The 1944 Act made the Fleming proposals statutorily possible, but, like so many educational reforms, the proposals have been wrecked on the twin rocks of finance and egalitarianism.

The guardians of privilege were not the old, vicious aristocrats, the public schools (which on the whole were conscious of their responsibilities, conscious, too, of the ultimate advantages, and therefore willing to co-operate, even at a time of crowded waiting-lists) but the representatives of privileged mediocrity. The financial shyness of Local Education Authorities is understandable, but most of the Authorities made a show of acceding to the Fleming suggestions, yet so hedged round their acceptance with restrictive regulation as to turn apparent acceptance into actual refusal. It is not enough for a child to pass the Common Entrance Examination in order to qualify for a L E A place at a boarding-school, nor even enough that he passes the examination high on the list. (Perhaps naturally, Authorities want the cream for their own grammar schools.) It is certainly not enough that parents should believe in the value of a public school education, for in the new order the wishes of parents are impertinent intrusions upon the prerogatives of administrators. So, under most country regulations, before a father can persuade the Authority to send his child to a boarding-school he must break up his family life. Let him become an itinerant preacher, a commercial traveller, or a bargee, and there is a chance for his child. Best qualification of all, let him divorce his wife!

Such restricted and restrictive acceptance of the Report faced the public schools with the probability that, instead of creaming the educational pot, they would be made to digest much of the nation's sour milk. They lost their appetite. Almost all that stands to the glory of the Fleming Report is that it fathered a successful but wonderfully exaggerated play by Warren Chetham Strode.

Yet the Fleming proposals might have done much towards preserving the educational health of the nation, and might have done something to preserve the public schools for the nation. For the moment the public schools can survive even without Fleming, but fewer and fewer parents can afford public school fees, the population bulge (as convenient to the public schools as it is inconvenient to the State system) will eventually collapse, and then it may be that the hounds of equality will have their way with the country's best schools, and the disappointment of ten years of failure will lead to an even greater disaster: the end of the public schools.

If these schools had done nothing to justify their survival

they should not survive. If they had produced nothing but elegantly-tied, well-mannered gentlemen, they could be left to commit gentlemanly suicide. But their history of leadership is rich indeed, and even in moments of crisis they have kept themselves free for experiment in a manner still unequalled by State schools. It is the independence and not the social exclusiveness of the public schools which must be preserved. Independent laboratories for secondary education are as essential as independent laboratories for higher education. The State is prepared to pay for universities, and yet leaves them their independence. The State must be prepared to help pay for independent schools.

The peculiarly British skill in boarding-school education is almost entirely the product of the public schools. From the public schools came the older and wiser notions of democratic entry, and although many have perverted the ideals of their founders – and should be dragooned back to their origins – there is still the old-established example of Christ's Hospital and the newer compromise between opportunity for all and freedom from control, represented, for example, by the reorganization of Dulwich College, or by Gordonstoun, to show the country how to equate 'democratic' admission policies with 'aristocratic' education. From Rugby came the experiment in combining the training of the classroom with the training of the games field and the chapel; from Oundle a lead in the teaching of science, and from Christ's Hospital the 'heuristic' method. St George's, Harpenden and Bedales showed the virtues of co-education. Even to-day, Tonbridge uses its arts school, Clifton its music school, King's, Canterbury, and Bryanston their theatres with ingenuity and educational validity beyond anything the controlled schools can achieve. Newer schools have led the way to freer activity; in the derogatory sense in which the egalitarians use the title, Dartington Hall is a public school. Gordonstoun, through its maritime activities, encourages a spirit of adventure which modern Britain cannot afford to lose. Abbotsholme, in many ways the 'father' of both Gordonstoun and Bedales, breeds in its boys an invaluable sense of countryside; if its influence is more recognized in France and Germany than in England it is only because here it has met with more rapid success, so that unique origins are lost in general effects.

In the unsystematic grouping which we call the public school system there is room for everything from Pop to vegetarianism, from the Church of Rome to the Theosophical Society, from birching-blocks to A. S. Neill. Some parents covet for their children the very parts of the system which are anathema to other parents, but at least the mixture can be taken to taste – if, unfortunately, only by those who can afford to buy it.

While the independent schools exist there is a chance that benefits of cranky traditionalism and untraditional crankiness will touch the whole of the nation's educational system. But slightly adapted (and how slightly is apparent only to those who believe in the public schools, God, or both) a famous tag can be applied to the English public schools: if they did not exist, then the English would have to invent them!

* * * *

So muddled and fearful is the social philosophy of education that, after ten years of failing to keep promises, most educationists have forgotten that a majority of the promises were not worth making. The facts of educational weakness have been drowned by the bleating and whining of educators. The teaching profession, for example, is embarrassingly eager to emphasize its own lack of prestige, but makes poor salary-scales the whipping-boy for all its troubles. Yet among the professions and near-professions only medicine gives security equal to the teaching profession with salaries that are greater. A lawyer starts with nothing and may end with nothing or twenty thousand a year. A journalist starts with nothing and is lucky indeed if he ever earns more than £1,500 a year. A don may, if he is very learned or very clever, work himself from the discomforts of an assistant lectureship at £300 to the great comfort of a chair worth almost £2,000; but the cards and the selection committees are stacked against him ever passing £1,100. A parson starts at almost nothing and ends with little more. An architect, like a lawyer, depends on his skill and his connections for his financial happiness. Writers, painters, musicians and actors are subject to all the whims of public taste and private whim. But a young graduate with a one-year teaching course behind him, taking up his first job in a provincial school earns almost £550 a year; he need do nothing else but minimal duties and still, after fifteen years, he will be earning close to £800 a year, while his chances of being closer to £1,000 a year

are high. (Admittedly the chances of earning £2,000 a year are infinitesimal; the Burnham Scale makes mediocrity safe and gives too few rewards to genius or enterprise. It is this, and not bad pay, which emphasizes the profession's low morale.)

Details of the shortages have been rehearsed with pathetic frequency, but it is seldom urged that the text of the times in education is not 'too bad, too few' but 'too many, too bad', that it is quality and not quantity we lack. The brilliant bullies of the past, men of the calibre of Busby or Boyer, flogged and taught with enthusiasm unimpaired by poor pay, poor classrooms and large classes; we have learnt to be decently suspicious of their sadism but we could profit from a renaissance of their pedagogic skill. Neither Sanderson nor Lancaster put conditions before men. But not Busby, Boyer, Sanderson or Lancaster were involved with school milk or school lunches.

The indictment is of the nation as a whole. The lowered prestige of teaching is part of a general pattern of lost faith in education. It seems that in education we want the show which comforts the national conscience, but not the reality which continues that conscience alive, active and sensible in the control of all national activity. We run the risk of throwing away the great educational gains of the last hundred years by being uninterested in the failures of the last ten. We allow the legislators to boast success when they are merely announcing that the flag still flies over an unimportant bastion. 'There is no need to be down in the dumps about education,' says Miss Horsbrugh, and then demonstrates that her complacency is based upon facts which are but remotely connected with education. Education, the training of minds, is a long way from the heart of Whitehall.

> They have brightened our room which is spacious and cool
> With diagrams drawn for the Idiot's School
> And Books for the Blind which will teach us to see.

In the market-places where critics remove the motes from their neighbours' eyes, few holds are barred. But, as in drawing-rooms where private abuse is politely practised it is considered unforgivable to cast doubts on a companion's sense of humour, so in international comment a slight against a nation's system of education is taken as a deliberate slur on that nation's honour. Let an American sneer that the Russians are communistic and his intended insult will be deflected by the

Russian acceptance of the obvious, by a satisfied smile and a gratified bow. Let a Frenchman declaim against German militarism, and the German will expect emulation rather than denigration. That we in Britain regard monarchy and democracy as complementary is to republican nations yet another cause for complaint against British perfidy, but to us a mark of our eternal political wisdom and an additional sign that we are the object of French or American envy. But let an Englishman say that French education is too rigid and American teaching the victim of mass-production, and immediately the *tu quoque* fly: English education is too casual, says the Frenchman, and the American adds that it is undemocratic.

Criticism of a national educational system, more than any comment on other legislated facts in a nation's life, can be construed as personal insult. I (and fifty million others like me in Great Britain) am in no sense a product of the British political system; I can argue that the religious atmosphere of this country has done little to make me what I am; that the economic custom of Britain has affected me but slightly; that though Britain's foreign policy has in some ways altered the history of my life, it has not altered me. And, when national policy is translated into legislative action, Education Acts more than any other Acts of Parliament, more than Military Service Acts, Health Acts or National Insurance Acts, change effectively the lives and habits of the whole nation.

By this measure the children who have suffered and are yet to suffer from the educational disorganization which has succeeded to the 1944 Act face a future more miserable than can be justified by the legislators or people of a civilized country.

CRIME FICTION FOR INTELLECTUALS

Marjorie Bremner

In January 1945, the American critic, Edmund Wilson, wrote an article called 'Who Cares Who Killed Roger Ackroyd?' In an earlier article, Wilson had discussed the reasons why people read detective stories and had concluded – after, in true scholar's style, reading several newly-published ones – that they were boring and badly written. He decided that detective stories were popular because the world 'during those years was ridden by an all-pervasive feeling of guilt and by a fear of impending disaster which it seemed hopeless to try to avert because it never seemed conclusively possible to pin down the responsibility'. The advantage of the detective story was that there, unlike in life, guilt could always be definitely fixed.

Wilson succeeded, with this article, in stirring up a lively hornet's nest. He remarks in his second essay * on the subject that 'this (i.e. the first) brought me letters of protest in a volume and of a passionate earnestness which had hardly been elicited even by my occasional criticism of the Soviet Union'. After a few acid comments about his critics and about such distinguished men of letters as Jacques Barzun, Somerset Maugham, and Joseph Wood Krutch, who had at one time or another written in praise of the detective story, Wilson explained – still in scholar's vein – that he went on to read additional detective stories recommended by his correspondents. He found the second lot as poor as the first, and concluded that detective story reading was a silly but minor vice, ranking somewhere between smoking and crossword puzzles. Detective story readers were always on the defensive and their claim that the books were often well-written and intelligent was simply an attempt to excuse their vice. He added, as a final body-blow, that a drunkard could always find an excuse to have another drink.

* Both published in *Classics and Commercials* (W. H. Allen, London, 1951).

The question, 'Who Cares Who Killed Roger Ackroyd?' was answered in one way in London in June 1954, when a new organization, the Crime Writers Association, sponsored a 'Crime Book Exhibition' at the National Book League in London. At the same time, 'Crime Book Week' was celebrated all over the country, by special displays in bookshops. (The organization had been founded the previous November, and includes some, though by no means all, of the well-known British detective story writers.)

The exhibition was opened one Tuesday afternoon, appropriately enough by Boris Karloff, looking rather smaller and less sinister than on the screen. Glancing around, Karloff saw three skeletons, including one very near to him, and affably expressed his pleasure at finding himself among friends. He went on to say that the size and variety of the exhibition proved that crime does, in fact, pay. He was immediately taken up by the Chairman of the Association, whose comments made it clear that crime writers, like other writers, believe that their publishers are less generous than they ought to be. After a few more words, Karloff declared the exhibition open, and graciously posed lighting a cigarette which an enterprising photographer had placed in the mouth of the nearest and biggest skeleton.

Almost the first object seen by visitors to the exhibition was a hangman's noose, suspended from the ceiling a little too high to catch necks. Three skeletons, one leering and two sober, lurked in corners of the room. A coarse, cloth hangman's mask decorated one panel. A larger-than-life picture of a melancholy bloodhound dominated one of the publishers' stands. A blue-clad policeman from Madame Tussaud's pensively surveyed the scene, and was criticized by the more knowledgeable as being too small to pass even the latest requirements for entrance into the Metropolitan Police.

The contributions of New Scotland Yard included various memorabilia of the Crippen case, the prize being the pyjamas found on the body of Dr Crippen's victim (and now going rather mouldy). The lantern, the jemmy, the spectacles, and other assorted oddments belonging to the famous burglar Charlie Peace, were there. So were various test-tubes, plaster-casts, and so on, showing the work of the scientific laboratory of the Yard. All these exhibits were packed up each night into a sealed case, and taken along by volunteer crime writers to

the nearest police station, where they were kept in safe custody till the next morning.

The other exhibits included one by the Sherlock Holmes Society, which featured an argument-provoking bust of the Great Man; old newspapers carrying stories of famous crimes; first, or otherwise interesting early, editions of crime books; a table of books in foreign translation; and original manuscripts by members of the Crime Writers Association. But the greater part of the exhibit was devoted to the thousands of contemporary books on the all-inclusive subject of crime. The majority of these could be classified as detective stories. (These may be defined as stories in which, whatever else happens, the real interest lies in a duel of wits between the criminal and his pursuer.) But there were also numerous adventure thrillers, spy stories, histories of crime and of famous trials, and biographies of men and women who were connected in some way with crime.

A series of programmes was also provided, including lectures and brains trusts. Members of the Crime Writers Association, each bearing an identity badge, were constantly present, talking to visitors, selling tickets, or autographing books. On Saturday afternoon, closing day, Miss Enid Blyton held an autographing session. As a result, there was a large influx of children who, after seeing Miss Blyton and having their books autographed, scattered to take in the delights of the exhibition. They were enthusiastic guests, and it was clear from their remarks that they were disappointed by the lack of much more bloodthirsty exhibits.

The exhibition received fairly good coverage in both the national and provincial press, and some attention from the B B C. Most comments, both from the press and from visitors, were favourable, though it was suggested that it would have gained in verisimilitude by having a genuine murder committed as part of the programme – which could then have been solved by the writers themselves. But in view of the attendance at the exhibition, and even more of the thousands of books on display, one conclusion is clear: millions of people in Britain do care who killed Roger Ackroyd.

The question why people read detective stories is not new. Edmund Wilson's theory is one of many which have been advanced at one time or another. It has been suggested that people read detective stories merely as a means of escape from

ordinary life and daily problems; that detective stories provide the chance to use one's deductive faculties and match wits with the detective; that they provide an outlet for the aggressive (and even sadistic-masochistic) impulses; that in a confused, uncertain world, people seek a safe, secure one, in which right always triumphs, wrong is always detected and punished, and each man gets his deserts; that in thrillers life is meaningful, significant, and important, in contrast with life in a modern industrial society; that readers can identify themselves with the hero-detective, a myth-like figure found in societies from their primitive beginnings, or even with the scapegoat (criminal) upon whom they can project their aggressive impulses and find expiation for themselves when he is caught (by the hero-figure) and brought to justice.

But perhaps the most interesting thing about detective stories is the universality of their appeal, and particularly their attraction for the more highly-educated and successful sections of the population. Over 80 per cent of all fiction published in Britain in any one year falls into one of the so-called 'big three' classifications: light romance, detective fiction, and Western stories. Yet people of education and intellectual interests practically never read light romances. A few, but very few, read Western stories, though many more like Western films. But many highly intelligent, cultivated, busy people read detective stories regularly – and feel little need, in spite of Edmund Wilson, to apologize for doing so.

Detective stories are, on the whole, better written than light romances or Westerns. Sometimes, indeed, the quality of writing and characterization, and the plausibility of the backgrounds, compare favourably with many so-called 'serious' novels. For these reasons, as well as because of their puzzle-solving element, they make greater demands on the intellect than the other types of popular fiction.

But there is another feature of detective stories which may make an appeal to the more educated and successful. In one way they are a much more varied form of literature than light romances or Westerns. Nonetheless, they do – and must – follow a strictly conventional pattern, in their essentials. In the deepest sense, all detective stories are very much alike. But the chief interest of the detective story does not lie in the novelty of its characters or the attraction of its setting, excellent though these may be on occasion. It lies rather in the *pattern* which is

made of the usual elements – in the choreography, rather than in the individual dancers themselves.

The regular reader of detective stories brings a wide experience to each new book. He knows detective stories as a *genre*. What interests him is to see what variations have been introduced on a familiar theme, how the writer has woven the strands together *this* time. He is interested in the morphology of each new story. One standard type of detective story, for example, is the country house-party variety (though any other type could be used equally well as an example). Anyone who has read a few of these knows in general what will happen. A group of people gathers in a country house. Each of them has some reason to fear or mistrust one particular guest. That guest is murdered. An atmosphere of tension and suspense develops. The motives for murder are exposed, and people behave in odd, suspicious ways. There is often a second murder, though there need not be. Eventually the murderer is unmasked, all is explained, and normal life is resumed. None of this is new to the habitual reader, but he is not looking for surprises. It may be that this is another of the reasons why the educated minority reads detective stories – to see each time how the standard elements have been put together in a slightly different way.

There is still another aspect of all this. The world to-day – perhaps because of the threat of complete annihilation – provides less excitement for the individual at the higher levels of society than it did in the past, and in a more settled, stable order of society. His life and his expectations are much more confined. There are, except perhaps in science, few new worlds to conquer. No new continents remain to be discovered or exploited. The individual who wants to, has less chance to lead an exciting, adventurous life, to take risks, and to accept heavy responsibilities. Altogether – except in war, and often even then – the more competent, lively, and adventure-seeking groups of the population lead more sedate lives than they did two generations ago. Now these changes have affected most the people at the top of intellectual, professional, political, and business circles – the top quarter of our society, which was once a ruling élite. These are the men who in the past would have found the way more open to adventure and excitement – if they wanted them. Only a handful of men, of course, ever went to explore darkest Africa. But on a less spectacular

level, the life of a diplomat in one of the larger European capitals provided some adventure of its own. In the years before the first world war, such a man was comparatively independent. Communications were slow, with the result that, in delicate and difficult situations, he often had to bear heavy responsibilities without having access to outside advice. Capable men considered such responsibility a challenge, and responded to it willingly. They had little need for vicarious excitement or vicarious responsibility. But to-day, the ambassador has his superior at the other end of a telephone wire; soon he will have him on a private TV circuit. Not only need he not rely on his own responsibility and initiative, he is not usually encouraged to do so. The same holds true in all other walks of life.

So there is reason for competent men in any social group or class, who would welcome excitement, risk, and responsibility, to feel frustrated in modern life – and so perhaps to turn to vicarious adventure to provide them with the things they lack. The detective story does provide just that. So do betting, the football pools, the films, the watching of violent games, motor racing, and so on; all recently very attractive. The ordinary citizen may use detective stories as merely one among several types of escape reading. The educated and energetic may be looking less for escape than for risk-taking and substitute satisfactions. This is not to say that the other attractions of the detective story – the chances for an outlet for aggression, the glimpse of a secure, meaningful, essentially moral world, and so on – do not exist for the élite as for others. No doubt they do; but the élite also may find in detective stories release from some of the frustrations which are less common outside their own group.

For the detective story does provide much that is lacking in modern life – excitement, colour, flamboyance, danger, risk, and a sense of personal responsibility. No matter how well-bred, educated, and erudite the detective story has become in some British hands, the basis of nearly every one is an act of violent drama: murder. When someone has been willing to murder, it is clear that the stakes are very high. Someone – the murderer – has taken upon himself the fearful responsibility of ending another human life, with all the risks that entails. To the intellectual who thinks he cannot get a serious hearing for his opinions, the business-man who feels hemm

by regulations (as he certainly is, compared with his predecessors, in spite of the social advantages gained from his being so regulated), the politician who is confined by a party machine (and a mass-electorate), reading about such rampant individuality may provide the excitement and the scope which his own life does not.

But the figure of the murderer as an individual is usually a negative one. The positive figure is the hero-detective, who may take many forms. He may be a policeman, a private detective, or a gifted amateur who either dabbles in crime as a hobby or is – for reasons of love, loyalty, or revenge – forced to take a hand. Very often this hero-detective is a lone wolf, who takes on responsibilities, courts risks, and uses unorthodox methods to secure justice – who, in short, does all the things that the more intelligent and independent spirits to-day find themselves increasingly blocked from doing in ordinary life. Here is Raymond Chandler's private detective, Philip Marlowe, a high favourite among intellectuals, describing himself.

> I'm a licensed private investigator and have been for quite a while. I'm a lone wolf, unmarried, getting middle-aged, and not rich. I've been in jail more than once and I don't do divorce business. I like liquor and women and chess and a few other things. The cops don't like me too well, but I know a couple I get along with. I'm a native son, born in Santa Rosa, both parents dead, no brothers or sisters, and when I get knocked off in a dark alley sometime, if it happens, as it could happen to anyone in my business, and to plenty of people in any business or no business at all these days, nobody will feel that the bottom has dropped out of his or her life.*

Not all detective stories, of course, provide a detective-hero. But many do; and if the view advanced here is correct, those which do ought to be more popular among the better-educated. No one has ever made a study of the types of stories favoured by various groups in the population; but it is not without significance that Dashiell Hammett, the man who first created a detective-hero of the modern type, was described by Jimmy Durante, the American comedian, as 'duh toast of duh intellectuals'.

* Raymond Chandler, *The Long Goodbye*, pp. 79–80 (London, 1953).

THE QUALITY OF ARNOLD BENNETT

John Wain

> *He stands nearer Gustave Flaubert than any other English novelist.* – Georges Lafourcade.
>
> *You can only do one man's modest share in the education of the public.* – Arnold Bennett.
>
> *Tell Mr Bennett he stinks.* – Anonymous telephone message, 1911.

The re-issue of a batch of Arnold Bennett's novels by Penguin Books is a reminder of his curious position: he is much admired, but not (if this doesn't sound very rude) much admired by the people whose admiration is worth having. Obviously Georges Lafourcade was very intelligent, and he admired Bennett sufficiently to publish a long book about him in 1939, but foreigners, for this sort of purpose, don't count; Mr Walter Allen came out with an able summary in the *English Novelists* series nine years later, but his efforts curiously failed to provide Bennett with any sort of highbrow reputation; perhaps the feeling was that Mr Allen, being a Midlander and a novelist, was *bound* to like Bennett, so the rest of us didn't need to wonder if we ought to be converted. Then, of course, Lawrence is fashionable now, and he and Bennett are such opposites that there is hardly room for them on the same planet. Lawrence's reference to Bennett in his letter to A. V. McLeod, October 6th, 1912, shows that he was clearly aware of this incompatibility: 'I hate Bennett's resignation. Tragedy ought to be a great kick at misery.' Dr F. R. Leavis, who besides being Lawrentian-in-chief has the great prestige of being one of the few English critics to make a successful attempt at the criticism of fiction, has either picked up this view of Bennett from Lawrence, or come to it independently – it doesn't matter which – but we find him saying in *The Great Tradition*,

> for all the generous sense of common humanity to be found in his best work, Bennett seems to me never to have been disturbed enough by life to come anywhere near greatness.

I think this is a pity. How disturbed one has to be before greatness becomes possible, I don't know, but Bennett has always seemed to me an excellent novelist, not so inferior to Lawrence as the current fashion would have us think. At any rate, here are a few notes on him, grouped into sections so that readers who find the whole too lengthy can skip any of the sections and still make sense of what they do read. The first section deals with the general mass of Bennett's work, the second with *The Old Wives' Tale*, the third with *Clayhanger* and the books that are ancillary to it, and the fourth with *Riceyman Steps*. My main object is to try to engage the serious novel-reader's interest, leaving the final judgment to him, but I am afraid my enthusiasm will now and then bounce me into a 'value-judgment'.

I

'Of pot-boilers let none speak. Jove hangs them on necks that could soar above his height, but for their accursed weight.' Bennett probably prided himself on the aptness of the quotation – it is from Meredith – yet the truth of the matter was, as regards his own case, exactly the opposite. Without the constant practice, without the habit of using the same material over and over again until finally he mastered it and gave it imaginative life, Bennett would never have produced his major work. This gives his mass of bread-and-butter novels a certain interest; they will never again be read by readers whose motive is entirely literary, and yet it is possible to draw from them some useful data about his methods of work and his preoccupations generally. In *The Author's Craft* (1914) he tends to talk as if there were only one kind of author and one kind of craft, and the outline he gives there of 'the author's' attitude is a fair description of his own: observation first and foremost, but observation marshalled and directed to an end.

> The predominant interests of the observer, [he says], will ultimately direct his observing activities to their own advantage. If excited by the phenomena of organization – as I happen to be – he will see individuals in new groups that are the result of organization, and he will insist on the variations of type due to that grouping.

What are these groups into which individuals fall as the result of organization? Let us attempt a classification of the

types that emerge most clearly from Bennett's novels.* To take the male characters first:

(i) Self-made men of the first generation (Darius Clayhanger, Mr Povey, James Ollerenshaw). These are usually dominated by material considerations to an attempt that limits and controls their action in the plot. A variation of this type is the character whom the struggle for existence has warped and soured; Tellwright and Earlforward are misers, Critchlow a cynic.

(ii) The Card (Denry, Gerald Scales, Jos Curtenty). It will be seen, from a consideration of the characters I bracketed here, that this type is only really at home in the lighter novels, and collapses into a profligate or villain when introduced into a serious book. Denry is a successful character *because* the writing is on the same level as a *Punch* cartoon: brilliant and wilfully incomplete.

(iii) The Sensitive Plant (Clayhanger, Lawrence Ridware, Willie Price, Richard Larch). This is the male type with whom Bennett had most sympathy, and the class includes some of his best portraits.

(iv) Neurotics and misfits. There is a surprisingly large number of these. Joe, Edgar and Geoffrey are nerve-shattered soldiers; Charles Fearns is a satyromaniac, Charlie Prohack a victim of social upheaval and war strain.

Finally, since Bennett's attitude to the arts seems to have been that they were, after all, simply the adjuncts of a high standard of living, we have two almost interchangeable types:

(v) The Man of the World with Artistic Tastes (G. J. Hoape, Matthew Peel-Swynnerton, Alan Frith-Walter, Johnnie Hulse). This seems to have been the type Bennett admired most; successful, leisured, sufficiently

* In the passage that follows it seemed necessary to identify only characters from the lesser-known novels; viz., James Ollerenshaw from *Helen With The High Hand*, Tellwright and Willie Price from *Anna of the Five Towns*, Jos Curtenty, a recurrent character in 'local-colour' in *Tales of the Five Towns*, Lawrence and Mark Ridware and Charles Fearns from *Whom God Hath Joined*, Edgar from *The Pretty Lady*, Geoffrey from *Lord Raingo*, Richard Larch from *A Man From the North*, Alan Frith-Walter from *Accident*, Johnnie Hulse from *The Glimpse*. Of the female characters mentioned, Annunciata Fearns is from *Whom God Hath Joined* and Christine from (indeed *is*) *The Pretty Lady*.

appreciative of the arts to enjoy them, and sufficiently Philistine to resist their strangling fascination.

Here is a specimen:

> He himself was healthy and personable; young for his age. He had done excellently in the business, which, without positive enthusiasm for it, he liked. And he had interests wider than the business. He bought rare books, and a French picture occasionally. He had preferences among pianists, violinists, and orchestral conductors. He could go to a new play and despise it and yet enjoy bits of it. He understood food and wines and loved them. He could talk to his wife about her clothes with more knowledge and appreciation than she could talk to him about his.

We all recognize him at once: he is the tall, distinguished man, with a youthful bearing in strange contrast to his greying temples, who escorts fabulously dressed women through the advertisement pages in *Vogue*. The novelist's hero is the publicity man's dream. With only a slight shift of emphasis we reach

(vi) The Artist/Man of the World. This type is not compelled to earn his living, even at a business he likes ('without', of course, 'positive enthusiasm for it'). He has an income which allows him to devote himself to an Art. Sometimes he is really talented, sometimes not. Mark Ridware, for instance, never looked back after winning a national scholarship to the Royal College of Art, South Kensington; with the result that at the age of thirty-five 'His bearing had the touch of good-humoured arrogance which success so often gives . . . he . . . had reached the illustrated papers: no small achievement for a painter.' Whereas another national scholarship winner, Cyril Povey, remained a contented mediocrity.

The last two categories overlap so much that it is impossible to decide which of them ought to contain Loring, the British Museum æsthete who visits the Five Towns in Bennett's two best short stories. He is a good example of all the prevailing tendencies; a connoisseur in food, drink, tobacco, music, painting, first editions, newspapers, and smoking-room stories. This last detail is not unimportant; Bennett evidently believed that whenever two representatives of types (v) and (vi) met, their conversation sooner or later came round to 'life, in those aspects of it which cause men to laugh and women uneasily to

wonder.' Even limericks can send up a man's prestige within these two groups.

> It happened that I knew a number of the unprinted Rossetti limericks, precious things, not at all easy to get at. I detailed them to Mr Brindley, and I do not exaggerate when I say that I impressed him. I recovered all the ground that I had lost upon cigarettes and newspapers.

Before leaving these two types we should note that they have a tendency to read Wordsworth in trains; but then Bennett evidently had what Professor Lafourcade rather disconcertingly calls 'a middle-class admiration for Wordsworth'.

The female characters are very easily arranged in groups. In any case it is obvious that most novelists, when drawing characters of the opposite sex, make a very sharp distinction between those who are sexually eligible and those who are not; I do not mean between good-looking and ugly, but between those biologically qualified for sexual relationships, and those who are *hors concours*. If this sounds absurd, consider the vast superiority of the average female novelist's portraits of very old men, or children, over her portraits of men between twenty-one and sixty. Male novelists are less predictable, but it must be obvious that the same tendency is often present among them. In Bennett's work the older women (Mrs Baines, Aunt Harriet, Mrs Hamps, Mrs Orgreave) are generally neutral, or, if they have a part in the plot, it is often a dead one; to be an obstruction against which the stream must push until it is dislodged. The hint, or echo, of crude scientific determinism in Bennett's mind may have been responsible for this: Mrs Baines was 'at odds with the everlasting purpose' because it had 'made use of her and cast her aside'.

The younger women are generally either

(i) Shy, tender (Christine, Annunciata Fearns) or
(ii) Pert, wilful; a female counterpart to the Card type among the men (Ruth Earp, Helen Rathbone, Janet Orgreave).

In *The Old Wives' Tale* the two types are, of course, played off against each other in Constance and Sophia. The wide range of these two dominant types is illustrated by the fact that, of the two examples I have chosen to illustrate (i), one is a prostitute, the other a young girl of the most delicate sensibilities.

If this catalogue seems dull or unnecessary, I can only plead that it was Bennett himself who liked to 'see individuals in new groups that are the result of organization'; and that these groups are very important in surveying his work. For, on his view, so much depended on 'organization'; for instance, he takes it for granted that Samuel Povey, being a hard-working apprentice and later a respectable draper, will lead a decorous and moral life; just as he takes it for granted that his son, being a young man in easy circumstances with no responsibilities, will lead the life of pleasure and move in circles where women are discussed as if they were meat ('No more English for me'). The moral question does not arise; it is simply a question of environment and custom. He would probably have called this attitude 'scientific'.

Again, it may have been something to do with these half-grasped scientific doctrines that made him insist on the ruthlessness of children. Whatever the cause, he never introduces a child without some reference to its selfishness, sensuality, and contempt for the virtues. Mrs Blackshaw's baby, a typical specimen, was

> convinced that the rest of the universe had been brought into existence solely for the convenience and pleasure of it – the baby. . . . it had no god but its stomach. It never bothered its head about higher things. It was a bully and a coward, and it treated women as beings of a lower order than men. In short, it was that ideal creature, sung of the poets, from which we gradually sink and fall away as we grow older.*

This, of course, is nothing more than one of the commonest wiles of the trade: the facetious attribution of adult motives to the baby; but in his serious handling of the subject the same attitude is recognizable. Cyril Povey at the same stage

> had never spent a day without making experiments on this shifting universe in which he alone remained firm and stationary. The experiments were chiefly conducted out of idle amusement, but he was serious on the subject of food. Lately the behaviour of the universe in regard to his food had somewhat perplexed him, had indeed annoyed him. However, he was of a forgetful, happy disposition, and so long as the universe continued to fulfil its sole end as a machinery for the satisfaction, somehow, of his imperious desires, he was not inclined to remonstrate.

* 'Baby's Bath', in *The Grim Smile of the Five Towns.*

Both now and at a later stage, children are chiefly interesting to Bennett as a means of presenting and illustrating one of his favourite themes – misunderstanding. Parents behave insufferably to their children because they love them; children behave insufferably to their parents because they are inhabitants of a world totally different from, unguessed by, and inimical to the adult world. Bennett is at his finest when treating, with an admirable blend of irony and compassion, the inevitable conflict. That superb children's party, when Cyril disgraces himself by snatching a slice of cake from one of his guests, is one of the minor peaks of English literature. Bennett's method is, here at least, entirely adequate to the situation; everything is accounted for, and the catastrophe is inevitable.

> His face at once changed from calm pride to a dreadful anxiety. His eyes bulged out. His tiny mouth grew and grew, like a mouth in a nightmare. He was no longer human; he was a cake-eating tiger being balked of his prey. Nobody noticed him. The officious fool of a woman persuaded Jennie to take the last slice of the cake, which was quite a thin slice.
>
> Then everyone simultaneously noticed Cyril, for he gave a yell. It was not the cry of a despairing soul who sees his beautiful iridescent dream shattered at his feet; it was the cry of the strong, masterful spirit, furious. He turned upon Jennie, sobbing, and snatched at her cake. Unaccustomed to such behaviour from hosts, and being besides a haughty, put-you-in-your-place beauty of the future, Jennie defended her cake. After all, it was not she who had taken two slices at once. Cyril hit her in the eye, and then crammed most of the slice of cake into his enormous mouth. He could not swallow it, nor even masticate it, for his throat was tight and rigid. So the cake projected from his red lips, and big tears watered it. The most awful mess you can conceive! Jennie wept loudly, and one or two others joined her in sympathy, but the rest went on eating tranquilly, unmoved by the horror which transfixed their elders.
>
> A host to snatch food from a guest! A host to strike a guest! A gentleman to strike a lady!

Here the same device as before, the application of adult standards to a child's behaviour, is used; but instead of being facetiously adopted by the author, it is satirically attributed to the grown-up witnesses. Everything is seen in a refreshingly right perspective. Cyril is an object of beauty to Bennett ('his tiny mouth'); he is also ruthlessly selfish ('a cake-eating tiger');

the woman who is helping to make the party a success is an 'officious fool'; and – finest touch of all – the utter isolation of the child-world from the adult-world is indicated by 'the rest went on eating tranquilly'. It is typical of Bennett's method that this superb episode should be a re-working of material that was already familiar to his readers; it was the patience of the competent journeyman that put greatness finally within his grasp.

II

There is no doubt that the theme of *The Old Wives' Tale* was alive in Bennett's mind before the story itself was planned. *Leonora* was at once recognized as an essay in this direction when it appeared in 1903; Marcel Schwob remarked that Bennett had 'got hold of the greatest of all themes – the agony of the older generation in watching the rise of the younger'.

The precise facts as to how this preoccupation took shape into a novel are common property. There are two sources for Bennett's account, of which the better known, his own preface to the later editions of the book, does not need to be quoted. The other is the Journal entry for November 18, 1903. This, as the reader is unlikely to have it by him, I quote in full.

> Last night, when I went into the Duval for dinner, a middle-aged woman, inordinately stout and with pendant cheeks, had taken the seat opposite to my prescriptive seat. I hesitated, as there were plenty of empty places, but my waitress requested me to take my usual chair. I did so, and immediately thought: 'With *that* thing opposite to me my dinner will be spoilt!' But the woman was evidently also cross at my filling up her table, and she went away, picking up all her belongings, to another part of the restaurant, breathing hard. Then she abandoned her second choice for a third one. My waitress was scornful and angry at this desertion, but laughing also. Soon all the waitresses were privately laughing at the goings-on of the fat woman, who was being served by the most beautiful waitress I have ever seen at any Duval. The fat woman was clearly a crotchet, a 'maniaque', a woman who lived much alone. Her cloak (she displayed on taking it off a simply awful light puce flannel dress) and her parcels were continually the object of her attention and she was always arguing with her waitress. And the whole restaurant secretly made a butt of her. She was repulsive; no one could like her or sympathize with her. But I thought – she has been young and slim once. And I immediately thought of a long 10 or 15 thousand words short story. 'The History of Two Old Women'. I gave this woman a sister, fat as herself. And the first chapter would be in a restaurant (both sisters) something like to-night – and written rather cruelly. Then I would go back to the infancy of these two, and sketch it all. One should have lived ordinarily, married prosaically and become a widow. The other should have become a whore and all that; 'guilty splendour'. Both are overtaken by fat. And they live together again in old age, not too rich, a nuisance to themselves and to others. Neither has any imagination.

It will be seen that the published account is rather more tidy than what actually happened; the contrast between the two waitresses, the fat and faded one who served Bennett, and the beautiful one who caught his eye, is written up into something more striking than the Journal account warrants. The fat waitress, incidentally, was authentic enough; he continued to watch her and noted on November 19 that her looks were deceptive; 'fat, fifty, and apparently the image of shrewd content', she was 'really a *névrosée*, given to crises and sudden violent feelings of an irrational nature'. There is another slight discrepancy between the two accounts, in that the Preface describes the book as having been finished by the end of July 1908, while the Journal gives August 30 as the date; this may be mere carelessness.

One of the interesting points that arises from Bennett's account of the book's genesis, whichever version we consult, is the extent to which his fundamental honesty took command and forced him to tone down the obvious contrasts involved in his original idea; and also how his instinctive sympathy with humanity compelled him to produce in the end a book written in a manner the reverse of 'cruelly'. Sophia and Constance are not crudely opposite in temperament; they are simply different enough to be launched on different paths, which is not at all the same thing; nor are they ridiculous. As a matter of fact, however, Bennett did not sacrifice his original vision of the ridiculous and almost contemptible middle-aged woman. She is present clearly enough:

> Her face, especially as damaged by tears, could not support the ordeal of inspection; it was horrible; not a picture, but a palette; or like the coloured design of a pavement artist after a heavy shower. Her great, relaxed eyelids alone would

have rendered any face absurd; and there were monstrous details far worse than the eyelids. Then she was amazingly fat: flesh seemed to be escaping at all ends from a corset strained to the utmost limit. And above her boots – she was still wearing dainty, high-heeled, tightly laced boots – the calves bulged suddenly out.

As a woman of between forty and fifty, the obese sepulchre of a dead vulgar beauty, she had no right to passions and tears and homage, or even the means of life; she had no right to expose herself picturesquely beneath a crimson glow in all the panoply of ribboned garters and lacy seductiveness. It was silly; it was disgraceful. She ought to have known that only youth and slimness have the right to appeal to the feelings by indecent abandonments.

'The obese sepulchre of a dead vulgar beauty' – one has only to imagine the phrase applied to Constance or Sophia to realize the distance Bennett travelled in working out the novel. Yet they, by the end, are each the sepulchre of a beauty; and Constance, at any rate, is obese; the word is actually used of her. Nevertheless, the fat woman in the Duval did get into Bennett's story after all; and this fact redeems, for me at least, the not quite convincing character of Madame Foucault.

Just how hard and concentrated was the work of composing, of engineering, *The Old Wives' Tale*, we have plenty of striking evidence. Take, for instance, the much discussed point of chronology. It was not Bennett's way to set down precise dates as part of the narrative, but Maggie's written notice (Book II, cap. I) is dated June 10, 1867; this gives us the ages of Sophia and Constance, and by collecting the hints it is possible to give a date to every occurrence: death of John Baines, 1864; elopement of Sophia, 1865; marriage of Constance and Samuel, 1867; death of Mrs Maddack, 1867; birth of Cyril Povey, 1874; death of Mrs Baines, 1875; and so forth. Constance's letter (Book IV, cap. I) enables us to check our calculations and provides a few missing links.

For the French sources, literary and historical, the world is largely in the debt of the late Professor Lafourcade's 'The Sources of the *Old Wives' Tale*' (in his *Arnold Bennett*, 1939). Not only did he discover the precise source of the account of Rivain's execution, in the articles by Georges de Labruyère in the *Matin* (August 22–27, 1907), but he showed that Bennett, while chiefly drawing on the account of the execution of one

Eyrand (August 24, 26), borrowed the motive for Rivain's crime (the murder of a celebrated courtesan) from another case described in the same series. Lafourcade has also gone behind Bennett's bald statement of his sources for the Siege of Paris, and has shown in fascinating detail how many of the small touches of incident and description which give life to his narrative were carefully selected from the pages of Sarcey's *Le Siège de Paris* (1871). To say that his research had a direct bearing on criticism would be an under-statement; it is clear enough that there must be documentary evidence for the facts and figures about such matters as the price Sophia has to pay for black market food, but it is staggering to learn that the description of Chirac's ascent in the balloon is reproduced almost verbatim from Sarcey.

> The light of the railway engines [says Lafourcade], the colour of the taffetas, the presence of the Directeur des postes, the sailor, the mysterious figure wrapped in furs ('dont le nom est un mystère' – it probably *was* Chirac!), the pigeons, the forgotten victuals, the message from the governor, the perilous departure – all has been taken bodily from Sarcey.

Even the restaurant proprietor's joke about the dog's bone, even Sophia's exposure to the charge of signalling to the enemy as she carries her candle up and down stairs at night, have their origin in Sarcey. It is the modesty, the quiet skill, of Bennett's selection from facts, that is the mark of the master. He passed over the more lurid and flamboyant to seize, unerringly, on the small and telling. This tendency was no doubt strengthened by his conversation with the Leberts, from whom he rented the villa in which the book was written. They had been through the siege, but, he noted,

> *they seemed only to attach importance to the siege because I did. Like inhabitants of picturesque town or curious village.* [Italics his.] It seems to have left no particular mark on their minds. They thought more of an accident just before, and [of the fact that] they had a lot of potatoes. They had 3 children (went to school as usual). At first meal 125 grammes each per day (but only 30 grammes later).

This seems to have been one of Bennett's main objects all through the book; to illustrate the faintness and remoteness of the impression made by great public upheavals on the individual life. It is not until potatoes become dearer that the war matters.

Trade's bad says John Baines, and Sophia

> was, in fact, aware of the badness of trade, caused by a vague war in the United States. The words 'North' and 'South' had a habit of recurring in the conversation of adult persons. That was all she knew, though people were starving in the Five Towns, as they were starving in Manchester.

Again and again the distance of history-book events from personal life is stressed.

> As the two women strolled along, content with their industry and their resolves, they came to a National Guard, who, perched on a ladder, was clipping away the 'N' from the official sign of a court tradesman. It was in this way that Madame Foucault and Sophia learnt of the establishment of a republic.

It is this spirit that informs the fine paragraph in which Bennett muses over the death of John Baines.

> Mr Critchlow and the widow gazed, helplessly waiting, at the pitiable corpse, of which the salient part was the white beard. They knew not that they were gazing at a vanished era. John Baines had belonged to the past, to an age when men really did think of their souls, when orators by phrases could move crowds to fury or to pity, when no one had learnt to hurry, when Demos was only turning in his sleep, when the sole beauty of life resided in its inflexible and slow dignity, when hell really had no bottom, and a gilt-clasped Bible really was the secret of England's greatness. Mid-Victorian England lay on that mahogany bed. Ideals had passed away with John Baines. It is thus that ideals die; not in the conventional pageantry of honoured death, but ignobly, when one's back is turned –

There is an understanding of human history in that paragraph which radiates through the entire book.

This same patient restraint, which governed his selection of facts, is alive in the texture of Bennett's narrative. To analyse its workings in every particular would probably be more than the reader would stand for; but we might glance at the method of the opening chapters.

In almost every way, the first book of *The Old Wives' Tale* is the finest hundred pages Bennett ever wrote. This is fortunate, because the first book is strategically vital. Not only is the more important of the book's two settings established there, but almost every major character is introduced. Only Chirac,

waiting in Paris, and Cyril, waiting to be born, were still ahead when Bennett sent Mrs Baines to her living entombment at Axe. The first book deserves more than ordinary study.

The first thing one notices is the extraordinarily subtle use of anticipation. After the episode of the laudanum, when Sophia has run away to laugh in private, Constance stays with Mr Povey. 'This seclusion of Constance and Mr Povey was really very strange' – too slight, so far, even to be called a hint of what is ahead. The next pointer, in cap. iv, is: 'These two practical, duteous, common-sense young and youngish persons had been so absorbed in their efforts for the welfare of the shop that they had positively not only forgotten the time, but had also failed to notice the band.' That they were also engrossed in each other is almost imperceptibly conveyed, and underlined by the next sentence: 'But if Constance had had her wits about her she would at least have pretended that she had heard it.' By now the reader's suspicions are fully aroused, and he suddenly realizes that the shocking, unprecedented display of self-will by Constance – when she invaded Sophia's work-box to rescue Mr Povey's tooth – was another sign of the state of her emotions. The joke had gone far enough: Mr Povey's tooth was not to be kept as a comic souvenir. Everything is falling into place, and a few pages later the matter is settled. 'Who would have supposed that the gentle-eyed Constance, pattern of daughters, was risking her eternal welfare by smiling at the tailed one who, concealing his tail, had assumed the image of Mr Povey?' (He, by the way, was thinking of the tickets they had been making.)

Again, the most alert of readers is unlikely to attach any importance to the fact that Mrs Daniel Povey has a shocking hole in her curtains, and in a room overlooking the Square at that: but these things seep into the mind. A living care over detail is evident on every page. During Sophia's first interview with her father, Bennett quietly inserts, with no comment, two sentences that contain the explanation of his subsequent death.

> Presently his sallow face and long white beard began to slip down the steep slant of the pillows, and a troubled look came into his left eye. Sophia rose and, putting her hands under his armpits, lifted him higher in the bed.

No comment – but that is how John Baines died. And not until it is too late does Bennett add explicitly, 'For five thousand

nights she (Mrs Baines) had wakened infallibly every time he stirred, and rearranged him by the flicker of a little oil lamp'. The handling of Gerald Scales is marked throughout by this triumphant subtlety of detail. We are led to identify ourselves so largely with Sophia that on a first reading, if we do not know the story, it is natural to see him as a knight errant; but the tiny drops of poison glitter so clearly that on a second reading we wonder how we could have missed them. Gerald's is a destructive rôle; every time he appears in this first book he breaks something, even if it is only the decorum of the Baines parlour by using the word 'bitch', or Mrs Baines's pride in her pastry. And Bennett does not forget to add, when John Baines is dead, the coolly significant words, 'The real murderer was having his dinner in the commercial room up at the Tiger, opposite the Town Hall'.

This patient precision is the main feature of Bennett's method in *The Old Wives' Tale*, just as its deep, half-articulate pity for humanity caught in the trap of Time is the main effect he is out to engineer. To say that this is obvious, to point out that no reader ever missed the point, is not to condemn Bennett for his triteness but to praise him for his success. His melancholy was not the reaction of the man who is 'disturbed' by life, but of one who was, if anything, frozen by it into a semi-paralytic suffering, of which the obverse is his frequently jarring jauntiness. But the irritating cocksure note is never permitted to enter this or any other of his major novels. What we get instead is a manly, uncomplaining melancholy, equally remote from peevishness or panic. It is useless to try to show this by quotation, since Bennett's art is slow and cumulative; nevertheless, if I were asked to choose, from the pages of the work itself, phrases which contain the gist of its 'message', point, hub, centre, or whatever term is most in fashion, I should point to two. One is 'the vast inherent melancholy of the universe' (Book II, cap. 2, iii), and the other, 'the earth's fashion of renewing itself' (Book IV, cap. 2, i). In these two phrases, if we will weigh and examine them, is to be found the root of the matter. And along with his melancholy goes its proper accompaniment, a gentle and dispassionate irony. This irony is present everywhere as a subsidiary colour. It is partly in the incidents: Constance does not go directly to Knype station to meet her sister, but deviously, so that it will not seem to observers that she is too excited; Mrs Baines walks to the top

of the Square to have a view of the new signboard, and returning, says nothing. And it is partly in the phrasing. 'She had caught smallpox and died of it,' Bennett remarks of Sophia's charwoman, 'thus losing a good situation.' When Spot is being forcibly washed, 'His eyes continually peeped forth between corners of the agitated towel, and they were full of inquietude and shame.'

Let me leave *The Old Wives' Tale* with a quotation in which, so it seems to me, the pathos and the irony achieve a perfect union. It is after the death of John Baines.

> . . . on the morning of the funeral Aunt Harriet had the satisfaction of beholding her younger sister the centre of a tremendous cocoon of crape, whose slightest pleat was perfect. Aunt Harriet seemed to welcome her then, like a veteran, formally into the august army of relicts.

Will not this suffice? Or must we still regret that he failed to launch 'a great kick at misery'?

(To be continued)

KNAPPING SUDROUN

(A Defence of the Scottish Language)

Tom Scott

It is not sufficiently realized that a very considerable literature exists in that development of the Northumbrian dialect of Old English which came to be called (first by Gawin Douglas) 'Scots'. Any reference to the volumes of the Scottish Text Society, the Bannatyne Club, the Spalding Club, or the original texts and manuscripts will satisfy the interested reader on this score: and reference to the relevant chapters in any standard history of 'Eng. Lit.' will show that if all works in Scots were to be subtracted from that literature, there would be a very noticeable gap, despite the fact that Scottish literature, especially if it have a nationalistic tinge, is by no means overrated.

Not only the poems of Barbour, Henry the Minstrel (both heroic poets much depreciated because of their Scottish matter); James the First, Henryson, Dunbar, Douglas, Scott, Boyd, Montgomerie, Maitland, Sempill, Ramsay, Fergusson, Burns, Ross, Stevenson (the founder of *Lallans*), the border ballads and a host of excellent minor poets (often women), but the prose of Murdoch Nisbet (New Testament), John Bellantyne, Wyntoun, Walter Scott (dialogues), Stevenson, Galt, Alexander, and others, sometimes anonymous, form a solid basic literature for a small country.

The existence of this literature makes it ludicrous for Nelson-eyed critics south of the Tweed to call Scots a mere dialect like Yorkshire or Dorset. Scots is, and has been since the fourteenth century, a literary language. This means that few creative writers born in this tradition (Gaelic-speaking Celts are in a different case) are likely to produce first-rate work before they have come to terms with the Scots which their own strongest feelings are rooted in. In fact, as Mr Edwin Muir rightly pointed out some twenty-five years ago, no Scot has written first-class work in English at all (creative work). The position to-day is unchanged; indeed it has degenerated. (Mr Muir's

own beautiful poems in English are irrelevant here – his own background is Old Norn in which nothing has been written since the Icelandic sagas; being an Orkneyman, his difficulties therefore are much greater than those confronting any Scot, even Gaelic-speakers, and it would be difficult to overrate his achievement or exaggerate the difficulties he had to overcome.) This failure of English for Scots writers means that after four hundred years of trying to wear the 'masquing-gear' of English, no Scot has succeeded in producing first-rate work in that tongue; even Walter Scott is rather a giant than a god. On the other hand, whenever Scots has been turned to by serious writers, work of the first quality, if not of the highest order, has been immediately forthcoming.

In 1581, John Hamilton published *Ane Catholic and Facile Traictise* in which he accused the reformers of 'knapping sudroun in contempt of our language'. The 'knapping sudroun' has gone on for four hundred years, but has not produced anything comparable even to the work of second order writers born to the English traditions.

It is not surprising therefore that the Scottish language should assert itself again, this time through a poet of undoubted genius, Hugh MacDiarmid (after Yeats the best poetic mind born in these islands and writing in this century). Nor is it surprising that the reassertion should be tempestuous and forceful; nor that he should draw Scots poets home to their own traditions. It is worth noting too that the dissipation of his own powers which many complain of in the later MacDiamid coincides with his return to English for political and polemical poems; English has always gone hand in glove with Calvinism in Scotland.

There are many reasons why English and Anglo-Scottish journalists should be against the Scottish language; but none is a literary reason.

II

Some facts, commonplace among poets and language specialists, need to be constantly reiterated, for the man in the street and the busy journalist forget them.

Language is an essential mode of consciousness. The language of a people (Scots is the native speech of all lowland Scots, educated or uneducated, whether they know it or not) is part of its timeless heritage and something it holds in trust for all humanity. No people can lose or neglect its language and

traditions without suffering damage more or less great; consciousness is lost, and not only the best individuals, who feel the loss most, nor only the whole people, but the whole of humanity, are the poorer. The city not of Cecrops cannot be a city of Zeus; it is a mere bog, a nuisance to itself and to its neighbours.

It is the business of writers to safeguard and develop language; their own in particular. A writer who denigrates his own language is like a priest who denigrates faith. (If this be thought to be 'emotional blackmail', let it be said that those who are not compromised cannot be blackmailed.)

These considerations go beyond the merely practical, beyond questions of time or place. Even if writers felt no vital impulse to do this work, it would be valuable if they did it for merely intellectual reasons. Where the impulse is most forcefully present, there is no relevant ground for discouraging it.

A poet must use the language or languages demanded by his poems for their full achievement and articulation. Moreover, no language which has a living (ever-living) literature, can ever be a dead language.

III

In the June number of this journal, in an article called 'Masquing-gear', Mr Iain Hamilton makes what, in the light of the foregoing, seems to me to be statements of such wild and perverse a character as to be almost incredible. I propose to consider some of them, and for reasons of space will do so with as little quotation as possible.

Mr Hamilton thinks that the recent so-called 'Scots Renaissance' (a misleading term, for it underrates the perennial continuity of spoken Scots among the peasants and proletariat) is a failure, because it has produced 'only' a few dozen genuine poems, and a lot of pastiche. What but a few dozen genuine poems has any similar period produced anywhere in these islands, since the Elizabethans? Any critic who, after Eliot, Pound and Joyce have been thirty and more years alive, can use the word 'pastiche' as if it were a term of abuse, is critically as dead as the dodo. But the parrot cry is raised again and again by criticules, applied alike to poems of as much content as their own clever heads and to those which have enough content to start a revolution, if enough readers were about. Mr Hamilton is referred to an essay by T. S. Eliot called

'Tradition and the Individual Talent'. Further, says this expert on poetry, MacDiarmid is the only important writer produced by his own movement. One would not expect the kind of critic I have criticized above to see what is in the work of the late William Soutar, that of Sydney Goodsir Smith (the best of whose work is above the fluctuations of mere fashion, but who is becoming now something of a butt for reasons remote from poetry; indeed, as usual, precisely because he is a poet) Robert Garioch, Douglas Young, Alexander Scott, Helen Cruikshank, George Campbell Hay and myself, among others; but to readers who may have the necessary acumen one may say: they that have ears to hear, let them hear; they that have eyes to see, let them see. But Mr Hamilton, a new spectator of the Scottish scene, thinks the movement is a failure. The evidence is rather that it is only just getting its second wind and striding forward with a new and invincible seriousness to the establishment of Scots as a complete, all-purpose literary language. This purpose is of course strengthened by every form of opposition it meets, and those who are most nationalistic welcome gleefully such irresponsible attacks as Mr Hamilton's for this reason. I myself hope to see a more catholic and enlightened spirit meet the problem, both in Scotland and England; so much so that I think it worth while trying to counteract Mr Hamilton's propaganda in the mind of the innocent English reader. The goodwill of readers in England (and elsewhere) may reduce the intensity and impact of the Scots revival, but it makes for a higher maturity of achievement, and so is worth inviting.

When Mr Hamilton says that we should write off the Scots Renaissance as a failure and turn to the creation of 'real literature' in 'decent' English (by 'decent' he means 'genteel', and our genteel Scots are so careful to cover up their true accents that they add '*g*' to such words as '*garden*'.), he overlooks the fact already mentioned above that Scots have been trying to do that for four centuries with lamentable results. Another four will make as little impression; the immortals are always there to demand their due.

We must write 'decent' English 'tinctured' with our Scottish background, says Mr Hamilton. 'Tinctured.' What a word. We are to be sparing with this dangerous, indecent, Scottishness of ours, and take the English Muse, daub her up with lipstick and mascara concocted out of heather and bluebells, duly

licensed to solicit furth the Tweed by Whitehall (or is it Fleet Street?) and pimp this Bloomsbury bag as our native Muse. Our 'mother' tongue, as Mr Hamilton puts it. I know what my mother would say, and my father too, but I'll spare the reader the indecency. Even Walter Scott, keen as he was on capturing the English market and founding a 'family', would have scorned such whuremongering.

But, says Mr H., this 'tincturing' of English is what Yeats and Thomas did, what William Carlos Williams does. Mr Williams can speak for himself, but Yeats and Thomas had no alternative: they had either to write in Gaelic or English: but we Scots can write in Scots. Yeats was one of the earliest fans of Hugh MacDiarmid and envied him his rich native speech. Thomas tore English syntax to tatters to make it suit his Celtic mind, and his chief disciple, W. S. Graham, whom I think, perhaps wrongly, is a Celtic Scot, began by doing the same. The lowland Scot has no need to use such violent methods, for he inherits a language which includes the whole vacabulary of southern English (but none of its idiom), plus his own rich additions thereto. This sharing of vocabulary is common to languages descended from the same stem: French, Italian and Spanish from Latin, Scots and English from Anglo-Saxon. Our common vocabulary is somewhere in the region of half a million words, or more; not the eight hundred and fifty to which English has recently been reduced by language-killers.

Mr Hamilton thinks it odd that MacDiarmid did not take his cue from the late Professor Gregory Smith, one-time editor of the *Spectator*. Does he need to be told that professors take their cue from poets, not the other way round? And Mr Hamilton, who tells us flatly that the same language was spoken in London and Scotland during the Middle Ages, should read Gregory Smith on the common supposition that the same language was spoken between Humber and Aberdeen *before* the Middle Ages, when all differences increased: 'It is, perhaps, too dogmatic to say, especially when the documentary evidence is so slight, that, in the earliest period, the language north of the Tweed was identical with that between Tweed and Humber.'

Mr Hamilton, despite his contention that Scots has no more than sentimental and political value, seems to think that national sentiment is quite 'decent', so long as it is expressed in respectable English. He goes on to accuse Scots writers of a

simple confusion of poetry and politics. One might be inclined to think that here he puts his finger on something that might be alleged against certain versifiers in Scotland; but it is quite clear that they are paragons of integrity compared with Mr Hamilton in this matter of confusing poetry and politics. There are those in Scotland who write political verse and think it is poetry; and there is Mr Hamilton who writes political propaganda, and thinks it is literary criticism. One is tempted to say to both, 'Take off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground'. For politicians to meddle with poetry should be the one capital offence. What must be said, however, is that the confusion of poetry and politics is by no means a Scottish idiosyncrasy. There are whole so-called literary magazines, long-established in London, which have no other purpose than to try to give literature a direction acceptable to the defenders of the *status quo*, and are the natural haunt of every kind of literary hireling. It must be said, too, that of the four nations belonging to these 'British' Isles, the Scots are by far the least nationalistic, and the English by far the most.

When Mr Hamilton tells us that after James VI poetry became almost entirely popular or folk, in Scotland, he omits to tell us the reasons. These are that Calvinism suppressed all secular art and poetry for about a century and a half, discouraged the use of Scots and any reading but that of the (English) bible: that the court had been the centre of art poetry until this scion of Lord Darnley mounted the throne, having done precisely nothing to prevent his mother's ghastly fate, and that after the court moved to London the poets either became silent or subservient and second-rate.

The old chestnut about the English lines in Tam o'Shanter can be easily answered. Burns did not think in English and feel in Scots: too simple a distinction for any poetry, which is both thought and feeling in a state of fusion: it is simply that Burns often wanted to be high-falutin, and when he did he turned, like most Scots in similar case, to English. The result in Tam o'Shanter, as usual, is unspeakably banal.

As for droves of poetasters, alas, they are to be found nowhere outside of London, in this country. But I am not to be thought to identify myself in any way with this use of the word 'poetaster', the half-envious invention of the British philistine of all nationalities, by which is meant an attack on all poets through their weakest brethren. As Mr Eliot pointed out long

ago, the true attitude to poetasters, so-called, is not to kill them off (together with their more gifted fellows), but to help and encourage them to do useful work. Like the crowd artistes in a film, they may just stand around in costume and do nothing, but they add to the colour, they body out the scene, and their passionate dedication is itself a tribute to the Muse whom we all serve. (One might recall the last line of Milton's most famous sonnet.) Would we had just one drove of them in Scotland! The philistine's ignorant fear of the artist stems from his fatuous belief that the only thing that prevents him being a great artist himself is that there is no money in it. He cannot accept the simple fact that some are born with gifts from which he is himself eternally and hopelessly estranged. *Poeta nascitur* (*ET fil*).

If an Englishman, or any Scot wanting the gift, tried to don the masquing-gear, so-called, of Lallans, he would make an ass of himself, as my friend Mr Hubert Nicholson recently demonstrated in *London Magazine*. Similarly, it would be folly of an Englishman at this time to produce 'pastiche' of Chaucer; not because it is inherently bad, but because he has no need to. But Spenser and one Thomas Chatterton, among others, have done this sort of thing when and as suitable; I have never heard that they are any the less poets for that.

Mr Hamilton talks much and mysteriously about critical standards, so that one waits for him to produce some evidence that he himself possesses some. At the end of his article the oracle speaks: MacDiarmid's 'A Drunk Man looks at the Thistle' is a piece of kailyiardism! For the uninstructed I had better point out that this is like saying that Eliot is a 'Georgian'. If this little emperor have any rag left, I will leave it him.

As a friend of mine said the other day, any translation is interesting. Mr Hamilton's version of Mr Smith's poem (one of his least deeply Scots) is interesting; but it is an entirely different poem. Some may object here, it merely 'sounds' different. But a poem which 'sounds' different is a different poem, as every poet knows. I myself think that Walter Scott, who learned to write heroic verse from John Barbour, made a mistake in not using his master's language as well as his style; but although I can prove this at least to my own satisfaction, the fact remains that Scott wrote it in English. This:

> Beathes there the man with saul sae daed
> Wha nevir til himsel hes said,
> 'This is my ain, my native laund!'

> Whase hert hes neer within him burned
> As hame his fuitsteps he hes turned
> Frae wanderan on a fremmit straund?

may be better than what Scott wrote; but it is a different poem.

> The stag at een had drunk his fill
> Whaur daunsed the muin on Monan's rill,

is to my ear preferable to

> The stag at eve had drunk his fill
> Where danced the moon on Monan's rill,

but the latter is what Scott wrote, and it is different from my version. Then again, at a lighter level, I prefer:

> O Brignall banks are fresh and fair,
> And Greta wuids are green,
> And ye may gaither gairlaunds there
> Wad set a simmer queen:
> And as I rade by Dalton Haa,
> Ablow the turret hie,
> I hard a queyn on the castle waa
> Singan cantilie

to what Scott wrote, but it is a different poem. I think a great deal of verse written in English by Scotsmen would have been far better done in Scots; whereas I have never translated a true English poem into Scots, and I have tried many, without losing something essential; indeed the very soul of the poem. Let us respect the integrity of the poem and its own language.

Mr Iain Hamilton writes:

> There are things, said a great Irish patriot, that a man must not do for his country. Mr Scott should ask himself whether his patriotism really demands such intellectual befuddlement as that made manifest above. There is little for me to reply to, since Mr Scott makes no attempt to answer the arguments set out in my article. Perhaps he has not taken them in. May I therefore, for his benefit, repeat the main points concisely:
>
> (1) Scottish speech is now standard English with no more than a tincture of the old local dialect.
>
> (2) *Lallans*, so called, stands in no sound relationship to any living Scottish speech past or present.
>
> (3) *Lallans*, composed as it is out of dictionaries and the

obscurest of obsolete dialect words and th[illegible] of Wardour Street 'olde tyme', is no[illegible]e general equivalent Esperanto. [illegible] less artificial than

(4) An exact English parallel of a *Lall[illegible]* a mild little Georgian lyric dressed up [illegible]*ans* 'poem' would be tatters of an antique cut torn off Chauc[illegible] in various rags and peare and Donne' and further masked wher[illegible]r, Skelton, Shakes- coinings and compounds and, to a great ex[illegible] ever necessary with nary English word disguised in a fancy s[illegible]tent, with the ordi-

(5) The practice of *Lallans* is comparat[illegible] pelling. the literary competitions of the week-end [illegible]e to participation in nature it cannot and does not produce a si[illegible]eviews; by its very

(6) The real issue is being obscured by the [illegible]nificant poetry. ganda; the emotional blackmail; the irrespon[illegible] 'ceaseless propa- minor verse into major poetry; the extreme ea[illegible]ible inflation of a drove of poetasters (in English) have put o[illegible]e with which masquing-gear and, so disguised, arrived eff[illegible] the *Lallans* 'significance'; a taste for the picturesque; the s[illegible]rtlessly at fusion of political and literary values; the growing unwillingness of critics (not least Scottish critics living and working in London) to employ their critical instruments, and their readiness to make instead all manner of improper allowances, on political or sentimental grounds, and finally to pretend that a pebble-dash of *Lallans* will turn a sentimental banality fit only for the attention of Tin Pan Alley into a lyric which will stand comparison with the best of Rilke or Yeats or anyone else.'

For the rest, I must refer Mr Scott back to my article, which he might read again with profit. But I greatly fear that one might as well try to argue with a flat-earther. In any case it would be distasteful as well as profitless to enter into a controversy with someone with the manners of Mr Scott. One understands very well why it is that the defence of *Lallans* verse is generally conducted in a tone of uneasy yet raucous vulgarity; but that does not make such displays as Mr Scott's any the more edifying.

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor of THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

SIR, – Mr Iain Hamilton, in his article 'Masquing-Gear' in your June issue, refers to me in ways both engaging and enraging that call for comment. He states (p. 536) that I 'modestly, honourably, and successfully' write in 'a thinly Scotticized English'. My gratification at the compliment is overwhelmed by my stupefaction at the linguistic obtuseness of the critic. So far am I from writing in 'a thinly Scotticized English' that my fellow versifiers have long since dubbed me 'The Pedant of the Scots Renaissance' for my rigour in excluding English from my Scots. Looking over press notices of my volumes I find remarks like these on my use of languages:

'Douglas Young is more Scottish than Burns' (*Poetry Review*); 'alive with the pith of Scots' (*Glasgow Herald*); 'a superb and well-justified confidence in his native Lallans' (*Blackfriars*); 'homely and authentic' (*The Carrick Herald*, Ayrshire). Dr Edwin Muir, our best critic, observed in a broadcast:

> Mr Young's occasional poems are very good indeed, perfect in their balance, with a delightfully just and appropriate use of language. This is particularly true of the poems in Lallans. Mr Young catches a sort of couthiness in his use of Scots, which is very attractive, a sort of endearing intonation which seems to be inherent in it. We have the feeling that the language is trying to domesticate all the things it describes and bring them into the warm community of men and women.

Mr Hamilton's second major error in my regard is when he writes:

> Mr Douglas Young . . . consistently refers to *Lallans* as if this antiquarian hotch-potch had an actual existence upon the lips; and he is scholar enough to know very well that it never existed, that it does not exist, that it never will exist.

Well now, Mr Hamilton is here joining issue with great names like Robert Burns and Robert Louis Stevenson, my predecessors and preceptors in the literary use of Lallans, which is the Scots name used by them, among others, for our old Lowland

tongue. In his Epistle to the Ayrshire poet William Simpson, of Ochiltree, Burns writes of the old Scots *Makars:*

> They spak their thochts in plain braid Lallans,
> like you and me.

A century later, Stevenson, in 'The Maker to Posterity', confesses:

> I wrote in Lallan,
> Dear to my hert as the peat-reek,
> Auld as Tantallon.

Originally, of course, a Germanic dialect ('Northern Insular West Teutonic', a philologist might call it), Scots, Lallans (or *Doric,* or 'the Vernacular', as some term it), has been in colloquial and literary use in the Lowlands of Scotland and beyond for six centuries and more. Though not now the speech of the Royal Court, the Parliament, or the Judiciary, and not commonly a language for formal and sustained discourse (as Gaelic still is, in sermons, for example), Lallans continues to bulk largely in the personal and informal conversation of the majority of native Scots. This fact causes some despair to teachers of standard English, who find the influence of the Scottish home not wholly eradicable by the classroom. It was noted that, during the war, refugees and prisoners who picked up the language of North Britain by the direct method, not primarily from books, spoke Scots rather than English.

To be sure Lallans has always had, like Frisian, Dutch, and other kindred tongues, an overlapping vocabulary with English and with German. Did Goethe on his deathbed cry for 'mehr licht' or for 'mair licht'? It is true also that colloquial Scots becomes increasingly mixed up with standard English or American words and idioms picked up from compulsory schooling, the cinema, radio, TV, press, and so on. Yet one hears it every day from almost everyone. Even the more Anglicized of our big city bourgeoisie use more Scots vocabulary and idiom than many of them might like to know. And among the upper classes with a rustic background the proportion of knowledge is greater. I recall at my preparatory school, for instance, a boy of a well-known Border family being asked, 'What is the French for *to be called?*', and immediately answering 'Avoir froid' (*Scottické*, To be cauld).

In literary use, admittedly, prose-development has been lopsided, but it has been continuous in popular works, from the

colloquial parts of Scott, Galt, and Stevenson, down to Grassic Gibbon and other contemporaries; while in the theatre roughly half the plays favoured by the very numerous bodies of local amateurs and their spectators are in a Lallans not always heavily diluted with standard Southron. In literature and the rest of life, Lallans is an integral part of our living heritage.

If Scots like to write in English, Russian, Chinese, or Esperanto, good luck to them. My own experience is that some occasions promote thoughts and feelings that require Lallans for appropriate expression. T. S. Eliot has written of Lallans: 'I am convinced that many things can be said, in poetry, in that language that cannot be expressed at all in English.' Admittedly the cinema organ has a greater range than some other musical instruments; but ought we on that account to abandon the clarsach and the bagpipe? Pindar indeed said that water is most excellent; but Scotch whisky has a flavour that commends itself to many, as does our ancestral literary language, Lallans.

Some whiskies are better than others, and some versifiers have a better use of Lallans than others. Mr Iain Hamilton seems to wish to have everyone writing solely in English, the advice given to Burns by many previous Messrs Hamilton. Had Burns followed it we should not have had 'Tam o' Shanter' – which, however, was prompted by an English tourist, Captain Grose, who knew a good thing when he heard it, and relished our national literary medium, as I feel sure many of your readers will, if they have access to the best work of such recent practitioners as Lewis Spence, Hugh MacDiarmid, William Soutar, Violet Jacob, Charles Murray, Sir Alexander Gray, Helen Cruikshank, William Grey, Albert Mackie, Sydney Smith, Robert Garioch, Crom Saunders, and Alexander Scott.

Mr Hamilton suggests that MacDiarmid might, in English, have been to Scotland as Yeats was to Ireland. MacDiarmid has in fact written English poems of signal interest, but Yeats, and his friend, A. E., never for a moment considered them on the level of MacDiarmid's best work in Scots. Mr Hamilton tells of his aviator's perception of Scotland. We would welcome him down to our native earth.

Yours faithfully,
DOUGLAS YOUNG.

MAKARSBIELD, TAYPORT, FIFE.
August 7, 1954.

Mr Iain Hamilton writes:

It is pleasant to find a defender of Lallans who observes the common courtesies and puts forward his opinions in a manner which is not reminiscent of a public-house brawl.

Mr Young is welcome to his arbitrary and eccentric separation of Scots English and English English. But one wonders what Dunbar or Henryson or Douglas would have had to say to his quaint philology. I imagine that most professional philologists will join with me in wishing Mr Young 'mehr licht' or 'mair licht' or even just 'more light' on this subject.

The rest of Mr Young's letter appears to depend upon an avoidance of the necessary distinction between the vernacular, in any of its living forms, and that wholly artificial lingo which is now denoted by the word *Lallans*. Mr Young must know very well that this antiquarian hotch-potch, as I justly described it, has not and never has had an existence upon the lips. It was *Lallans* that was under criticism, not the vernacular (otherwise Broad Scots or the Doric) – of which I wrote:

> To write, at this point in history, in the vernacular – that is to say in a thinly Scotticized English, similar to any given existing dialect – may be merely to grow a very small flower in a very small corner of the garden which will be visited by a rapidly diminishing number of admirers; but it is at least an activity in some touch with reality.

This was generous of me in view of the fact that, so far as I am aware, all Scottish poets of note to-day (except the Gaels among them) have standard English for their mother tongue. The fact that an Ayrshireman or an Aberdonian or a Borderer has his own distinctive *accent* (like a Yorkshireman or a Lancastrian or an East Anglian or a Cornishman) does not seem to me to have any particular relevance. Or would Mr Young have us all spell out our words phonetically (see Mr T. Scott's article elsewhere in this issue) so that we might call the results something other than English? Mr Young invites me 'down to our native earth'. Is that the same place as the Land of Let's Pretend? For it is only there surely that his arguments have much validity.

To the Editor of THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

SIR, – THE TWENTIETH CENTURY is so alive these days that it is a little disconcerting to find one of your contributors ('J.G.W.', reviewing *The Invisible Writing*) apparently under

the impression that the last word on the subject of God's Will was spoken – ('once and for all' . . . 'unanswerably') – by Voltaire; and, indeed, taking it for granted that your readers (some of whom may be reminded of Blake's unanswerable answers to Voltaire) are necessarily afflicted with his own 'logical' but no longer very satisfying deficiency of vision.

Yours, etc.,

H. F. RUBINSTEIN.

Our contributor replies: –

Mr Rubinstein seems to imply that Voltaire is dead and that I am a logical-positivist. I have not the honour, and Voltaire is very much alive. *Candide* is a song of innocence and experience by a man who thought more about God than most people do. When I say that the points he makes are unanswerable, I mean that the intelligence cannot answer them; at least I have never seen any answer in the innumerable books on the problem of evil I have read or in the sermons I have listened to. 'Faith' puts a cushion over the spikes so that we can sit on them. Voltaire had a very sensitive constitution. He wrote what he did because, being a kind of believer, he had to sit on the spikes, and, being the perfect non-believing intelligence, he refused to use the cushion. J. G. W.

To the Editor of THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

SIR,

I notice several of your correspondents saying Dame Edith Sitwell is not a poet at all.

Is this meant to be funny, like those inverted commonplaces which used to be heard at the bleaker kind of undergraduate party: 'Water is so alcoholic, my dear,' or 'No *white* man is human'? Or is it meant to be a metaphysical paradox like 'the invisible world is not real'?

What it clearly *isn't* is criticism. It would be criticism to say that Edith Sitwell is a bad poet and to give reasons for this judgment, but your correspondents refuse to do this. Why do people who dislike her work never say what they think is wrong with it? Can it be because a detailed analysis would inevitably show her to be a *good* poet?

Yours, etc.,

MAURICE CRANSTON.

TRAVELLERS' CLUB, PALL MALL, S.W.1.
July 30, 1954.

Our correspondents reply:

It does Mr Cranston credit that, observing my summary judgment – 'Dr Sitwell is no poet' – and Mr Patrick Cruttwell's endorsement of it, he should ask for evidence, for the case to be made. It is only fair to me, however, to acknowledge that I put this forward, not as an *ex cathedra* pronouncement, but precisely as an example of highly controversial opinion, an opinion that I happen to hold.

It is not true to say that people who dislike Edith Sitwell's work never say what they think is wrong with it. I am on holiday and away from my books; otherwise I would give Mr Cranston chapter and verse. In recent years there have been, in the first place, a controversy about the notorious 'Emily-coloured primulas', a phrase of Dr Sitwell's that was tugged this way and that in the correspondence columns of *The Observer* and finally, as it seems to me, disposed of by Mr Kingsley Amis in 'Essays in Criticism'; and, more recently, a similar controversy in *The Spectator*, arising out of Mr Anthony Hartley's review of *Gardeners and Astronomers*. So far from adverse criticism of Dr Sitwell having never come down to brass tacks, there has been so much of it that her admirers seem to me to do what I objected to in my article – they refuse to take any notice of the case made against their favourite.

It seems to me there is a world of difference between calling somebody 'a bad poet' and calling her 'no poet at all'. I cannot of course speak for Mr Cruttwell, though I am glad to acknowledge that in all these matters I should expect to agree with him. But the difference as I see it is this: the bad poet presumably knows what poetry is, but can't write it; the pseudo-poet (and I think it was Mr F. W. Bateson who first gave this title to Dr Sitwell) does not know what poetry is, and writes something else. Dr Sitwell's writing, that is, seems to me wrong *in principle*; and if Mr Cranston still wants to know what I mean by that, I can only direct him to Mr Amis and Mr Hartley, in the places I have indicated.

I should like to take this opportunity of commenting on Mr Spender's interesting and generous letter in the July issue. Mr Spender admits that, because he knew his name was often linked with Mr Auden's and Mr Day Lewis's, he was less than fair in his comments on some of their earlier work. In other words, he was falling over backwards to be impartial. But a falling backwards is still a falling. It is as bad to be too severe

on our friends as too indulgent towards them. In either case, personal and private considerations have obstructed truly impartial criticism. Perhaps this is in the nature of things. I wished only to point out that it happens, and that when people fulminate self-righteously against 'the racket' they may turn out to mean nothing more heinous than this. I am inclined to agree with Mr Cruttwell that the most important point to get home to the public is not that the racket exists, but that 'the goods which the racket recommends are intolerably shoddy'.

DONALD DAVIE.

As one of the 'several', I am grateful for the Editor's invitation to reply.

'No poet at all' is merely a conveniently brief way of saying 'not, in my humble and personal opinion, a good poet'. Such apparently dogmatic ellipses must occur now and then in criticism; for mere reasons of space, it is impossible always to qualify and apologize and back up every opinion with 'detailed analysis'. Dame Edith herself is a mistress of such ellipses: when she refers to a hostile critic as 'a Mr Hartley' – one day (who knows?) she may call Mr Davie 'a Mr D.' and myself 'a Mr C.' – she means, and surely we all understand that she means, 'a critic whose existence has been forced on my notice and for whom I have the deepest contempt'.

But Mr Cranston's challenge is fair, and ought to be met. He will not expect me to furnish a 'detailed analysis' of the whole of Dame Edith's considerable *œuvre;* perhaps I may be allowed to use one sequence of poems in her latest volume, *Gardeners and Astronomers*. The ultimate meaning of this sequence – *The Road to Thebes* – eludes me after five careful readings; but it is clearly intended to make some very large and important statements. This it endeavours to do partly by a great wealth of capitalized abstractions, in this style –

> The four worlds came: Love, Hate, Belief, and Unbelief

partly by a highly rhetorical use of mythology, like this –

> No. It was Lucifer,
> Son of the Morning – then it changed to the Prince of the Air, the brightness
> That rules in Hell! Grown cold! I am Medusa – and my other Name is Time!

and partly by an exotic and densely private symbolism. In this the word 'sapphire' seems to have great importance, occurring as it does these seven times –

> Calls to the sphinxes of the silence and the unburied sapphires . . .
> What do the seraphs and sapphires of air among the branches
> Hear as the voices pass? . . .
> My lips cold as the unburied sapphires in the desert air . . .
> Those airs of sapphire drift from violet vines –
> Elixirs and saps of sapphire beloved of Saturn . . .
> And the sad sapphire bone shrunk by Time's fires . . .
> Then where the suns of Night seek in the rock for unborn sapphires . . .

I find myself completely unable to attach any meaning to 'sapphires' in this poem: the contexts give no help whatsoever. Why are they there at all? Why are they unburied at one point and unborn at another? Why are they airs first, saps next, and finally bones? And so on – such questions the whole poem, if read with any care, is perpetually provoking. Dame Edith herself, I have little doubt, could explain it all if she cared to; but Mr Cranston may perhaps remember a controversy about 'Emily-coloured primulas' (or 'hands') which enlivened the columns of *The Observer* some three years ago. In that controversy, it was clear that even approving readers were interpreting the Sitwellian phrase entirely in their own sweet ways: some plumped for pink, some saw mauve, one saw black. The writer herself (who gave 'pink' as the authorized interpretation, with 'mauve' as a permissible variant) laid down this notable principle: '*The phrase gave her a sensory impression.* [Dame Edith's italics.] That is all that matters.' This gives the show away. 'Sensory impressions' – and those of a far-fetched, day-dreaming, and arbitrary sort – are all that Dame Edith's poetry can give; she is the slave, not the mistress, of her words. The claims to spiritual profundity, which the portentous vocabulary and long loose 'prophetic' lines, derived from Blake, are continually making, have nothing to support them. And 'sensory impressions' alone are not enough to make good poetry.

PATRICK CRUTTWELL.

BOOK NOTES

THE SCOURGE OF THE SWASTIKA: A SHORT HISTORY OF NAZI WAR CRIMES. By Lord Russell of Liverpool. (Cassell. 15*s*.)

MARTYRS AND FIGHTERS: A HISTORY OF WAR IN THE WARSAW GHETTO FROM DOCUMENTS AND DIARIES. Edited by Philip Friedman with a preface by Norman Bentwich. (Routledge & Kegan Paul. 21*s*.)

For those who are inclined to be overcome by depression at the spectacle of the contemporary world, and to believe that the last war was fought in vain, the best antidote is undoubtedly a course of reading about what the followers of Hitler actually did in the lands they conquered and what they intended to do in the countries they failed to overrun. However bitter may have been the disillusionment of war-time hopes of a better world, the present condition of Western Europe at least is heaven itself in comparison to the hell in which it was so nearly engulfed as part of a Nazi empire. Nine years after the end of Hitler, with an abundance of documentation for checking in historical retrospect what was once current news, the face of Nazi tyranny appears no less grim than it did when the Germans were in Calais and Bordeaux. *The Scourge of the Swastika* is a book which gives an adequate general survey, based on the evidence of war crimes trials, of the Nazi conduct of war and treatment of conquered peoples. Lord Russell of Liverpool (not to be confused with Bertrand) was Deputy Judge Advocate General to the British Army in Germany and was legal adviser to the Commander-in-Chief in respect of all war crimes trials held in the British zone. He still writes very much in the style of a prosecuting counsel addressing the court, and there is little attempt to relate the atrocities described to Nazi political aims, or to study the working of the bureaucratic machine by which mass murder was carried out. The author touches at one point on the vital question of who knew what in Hitler's Germany, but does not go deeply into it. He has, however, produced a useful guide-book to the Nazi chamber of horrors.

With *Martyrs and Fighters*, although the theme is much narrower, we come closer to the reality of that totalitarian world which it is still so hard for the average Englishman even to imagine. The Jewish community in Warsaw was the largest in Europe in 1939 and comprised not only a population of all social classes from the richest to the poorest, but also a number of highly distinguished

scientists, writers and artists. In this book the story of its destruction is told by putting together extracts from various original sources, including German official reports, reminiscences of survivors, and 'archives' deliberately buried in the earth in boxes, in order to preserve the record, and located under the ruins of the ghetto by Jewish historians since the war. Here we have first-hand accounts in vivid and appalling detail of every phase and aspect of the ghetto tragedy: of the formation of the ghetto under German orders and the crowding into it of Jews not only from the rest of Warsaw, but from other parts of Poland and even other countries, so that at one time there were more than half a million within the walls; of the starvation which became so terrible that there were even cases of cannibalism; of those Jews who collaborated with the Germans against their own people in the hope of obtaining immunity for themselves, but were all in the end likewise exterminated when they had served their turn; of the mass deportations of families for 'resettlement' and of the refusal of many who remained to believe, in spite of authentic reports, that they had in fact been sent to the gas-chambers of Treblinka; of the unrestrained cruelty of the S S who had powers of life and death within the ghetto; of Hitler Youth boys entering the ghetto to shoot Jews at random for sport and of S S men amusing themselves by plucking out the eyes of a Jewish child in front of its distracted mother; of theatres and concerts where the best actors and musicians of pre-war Poland performed in the midst of horror and misery; of poetry – some of it given in English translation – written by sensitive men and women who faced the extermination of themselves and their entire community; of the day when, after the majority had already been murdered on the spot or deported to Treblinka, the remnant at last hit back at their tormentors with weapons which they had smuggled into the ghetto through the Polish black market or manufactured secretly within the walls; of the long, unequal battle and of resistance fighters perishing in the flames of the burning houses rather than surrender; of the few who escaped from the final massacre by crawling through sewers thirty inches high while their pursuers tried to kill them underground with gas bombs.

All that is past now, but the question whether a nation which allowed its rulers to do such things should again be permitted to bear arms is a very topical one, and these two books can be used as a storehouse of arguments by those who oppose German rearmament. Certainly they should enable anyone to understand better the fears of the French who have had direct experience of a German occupation. But the point of the E D C plan was that, just because Germans are Germans, their military power can only be made safe for Europe within a strong collective framework. In the East, Germans already bear arms, but it is in the service of a political

system which reproduces all the essential features of the Nazi régime, from the regimented youth shouting slogans in unison to the savage prison sentences for the mildest criticism of an infallible leadership. Margarete Buber, the wife of the German Communist Heinz Neumann, who had the rare experience of being confined in both Soviet and Nazi concentrations camps (Karaganda and Ravensbrück), has made it clear in her book *Under Two Dictators* that what the two systems have in common, despite their ideological differences, is their fundamental denial of any moral right of individual human beings against the party-state. From that everything else follows.

G. F. H.

THE EVOLUTION OF DIPLOMATIC METHOD. By Harold Nicolson. (Constable. 10s. 6*d*.)

Sir Harold Nicolson's elegant little pot-boiler falls into four parts, because it is a reprint of a series of four lectures. The four chapters deal respectively with the ancient Greeks and Romans; with the Byzantine Greeks and Italians; with the French and those European powers that learned diplomacy from the French in the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries; and with the modern transitional age. The quadripartite division also reflects Sir Harold's attitude to the four eras which he has studied: towards the first, polite indifference; towards the second, disdain; towards the third, respectful enthusiasm; towards the fourth, bewilderment bordering on despair. Nevertheless, the final conclusion is an optimistic one:

> I believe that the principles of sound diplomacy, which are immutable, will in the end prevail . . .

It is difficult to see why Sir Harold believes this. He adduces no evidence whatever for the conclusion, and the whole trend of his previous review is against it.

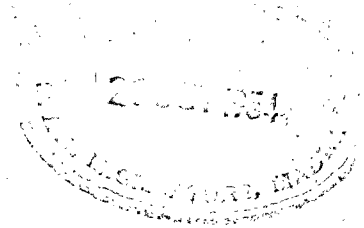
The principles of sound diplomacy, which he calls immutable, are hard to dig out of his argument. At first reading, it seems fairly obvious that they must be the four characteristics which he attributes to the French method in his third chapter, since this is clearly the method which he most approves. These are:

> . . . the conception of Europe as the centre of international gravity; the idea that the Great Powers, constituting the Concert of Europe, were more important and more responsible than the Small Powers; the existence in every country of a trained diplomatic service possessing common standards of professional conduct; and the assumption that negotiation must always be a process rather than an episode, and that at every stage it must remain confidential.

Yet all these characteristics were totally absent from the periods covered in Sir Harold's first two chapters, from which it must follow that the Greeks, Romans, Byzantines and Venetians were not practising diplomacy in Sir Harold's sense at all (a tenable but somewhat narrow conclusion). On the other hand, what is more important, practically none of the characteristics remain intact at the present day, and it is certainly impossible that all four of them should be revived. We are thus left with virtually no continuing thread to hold together the four little clusters of brightly coloured beads which make up the book, other than the initial definition of diplomacy as 'the art of negotiation'. If the above quotation is a definition of the correct practice of that art, then it has been correctly practised only at one short period of human history, in circumstances which had never occurred before and are unlikely to occur again. If that is not Sir Harold's definition of the art, then he appears to offer none at all.

Connoisseurs of style and anecdote will nevertheless find much to enjoy in Sir Harold's dippings into the past. Classical scholars should be warned off the first chapter, and devotees of accurate proof-reading will suffer frequently in the first half of the book, though not in the second. This is only another way of illustrating where Sir Harold's real interests lie. The third chapter is a little masterpiece of loving care; and the last, though written in visible anguish, contains instructive argument from Sir Harold's own experience. The disappointment of the book lies in the fact that the whole comes to so much less than the sum of the parts. Perhaps Sir Harold suffered from too much urbanity (and even too much diplomacy) to draw painful conclusions from his own evidence. The gap between the bad old diplomacy of the Greeks and the beautiful French method was over two thousand years; and there is more than one point in common between the bad old diplomacy of the Greeks and the bad new diplomacy of to-day. It sounds comforting to be told that the good old ways will come back, but it might not sound so comforting if Sir Harold were challenged to answer the question, When?

C. M. W.



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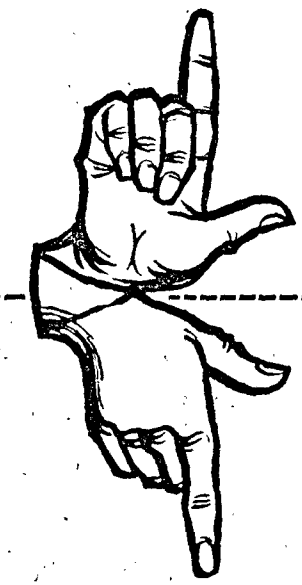
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EDITORIAL

Has the British public begun to understand the significance of what is happening in and around Europe, in the wake of the French Assembly's rejection of E D C? Judging from the gentle flow of muffled comment which has accompanied the funeral of European federalism during the past month, there is as yet no clear awareness of what this turn of events means for Great Britain. Yet the issue was posed almost brutally by M. Mendès-France in the crucial debate on the Treaty, and it has been underlined since then by the acrimonious exchanges between Paris and Bonn, the German demand for full sovereignty, and Mr Eden's search for a compromise. The issue, in plain terms, is this: the French have made it clear that they will not enter any European partnership of which Britain is not a full and equal member; in particular they have made it clear that the rearmament of Western Germany – to which in principle they are not opposed – must have for its counterpart the acceptance by Britain of her true status as a Western European country. However camouflaged – e.g. by a new interpretation of Britain's N A T O obligations, on which the experts are already at work – this is now the real substance of Western policy-making. Compared with it, the legal complications caused by the French Assembly's action, and by Bonn's demand for unrestricted sovereignty, are minor issues. What the world now wants to know is whether the British Government is ready to face the decision which for the past nine years it has succeeded in evading.

That the issue should be posed so nakedly is doubtless embarrassing to the Foreign Office, which for years has tried hard to make the best of both worlds, by urging the French into a European federation, while reserving for this country an exclusive status as America's principal ally. It has likewise proved embarrassing for the neutralists and for all those who oppose the arming of a single West German soldier; for it is now perfectly clear that M. Mendès-France is not prepared to play their game, that there is a solid majority in France for an *Atlantic* policy which recognizes Europe's special status, and

that the German problem can be solved, provided the Franco-German deadlock is broken. But the greatest embarrassment of all must be felt by Sir Winston Churchill, for it is he who for years held out hopes of an active British policy which since his return to power has signally failed to materialize. Since the French Assembly's vote on the E D C Treaty, the decision has been up to him, and it is all too plain that he has not relished his responsibility.

Now the need to take the plunge and bring Britain fully into Europe is becoming more evident with every week that passes. Apart from a minority of traditionalists who cling to the illusion of a Great Power status which two world wars have shattered beyond repair, no one seriously believes that this country's military position differs fundamentally from that of France. The alleged danger to Commonwealth unity invariably invoked in this context (though not by Commonwealth spokesmen) appears less and less substantial, now that Australia and New Zealand have followed Canada's example in making their own defence arrangements with the United States. What in fact is there to prevent the British Government from committing itself fully to partnership in Western Europe? Nothing but the ghost of federalism, and this phantom has been exorcised by the vote of the French National Assembly. Whatever European 'community' may be formed will plainly have confederal rather than federal character, so that there is no longer any danger of that supra-national authority which so alarmed the traditionalists. The extent to which sovereignty would have to be sacrificed in such an arrangement is not substantantially greater than that evisaged by the N A T O compact.

Yet the official emphasis is all on getting Western Germany into N A T O and on avoiding any permanent association between this country and the remainder of Western Europe. This may be a convenient way of raising German divisions, but it spells death to the European idea – the only hopeful thing that has come out of the last war. The excuse is twofold: first, we are told that Britain can go no further than America – an argument which overlooks the existence of the Atlantic Ocean, and which Americans (and Canadians) have for years greeted with polite silence. Secondly, European unity is affirmed to be a Franco-German responsibility; but it has just been shown that this form of Europeanism is unworkable, if only because its basis has become almost entirely Catholic, and thus too narrow. Britain and Scandinavia are needed to complement the Franco-German core, and to drag French Nationalists and German Socialists away from their parochial obsessions. Without Britain there can be no effective European community, and without a European framework the rearmament of Western Germany threatens to tear the Atlantic alliance asunder. It has already alarmed the more responsible Germans and inflamed dangerous passions in France; in addition to splitting the British Labour movement. Further advance down this Gadarene slope may spell the end of Western solidarity.

At a moment such as this it is natural to turn towards Sir Winston Churchill. It is a remarkable circumstance that fifteen years after the outbreak of the Second World War the principal architect of victory should be confronted with this challenge – perhaps the last, certainly not the least, of his unparalleled career. Can he, recovering the mood of 1940, break through the barriers of tradition and carry the country with him in a course which his own past words and actions seemed to justify? Or must we resign ourselves to a drift of events which promises a repetition of the dreary epoch between the two world wars? So much is at stake, and so little time is there left, that one must hope he will do what no other man can and help Europe come into being.

AMERICA CONTENTED AND ENDANGERED

Oscar Gass
Economic Consultant, Washington

I

In their broad numbers the people of the United States seem well satisfied with the general course of their domestic, economic and political affairs as things stand in the autumn of 1954. They look toward Congressional elections in November with the conviction that the choices they have to make are of no special importance. Congressman Jones may be replaced by Mr Smith, or Senator Cooper by Mr Barkley; it is nothing to get excited about. The economic recession which began in August – September 1953 has hurt some groups and will probably hurt more, but the recession has not yet visibly aroused wide and deep fears; Americans are spending and buying houses, as confident people do. Some are concerned over the increasing organization of American society to assure conformity of various kinds. The degree of conformity presently exacted is, however, found oppressive only by relatively few, and Americans are not tender of individual differences in 1954.

The American people did not view their domestic public affairs with such contented minds twenty years ago or even ten years ago. The change in outlook came when the fear of a serious post-World War II depression had passed. By now the thought that relatively full employment might be a transitory war-time phenomenon has been buried. Most Americans believe that domestically in 1954 they are enjoying an average year about mid-course in what the advertising men have named 'the American century.' And will not all centuries hereafter be American centuries? Things are not perfect, but they are good enough.

At one edge of public consciousness there remains the problem of the relationships of the United States with other countries. These relationships are variously found difficult and troubling or heavily burdening and frustrating. They are important in Washington and New York. But the weight of all

foreign events and relations in forming general American public sentiment now is not remotely comparable to that of domestic affairs. The Korean war is over, and American soldiers are coming home. Even the threat of Soviet aggression is regarded by ordinary Americans as potential and remote, not actual and immediate. The American people did not believe that its survival was threatened by Nazi Germany or Imperial Japan. No bombs fell on the United States in World War II, though there were perfunctory civil defence precautions. The American people, in its broad numbers, does not believe that atomic bombs or hydrogen bombs will fall on the United States in any war with the Soviet Union, even though there are perfunctory civil defence drills to-day.

America is endangered to-day by inattention to dispersion of industry and population, and by neglect of air defence (as distinguished from attack). Her thinking is not adjusted to atomic warfare in which both sides have atomic bombs and are able to deliver them. But there are greater dangers. One is the weakening of the fabric of civil liberty and responsible public conduct. Another is the isolation of the American mode of life from the common lot of humanity; in 1954 the average 'standard of living' of Americans is one that the average European will probably not attain in the forty-six years which remain to the twentieth century, and correspondingly more remote from most of mankind. Most dangerous of all perhaps – because it blinds – is the simple picture of world happenings that irresponsible demagogues have been painting recently for the American people and which many (I believe most) Americans have accepted. In this picture the Communist tyranny is the only major source of unrest in the world. There is no view of the effort of the coloured races to find a place beside the dominant white race; no image of the struggles of subject national groups; no insight into the fears of destruction in war which affect the conduct of peoples weaker or less fortunately situated than the American. There is no perspective of the fierceness of the conflict between rich and poor in societies where property is widely identified with privileges having no foundation in public utility.

II

One hundred years ago, that searching, solitary, wilful man, Henry David Thoreau, told his countrymen they were starving

their lives to accumulate things. The better part of man was ploughed into the soil for compost. Even the rich man was sold to the institutions which made him rich. Most men were '. . . so occupied with the factitious cares and superfluous coarse labours of life that its finer fruits cannot be plucked by them.' So it may be. But if Thoreau's thought be wisdom, it is a wisdom that America has rejected. The unity of the American community derives not from abnegation of the acquisition of things, but from increasing success in accumulating them and from wide concurrence in the system of doing it. When that success has faltered, as in the 1930's, the community has fallen to questioning its institutions, practices, leadership and accomplishments.

Thoreau said also: 'None can be an impartial or wise observer of human life but from the vantage ground of what we should call voluntary poverty.' It may be so, but we must hope that Thoreau is wrong, because if he be right there is little impartial or wise observation of human life in America; there is almost no voluntary poverty. This may be why America has no 'intelligentsia' as a self-conscious and distinguishable group; there is no distinction of standards. Rejection of voluntary poverty is certainly an important reason why there are so few persons of middle-class origin associated with any labour organization or movement in the United States to-day – far fewer, I believe, than fifteen or thirty years ago. The rewards are better in business or the professions. No significant labour organization or movement poses an objective or ideal which would be regarded as a competing attraction.

A major advance in the degree of success of the United States in accumulating wealth took place after 1939. With the consolidation of that success has come a decided shift in public psychology. The uneasy, questioning society of the 1930's has become the contented one of the 1950's – a society confident that it has most of the answers.

The 1930's were a decade of economic failure. Real national output rose only 6 per cent. from 1929 through 1939; in per capita terms it declined 1 per cent. People believed that the decline was greater. Never for a single year were the unemployed less than one-sixth of the labour force. In 1939 unemployment was still 9½ million. Insecurity and poverty were close to a great many Americans. They knew the loss of dignity and independence that such things entail. Congressmen and

Senators investigated, probed, pried and challenged. Light was directed toward every corner where some explanation of the poor performance of the economy might be found. Economic institutions and practices were questioned and rejected. The Democratic Party was returned to office repeatedly as the party less satisfied with the existing economic order and more determined to effect changes. Nevertheless, in 1938–39 the economy was drifting without a steady course. Creative in institutions, the New Deal had yet failed to achieve sustained economic expansion. Private businessmen had derived from the collapse of the early 1930's a fear of the major financial commitments involved in large expansions of capacity. Where would the market come from? And would not the Government somehow bedevil the whole business? As the country wallowed in the 1938 recession, neither the White House nor the Treasury had the remotest idea of making the Federal Government responsible for full employment. Where would one get so much money? What would happen to the dollar? And to business confidence? The minutes of the closing sessions of the T N E C constitute a published document mirroring the bankruptcy of the New Deal, at the outbreak of World War II, in policy for accomplishing re-employment and expansion. But nobody who knew official Washington in 1938–39 need rely on a single document to recall – what the archives will one day show so amply – the complete absence of Administration policy with regard to expanding production and employment. Between business and Government, the economy was stalemated.

Then came the simplicities of war – the amplitude of demand, the proliferation of new manufacturing capacity, the universal liquidity and the labour shortage. In the economic sphere, the American people came to fear only that, with the end of hostilities, good times might be over. When they proved not to be over – indeed only to be beginning – contentment gradually acquired a solidity that had certainly not been approximated since 1929, and which, I believe, was not equalled even then. From 1939 to 1953 total real national product in the United States approximately doubled. Per capita real product increased 72 per cent. The period was short enough for the change to be fully appreciated. Indeed, as prices also more than doubled, most people had the pleasant illusion that their gains had been even greater. Government absorbed 23 per cent. of total product and private investment 14 per cent. in 1953, in

contrast to 14 per cent. and 10 per cent. fifteen years earlier. Yet personal consumption of every kind increased massively. Americans ate more, wore more, built more, and travelled more than ever before. They also spent more on education and research. Income also came to be more equally distributed among individuals and regions. After showing no trend from 1919 through 1939, the share of the richest 5 per cent. of the population in disposable personal income decreased by one-third in the next decade (from 22·7 per cent. in 1939 to 15·7 per cent. in 1948). The most important cause of increased equality was the reduction in unemployment, but a second major factor was the increased progressiveness of taxation. The regions which were farthest behind in 1939 made the most rapid relative advance in the subsequent fifteen years. In the south-east region, per capita income rose from $303 to $1,159 and from 56 per cent. of the national average to 68 per cent. The poorest State, Mississippi, had a rise from $201 to $834 and from 35 per cent. of the national average to 49 per cent. The South and particularly the Negro remained relatively poor, but they were neither so poor nor so far behind the others as fifteen years earlier.

Conviction solidified, particularly after 1946, that basically the economic system was working well and would continue to work well. For the first time in many decades, Americans became uninterested even in the issues involved in private concentration of economic power. Would not power always be offset by countervailing power, and was not big business necessary to do big things? Critical appraisal came to be regarded as somewhat annoyingly irrelevant.

The cold war then supervened, and to the cold war the hot (Korean) war. Never has American discomfiture in war been exploited more ruthlessly by self-styled patriots. The American people were told that, if the declared policy of their Government did not succeed in Asia, the primary reason was that Communism had planted treason in the highest places of the United States Government. ('Disloyalty' among America's presumed allies was a secondary reason.) Soon the air was full of accusations, innuendoes, denials, and recantations. By 1951 even a distinguished Liberal historian, in a volume entitled *Living Ideas in America*, could write that, in dealing with public problems, '. . . Americans need not look abroad for solutions, or fabricate new ones, but they can turn, with confidence, to

their own historical past.' Few Americans would have been so confident in the 1930's of the sufficiency of the past, and few Liberals would have been so quick to deny the need to 'look abroad' – or indeed to look from one end of the earth to the other – in search for solutions. The American university of the 1930's had been a seedbed of political, economic and social criticism – sometimes silly, half-baked or irresponsible, but uninhibited by fear. In the early 1950's a prominent social research foundation enlisted a team of psychologists and political scientists to investigate why American university students now abstained from political interest, discussions and activities. Obviously students are 'on the make' for professional and business opportunities which were not so brilliant in the 1930's. But students also now clearly fear that any opinion or association may be written down to them for disloyalty, if not unto the third and fourth generation then at least until the third and fourth decade. A widely contented society can be an intolerant one.

III

The economic achievements of the Eisenhower Administration have not been positive factors in this general public contentment. Up to now the distinctive economic policy of the Administration has been a failure – though not a spectacular failure. This policy was to reduce public expenditure so as to make way for an increase in private expenditure. The reduction in public expenditure has been achieved. But to no purpose. Private expenditure declined also. The labour, materials and plants freed by the reduction in Government spending have been released to idleness. Coming into office in January 1953, the Administration could not influence either the income or the expenditure of the Federal Government significantly in the old fiscal year which ended June 30th, 1953. Thereafter Government spending turned downward. Simultaneously, general productive activity also turned downward. But the Administration has not repented of its policy, and no important public influence has pressed it to repent.

From the peak second quarter of 1953 to the same quarter of 1954, Government expenditure on goods and services (including spending of non-Federal authorities) declined by about $8½ billion per annum. As private spending also declined – though prices rose – total national product declined by about

$14 billion uncorrected for price changes and perhaps $16½ billion in prices of second quarter of 1953. Federal Government expenditure is to decline again in the fiscal year ending June 30th, 1955, and a still further reduction has been made the basis of budgetary planning for the subsequent year. For the present, the fiscal environment of the 1953–54 recession period seems therefore likely to be sustained in its general features. In the summer of 1954 total national product has been running about $30 billion per annum lower than it would have been as the result of steady growth in the size of the employed labour force and in productivity from second quarter of 1953. Output being lost in 1954 was equal to half the total United States foreign aid since the end of World War II. By the third quarter of 1954 idle steel capacity ran to 40,000,000 metric tons a year. Yet the American people, in its large numbers, still regarded itself as prosperous.

The polite analysis of the decline in production since the summer of 1953 is that it is 'only an inventory recession.' As a contribution to the understanding of economic processes, this explanation may not rate high; inventories were lower in relation to sales when the recession began than they had been at earlier periods of sustained economic expansion. But the polite analysis has at the moment a further unpleasantness; it implicates that the recession is about to get worse. During the past year, sales have fallen faster than inventories. The ratio of inventories to sales, which was 1·60 for June 1953, had risen to 1·66 for June 1954 (the last month available). Do these higher ratios of inventories to sales then foreshadow a second wave of decline in economic activity which – since there is more 'imbalance' to correct – will be sharper than that of the previous year?

* * * *

Most other economic problems are aggravated by a general decline in demand. That is the current position of the American farm problem. Farm employment has not declined fast enough. In 1939 about 9,600,000 persons worked on farms, in 1954 about 6,400,000. But meanwhile farm output per man-hour rose about 70 per cent. Farm labour productivity continues to rise as fast as ever – about twice as fast as non-farm productivity. World War II and the post-war export market kept people on American farms who must now leave. Nobody wants to say so. The surplus manpower on farms may run to 1¼ million man-years, or even 1½ million man-years if it is taken from the least productive farms. That means about a million farm families must leave the land. It is no easy thing, and if a society in which farmers too have a voice spends many billions of dollars fumbling with the problem, that is quite natural; the American farmer is no Russian peasant to be whipped into line by a new batch of directives from the Party.

The farmer's resistance to the process of leaving the farm may have cost the U.S. Treasury as much as $10 billion for accumulated farm commodities before the present crop year is over. The Eisenhower Administration has had the political courage to push through legislation authorizing lower farm price supports. Unfortunately this courage is largely irrelevant to the basic problem under recession circumstances. Lower farm price supports will save money for the Treasury. They will mean poorer farmers. But they will not necessarily mean fewer farmers or less farm output. The movement of a million farm families to urban occupations could take place in the United States in five, six, or seven years of expanding urban demand for labour. (Nearly 500,000 farms were abandoned in 1945–50 despite exceptional export demand and one urban recession.) Under present employment conditions, the movement away from farms cannot take place at all – or to no useful purpose. What a decline in farm price supports will mean immediately is dissatisfied farmers. Farm income has already fallen about 25 per cent. from 1951 to 1953. There will be a further fall in 1954.

Some groups of small businessmen are at least as unhappy as most farmers. Now that excess profits tax is gone, General Motors and Ford are having a banner year, but some 40,000 automobile dealers – who have had to cut their margins sharply, while manufacturers' prices remained untouched – are having their worst year since World War II. More serious than the position of small businessmen or farmers is that of the unemployed. In July 1953 about 1,548,000 persons were estimated officially to be totally unemployed; in July 1954 (the last month available) about 3,346,000. Less than 60 per cent. of the unemployed were receiving unemployment benefits. Something unexplained happened in the category of persons identified as 'with a job but not at work.' This includes those temporarily laid off, ill, on strike, idle because of weather, waiting to begin a new employment, or on vacation. In July 1953 this category

of those not working but not 'unemployed' numbered 6,126,000, in July 1954 it had risen to 7,992,000. This is a very puzzling change for a single year. Many of these people were probably not at work in 1954 because there was no work for them to do. In any case they were not working. If the one year's increase in the number 'with a job but not at work' be added to the 3,346,000 listed as unemployed, they make a total of 5,242,000. This is 8 per cent. of the total United States civilian labour force. The employment position is one that could topple quite a few Congressmen in November.

The chronicle of recession should, however, not be carried to the point of suggesting a society under profound economic stress. The discontents of farmers, small businessmen and unemployed are only of marginal electoral depth. There is no panic and little deep concern. Manufacturing production seemed to be declining further in the late summer. The recession seems to be deepening, though slowly. There is nothing in sight which constitutes a reasoned basis for forecasting a general economic upturn. But hope springs eternal. Those businessmen, politicians, journalists and professors who saw an upturn in spring, then in summer, see it now in the autumn. The economy of the United States has been producing, in rapidly increasing abundance, for fifteen years without any setback which has left a scar on public memory. Soon – somehow – things will be on the road up again. The American economy is whistling for a wind.

IV

In the past twenty years the number of civilians employed by the Federal Government has tripled, from 720,000 to 2,160,000. Yet the United States has to-day no Federal career civil service which ranks as a profession like the practice of law, medicine or engineering. A profession comports training, a procedure of entry, standards, and – above all else – general recognition of a responsible function to be performed that requires distinctive qualifications and experience, and merits corresponding social esteem. The essential is lacking: Government administration is not regarded as requiring distinctive qualifications and experience, and does not command esteem. Any person who has been reasonably successful in selling steel, building houses or making radios is regarded as probably competent to staff any Government position. The higher ranks of Government positions are regarded as consisting of people who somehow – and probably in ways that are no better than they should be – have got hold of a good thing. They are 'feeding at the public trough.'

Twenty years of Democratic administration in Washington fostered illusions concerning the emergence of a genuine career service. But there was never any serious system of examination for entering those Federal positions which correspond – however remotely – to the British administrative class. Most persons qualified for such positions through a so-called 'unassembled' examination (a submission of educational credentials, employment record and personal testimonials); having qualified, they went out to look for a Government office that wanted their services. There was no conception of a general Government career officer; career officers had the special skills of lawyers, economists, engineers, etc. There was no planned grooming of officers for successively higher responsibilities. With the exception of the Foreign Service, there was no organized rotation of duties within a Department, and there was no organized rotation at all among the various Departments – Commerce, Interior, Treasury, etc. Experience in several Departments came only from individual initiative; an officer in Interior who saw a better position in Commerce would apply for it and might get it, substantially as a person working for a private copper company might get a job with a private steel company. The highest positions attainable by people with civil service ratings – as distinguished from simple political appointees – varied, but they were always far below the level of a British Permanent Secretary. Tenure remained uncertain, even for the capable, discreet and loyal, because – even apart from such legal techniques of discharge as administrative reorganizations and the abolition of positions – no strong tradition existed against making a position so uncomfortable for a senior officer that he would feel it necessary to resign.

The Republican Administration has approached the Federal service with desires to find positions for deserving Republicans, to reduce expenditure and therefore personnel, and to remove security and loyalty risks. All vacancies in the top five grades of the Federal Service (GS14 and up) have apparently been reserved for persons approved by the Republican National Committee. The Democrats have not objected – no doubt

because they expect to do substantially the same thing when it is their turn. Outstanding senior officers, in some cases with service reaching back to the Hoover Administration, were dismissed as part of general 'reductions in force.' Such persons received envelopes containing impersonal notices of termination of employment effective in thirty days. Security and loyalty dismissals ranged wide. A published record like that of the Oppenheimer case may give a misleading impression of common practice. Oppenheimer is a world figure. A little-known officer would be dismissed unhesitatingly on a small fraction of the evidence cited against him.

The quality of personnel in the Federal service continues to deteriorate. Some able, public-spirited and hard-working officers remain, but more of the best have left or are leaving. Many of those who remain are frightened and demoralized. Much time and thought go to discussing further dismissals and looking for non-Government jobs. Responsibility is avoided; everything gets a maximum number of concurring initials. Business therefore moves slowly. Ideas are shunned. Few would now recommend to exceptionally able young people that they should think of Federal civil service careers. The Government of the United States goes into the second half of the twentieth century with a civil service which does not include any considerable share of the best talent and training available among the American people.

America has become a more organized, conformist society. People are increasingly concerned to get along and not to stick out. One mis-step may be remembered for a life-time and foreclose a career. Few business firms, few universities, and no local government bodies to-day would employ an ordinary person, even in the least 'sensitive' occupation, after such a person has been dismissed by the Federal Government – on however flimsy evidence – as a possible security or loyalty risk. To be dismissed even in a 'reduction in force' arouses suspicion. Personal knowledge of the accused, and even normal ties of friendship, avail little. A conservative Republican Congressman could still stand before the American Legion in August 1954 and urge earnestly, 'We need less conformity, less sameness,' but in so doing he was a hero. The vaunted American individualism is hard to find. It is safer and far more usual 'not to stick your neck out.' In the senior ranks of the Federal service itself, a colleague who has been dismissed – as his associates

EQUALITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

Stanley Alderson

In the sixteenth century we rationalized our imperialism – our appropriation of other lands and of the goods and services of their inhabitants – by asserting 'that the traffic and planting in those countries shall be unto the savages themselves very beneficial and gainful. . . . Firstly and chiefly, in respect of the most happy and gladsome tidings of the most glorious gospel of our Saviour Jesus Christ. . . .'* For good measure, we reminded ourselves that 'These heavenly tidings which those labourers our countrymen (as messengers of God's great goodness and mercy) will voluntarily present unto them, do far exceed their earthly riches. . . .'* At that time the opinion of the rest of the world – in particular of the savages – did not count. In the twentieth century it does. And in the twentieth century we have justified our imperialism by transforming it into tutelage. Though in effecting this transformation we have been jogged along by such as Gandhi and Nehru, by the institution of chairs of Swahili in Russian universities, as well as by the stirrings of a more enlightened conscience, to-day we may reasonably claim, with a qualification for colonies where there is a substantial white-settler population, that our intentions are honourable. Even so, Britain's present role is subject to two criticisms.

The first of these imputes a *non sequitur*: we assume, because the colonial peoples require tutelage, that the British must provide it; properly, it is argued, the responsibility should belong to the United Nations. We reply that experience and tradition are necessary in the tutor; that when the need for tutelage has arisen, as it were, in the abstract, both the League of Nations and the United Nations have recognized that the territories

* *A True Report of the late Discoveries and Possessions Taken in the Right of the Crown of England of the Newfound Lands by . . . Sir Humfrey Gilbert* (1583); *Hakluyt's Principal Voyages of the English Nation*, quoted in *English Economic History, Select Documents*, compiled and edited by A. E. Bland, P. A. Brown and R. H. Tawney, G. Bell and Sons, 1914.

concerned must be mandated to, or placed in the trusteeship of, established imperial powers. This is a good argument so far as it goes; but it does not quite carry the point that the suitably-experienced Colonial Service must be responsible to the House of Commons; it does not acknowledge the fact that the League of Nations and the United Nations, while delegating administrative functions, have seen fit to decide for themselves the dates on which mandated territories and trusteeships should be freed. The House of Commons has no interest, other than a moral one or a fear of revolution, in freeing the colonies, and it has good economic motives (and perhaps psychological ones) for wishing not to – while the various interests and prejudices of the United Nations would about cancel one another out to an impartial arbitrator. In the foreseeable future the House of Commons is unlikely to surrender its powers to the United Nations; but there are a number of possibilities which are practical politics, which would improve matters, and which would still some of the criticism. First, there should be a free vote after every colonial debate; since the colonial peoples have no vote at a British general election, and since the British people themselves inevitably vote on matters which affect them most nearly, no British government can claim any sort of mandate for its colonial policy; where it can claim no mandate it has no right to employ the party whip. Secondly, for all controversial colonial debates, representative native leaders should be called to the bar of the House of Commons and invited to contribute – at the cost either of the British or of the colonial taxpayers: at present half the difficulty in judging colonial disputes is in deciding who really said what. Thirdly, the Colonial Service should be reformed in the manner indicated below.

Of the second criticism of Britain's role not much has yet been heard; but it is likely to reach the headlines during the next few years. This is that, though all the members of the Commonwealth are equal, Britain is more equal than others – a fact which was perhaps first brought home to the British people by Mr Gordon Walker's suggestion that the United Kingdom should share the time and services of the Sovereign equally with the Dominions and herself be accorded a Governor-General.* Britain's crucial inequality, however, consists in her power to legislate the constitutions of the colonial countries and hence to rule when each shall be granted self-government. For

* See *The Twentieth Century*, June, 1953.

what happens when a colony achieves self-government? So far it has always been given the option of joining the Commonwealth – which has meant in effect that Britain, alone of the members of the Commonwealth, has determined the Commonwealth's membership. But so far, of course, no existing member of the Commonwealth has strongly resisted the admission of a new member. To-day the list of candidates for Dominion status is headed by the Gold Coast; and Dr Malan, who choked at being drawn into equality with brown men, will explode before he accepts the relationship with black. It would be naïve to doubt that South Africa is already trying to influence Britain in this matter, and it must be inferred that South African influence accounts for the ambiguous statement made in the House of Commons (April 28) by Mr Hopkinson, Minister of State for Colonial Affairs. Mr Hopkinson said the United Kingdom Government had guaranteed the Gold Coast 'full responsibility' within the Commonwealth; 'full membership' of the Commonwealth, however, was a matter for consultation between all the existing members of the Commonwealth. Consultation is, of course, an admirable practice in that, as often as is possible, it enables disagreements to be resolved, but it is useless when a disagreement cannot be resolved. The principles and policy of the South African Government do not admit the equality of black and white, while other members of the Commonwealth – notably India, Pakistan and Ceylon – will not be content to see African aspirations sacrificed to South African colour prejudice. Clearly, though they can agree to disagree on all other matters, the members of the Commonwealth must quarrel over membership.

The only hope of resolving these quarrels is in establishing a procedure whereby corporate decisions can be made; and the only hope of achieving this is in anticipating the quarrels. The Gold Coast issue cannot be delayed more than a few years. If the present procedural vacuum persists, then it is not only possible, but probable that, within this time, a British Government will have to decide either to refuse the Gold Coast Dominion status and have India, Pakistan and Ceylon secede, or to grant Dominion status and have South Africa secede. In the event it is likely to procrastinate until it has alienated not only the entire colonial empire, but most of the world, before it finally grants Dominion status to an embittered Gold Coast, has an embittered South Africa secede, and leaves the other em-

bittered members of the Commonwealth to get on with one another as best they can – if indeed many others of them, including the Gold Coast, do not promptly secede as well. But the point, in this context, is that it will be so apparent that Britain alone is making a controversial decision vital to the Commonwealth as a whole that the other members will wake up to the fact that Britain is more equal and will object to that in itself. The procedural issue will be raised then; it will inevitably be confused with the particular issue; and the two will be discussed simultaneously while tempers are frayed. Far better settle the procedural issue now.

It must be admitted that it is a difficult one to settle – even given goodwill from all the members of the Commonwealth. It is easy to suggest that new members should be accepted by, say, a two-thirds majority – but a two-thirds majority of what? India might propose the allocation of votes according to population, but the consequent Canadian anguish could not be ignored. The objections of the larger countries to the allocation of a single vote for each member might be overcome, but might not then Nigeria, for example, on the eve of Dominion status be further tempted to become three? Probably the single vote would still be best, because Dominion status could always be collectively withheld from any aspiring members suspected of jiggery-pokery in decentralization. South Africa, of course, will not want any procedure at all. She will realize that such procedure anticipates Dominion status for the native African colonies, and will prefer that decisions be left entirely to Britain – when she can at least hope to abort the birth of freedom in Africa by continuing to play upon the nineteenth-century minds of the British Executive with visions of the horror of a world war without her ports. But, however much she dislikes the idea, South Africa will be hard put to make out a reasonable case against it.

The establishment of this procedure is, we have seen, a necessity, because sooner or later the present members of the Commonwealth will demand it. Even were it not a necessity it would still be desirable. One reason is obvious: it will offset the propensity of Britain to be unduly influenced by South Africa and by the white settlers in the colonies. But there is a second. In colonies where no substantial body of Europeans has settled there is a real danger that, to avoid disorder, Britain will grant self-government prematurely. If the relevant decisions are made

not by Britain alone but, immediately, by white and brown men together, and, very soon, by white, brown and black men together, they will carry a deeper authority in the colonies, which can then be persuaded to accept a more temperate progress towards freedom. The colonies would be even more convinced if some of the colonial officials with whom they came in direct contact were themselves brown and black. Unfortunately, countries which have only recently achieved self-government do not have many good men to spare. But they would find some for a purpose such as this. At all events, there is no reason why the Colonial Office should not declare itself ready, without lowering its standards, to recruit from throughout the Commonwealth* (or, for that matter, from throughout the world).

Something could also be done about the appointment of Governors and Governors-General. One of the manifestations of Britain's dominant role is her inclination to select colonial Governors from citizens of the United Kingdom, and Governors-General either from citizens of the United Kingdom or from citizens of the particular Dominion: there has been, and, in the short term, may continue to be, some alternation between British and native Governors-General, partially correlated with changes in the Dominions' governments; in the long term the trend is clearly separatist – each Dominion keeping its end up by insisting more and more upon native Governors-General. All existing Governorships and Governorships-General should, of course, be filled from throughout the Commonwealth. The earlier introduction of this principle might have dissuaded India and Pakistan from choosing quite such an independent status within the Commonwealth. As it is, their special status will present a difficulty, the Crown being deprived of the power to appoint Governors-General to them. There is also the difficulty that Governors-General and Governors from certain countries would be unacceptable in certain other countries – Australia might [illegible]t like a Governor-General from Ceylon; Uganda certainly [illegible]ld not like a Governor from South Africa. Nonetheles[illegible] possibilities of inter-Commonwealth exchange are co[illegible]able. A Canadian could be Governor-General of New Zea[illegible], an Australian Governor-

* The Tory reformers, concerned about the administrative difficulties of the Colonial Office and about its potential redundancy, have made the same suggestion.

G ieral of Canada. Colonial Governors could be drawn from Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Ceylon, and, despite their special status, from India and Pakistan; later they could also be drawn from the African Dominions. There can be little doubt that brown and black Governors would be the most acceptable to the African peoples.

These proposals – which, needing decision only by Britain, can be established in principle overnight and fulfilled as soon as Governorships and Governorships-General are vacated – represent the minimum reforms. Further reforms will be necessary, after Commonwealth Consultation, in order to resolve the inequality of Britain's peculiar relationship with the Crown. A Governor-General in Britain is probably undesirable, not only because the British people would resent him, but because he would be unduly anomalous even in a Constitution that prides itself on anomalies. Instead of equating Britain with the Dominions we should do better to equate the Dominions with Britain. Let us abolish the office of Governor-General and substitute Councillors of State to act for the Crown in the absence of the Sovereign.* The actual Councillors in any one country can be appointed for a fixed period, as are the present Governors-General, and would be chosen by direct consultation between that country's government and the Crown, reference being made to other governments, including the British, if and when one of their citizens has been placed on the short list of candidates. The present office of Governor-General is disliked, if tolerated, by the peoples of the Dominions because of its Imperial connotations. Indeed, a Governor-General is in fact a representative of an Imperial Government, and so long as present Governors-General, or future Councillors of State, are appointed by the Crown upon the advice of the British Prime Minister, the Dominions will not be entirely free; it is true they have the political freedom to secede from the Commonwealth whenever they wish, but there are advantages to remaining within the Commonwealth; there is at least a limited analogy between their freedom to secede and the nineteenth-century factory worker's freedom to starve.

It must be noted that the reform proposed does not involve changes only in title and in method of appointment; for, whereas Governor-General is necessarily a single office, Councillors of State may be single or plural. In fact their potential plurality is itself advantageous. Allegiance to the Crown is the most important factor in binding the Commonwealth, and for this reason there is already general agreement that the Sovereign's time must be divided more evenly between the different countries; in short, the projection of emotion upon the Sovereign is to be encouraged. It can be encouraged more effectively if there is no single figurehead intermediate between the people and the Crown, and if selected members of the Royal family, close in relationship to the Sovereign, can put their services to the fullest use as Councillors of State at Large. Another advantage of plurality is that it provides continuity at the head of the state, whereas a Governor-General has to assume sole responsibility immediately he is appointed and before he has either experience or training in performing his role. A third and decisive advantage is in overcoming prejudice: though the British people might at present resent a Sinhalese Governor-General, one Sinhalese Councillor of State among a number of traditional figures might both intrigue and delight them.

* I am indebted for this suggestion to Mr D. G. C. Allan of the London School of Economics.

If we believe what we profess to believe – that, while British experience and tradition are essential to the day-to-day administration of the colonial empire, the Commonwealth must be a body of equally sovereign nations – these reforms are obligatory. Their purpose is limited, but manifold: to persuade colonial peoples to accept the tutelage they need; to preserve the present Commonwealth during its most difficult period; to encourage the Dominions of the future to remain within the Commonwealth (and perhaps India and Pakistan to adopt a less independent status); to satisfy the rest of the world that our imperialism is really a thing of the past; incidentally to weaken Communist propaganda; and to make an honest gesture towards living up to our principles. The full evolution of the Colonial Empire into the Commonwealth will take another fifty years, perhaps another century. What is important now is that we be conscious precisely what this evolution implies, and that we convince everyone else that we are so conscious. We shall not be absolved from our imperial responsibilities – nor should we rest morally content – until every dependency, either in its own right or as a constituent of a federation, has achieved self-government – and until an Australian aborigine has served his full term of office as Councillor of State in the United Kingdom.

TOWARDS A NEW COLONIALISM

The Rt Rev. Leonard Beecher, *Bishop of Mombasa*

These are the notes of one who is primarily a pastor and, as such, concerned with people in human situations. But because human affairs build up into political and economic situations, it is inevitable that these too should come into consideration when any pastor looks at the tragedy which has come upon his people with the bursting of the Mau Mau terror on Kikuyu-land and adjacent areas.

It was a missionary of the Church Missionary Society, G. C. Krapf, who established himself at Mombasa in 1844 as the first white man of modern times to bring the Christian gospel to Eastern Africa. As he stood by the grave of his beloved wife and their tiny daughter, God gave him a vision of a chain of churches stretching across Africa from its eastern to its western shore, and to the laying of the foundations of that chain of churches Krapf dedicated his life. Evangelist, linguist, and explorer, Krapf did, in fact, fulfil his appointed task, and in so doing, made possible the subsequent opening up of the country to colonization as well as to the further missionary activities of the Church. The Imperial British East Africa Company had its outposts in the interior, but the effective occupation of the interior of what is now Kenya Colony dates from a little before the turn of the century, just a little more than fifty years ago.

That occupation of the interior brought to tribal Africa the cessation of inter-tribal warfare, the arrest of plague, pestilence, and famine, and placed at the disposal of the African peoples amenities undreamed of. But we have consistently ignored or greatly underestimated the dimension of the impact which, within a comparatively short space of time, Western materialism has made on the closed cycle of life within an African tribe. We have grown accustomed to the industrial revolution and its consequences which have been working themselves out in our British way of life and thought over a period of a century

and a half or thereabouts; so much so indeed, that many of its present consequences in British social and industrial life still remain unassessed and not fully dealt with in Britain to-day.

But when we concentrate the consequences of that long process of social and material change, remove them from their British environment, and then introduce them into the colonial areas, we must not be surprised if we engender bewilderment of an even more serious order. Perhaps one of the most disturbing features of the disruption of tribalism which this impact brought about was the brushing asunder of the bonds which integrated tribal animism into the every-day living of the tribe. The sacred and the profane never existed as independent entities; the one, even in its minutest details, seemed to be wholly conditioned by the other.

The period of the first World War would appear to represent a first climax in this process of material impact on African tribalism in Kenya. And it was the Kikuyu people who then and ever since have come under its fiercest blows. It is not hard to appreciate the bewilderment of a people whose agrarian activities appeared to them, to put it at its simplest, to have been seriously disturbed by the new settlement that had taken place in their midst; and now a war between two colonial powers, Britain and Germany, involved them in quite considerable numbers, for the Kikuyu provided a large carrier corps serving the British forces as they advanced into German East Africa. From that period date two movements of reaction. One was a mass movement into the Christian Church. The other was a movement of tribal regression towards a re-established tribalism. And both of these movements are significant in the terrorist struggle which is taking place in Kenya to-day.

The Christian Church had made little outward advance over wide areas in its earlier history. Converts had been few, and many of them suffered a good deal for the sake of their new-found faith. But many of those who had been bewildered by the new culture that had come amongst them, and at whose coming tribalism seemed to lose its effective control of daily life, now came to the missionaries and asked to hear again the message of the Christian gospel. So there began a mass movement, not only in Kikuyu, but over a wide area in Eastern Africa, which brought many thousands into effective

membership of the Christian Church. Here they found new courage and confidence with which to face the life of a new Kenya. The mass movement rose to its height in the late twenties, but soon began to show signs of falling off as it passed into the early thirties; a new generation was growing up within the Church, more subservient to the growing power of a Western materialism, and less mindful of the need for spiritual conversion in each succeeding generation. Nominal Christianity threatened the very inner life of the Church. This decay was arrested by a movement of revival in the early forties: it was apparently spontaneous within the Church's life; it had no obvious leaders; and it has remained almost wholly within the ordered life of the Church. It has, in fact, proved to be part of the forearming of the Church against the persecution that has come upon it at the hands of Mau Mau terrorists. But for the revival movement within the Kikuyu Church, terror might have succeeded in obliterating it.

The fact of the Church as an ordered multi-racial society, demonstrating a re-integration of religion and life, has shown to the Kikuyu, and to the peoples of other tribes in Kenya, that there is a means whereby men can get to grips with bewildering situations other than by abandoning themselves to measures of despair. For the movement of regression which began at the same time as the mass movement into the Christian Church is, in fact, a movement of despair. The collective behaviour of the movement of reaction which the Kikuyu made in its most exaggerated form, may be likened to the behaviour observable in individuals who, failing to come to terms with a new and perhaps baffling set of circumstances in their environment, seek to withdraw into a world of make-believe in which they hope to regain a sense of protection and security. Barriers are erected beyond which the intrusions of those alien influences must be thrust; and from behind those barriers furtive attacks are made, seeking to damage individuals or elements in that excluded system.

A collectivization of this type of behaviour has been taking place amongst the Kikuyu for thirty-five years. Nor has it been amongst the Kikuyu alone; there are evidences of similar behaviour widespread throughout the world where colonial and coloured peoples have come under the baffling and disruptive influences of the Western material world. Stepping aside from the colonial situation, there are certain phenomena

observable in the Western world itself, in places where elements in society have not been made part of the complete culture pattern. The growth of 'pentecostalism' amongst the early American colonists who moved westward from the religious settlements on the Atlantic coast is one such phenomenon. Gangsterism in the towns of the Western world is another. Indeed the whole sociology of the growth of cities has great relevance to a study of what is happening in East Africa to-day, as well as in other parts of the colonial world. Now in Kenya, tribal movements as they came into being all appear to have had as their objective the re-establishment of the 'golden age' of tribalism, to the exclusion of all that was held to be responsible for tribal disruption. Here and there, there burst out small 'prophet movements', pentecostal in character, displaying many features strange to old tribal ritual, and nearly all involving the purge from any association with the material culture of the West: there have been graveyards where blankets, clothing, aluminium cooking pots, and even money were forcibly buried as a sign of separation from the West. In some instances there have been attacks on the forces of law and order. But in no instance was the behaviour a simple 'reversion to pagan savagery'; much rather was it part of the outworking of a psychology of despair, and this in its turn derived from not having absorbed, nor been absorbed by, the life of the West which increasingly dominated the African scene.

Such a movement amongst the Kikuyu pursued a largely pacific course. *Muumbi*, the foundress of the tribe, was again to be revered; the ancestral spirits would again exercise their benign control over the destinies of men; and *Ngai* would again be worshipped as the tribal deity 'facing Mount Kenya' in the snowy fastnesses of which he was supposed to dwell. The 'missionary' force of such a movement depends for its rapid expansion on an attractive eschatology, or doctrine of ultimate objectives. The promise of lavish redress of grievances, not least over land, and the promise of this golden age, all provided this eschatological attraction. It was embellished by certain non-tribal additions, including a 'trinity' (comprising three leaders of the revolt) responsible for the ordering of what had, in old tribal days, been a thoroughly democratic society.

There had been amongst some who had long lived close to the Kikuyu an expectation that a *coup d'état* would be launched,

establishing that golden age, at the time afforded by the *Ituika* ceremony. This was due at about the time that the emergency was declared, some would say long overdue, and was a ceremony of change in the ruling age-grade, the democratically constituted order of tribal government. And there are some who hold that the activities of *Dini ya Misambwa* amongst the Kitosh and Suk had been an experimental prelude to the seizure of power in Kikuyu. Elijah Masindi who engineered the Misambwa rising had, in fact, been a disciple and close associate of Jomo Kenyatta.

The movement of Kikuyu regression had thus far been largely pacific; an element within it, however, was becoming increasingly committed to violence. And violence derived from the growth of cities. Again, this and associated de-tribalization affected the Kikuyu more than any other Kenya tribe. Only those who have witnessed the growth of Nairobi from a small colonial town into a sky-scraper city in little more than a generation can realize to anything like the full the disparity between the material culture which this represents and that of the de-tribalized, amorphous African society which constitutes the life of its locations. Many of the African town dwellers are without their wives and families in the city; most of them work and receive wages in sub-economic conditions, with little or no more than the minimum wage prescribed by law as the basis of their urban subsistence. A parallel movement of de-tribalization was the movement of Kikuyu into farming areas in the Rift Valley as 'Squatters'. It is amonst these '*déraciné*' people that the Mau Mau terror fomented; it was in an unabsorbed, de-tribalized society living at or below subsistence level that the hideous oaths and orgies of the Mau Mau gangs had their origin.

These oaths and orgies have been documented by screening teams, drawn from the ranks of the European farming community and of the loyalist elements among the Kikuyu. For obvious reasons they cannot be published in detail. But even the most cursory examination of them reveals that they in no way constitute a simple 'reversion to pagan savagery' as is often supposed. Of course they have features which are p[illegible] Kikuyu, but these constitute the more superficial a[illegible] Even these involve the violation of long-established, feared tribal prohibitions. This Mau Mau oathing or 'Black Mass' of the Kikuyu terrorist upsurge against th[illegible]

materialist West. Remove the more superficial aspects of the orgy and there remain the same symbolisms which characterize the oaths of cosh-boy gangsters in London's East End and the behaviour of the gangster underworld of New York or Chicago. In the maladjusted individual precisely the same imagery is revealed in any psychologist's consulting room or, indeed, from time to time in any pastor's study.

The Mau Mau terror represents maladjusted man collectively in rebellion against an order of society which has not made him part of itself. There are many of us who can remember our African friends saying somewhat wistfully from time to time, 'You have shown us the British way of life and thought, but you have not made us part of it'. It is here suggested that this presents a line of approach to the answer. Of course law and order must be re-established. But the re-establishment of law and order is not the solution of the problem. Nothing short of a colonialism which provides a complete and effective place for all the colonial peoples within its ordered life will meet the need of the hour. For Kenya this will mean an ordered multi-racial society, with a recognition of citizenship as the right of all who compose it. We cannot go on having 'citizenship courses' for Africans in which we expound the British way of life and thought, without granting effective citizenship within the framework of which that new way of life and thought can be worked out. Rural areas may still have a measure of resilience; the cities and towns have nothing that will permit of any delay in a re-orientation of our attitudes towards African citizenship.

There is so much that has been achieved by Church and State alike, by a European civil service as well as by a growing 'unofficial' European community of which we can be justly proud. But we have still this great task before us of welcoming Africans into citizenship and of making them effective partners with us in that citizenship. Unlike India, Africa has no ancient urban tradition; towns and cities are now an inevitable and dominating part of the new pattern of culture in Africa, of which we must help Africans to be an effective part.

And behind all this, indeed as very part of it, stands the three[illegible], offering the pattern of the family of God as a way of [illegible]ther, and itself as undergirding to the new endeavour.

[illegible]

SCIENCE AND SECRECY

Humphry Osmond
Superintendent of the Saskatchewan Mental Hospital

Man is a creature of secrets, a characteristic which he shares with animals such as squirrels, jackdaws and some dogs. Perhaps secretiveness and aquisitiveness go together, but whatever the biological roots of secrecy may be, its psychological and sociological importance is undeniable. Folk and fairy stories abound with secrets: secrets which must be solved for success, secrets which if divulged would bring disaster. Religions with their initiations and rites, secret societies, trade guilds, lovers and children all have their secrets. Secrecy seems to be an enduring passion of the human soul, and men have died very horrible deaths rather than renounce a secret. There have been numerous explanations for this remarkable human quality, but they do little more than underline what anyone can observe: that man is a creature who cherishes, but rarely contains, his own secrets and is always prying into the secrets of his fellows and those of Nature.

In their nascent days scientists strove to reveal nature's secrets to all men and especially to fellow scientists. At its finest, this transcended nationality, so that Jenner could be honoured by Napoleon, though France and Britain were at war. In the last war a comparable happening would have been for Hitler to give Sir Alexander Fleming the Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves. Hitler would never have done this, and the discoverer of penicillin would not have been allowed to accept it, even had he wished to do so. Science has shrunk behind national barriers. The First World War damaged, and the Second World War killed, the splendid supra-nationalism of science, fo[r] was only in about 1917 that politicians and soldiers bega[n] take scientists seriously. The jokes which used to appear m[o]tonously in *Punch* during the 1920's and '30's about s[cience] the atom would not now be funny. Science is almost too [se]ous for humour now, at least in nuclear physics. Ever[y] us, whether we are scientists or not, believes in t[he]

of secrecy just as strongly as the witch-doctor privily engaged in his own special rite, hidden from prying eyes safely in the jungle. The witch-doctor makes an assumption, which we are all likely to make. This is that, because the possessor of a secret values it, it will be equally valuable to someone else.

On first thought it seems obvious that if one knows the enemy's intention and his capacity for putting it into effect, there should be no difficulty in thwarting his aims and possibly defeating him. But history suggests that this is an oversimplification. If it were common in war for the enemy commander's intentions to be translated quickly and accurately into accomplished fact, it would be useful to know what he had in mind. In practice this state of affairs is so infrequent that, short of omniscience, partial knowledge of an enemy's plan of campaign may be dangerously misleading, especially if it leads one to neglect other sources of information. How often have *correct* reports from spies proved misleading, simply because they reflected accurately an intention which could not be carried out? How often has the truth been known, but not recognized and so disregarded? It is said that the Germans had knowledge of the Allied plan for landings in Normandy long before D-day, but would not believe what they were told. Mr Churchill told Stalin that the Germans were moving large numbers of men to the East in early 1941. The sly Georgian was too subtle to be wooed in this way and nearly lost the war in consequence. In 1915 the Allies had many reports that the Germans were preparing to use poison gas, but they made no attempt to profit from this information, and it was fortunate for them that the Germans had under-estimated the possibilities of the new weapon. On the other hand, Mr Ewan Montagu in his recent book, *The Man Who Never Was*, shows how one group of intelligence men can outwit another, so that completely false documents will be accepted as being above suspicion. Clearly it is vital to know whether, on balance, the intelligence services have been valuable or not, and especially [whe]ther spying in enemy territory helps one to judge his in[ter]pretations with any accuracy. Until such a study is made we [can] consider the case for wartime espionage not proven, [and] three[fore] peacetime it may simply damage international [re]had, in [the] hip without making us any safer.

There[fore], politicians and policemen are becoming increas[ingly] the [ob]ject of interested in certain aspects of science. At present they

are mostly concerned about physics, but there is no reason why they should be limited to this, since chemical, biological and psychological weapons all play their part in warfare. There is a very real danger that the intelligence services will be encouraged to extend their control of scientific activity. The Oppenheimer affair shows just how complete and stultifying this control may become. Since leading scientists all over the world have expressed anger and dismay at what happened to Dr Oppenheimer, it is a good time to consider the whole matter of secrecy in science. Is it a coincidence that the layman and the admiral on the board were against Dr Oppenheimer, though apparently finding him a paragon of nearly all the virtues, and only the scientist supported him? The scientist, of course, was the only one who had any idea how scientists think and work. The others were preoccupied with secrecy as it is manifested in what Jung calls the collective unconscious, the land of fairy tale and myth. I do not underestimate the importance of these deep secrecies, but only note that they play no part in ensuring that we secure and maintain a technical advantage over the enemy in nuclear physics. Since Dr Nunn May and Dr Fuchs, prompted in my view by misplaced ideals of scientific universalism, gave certain secret information to the Russians, people have felt that the scientists have let us down. Nunn May and Fuchs, although their intention may have been good, applied it in a mean and furtive manner that can only be deplored. This anger with the scientists reflects our fear and horror of the hydrogen bomb, developed, if we are to believe Admiral Lewis Strauss, too tardily by the unenthusiastic Dr Oppenheimer. This fear was focussed on the Rosenbergs who are supposed to have given the Russians some very valuable information, though just how valuable this information was, remains a matter of doubt. Dr Urey is, it seems, unconvinced that what was transmitted to the U S S R made a jot of difference to the speed with which they developed their fusion weapon. This strong difference of opinion, which can be seen very clearly in the United States between scientists and the public as represented by soldiers and lawyers, is a most important matter which can have grave consequences. I think there is a simple explanation of this divergence of view, obvious to anyone who has been engaged in scientific research, that it doesn't seem worth mentioning, and so obscure to those who have never done research that they fall back on

feelings about secrecy rather than attempt a reasonable solution to the problem. Sociologists tell us that this concern with secrecy has a latent function. It does, and so did the burning of witches, but we must find better ways of dealing with the fear that scientists will wipe us off the face of the earth than putting research in the care of people who don't understand it.

No country has more than a few dozen great scientists, men who make major innovations in their subject. It is unlikely that there are more than half a dozen scientific geniuses in the world to-day, men who change the aspect of a whole branch of science for generations to come. I can think of only two. The discoveries which these marvellously endowed men make can be used in numerous ways. Einstein's and Rutherford's work has told us the age of the earth and blown up the largest fragment of the earth's surface ever destroyed by man. For many years it seemed unlikely that the ideas of these two men would ever be of any practical, let alone military, importance. During those years, men from all nations came to work with Rutherford in England, and though Kapitza carried back to the U S S R many of Rutherford's ideas, I have no doubt that he brought with him to Cambridge some of his own. The compartmenting of science, dividing it into civil and military science, or into British, American, Soviet or Bulgarian science is a retrograde and damaging step, which, as scientists, we must deplore. Let military men keep some technical secrets if they feel the better for them, providing they don't come to value them higher than courage and daring; but to have secret scientists toiling under the watchful eyes of secret policemen, however tactfully labelled, is not only degrading but dangerous.

Let us admit to ourselves that the scientists, by what is in the last analysis a demonstration of *our* astonishing and ruthless skill, have terrified us and made us wish that they had never been born. There are aspects of ourselves which we don't like, [illegible] that they don't become easier to deal with by denying that they don't exist. Scientists have allowed those of us who feel like the First Murderer in Macbeth (and who doesn't sometimes repeat certain lines to the effect 'I am one, my liege, Whom the vile blows and buffets of the world Have so incens'd that I am reckless what I do to spite the world'?) an unrivalled opportunity to [illegible] There [illegible] in horrifying day dreams, which we are naturally the K[illegible]leny. One of the easiest and worst ways to deal with

our guilt and fear is to muzzle and persecute the scientists, to make them sorry for what they have allowed us to do. If this increased our safety or discomforted our potential enemies, it might be tolerated, but since it does neither, we should abandon this stupidity before it does us even more harm than it has done already. I should point out here that I am a researcher in a small way and so am writing from experience. I have had no contact with the military who have, so far, only little interest in my field. However, no one who saw active service in the recent war could fail to be aware of the official ideas about secrecy.

Scientific research has many levels of activity, from the comparatively straightforward one of fact-finding to enormous and fruitful generalizations, such as those of Newton or Einstein. These great systems of ideas seem to arise from the same source as poetic inspiration. As in poetry or painting, the innovator in science often receives little welcome at first, yet it is, of course, innovators such as Einstein, Rutherford, Freud, Jung, Darwin and Wallace who change their subject. The pioneer requires free publication and some chance that scientists all over the world may hear about his views. Because his ideas are new he will probably receive no support in his own country, and so it is essential that the whole world of science should have a chance to give him a few crumbs of encouragement. Luckily at this stage this sort of man is unlikely to interest the security services, although with an increasing awareness that thoughts are dangerous this immunity may be a thing of the past. Usually his ideas are regarded as worthless by the authorities. It is these worthless ideas which change history. The atomic physics that we now know is based upon the work of Planck, Einstein and Rutherford, who did their great work over forty years ago. Thus at the very start the cards are stacked against secrecy at this highest and most creative level, for short of rigorously controlling all young scientists who are publishing new ideas, and so stopping these ideas from being winnowed by time and criticism, the most dangerous and also the most fruitful ideas become public property early on. The most dangerous ideas are clearly the most useful, since they deal with the fundamental drives and energies. He who has the secret of life also has the secret of death.

I think it is likely that secrecy defeats its own ends, but if we admit this as being even a remote possibility, it would be

prudent to try to discover how such a mistake has arisen. The prime error is, I believe, due to misunderstandings about research and research workers. A very well-known physiologist recently told a friend of mine that he rarely read other people's work because it distracted him from doing his own, and he could never make much of other people's ideas. In his excellent book *The Art of Scientific Investigation*, Professor W. I. Beveridge deals with the dangers of reading too much, but it is only when one realizes that some 50,000 scientific journals are published in the world, which turn out some 40,000 articles weekly, that the danger of immersing oneself in this flood and never getting back to one's own work becomes clear. A research worker should prefer to develop his own or his associate's ideas rather than those of other people. Indeed, the more useful he is likely to be in research the less will he be preoccupied with other men's ideas. Poets believe in their own poems, even when no one else does, otherwise they stop being poets, and it is much the same with researchers. I doubt whether Russian research workers are any more interested in our work than we are in theirs. In my field we are quite ignorant of psychiatric methods in Irkutsk and possibly foolishly sceptical of their worth. No doubt they return the compliment. I wonder if it is so very different in physics?

It is very boring to read through dozens of papers when you are surveying a field. It is sometimes necessary and almost always tedious. One puts it off and at the end of a long day starts on the pile of references with a jaded brain. Sometimes there is a pleasant surprise to be found tucked away in a journal, but mostly there are no surprises. It is bad enough doing this sort of thing because one wants to fill in the reference brackets on a paper which may have given pleasure in its preparation, but what about the scientist who has to read these things at the behest of the intelligence chiefs? Those unlucky men to whom the fruits of spying and bribery are forwarded [illegible] checking, Professor Y for instance. Top secret papers have [illegible]don stolen from Professor X's laboratory in Tiflis and at great [illegible]whatnse have been brought here for scrutiny by Professor Y. [illegible]cer[illegible]A[illegible]upposed to know X and to be thoroughly conversant with [illegible]three[illegible]k, but as he surveys the translation he wonders uneasily had, in [illegible] X was the little fat man with whom he got drunk at [illegible]Ther[illegible]nternational congress, or the gangling, morose fellow [illegible]the K[illegible]ed to have a permanent hangover. Russian names

are so confusing, especially when you have no common language except technical German. Y felt that X was a nice chap but rather a showman; the gangling man on the other hand seemed incomprehensible and was probably mad. The article is long and pretentious, it has been translated by a first-class physicist (one wonders how many first-class physicists know Russian and can spare the time to translate it). Y wonders if it isn't a plant. It seems vague and may not be the real thing at all, if there is a real thing. Bits of it are interesting, but Y is not happy about the translation. He thinks that another should be done for comparison. He has never agreed with X's basic assumption, if X is the little fat fellow, but he doesn't wish to be biased on that account, for the document has cost money and perhaps lives to abstract from Tiflis.

The retranslation is done and Y gets ready to make his appreciation, just as Professor Z at Cambridge is doing the same thing. (I know nothing about the details of these matters, but without some arrangement of this sort it would be impossible to use intelligence reports at all.) Z knows that Y is probably the other assessor, because he has a friend in Intelligence who let it out to him over the brandy the other night. In addition, he has identified X as a handsome blond Russian with a cavalry moustache with whom he got on very well at the congress. Z is enthusiastic about the moustached man's ideas and he happens to dislike Y. He reads the paper with much greater enthusiasm. The Atomic Energy chief receives two vastly different reports: Z is enthusiastic; Y is openly sceptical and has written 'if this is authentic, which I am inclined to doubt'. The matter is referred to Intelligence again and evokes a lively response. The Atomic Energy chief really agrees with Y, but he feels Z is after his job and he doesn't want to offend Intelligence, not that he worries about it, but Oppenheimer got into such hot water for 'lack of enthusiasm'. He asks Y to do at least one run on X's work. Y is despondent, his programme is already behind-hand, and their own work will still more if they start to attempt to check X's hypothesis. isn't sure that there are enough data to do this. On the o hand he doesn't want to embarrass the Atomic Energy who has much to do with their grants, and he kno difficult the Intelligence can make it.

It is not necessary to expand this further. Russia few first-class scientists, and we may be sure that t

enjoy reduplicating our work any more than we like doing theirs. We have very little to fear from them so long as they are trying to do what we have already done – the pioneer in a particular field usually gets ahead and stays ahead. What then can we do about secrecy in science? I think that we should abandon it for safety's sake. It is very dangerous to make one small group of very intelligent and specialized men too aware of their uniqueness, and even more dangerous to allow a potential enemy to focus his attention on them. Among these gifted men there are sure to be some eccentric and curious characters, for an innovator by his very nature is a man who deviates from the usual course of things. For such men the imposed secrecy itself may become a compulsion to give away the secret, just as it is in fairy stories. The secret becomes like a hole in a tooth which must be exposed, however much it hurts. It is useless and totally unrealistic to say that government research establishments must only employ stable men of good character, etc. The wind of genius blows where it and not where we choose; studies of geniuses lend no special confidence to the theory that they are exclusively steady, long-headed men.

What must we have in place of secrecy? Ample open publication. Every scientist, however hush-hush his work, will be strongly encouraged to get it into print. An enemy cannot possibly read and check the whole volume of any one country's scientific output. If he did, we could be sure that his own research would soon come to an end. It is only when some subjects are labelled as secret that he will be tempted to try. No country has enough men of the highest capacity in any science to check its own work, let alone someone elses.

I do not wish to be unfair to the spy services. They probably serve some purpose in reducing a fear of the unknown among senior officers and so letting them do their work of command with greater confidence. It seems, however, that the excitement and uncertainty of espionage attracts peculiar and unreliable people. I can recall immediately, without using any reference books, several instances in which very highly placed men in Intelligence have been alleged to be traitors to their own country, and if men at the top, why not others? Admiral Canaris, head of German Naval Intelligence, is said to have had, in fact, been for the British, though the evidence is not completely

There is the history. Beria, according to his colleagues, was for many years the K[illegible] agent of capitalism while heading his country's secret

police; however dubious we may be about these accusations, it is certain that Petrov, one of his men, gave away many important secrets recently, if we can believe what is published. During the 1939–45 war, a British Admiral, once head of Naval Intelligence, was interned as an active supporter of Fascism. Recently Dr John, head of the West German Intelligence Services, fled to the Eastern Zone. One of the most interesting accounts we have is that of Colonel Redl, for years before 1914 Chief of the Austrian Intelligence Services. He was well known as a spy hunter, but was himself a Russian spy. Theodor Reik gives details of this remarkable affair in his book *The Unknown Murderer*. Besides, it is not only deliberate treachery from secret service men that we must guard against, but also zealous stupidity. It has been shown in an analysis of the Oppenheimer enquiry that, in an effort to justify the committee's action in suspending Dr Oppenheimer, much highly secret information was published. The energetic Admiral Strauss and the U S intelligence services presented their Russian counterparts with information that would have cost many millions of dollars to obtain by normal means. It may be felt that these are special instances, but it seems that the 'casualty' rate among these men is high and that treachery is an occupational disease in spy services much more than among scientists. One hopes that some historian will study the effects of intelligence and spy services on military operations and tell us how much benefit has been gained from them, and how much it has cost. I believe that spying is much less valuable than we suppose, because war has always been more of an art than a science.

The secrets of scientists are much like those of poets, artists or composers. Wordsworth's capacity to move and enchant us lies not in his metre or his vocabulary which, if we were diligent enough, we could perhaps acquire, but in Wordsworth himself and nothing else. Soldiers, politicians and police confuse the mysterious results of scientific inspiration with the secrecy of tradesmen, and in so doing have probably done more harm to us than to any potential enemy. If we wish to deceive our these people let us be completely honest and show them the secrets. They will never believe us, at least for so many years or not. that it will no longer matter a jot whether they believe us

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor of THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

SIR, – No doubt a philosopher will be commenting in due course in your columns on the article in your August number by Mr Everett W. Knight on 'The Politics of Existentialism'. Perhaps, however, you will allow a layman to get in a few rash blows as well.

Mr Knight's argument seems to be built up on the surprising statement that

> Our philosophy and religion have been, from antiquity to the present, a long quest for an Absolute; they were based upon the certitude, which only a madman would have questioned, that the universe had been constructed in such a way as to make the secrets of its functioning accessible to human intelligence.

This is surely quite untrue. The author of the Book of Wisdom knew better:

> For the thoughts of mortal men are miserable, and our devices are but uncertain. . . . And hardly do we guess aright at things that are upon earth, and with labour do we find the things that are before us; but the things that are in heaven who hath searched out? And thy counsel who hath known, except thou give wisdom, and send thy Holy Spirit from above?

There are innumerable other testimonies, Christian and pre-Christian, to the fact that the universe is *not* entirely accessible to human intelligence and that, as for God, as Hooker said, 'our soundest knowledge is to know that we know him not as indeed he is, neither can know him. Our safest eloquence concerning him is our silence.' That surely represents a basic tenet of Christianity, and the development of it represents one of the most persistent traditions in the thought of the Western world. Moreover, to say that Appearance is Reality is surely not as original as Mr Knight suggests. Does it really mean anything more than saying that God is immanent in all creation – with the difference that the Christian realizes that

his formulation is inadequate, that it is only one of various ways, all imperfect, of approaching the unknowable, that 'all is symbolic except love, in which God gives us himself.'

Mr Knight could perhaps argue that this Wisdom is in fact only the Absolute in another disguise. But is it? Wisdom is not an object of science or intellection in any form; 'Wisdom is a loving spirit'; 'her very true beginning is the desire of discipline; and the care of discipline is love.' In other words, Wisdom is a way of living, not a form of knowledge; it is the blessing which comes to the pure in heart, to the man who can purge himself of sin and become as a little child; for 'forward thoughts separate from God' and 'into a malicious soul Wisdom shall not enter'. Once pride and desires have been subordinated to love, then life can be accepted with simplicity as it is, the regenerate soul can enjoy the perfect freedom which is the service of God, and can live in action rather than thought. Then indeed it can aspire to 'that state in which it does not so much pray as live in God'; it lives in the present; as Eckhart said, 'he who stands continually in a present Now, in him God the Father begets his Son without ceasing'. This is the Christian ideal, no doubt practically never attained on earth. If it is Existentialism, then there has always been a strong stream of Existentialism in Christianity; in any case it is anything but the revolutionary mode of thought of which Mr Knight writes.

However, one must admit, the Christian ideal differs a good deal from what Mr Knight has been advocating. For it is much concerned with ethical behaviour; and M. Sartre has not got round to writing his book on ethics yet. This does not prevent him from holding strong political opinions, nor, strangely enough, his followers from sharing them, even though they do not know what, if any, their ethical basis is. These views derive apparently from M. Sartre's special insight that 'the truth of our particular historical context is Marxism' – Marxism not, of course, as Marx wrote it, but interpreted as one feels like interpreting it, rid of all its 'objectionable features'. This see[illegible] rather like interpreting a tiger as having no teeth, and it not surprising that to practical people the new version, as e Knight puts it, 'has little of the attractiveness of the old' ve would perhaps be too much to expect him to explain in [illegible] our article why any historical context should be expected [illegible] ecades 'a truth', and why in the present case that truth sh[illegible] or not. Marxism, rather than the atomic bomb, Freudiani[illegible]

Malthusianism, Hollywood, the football pools or anything else.)

> The truth of each immediate situation is evident. What is required of the intellectual therefore are not analyses and investigations but *participation* in the never-ending struggle to ensure that the issues are not confused by those whose prosperity depends upon the mystification of the public.

This seems to give even Mr Knight some pause. How, he says, except by fidelity to a certain number of fixed ideas is action to be prevented from taking the form of Nazism? He finds comfort, however, in the new book on ethics which M. Sartre is going to write and which will presumably make plain in due course to his followers how they are to recognize the self-evident. Perhaps it would be better if, instead of writing his new book, M. Sartre gave consideration again to the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount. It may be true in a sense that the truth of every situation is evident; but the Christian view would be that only the man who has attained to true humility is in a position to recognize it. It is not enough to be just an intellectual, for not only 'those whose prosperity depends on the mystification of the public' (i.e. those who disagree with you) have motes in their eyes; intellectuals sometimes have them too.

Yours faithfully,
E. Moss.

To the Editor of THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

SIR, – Might I point out one of the more elementary grammatical errors in Mr Stephen Spender's recent letter to you? This gentleman writes:

> I agree with his general conclusion, which appears to be that there is always the machinery for whomever cares to use London literary life as a racket.

He takes *whomever* to be governed by the preposition *for* [illegible] it is, of course, subject to the verb *cares*, the case of the [illegible]ative pronoun depending upon its function in the clause of [illegible] it is part. We are used to mixed metaphors in Mr [illegible]er's poetry – a Russian worker described as 'one cog in a [illegible] and singing hive', for example – but I should have [illegible]t he owed you the courtesy to keep the grammar of a

letter correct, shocking as this communication may have seemed to many of us.

At my private school, at the age of perhaps ten or eleven, I had my bottom soundly beaten for mistakes of this sort. Perhaps this is what, as a public service, Dr Leavis should have done to Stephen Spender a long, long time ago.

Yours, etc,

GEOFFREY WAGNER.

2310 SECOND AVENUE, NEW YORK, 35.
August 7, 1945

Mr Spender replies: –

Mr Wagner is perfectly correct in grammar and sentiments. I agree with his brilliant conclusion that Dr Leavis should be a Dr Syntax, equipped with birch. I am grateful to Mr Wagner for taking over the function for him, and glad to recognize Mr Wagner's place in the class room where he so rightly belongs.

In criticizing my 'mixed metaphor,' Mr Wagner reveals the dangers of the pedantic mind when it moves out of the class room. This is a line I wrote when I was twenty-two, and I could easily dismiss it, or now alter it. But in fact the use of 'mixed metaphor' is justified. To understand this one might invent some term like 'fused' rather than 'mixed.' The whole point of this partly ironic line is that the Russian concept fuses the idea of the worker as a living and golden unit of his cell or hive – like the bee – and the mechanistic concept of him as a cog in a machine (which is also humming and glowing). The late Michael Roberts wrote very intelligently about such telescoping of imagery in metaphors. If Mr Wagner would read my line in conjuction with the one that precedes it, even he might se the metaphor:

> 'They think how one life hums, revolves and toils,
> One cog in a golden singing hive.'

Mr Wagner should stick to laying down the law about w was whacked into him at the age of eleven.

(*We also must take a rap over the knuckles, since it is an duty to correct any mistakes in letters hastily, and obligingly, by our correspondents.* – Ed.)

To the Editor of THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

SIR, – After reading Tom Scott's defence of Lallans I can quite understand why he should prefer some language other than English for his verse. However, when he writes that 'after four hundred years . . . no Scot has succeeded in producing first-rate work in that tongue (English); even Walter Scott is rather a giant than a god', he is indulging in too subjective a generalization. Of course, it depends on what you mean by 'first-rate'; it is interesting to see that Mr Scott regards deification as the end of literary activity (I seem to remember a poem of his called *Ilk Man His Ain Christ*), but most of us would be content with being mere giants or, at any rate, with reading their works. Still, I should like to name five or six books by Scotch authors writing in English which seem to me 'first-rate' and I challenge Mr Scott to say specifically that they are not. I shall then be content to leave the issue to yourself and your readers.

(1) *Biography:* Boswell's *Life of Johnson.*
(2) *Poetry:* Thomson's *The Seasons.*
(3) *Fiction:* Smollett's *Humphrey Clinker.*
(4) *Philosophy:* Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature.*
(5) *General:* Hogg's *Confessions of a Justified Sinner.*
(6) *Translation:* Scott Moncrieff's *Proust.*

One word more. It might be possible to excuse or pass over Mr Scott's lack of literary judgement, but it is certainly not possible to ignore the offensive tone in which he conveys it. By studding his article with refcrences to 'Anglo-Scottish journalists,' by impugning Mr Hamilton's integrity in the true Zhdanovite manner, he has destroyed the basis on which a fruitful literary controversy can be conducted. Of any such exchange manners are an essential ingredient, and Mr Scott's deficiencies in this respect make it impossible to take him seriously. If he regards the defence of Lallans as an occasion for fourth-form L se, I can only conclude that it is because no other defence ind ailable.

Yours, etc.,

ANTHONY HARTLEY.

(*The correspondence on Lallans is now closed. Ed.*)

ART IN A COLD CLIMATE

J. G. Weightman

From our native Northumbrian heath, where there is no art, – where, when the curlew cries and the hawk hovers and great shadows move over the fells, all one can feel is a kind of metaphysical numbness – we were shot into the artistic concentration of the Edinburgh Festival. Now Scotland, unlike the North of England, which is a No Man's Land, has its particular style, compounded of whisky, haggis, shortbread, Gaelic songs, bagpipes, tartans, Burns and Sir Walter Scott. Edinburgh has impressive streets and squares of massive grey-black houses, which seem to announce that civilisation is holding its own against the north-east wind. No doubt there are big towns still further north, but the southerner arriving here must feel that he has reached an outpost. And on the folk basis of skirling pipes and crumbly shortbread is suddenly superimposed a mass of far more complex art. The tourist photographs kilted pipers in the morning, lunches – if he so wishes – off haggis and whisky, dashes to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in the afternoon and to the Glyndebourne Opera in the evening. Boswell must be rubbing his hands with glee at the thought of so many Englishmen making the pilgrimage, and Johnson grumbling that it has all been arranged for the voracious appetites of the American rebels, who have prospered so strangely. It is true that the squashing together of so much civilization into so short a time is, perhaps, not very civilized, but there it is; only a few mile[s] from the timeless and inhuman moors and hard by so ma[ny] tons of scones and Edinburgh rock, a glut of some of the r[ich] precious products of art.

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The term is excessive, of course, when applied to *The M[atch]maker*. The work itself (the programme dubs it a fa[rce] although it represents the results of the successive efforts English dramatist, his Viennese adaptor, and Mr Th[ornton] Wilder, is no more than enjoyable froth. Unlike Mr

two plays which preceded it, it rests on purely humanistic, non-religious values. It is, indeed, a lay sermon, the various parts of which are preached directly to the audience by the five main characters, who advance in turn to the footlights. The sermon consists, briefly, of the following propositions: (1) we are all fools; (2) the poor who meekly accept poverty are especially foolish; (3) we should all seek 'adventure'; (4) the individual should not shut himself away from the world; (5) everyone should cultivate a vice to season his virtues; (6) money was not meant to be hoarded, but to be spread around. It is the philosophy of a warm-hearted, well-to-do man of the world; a mixture of Christmas carol sentiment, American folksiness and Irish blarney. The action takes place in nineteenth-century America, 'adventure' consists in going up to New York and taking a girl out to dinner, and the social relationships described have little significance outside the setting. The piece is remarkable for its accumulation of ancient theatrical devices – hiding in cupboards, mistaken identity, the use of screens, etc.; in fact, part of Act I is cribbed straight from Molière. Watching it, one was struck again by the amazing crudeness and simplicity of theatrical convention, and by the fact that it rarely fails to work. However, the art, here, was in the acting and, presumably, in Mr Tyrone Guthrie's directing. Miss Ruth Gordon, as the red-haired, blowsy and rather touching widow, scheming to marry a well-to-do miserly shopkeeper, was the star. Miss Eileen Herlie, playing an Irish widow (with what seemed to us a rather Scottish accent), came a close second; Miss Herlie has the faculty, rare in beautiful women, of projecting humourous warmth. Mr Sam Levene, as the Napoleonic shopkeeper, was good in Act I, but after that, through no fault of his own, his part almost disappeared. Mr Arthur Hill, as his naïve chief assistant, even managed to put across such a line as 'Women – they are so different from men!' As for Mr Patrick McAlinney, [he] was so perfect a stage Irishman that he might have walked ind[eed] from the streets of West Hampstead. *The Matchmaker* was a con[ge]nious play to choose for the Festival, if the Festival is supposed tene[d] to include some significant new work. It is little more than a bag of thea[tri]cal tricks, performed by virtuosi; fortunately, virtuosity is not a[lso] a worthless thing one appreciates more and more as one grows older. anyth[ing] creati[ve].

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We were given two doses of Shakespeare this year – both

administered, with some originality, by Mr Michael Benthall. As a compliment to Edinburgh, apparently, his *Macbeth* was full of tartans, the wail of the pipes, and broad Scots accents. This would have been acceptable enough if all the characters had spoken Scots, or alternatively, if the King and the Nobles had expressed themselves in standard English (as has been the case, historically, since the Scottish aristocracy began to be educated in England) and the local dialect had been restricted to the non-aristocratic characters. Neither of these courses was followed; Ross spoke Scots, Macduff English; the Porter had a very strong accent, the Old Man and the Doctor none. The resulting jumble was almost as bad as the confusion of accents and styles in the recent film version of *Julius Cæsar*. I think Mr Benthall made the further mistake of exaggerating the uncouthness of Shakespeare's Scotland. The stage remained gloomy for most of the first part of the action, with the result that the speech about the temple-haunting martlet, which is intended to create an atmosphere of calm enjoyment just before the murder, sounded as if it were being uttered in a crypt; moreover, such poetry seemed strange in the mouths of the rough and kilted band of Duncan's followers. In fact, the tragedy began too soon. As De Quincey points out, the knocking on the gate which accompanies the murder marks the transition to irrevocable evil; until then, Macbeth is an ambitious, uncertain man, in whom good predominates, and Lady Macbeth is a brilliant source of resolution and energy. Unfortunately, Ann Todd, who looked splendid in red wig and green dress, played her part on one continuous note of wicked tension; when she welcomed Duncan, she was not a flower, but the hissing serpent from under it; she nagged at Macbeth slowly and emphatically, instead of pouring vitality into him; in the banqueting scene, she screamed with the same deliberateness and, when she should have been play-acting, looked every bit as guilty as Macbeth himself. Her tenseness was appropriate only when she walked in her sleep, but as she had been tense all through, it seemed less effective then. She was not a match for Macbeth – their exchanges were remarkably slow and unsubtle; she was a monotonous villainess in her own right, and as such flattened out a good deal of the play. To conclude the chapter of grievances, the witches were a sad disappointment, being comic rather than sinister. They leaped about too much, shouted their lines instead of letting the poetry sweat coldly out

of them, and were given a cauldron so big that they could not move round it and had even to stand on some sort of support to drop in the 'eye of newt and toe of frog'. They looked as if they had discovered an abandoned tar-boiler on their blasted heath.

All this was redeemed to a considerable degree by Mr Paul Rogers's performance as Macbeth. Without any special advantages of voice or person, he did not make the indeterminate Thane of Act I very interesting, but having done the deed, he warmed up, and we were treated to a shaggy, bull-like King, running his head against ghosts and barging recklessly into further crimes, until he died, glassy-eyed and panting. In his speaking of the verse, Mr Rogers did not, perhaps, render all the fits and starts of mood, the sudden changes from wilful assertion to philosophical reflection, or from cruelty to unexpected humanity. Like most of the players, he was forceful rather than poetic. Two other performances which helped to save the day were John Neville's as Macduff hearing of the death of his family, and Laurence Hardy's as the Scottish Porter.

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A Midsummer Night's Dream has been turned into gorgeous pantomime. It contains so many fairies that when they first came on, the perfumed wind that blew from the stage was quite overwhelming in the third row of the stalls. The ass's head is of the very latest model; it can roll an eye, drop a coy eyelid and cock an ear. Hermia is a soubrette, Helena a figure of fun. Titania, the most beautiful fairy-queen imaginable, embarks in mid-stage from a swan-boat and dances for us in a dress of milky-blue moonbeams. Oberon is a conjuror who, with arched eyebrows and pursed lips, plays pranks in the forest-glade. Puck is the only non-bumpkinish character who is not magnificently attired; he wears an ivy leaf and makes up for his lack of dress by his acrobatic movements. Strange to relate, the one character who is not as redolent of pantomime as he might be is Mr Stanley Holloway's Bottom. He is good enough as far as he goes, but if he were twice as loud and vulgar and a great deal more boastful, he would act as a better seasoning in the surrounding fairiness. The show is beautifully timed to Mendelssohn's music and, as a spectacle, could only be improved by cutting out one or two of the *longueurs;* the gentle moon-sprites seemed to do some unnecessary flitting,

which made me afraid for their fern-like wings; Titania's bed-time dance was complicated by restless evolutions with a rope of roses. These are slight criticisms; at the age of eleven, the performance would have left me breathless; being older than that now, I admired the ingeniousness of the presentation, sniffed the scents in the air and concentrated more easily each time Miss Moira Shearer appeared.

One can, of course, imagine quite a different *Midsummer Night's Dream;* one in which the characters would be very simply dressed, the fairies less of a swarm, and where the poetry would have pride of place. In the present version, the music is more poetic than the language. Miss Shearer is not as richly endowed in voice and feeling as she is in looks and grace. Mr Helpmann, although he speaks his lines resonantly, gives them no magic; 'I know a bank,' firmly enunciated, showed merely that he knew his way about a wood. The Athenian story, too, if played realistically loses its formal balance and 'The course of true love . . .', instead of being an echoing line, becomes a hearty encouragement. But what is the poor actor to do? He would have to be almost divinely inspired to convey the beauty of the verse without appearing to linger over it at the expense of the action, so he throws it vigorously away, as if it were not beautiful at all. The beauty is something for the poetry-lover in the audience to notice and he, hearing the verse with his mind's ear at the same time as it comes from the stage, is confused by the contrast between the two sounds. We thus arrive at the preposterous conclusion that Shakespeare, the world's greatest dramatist, is almost unactable. Instead of one continous, complex glow of effects, which is what we hope for ideally, we usually get flashes of satisfaction interspersed with disappointments. But it may be that, never having been much to the theatre, I have simply missed the best performances.

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The Glyndebourne Opera's *Cosi fan Tutte*, produced by Carl Ebert and conducted by Vittorio Gui, provides an almost completely opposite experience. From the opening bars of the overture, the satisfaction was unbroken, so much so, in deed, that the perfection of it at times set one's teeth on edge; absolute symmetry of pattern is, after a time, almost unbearable to a modern eye and ear. The settings by Rolf Gérard had exactly the right degree of stylization; not a finger was lifted nor a step

taken on the stage that was not in exquisite relationship to the score; and the score itself clothes Da Ponte's libretto (as conventional in design as a Marivaux comedy) with impish and lyrical music, the distinction of which belies the superficiality of the story, just as the fluting voices in the *Nozze di Figaro* have a purity far removed from the sophistication of Beaumarchais' play. This was the very flower of a certain kind of European civilization; libretto by an Italian, music by a German, conducted by an Italian, production by a German, settings by a Frenchman (?) – if not, no matter; the eighteenth-century spirit and movement of the performance were French – the parts sung in Italian by two Italians, two Englishmen, one Bosnian and one Hungarian. The neo-classical, pre-romantic style blended them all into a rich yet simple whole. How remote we were from the curlew's cry and the shadows over the fells! How many generations of musicians, and finally what accident, had it taken to produce a Mozart? How many thousands of hours had all these talented people devoted to the perfecting of their art? And as always with perfection, its contemplation was almost an anguish; the mind veered away into speculation about its achievement or niggling at its detail. On this occasion I found myself reflecting that, although all six singers were completely accomplished, only two – Alda Noni, as the maid Despina and Sena Jurinac, as Fiordiligi – had the additional flourish which makes for greatness. At times, Jurinac was not a beautiful woman singing, but a splendidly round, unsullied Voice, rising inexhaustibly from a comely body.

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To see the Diaghileff Exhibition, we trudged to the Lauriston Hall in a heavy downpour. After folding our umbrellas and shaking ourselves, we paid half-crowns to enter a twilit structure reminiscent of Father Christmas's home in a big store or the Tunnel of Love at a fun-fair. We climbed a staircase while a Chopin waltz came from a hidden gramophone; the waltz stopped and, without a pause, the gramophone embarked on *Swan Lake*. At the top of the staircase, we found ourselves in a series of galleries lined with a very rich collection of original sketches for the settings of famous ballets, photographs and drawings of famous dancers, and iconographical material relating to Diaghileff; letters to and from Cocteau, Picasso, etc; contracts, registers and so on. Downstairs again,

another very big room contained cartoons and portraits of celebrated figures connected with the ballet. The decoration all through was in keeping with the tinsel entrance; the cartoons, for instance, were hung against a striped wall-paper that vibrated blindingly; here and there, a round window opening off a gallery offered us a peep into a kind of band-box, done up in wedding-cake style and containing a plaster effigy of the Sleeping Beauty or some other such character. And all the time the music played faintly to the mackintoshed crowd. Why is it, I wondered, that ballet, which is essentially a hard discipline and a question of limbs moving mathematically against a plain, static background, should be surrounded by so much *chichi*? Diaghileff was, presumably, a great man, the iconographical material is interesting for the historian, but why this veneer of bad taste, this overall softness? For my part, I should have preferred an exhibition showing what exactly Diaghileff did for ballet, or a collection of moving films of famous dancers or dances, or explanations by a dancer or producer of the technical problems in working out steps and achieving affects; instead of which I felt I was sitting in front of a confectioner's window, turning over a photograph album, while the wireless played a medley of old favourites. Perhaps I just wanted an entirely different exhibition or had been put in a bad mood by the rain, or am a Philistine from the moors, civilized only in patches. Whatever the cause, when we reached the last room, a kind of Hall of Memory, twilit like the entrance and done up as a grotto with a huge bust of Diaghileff set in a niche and where the faithful, still in their mackintoshes, sat in hushed rows listening to the invisible gramophone, I had a sudden thirst for fresh air. With relief we found the exit and took a train going south-west, back to the hawk, the curlew and the trout.

THE QUALITY OF ARNOLD BENNETT. (*Continued*)

John Wain

III

Critics are fairly strongly agreed that Bennett's attempt at a trilogy was a failure; there is a disastrous slipping on to an altogether lower plane in the second book, and the third is merely a perfunctory rounding-off which would not really save the situation even if it were a success in itself, which it is not. Nevertheless there is something to be gained from a discussion of the extent to which the books do fit together. *Clayhanger* is not improved by the addition of *Hilda Lessways* and *These Twain*, but even so the subsequent volumes are worth reading, and most of their readability is owing to the interest already aroused in the magnificent opening study. As for *The Lion's Share*, it is too late to try to defend that. It adds nothing at all.

I suppose most of Bennett's readers have gone through *Hilda Lessways*, even if their interest flagged before reading *These Twain*, because there are some important episodes in *Clayhanger* that are deliberately meant to be unintelligible without an account of Hilda's actions and motives. This kind of book must be hard to write, and there was not much to guide him; the only masterpiece of this kind in previous English fiction is Hogg's *Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, which he does not seem to have known; and which anyway was a special case, having an occult theme. The trouble in *Hilda Lessways* is that Bennett fails, almost entirely, to give us any understanding of Hilda's character even when he devotes a whole book to her. A few details of plot are cleared up – we learn who George Cannon was, and why she married him, and why she had to disappoint Edwin when he was waiting to show her over the printing works – but the light shed on the source and essence of her behaviour is far too dim. The key to her character, we are given to understand, lies in the intensity with which she savours life: she is always realizing this or that 'in a flash', odd sensations about the miracle of life keep coming over her, and so forth, but the reader can never do more than watch it happen-

ing from the outside. The words 'romantic' and 'romance', always favourites with Bennett, are cruelly overworked; so much so as to suggest that his failure to convince is intimately connected with a purely stylistic bankruptcy. After Hilda's first visit to George Cannon, 'The whole town, the whole future, seemed to be drenched now in romance'. When she first saw a specimen of Pitman's shorthand, 'In their mysterious strokes and curves and dots she saw romance'. Then there is 'the strange, romantic piquancy' of her 'brief vision' of Edwin: 'all her being vibrated to the mysterious and beautiful romance of existence'. When her mother's house and furniture were sold, she was affected by the thought that so elaborate and decisive an undertaking had gone forward merely at her command: 'How mysteriously romantic,' Bennett comments. Cannon's demeanour 'seemed . . . to give romance to the perfectly unromantic business of lodging and catering'. Her first sight of Brighton 'made promises to her romantic sense'. The fact that a joint responsibility for Sarah Gailey's welfare was forming a link between herself and Cannon 'seemed to her grandiose and romantic'. In the room where he proposed to her 'she saw glimpses, beautiful and compensatory, of the romantic quality of common life'. She had never been in that room before, and 'she regarded the fact as tremendously romantic'. Edwin's face, to her, 'was romantic, melancholy, wistful, enigmatic'. Examples could be multiplied for pages. Of course, too, she is continually vibrating, yearning and burning: the fact must be driven home that she is *intense*. At the sight of the ill-clad, thin figures of the strikers' children, 'Pain and joy ran together in her, burning exquisitely; and she had a glimpse, obscure, of the mystical beauty of the child's suffering'. The extent to which Bennett had lost his head is painfully evident from the fact that he blots out his usual clear, honest vision of human life and begins to talk nonsense (for nonsense, in a man of his beliefs and temperament, it is) about suffering having a 'mystical beauty'. 'Bliss' is another favourite word for Hilda's emotions. The first time she reminded George Cannon to drink his evening glass of milk, 'The fact that he had forgotten it and she had remembered it yet further increased her strange, mournful, ecstatic bliss'. And of Edwin: 'The idea that all his life had been embittered and shadowed by the caprice of an old man was beautiful to her in its sadness: she contemplated it with vague bliss'.

The fact is that Bennett is out of his depth. It is remarkable that a man so preoccupied with, and versed in, the method of fiction, should not have realized that repeated statement, by the author, of the nature of a character's emotions is no substitute for an imaginative presentation which will communicate these emotions. In his hack-work one is prepared for it (cf. *Mr Prohack*, where the reiterated statement that Prohack loved his wife is made to do duty for an imaginative perception of his love, which alone would have given point to his mental conflict); but in a book designed to stand beside *Clayhanger* it is a bad disappointment.

There are, of course, other reasons for the inferiority of *Hilda Lessways*. In *Clayhanger* the love story had been only one strand of many, and is in fact subordinated to the main theme, that of growing up. Here the love story is weakened by being largely unsupported. True, Bennett meant to support it; just as in *Clayhanger* the action was seen as part of a provincial adolescence, so now it is meant to be seen as part of the development of a sensitive and poetic woman, a kind of Sophia Baines, but with more soul and less selfishness – or rather a different kind of self-absorption. But he simply had not sufficient weight of material. It is all too much of a *mélange* of things he had treated before: the lonely woman with her life running down, the intimate life of a household, the position of domestic servants, the strangeness of Brighton to a provincial – all had been dealt with to exhaustion; it is simply the popular novelist's method of writing the same book over and over again.

This is not to say that *Hilda Lessways* can be overlooked. It contains some of the finest pages Bennett ever wrote, and even seen as a whole it shows a sombre awareness of the depth and force of everyday incident worthy of the best traditions of the realistic novel. The description of Hilda's sensations during her nervous collapse, in which she imagines herself to have been transformed into the hideous epileptic whom she saw in the street, is on a level with the similar incident in the life of Sophia Baines; and for a crowning example there is the attempted suicide of Sarah Gailey.

> Hilda ran down the steps; at the bottom another row of lamps defined the shore, and now she could hear the tide lapping ceaselessly amid the supporting ironwork of the pier. She at once descried the figure of Sarah Gailey in the gloom.

The woman was moving towards the faintly white edge of the sea. Hilda started to run after her, first across smooth asphalt, and then over some sails stretched out to dry; and then her feet sank at each step into descending ridges of loose shingle, and she nearly fell. At length she came to firm sand, and stood still.

Sarah Gailey was now silhouetted against the pale shadows of foam that in ever-renewed curves divided the shore from the sea. After a time, she bent down, rose again, moved towards the water, and drew back. Hilda did not stir. She could not bring herself to approach the lonely figure. She felt that to go and accost Sarah Gailey would be indelicate and inexcusable. She felt as if she were basely spying. She was completely at a loss, and knew not how to act. But presently she discerned that the white foam was circling round Sarah's feet, and that Sarah was standing careless in the midst of it. And at last, timid and shaking with agitation, she ventured nearer and nearer. And Sarah heard her on the sand, and looked behind.

'Miss Gailey!' she appealed in a trembling voice.

Sarah made no response of any kind, and Hilda reached the edge of the foam.

'Please, please don't stand there! You'll catch a dreadful cold, and you've got nothing on your shoulders either!'

'I want to make a hole in the water,' said Sarah miserably. 'I wanted to make a hole in the water!'

'Please do come back with me!' Hilda implored; but she spoke mechanically, as though saying something which she was bound to say, but which she did not feel.

I am not sure how this extract will strike readers who are not familiar with the whole novel; but in its context it is the climax of a very great study in human misery. The fact that Bennett could expend so much passion, and muster so skilfully the resources of his craft, in drawing the figure of Sarah Gailey is not to be explained simply as the professional wish to exploit a line which had proved profitable. On the contrary; it is a sign that the complex perceptions and emotions which prompted the earlier study were still unexhausted; it is like (in its immeasurably smaller but still valid way) the repetition, in *Cymbeline*, of the theme of *Othello*.

These Twain, which followed at a distance of nearly five years, is of little value except as a pendant to *Clayhanger*. The ostensible theme – marriage – is treated with a curious lack of conviction

(five years later Bennett's own marriage collapsed, but this may be nothing to do with the matter). Edwin and Hilda occupied such obviously different planes of their creator's mind, the one seen from within, the other from without, that he was courting failure in the attempt to show their life together. Nevertheless there are a number of dramatically excellent moments, in which time-bombs planted in *Clayhanger* suddenly explode. One of these is the death of Auntie Hamps; others, more sharply defined, are incidents which reveal the consequences of the moral attitudes which formed Edwin's early environment. The way of life typified by Darius, Albert Benbow, and Auntie Hamps is shown in its effect on human relationships; this kind of work is extremely subtle, and Bennett was right to allow himself a fresh book to turn round in.

To take a striking example:

> Maggie had once said that she knew that Auntie Hamps made her servant eat dripping instead of butter. To give inferior food to a servant was to Maggie the unforgivable in parsimony (*Clayhanger*, cap. VII).

After hundreds of pages, and some thirty-five years, we reach the chapter in which Maggie, who has gone to live with Auntie Hamps, is directing the household while the old woman lies upstairs dying. The servant-girl comes in for her supper.

> 'Here's your bread,' said Maggie, indicating the two rounds of dry bread. 'I've left the dripping on the kitchen table for you.'

The shock is all the keener in that Bennett does not, for once, pause to underline. He says that Edwin was 'revolted' as he 'perceived in a flash what the life of Minnie was under the régime of Auntie Hamps'. But the more important point – that Maggie has become resigned to administering this régime, even to the details which had once struck her as 'the unforgivable in parsimony', is left to the reader to pick up.

Consider, again, the remarkably significant parallel between the tea-party in the early pages of *Clayhanger*, and the corresponding tea-party at the home of the Benbows in *These Twain*. In each, there is a mutely suffering child, oppressed by the severity of his elders and even more oppressed by their smug acts of 'kindness'. Edwin, at the first party, is feverishly anxious to seize some opportunity of announcing his decision to seek an

independent career; Bert Benbow, at the second, is depressed because his birthday has been ruined by the elephantine unction of his parents' celebration of it. And there is the clinching parallel: at each party Auntie Hamps, choosing her moment for its effectiveness, leans across and raps down half a sovereign on the boy's plate. The fact of her presence – a member of the older generation at the first party, still surviving and still authoritative at the second – gives just the necessary point to the repetition. For the heart of the matter is that the Bursley generations succeed one another unaltered; still smug, still 'acting for the best', still stifling their children's lives through lack of imagination. Here is Edwin:

> After all, it was not a crime, it was no cause for shame to wish not to be a printer. Yet he was ashamed! Absurd! He blamed himself. But he also blamed his father. Now, however, in responding to his auntie's remark [she has said, 'It does me good to think what a *help* you'll be to your father in the business'], he could remedy all the past by simply and boldly stating that he did not want to follow his father. It would be unpleasant, of course, but the worst shock would be over in a moment, like the drawing of a tooth. He had merely to utter certain words. He must utter them. They were perfectly easy to say, and they were also of the greatest urgency. 'I don't want to be a printer.' He mumbled them over in his mind. 'I don't want to be a printer.' What could it matter to his father whether he was a printer or not? Seconds, minutes, seemed to pass. He knew that if he was so inconceivably craven as to remain silent, his self-respect would never recover from the blow.

And here is Bert Benbow:

> Spectacles had been ordained for him by the oculist, and his parents had had the hardihood to offer him his first pair for a birthday present. They had so insisted on the beauty and originality of the scheme that Bert himself had almost come to believe that to get a pair of spectacles for a birthday present was a great thing in a boy's life. He was now wearing the spectacles for the first time. On the whole, gloom outbalanced pride in his demeanour, and Bert's mysterious soul, which had flabbergasted his father for about a week, peeped out sidelong occasionally through those spectacles in bitter criticism of the institution of parents. . . . His presents, all useful (save a bouquet of flowers from Rupert), were all useless to him. Thus the prim young Clara had been parentally guided to give him a comb. If all the combs in the world had been annihilated Bert would not have cared, – would indeed have rejoiced. And as to the spectacles, he would have preferred the prospect of total blindness in middle age to the compulsion of wearing them. Who can wonder that his father had not fathomed the mind of the strange creature?

This is the Bennett who matters, the Bennett for whose absence English fiction would be the poorer. But it cannot be denied that *These Twain*, taken on its own (and each panel of a trilogy should, obviously, be able to sustain criticism alone) does not succeed. Bennett's power of organization seems to have deserted him. The character of Tertius Ingpen, for instance, is meant to embody an important comment, or series of comments, on marriage; he is the unattached and unhampered bachelor whose life, contrasting with Edwin's, throws into relief the joys and exasperations of wedlock. But Ingpen is so loosely and casually linked with the story, his appearances are so haphazard, as to leave the impression of untidiness; an impression necessarily fatal to an art such as Bennett's. Even the final – and rather desperate – attempt to bully his material into a unified form, comes too late. Edwin, moodily pacing about the streets at night while he screws himself up to the point of deciding whether or not to break up his marriage, comes to that same canal bridge on which, scores of chapters earlier, he had stood on his way home from school. He recalls that 'as a boy he could not sit on the parapet unless he vaulted up to it. He thought he must have been ridiculously small and boyish'. A good touch, but too late. The house has collapsed, and it is of no use to exhibit the foundations, however deeply they were dug.

Nevertheless, when the painful duty of assessing the degree of failure of the rest of the trilogy has been performed, the one great volume, unshaken, valid, and almost self-sufficient, remains. On January 5th, 1910, at a quarter to ten in the morning, Bennett sat down and began the writing of *Clayhanger*.

> I felt less nervous and self-conscious than usual in beginning a book. And never before have I made one-quarter so many preliminary notes and investigations.

This was true. He had consulted Shaw's *North Staffordshire Potteries*, the 'Social and Industrial' section of the Victoria

History,* and an anonymous book by 'An Old Potter' called *When I was a Child*. He had even gone to the length of making a list of the chief 'social, political and artistic events' between 1872 and 1882; and to round off his researches he had paid a visit to the Potteries in December 1909 during which he spent a good many hours in the company of Joseph Dawson, a shopkeeper and the Registrar of Burslem. On December 8th, after a morning during which he 'made real progress in getting information from Dawson', he went to the local theatre; the show included some clog-dancing, which impressed him so much that he immediately (and characteristically) envisaged a short article about it for the *Nation*. (All Bennett's inspirations came to him originally in the form of ideas for short stories or articles, and ended by being digested into his larger schemes.) Altogether, the last few weeks before he began to write the novel were spent in polishing and enlarging his knowledge of its subject matter. He even went for a walk along the route that Edwin would take on returning from his last day at school. This novel was to be (*un*) *des plus historiques de ce temps-ci* with a vengeance.

He had every right, then, to feel 'less self-conscious and nervous than usual'. With *The Old Wives' Tale* behind him, and his theme and setting entirely at his finger-tips, there was no reason why he should not set out deliberately to write the greatest regional novel in English literature. Moreover, he was aiming well within his known range. He had proved himself capable of dealing separately with all the themes and subjects which he now proposed to treat in combination – with the Five Towns, with adolescence, with illness and death, with Victorian commerce, with 'the great war between the old and young'.

*Thus the Journal: it is actually 'Social and Economic' (pp. 275–319 in ed. of 1908). It is no surprise to find Bennett deliberately omitting the more horrific details he read there, e.g. that 'Most of the workhouses suffered from inadequate classification of inmates, so that one might find able-bodied men, women and children, all herded together in a horrible community'. On the other hand he has picked and chosen his material delicately; there is not much evidence that Darius would have gone to work as an apprentice at the age of six, for in the pottery trade the normal starting age was thirteen (p. 307). But his eye was no doubt caught by a sentence two pages earlier which actually refers to children apprenticed to the hardware trade in South Staffordshire: 'They began to work at the age of seven or eight, sometimes as early as six, and their hours of work were without limit save that ultimately set by human endurance'.

It was merely a question of organization, and he had shown his strength in organization a score of times. As the book's preparation had been careful and leisurely, so its composition was regular and uninterrupted. Perhaps too regular, too quiet, for its author's peace of mind. 'I am trying to lift the whole thing up to a great height, but I feel sure that up to now it is nothing more than interesting in a nice quiet way,' he noted after working on it for sixteen days. On June 12th, in a moment of surfeit after writing 2,400 words in twelve hours, he felt gently pessimistic. 'I really doubt whether as a whole, this book is good. It certainly isn't within ten miles of Dostoevsky.' This did not prevent his persevering, and on July 23rd the task was done. 'I have just (3 p.m.) finished *Clayhanger* one week in advance of time.' Mental efficiency had triumphed.

Like *The Old Wives' Tale*, *Clayhanger* is in a sense a novel about time. The passage of time, 'the earth's fashion of renewing itself', becomes a poetic theme on its own. Technically this is done by the slow accumulation of minute changes and adjustments, with every now and then a shock of surprise as we realize that some great change has become inevitable and has duly happened. Imaginatively it is done by Bennett's usual insistence on the wonder that lies under the surface of any normal life. Mr Shushions's life is grasped at the tail end, and we are made to feel, without much retrospect, the immense distance of years that lies behind him: Darius Clayhanger enters the book middle-aged, and grows old and dies in its pages, but in his case there is a determinedly full retrospect, and the 'little boy from the Bastille' refrain, to emphasize the hugeness of this unremarkable existence; Edwin's thirty-five years seem, as in true realism they were bound to, like a century. Not only in the book's construction, but in countless scattered remarks, the great length of a few years, to those who have to live them, is emphasized. 'The Sunday' was given that nickname by his schoolfellows, but no one knew why. 'Its origin was lost in the prehistoric ages of his childhood.' Only a man who understood an important fact about childhood – its appalling length – could have written that sentence.

Besides the time theme, or rather linked to it, is the book's 'second subject': growing up. Edwin, whose character is such that he shrinks from any kind of violence or conflict, is driven by impulses at the centre of his being to revolt from his environment, and his love for Hilda is not so much a third subject as a

subdivision of the second. She represents the opposite of everything he is seeking to escape. In the fight for his own soul, his father is the arch-enemy, Clara a thorn in his flesh, and Mrs Hamps a dead weight, not actively hostile, but uncertain, likely at any moment of tension to crash down on the other side of the scale and outbalance his will with hers.

The economy with which the characters are apportioned to the theme is typical of Bennett's good work. As in *The Old Wives' Tale*, one parent is sufficient (Edwin's mother, long dead, is scarcely mentioned) though an outside figure with something of a parental status is useful (Mr Critchlow—Auntie Hamps). Every character is used to throw important light on the figure of Edwin, while at the same time each adds his mite of 'romance' to the slow unfolding of the years. The minor characters are chiefly useful as embodiments of the Bursley spirit from which Edwin struggles to free himself; some are contemptible, but not hateful (Albert Benbow), others sympathetic (Big James). The Orgreave family is of great importance, not only for the plot – a machinery for introducing Hilda into Edwin's world – but because they typify the life to which Edwin aspires and gradually ascends. It is symbolic of the faint but haunting note of failure, which sounds repeatedly through the book, that the Orgreaves should later (in *These Twain*) succumb to financial ruin, and that Janet Orgreave should finally be shown as an unwanted, brightly pathetic spinster.

When all is said, the finest quality of *Clayhanger* is the finest quality of all Bennett's work: his understanding. He does not take sides. If he happens to prefer Edwin to Darius, it is not because he does not understand Darius. He understands them both, just as each of them misunderstands the other. As Mr Pritchett has neatly put it, 'Each one bumps awkwardly along in the wonder of his own nature'.

Everything in *Clayhanger* is so perfectly understood, so entirely assimilated by the novelist's imagination, that it must nearly be impossible to read it without gaining in wisdom. But it is a brown, flat, autumnal wisdom that he gives us. Everything, everyone, is on a small scale. Edwin's education was futile; Methodism is crude and somehow sinister; Maggie lives and dies for no reason in particular; Albert and Clara are coarsely stupid; the Five Towns are dull and heavy, Brighton is vulgar. Lives fizzle out, and no one has much idea of what it all means. Human nature is represented throughout as something rather

grey and wizened. For instance:

> When they entered the shining mahoga... ...erior of the richest Bank in the Five Towns, hushed save for a discreet shovelling of coins, Edwin waited for his father to speak, and Darius said not a word, but stood glumly quiescent, like a victim in a halter. The little wiry dancing cashier looked; every clerk in the place looked; from behind the third counter, in the far recesses of the Bank, clerks looked over their ledgers; and they all looked in the same annoying way, as at a victim in a halter; in their glance was all the pitiful gloating baseness of human nature, mingled with a little of its compassion.

It is this kind of passage that would naturally occur to Bennett's opponents as illustration of his negative, resigned attitude. And yet a mere reading of it, particularly in its context, reveals a force of counter-assertion, a vehemence of suppressed but communicated protest, that turns the apparent negation into something affirmative. People talk as if Bennett were *glad* about the pitiful gloating baseness of human nature, yet the whole tendency of his work is to show how it is inextricably blended with compassion.

IV

There remains only *Riceyman Steps* (1923), the novel with which Bennett confounded the contemporary opinion that he was played out. In a sense, opinion was right; he was tired, worried, and disillusioned, and he succeeded by capitalizing these very elements. His art had never been exuberant, and now he marshalled all the resources of his experience to express in art – with all 'the force and beauty of its process' – his own incapacity to see beyond a world of suffering and misunderstanding. George Moore's remark, that it was 'the only really objective novel ever written', may be taken as a recognition of its extreme honesty and plainness; if he meant that Bennett had been more than usually successful in keeping himself out of the way, one cannot agree.

Riceyman Steps must be the most *stationary* novel in English. Previously Bennett had excelled in showing the enormously slow and crowded passage of time; here, time stops altogether. All the characters are fully developed when the book begins, and though they perform actions they are not really acting, in

any deep sense, at all: they are pacing about inside the cage that was built and locked round them before the first sentence was written. The only element of suspense, on a first reading, lies in one's anxiety to know by what means Elsie will finally escape from the cage. Escape she will, for she alone of the three principal characters has the atmosphere of life about her. Violet, from the first, is a victim; ripe for sacrifice from the moment she appears, by reason of her independent means, her sensible attractiveness, and her bright common-sense brand of stinginess, she is twisted and twisted in the web until it hides her struggles.

That is the point about Mr Earlforward: he is a spider, but a bland and gentle one. He does not spin webs with the intention of laying them as traps for flies. He spins them because he cannot help it, the sticky grey thread exudes from him automatically, and, as he goes about what for him is normal life, his fellow creatures are imprisoned and left to starve. That is why Bennett insists throughout the book not only on his blandness, but on his easy indifference, his faculty of letting things slide. The positive passion, the mania, which is the centre of the miserly character, is of course present; but it is hidden in a soft centre of indifference, and when it appears it is always directed most fiercely at himself rather than at others. He starves himself; he endures the agony of strain in his lame leg rather than ride in a taxi; he refuses to have the doctor or to be taken to hospital. It is admirably in keeping with this conception of his character that he should have *inherited* the bookshop, with all its paraphernalia of casual acquisitiveness, and not built it up himself. This, one gathers, fostered his reluctance to part with money, rather than any passion for making it. He buys and sells cheaply; he does not object to a little rain falling on the cheap books outside; rather than give a ten-shilling note to charity, he prefers to give a book whose potential value is probably as many pounds. All this is logical, even simple, but fiction had hitherto neglected the spider in its misers and concentrated on the tiger.

But to return to the first point. This is not a story; it is what the Elizabethans would have called an anatomy. There are three *active* characters: Elsie, Mr Earlforward, and Dr Raste; and two *passive* characters, Violet and Joe. These two are passive in that their function is to have things done to them by the active characters, thus enabling the active characters to be

better understood. It does not depend on frequency of appearance. Violet, for all her central position in the book, and for all her surges of resolute action, is a passive character, and Raste, whose part in the plot is slight, is active, for he influences both Elsie and the miser. He is the real opponent of Earlforward when it comes to a struggle over the question of going into hospital, and he provides the destination, offstage, to which Elsie moves when the finishing touch is given to the portrait by the logical and necessary double death; a destination which we never see, but which emanates waves of its own atmosphere into the miser's house, waves which have almost the importance of a character in the story. The doctor's house represents normality; since there is a child and a pet animal there, it also represents life as opposed to the atmosphere of death in the bookshop; since it is where Joe is employed, it also represents salvation for Elsie.

So many people have commented on the narrowness of *Riceyman Steps* that it is worth remarking, briefly, on the extreme importance of the double plot in the book. The value of double plots in the drama is nowadays fairly well realized, owing no doubt to Mr Empson's classic essay, but there is room for more recognition of its usefulness to the novelist. Elsie, the one *living* character at the centre of the plot, is occupied during most of the book in two ways; her body is working for the Earlforwards, and her soul is waiting for the return of Joe; in other words, she is the spectator of death, and she is waiting for the recommencement of life. The union of death (Mr and Mrs Earlforward) is in contrast to, and the enemy of, the union of life (Joe and Elsie). In terms of plot, they are related by the fact that Joe's homicidal outbreak, which was the cause of his decision to absent himself for a year, arose from the fact that Elsie was made to work overtime for Violet, and could not spend the evening with him on his birthday; and later by the simultaneous presence of Joe and Earlforward in the house, both ill and both tended by Elsie. The handling of these two plots is, in my opinion, Bennett's finest technical achievement. The Joe-Elsie plot reaches a climax of tension in Book IV, cap. V, when Elsie spends the last hour of the year in an agony of half-expectant anxiety, and Joe does not come. Then the Earlforward plot moves strongly into the foreground; Nemesis overtakes the doomed couple, and the reader forgets completely about Joe because Elsie herself forgets. Violet, dying, is carried

off to hospital, Earlforward himself is dying, and Elsie is in command. She sends Mrs Perkins's boy on an errand to the hospital; and just as he is about to depart –

> 'Your Joe's been asking for you to-night,' he said suddenly.
> 'My Joe!' She stood still, then leaned against the railings.

Riceyman Steps is not the best novel Bennett wrote, but it is the most brilliant. A man of fifty-six, whose strength had previously lain in the honest, leisurely chronicling of normal life, suddenly forsook his usual line and produced, not a novel at all, but a disguised poem; for a poem it is, with its surges of half-revealed emotion conveyed by imagery, with its crests and troughs of rhythm. Knowing Bennett, one looks back for a precursor among his early failures and half-successes; lighting, inevitably, on *Anna of the Five Towns*. That fierceness, that intensity and concentration, would have marked the earlier novel had it succeeded. But Bennett had not yet learnt the secret of such writing. It is characteristic of him that he laboured in pursuit of that secret for twenty-one years; and no less characteristic that finally, unmistakably, he found it out.

V

If Bennett is to be placed in literary history, I should say that he came at the end of that branch of English fiction which is begun by Defoe. The two so obviously counterbalance each other; the one inaugurating that particular kind of precision, the other bringing it to its highest point (and at the same time flogging it to death). Both were journalists who disciplined themselves into novelists by long and strenuous apprenticeship; both were products of the mercantile middle class – that class which was just reaching its full stature in Defoe's day, and just beginning to dwindle into something smaller and shabbier in Bennett's. And their minds are extraordinarily similar; brisk, entirely mundane, tinged with Philistinism, strong rather than fine. They have the same sense of humour, chiefly manifest in a kind of dry, deflating irony: compare 'She had caught small-pox and died of it, thus losing a good situation' with

> My good gipsy mother, for some of her worthy actions no doubt, happened in process of time to be hanged: and as this fell out something too soon for me to be perfected in the strolling trade, the parish where I was left . . . took care of me (*Captain Singleton*).

Bennett is richer, of course, but only (one feels) because he has two centuries more of European fiction to draw on. If Defoe had been able to read Flaubert and Dostoievsky, it is absurd to suppose that he would not have profited by them, at least to the extent of basing his stories on something more than the simple profit-and-loss attitude to life. Another parallel, of course, lies in the completeness with which nine-tenths of Defoe's output has withered away, leaving him represented by about four books.

There is, however, one important difference between the two. Defoe is fascinated by life, by the variety of things that can happen to a man; Bennett is numbed at the ultimate monotony of the pattern. In spite of what may happen on the surface, he seems to be thinking, human lives vary so little, so pitifully little. Even at his most light-hearted he seldom writes a page in which we cannot hear the distant clank of the chain, reminding us that, after all, these people are prisoners. Even *The Card*, one of the funniest books ever written, has its Widow Hullins. Look at her:

> The old woman sat at the fireplace, 'all bunched up,' as they say in the Five Towns. The only fire in the room, however, was in the short clay pipe which she smoked; Mrs Hullins was one of the last old women in Bursley to smoke a cutty; and even then the pipe was considered coarse, and cigarettes were coming into fashion – though not in Chapel Alley. Mrs Hullins smoked her pipe, and thought about nothing in particular. Occasionally some vision of the past floated through her drowsy brain. She had lived in that residence for over forty years. She had brought up eleven children and two husbands there. She had coddled thirty-five grandchildren there, and given instruction to some half-dozen daughters-in-law. She had known midnights when she could scarcely move in that residence without disturbing somebody asleep. Now she was alone in it. She never left it, except to fetch water from the pump in the square. She had seen a lot of life, and she was tired.

It is a not particularly profound or far-reaching comment on life, but it seems to me to be valid; the kind of comment that can be properly made by the realistic novel. And is it so certain, after all, that Virginia Woolf's criticism has really disposed of that *genre* for ever? True, it must have been a Magna Carta when she first uttered it:

> Admitting the vagueness which afflicts all criticism of novels, let us hazard the opinion that for us at this moment the form of fiction most in vogue more often misses than secures the thing we seek. Whether we call it life or spirit, truth or reality, this, the essential thing, has moved off, or on, and refuses to be contained any longer in such ill-fitting vestments as we provide. Nevertheless, we go on perseveringly, conscientiously, constructing our two and thirty chapters after a design which more and more ceases to resemble the vision in our minds. So much of the enormous labour of providing the solidity, the likeness to life, of the story is not merely labour thrown away but labour misplaced to the extent of obscuring and blotting out the light of the conception. The writer seems constrained, not by his own free will but by some powerful and unscrupulous tyrant who has him in thrall, to provide a plot, to provide comedy, tragedy, love interest, and an air of probability embalming the whole so impeccable that if all his figures were to come to life they would find themselves dressed down to the last button of their coats in the fashion of the hour. The tyrant is obeyed; the novel is done to a turn. But sometimes, more and more often as time goes by, we suspect a momentary doubt, a spasm of rebellion, as the pages fill themselves in the customary way. Is life like this? Must novels be like this? (*Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown*, 1924).

What this boils down to is a plea for a new convention, one that would involve a keener recognition that 'life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end'. And several new conventions have duly been tried out, and found to have their own limitations. *The Years* is an attempt in the same direction as *The Old Wives' Tale*, but can we honestly say that it is equally successful? In stressing the falsity of the accumulative realist method, Mrs Woolf was not, one feels, allowing sufficient importance to the work done by the reader. The right kind of reader can extract a rich poetic experience from the heaviest and most matter-of-fact compilation, *so long as it is honest;* in fact it is easier to respond richly to this kind than to the overlush imaginative novel that provides your poetry for you.

And, in any case, Bennett would have been the last to deny that conventions in fiction come and go. One of his essays, written in 1910 – it is to be found in *Books and Persons*, 1917 – is almost prophetic in this respect. He is discussing modernism in

the arts generally, and though he takes little enough pleasure in it he admits that it sharpens and strengthens his instinct for quality. '. . . a regular contemplation of these pictures [i.e. those of Matisse and Vallotton] inspires a weariness of all other pictures that are not absolutely first rate.' Then follows a statement on his own art that seems to me of great importance.

> I have permitted myself to suspect that supposing some writer were to come along and do in words what these men have done in paint, I might conceivably be disgusted with nearly the whole of modern fiction, and I might have to begin again. This awkward experience will in all probability not happen to me, but it might happen to a younger writer than me. At any rate it is a fine thought. The average critic always calls me, both in praise and dispraise, 'photographic'; and I always rebut the epithet with disdain, because in the sense meant by the average critic I am not photographic. But supposing that in a deeper sense I were? Supposing a young writer turned up and forced me, and some of my contemporaries – us who fancy ourselves a bit – to admit that we had been worrying ourselves unduly with inessentials, that we had been worrying ourselves to achieve infantile realisms? Well, that day would be a great and disturbing day – for us.

This says everything that Mrs Woolf said, and a good deal more strongly. We all know the subsequent history; four years after that essay was written, Joyce began the composition of *Ulysses*, and the heyday of the 'infantile realisms' was at an end. But Bennett's anticipatory tribute was generous, and we can be generous to him in return. For now, surely, his period of enforced quarantine is over, his passport is in order, and he should be allowed to land at the harbour of English literature.

THE AMERICAN PAPER-BACK BOOK

Geoffrey Wagner

Someone Is Bleeding – Strip For Violence – Tomcat in Tights: certainly American pocket, or reprint, novels (of which the above are some current titles) should not be judged by their jackets. It is true that if you walk into any drug or cigar store in America you are confronted with a stand of paper-backed pocket novels, mainly priced at 25c. each, on the jackets of nearly all of which some Juno in a *négligé* plunges about, pursued by a bruiser toting tommygun or bull-whip. But this means nothing. At least four pocket-book publishers (Avon, New American Library, Pocket Books, Permabooks) have produced in this format avant-garde literary magazines, and New American Library claim that their *New World Writing* has a sale of nearly a quarter of a million copies per issue. Ballantine and other reprint houses have issued difficult modern anthologies. And of course the possibilities of the literary miscellany bought by the masses are enormous, as we ourselves have seen with John Lehmann's admirable *New Writing*. For this kind of magazine can be far more editorially adventurous than the 'personal' or 'Tendenz' periodical, and it can have a vital influence. Jacket and blurb, then, should invariably be discounted by the English visitor to the book rack of the American drug store to-day. They should be, and are, ignored. 'Ripe and restless, she was trouble in calico' may describe the novel of a Nobel Prize winner, while Orwell's *Burmese Days* was sub-titled in reprint – 'A Novel of Lust and Hate.' *New Voices*, an advanced magazine of experimental writing from the New School in New York, has 'Vital – Powerful – Frank' as the lure on its cover. At least no one can quarrel with the intention, that of getting good literature to the masses. And in any case, since nearly every reprint in America is decorated by some writhing blonde, the reader is really back where he started, to selection on the basis of what may be *inside* the book.

This commentary sounds cheerful enough so far, but there is another aspect of the reprint phenomenon sweeping

the publishing scene in America now, and it is one interesting to us if the same tendencies are to be reproduced here. Nearly every novel submitted to an American publisher to-day is going to be read with one eye on its possible sale to a pocket reprint house. Some New York publishers are said to slip their manuscripts surreptitiously across to a couple of reprint firms for a report on its cigar store possibilities before making their verdict. As literary agencies are now doing the same thing, this makes for some incidental embarrassment, and it certainly works against the English novel which tends on the whole to carry less of the sensational qualities demanded by the drug store public. Henry Green, for instance, a writer, and an accessible one, with a very high prestige value in America, is not yet sold to reprint houses to my knowledge.

There are usually two types of reprint sales, although it is difficult to generalize here, since the situation is changing monthly. Publishers hope to sell their run-of-the-mill short novel for some figure between $2,000 and $8,000 to a reprint house. This will be shared fifty/fifty with the author and is specifically an 'advance' on royalties, but in reality few reprint royalties exceed the original down-payment. For this reason publishers naturally bargain for as big an outright payment at first as they can get. If a publisher can sell five thousand copies of a novel in hard backs, and then interest a reprint firm to pay, say, $5,000, he will probably just about break even on his costs.

The second kind of reprint sale, now increasingly rare, concerns the live best-seller. To acquire this type of title a reprint firm may pay a large sum, provided it is a 'live' work, i.e. one likely to appeal to the itinerant drug store public. Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead* sold for a reputed $40,000, James Jones's *From Here to Eternity* for $80,000. But it is reported that writers like Daphne du Maurier, or Elizabeth Goudge, or Frances Parkinson Keyes, do not fetch such high figures, for these writers exhaust their largely feminine readership in the hard back or book-club edition, and from experience reprint houses have learnt not to bid high for them. With the lusty, busty type of best-seller, the publisher faces therefore somewhat of a quandary. He must either gamble on his trash-ridden historical being a lively best-seller and, when it is, demand a big price, or he can take no risks and sell the book to the reprint house in manuscript for a much smaller sum, perhaps under

$8,000. In which case the reprint firm stands to sneak a lot of his profit.

As I write, however, the whole reprint market in America is changing. Reprint houses are now offering what they call 'realistic' advances for hard-back novels because they have found that authors will write directly for them. Gold Medal Books started the trend in 'paper-back originals' and published new novels direct from Taylor Caldwell, MacKinlay Kantor, and others. Avon Books are bringing out an original by Richard Wright. Lion, Popular Library, and Dell followed suit and all now have an original list. For these novels the authors receive tempting advances, none of which they lose to a third party (the hard-back publisher). Royalties are generally one cent a book up to 150,000 copies and 1½ cents afterwards. Ballantine Books are trying simultaneous editions with hard-back publishers. Of course young novelists are not at first attracted to publish originally with reprint firms, because they are little reviewed in this format; but it does seem that more and more are coming round to it for the money and for the excellent introduction it gives to an audience who would otherwise remain ignorant of them. I myself have published with both hard-back and reprint publishers in America, as well as with a firm printing paper-back originals, and I can vouch for the fact that it is sometimes really difficult to refuse the offers of the last.

The attempt to feature original novels, however, does not seem to have succeeded in its intention, which was surely to replace, as far as possible, the hard-back book. If he could get his novel reviewed, the paper-back publisher felt that he was performing the same function as any other publisher. There was the rumour of a San Francisco bookstore handling *only* paper-bound books. This may seem an unlikely bid to the English reader, but it is undeniable that the American masses tend to regard a hard-back book as something of a luxury. There is not, that is, quite the appeal of permanency in a book which one meets in England, so that the reprint publisher could really gamble on these originals. Recently, for example, a theatre manager in New York showing the film of *The High and the Mighty* offered to give his first hundred custc mers a copy each of a 'de luxe edition' of the novel. The publishers, knowing nothing about any such edition, were curious and despatched a representative. The 'de luxe edition' turned out to be the

ard-cover, as opposed to the paper-bound reprint edition.
r, in this connection, was the audience for paper books
d to be interested in the newness or originality of the
ling they selected for train journey or subway ride. The
ginal paper-back novel has sold, by and large, at about the
ne rate as the reprint. A useful feature of this phenomenon
been the fact that unknown writers can compete fairly
nly in this market. Apart from a few names, like Hemingway,
drug store public has not heard of the majority of novelists
rent. Thus good reading slips into their pockets sometimes
hazard. Indeed, Delmore Schwartz, in the *New York Times*,
s made the nice suggestion that the mass drug store audience
ke the Elizabethan theatre audience, thirsting for violence
sex and getting them, often enough, in the envelope of
llent literature.

he effect of this paper book activity on the staple of the
lishing industry, the retail bookseller, is discouraging; it
aired recently at a convention of the American Booksellers
ociation at Atlantic City. Here it was the contention of Mr
tor Weybright, the intelligent Chairman of the New
erican Library, perhaps the most culturally enterprising of
pocket-book firms, that paper-bound books have widely
ulated all reading in America and that they succeed in
sidizing the publishing industry as a whole. Paper reprints,
pleaded, were now providing royalty fees of $5 millions a
r, divided between original publishers and authors. He took
view that stocking of paper-bound books attracted new
d unlikely customers into the bookshops and took up little
esmanship in their service: indeed he called them 'self-
vice merchandise . . . using otherwise dead space in a book-
op.'

The booksellers do not seem to share this view. They argue
at it takes as much of their time and energy to sell a 25c.
cket-book as it does to sell a $5 or $6 item of non-fiction, or
$3.50 novel. In fact I believe that the first attempts to get
ap editions – the Simon and Schuster dollar paper editions,
example – into the bookshops at all met with opposition,
d with understandable opposition too. In passing, this was a
incipal criticism made by some booksellers at the convention
the book clubs (there are now more than sixty of these in
merica and they act, after all, very much like a postal book-
op); Mr Lewis F. Lengfeld, President of Books Inc. of San

Francisco, pointed out that by creaming off a number of expensive items, such as the Columbia Encyclopedia or Churchill's memoirs, as dividends, the book clubs were taking away the bread-and-butter stock of the book stores. As Mr Harold Guinzberg, President of the Viking Press, observed, 'You can't run a retail bookstore if the unit of sale is too small.' He instanced a possible compromise in the paper-backed field, Doubleday's Anchor Books, paper-bound books of permanent worth which sell for an intermediary price – Huizinga's *The Waning of the Middle Ages* and Dr Leavis's *The Great Tradition* sell for 95c. each as Anchor Books, Kitto's *Greek Tragedy* for $1.25. Knopf have now started a line of this type also.

The argument is tossed to and fro but nearly every speaker at the convention seemed agreed on one point, on the vast *potential* market for books in America. In spite of this huge possible audience the bookstores appear to be in sad shape. Mr Lengfeld said:

> Let's not have any false pride. The retail bookstore, in this 300-billion-dollar economy, is practically defunct. The little that's left is almost a nuisance to publishers – a little too much to ignore, and much too little to do any good. . . . Another few years and the school teachers will be taking their classes on long excursions to see the last few surviving examples of a real bookstore.

The English auditor of many of these Jeremiads, meanwhile, could not avoid wondering if the whole American publishing industry is not somewhat greedy for gains. Sales are what is known as 'soft' these days and publishers still remember the boom reading years of the war and just after. Thus, for instance, we are told in Mr Bennett Cerf's column in *The Saturday Review*, that some reprint firms are just holding on to existence with their fingernails – *Time* reports that three reprint publishers suspended publication during the past summer months – but in contrast to this information we learn elsewhere that last year most of them announced dividends of 100 per cent or over.

The effect on the author in this problem is, however, parlous. Immediate profit by the sale of subsidiary rights is undoubtedly what even the most generous and liberal-minded American publisher is looking for to-day. Referring to the early economic debits in publishing a presently remunerative writer like

Steinbeck, even the temperate Mr Guinzberg remarked:

> The question is how long a publisher can go on publishing five unsuccessful books by a new author whose books are not taken by the clubs or not reprinted. Will publishers be able to go on doing this sort of publishing if they are more and more dependent on subsidiary rights? I think they are less likely to do that.

The reader should remember that this statement was made by the President of the Viking Press, publisher of some of the most serious of contemporary fiction. The head of Dodd, Mead has not hesitated to say that first novels will soon be 'almost impossible' to publish. Another leading New York publisher has confessed: 'We are aiming frankly at the book-club type of book. And that means that we simply haven't got room on our list now for the little volume of verse, or the first novel.' Basil Woon, in his recent book on American publishing, tells us that publishers in the U S A buy manuscripts 'that can't possibly lose.' These are platitudes, and American publishers always immediately reply that their doors are kept wide open to a new author of genuine talent. The point is that there are, and will continue to be, contemporary writers of significance who will never be taken by a book club and never sold to reprint firms.

The tremendous boom, now receding, in paper-bound book publishing in America has obvious dangers, which I personally believe are going to be reproduced in England in the years to come. It is all very well to point to copies of *New World Writing* in the book slot-machines in railway stations or even in shoe-shine parlours, but pressure is being put on the fount of the industry, the author, by inadequately interpreted mass demands. 257 million copies of pocket books were sold in America last year and of this output nearly 40 per cent consisted of mysteries and Westerns. About twenty houses were responsible for the entire publication of these books and many of these houses are owned by, or affiliated with, hard-back publishers (such as Simon and Schuster's Pocket Books or Doubleday's Permabooks – there is no imputation of joint editorial policy intended here).* That the hard-back publisher now keeps his

* Since writing this, a merger has been announced between Pocket Books and Permabooks, the latter being assimilated by the former. At present writing it is said that both imprints will remain, but the general effect will be a reduction of titles in the paper-back field.

eye more and more on the requirements of the reprint firms cannot help but come through to the author. The new, struggling author will be strongly tempted to keep *his* eye, also, on the reprint potential in his first novel. I do not suppose by this that he will necessarily be tempted to inject salacious matter, but that over the years a certain conformity will be induced which is, in its way, equally meretricious. The reprint publishers have certain qualifications for a novel, after all: these do not invariably include sex, though some reprint firms seem to pour out nothing but lipsticked trash, like Venus Books (which are what they sound). Any literary agency will tell an author these qualifications, and they will gradually be reflected in the trade lists.

It is, finally, to the attitude towards books in the reprint phenomenon that the serious young author must take exception. For the average reprint novel is treated like a magazine in America, indeed is handled by the same distributing machinery in many cities. (Note that even Mr Weybright refers to books as 'merchandise.') Each week the reprint firms pile batch after batch of novels into the drug stores, with the result that few titles are allowed to show sales potentiality. Apart from a few perennials, like Mickey Spillane (whose *Opera Omnia* may be seen everywhere), no author gets a real chance of word-of-mouth sale in this format. He is there to-day, gone to-morrow. All he is permitted is for a transient public to have an immediate take-it-or-leave-it choice of his latest book, and in this the cover endeavours to be influential. If I buy a paper-bound novel in my neighbourhood drug store to-day, read it and recommend it to a friend in two weeks time, that friend will not be able to get the drug store assistant to re-order the book. It is books, not authors, that are being sold in America's drug stores. This is a considerable pity because, fundamentally, the reprint business offers both author and publisher alike a challenging opportunity of meeting a wide public, not merely of making money out of them. Indeed a vital opportunity is perhaps being missed.

BARABBAS WAS A PUBLISHER

Vincent Brome

The present contradictions which bedevil British publishing make it difficult to determine whether that traditional blend of literature and commerce which has been brought to such a special pitch in some British houses, can survive intact. Already the emphasis has shifted in some companies. Something that will last and sell has given place to something that will blatantly and boldly sell. But contradictions multiply.

There is no disputing the fact that the total turnover in British publishing for 1953, £44,892,291, set a new record; that the number of new books and editions published in 1950 was 6,000 more than in the United States; that when a Gallup poll asked the question – Are you now reading any books or novels – the answer 'yes' came from 55 per cent in Britain, 43 per cent. in Norway, 40 per cent in Canada, and 21 per cent in the United States.

These figures are meaningless without taking account of costs. Sir Stanley Unwin has given a typical account for a moderately successful first novel published in 1939 and a similar novel published in 1950. In effect the cost of composition increased between 1939 and 1950 two and a half times, paper three times, and author's royalties three times. By 1954 printing had gone up 145 per cent, paper 300 per cent, and binding well over 100 per cent.

All this would be of less significance if the price of books had mounted at the same pace, but selling prices show only a 40 to 60 per cent increase. The publisher appears at first sight to have borne the brunt himself, and it is easy to dismiss his troubles as the inevitable consequence of a misplaced philanthropy. If he believes that Berdyaev's animadversions on the mechanistic society should be brought to the public for the same price as a good British meal, and such a meal should continue to be fed through the libraries to hundreds of fresh minds without anyone adding more than a penny to the original payment, well and good. But lofty commotions of this

kind do not alone condition price. The publisher is afraid that if the book cost 15*s.* or 18*s.* instead of 12*s.* 6*d.*, half his audience might deliberately go hungry, and the attempt to recoup his growing costs by increasing the price of the book would merely inhibit, if not seriously undermine, his sales. The vicious circle then becomes complete.

Within this broad situation lie many subtleties. In the past British publishers, like others, made money from reprints. Running off a second, third and fourth edition cost far less than the first. But now the prohibitive cost of paper, machining and printing has cut this margin considerably. The real fear behind these growing complications is that further aggravations may lead straight back to the dark days of the nineteen-thirties, when many first novels in Britain sold only two or three hundred copies, most novels were published at a loss, and only houses with a good 'backlist' (books already published which continued to sell without promotion) easily survived.

Between 1931 and 1939 twenty-one well-known book publishers went out of business. Since the end of the war no major publishing house has succumbed, but Secker and Warburg have come to a financial arrangement with Heinemann, many mushroom companies flourishing in the war have vanished, and rising costs are pressing hard everywhere. On the other hand a well-known publishing house stated in *The Times* for April 28th, 1954, that 'the consolidated nett profits for 1953 amounted to £43,408 (compared with £23,324 for the previous year)'. It is clear that profits have not fallen for some companies. Similarly Cyrus Brooks has said, 'The profits disclosed by printers and paper merchants leave little doubt that these price increases are greater than are necessary'.

Not the large but the small-scale publishing house tends to suffer under the present dispensation, which at once presents a paradox. If a number of small companies are hard-pressed, a larger number of authors dwell daily in the shadows of extinction. To relieve the publishers' situation the Publishers Association has suggested sharing the subsidiary rights of new authors. Proverbially dog does not eat dog, but this cannibalistic equation becomes complete when hard-pressed, new and sometimes penniless authors are asked to surrender part of their subsidiary rights to succour equally hard-pressed, perhaps new but to some extent capitalized publishers.

True, publishers do bear the cost of promotion for unknown authors, but one has to remember the risks taken by a young writer in the course of producing his first book. He may spend a year, maybe more, in the course of which, as an unknown, he must support himself. Frequently he has no capital like a publisher, and no publisher will pay him while he writes his first book. He risks are rather greater than the publisher's when he faces not merely penury, bankruptcy, and a way of life so restricted as sometimes to threaten starvation, but no payment whatever for work undertaken.

Alternatively, continual rejection may lead years later to payment equivalent to that of a typist. Moreover, he has, in the beginning, one book by which to stand or fall; the publisher has several. He needs every penny of all rights to provide him with enough capital to make his risks roughly equivalent to those of the publisher.

Clearly other solutions must be found and perhaps they are not so elusive as the more pessimistic seem to think. It is worth while, in the first place, pressing the Inland Revenue to permit all undistributed profits ploughed back into any publishing house to go tax free. No precedent is involved. The principle had widespread application under the Labour Government with stimulating results.

Second, the whole question of jackets needs investigation. Does anyone know whether the fall in the cost of production would be overwhelmed by the fall in sales if the sometimes garish, sometimes vulgarized packaging of literature were abandoned? Where second and third printings are undertaken for a book already in demand, surely jackets are no longer necessary?

Far more important – we are now confronted with the prospect of television-advertising, and however remote parlour games may be from literature, the threat to certain categories of the novel is sufficiently real to demand a realistic approach. No one *wants* to vulgarize books with advertisements, but there is a discreet method, at one remove, which could yield revenues to hard-pressed publishers without lowering the quality of first editions. By restricting advertising to reprints, second and cheap editions, the initial shock of desecration might be softened. Wherever economic imperatives demand bolder action, even first editions might succumb, but clearly the type of advertising would need stringent censorship. Goodwill

advertising from the great trusts is not incompatible with good taste. Quack medicines and football pools are.

Michael Joseph once recommended the abolition of remainders

> which have for many years been a curse in the book trade, just as the accumulation of second-hand cars once bedevilled the motor-car industry. If I had my way all books would be compulsorily pulped two years after publication unless a stipulated number of copies had been sold by the publisher within the preceding twelve months.

Remainders are no more important than the problem of over-production. It is argued that if demand becomes highly sensitive to a further rise in prices, and sales fall, then a number of publishers and booksellers will go to the wall, and eventually fewer books will be published. The brutal economics of survival make fewer books, in one sense, an advantage. The wisdom of publishing simultaneously ten full-dress books on the M C C's cricket tour in Australia, each book not merely competing with but threatening the very existence of others, has been questioned. A little foresight, planning, and co-operation might have produced five books only, selling double the number. At once the glimmering spectre of rationalization appears, and a large part of the publishing world recoils in varying degrees of distaste and horror. But the spectre has to be faced. Already a London Clearing House has been established and was used in 1950/51 by 375 booksellers and 222 publishers, the first step in the early phases of rationalization. In 1950 the Clearing House dealt with 140,000 accounts involving a total of £2,350,000 and its turnover was steadily increasing. Instead of settling their accounts with each publisher separately, booksellers paid a single monthly cheque through the Clearing House. The Book Centre, another step in rationalization, served seventeen publishers. It pooled not only the accounts of these publishers but the distribution of their books.

Has America anything to teach us? To judge by Geoffrey Wagner's article, the thundering cannon-pulse of American enterprise has broken open new markets with an audacity characteristic of American commerce. If, in the process, literature has come to resemble a commodity, the inherent laws of unbridled competition may reach their logical conclusion and encourage the distribution of free gifts (chewing

gum with every copy of Plato) in an effort to outdo the continuously more extravagant efforts of rival publishing houses. Whether injecting new life into publishing at such a cost can be justified becomes questionable. That a blonde with voluptuous outlines should escort a reader into the thoughts of Bertrand Russell seems such a falsification of literature that one wonders why a man who expects the Conquest of Happiness to involve wholesale seduction should ever pick up another blonde-bound book again. As Wagner says, when every reprint carries the appropriate lure, discrimination is forced to open the book, which may render half the blonde population superfluous, but does draw attention to the contents.

It is no part of this article to examine the ethics of an unrestrained profit motive, or the worthwhileness of those characteristics it may impose on any culture; but clearly any scale of values which equates the highest profit with the most desirable form of success may run riot and produce the pathological examples of book-titling which Wagner gives – *Someone is Bleeding – Strip for Violence – Tomcat in Tights.* On this principle Allen Lane should release Somerset Maugham's *Rain* under the title *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, with a lady clad in nothing but white knee boots striding through a passionate downpour. It would probably sell a million copies and find its way into a quite new readership: but however remote philosophical values may seem from the facts of publishing economics, means indisputably qualify ends. Teleologically *'Tis a Pity* carries conviction. Ethically it invades the nature of literature. An interpretation which may not belong to Maugham is introduced from the outset.

Sir Allen Lane's modesty seems not merely better acclimatized to Britain, but better suited to the ends of literature. Publishing may be commercial, but it is not a machine for generating higher profits at any cost. Disinterested devotion to literature with a reasonable return for risk, work or capital involved, is an ideal not unrealized by some companies in this country.

That the widest 'paper-public' remains open, without importing extravagances from America, is clear from Penguin books. There remains this rub. 'Paper-back' authors in this country cannot hope to receive the 2,000–8,000 dollar advances which appear to abound in the States. Undoubtedly the lush statistics of American paper-back publishing lighten the

author's lot, if they do not demoralize him and drive him in search of the plot or biography which meets the demands of the new – one hesitates to use the word tradition. I have never heard of a paper-back company in the States which was prepared to launch – as say Messrs Macmillan, Longmans or Kegan Paul – a book likely to sell only a few hundred copies every year over a number of years, with little motive other than belief in the significance of the book.

Penguins apart, the resistance to paper-backs in this country is considerable. Gollancz once experimented with the simultaneous production of cloth and paper editions of Margery Fry's *Arms of the Law*, the cloth at 12*s.* 6*d.*, the paper 8*s.* 6*d.* Since he has not repeated the experiment it is doubtful whether it was highly successful, but one question persists – if Penguins succeed, why not others? The answer is complicated. Penguins had their difficult days when it was said that only the support of Woolworths helped them through, but now they have built up an extraordinarily efficient marketing organization and so consolidated their hold on the public that it would need a masterly competitor seriously to challenge them.

Paper-backs do not offer any simple panacea to cloth publishers. There remain other solutions. The interminable series of well-bred books about famous novels, novelists or men of letters which recur perenially from one press or another, represent the spent end of a traditional cul-de-sac whereby a blend of biography and criticism is periodically regurgitated on the public. (I would except Longmans' excellent series from this charge.) Clearly creative publishing must take the place of traditional publishing in any general attempt at resuscitation. It does not require a man of genius to conceive a new series of books integrated by a common idea, at once stimulating, original and capable of arresting the attention of a book-bemused public. The technique is open to the widest realization. I hope I do not appear to be encouraging my grandmother to repeat her traditional function. Certainly this approach needs not merely the conception of original ideas, but detailed briefing and the discovery of authors capable of carrying out and responding to the creative intensity which those ideas generate.

Meanwhile the public libraries brood over the publishing scene, largely insensitive to its troubles. Sheer statistics do not support the extravagant place they occupy in the minds of some concerned with the fate of publishing. Taking account of their ten per cent discount, in the year 1949–50 they contributed only £1,600,000 of the £25,000,000 domestic sales. Yet that ten per cent discount could mean a considerable amount to small scale publishers and there is a case for abolishing it and proportionately increasing the grants to public libraries.

Narrowed to more exact terms one dominating problem comes to this. The burden of launching and promoting new authors threatens to introduce serious paralysis if security demands restrict experiment with new writers; and here the Author's Bank arises.

If ever the State, disembodied and didactic, gave sustenance to young writers – which God forbid – we should need to cast some magic wall around the imagination to protect it from the quick corrosions of propaganda, indoctrination and the appalling fate which overtook the waggish Zoschenko in another place; and if the State answered the voice in the writing wilderness it would need to be economic and not ideological, a division many believe to be impossible. But it is not the State pure and simple which can help here.

There already exist considerable depressed areas in writing as unlovely as anything seen in publishing, and if the problem is neither new nor completely neglected, the most enlightened attempt to solve it comes from the land which produced paper-back extravagances. The Transatlantic Awards made by the Rockefeller Institute subsidized some promising talent in this country. A committee under the chairmanship of Professor Allardyce Nicoll, including James Bridie, Ivor Brown, Bonamy Dobree, Ifor Evans, Louis McNeice and A. E. Morgan, ploughed heroically through thousands of manuscripts and awarded prizes for critical and creative writing of £300 each. The £300 was expected to give the young writer a year's grace to follow his leading wherever it took him. Sid Chaplain was one beneficiary.

But why give a writer money? Why not a secondary or part-time job with sufficient leisure to nurture the least likely talent? The point was put to some distinguished men of letters some years ago and their choice of the ideal secondary job was illuminating. 'I would like to be a stationmaster on a small country branch line (single track)', wrote John Betjeman. 'A rich wife,' said Cyril Connolly, and C. Day Lewis '. . . for

the novelist who needs a wide range and diversity of personal contacts, medicine, the law or commercial travelling . . .'

The two-way tradition, a high one, made Spinoza a lens polisher, Fielding a police magistrate, Stendhal a consul, Trollope a Post Office official. In modern times the Civil Service has nourished big and small writers, but the Civil Service is no longer a sinecure, and without Angus Wilson's ability to generate five thousand words on Sunday (Sunday-writer instead of painter), the double harness is liable to kill off less resilient types, or to force them to write under duress, bringing tired nerves to a task which requires a blaze of nervous energy. Men of the calibre of Shakespeare, Tolstoy, Shaw and Wells will continue to make themselves felt against the worst adversity; men of genius, even of tremendous talent are rarely overwhelmed by environment. It is the writer of considerable talent, granted his own peculiar vision but not completely possessed by it and lacking the toughness to survive interminable frustrations, who may go down in the half-time treadmill.

The patron is largely dead, publishers chary of risking money on uncertain new talent, and secondary jobs too fertile in frustration and exhaustion. There remains the Author's Bank. We have an Arts Council, financially fed by the Treasury, which does sterling work in every field except that of literature. Why should writing be neglected? Perhaps because for writing something more subtle than the Arts Council is required.

Supposing an Author's Bank were created, governed by a body similar to the Arts Council and similarly subsidized, in the beginning, by the Treasury. Any young writer who fancied he had something to say could then submit the first two chapters and synopsis of any book to one of three committees – Creative Fiction, Poetry, or General Literature. Ideally each committee would cover a cross section of writers, publishers, publishers' readers and critics. The committee would decide by a majority vote which would-be author deserved a loan from the Bank. The loan, *not grant*, would last from one to two years, and be sufficient to provide a reasonable standard of living, varying according to circumstance. Any completed work of which the committee approved would be recommended with all the weight of the Author's Bank to a number of publishers and the Bank would set out to recoup its money in two ways. First it would take the normal agent's ten per cent on all sales of books which it had sponsored, and second, if the author failed to complete the book he had undertaken to

vrite, he would be expected to repay the loan over a number of years from whatever other job he filled. Along these lines what began as an idealistic attempt to succour literature, might turn out to be a highly successful commercial venture. It would also overcome one of the main troubles of subsidizing authors: buying the leisure necessary to most people attempting serious creative work, without destroying their morale. When the artistic temperament only becomes industrious at its own dictates, giving a writer grants may merely support him in idleness. A repayable loan is another matter.

Whatever new economics enter the writing and publishing world in the next ten years, the writer remains at the heart of the matter, and privileged though he may be to exercise special skills at the risk of extreme poverty, they are, in the last resort, very special skills which do not flourish – however romantics protest otherwise – by any invasion of the financial terms under which he writes. Incensed authors once threw the term 'Barabbas' at certain publishers; it would need a very clever publisher to deserve the name to-day. Within living memory no author has achieved the distinction.

BOOK NOTES

ELIZABETH BARRETT TO MISS MITFORD. Edited by Betty Miller. (John Murray. 25s.)

These hitherto unpublished letters, written during the period of Elizabeth Barrett's illness leading up to her marriage with Robert Browning, make an important collection.

The personality reflected is one of charm, courage, and intelligence. The letters are obviously feminine, and of their period, with the attendant qualities to be expected. They are emotional, but never gushing, and contain touches of intimate domestic detail such as a man would not have given us. As documents of a time when you went by train from London to Basingstoke to get the Exeter coach, they are fascinating; and they should make good, if not always complimentary, reading to the inhabitants of Torquay. Once (p. 208) we are given a striking insight into what the new invention of the Daguerrotype-portraiture meant to a woman who loved people.

We have many exquisite literary comments, springing direct from the poetic consciousness, with no evidence of sex. Here are a few: of Crabbe – 'as if a portrait painter painted our skeletons' (p. 5); of Byron – 'We are apt to judge the man of genius by his own ideal and to apportion our severity by his eminence' (p. 77); of Shelley – 'that high, and yet too low, elemental poet, who froze in cold glory between Heaven and earth' (p. 82); of Keats, quoting but probably improving on, the conversation of R. H. Horne – 'He was already bending over his grave in sweet and solemn contemplation, when the satyrs *hoofed* him into it' (p. 93); and of Christ – 'Christ's religion is essentially poetry, poetry glorified' (p. 103). Elizabeth Barrett was an acute perceiver of the best in contemporary letters, rightly finding in Tennyson 'a higher degree of philosophical thought than the critical world wotteth of' (p. 117), and brilliantly characterizing her future husband as a 'master in clenched passion . . . concentrated passion . . . burning through the metallic fissures of language' (p. 172), even though to *act* one of his works was rather 'like reading a riddle-book right through without stopping to guess the answers' (p. 179). Perhaps the finest comment is on Carlyle:

> He does not write pure English – no, nor quite pure German – nor pure Greek. . . . But he *writes thoughts*. . . . There is something wonderful in this struggling forth into sound of a contemplation bred high above dictionaries and talkers. . . . The sounds do come – strangely indeed, and in unwrought masses, but still with a certain confused music and violent eloquence, which prove the power of *thought* over *sound* (p. 116).

Has Carlyle's greatness ever been more crisply summarized?

Such insights flower from generosity. Elizabeth Barrett was indeed one, as she herself admits, whose 'organ of veneration is as large as a Welsh mountain' (p. 50). She can, however, be critical, sometimes with a happy turn of humour, as when she writes of Dr Johnson as 'this great lumbering book-case of a man' (p. 106), or remarks on the Bishop of Exeter 'dealing damnation round the Church on Christmas day' (p. 61). Sir Robert Peel comes off badly: 'I have the sort of dislike to that man which some people have for cats or spiders – a half-fear and half-contempt' (p. 113). But, though the intellectual quality may be sharp and penetrating as steel, the generating power and over-ruling atmosphere of these letters is generous and sweet. She expressly dislikes 'in man or woman the constant carrying about of an intellect rampant, like a crest – as if thinking were a better thing than loving' (p. 30). The brilliancies are the finer for the soft soil from which they flower.

Throughout we are aware of a deep capacity for religion and love in their essence, apart from dogmas and specific objects, and she feared the tendencies of her time. She saw the loss of idealism in pictorial art as 'the defect of the age,' continuing:

> It is terrible to be dragged captive, not by a King in purple and fine linen, not by a warrior in the glittering of his arms, but by a poor paltry counting-house Utilitarianism – along a railroad instead of a Via Sacra (p. 14).

What now is platitude was in her day a keen perception:

> The country is sinking on one side like a willow tree, for the lack of power – for the want of a supporting soul. We have hands enough, and tongues rather more than enough, but of souls there is a deficit (p. 113).

The letters themselves record the tempering of a soul. The invalid's suffering appears to have been great. At Torquay, she could at first write of looking out on the 'lovely bay' from her room, being sheltered by an 'abrupt rock' from the north and east winds, so that 'we are in an awful silence and only guess at their doings' (p. 42). But there is already a threat in the words; the elements were alive to her, and grew to be terrible, especially the sea. 'That tormenting dashing sound' (p. 67) maddens her; and again, 'that dreadful perpetual sound' (p. 88). She was a finely tuned instrument on whom these presences, as living beings, played out their effects; and such extreme perceptiveness does not make for ease. Phrases,

simple yet loaded, are wrung from her anguish: 'God's will is terrible' (p. 67); or, thinking of her Uncle's death, 'How awful it is to love' (p. 101). All this will not surprise those who have read her poetry, or know of her interest, later, in what is to-day known as 'spiritualism,' a religion, or wisdom, prepared for in this fine comment on humanity's lack of sympathy for animals: 'How often does their love not flow at all – not downwardly to the animal, not upwardly to the Great Spirit – but is comprehended and made stagnant within the narrow limits of humanity' (p. 14). Because she herself was attuned to such mysterious powers, she was at peace with death, when, if others cannot come back to us, we can go to them: 'The connection, the meeting, the embrace, remain as sure in the case of death as life – the change being simply in the action . . . "*I* shall go" instead of "he shall come" ' (p. 82). If we want one, simple, sentence to characterize these letters, and their writer, we may conclude with this, of one of her worst periods of illness: 'I seemed to lie too near to God to pray' (p. 138).

The selection of the letters here published has been skilfully made from the many manuscripts in the library of Wellesley College, Massachusetts, and the collection is excellently edited, with explanatory footnotes at the end of each letter, and not, fortunately, at the book's conclusion. The production and printing are good, except for a misplaced line on p. 56, a small misprint at the top of p. 89, and a dropped quotation mark on p. 157. The index is, in the main, adequate, but some minor references to Chaucer, Byron, and others are passed over, and the notes get less attention than the text. There is clearly some system at work, but this cannot, or should not, account for the inclusion of St John and the omission of St Paul on p. 140, or the passing over of the important reference to Christ, quoted above, on p. 103. A faultless index is, it is true, an impossibility, and there are two views regarding selection; but surely for proper-names Brand's 'all or nothing' is, with a few exceptions, the best guide.

G. Wilson Knight.

THE ANALYSIS OF AN OBSESSIONAL. By R. W. Pickford, M.D., Ph.D., D.Litt. (Hogarth Press, 1954. Pp. 234. 21*s*.)

The opponents of psycho-analysis have generally taken their stand on the argument that those who have adopted the analytic form of theory and therapy in psychiatry came to their task with no deep training in scientific method, and that the data of analysis and the theories proposed cannot be validated by the experimental or statistical methods of other sciences. The wedge that has been driven between formal experimental psychology and

psychopathology has had some justification, for many lay analysts, as well as physicians, know little of scientific procedures and have been initiated into the subject by means which cannot be repeated by standard methods. The author of this thorough case study is a striking exception. He is a trained experimental psychologist whose work on Colour Vision is testimony to his scientific approach. In addition, he has collaborated with psychiatrists in mental testing of all kinds, and has himself been analysed. He presents in this volume one of those rare studies, a detailed exposition of the long and arduous analysis of one of the most difficult, and usually intractable, neurotic disturbances.

The reader approaches this volume, therefore, with respect and great expectations.

It is well known to those who have followed the history of psycho-analytic theory and practice, that every neurosis is not only a painful disorder suffered *by* a human subject, but is a disorder suffered *for* the subject. That is to say, it is a process brought about by a struggle to cope with a disturbance occasioned by instinctual drives held only partially in check by the conscious and unconscious moral dictates of the sufferer. The condition is therefore in the nature of a defence against impulses which cannot be tolerated. These are partially transformed in the best of us into working patterns of behaviour and character. Browning speaks of: 'fancies that break through language and escape'. This is the path of poetry; but in the general case the escape of the repressed takes the pattern of remote disturbances – of the body and/or of the processes of thought and feeling. In the case of obsessional neurosis the *idée fixe*, the compelling rituals, the ruminations and superstition-like notions are, as it were, pseudo-moral ways in which a painful conflict is translated into disturbances of thought and action which are quasi-expiations of unconscious intolerable feelings of guilt. As analysis shows, the pain that the ego suffers proves to be greater than the primitive guilt which lies at the root. But an archaic child psyche, living upon phantasy and the fear of parental punishment, finds this guilt more overwhelming than any conscious guilt can be.

Dr Pickford's patient was a highly intelligent, scientifically trained student of mathematical physics, whose very pursuit became woven into and was indeed partly occasioned by his neurotic conflicts. Dr Pickford did not see his patient in the daily sessions imposed by classical psycho-analysis, but several times weekly and over a long period. The free association on dreams and their interpretation was the dominant procedure. These restrictions apart, the treatment was 'orthodox' in the analytic sense, and no ancillary aids were used, such as forced abreaction or catharsis under ether or hypno-analysis. In this way, all the 'wanderings of the libido' were exposed, symbolic forms of thought, sublimation of erotic phantasies into mathe-

matics were laid bare. The early childhood struggles with sexual perversions, relationship with parents, surrogates, and normal love objects in adolescence and early adult life were unravelled in the light of the transference situation. This latter process, that is, the shifting of early object relations on to the analyst, was worked through and interpreted.

A satisfactory working cure was achieved. To the experienced psycho-pathologist this is an invaluable study of an analytic procedure. True, there remain critical points both as regards procedure and interpretation, and it might be held that the complex nature of obsession formation is not fully clarified. To the layman, much of this unfolding will prove difficult to comprehend and to accept. But to the student of language, symbolism and indeed of poetry, the complex weft of phantasy formation should prove of outstanding interest.

Dr Pickford has already written on the 'Psychology of Cultural Change in Painting'. He might well use data such as this for a study of the psychology of the poetic process.

The reader must approach this book with patience and restraint for it is well nigh impossible, outside an analytic session, to realize what really occurs and what passes for acceptance in perhaps the most intimate psychological relation which a person can experience.

EMANUEL MILLER.

THE CONSERVATIVE MIND. By Russell Kirk. (Faber & Faber. 443 pages. 30*s*.)

Professor Kirk's book stirred some criticism on its appearance in the United States last year which preceded the publication of a revised British edition. He is, *mirabile dictu*, an American conservative and thus out of sympathy with the majority of the Founding Fathers, to say nothing of their numerous radical offspring. The American way of life does not commend itself to him; not merely the New Deal, but democracy in general is suspect. His favourite historical period is the (English) eighteenth century; his favourite writers Burke and Tocqueville. This preference smacks of Whiggery, and Mr Kirk's conservatism in fact is heavily diluted with the Whig brand of aristocratic liberalism. At times he seems uncertain whether to cast his lot with the authentic traditionalism which stems from Hooker, or with the highly individualist outlook of a modern sceptic like Santayana; but on the whole he sticks fairly closely to his chosen model, Burke, who set the tone for subsequent controversies by founding conservatism on a pessimistic view of human nature and directing his shafts against Rousseau. Given this

starting-point, the entire modern development appears as a clash between political 'principles' grounded in opposing doctrines of humanity, and since modern democracy is committed to optimism about human beings, it follows that all its works – notably the welfare state – stand condemned at the bar of political philosophy.

Little that is new can emerge from a controversy conducted within this familiar setting. The vantage-point chosen by Mr Kirk permits no departure from the well-worn groove of liberal-conservative disputations. By the early nineteenth century these had already congealed into a rigid tournament around the stale commonplaces of utilitarianism. Yet some of the participants were still aware that there had been a time when political and doctrinal line-ups followed a different pattern. Macaulay could not afford to ignore Cromwell, but though his sympathies were with the Roundheads he did not admire their Calvinist theology, which to Professor Kirk is the only admirable thing about them. In general it may be said that the association of political radicalism with an optimistic view of humanity is too simple and mechanical, as is the corresponding fashion of deducing conservative attitudes from belief in Original Sin. Karl Barth is both a Calvinist and a Social-Democrat – one wonders how Mr Kirk would get on with him.

The fact is that deductions from human nature tend to bear out the predilections with which a writer approaches his subject. Professor Kirk happens to dislike industrialism, as do a great many other people (socialists included), and to prefer stable, agrarian societies, small-scale production, the family unit, and a culture based on social stratification. He is entitled to his preferences, but it would have been better if he had not tried to garb them in metaphysical dress. As a contribution to the history of political ideas since the eighteenth century, *The Conservative Mind* moreover suffers from a species of Anglo-American provincialism which is fortunately becoming rare. Apart from the inevitable Tocqueville, no French writer makes more than a fleeting appearance, nor does any other continental European. Hegel and Marx are mere names to Mr Kirk; Vico apparently is not even a name. Instead of him we have Mr Peter Viereck and other stars of American journalism. Where are Spain, Italy, France, Germany? Why, if the historical philosophy of conservatism is so important, is there no mention of Burckhardt? Why only the barest reference to Nietzsche? There are translations of all these authors, if they are not accessible in the original. Since it cannot be unawareness of their existence that prevents Mr Kirk from dealing with them, he must have chosen deliberately to ignore everything outside his Anglo-American parish which he mistakes for the world. This exclusiveness is significant, but what is even odder is his corresponding failure to link the persistence of conservative tendencies in the English-speaking

world with the unbroken tradition of self-government which distinguishes England's history from that of the Continent.

This quaint indifference to the genuinely unique character of English (and consequently American) development – doubly remarkable in a writer who so resolutely confines himself to his own parish – suggests a certain academic indifference to the stuff of politics. If Professor Kirk had given as much attention to the character of the Ancien Régime as to Burke's impassioned defence of its ideology, he might have revised his belief that ideas make history, and that of all ideas those of the late eighteenth century were uniquely effective in imposing a perverted doctrine of human nature, and a perverted society to match. The England of Burke escaped revolution because it had preserved some vestiges of self-government, much as Mr Kirk's America is immune to Communism because it has developed the democracy he so greatly dislikes. Democracy of course is 'vulgar', but the worst vulgarities he cites are due to commercialism and the social dominance of the business community, rather than to 'the mass mind'. They can be removed on condition that the media of advertising and mass communication are suitably controlled. But would Mr Kirk welcome such a proposal? He would probably call it tyranny. These patrician liberals who mislabel themselves conservatives are difficult to argue with: take them at their face value and they immediately become apostles of *laisser-faire*. Mr Kirk is a true representative of the school. For all his railings against commercial vulgarity and industrialism, the established order has nothing to fear from him. His Utopia is firmly located in the past; there is no danger that it will come to life.

G. L. A.

THE BLOOMSBURY GROUP. By J. K. Johnstone. (Secker & Warburg. 25*s*.)

Material abounds for a really interesting book on the Bloomsbury Group – the subject is a mine of fascinating material, but its riches will only be revealed when the time is ripe for a critical estimate not only of the work it produced, for this has already been undertaken extensively, but of the people who produced it, of their lives and characters, how they developed and from what. Only an intimate study of the application of their principles to their daily lives would reveal the sort of people they were and what they stood for.

Mr Johnstone's book is not altogether what one would have expected from a young man in his very early thirties with the supposed independence of a colonial background, but the fact that it is an academic thesis has limited the scope of his approach. He

has certainly helped to explode the myth, which has persisted among the uninformed and the semi-literate, of Bloomsbury as a group of pretentious Bohemian poseurs, high-brow, snobbish, irresponsible and arty. Single-minded and unworldly they certainly were, and unconventional (*not* Bohemian), with a highly ordered way of life and in its best and truest sense profoundly moral.

It is sometimes said that from this original hierarchy or High Bloomsbury there developed a middle and a lower Bloomsbury embracing the younger scientists and the theatre, and an investigation of this alleged spread of their influence would make the picture more complete.

Our greatest debt to Roger Fry was in the influence he exerted in restoring classical values in painting at a time when it had lapsed into a weak Victorian romanticism, romantic being in Fry's own words 'any work of art which to produce its effects, counts on the association of ideas which it sets up in the mind of the spectator'. Classical he defined as 'the work which to provoke emotion depends on its own formal organization'. Some acknowledgment also would have to be made of journalism's debt to Desmond MacCarthy and Raymond Mortimer who brought to it a quality of quiet reflection, a literary distinction which it had previously lacked.

It is really only the misleading title of the book with which I have fault to find, for what Mr Johnstone set out to do he has in fact done with a sensitive scholarship. In his thesis he concentrates on writing and on the work of the group's three outstanding writers, Lytton Strachey, Virginia Woolf, and E. M. Forster.

However much Strachey may be in eclipse at the moment, his detached approach made him something new and original among biographers, with results that were often exciting. In commending the historical and critical method of the French historians of the later nineteenth century for their 'elaborate examination of detail, a careful, sober, unprejudiced reconstruction of past conditions, an infinitely conscientious endeavour to tell the truth and nothing but the truth', Lytton Strachey might well have been describing his own work.

In his summing up of his section on values, Mr Johnstone finds that the three principle subjects of his study

> all share the same first principles, the same ultimate values. All three respect both reason and sensibility. They all value self-possession, self-knowledge, and humour. They dislike pomposity, pretention and muddle. . . . They admire honesty, tolerance, disinterestedness and courage; they respect truth above all. They desire understanding rather than power and they seek it in contemplation and in art. Art they believe is indispensable because it is an enduring expression of man's spiritual life.

world with the [illegible] ting[illegible] have quoted at some length from Mr Johnstone's summing up because in it I find a fitting valediction to that gentle, fastidious spirit, both fearless and serene, which its own generation knew as Bloomsbury.

W. H.

HENRY FIELDING, HIS LIFE, WORKS AND TIMES. By F. Homes Dudden, D.D. (Oxford, Clarendon Press. 2 vols. £5 5s.)

Henry Fielding died at Lisbon 200 years ago this month and, as Rosalind would say, our affection for him has an unknown bottom like the bay of Portugal. Indeed the object of it remains something of an unknown quantity. The only likeness of him is the pen-and-ink sketch drawn from memory after his death by Hogarth. Few details of his private life or public career survive, and for most of what we do know of Fielding we must go to his own published work. Most of all, perhaps, we can glimpse the man in the final and now too seldom read *Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon*. But to the majority of the British public, Dr Homes Dudden is surely right in supposing, Fielding is known only as the author of four celebrated novels, and above all of *Tom Jones*.

The 200 pages that his latest biographer devotes to Fielding's work as a playwright suggest that in this direction, anyway, the British public is right. Dr Homes Dudden makes no bones about regarding the censorship that put a stop to Fielding's pointed political satires on the stage as a sort of fairy-godmother to the English novel:

> We have reason to be grateful for the Licensing Act, which brought Fielding's work as a playwright to an abrupt conclusion. Driven out of the trade of Aristophanes and Molière, in which it is unlikely that he would ever have greatly excelled, he turned ultimately to that of Cervantes, which afforded the amplest opportunities for the free exercise of his original genius, and which he was to prosecute with such brilliant success as to win for himself ever-lasting fame as 'Father of the English novel'.

Is it really quite so certain that the dramatic form would never have suited Fielding's genius? Fielding was barely thirty when the Licensing Act was passed and had been a dramatist some seven years. Another five years passed before the publication of *Joseph Andrews*. What sort of plays would Fielding have been writing by that time? The Fielding bicentenary is perhaps as good a time as any to ask ourselves if the political vacuum in which the English theatre now unquestioningly exists is or is not entirely a good thing, if there is not some unnatural limitation of interest and consequent

loss of vitality which our somewhat anæmic dramatic art can hardly spare. In any case the test of a play is in performance. Fielding revivals are few and far between, but I can testify that one of his early pieces, *The Tragedy of Tragedies: or, The Life and Death of Tom Thumb the Great*, is still extremely funny on the stage, however many of the parodies of more than forty other plays go over our heads.

Dr Homes Dudden's careful account of Fielding's early career gives us the impression of a good-hearted adventurer, willing to flatter Walpole for a place, and if that failed to bark for the Opposition, determined anyway, like many a playwright and journalist since, to feed by nonsense rather than starve by sense. Consequently, the biographer's endeavour to dispose of the legend of Fielding as something of a rake-hell strikes us as the sort of school report one might hope to get off with, rather than the one its subject probably deserved:

> It may well be that Fielding, in the days of his youth, was somewhat reckless in his expenditure. He was a spirited fellow, with an immense capacity for enjoying life. He liked good food. He appreciated good wine. He had a relish for good company. He delighted, too, in giving assistance to needy friends. He saw no sense in hoarding.

No one ever accused him of gaming, but as to women 'it is hardly probable . . . that he adhered very scrupulously to the narrow path of virtue in the season of his hot-blooded youth.'

One suspects, indeed, that Fielding's great merits were hardly at any time those of the highest respectability and conformity, even if his career swung from being the subject of legislation to becoming a pillar of the law, from malcontent to magistrate. The majority of the British public, whose curiosity about Fielding does not extend much beyond the four great novels, will probably not read 1,200 pages about their author. But the merits of the Master of Pembroke's study, if not ostentatious, are substantial. There is generosity of judgment, a sustained lucidity of style and an unhurried and masterly marshalling of all the relevant facts that makes the enquirer who comes to dip stay to read, and will lead many of its readers on to a wider exploration of the works of Henry Fielding than they have hitherto made for themselves. And what more could a writer ask of his biographers?

R. W.

WARREN HASTINGS. By Keith Feiling. (Macmillan. 30s.)

Warren Hastings is perhaps the most difficult of all great Englishmen to judge fairly. There is not merely the familiar difficulty of applying to the eighteenth century the standards of conduct that prevail in the twentieth; for even by the standards of the eighteenth century

well-nigh impossible to reach a final verdict on him. No man in our history has ever appeared simultaneously so utterly wicked and so scrupulously just to equally honourable contemporaries. His own writings on India and the Indians make it at first sight incredible that such a man could ever have been impeached for his conduct towards them. His advice to colleagues and contemporaries is full of passages like these:

> Among the natives of India, there are men of as strong intellect, as sound integrity, and as honourable feelings as any of this Kingdom. . . .
>
> They are gentle, benevolent, more susceptible of gratitude for kindness shewn them than prompt to vengeance for wrongs sustained, abhorrent of bloodshed, faithful and affectionate in service and submission to legal authority.
>
> There is a fierceness in the European manners, especially among the lower sort, which is incompatible with the gentle temper of the Bengalee. . . .

Yet this was the man of whom Burke spoke in the terms which Cicero used of Verres, the scourge of Roman Sicily. And, although Hastings was finally acquitted after seven years of intermittent trial before the House of Commons, there are still at least two counts on which he is not unanimously held guiltless to-day.

Professor Feiling has brought meticulous pains to the complicated task of reconstructing this strange, contradictory figure. His honesty and fairness can be judged by the fact that, though he personally leans towards acquittal, his portrait can be looked at from a different angle with equal consistency as a condemnation. The antithesis between the two views of Hastings is in fact clarified but not resolved; and that is perhaps the best tribute that can be earned by such scholarly biography. Professor Feiling's is a work of *constatation*, not of persuasion – which is to say that it is sometimes a little slow and a little dull. Except through the personality of Hastings's second wife and his devotion to her, the book is irradiated by little of the romance and warmth and colour of eighteenth-century Empire-building, which make, for instance, Philip Woodruff's *The Founders* such good reading. Painstaking scholarship is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the full realization of Warren Hastings's subtle and difficult character; and one must turn elsewhere in order to glimpse

> the fervour of his spirit, the flame of purpose that shines in everything he wrote or said, the glow of his indefinable imaginative greatness.

C. M. W.

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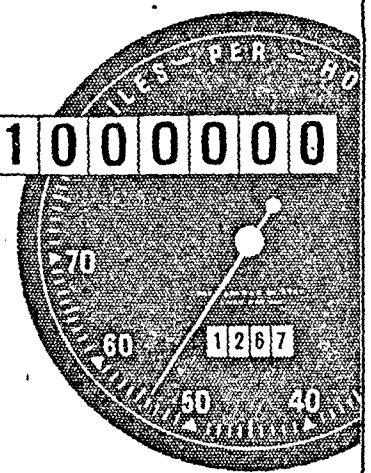
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EDITORIAL

The exasperation which Mr Aneurin Bevan used to arouse in his friends, as well as his enemies, is being replaced by feelings of pity. He has made such a hash of things. He tried to show that he would make a stronger, more appealing, more discerning leader than Mr Attlee or his possible successors. What he has proved, to the delight of his enemies, the chagrin of his friends, and the regret of many who stand between the camps, is that of all the prospective leaders of the Labour Party he is the least fitted to command. He has not the kind of temperament which men will trust in a crisis.

At Scarborough his cause had done well, not through his advocacy, for he was not allowed to speak, or through that of his friends, which ruined a strong case; it did well because the fears which even the supporters of German rearmament cannot repress play on every tender and tremulous heartstring in the Labour breast. But the vote at Scarborough was not cast solely on the German question. It was also a vote of confidence in the leadership of Mr Attlee, Mr Morrison and Mr Gaitskell. That was why, against the odds, they won their majority. Labour would rather have Attlee, even if he is wrong, than Bevan, even if he is right. Yet the voting was so close that Mr Bevan need have sacrificed none of his dignity. A statesmanlike speech at the *Tribune* meeting, a sombre warning of the high seriousness the theme deserved, would have restored what little prestige he had lost at the conference. Instead he delivered an angry rant that dismayed his followers, upset some of his most loyal friends, and brought his standing in the country to its lowest point.

It is a tragedy for the Labour movement, as well as for Mr Bevan, that his temperament is so unstable. The Party is dangerously short of working-class leadership. Let a flicker of it appear, as in Mr Sam Watson at Scarborough and in his newspaper articles, and the serious press immediately begins to consider whether he should not be given high office in the next Labour Government. The Party needs men of imagination as well as calculating planners. To-day the latter are plentiful,

while the former are scarce. This unbalance may be dangerous for the country. The right wing of the Party, which substitutes for the socialism in which it does not believe a Fabian fondness for rigid control of industry and giant organizations, and has yet to learn from the errors of the last Labour Government what are the limitations of planning, could be as big a menace to the well-being of the country, and the happiness of its people, as are the doctrinaire left-wingers. The only lesson which appears to have been learned from experience of government is a mere electoral one: that nationalization catches no votes. There was a hope once that Mr Bevan's freedom from the guilt of a middle-class past, and his ability to think freely outside the orthodoxy of Transport House, might be used to put more humanity and liberal tolerance into British socialism. Just as his old comrade in dissidence, Stafford Cripps, injected into the Party some awareness of the need for industrial efficiency and higher productivity, so Aneurin Bevan, with his different gifts, might have persuaded his more austere colleagues that people will not stand for bureaucratic regulation of their daily life even in the name of socialism.

Mr Bevan's parliamentary gifts, his appeal to the back-benchers and the Party rank-and-file, had already brought the leadership of Labour within his reach when he resigned from the 1951 Government. That was a fatal error. He now talks ceaselessly of his prescience. He predicted – and he believed – that the arms expenditure America was forcing on Europe would bankrupt her. Every other politician in Europe was willing to humour the Americans, knowing that in the event they would not be called on to do anything so self-defeating. Mr Bevan then cast himself for the role of the solitary rebel. He was not fitted by his disposition for such a part. He is an almost morbidly sensitive man, and he should have known that orthodox Labour has a useful stock of gags and whips, and even a hangman's rope for the recalcitrant. Labour is always a disciplined party before it is a democratic one. Mr Bevan, badly advised by the cronies whose friendship he needed to make his isolation endurable, tempted by the cheers of the heterogeneous collection of cranks, dissidents and jackasses who have straggled behind his banner, has made himself, to the public if not to the Party, the most misunderstood man in the Labour movement. He is regarded by the electorate as an illiberal hothead, sour, savage and abusive,

an enemy of America, a sympathiser with Communism. People have come to believe that, given the leadership of the Party, he would both jeopardize the Atlantic alliance and, bankrupt the country. This false picture has been created not so much by the 'capitalist press' as by himself. Even his superb work at the Ministry of Health is forgotten by the general public. Inside the Party, people are tired of his tantrums. Perhaps he is tired of them himself. One must hope so. If even for a year he could hide his vanity, forget his brilliance, show that he has a bit of common-sense, and exercise in public the gift of charm he displays in private, he might yet recover the prestige he has squandered.

TERMS FOR PEACE

Richard Lowenthal

The cold war has this in common with 'real' war that it is more difficult to end than to begin. One can start a war by a simple act of will; to end it, except in the case of unconditional surrender, requires an agreed solution of outstanding conflicts. What we have come to call the cold war is more than propaganda warfare between opposed 'ideological' camps: it is rooted in a failure to find diplomatic solutions for a number of definite conflicts between the two power blocs, and the consequent attempt of both sides to shift the balance of power by all means short of world war – including competitive armaments, military threats and local acts of violence. It could, therefore, be ended even though the ideological strife continued, and the burden of competitive armament and fear could correspondingly be lightened. But this desirable result can only be obtained if the major outstanding conflicts find their agreed diplomatic solutions.

These remarks are prompted by the mounting evidence of a shift in the methods of Soviet strategy – a tendency to rely less on crude military pressure, and more on political manœuvering. One possible interpretation of this shift is that the Soviet leaders may now genuinely wish to liquidate the 'cold war' in the sense here defined, if only they knew how this can be accomplished; from which it follows that if such a wish on their part really does exist, it would be to our advantage to meet it by offering reasonable terms for a settlement of the major issues of conflict; and that the time has come for the West to devote serious thought to working out such terms, with three related purposes in mind: as a means to discover whether the Soviet feelers now thrown out are evidence of a genuine change; as a necessary contribution to peace if they are; and as the best defence against being out-manœuvred by Soviet peace propaganda if they are not.

I

The only major, tangible change in Soviet foreign policy

during the first year after Stalin's death was the decision to conclude an armistice in Korea by accepting the previously rejected Indian proposals on the prisoners-of-war issue. But the same year saw two other major changes in the Soviet position which were bound to affect foreign policy: official recognition of the seriousness of the agrarian crisis throughout the Soviet empire, and the explosion of the first Soviet H-bomb. The first led to strong pressure against continuing the arms race at an ever-increasing pace; the second greatly strengthened Soviet self-confidence and diminished the Kremlin's fear of 'preventive war'. Growing awareness of the gap between the words and deeds of the new American Administration must have operated in the same sense: by the time Mr Dulles launched his memorable formula about meeting local attacks by 'massive retaliation', the Russian leaders were no longer deceived.

On this basis Soviet diplomacy has developed a far greater flexibility in the past six months, beginning roughly with the Geneva conference. It was perhaps not difficult to accept a compromise in Indo-China which in substance consecrated a Communist victory; yet the victory could have been made more complete, and the paralysis of French policy in Europe prolonged, if Russia and China had decided to continue fighting, at the risk of shocking the Asian neutrals and destroying the 'peace atmosphere' they had so patiently built up. In Europe, the conclusion of the Balkan military alliance was answered by continued efforts on the part of the U S S R and its satellites to 'normalise' diplomatic and trade relations with their neighbours, including the recognition by Bulgaria of its reparations debts to Yugoslavia and Greece, the repatriation of Greek children abducted during the civil war, and the closing down of Moscow's anti-Tito radio station. During the same period, private travel across the border between East and West Germany was permitted to increase to a point where 300,000 West Germans visited the East, and 400,000 East Germans the West, during the month of August alone. Applying to a divided nation, this was the most striking case of a general tendency to replace the 'Iron Curtain' of recent years by more flexible forms of control; the former rigid concepts of military security for a 'forward area' have given way to recognition of the political usefulness of East-West contact. Even the conclusion of the London agreement on a new frame-work for West German rearmament produced

no reversal of this policy. On the contrary, it evoked a hint from Mr Molotov that he might be ready to discuss proposals for free all-German elections – which he had rejected in Berlin last February – and an offer from Mr Vyshinsky to discuss the Anglo-French disarmament proposals which he had dismissed in June.

Only in the Far East, where China and the United States are still without diplomatic relations, has there been no comparable change in the methods of Soviet policy. Chou En-lai has continued since Geneva to pay far greater attention to neutral Asian opinion than ever before, as shown by his visits to Nehru and U Nu; but he has reacted to the Manila Pact in classical cold war style by openly championing subversion of the Siamese Government, and, less openly but undeniably, he has continued to support the Communist guerillas in neutral Burma. Moreover, the Chinese Government has deliberately chosen to turn Formosa into a new danger spot of world politics, by proclaiming its intention to 'liberate' the island by force, in the teeth of United States protection; and Moscow has given at least moral support to this new campaign.

In trying to decipher the meaning of the new trend, two extreme interpretations can be ruled out at once. To start with the optimistic fallacy: there has not been any basic change in the nature of the Soviet régime since Stalin's death. On the contrary, parallel with the changes in foreign policy there has been a remarkable consolidation of the régime, following the period of uncertainty and flux in the wake of the succession crisis; there is no sign of any weakening in the supremacy of the Party, or any revision of its permanent long-term objectives. On the other hand, it is foolish to dismiss the changes as purely verbal, a mere dressing-up of an unaltered policy in more pleasing words. The fact that the fighting in Korea and Indo-China has been ended, that frontier control in Europe has been relaxed, that the offer of negotiations and the lure of trade have replaced the threat of reprisals at least in Russia's European policy, implies a definite shift of priorities from the use of primarily military to that of primarily political means.

Elimination of the extremes, however, still leaves us with two possible ways of analysing the new policy. We may conclude that the Soviet bloc is still trying to resume the offensive which was stopped in Europe in 1948–49, at the time of the Berlin

blockade, the Greek civil war, and the break with Tito – but that, having at last realized how much its threats have helped to weld its opponents together, it is now seeking to divide them by flexible tactics in order, later, to destroy them one by one. The deliberate baiting of the Americans over the Formosa issue, in which they enjoy little sympathy from their allies, would tend to support this view. Or we may think it possible that the new rulers have genuinely accepted the end of the post-war offensive, are willing to settle down within their new borders for a lengthy period (until the 'inevitable crises' of capitalism offer a major opportunity for further advances) and are anxious to devote their maximum energies in the meantime to internal consolidation. On the first assumption we are witnessing a mere change in cold war tactics, though a major one; on the second we are faced with a change in strategy amounting to a desire to end the cold war.

The evidence available so far does not permit a definite conclusion. Nor can we be certain that whatever choice was made in Moscow is already final. Even apart from possible disagreements within the new 'collective leadership', of which there have been occasional hints, and possible differences between the Russian and the Chinese outlook, we must remember that the ending of the cold war does not depend on one side alone. Western ability to remain united in the face of the new flexible Soviet tactics, and Western willingness to work out realistic peace terms, may in their turn be major factors in deciding how far the 'new course' will go.

II

It would appear that the West has at the present time reached a degree of diplomatic and military cohesion which is favourable to an effort to reach a cold war settlement; but this cohesion is still precarious and can easily be lost again if the effort is not made in the near future, and if the Communist powers are left in sole possession of the initiative for peace.

The first part of this suggestion may seem unduly optimistic if the recent stresses within the Western alliance consequent on defeat in Indo-China and the death of E D C are recalled. Yet the truly remarkable thing about both crises surely was the manner in which they were overcome. In Indo-China a position that had long become untenable has been written off, without any of the major immediate repercussions on neigh-

bouring countries that the alarmists had feared; and in so far as further Communist advances in South-East Asia may again take military form, an insurance against them has been taken out by the S E A T O pact. In Europe, though the demise of E D C was at first widely described as a major Communist victory, it was in fact nothing more than the long overdue liquidation of a rigid ideological concept based on a rare collection of delusions; while to safeguard the only practical purpose it had been meant to serve: the arming of West Germany in a Western framework with French consent, a far better agreement – more workable thanks to British participation and more flexible thanks to the renunciation of federalist shibboleths – was found almost overnight, once Western statesmanship had been compelled to free itself from the hypnotic formula 'there is no alternative'.

Above all, the crises of 1954 have left inter-Allied, and particularly Anglo-American, relations in a far healthier state than before. In Britain, the shock of the collapse of E D C, and the sudden realization of the danger that the Atlantic defence organization might disintegrate, made many people more acutely conscious of the perennial danger from the East, and of Britain's responsibility for helping to shield Europe against it, than they had been for years; and Britain's new European commitment, made possible by this sharpened perception of fundamentals, has greatly increased American confidence in the value of the British alliance. In the United States, the frustration of Geneva has given rise, after a period of bitter recrimination, to a more sober appreciation of the limits of American power in Asia; during this interval Dr Syngman Rhee acquired lasting merit by confronting the diehard opponents of any Chinese settlement with the logical consequence of their policy, for the idea of 'preventive war' had only to be dragged into the light of day to be decisively and overwhelmingly rejected by President and Congress alike. The sharp decline of McCarthyism, and the quick silencing of the loose talk about arming Germany without French consent which followed the defeat of E D C in the French National Assembly, are other aspects of the slow retreat from blind anti-Communist hysteria in the U S A – a process of sobering down which has left American public opinion for the moment somewhat limp and apathetic, but has not led to any marked recrudescence of isolationism, and which promises to leave

the Administration more immune from political blackmail and correspondingly better able to pursue the search for sensible settlements in co-operation with America's allies.

Yet while the London and Manila agreements go far to close the major gaps in the system of Western military alliances, they also indicate the point beyond which a further concentration on military forms of resistance to Communism is bound to yield diminishing returns. In Asia, it has proved impossible to win the non-committed nations for S E A T O; in Europe, the strength of the opposition to the new agreements in both France and Germany illustrates the difficulty, in democratic countries, of winning popular support for the efforts and sacrifices involved in the organization of military defence, once the enemy against whom these efforts are directed no longer adopts a threatening attitude. The new agreements were needed because we must be organized in order to negotiate peace, and must remain ready in case negotiations fail; they are not enough by themselves, for at this stage we must also make a genuine effort to negotiate with our opponents, in order to preserve a coherent organization. To stick to a policy dominated by military considerations, once our opponents have switched to the use of primarily political weapons, is to pursue an illusory concept of strength and to foster the growth of neutralism among the nations wearied of the sacrifices and fears of the cold war. In this sense, S E A T O and B R U T O complete a phase of Western policy which, like the Soviet policy that provoked it, is now drawing to a close. In the new phase into which we are now moving – whether it really brings a settlement or merely amounts to a continuation of the cold war by subtler means – they will be valuable safeguards in the background, while the forefront may well be occupied by organizations such as the Colombo Plan and O E E C, which because of the constructive nature of their task can include countries bent on remaining neutral in the military field.

III

So far as one can judge, the shift of emphasis in Moscow from military to political methods has not so far involved a comparable reduction in the share of resources devoted by the Communist régimes to their armaments; nor has there been a marked reduction on our side. This is quite natural; a

major freeing of resources for non-military tasks will only be possible once the cold war is ended – i.e. once the major outstanding issues are solved.

There are three major groups of unsolved issues at present pending between the two power blocs. The Asian complex concerns the question of recognition of Communist China, the related question of the future of Formosa, and the various forms in which Chinese military strength threatens China's neighbours – ranging from the presence of Chinese forces in Korea, through the training by China of Burmese and Siamese guerillas, to the general problem of the 'overseas Chinese' throughout South-East Asia. The European complex concerns the conditions for German unity, and the chances of a disengagement of Russian and American forces from the centre of Europe, including, as a special case, the Austrian peace treaty. The disarmament complex concerns the search for a method of ending the arms race, both in the fields of atomic and of conventional weapons. It is sufficient to enumerate these subjects to realize how immensely difficult a settlement is bound to be, even assuming that the will to reach one now exists on the Soviet side. Certainly the liquidation of the cold war would be a lengthy process even in the best of cases. At this stage nobody can offer any ready-made solutions; yet it may be useful to indicate some methods of approach.

The area in which there are at the moment the least signs of any diminution of mutual hostility is the Asian one. This may well be because Communist China is even now less willing to renounce expansion by force, or the threat of force, than is the Soviet Union. There is, however, only one way of testing this hypothesis – if the United States Government would declare itself willing, either before the United Nations, or through intermediaries, or in any other way, to discuss terms for the recognition of the Chinese Communist Government and its admission to the United Nations. It is naïve to ask the United States, after the Korean war and in the middle of the Formosan conflict, to agree to Communist China's membership in U N O unconditionally; it is equally naïve to expect a Communist government to behave as a peaceful member of the international community, while it is unconditionally refused a place in that community. Once this form of approach – the discussion of terms of recognition and admission – is adopted, all the grievances of China's neighbours can be legitimately raised;

while this discussion is refused, the nations of Asia, however wary of China, will blame the United States for blocking the normal road of redress. There is no point in going into details, but it is clear that the terms of a hypothetical settlement would have to include a Chinese withdrawal from Korea, which could take place in stages and parallel with the withdrawal of United Nations forces, and a complete stop of any support for guerilla activities in neighbouring countries. It should also be clear that recognition of the Peking government would not imply the surrender of Formosa, on the grounds that Formosa is a part of China in international law. Nobody contests China's title to the island as set down in the Cairo declaration; yet the separation of this part of China from the rest is the result of the same process which has led to the emergence of the Communist government on the mainland – the civil war. If the West recognizes that the Chinese mainland has become Communist, and withdraws support from Chiang Kai-shek's exile government, the Communists must recognize that the nine million Formosans and the two million Chinese refugees on that island do not wish to form part of a Communist state, and that their desire for self-government is entitled to international sanction, provided the régime stops its raids against the mainland.

The disarmament issue is the one about which there have lately been the most encouraging signs of progress, but in a sense it is the most fundamental of all, for it involves the ultimate question of mutual confidence. Where the decisive weapons of mass destruction are concerned, neither power bloc can afford to disarm, short of a system of inspection and enforcement so completely watertight as to be incompatible with territorial sovereignty. The prospects of agreement on a banning of nuclear weapons are therefore much less favourable than the prospects of preserving peace, and concentration on this aspect, which strikes the imagination but promises little success, is itself the mark of a propagandist approach.

The situation is different, however, with regard to the size of the armed forces and the output of 'conventional' armaments. It is conceivable that two power blocs, which are and remain divided by profound mutual distrust, may feel compelled to go ahead full speed with the production of a nuclear stockpile and the development of the means of delivery, but that in a situation where neither plans, or seriously fears, an attack in the near future they might be ready to reduce their

armed forces and the current production of their normal equipment for the time being. Moreover, such a convention, just because it entails nothing irrevocable such as the destruction of the atomic stockpiles, and also because divisions and airfields are more difficult to conceal than research laboratories and secret plants, could fulfil a useful purpose even with an imperfect system of inspection: if one side broke the agreement, the other could be sure of learning about it fairly soon and of being able to take counter-measures before an irreparable shift in the balance of power had occurred. Yet the fact of such an agreement would in itself greatly reduce the risks of local conflicts and would reinforce the tendency to abandon the use of local military pressure as a means of political expansion; it would have an effect similar to a territorial disengagement of the opposing forces, and might facilitate it. Agreement in this field, too, would of course be a matter of hard and prolonged bargaining; but in contrast to the attempts to start with a nuclear ban, an approach from the other end of the disarmament complex is at any rate not hopeless, and should be seriously and patiently pursued.

IV

Lastly there is the related question of military disengagement. This is, of course, at the heart of the European complex. The basis of every Soviet scheme for German unity and European security is the demand for a withdrawal of non-German forces from Germany. Soviet statements on whether a united Germany should be armed or unarmed, whether it should be united at once or later, whether a European non-aggression pact is compatible with the existence of NATO or not, have repeatedly varied in recent years, but this basic demand has remained unchanged. In the West, current official doctrine holds that such a disengagement is not desirable. It is argued that Western Europe is not defensible without forward bases stretching at least to the Elbe, nor without the presence of American troops, that the American forces needed cannot be adequately garrisoned outside Germany, and that the defence of German territory on which the security of Western Europe depends could not safely be left to a rearmed Germany alone, either because Germany might start a war for her own territorial demands, or because of the supposed risk that she might defect to the Eastern bloc. This is really the core of the Western

attitude both to German rearmament and to German unity. The former is now urged not in the main as a means of getting some additional divisions, but as a way of cementing the alliance between a Western Germany that is bound to recover sovereign and equal status, and the Western powers. At bottom German unity is only desired by the West if it can be achieved within this alliance, while the demand for free all-German elections is only regarded as a means to this end.

This Western attitude is perfectly logical in the conditions of Soviet military pressure as hitherto exerted on post-war Europe; in practice it excludes any compromise on German unity while these conditions last. It would, however, be extremely dangerous for the West not to envisage the possibility that these conditions may change, and not to work out and offer alternative policies for that case. Already, the change in Soviet tactics has (not so much by specific offers as by the general appeasement of popular fears) produced a steadily growing undercurrent of West German opinion which is opposed to the present rearmament plans and favours an attempt at new unity negotiations with the Russians. It may be in the power of the USSR to strengthen this current – and the parallel trends in France and Britain – by a new and alluring offer of terms for German unity and European security, and it seems likely at the time of writing that some such new offer will be forthcoming before the London agreements are ratified.

A genuine change in the conditions that have so far determined Western policy in Germany would have to be acknowledged if the Soviets were ready to withdraw their troops from Eastern Germany without leaving a Communist régime in their place, and if they continued at the same time an overall policy which, by renouncing threats, deprived itself voluntarily of the weapon of fear – particularly if progress were made at the same time in the field of disarmament. In such a situation, the need for strong American land forces on the European continent would largely disappear, and German and West European land forces (plus a merely symbolic American contingent and American air cover) would become adequate for continental defence. But once this was the relation of forces, would there be really a compelling need for a united Germany to be formally allied to the West? Would it not be sufficient (if such a united Germany was genuinely democratic and

independent of Russia) for her to have a limited army for self-defence, fixed by a peace treaty, and to be protected by a Western guarantee against Russian aggression, as Mr George Kennan recently suggested for Western Germany? There could well be an equivalent Soviet guarantee at the same time, as well as mutual pledges of non-aggression between the Western and Eastern blocs. That is the kind of construction which was really meant when people talked of a 'Locarno' solution; it would be the only practicable form of a neutral or 'alliance-free' Germany. In such a system, aggressive action by an independent Germany would be more certainly excluded than by any controls within a Western alliance, while a German line-up with Russia would in fact be prevented by the all-too-lively memories of recent Soviet rule, as well as by the overwhelming preponderance of economic and cultural links with the West. (It is too little known that, even at the peak of trade between Germany and the Soviet Union in the 1920's, Germany's Eastward trade, though highly lucrative for particular groups, was insignificant compared with her Western connections, and the same would still apply to-day.)

All this presupposes, of course, a genuine Russian offer to permit German unity in freedom – an offer that so far has *not* been made. Unless and until it is made, we can and must go ahead with the plans for arming Western Germany, within N A T O and Western Union, as agreed in London. But the new treaties cannot bind a united Germany, which does not as yet exist; and the people of Western Germany, on becoming sovereign in the new framework, will be bound to accept any offer of unity in freedom, if and when it arises. If the Russians really wish to end the cold war in Europe, and not only to continue it by subtler means, they will have to make such an offer sooner or later. This means that they will have to accept the dismantling of the East German régime by free elections; they may find ways of mitigating the shock by first transforming it themselves, but they cannot escape paying this price in substance. Only by paying it can they create the pre-condition for a withdrawal of all foreign troops from Germany and for a 'German Locarno'; and once they take this step the Western powers will not be able in the long run to resist such a solution. The position of the West would, however, be far stronger if it boldly took the initiative for such a settlement, instead of appearing to concede it only reluctantly.

V

In every one of the great unsolved conflicts, then, the road to a solution is beset with almost unending difficulties and complications – but in every case a possible approach to peace can be discerned. In Asia, it must lead through a discussion of terms for the recognition of Communist China; in the field of disarmament, through a gradual reduction of armed forces and conventional armaments; in Europe, through a Locarno-settlement for a Germany united in freedom. But all this speculation on possible settlements is bound to encounter one powerful objection: what is the evidence that the Communist powers are really willing to tread the road to peace, that they would really accept any one of the proposed types of solution? And if there is no such evidence, what is the use of raising false hopes and spreading confusion in the Western camp by discussing them?

The answer must be that there is indeed no evidence of Communist willingness to accept any of these terms, though there are many signs which can be interpreted in two ways – as evidence of skilful manœuvering or of a fumbling search for solutions. On balance, it still seems probable that the leaders of the Soviet bloc are not yet ready for real solutions and are merely trying to continue the cold war by more flexible methods. But even on this assumption it is not idle speculation or dangerous self-delusion to explore the terms of peace from a Western point of view; on the contrary, it is the only means of retaining the initiative in the new phase of the political struggle.

Nothing, indeed, is now more dangerous for the West than the attitude which fixes a hypnotized stare on the military means of resistance to Communist aggression, decrying any thought of a political settlement and leaving the Communists a monopoly of peace talk. This attitude is to-day, after years of bitter cold war experience, by no means confined to the professional military – it is a habit of thought stemming from a time when Communist peace talk had only to be confronted with the facts of current Communist activity to be shown up as a trick, until it became a kind of conditioned reflex that one must not be lulled to sleep by 'peace propaganda'. In view of the new Communist flexibility, the West can preserve its unity and cohesion only if its spokesmen remember that it is, after all, the free world which has most to gain from peace.

On all sides we hear warning voices that the Communist powers only want a breathing space to solve their internal difficulties; that they hope the end of the armament race will throw the capitalist world into a desperate economic crisis; that peace is their secret weapon for making their opponents lower their guard and dissolve their alliances. It is true enough that a period of peace will be dangerous if we forsake the elementary precautions of research and development in the field of atomic weapons, if we allow the unity of the West to be disrupted, or if we fail to solve the basic problems of employment in the developed industrial countries, and of modernization in the under-developed ones. But so far from being frightened by this prospect, we should eagerly grasp any chance of concentrating at last on the constructive tasks which by right should represent the chief content of life in any free society.

Among all the burdens which the cold war, following on the last world war, has imposed on us, none has been more grievous and crippling than the constant compulsion to give priority to external defence over internal development. It is not just a matter of the distribution of resources, or a choice between armaments and social services or 'Point Four' aid. It is the constant muffling of productive controversy within each nation, the sense of having to pull one's punches within hearing of the common enemy, which has gone on for so long that many of us are hardly conscious of it any more. The curse of totalitarianism is not merely the oppression it inflicts on its immediate victims – its threat casts a chilling shadow even beyond its borders, stifling the free discussion which is the very breath of democracy. If we could make that shadow recede by a settlement of the acute issues of the cold war, we should at last be able again to devote our main energies to the proper concerns of free men. It is an aim well worth striving for.

TOYNBEE VERSUS GIBBON

G. F. Hudson

The last four volumes of Professor Toynbee's vast work *A Study of History** have now been published and have completed the exposition of his theory of the rise and fall of civilizations. The immense range and discursiveness of this *magnum opus*, together with the fact of its piecemeal presentation to the public, render it extremely difficult to comprehend the doctrine in its full elaboration or to criticize it as a whole. It is only too easy to stray into such fascinating byways as 'The Case for the Goodman-Martinez-Thompson Correlation of the Yucatec and Mayan Chronology with Years of the Christian Era', or to get lost in the intricacies of discussion of the formal categories from which Professor Toynbee seeks to construct a framework for universal history. It may be more effective, however, for coming to grips with the Toynbeean doctrine if criticism is concentrated on a particular issue which is both crucial for the general argument and of wide current interest in its relation to the major problems of our time. Such a test case is provided by Toynbee's attitude towards Gibbon and his comments on Gibbon's *General Observations on the Fall of the Roman Empire in the West*. Professor Toynbee would probably agree that it would be fair to take Gibbon's outlook as the exact antithesis of his own, and the fact that both these philosopher-historians are vitally concerned with the fate of the Roman Empire and with comparisons between the civilization of Hellenic antiquity and that of modern Western Europe – even though at dates 170 years apart – brings them together to contend in battle for the same pass.

Gibbon, contemplating that dissolution of the Roman imperial order which was the theme of his great historical work, naturally came to ask himself whether a similar disaster was likely in the future to overtake the Europe in which he had been born and bred. To this question he returned a

* Arnold Toynbee, *A Study of History*. Vols. VII–X. Oxford University Press. £7 10*s*.

highly optimistic answer. His confidence was based on three main considerations. In the first place he believed that the absence of a centralized political unity corresponding to the Roman Empire in modern Europe, far from being a cause for alarm, was a safeguard against the stagnation and decay which he found in the later days of the Roman autocracy. Drafting his 'General Observations' sometime between 1772 and 1781, he wrote:

> It is the duty of a patriot to prefer and promote the exclusive interest and glory of his native country: but a philosopher may be permitted to enlarge his views and to consider Europe as one great republic whose various inhabitants have attained almost the same level of politeness and cultivation. The Balance of Power will continue to fluctuate, and the prosperity of our own or the neighbouring kingdoms may be alternately exalted or depressed; but these partial events cannot essentially injure our general state of happiness, the system of arts and laws and manners which so advantageously distinguish, above the rest of Mankind, the Europeans and their colonies. . . . Europe is now divided into twelve powerful, though unequal, kingdoms, three respectable commonwealths, and a variety of smaller, though independent, states. . . . The abuses of tyranny are restrained by the mutual influence of fear and shame; republics have acquired order and stability; monarchies have imbibed the principles of freedom, or at least of moderation; and some sense of honour and justice is introduced into the most defective constitutions by the general manners of the times. In peace, the progress of knowledge and industry is accelerated by the emulation of so many active rivals; in war, the European forces are exercised by temperate and undecisive contests.

Secondly, Gibbon argued that, partly because the geographical range of 'barbarism' in the world had greatly diminished since Roman times, and partly because of the new armaments at the disposal of European civilization, the latter was no longer in serious danger of being overrun by modern equivalents of the Huns, Goths and Vandals.

> Such formidable emigrations no longer issue from the North. . . . Instead of some rude villages thinly scattered among its woods and morasses, Germany now produces a list of two thousand three hundred walled towns. . . . From the Gulf of Finland to the Eastern Ocean, Russia now assumes the form of a powerful and civilized empire. The plough, the loom and the forge are introduced on the banks of the Volga, the Ob and the Lena; and the fiercest of the Tartar hordes have been taught to tremble and obey. . . . Cannon and fortifications now form an impregnable barrier against the Tartar horse; and Europe is secure from any future irruption of Barbarians, since, before they can conquer, they must cease to be barbarous. Their gradual advances in the science of war would always be accompanied, as we may learn from the example of Russia, with a proportionate improvement in the arts of peace and civil policy; and they themselves must deserve a place among the polished nations whom they subdue.

Finally, Gibbon took comfort from the thought that mankind through the ages accumulated knowledge and capacity which were too widely diffused to be wholly obliterated even by major social and political catastrophes:

> Since the first discovery of the arts, war, commerce and religious zeal have diffused among the savages of the Old and New World those inestimable gifts; they have been successively propagated; they can never be lost. We may therefore acquiesce in the pleasing conclusion that every age of the world has increased, and still increases, the real wealth, the happiness, the knowledge, and perhaps the virtue, of the Human Race.

In criticism of Gibbon's 'pleasing conclusion', Professor Toynbee, writing after an interval of 170 years, has some telling points to make. He fairly claims that Gibbon's picture of Europe's armies being 'exercised by temperate and undecisive contests' conveys 'to the ears of Gibbon's successors in A.D. 1952 the full measure of the change for the worse in the Western Civilization's prospects since Gibbon's day'. During the present century the nations of Europe have engaged in two struggles which have been fought *à outrance*, which have brought immense material and moral devastation, and which have burst all the bounds imposed on states since the seventeenth century by recognized international law and the 'general manners of the times'. To-day, with the development of atomic and thermonuclear weapons, mankind is faced not only with the prospect of warfare of an unprecedented destructiveness but even with the possibility, according to some scientists, of a total extinction of life on the surface of the planet through excessive release of radio-activity by explosions. In this situation it is no longer possible to share Gibbon's satisfaction in a balance of power

among a plurality of sovereign states as keeping the world safe for civilization. Nor has recent history confirmed Gibbon's expectation that advances in the capacity to wage war in an age of modern scientific technology must always be accompanied by 'a proportionate improvement in the arts of peace and civil policy'. In a time which has coined the ugly word 'totalitarian' to indicate an even uglier new reality, a philosopher of history may well regard Gibbon's optimism of nearly two centuries ago as completely unwarranted and as 'a classic example of the egocentric illusion'.

If, however, Gibbon were to revisit the earth and discuss the matter with Professor Toynbee, he might still make a case for his views of 1781, subject to certain modifications which the hindsight of 1954 would impose. He would probably begin by agreeing that he had been too sanguine in his forecast and that civilization had run into perils which he had not foreseen. We may assume that he would admit that the European wars of 1914 and 1939 had not been as 'temperate and undecisive' as European wars, if fought at all, ought to be, and that the invention of 'total' war, with weapons of mass destruction and agencies of mass propaganda, confronted mankind with an entirely new problem. He would probably allow that the numerous walled towns of Germany were no safeguard of European civilization if their inhabitants reverted to the moral outlook of the ancient Goths and Vandals, and that the forges and looms on the banks of the Volga were of no benefit to Europe if their owners, instead of using their power to curb the ferocity of the Tartar horsemen, were themselves seeking to emulate the exploits of Genghis Khan. He would certainly agree that the persecutions of modern totalitarian states represented a secularized revival of that religious bigotry and fanaticism which his own relatively sceptical and tolerant century thought to have left behind for ever. On the other hand, he would observe that the majority of nations were still to be numbered among those which had 'imbibed the principles of freedom, or at least of moderation', and that these shared between them the highest material standards of living, the greatest economic productive capacity and the most advanced scientific 'know-how'. He would infer that if these nations combined together for a common defence and maintained their unity, they would still be stronger than the forces of regression, and he would be confident that if the neo-barbarians could be held at bay long enough, the 'general manners of the times' would ultimately

introduce 'some sense of honour and justice' into their behaviour.

It is to be feared, nevertheless, that such a modification of his original forecast would not enable him to reach common ground with Professor Toynbee. For it would soon become apparent as the discussion proceeded that, whereas Gibbon regarded the preservation of Western civilization as an end most strongly to be desired, the contemporary historian took the view that the worst that could happen to it would be no more than it deserved. For Gibbon the higher type of civilization was essentially the creation of human reason, and the collapse of the ancient Greco-Roman culture was 'the triumph of Barbarism and Religion'. For Professor Toynbee, on the other hand, the essence of every civilization is its religion, and the increasing secularism of Western civilization over the last three centuries has been a kind of apostasy which has rendered its great intellectual and material achievements vain and sterile. He declares indeed in one passage * that 'the plane on which the decisive spiritual battle was likely to be fought was neither the military nor the political nor the social nor the economic nor the intellectual; for in A.D. 1952 the crucial questions confronting Western Man were all religious'.

Professor Toynbee's preoccupation with religious questions and his disapproval of the godlessness of modern Western Man leads him by a curious process of reasoning to minimize to the point of denying the difference between free and totalitarian systems in the contemporary world. We are all, he appears to argue, so sinful in the sight of God that the Western democracies have no right to consider themselves morally superior to their enemies. Speaking of Nazi atrocities, he writes: †

> A Western nation which, for good or evil, had played so central a part in Western history, since the first emergence of a nascent Western Civilization out of a post-Hellenic interregnum, could hardly have committed these flagrant crimes if the same criminality had not been festering foully below the surface of life in the Western World's non-German provinces. The twentieth-century German psyche was like one of those convex mirrors in which a gazer learns to read the character printed on his own countenance through seeing the salient features exaggerated in a revealing caricature. If a twentieth-century German was a monster, then by the same token, a

* Vol. IX, p. 449.
† Vol. IX, p. 433.

twentieth-century Western Civilization was a Frankenstein guilty of having been the author of this German monster's being.

It is no doubt a salutary corrective to self-righteousness to explain to law-abiding people that they have within their unconscious, or even sometimes in their conscious, minds the same urges and impulses which lead some individuals to commit murder. But it is still usually regarded as a matter of some importance whether people actually commit murder or not. Humility may be a cardinal virtue, but it is difficult to see how the moral standards of humanity are to be upheld if liberals must refrain from condemnation of genocide or concentration camps because the same criminality is 'festering foully' in their own minds. Too lofty an idealism may have the paradoxical effect of promoting the worst evil by denying to anybody the moral right to condemn it. This idea of human equality in sin comes out again and again in Toynbee's writing. Thus, on the theme of modern techniques of propaganda, we are told:

> Education was a two-edged sword which could be used at will, by the powers that wielded it, either for opening the minds of their fellow human beings to a liberating truth or for subduing them to a cramping dogma. At the time of writing, when this mental strife between Enlightenment and Obscurantism was raging *aequo Marte* in the 'democratic' as well as the 'totalitarian' provinces of a Westernizing world, there was no reason to take it as a foregone conclusion that an insidious Propaganda would win a permanent victory anywhere over an innate Human Intelligence.

Professor Toynbee apparently considers the human mind to have just as much or as little freedom in Russia or Poland as in Britain or America; there is 'obscurantism' in Moscow, but so there is in London and New York. His lofty impartiality will not allow him to show any preference for one side rather than the other of the Iron Curtain. He expresses his attitude towards Western liberalism by quoting with relish a story about some British and American representatives at a conference of the Institute of Pacific Relations who were trying to explain the principles of democracy (which Professor Toynbee derisively describes as 'this beatific Western institution') to a group of Chinese. They were reduced to silence by a Chinese woman schoolteacher who had studied in England and claimed that on railway journeys she had always been able to predict what an Englishman's opinions would be by observing what newspaper he was reading. Professor Toynbee seems to think that this sally was a conclusive refutation of everything that has ever been said or written in support of political liberty. It does not occur to him that the Western champions – who indeed were hardly worthy of their cause on this occasion – might have answered that the readers at least got different opinions from different newspapers and could freely discuss their conflicting views. In China to-day, of course, the schoolteacher, who has doubtless by this time become a 'responsible party worker', would not need to look and see what newspaper anyone was reading, for every newspaper in the country propagates exactly the same opinion and nobody may controvert it.

In any great political or military conflict it is always possible for two observers equally devoted to the cause which is at stake to make divergent estimates of the chances of winning. But their estimates are clearly likely to be far more divergent if they are fundamentally divided in their sympathies. The difference between Churchill and Pétain in 1940 was not simply one of military judgement of the odds in the war against Hitler; it arose primarily from a disparity in the will to preserve the West and its values from Nazi domination. A similar gulf divides Gibbon and Toynbee in their attitudes to the civilization into which they were born. Gibbon identified himself with the developing liberalism of his time, and there can be no reasonable doubt where he would stand if he were alive to-day. He lived in an aristocratic society at a time, when most of Europe was still monarchically governed. But condemnation of arbitrary despotic power and of religious intolerance and fanaticism is the keynote of his work, and in this age he would undoubtedly be on the side of the 'free world' against the totalitarian challenge, for he would see in the current values and institutions of the West the latest phase of the evolution already going on in his own day, in contrast to which Hitler and Stalin would represent a barbarous regression. Professor Toynbee, on the other hand, is profoundly alienated in spirit from the civilization which he has had the misfortune to inherit. His heart is in an earlier age of that civilization — the medieval, and he disapproves fundamentally of the course its development has taken since the latter half of the seventeenth century. He shares Mr T. S. Eliot's antipathy for 'decent godless people' and their impious works. In a revealing autobiographical passage he describes his spiritual revolt in early life against the complacency of 'an unprecedentedly prosperous and comfortable

Western middle class' which imagined in the days before 1914 that 'for their benefit a sane, safe, satisfactory Modern Life had miraculously come to stay as a timeless present', and that their world was the goal towards which all creation had previously moved. Toynbee found the remedy for this suffocating complacency in the Spenglerian interpretation of history, according to which human civilization has been not one but many, and each specimen of it must be studied as a separate unit. Thus he attained 'a standpoint from which alone it was possible, in his belief, to see in true perspective the whole history of a species of Society of which the Western civilization was one, but only one, representative', and he has, according to his own account, spent 'two decades trying to read the map of history from a non-Western angle of vision'.

Professor Toynbee would presumably not admit that it is an *anti-Western* angle of vision; he would say that he has merely freed himself from the 'egocentric illusion' of regarding one's own country as the centre of the world and one's own culture as the climax of history. He has become the 'spectator of all time and all existence', raised above the flow of history on a pinnacle of utter impartiality. But has he then no values of his own, no criterion by which he judges anything better or worse in the affairs of men? Indeed he has, but they are values antipathetic to those which have prevailed in Western civilization over the last three centuries, and it is this that explains his obvious relish in 'taking it out of' modern Western Man, and his *Schadenfreude* at the spectacle of the latter's recent tribulations. Western civilization is only one of a score of similar 'representatives of the species'; it has no special excellence and is probably if not certainly – for Toynbee avoids the complete determinism of Spengler – destined to go the way of all the others. It was only fully creative when it was thoroughly Christian and has been in a spiritual decline every since it began to put its faith in reason and science. Toynbee puts in the form of a speculative forecast his belief that the age of liberalism is approaching its final demise. Thus he asks:

> Was there any virtue in the religious toleration into which a Western World, disillusioned by the inconclusive savagery of the Wars of Religion, had subsided towards the close of the seventeenth century . . .? How long would Western souls find it bearable to go on living in an empty, swept and garnished house? And now that the discomfort of a spiritual vacuum had tempted them to open the door to such devils as Nationalism and Fascism and Communism, how was their vaunted latter-day conversion to a belief in tolerance likely to stand this test? Toleration had been easy to practise in a lukewarm age of Western history in which all varieties of Western Christianity had lost their former hold on Western hearts and minds, while these had not yet found any alternative objects for their frustrated devotion. Now that they had gone a-whoring after other gods, would an eighteenth-century toleration hold its own against a twentieth-century recrudescence of a seventeenth-century fanaticism which in Gibbon's naively optimistic belief had been exorcized once and for all from the precincts of a 'polite' society?

But what answer does Toynbee give to his own question whether there is 'any virtue' in Western religious toleration? It is an extremely ambiguous one, but the ultimate implication is that there is no virtue at all. Toynbee holds that a religion ought not to be intolerant, but he plainly prefers even a fanatical persecuting religion to what he describes as 'ideological low temperature'. Thus we are told that Communism has 'fallen into the aberration of lending itself to the mundane purposes of a militant state', which seems to be a sharp rebuke for the comrades, but the practical effect of this disapproval is cancelled by Toynbee's contempt for the 'beatific Western institution' of political democracy. It is in any case futile to reproach Communism for the 'aberration' of serving 'the mundane purposes of a militant state', for whereas a spiritual religion such as Christianity can exist as a way of salvation for individuals without having control over society and the state, the Marxist-Leninist faith is essentially political and has no meaning apart from the violent capture and exercise of state power. The question, however, is not whether Toynbee approves of all that is being done in the totalitarian 'provinces' of the contemporary world, but whether he is concerned to preserve and defend the system of civil, political and intellectual liberty established in the 'provinces' which he himself still inhabits. And the only conclusion to be drawn from a reading of his work is that he is not.

It might be supposed that a writer would feel that he had a stake in an order of society which permits him without let or hindrance to convey his message to the world in ten massive volumes, knowing, as he must, that they could not have seen the light in Moscow or Peking. But Professor Toynbee appears to be haunted by a sense of guilt at 'having it so easy' and to

suspect that it would be better for his soul if conditions were tougher than they are People of intense religious faith have always held that lukewarmness and complacency are greater dangers to the spiritual life than persecution and oppression. The catacombs may be a healthier environment for the Christian than cathedral pews, and Nero's living torches a brighter illumination for the faithful than the neon lights of a tolerated church. Toynbee does not wish to avert the woes that are to come upon the earth, but rather welcomes them as opportunities for the spiritual purification of the *élite*:

> If Christianity was to be requickened in agnostic Western souls through a winnowing of the chaff out of the wheat, this palingenesia could be achieved only through suffering. . . . Resisting the temptation to hide themselves in the rock and facing the blast of the rushing mighty wind that bloweth where it listeth, these pilgrims through the Valley of the Shadow of Death must let suffering do its unhurrying work within them till, in the fullness of times and seasons which it was not for them to know, they should receive power through the anguish of being born of the spirit.

Obviously, such a thirst for suffering is more likely to be satisfied in an age of Hitlers and Stalins than in a Gibbonian world of ideological low temperature. Suffering, however, can be incurred not only by emulation of the passive resistance of the early Christian martyrs, but also by the endeavour to defend an order of secular liberty. Unfortunately those who regard the latter aim as worth while cannot consider as allies those whose spiritual treasure is only in heaven. From one point of view the Yogi is the extreme antithesis of the Commissar, but from another he is the Commissar's fifth column; he is of no help to the free citizen who is trying to hold the ramparts of liberty, for he does not regard these ramparts as worth defending. When he further seeks to persuade those who are striving to uphold the cause of human freedom that it does not matter whether the Commissars conquer the world or not, his influence becomes a menace which is the equivalent of defeatist propaganda in time of war. Neither admiration for Professor Toynbee's great intellectual gifts nor respect for the high seriousness of his idealism should deter the liberal critic from pointing out that his teaching operates to the advantage of the totalitarian enemy. He is certainly on the side of the angels, but they are hell's angels.

THE CYPRUS DILEMMA

Nancy Crawshaw

When the Greek Government decided to bring the Cyprus question before the United Nations General Assembly the problem of *Enosis* entered the most critical phase of its seventy-six-year-old history. In the present crisis, political ideology and military expediency come into sharp conflict. Whatever the outcome of the United Nations debate, little change is likely to result in British policy, which is governed by considerations of Middle East strategy. That the dispute should have arisen at all between allies can only be regarded as a major failure of British and Greek diplomacy.

I

Scholars differ about the racial origin of the Greek-speaking Cypriots who form four-fifths of the island's population, but no one could deny that Greek culture predominates. The Cypriot Greek's yearning to belong to a country of his own choice is a natural reaction to centuries of foreign domination. The strongest argument for *Enosis* is the right to self-determination, and it was within this framework that the Greek Government worded its appeal to U N O. The fundamental doctrine of the movement, however, is Hellenism. Its spirit was expressed in characteristic terms by a Cypriot spokesman in London last July:

> Cyprus is in no sense a colony, although it is labelled as such in the British Empire. It is in reality a Greek island . . . inhabited by a European people of the Hellenic nation with a history of Greek civilization and culture extending over thousands of years. . . .

Race conscious and anti-colonial, this is the answer to British patronage and exclusiveness; to British insistence that Cyprus has never been part of Greece, an argument which exasperates because it ignores the historical processes which created modern Greece and her steady expansion.

The most fanatical *Enosis* propaganda tends to originate in Greece. The Rector of Athens University recently castigated the British with these words:

> . . . at a time when the ancestors of the present-day Cypriots were building Parthenons, upheld the ideas of democratic liberty with a Pericles, saw the true destiny of man with a Plato and an Aristotle, those who lived on your island were leaping from tree to tree in search of their food. . . .

Finally, the Rector pledged himself and his students to relentless 'wrath and rancour' so long as Cyprus remained British:

> We shall not desist from sowing the poison of rancour against Britain in the souls of Greek students. . . .

Enosis is popularized in the island by such slogans as 'Better to be with Liberty even if she comes dressed in rags.' This philosophy runs counter to the persistent efforts to convince the people that they have nothing to lose materially by severing the British connection. The leaders have steadily opposed economic and constitutional reform with the cry '*Enosis* or nothing'. Athens radio, now waging full-scale political warfare, warns against the acceptance of a constitution and denounces Britain for neglecting the island's economy. 'It was by design', claimed a recent broadcaster, 'that Britain allowed agricultural diseases to spread to the extent that they destroyed three-quarters of production' in the island. Poverty and autocracy serve the cause best. The leaders then escape criticism, and every grievance can be blamed on the 'Colonial Oppressor'. Constructive comment is perpetually frustrated, and important reforms, such as the break-up of Church lands for the benefit of the peasants, are indefinitely delayed, since they can only be carried out by freely elected representatives of the people.

The leadership of the Cypriot agitation was automatically inherited by the bishops of the autocephalous Church of Cyprus, which grew powerful under the Turks. In the island the Church has exerted a retrogressive influence in politics and education until a much later date than in Greece, where the Venizelist Liberals restricted the secular activities of ambitious ecclesiastics. British efforts to broaden Cypriot-Greek education have been firmly discredited as 'de-Hellenization', and a narrow classical curriculum continues to provide the peg for nationalism. Most Greek secondary schools in the island still follow a programme which is subject to the approval of the Ministry of Education in Athens. Funds are drawn from pupils' fees, from church and private donations. Many teachers are recruited from Greece, their pensions paid by the Greek Government. Every Cypriot Greek learns in church and school that the struggle for the 'return' to Mother Greece is his first religious, national and moral duty. The work is continued at the University of Athens, where many Cypriot Greeks take degrees.

The British authorities hoped that by tolerating the sedition which flowed from the pulpit and filled the Cypriot Greek press, *Enosis* might burn itself out. Instead the activities of the extremists thrived on leniency, and the only mass disturbances during British rule occurred in 1931 under a Governor of irreproachable Philhellenism. In recent years the constant vilification of Britain has made it almost impossible for the moderate Greeks who favour self-government within the British Commonwealth to come into the open, and the political forum has thus been monopolized by the extremists. The general public has had nothing to fear from the Colonial authorities in shouting for *Enosis* whenever the leaders demanded it. They were not committed to specific action by doing so, and failure to respond would have invoked the opprobrium of 'betrayal'.

Many mistakes have been made by Britain. To-day these mistakes form the hard core of anti-British propaganda. Some critics consider that a favourable opportunity for introducing self-government was lost in the years before the last war. Though the island's economic prospects are now encouraging, Britain's past neglect will not be easily forgotten. There have been major injustices, such as the Turkish Tribute which, until 1927, was largely drawn from Cyprus revenues. Even at this stage it would be sound to remove a legitimate grievance by refunding the Cypriot contribution for the benefit of the island. There have also been many examples of official tactlessness which could not fail to arouse Cypriot and Greek public opinion. Against the failures can be counted some impressive achievements. By any standards Cyprus is healthy and well administered; as an oasis of order and prosperity it is unique in the Near East. There is more justice and true liberalism in the island than under régimes which have passed for democratic in post-war Greece. Extensive Cypriotization has qualified the people for political responsibilities, should the

of Greek citizenship. Mr Amery's scheme would have expo them to increased competition in the island from mainland Greeks, without any compensating advantages.

The British have consistently refused to consider any alternative, and even to hold talks with Greece. This uncompromising attitude has been prompted by the realization that the moderate groups will not come forward so long as there is a risk of *Enosis* in their lifetime. Any constitution offered in the near future will have to include safeguards against a Communist majority and will, because of its restricted scope, be open to criticism. The acceptance of a constitution, or other proposals, would depend on the ability of the pro-British groups to stand out against the extremists. The loyal Turkish minority of 100,000 and the moderate Greeks urge the strict enforcement of the sedition laws which would give greater protection against intimidation. But deportations and press restrictions are alien to British ideas; they damage Britain's international prestige by exposing her to accusations of illiberalism, and risk creating martyrs. The islanders as a whole have not in the past shown the hostility of their leaders. It remains to be seen whether the agitators, spurred on by 'diplomatic' victory' at U N O, will manage to alienate the people against Britain to the extent that the island's normal life is undermined.

III

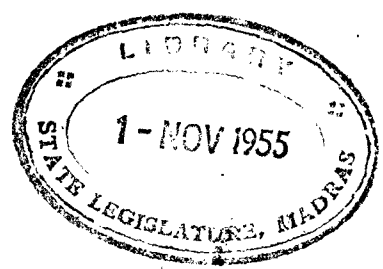
In the official British view, the hazards of *Enosis* would be considerable. Cyprus is the last stable foothold in the Middle East, and, with Malta and Bahrein, an essential link in the chain of airfields to India and beyond. The island's strategic value is increased by its proximity to the oilfields and pipelines of the Middle East. Since the war, Britain and most of Western Europe have become dependent on oil from this source. Moreover, Britain's military commitments in the Persian Gulf, in Iraq, in Jordan and Libya, are outside the scope of N A T O. Troops based on Cyprus provide a mobile reserve for the whole area. Use was made of the island during the Abadan crisis and the Suez riots. A conflict of interests can be expected if the need should ever arise to meet similar emergencies from bases on Greek territory. Greece's policy is dictated by her dependence on Arab goodwill for the protection of her minority in Egypt. In 1952 she ignored the rights of the Sudanese to self-determination and recognized Farouk as King of the Sudan. As an Egyptian newspaper recently pointed out with approval, she is one of the few countries outside the Arab bloc which do not extend *de jure* recognition to Israel.

Turkey has no legal claim to Cyprus, but her apprehensiveness about any change in the island's sovereignty cannot be ignored. Cyprus is over five hundred miles from Athens but only forty from Southern Anatolia. Ankara fears that an unstable Cyprus may endanger her own security, and privately the Turks have made it clear that if Britain gives up the island, the Turkish army will move in. Concern for the Cypriot Turks is secondary, but their anxiety plays its part in arousing public opinion in Turkey. In the interests of the Balkan Pact, Turkey's official objections were not publicly announced until last April, but they are well known. There is a further consideration: in Greece itself the Communists are outlawed. A clash between the Greek authorities and the Cypriot Communists could plunge Cyprus into civil strife. The powerful Greek Confederation of Labour is a militant campaigner against Communism, and conflict might thus spread in the trade union as well as the political field. Greece has had twenty-eight governments since the war, and almost every change brought corresponding chaos in administration and a fresh set-back to economic recovery. Though the Papagos Government has made marked progress, the country still faces formidable problems of administration, unemployment, malnutrition and disease. Without foreign aid it cannot even meet immediate commitments within its existing boundaries. Cyprus is not self-sufficient and has to be subsidized by Britain. Yet neither economic nor strategic arguments are likely to be heeded in Greece, where the desire for new territories is not matched by sober reflections as to how they will be financed. At heart many Greeks still yearn for a 'Greater Greece', for the lost lands of Anatolia, and even for Constantinople. Many hoped that their sacrifices in the Allied cause would be compensated by an enlargement of the nation's boundaries. But the end of the war brought no additions except the 'sacred but barren rocks of the Dodecanese'. Mention of Cyprus was discreetly avoided by Greece at the Paris Peace Conference in 1946. And the failure of the West, especially of Britain, to support the Greek appeal for the revision of the northern frontier and the inclusion of Southern Albania left a deep sense of frustration.

The Greek Communist Party (K K E) was the first after the war to press the Cyprus claim. Eventually all the main parties came to echo the Communists, and in 1947 the Greek Prime Minister stated that the union of Cyprus and Greece always had and always would constitute the 'unanimous demand of the Greek nation'. Britain's economic and military withdrawal from Greece, which started in 1947, left the British without influence and negotiating power once Greece became a member of N A T O. In recent years Greeks have tended to make Britain the scapegoat for the evils which have befallen their country. The decisive role of the British in Greek affairs during and immediately after the war brought them many enemies in political circles. To-day anyone who has a grudge against Britain – from ex-collaborator to Communist – joins with a disgruntled public to form a united front over Cyprus. The ordinary man, wearied by the sterility of Greek politics and the hardships of daily life, finds a righteous cause in the distant Cypriot cry for Liberty. He resents Britain's apparent tendency to conciliate the Turks, since Greece was an ally and Turkey a neutral in the war. He believes that the Greek security forces can easily put down the Cypriot Communists and their followers. He forgets the price Greece paid in the civil war: the part played by Right-wing oppression in driving many peasants into the arms of the Communists; the political trials and the concentration camps, with their legacy of lasting bitterness and new recruits to Communism. His anger is accelerated by rumours of British 'tyranny', by suggestions that Cyprus under Greek rule 'could eventually provide sufficient food . . . not only for its inhabitants', but for Greece as a whole. Though originally Communist-inspired such propaganda is to-day being circulated by the Papagos Government.

Bishops, editors, trade-union leaders, diplomats, teachers, and opportunists have all worked to promote the cause over recent years. The British made no attempt to counteract the mounting torrent of propaganda. When Greeks raised the question they met with evasion and finally discourtesy. The handling of the problem has always suffered from the division of responsibility between the Colonial Office and the Foreign Office, and the announcement that the sedition laws in Cyprus would be strictly enforced was one of Whitehall's worst blunders, because it took place at a time when feeling in Greece had reached crisis pitch. Yet Athens, too, has failed. The

British attitude has been highly provocative, but the wisdom of the Papagos Government's action is equally questionable. It has paved the way for other ethnic groups, from Greek Slav to Iraqi Kurd, to plead secession at U N O under Russian sponsorship. It virtually invited mass demonstrations which, as was expected, ended in violence. It has associated itself with a hostility towards Britain which may well prove as irrevocable in domestic politics as the anti-Westernism of the Arab leaders. No people pleaded harder than the Greeks to be admitted to N A T O. Western hesitation did not spring from any lack of confidence in the ordinary man, whose worth had been proved time and again, but from misgivings about the shaky structure of Greek political life. These doubts have been confirmed: once again the passions of nationalism have triumphed over moderation and Western unity.



'WE ARE THE PEOPLE OF BURKE . . .'

Hubert Butler

Is there a hope that a new age of candour and calm assessment is approaching in Ireland, when the critic will replace the conspirator, and emotionalism yield ground to reason? We are a pugnacious people and no one has ever successfully preached conventional pacifism to us. Yet often we manage to sustain our quarrels on the plane of conflicting principles openly proclaimed and violence is avoided, till some timid or intriguing busybody chases us out of our bloodless arena. We have many such people in Ireland. It is a favourite theme of theirs that controversy leads to bitterness and battle. But they are wrong. It is in dark, ill-ventilated basements that gun-powder plots are hatched, and it is where prejudices and resentments are never precisely formulated and squarely confronted that the irremediable explosions occur.

In the last few months we have sampled both kinds of combat. The seizure of arms at Armagh revealed what deep and secret passions seethe beneath the quiet surface, and what intelligence and daring they can enlist in their support. At the same time there has been a vigorous and sustained controversy in the press and on the public platforms of the Republic, both provincial and metropolitan. The combat surged round the spiritual and political foundations of the State, tempers were strained and furious insults hurled, but, as always, the most experienced and persistent combatants were the calmest, and the tide of battle, many times turning, always flowed against the gunmen. It became apparent that the stark antithesis of loyalties suggested by the Armagh raid, of Orange and Green, Empire and Republic, 'foreign' Pope and 'foreign' Queen, had no counterpart in our intellectual life. Our most ardent Catholics are often lukewarm anti-Partitionists and do not want to see Orangemen assailing 'clericalism' from inside the Republic. Our most vigorous critics of the Vatican do not share the political loyalties of the Northern Protestants. In this wa[illegible]ter there is always some reservation to blunt the sharp edge of our

[illegible]agonisms. We might allow ourselves to be muddled into a civil war, but we shall certainly not march to it in orderly battalions.

The occasion of the controversy was Paul Blanshard's book, *The Irish and Catholic Power*. It had been published in America many months previously, but a discreet silence had been preserved about it in Ireland. No reviews were printed, till at last a Trinity lecturer famous for his fearlessness gave a long and favourable analysis of it in the *Irish Times*. It fell like a stone into a stagnant pond. The ripples reached the furthest corners of Ireland and lapped round many sacred citadels. The controversy lasted for several months, and it became clear that Paul Blanshard's book and Dr Sheehy Skeffington, who commended it, had many influential admirers in Ireland. (At the next election Skeffington became a member of the Senate.) Book and controversy could scarcely have been better timed, for the Armagh raid had focussed attention on Partition and the Northern refusal to be enticed or bullied into a 'clerical' Republic. Blanshard states the Northern case with fairness, but I think he underestimates the hold which nationalism has on many Southern Protestants and the tragic dilemma in which they find themselves. They long to see a United Ireland, but any threat to the liberties of their Northern brothers would ultimately react upon themselves, and so they rejoice at Blanshard's detailed and effective championship of the Protestant cause. It has become plain to many of them that if the Protestant minority of the South is to play a part in the reunion of Ireland, they can do so best by standing up for their own liberties. For the links between National Independence and Protestantism are so many and so strong that even a Partitionist observer like Blanshard has to acknowledge them. However much the Protestants of the South have wasted their inheritance, they remain a focus of intellectual freedom. If they disappeared, they would carry with them many other concepts of freedom to which Irish patriots have dedicated themselves. In defending their own liberties they are defending Ireland's.

Blanshard's book opens more doors and windows than it closes. There is nothing in it to foster arrogance or smugness in the heretic, or to suggest that we can get on without the good-will of our countrymen. He makes some inevitable mistakes of emphasis and atmosphere, but they are of the sort

that draws criticism on ourselves rather than on him. How is it that the stock of Berkeley and Swift, of Grattan, Tone, Lecky and Yeats has become so inarticulate that they must wait for a knight-errant from across the Atlantic to champion their cause? For Mr Blanshard is no mere publicist; his book is luminous with the love of truth and with chivalrous solicitude for those who are doomed to misrepresentation and perhaps extinction.

On a different plane of conflict the Armagh raid provokes mingled admiration and despair. It was a brilliant coup, showing that our extremists possess initiative as well as devotion and powerful backing. In broad daylight, without firing a single shot, they walked into the British military barracks, tied up eighteen soldiers, including officers, and one inquisitive civilian, and shut them in the guard-room. They stripped the sentry of his uniform and put it on one of their own men, who then motioned a lorry from the street into the barracks. They unlocked the armoury and, with British soldiers passing to and fro, they stacked the lorry with British arms and in leisurely fashion withdrew by private routes across the border without once being challenged.

Undoubtedly this coup was carried out without connivance from the Dublin government, but it is the type of chivalrous and dramatic enterprise, which no public body in Ireland would dare to condemn, and, in fact, though it brought the two governments of Ireland into contempt, various county councils and public bodies passed congratulatory resolutions. The proposal was made that all the mayors of all the Irish Corporations should be assembled together to award decorations to the twenty heroes of Armagh. A week later at Bodenstown, by the grave of Wolfe Tone, huge crowds gathered by bus and car and special train to do honour to the great Protestant rebel of 1798. The principal speaker was explicit about the object of the Armagh raid.

> Let there be no doubt in the mind of any man or woman in Ireland on this matter. These arms were captured by the Republican forces for use against the British occupation forces still in Ireland, and they will be used against them, please God, in due course.*

Wolfe Tone, the founder of the United Irishmen, was a man of culture and education as well as courage, but to-day *The United Irishman*, the organ of the I R A, is a curiously dim production, suggesting that clear thoughts and brave deeds are no longer allied as in the eighteenth century. Art, like that which filters through the mission school to the Mau Mau, consists in standing the sacred shibboleths of the enemy on their heads. Take that pæan of triumph on the front-page:

> Twenty brave men and Ireland's name
> Across the earth is blazed!
> An empire tottering to its doom
> By one more blow is dazed.

Alongside this poem there is a picture of General Templer reviewing the troops at Armagh. They are presenting arms with spades, broomsticks, umbrellas and kitchen mops; large pear-shaped tears are falling from the eyes of the commanding officer. It is the sort of irreverent drawing that is made on the blotting paper in the Algebra class, but General Templer figures instead of 'the Head'.

In the poem God's blessing is invoked three times on the I R A; but it is the fifth verse that interests me most:

> (And again to Bodenstown
> We turn for strength to Tone
> That twenty deathless Irishmen
> May not stand yet alone.)

Now what are those queer brackets doing there? Printing in Ireland is often extraordinary, so it occurred to me that the poet bracketted the Tone verse so that the editor could leave it out (if more discreet) and that this intention had been misunderstood. For 150 years Tone's name and fame have been kept in brackets like this and let out once a year on a lead for the annual Bodenstown canter. He has no statue in Ireland. There used to be a slab in Stephen's Green marking the proposed site of a Wolfe Tone centenary memorial. It lay there for thirty years and then in the middle of the night the Board of Works removed it.

In fact Tone must be a nightmare to many Catholic anti-Partitionists. He cannot be by-passed, for he was the greatest of all the Irish revolutionaries. He believed that Ireland could be spiritually as well as politically united, and did not shrink from the problems that such a unity involved. He was the secretary of the Catholic Committee and an ardent advocate of Catholic Emancipation; he was sincere in his hatred of

* News has just come in of a further raid, this time on the British military barracks at Omagh. It was unsuccessful, but it showed that the speaker at Bodenstown was not indulging in empty rhetoric.

English Ascendancy rule. Yet even to-day any Irish group, which acted honestly in the spirit of Tone, would find far more friends in Belfast than in Dublin. The Armagh raid would have delighted Tone with its beautiful timing and organization, yet he would be appalled by the crude, ill-conceived idealism, which inspired it. He shared to the full the Ulster distrust of clericalism. He had stood up at the cost of his life for the rights of the Dissenters against the English government. If the threat to their liberties were to come from an Irish government, his sympathies would once again be with the Ulstermen.

Tone was an Irishman first and foremost, but he was unequivocally a Protestant. He rejoiced when the Pope had been conquered by the armies of the revolution. 'Many a long century he and his predecessors have been fleecing all Europe, but the day of retribution has come at last; and I am strongly tempted to hope that this is but the beginning of his sorrows.' But he was a generous fellow, as well as reasonable and modest. A Catholic writer, Sean O'Faolain, has well said of him, 'Humanity would have been safe in his hands.' Though he was a democrat, he did not believe that ignorance should be indulged simply because it was the fruit of oppression. He actually declared against the enfranchisement of the forty-shilling freeholder 'whom we see driven to their octennial market by their landlords, as much their property as the sheep or the bullocks which they brand with their names.' Nor did he dislike a landlord just because he was a landlord; he was a keen admirer of the Duke of Leinster and many foremost Irishmen were proud to have been his friends. What would Tone have said had he risen from his grave at Bodenstown to address that vast concourse there? He would certainly not have withdrawn one iota of his republicanism or his belief in the Irish nation. But surely he would have declared that to-day spiritual freedom is guaranteed far better in the Six Counties than in the Twenty-Six. For in the North no Catholic liberty is infringed, while in the South the Protestant has to adjust himself to many alien tabus. I must not exaggerate. The Irish are the most tolerant of peoples. The pressure which weighs upon the unorthodox (and I am not only thinking of 'non-Catholics') is mechanical, impersonal, remote. The Irish priest is usually kindly and sensible and often does his best to soften the impact of this distant power upon his heretical or unconventional neighbour. Yet the pressure is constant and inescapable.

Those whose temperaments are compliant or conformist do not feel the pinch, or if they do the British Empire is at hand to offer them temporary relief. On the lowest plane it will give them divorce, contraceptives and banned books; on a higher plane, by means of the press, the B B C, the post office and foreign investments, they can make their homes into an extra-territorial outpost of England. Many of the wealthier of our Protestant sporting fraternity, immigrant and native, belong to this group. For example, they more than any others indulge in discreet overseas divorces but they would never risk their popularity by agitating for the legalization of divorce in Ireland.

It is only for those who wish to live full lives and to play a part in the land which they claim to be their own that the climate of life and thought is fatally unpropitious. They emigrate or else sink into melancholia or eccentricity. There would have been no place for the high-spirited and cultivated Tone, for Emmet, Fitzgerald, Davis, Smith O'Brien or Parnell in the Twenty-Six Counties to-day. More serious than the dwindling numbers of the Anglo-Irish Protestants is the decline of enterprise, audacity, intellect in their ranks. There are very few now even capable of presenting their case with knowledge and vehemence. The younger ones mostly worked in England during the war and their experience there has qualified them to make the case for England, or even for Ulster, but not for themselves. They seem resigned to the slow and dignified extinction of Protestantism in Southern Ireland. They thought it a tragedy that Ireland should not be represented on the Atlantic Pact, but they take it as a matter of course that there should be no Protestant on the local county council, though not long ago the entire administration of the county was in Protestant hands. Big talk about world alliances and the Defence of Civilization is often a smoke screen behind which they can mask the abjectness of their defeat upon all the local battlefields.

They have dissipated their strength and their brains all over the globe in England's service, and now, though they were to devote the last ounce of their resources to securing themselves in their own homes, their survival is doubtful. They have done so much for England; can England do anything for them? Can she put some heart into them?

Surely England can help best by being true to herself, a

great Protestant power, which planted the most of us here under an excommunicated Queen, a Puritan regicide, and a Dutch usurper who considered his own coronation a 'silly Popish ceremony'. By claiming our loyalties for the Crown and the Empire, England will put us wrong with our own people, making our Church an alien importation and ourselves untrustworthy fifth columnists. She will embarrass us as Irishmen in the realization of that old dream of Wolfe Tone:

> To unite the whole of Ireland, to abolish the memory of all past dissensions and to substitute the common name of Irishman in place of the denominations of Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter.

We cannot ask our countrymen to put Ireland before Rome if we ourselves put Britain before Ireland. On the other hand, if England remains true to herself, to the Reformation, her example cannot fail to restore our confidence and strengthen our hands.

Yet the average Englishman, as often as not an agnostic, regards as 'bigotry' the protests of the Ulsterman, and is shocked to read the excitable speeches of July 12. He would have been particularly hurt this year to hear Northern orators complain that the Queen had subscribed to the building of Southwark Cathedral and that the Church of England was turning its back on the Reformation. The attempt to block the Martin Luther film in England, and the Royal visits to the Vatican also come in for constant hostile comment. The 'broadminded' Englishman – and does he not now represent the majority? – has rejected all the dogmas of the churches and considers that this aloofness qualifies him to view their dissensions with strict impartiality. Having climbed to his high safe perch by the ladder of the Reformation, he listens politely when he is told that it was a ricketty, ill-conceived contraption, and he looks down with benevolent neutrality on the squalid struggles at the base of the ladder between those who are defending it, and those who wish to snatch it away. Am I misrepresenting modern England? Here in Ireland one can only judge her by the press and the wireless. For example, though Mrs Dale of the Diary has abundance of 'nice feeling', I have never heard her express any religious convictions. I doubt if she has any or would be allowed to express them if she had. I am sure that in the Ulster conflict, though she would permit herself to be

partisan about the Queen, she would be very much more 'broadminded' than the Ulster government about the Pope. Yet in fact, by the very negativeness of her views, she is morally committed to the most extravagant championship of the Reformation, which alone made her 'broadmindedness' possible.

England is now ashamed of the racial arrogance and rapacity, the penal laws and the tithes, of her colonists in Ireland; and we, their heirs, are often uncertain what to apologize for, what to defend. We love our Irish countrymen, who are not by temperament inclined to inflexible dogmas and rigid discriminations, but we are easily misinterpreted. (It is not, by the way, true that English Catholics are more 'broadminded' than ours. They merely observe, as do we Southern Protestants, the discretion incumbent on all minorities, and the most influential of them are converts with a gift for 'handling' the Anglicans and the unbelievers among whom they were reared.) We often hand a complimentary bouquet to our Catholic neighbours, but we are disconcerted when some nimble Roman hand reaches out across them to receive it, and what was given as a courtesy becomes a tribute. And our politicians are also adept at exploiting any unguarded politeness. Last year our Minister of External Affairs, speaking in the Six Counties on behalf of a united Ireland, quoted, against the Six County Minister of Education, three Protestant bishops of the South. They had praised the Dublin government for its liberality to Protestants in the matter of education and appointments, and their testimony was later printed in an anti-Partitionist circular. Yet in fact the Ulster quarrel is not with the Dublin government but with the Vatican, which the Ulster Protestants believe to be the real government of the Republic. They were shocked and alienated beyond measure by the withdrawal of the Health Bill in the Republic at the request of the hierarchy. All the jobs and schools in the world could not compensate them for the loss of dignity, freedom and integrity which such an abdication seemed to imply.

And yet the ideal of a united Ireland is indestructible. Even in Ulster there are Protestants who have not abandoned the old dream of Wolfe Tone, but their modified Rome-proof programme of a federal parliament in Belfast, autonomous in all that concerns education and culture, seems at present as visionary as a single all-Ireland parliament in Dublin. Moreover, it makes little appeal to the Southern Protestant who

would rejoice to see a large contingent of Ulstermen in Dail Eireann. With such a reinforcement maybe we should recover some of our old intellectual vigour and social enterprise. But what would we gain if Ulster Protestants were isolated from Britain and yet unable to make common cause with ourselves in what concerns us most, our spiritual and cultural freedom? On the other hand, how could we urge the Ulstermen to join us without federal safeguards, if they had to surrender a single one of their hard-won liberties of conscience and judgment? The only guarantee that the Northerners would respect is that we ourselves had recovered these liberties. So it becomes the duty of every Southerner who believes in a United Ireland to fight harder than he has done hitherto so that the principles, which we accept in our hearts, should not be violated by our laws.

England can help us, but her help has not always been wisely directed. If it is the Vatican which has made it hard for us to stay in Ireland, it is the Empire which has made it easy to leave. Between the hostile pushing and the friendly pulling we are rapidly disappearing. In my own county of Kilkenny, the Protestant population has dwindled by more than half since the establishment of the Free State, and other regions in the West and South show a still more extensive decline. Most of our battles we shall have to fight for ourselves, but there is one in which England ought to join us and lead us: the most serious threat to our survival comes to us not now from the Irish Government but from the Vatican decree *Ne Temere* of 1908. According to this, all the children of a 'mixed marriage' must be brought up Catholic, if the parents are not to be convicted of perjury or mortal sin. A pre-marital pledge is extorted from the non-Catholic partner and the famous 'Tilson case' described by Mr Blanshard has shown how in the Irish courts this pledge now has the force of law, and unless both parents repudiate the pledge the Protestant will lose his children, if he attempts to educate them in his own faith. Our bishops exhort us with circulars and sermons against signing this Catholic pledge, but it is all in vain. In the parish which I know best there is now scarcely a family which has not given a hostage to the religious community from which some centuries ago their ancestors fought desperately to free themselves. There is anguish and remorse, but to a lover a religious pledge often seems an unreal obstacle, and sometimes the more

sceptical he is about religion the more easily he capitulates. 'After all', he can argue, 'do we not often make mental reservations to our religious vows and professions of faith?' There are nowadays scores of ready-made sophistries by which the pangs of conscience can be allayed, and because our faith permits us liberty of choice we choose to sign it away.

I am inclined to think that, under the same pressure, the Da[illegible]mily would reason in the same perfidious way. But, of course, [illegible] impact of *Ne Temere* is not half so violent in England. Where there is a large numerical superiority for the 'non-Catholics' it often happens that the Catholic partner, not fearing ostracism, will defy the Church rather than extort a reluctant promise. According to Paul Blanshard, in America this happens in more than 50 per cent of mixed marriages. In Ireland the Catholics now almost never yield, though before 1908 the old compromise by which the girls followed the faith of their mother, the boys that of their father, was readily accepted.

Before the Tilson case it might have appeared that *Ne Temere* could concern the individual conscience alone, and that the traditions of the British Common Law, which underlie the domestic relations law of both the United States and Britain, could not possibly be affected. But, as Blanshard has shown, [illegible] Tilson case is of immense significance for England and America, for it proves that, where there chances to be a Catholic majority, this Vatican decree acquires the force of law and can be used against the dissentient minority.

The danger was apparent long ago in the Church of Ireland and the need for counter-measures clear. One of our scholars, Canon Fletcher, writing before the Tilson case, urged that the Irish Government should appeal to the Pope 'to withdraw a decree, which causes so much bitter resentment among the Irish people and hostility to his church'. 'Why', he asks, 'should a foreign state dare to proclaim and enforce its foreign laws in our country?' And earlier still, our present Primate, Dr Gregg, the Archbishop of Armagh, had written:

> We protest against the impertinence of this Italian Papal Court venturing to dictate to non-Papal Irish Catholics and to inform us that mixed marriages before a Roman priest are marriages before God, but the same marriages in our church are only what Pope Pius IX calls 'filthy concubinage'. . . . This uncalled-for decree from Italy has thrown national

> concord back by a hundred years. It is a wanton attack upon Irish unity and can only deepen the fissure that separates Irishmen into two camps. . . . Resistance, in God's name and in the name of conscience and liberty, resistance is the duty of us all.

When they wrote in this way they still believed that an Irish Protestant could appeal to the state against the operation of a church law which was not embodied in the constitution. But they were wrong.

There can be no shadow of doubt that had the reformed churches launched such an edict against the children of Catholics, the Roman church would have fought it with all the weapons in its power. Our passivity in the face of *Ne Temere* wins us no credit for tolerance, but merely confirms a long-standing Catholic belief that our intellectual convictions are so vague and superficial, our feelings so shallow, that a church conscious of its unique heritage of the truth can legitimately override them.

What can be done? The fact that the Vatican cannot compromise has been accepted by its bitterest enemies, and in Ulster any reference to the possibility of modifying its decrees is met with bitter ironical shrugs. Yet in fact the Vatican has compromised as frequently as the Protestant churches. There was compromise, as Dr Gregg pointed out, in the original promulgation of *Ne Temere*; it was not extended to Germany in 1908 or since, for it was obvious that it would provoke violent conflict there. There was abject compromise too in the concordat which was signed between Hitler and the Vatican in 1933. For by it the Catholic bishops of Germany were required to take an oath of allegiance to the Nazi Reich. This was a humiliating concession extorted by fear. There would be no humiliation if, in response to strong and organized representations, a decree scarcely a generation old and aimed at the children of non-Catholics were to be withdrawn.

Canon Fletcher thought that our government's desire for a United Ireland would lead them to make such an appeal to the Vatican. But it is not at all clear that the leading Catholics of Ireland sincerely desire a United Ireland, which would bring into our state a million non-Catholics to challenge the Vatican supremacy. Only a great Protestant power could launch such an appeal or be listened to.

For England and perhaps for America the pressure of *Ne*

Temere is still negligible except upon the individual; for us it is life and death. But the English have been known in the past to act from principle, even when such action appears inexpedient, and they have not always regretted it. A great power possesses a thousand ways of peaceful persuasion. Acting on behalf of principles accepted by believer and unbeliever alike in England, they would put heart into us Irish Protestants and give us the courage to survive. Thousands of Irish Catholics, who wish us well and long for a real reconciliation, without which Irish unity is impossible, would rejoice.

What is the alternative for us? I do not believe that many Ulstermen consider that Partition can last indefinitely. There are four or five ways in which it may end. The Armagh raid and the Bodenstown orations prove that a violent ending cannot be excluded, but, should there be a civil war, is it not less likely that Ulster will be forced into the Republic than that the Republic, shattered and disillusioned, will collapse into anarchy or, renouncing all her dreams, into some sad, sour partnership with the United Kingdom? Our independence, like Grattan's short-lived Irish Nation, might dissolve again in blood. However it ended, a civil war would mean the final destruction of the Southern Protestants. It would be a bitter irony that we should be destroyed in the name of one of the greatest and most liberal of us, Wolfe Tone. Alternately the Six Counties might vote themselves into the Republic through the slow but sure increase of the Catholic population. Blanshard has reckoned that this might happen in a very few decades.

There is another way in which Ulster might be induced to capitulate. The Catholic crusade against materialism often makes a strong appeal to the materially minded, and, menaced by a left-wing government in Britain, the magnates of Belfast might look to Dublin for more potent guarantees of the sacred rights of property. Unity won in any of these ways would bring with it humiliation and discord. Yet it is against nature that Ulster should remain detached from the rest of Ireland. Only the fear of a greater outrage against nature, that all Ireland should be governed from Rome, keeps her isolated and hostile.

There is still nobility and self-sufficiency in the proud tradition of Irish Protestantism. We are the natural mediators between England and Ireland. There has never been a rebellion against manifest English injustice in which Irish Protestants

have not played a leading part. Our survival is worth more to England than naval bases in Ulster and treaties of alliance with the Republic. I would go so far as to say that the Protestant tradition, if it survives in Ireland, indigenous, articulate and unabashed, is for Britain a better guarantee of a friendly Ireland than all the arms in the Armagh barracks, all the Ulster M.P.'s at Westminster.

The Protestant testimony is not often publicly made south of the border, but now and again a voice is raised whose echoes are not easily quenched. W. B. Yeats in 1925, opposing, in the Senate, the motion to withhold the right of divorce from the Protestant subjects of the Free State, was concerned for a wider range of liberties than those which were then curtailed. Are his words an epitaph on Irish freedom or a prologue to Irish unity? The next few years may decide.

> I think it is tragic [he said] that within three years of this country gaining its independence, we should be discussing a measure, which a minority of this nation considers to be grossly oppressive. I am proud to consider myself a typical man of that minority. We, against whom you have done this thing, are no petty people. We are one of the great stocks of Europe. We are the people of Burke; we are the people of Grattan; we are the people of Swift, the people of Emmet, the people of Parnell. We have created most of the modern literature of this country. We have created the best of its political intelligence. Yet I do not altogether regret what has happened. I shall be able to find out, if not I, my children will be able to find out, whether we have lost our stamina or not. You have defined our position and have given us a popular following. If we have not lost our stamina, then your victory will be brief and your defeat final, and, when it comes, this nation may be transformed.

A COMMANDER AND A VICEROY

Michael Edwardes

'They that take the sword shall perish with the sword' is a saying of decent antiquity. And it may be true. True, that is, for amateur duelists and conscript private soldiers, but rarely for the 'top-brass' – professional leaders of men, who usually fade away as Governors-General of the more stable Dominions or as chairmen of nationalized industries where the only losses are in cash.

That is the modern way, but it was not so in the nineteenth century and its hangover, the early twentieth. Then the soldiers' sepulchre was not only the surety of a constricted monument in St Paul's (looking for all the world like some forgotten oddment from the Chantrey Bequest), but a damp, congested memoir as well. This was the 'official' biography that Lytton Strachey described as having an 'air of slow, funereal barbarism'. To-day when we open these turgid works, as sometimes we must, they give off a soft smell of decay, as if they had been kept overlong in a faulty refrigerator and there is a sinister growth in the binding of Volume Two. But we have no need to frequent the sixpenny shelf at our bookseller, for the tradition of the standard biography is very much alive – the style less slipshod, perhaps, and only one volume to get through – but still crammed with ill-digested information and historical half-truths.

It may seem unfair so use these words in introducing a review of Mr David James's new *Life of Lord Roberts*,* but his book has some of the more unpleasant touches of the 'official' biography: the lack of control of one's material and the reliance on second-hand evidence. Mr James's book lacks critical shape. He has the hagiologist's faith in the virtue of his hero and is ready at any time to knock down those cads who suggest otherwise. 'No man is a hero to his valet,' and a biographer is a sort of privileged servant examining the under-

* *The Life of Lord Roberts*, by David James. Hollis & Carter, 30*s*.

linen of a man's life, seeing occasionally his private-parts ar how undignified he looks without his false teeth. No man should be a hero to his biographer – at least *before* he finishes his book.

Mr James has attempted, has succeeded, in writing a military life of Lord Roberts, but it appears that it is not Roberts as a *soldier* that really interested him at all, but Roberts the military reformer, Roberts the advocate of National Service, Roberts, in a word, as *theorist*. Because of this bias more than half the book is taken up with the last twenty years of his life. Mr James dismisses Roberts's *real* military career with a sneer and a slight consolation prize in that he might have been successful in the Western Desert.

> It is as a General that Roberts has gone down to fame; but, paradoxically enough, it was as a General that he accomplished least. It was his fortune to live in one of the longest and most profound spells of peace that the world has enjoyed. Although his three great advances, from the Peiwar Kotal to Kabul, from Kabul to Kandahar and from the Modder River to Pretoria, showed plainly that he was a battle commander of the very highest calibre, yet he was never matched against an equal foe, neither was he ever fully extended. In his reminiscences, *Listening for the Drums*, published nearly thirty years after Roberts' death, Sir Ian Hamilton suggested that he was not equipped to fight an Armageddon like 1914–18. That might or might not have been so; but with his speed of decision, his dash and the amazing reliability of his instincts, he would surely have come into his own again in modern tank warfare. It would be interesting to match him in an Elysian desert against Rommel. He certainly saved the day in Afghanistan and he certainly saved the Empire in South Africa. But he fought no Issus or Cannæ, no Blenheim or Waterloo.

But Mr James seems to have missed the point and if he had known more about British-Indian history would have recognized that to use European wars as a yardstick to measure the stature of Indian soldiers is not only ungenerous, but grossly misleading.

Frederick Roberts arrived in India at a time when great changes were imminent. He landed on the doorstep of the Mutiny which was to shatter so many of the political and military ideas that had remained unchanged under the administration of the East India Company. He spent his early years in the Punjab,

in the heyday of what came to be known as the 'Punjab System'. From Henry Lawrence and his political heir, Herbert Edwardes, he absorbed many of his ideas on frontier problems. His later conception of strategic frontiers emerged from the work of Lawrence and his lieutenants, and he might himself have written John Jacob's words:

> You wish the red line of England to advance no further. But to enable this red line to retain its present position . . . it is *absolutely necessary to occupy posts* in advance of it.*

This is a classic statement of the so-called 'forward policy' which was to have such tragic results in the second Afghan War.

If Roberts inherited his political view of frontier policy from the Punjab, he received his military education in the Mutiny of 1857. The Mutiny was not an orthodox war on the nineteenth century pattern, nor was it the static affair of 1914–18. It was a war of movement, a modern war without the modern devices of radio and aircraft. There were, of course, bloody sieges, due in the main to lack of offensive fire, but it was essentially a campaign built around the 'movable column'. Roberts never forgot the lessons of this campaign: rapid movement by lightly armed troops, good artillery and, above all, adequate communications. To Mr James, Roberts has panache, some sort of instinctive dash which is missing from the orthodox soldier, but no war in India was ever orthodox and Roberts's 'dash' is that of a cavalry leader. Even when commanding infantry forces Roberts used them as if they were mounted. This is the clue to his strategy. To suggest that he was never matched against an equal foe is to ignore it. He was continually fighting against an enemy superior to himself *who used his own tactics*. The war in Afghanistan was a guerilla war.

During the Mutiny Roberts behaved like many of his contemporaries, showed great valour, won the V.C. and wrote home bloodthirsty letters. When he came to write his autobiography he looked back calmly on the hell of the Mutiny, seeing it in the perspective of experience. Unfortunately, his daughter saw fit to publish her father's letters written during the Mutiny, some ten years after his death. Mr James has been careful to select the inoffensive ones. But these letters give the

* *Views and Opinions of General John Jacob*, p. 379.

background of Roberts's life in its most impressionable period and it is a pity they have been ignored.

In his survey of Roberts's life after the Mutiny, Mr James displays his superficial knowledge of the realities of British India. His historical notes appear to have been acquired from an imperfect reading of the *Cambridge History of India*. 'From 1839–1842,' writes Mr James with considerable naivety, 'we fought the First Afghan War to expel her [Russia's] agents from Kabul. By 1878 agents were there once again . . .' He revives the specious phrase 'masterly inactivity' to describe the attitude of John Lawrence to the North-West Frontier, when in fact Lawrence was sensible to the futility and extravagance of a 'forward policy' and as Viceroy following the Mutiny worked for consolidation within India's frontiers, and did not see why he should

> employ an Indian Army on a service they hate and . . . to throw away crores of rupees on barren mountain ridges and ever-vanishing frontier lines, when every rupee is sorely needed by a Government which can hardly pay its way, and by a vast population which, living on little more than starvation rates, cries aloud to be saved from the tax-gatherer on the one hand, and from actual starvation on the other.

Lawrence believed that Russia could stir up trouble more successfully *inside* India than it could menace it from without.

But Mr James's hero believed in a 'forward policy' and was soon to put it into practise. Lord Lytton was sent out as Viceroy in 1876 armed with instructions to do something about Afghanistan. He did, and rather naturally took to General Roberts, who had similar views to himself. This is not the place to examine the paranoia of Lord Lytton, but Mr James seems to think his outrageous policy of threats and intrigue reasonable and innocuous. Neither Roberts nor Lytton had learnt the lessons of the first Afghan War which involved the destruction of an army, and the collapse of British prestige, but the Russians had. As the tension between Russia and England increased in Europe and Disraeli indulged in romantic gestures, 'the Russians rumbled in the vastnesses of Central Asia, sent an agent to the Amir of Afghanistan and hoped that the English would fall into the trap. They did – for the logical conclusion of their frontier policy was an expedition into Afghanistan.

So, on a carefully manufactured *casus belli*, the second Afghan War began.

Roberts, placed in command of one of the attacking forces, was able to show his genius for decisive and rapid movement. It was a clever strategy played against a wise enemy. But everything was not quite so easy as Roberts had hoped. The Afghans refused to stay conquered, and a campaign of retributive vengeance began. Mr James passes off the reports of atrocities as products of the overheated and virulent mind of Colonel Hanna, a writer on the Afghan War, and quotes a letter of Sir Charles Metcalfe MacGregor to Sir Alfred Lyall for the defence. Unfortunately MacGregor himself records in his diary* three items that confirm the indiscriminate actions of the military, and Roberts, as commander, cannot avoid blame.

> Heard that Mir Fakir was at Deh Bala . . . and, owing to some quarrel, was surrounded. He was brigadier-general and fought against us. I do not think that men who merely fought against us . . . should be killed. Anyway, I will not sentence such men to death.
>
> The Foreign Office said the punishment should be *short, sharp and repressive*. It cannot be *short*, unless we catch men whose guilt is patent. With all others we must enquire thoroughly. I do not believe it ever does good to kill men indiscriminately, and *I will not lend myself to it* (MacGregor's italics).
>
> October 22nd. Saved five men's lives to-day – that is to say, if I had not enquired into their cases they would have been hanged. . . . One of the accused was . . . a merchant, against whom there was a regular got-up case, the principal witness being his deadly enemy.

MacGregor was not protesting over the non-existent. Kabul, as one writer said, lay under 'the shadow of the scaffold'. 'Your object,' wrote Lytton to Roberts, 'should be to strike terror and to strike it swiftly and deeply,' and he added, out of his contradictory mind, 'but to avoid a Reign of Terror'. Of course, once started, terror is difficult to stop.

Mr James makes much of the over-celebrated march from Kabul to Kandahar and gives Roberts's diary of the journey. But it was not quite the triumph Mr James would have us believe. MacGregor's own diary shows that the organization was often slipshod and lets through the fact that the Afghans themselves were helpful. In fact, as he writes, 'People civil, they

* See *Life and Opinions of Sir Charles MacGregor*, II, pp. 135, 136, 140.

say apologetically, "by order" '. The order came from Abdur Rahman who stood to gain by the defeat of Ayub Khan at Kandahar. Without his intervention Roberts's force would have been sadly mauled. The march was nevertheless typical of the man – if it was risky all the more reason for doing it.

The Afghan War finally came to an end. On the throne was Abdur Rahman, for long a pensioner of the Russians. But he was a wise politician and his main interest was the security and independence of his country. All the objects for which the war was fought remained unrealized. India alone suffered. Her debt was increased, live-stock depleted, all because of the stupidity of the 'forward policy'. Roberts had much to answer for. His advice supported Lytton in his romantic delusions. But even *he* was impressed enough to write in 1880:

> It may not be flattering to our *amour propre,* but I feel sure I am right when I say that the less the Afghans see of us, the less they will dislike us. Should Russia, in future years, attempt to conquer Afghanistan, or invade India through it, we should have a better chance of attracting the Afghans to our interests if we avoid interference with them in the meantime.

But not so Mr James. Of the war, he writes:

> It was vital on strategic grounds that India's 'Achilles heel' should be protected, as vital as was the integrity of Belgium in 1914, of the same strategic importance as a bastion against Russian expansion, as was Korea in 1950.

And Mr James is writing serious history.

From then onwards Roberts's life went on in fame. Commander-in-Chief successively in Madras, India and Ireland. Well liked by the ordinary soldier, canonized by Kipling, to die, fittingly, amongst Indian troops, at the beginning of the first World War, aged eighty-two.

The Dook of 'get ahead', Kipling called him. 'From Subaltern to Commander-in-Chief' was the subtitle of his autobiography, and he died a Field-Marshal. Even if Mr James does not give us the whole truth, and tarnishes his hero by his Tory view of Indian history, his book is welcome, for it is highly readable, weighs almost half the only other biography of importance, and might stimulate some historian of British India to write the real story of Roberts's influence on frontier policy in the late nineteenth century.

It is pleasant to turn from Mr James's panegyric to Mr Gopal's temperate and important book.* This is a work of mature scholarship. Lord Ripon, a sadly neglected Viceroy, has at last received his due regard. Sent to take over the ruins of Lord Lytton's Afghan policy, he finished off the war and turned again to India and its administration. He was not a great Viceroy, imperial and imperious, not a Dalhousie, a Dufferin, nor a Curzon, but an honest man of sound principles and integrity. Where Mr James pretends that the frontier policy that emerged after the second Afghan War was only what Lord Roberts had been advocating all along, Mr Gopal shows quite clearly that Ripon and his advisers, Lyall and Aitchison, actually returned to the views of John Lawrence. 'To me,' wrote Aitchison, 'it has always seemed that masterly inactivity abroad requires to be supplemented by masterly activity at home.'

Ripon's internal policy was in line with this conception. Advances in local self-government. The notorious Ilbert Bill which sought to remove the rule prohibiting Indian judges from trying Europeans, and the repeal of the Vernacular Press Act. The Ilbert Bill was amended under pressure from the white community in India, but the gesture had been made.

Ripon, as Mr Gopal makes clear, was not a great man. His will and his mental powers were decidedly second-rate. But he had the right intentions, and his failures will be remembered when the grandiose achievements of other Viceroys are forgotten.

> Ripon saw the possibility of building a community based less on blood than on will, and to-day when his efforts have been completed and India is no longer politically *in statu pupillari* we can salute the dimensions of his dream and pay tribute to his pioneering steps.

That an Englishman should write a biography of a Commander-in-Chief might perhaps be charitably dismissed as an act of misplaced piety. But that an Indian, a *free* Indian only a few years away from the Empire, has praised a nineteenth-century Viceroy, should make us feel a small, but certain, pride.

* *The Viceroyalty of Lord Ripon,* 1880–84, by S. Gopal. O.U.P., 21*s*.

BEYOND SPACE AND TIME

Franz Borkenau

I

Among the commonplaces of the history of science with which we have all been made familiar, there is the legend that the growth of true scientific understanding has been characterized by the triumph of empirical enquiry over metaphysical speculation. Empiricism presumably means reliance upon the evidence of the senses, which raises the interesting question just what Aristotle was doing when he relied upon his senses to inform him that the sun revolves round the earth, or that all bodies tend to fall towards a centre ; as against e.g. Copernicus and Galileo who refused to take experience on trust. The fact is, of course, that distrust of immediate sensory reality is fundamental to science. The primitive treats all phenomena as real, whereas cultural progress has always manifested itself in the acceptance of a distinction between immediate appearance and an underlying reality transformed by the human mind and connected with the phenomena of experience by increasingly tenuous links.

One can see the beginning of this process in the ancient Near East, whose learned priest-astronomers believed the stars to have more 'reality' than the sublunary world. Pythagoras, Plato and Euclid regarded the realm of mathematical symbols as more 'real' than sensory experience, without, incidentally, being able to reduce the latter to the former. It is common knowledge that, in post-medieval times, Descartes undertook a similar unsuccessful attempt to derive sensory appearance from mathematical reality. That a genuine advance was made towards the solution of the problem we owe to his contemporary, Galileo, who inaugurated a compromise between Aristotle's naive sensualism and Descartes' mathematical intellectualism. The next development came with Newton, who managed to secure his concept against metaphysical criticism ('Hypotheses non fingo'). But his empiricism was only apparent. In reality he was convinced – as Locke was to state

dis explicitly – that the universe of mechanical categories is the 'real' world, to which in the last resort all sensory impressions can be reduced. Thus mechanics became *the* basic scientific discipline, a conceptual framework which was not to disappear finally until our own days.

Yet the late eighteenth century had already witnessed the first harbingers of subsequent trouble. Originally this was not due to the further progress of science, which on the contrary seemed to confirm the mechanicist world picture and its presuppositions: Euclidean space and an analogous time sequence. The first serious doubts were raised by Kant on epistemological grounds. Then came the discovery that it was possible to operate with non-Euclidean terms, though not to obtain a sensory representation of the new kind of spatial concept. Finally, at the beginning of the present century, there occurred, as we all know, the great dethronement of mechanicism: its categories were shown to be inadequate both in the field of astro-physics and in that of atomic physics. Science was compelled to postulate non-Euclidean space, a spatially and temporally limited universe, and atoms which had no mass (and consequently could not be described as 'matter'). These atoms, moreover, seemed to alter their position in (non-Euclidean) space in such a way as to skip the intervals between them. Some of this could be blamed on the inadequacy of macroscopic instruments for the study of microscopic processes, but other phenomena – e.g. the dissolution of the atom – suggested a fundamental indeterminacy of the process as such: that is to say, neither more nor less than the absence of causality.

Now all this would not have been fatal for the traditional epistemology if it had resulted in the development of a new system of categories, however remote from the senses. The real trouble is that there is no such system, and that physical science has consequently been compelled to operate in the newly conquered fields with a variety of different, and frequently incompatible, hypotheses. This state of affairs in turn was bound to deepen the scepticism concerning the ontological significance of physical research which Kant had been the first to proclaim and which Helmholtz had explicitly introduced into natural science. Such scepticism had in fact preceded the new discoveries – a phenomenon familiar from other phases of the history of science. Even before the emergence of the new atomic physics, thinkers like Ernst Mach, Henri Poincaré, and William James,

had proclaimed the ontological meaninglessness of natural science and stressed its strictly practical orientation. So far from buttressing the philosophical self-confidence of the physicists, the grandiose discoveries of subsequent years could only serve to deepen this attitude. To-day it has on the whole become common form among natural scientists to refrain from metaphysical interpretation of scientific research. Where this self-denying ordinance is not observed one either encounters attempts to save the validity of the classical spatio-temporal categories, or else a plain expression of scepticism (in the traditional meaning of the term).

Yet neither attitude is really satisfactory. The classical system derived its strength from the fact that, while it reduced the validity of sensory experience to an often extreme degree, it never really conflicted with it or went beyond it. Space, time, mass, measurability, predictableness – these are all categories which conform to sensory experience, so that the classical mechanicist system can almost be defined as an attempt to construct, with the aid of a minimum of sensible experience, a world picture which in principle is capable of indefinite expansion and development. Such a system was just barely defensible as long as the non-Euclidean geometrical forms introduced since 1819 could be treated as an affair of 'pure' mathematics. The moment one began to construct a physical universe on this basis, the link between science and the sensory realm had, as a matter of principle, been broken. Even were it possible (which is far from likely) to bring the various hypotheses of the new physics into conformity with each other (e.g. the strict causality of Relativity physics with the evident non-causality of essential aspects of atomic physics), the incompatibility of the sensory world with the universe of science would still constitute an insurmountable obstacle to the emergence of a unified system of categories.

The proper course clearly is to drop all sceptical doubt concerning the 'reality' of this whole realm, and to accept it as it presents itself, for all the methodological confusion this entails. That, however, involves an alteration of the epistemological starting-point. It is fortunate from our point of view that the collapse of mechanicism makes this possible. The leading role played by mechanics in the classical tradition was due to the fact that, apart from mathematics, it provided the only existing system which clearly was derived from first principles. With the

dissolution of this system, mechanics can no longer aspire to the place it once occupied. It has indeed become apparent enough that what the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries regarded as the 'natural' edifice of science – i.e. an edifice founded on a pervasive mechanicism – was in fact the most unnatural construction imaginable: nothing surely is farther removed from immediate sensory experience than a concept of external nature from which all the qualities of concreteness have been totally abstracted. If scientific development has done nothing else, it has it has restored the right to place immediate experience (and notably human self-awareness) alongside those mechanist principles whose hegemony in all methodological and epistemological fields was still accepted by e.g. Kant as the most natural thing in the world.

II

Now the point to be noted is that, side by side with the new science of what might be called 'depth physics', the modern period has witnessed the emergence of what is commonly called 'depth psychology'. The parallelism is not fortuitous, and if it has not hitherto been seriously investigated, the cause presumably lies in the mutual antipathy which has characterized the relationship of physics and psychology since time immemorial. It must, of course, be conceded that the experiential methods applied in their respective domains are radically different. While physics concentrates exclusively on the external world, the psychologist, though he views the objects of his study 'from outside', in the last resort reflects upon his own inner experience. It is therefore advisable to set aside, for the time being, what we have learned about the significance of unconscious processes, and to fix our attention upon the formal structure of the unconscious, as it reveals itself in dreams, hallucinations, and similar phenomena. In doing so one cannot help being struck by the curious resemblance between certain features of unconscious psychology and the structure of the sub-atomic world, as reflected in modern physical theory. To guard against possible misunderstanding, let me say at once that this suggestion is not intended to revive the absurdities perpetrated by early representatives of the psychoanalytic school, who tried to explain physical theories in terms of unconscious processes. The point at issue is a more modest one, namely the existence of structural resemblances, and their possible significance.

What these resemblances are has already been indicated: reference to the partial dissolution of the category of causality in modern physics. Now lack of causality is a familiar element of dreams and other unconscious processes. In dreams we skip over space and time, and the 'absurd' appears entirely possible. Yet space, time and causality are not entirely absent from dreams, any more than from modern physics. Apart from the fact that the dreamer is embedded in a spatio-temporal reality, the latter makes its appearance in the 'manifest' content of his dream. The dream cannot do without the spatio-temporal continuum: its pictures are spatial, its actions evolve in time, and incoherent fragments of causality are carried over from waking. Yet these elements of the dream are all constituents of waking life, comparable to the physical instruments which operate within the framework of spatio-temporal causality. The dream process as such seems indifferent to the causal nexus, whence it used to be concluded that dreams, like hallucinations, are explicable only in terms of a physiological disorder of the brain. To us it appears that the welter of incompatibilities present in dreaming is no worse than that which we encounter in microphysics, and if it is objected that atomic physics, unlike dreaming, yields coherent results, the answer is not far to seek: dreams, too, can be translated (by the analyst) into logically coherent structures. Doubtless the atom and the dream belong to different worlds; they are incommensurable – as incommensurable as thought and matter! Yet the philosophical axiom that thought and matter stand apart has always been accompanied by the reminder that the categories of thought have the peculiarity of being able to render external reality comprehensible, predictable and governable. When one comes to think of it, this curious coincidence of thinking and being – identity in the midst of total discontinuity – is *the* basic problem of classical and, for the most part, of European philosophy. Is it really so surprising to encounter an analogous relationship at the level of modern science?

The point can be defined more narrowly. Of the two dimensions of the spatio-temporal continuum, space ranks first in physics, time in psychology. True, the dream dispenses with spatial limitations, but then the unconscious – like all inner awareness – is anyhow not concerned with space. What appears striking is the loss of the time dimension. Time, if we are to believe Kant, is the basic category of internal apperception; that the unconscious ignores

it appears not merely in the phenomena of dream and hallucination, but in what Freud calls the 'timelessness' of unconscious reactions where they impinge upon consciousness. Thus, however urgent an action or a decision is from the conscious viewpoint, the unconscious may and does react as though it had an eternity at its disposal, as though neither time nor death existed. This absence of the time dimension is the obverse of non-causal relationships: what cannot be measured in temporal terms is not predictable, and predictability is a basic constituent of causality. Yet we find Freud asserting that the unconscious is 'strictly determined'; he even goes so far as to suggest that his own discoveries were made possible by a bias in favour of thoroughgoing determinism. How can this hiatus be bridged? One is driven reluctantly to conclude that a gap is bound to remain. This is one of those instances where Freud's attachment to crude nineteenth-century determinism stands in the way of a correct formulation of his own insights. Yet his formula reflects a fundamental datum of analytical work which merely requires a different expression. In the mechanicist terminology on which Freud was brought up and to which he adhered throughout his life, there is always one and the same causality which either determines or – conceivably, but not actually – fails to determine the processes of the material world. This frame of reference is entirely adequate for inanimate nature, though physics has in the meantime taught us that there are non-causal processes. But once we enter the realm of life, of consciousness, and *a priori* of the human mind, the contrast between timelessness and indeterminacy, which raises so many puzzles in atomic physics, vanishes. Here the absence of the time dimension is no longer incompatible with determination of a sort. Trivial though it is, one is compelled to stress the distinction between external and internal determination, between the physical push or pull and the psychological process. In the light of this distinction let us take a glance at Freud's development as a scientist, as it has been disclosed to us by some recent publications.

III

Freud was originally a pupil of Bruecke, himself a disciple of Helmholtz; as a theorist therefore he derives from Helmholtz, Herbarth and Fechner. His starting-point was in fact mechanicist in the extreme: every psychological event must have an

external cause. On this assumption, causation in the realm of psychology is due to physiological lesion of some nervous function. In later years Freud was to comment humorously on his early attempts to trace the secrets of the soul (or the psyche, as he rather prudishly preferred to call it) in the medulla oblongata. He had, however, broken away from this extreme attitude long before he made his first psychoanalytic discoveries. In his paper on aphasia, which was considerably in advance of his time, he showed that while there was a general connection between disorders of speech and lesions of the vocal organs, no precise link was traceable between a specific lesion and the functional disorder arising from it. The latter appeared rather to be determined in the main by the sequence in which the patient had obtained his command of language. This suggestion represented a definite departure from the notion of external causation – an innovation whose significance seems to have escaped Freud.

The first step away from mechanicism had been purely empirical; the next was virtually unconscious. When Freud turned to hypnosis and, to his surprise, was flooded by his patients with a mass of sexual recollections released in this state, it was natural for him to conclude that psychical disorders were primarily due to disturbances of sexual development. This notion could without difficulty be given its place in a general doctrine pivoting, if not on mechanics, at any rate on biology – a doctrine, moreover, which in the last resort suggested a physico-chemical basis for the whole process. Not long after Freud's first discoveries in his chosen field, this line of approach was in fact taken up quite independently by others, and eventually gave rise to the present-day doctrine of secretion, hormone disturbances, and hormone therapy. The really remarkable thing is that Freud did not pursue this line of thought which was so closely in accordance with his mental training; instead, as we know, he radically renounced all thought of bio-chemical causation and founded his therapy exclusively upon the unconscious mental processes of his patients – processes which indeed turned out to be largely founded in sexual experience. And the reason was that his first halting hypnotic-cathartic cures had given him an insight into that 'determination' of psychic events by repressed memories to the elucidation of which he was to devote the remainder of his life. Sexuality remained the core of psychoanalytic theory and practice, but a

complete breach was effected with physiology, its place being taken by a unique soul-therapy in which sexuality as a physiological factor represented only the general background. Inevitably the concept of sexuality tended in time to become more elastic, and psychoanalysis gradually was transformed into a general theory and therapy of personal development.

What then is the inner psychic determination of events in the human soul whose discovery we owe to Freud? The answer is contained in the therapeutic method: the patient suffers from symptoms which he cannot overcome as long as they remain incomprehensible, and analysis exercises its healing function by helping him to understand them. It does not do this by acquainting him with sexual-biological theories; instead it illuminates the repressed psychic process from which the symptom arose, discloses the unconscious function of the latter, and thus helps to make it meaningful. What this therapy brings to light are not causal connections but teleological ones: repressed desires, conflicting urges, and unstable compromises between instinctual drives and ethically or socially motivated prohibitions. The picture which unfolds in this way (though Freud of course would not have admitted this) is best described in Aristotelian and scholastic language: *causae efficientes* and *causae finales*, and the relevant distinction between external occasion and inner volition. The genuine novelty of Freud's approach lay precisely in the fact that, without denying the sphere of external causation (biologically founded instinctual urges) he made therapy entirely dependent upon the disclosure of the repressed *telos*.

In the light of this innovation, the conflict between determinacy and indeterminacy in the realm of unconscious processes appears capable of solution. The point to bear in mind is that teleological behaviour is not peculiar to the unconscious, but is even more characteristic of the conscious personality. What Freud really did – in clear contrast to his original starting-point – was to found a science which serves to subject the unconscious to the teleology of reason. As long as the unconscious had not been understood it appeared senseless, and its products, such as dream and hallucination, were regarded as absurd and capable only of explanation in terms of physiological causality. Freud's innovation, whose significance was veiled from him, consisted in showing that this semblance of pseudo-causality vanishes when the neurotic symptom has been

understood, i.e. assigned its place in a finalistic order. This leads to the further conclusion that what Freud described as the determined character of mental life had better be defined as its freedom. Needless to say, this freedom is not absolute. The human being is confronted with a mighty external world, of which his own body forms part and parcel. This 'given' situation is the substratum of human volition and action; but in dealing with this set of circumstances we do not mechanically obey their impulses: we rearrange the conditions of life in accordance with the principles governing the mental process.

It is, of course, possible to suggest that this apparent freedom is really nothing but another form of causality – to be precise: the determination of each individual action by inherited and acquired characteristics of the personality. Here, too, there is no sharp distinction between conscious and unconscious processes, and once more the way out of the difficulty is suggested by what we have learned about the unconscious. In this case the relevant phenomenon is the so-called 'choice between neuroses': a stumbling-block for psychoanalytical theory, but a source of illumination for the philosopher. Its significance for the subject of human volition has repeatedly been stressed by philosophically minded psychoanalysts. Briefly, the problem is this: if both conscious and unconscious processes are subject to a thoroughgoing 'inner' determinism, then it must be possible to co-ordinate at least the major types of pathological mental aberration with clearly definable disturbances in the hereditary constitution or in the development of individuals. To this end, Freud's doctrine of sexual phases appears to offer a favourable starting-point. As is generally known, Freud postulates a number of partial instinctual urges linked in each case with a particular bodily zone, and an interconnection between these drives; neuroses and perversions are then related to constitutional handicaps or, more important, to traumatic disturbances in the development of the respective phases of sexual development, and their peculiarities are determined by the particular character of the phase to which they are linked. Unfortunately this theory is not wholly borne out by practical experience. The weak point appears to be the doctrine of chronological development in the evolution of the particular instinctual urges, which in their totality come together to form what is regarded as normal sexuality. It is becoming increasingly evident that all the various partial urges are already demon-

constrable in the first year of life, from which it follows that the connection between specific neuroses and specific phases of development is beginning to look dubious. What emerges in practice is the concept of a syndrome of various neurotic and psychotic traits, between which no causally determined selection can be demonstrated. Incidentally, Freud himself on one occasion formulated this kind of insight when he remarked that it is possible to comprehend a neurosis from its various 'determinants', but not to predict its result, and that a different combination of the same determinants (i.e. the same unconscious wishes and aims) in the form of a different neurosis or psychosis would be equally plausible. This is as much as to say that, while analysis discloses the unconscious significance of a particular neurosis, the same meaning might have been fulfilled in a variety of ways freely chosen by the individual.

Doubtless Freud was unaware that two decades earlier, in 1888, Bergson had said the same of the operation of consciousness, and at the same time established a close connection between conscious and unconscious processes by his concept of the *décision profonde*. Bergson held that while we can always obtain some sort of hindsight understanding of the peculiarly personal (i.e. not conventionally routine) decisions of an individual, we can never, as a matter of principle, predict them with an adequate degree of reliability – a statement which happens to correspond both with the experience of daily life and with the unpredictableness of historical development familiar to the politician and the historian. It is surely no accident that this doctrine of the unpredictability of the *décision profonde* is linked in Bergson's thought with a belief in the 'timelessness' of human activity at the deeper levels. Bergson's *durée*, which he counterposes to the chronologically ordered time sequence of physics, resembles Freud's unconscious in eluding measurement and prediction.

It may be suggested that we have here the key to the paradox of those unconscious operations which are described as being both timeless and strictly determined. The determination in question is not one belonging to the spatio-temporal continuum with its causal relations; it is teleological, self-determined, and thus identical with freedom. What Freud did, quite without knowing it, was to dethrone the mechanicist principles of psychology and to reconstitute the ancient concept of freedom common to philosophers from the Stoics to Descartes; and he

did so by demonstrating that freedom is not arbitrariness, but rather the highest degree of self-determination in accordance with the necessities of one's own being. Presumably he would not have been too pleased to be told that this concept of liberty is substantially that of the scholastics, of Thomas Aquinas, of Descartes and Spinoza, and lastly of Hegel. Perhaps the only doctrine with which it is wholly incompatible is the existentialist one, which declares man to be 'absolutely' free, i.e. radically independent, and, in the last resort, god-like: an aberration as pregnant with latent consequences as the causal universe of mechanicism which now lies behind us.

NORMAN DOUGLAS AS MUSICIAN

John Davenport

In *Music at Midnight* Muriel Draper wrote that [Norman Douglas's] 'first twelve years were spent in growing up. His second twelve years were dedicated to music; he is an accomplished and true musician. His next twelve were spent in diplomatic service which took him to many countries, and acquainted him with many languages. His years between thirty-six and forty-eight', etc., etc. To divide a man's life into lustra, octaves, decades or dodecades is no doubt an amusing hobby, but it can lead to Procrustean distortions. In fact, though I agree that Norman Douglas's first twelve years were spent in growing up (faster than usual), Mrs Draper is afterwards trapped in her own abacus. Similarly Miss Nancy Cunard, in her delightful book *Grand Man*,* says that 'his knowledge of music was very considerable (he had been a pupil of Anton Rubinstein) and the study of it played a large part in his education, although he is dismissive of his instrumental capacities in that charming passage in *Alone* which reveals him at the piano – as a child'. After saying that 'Brahms, Chopin, Mozart, much of Beethoven – such were his favourites, with the stress on the first-named', she goes on to quote from the same book the passage describing how, when he was walking near Ferento, not far from Viterbo, there suddenly came into his head 'a wistful intermezzo of Brahms'.

> It seemed to spring out of the hot earth. Such a natural song, elvishly coaxing! Would I ever play it again? Neither that, nor any other.
>
> It turned my thoughts, as I went along, to Brahms and led me to understand why no man, who cares only for his fellow creatures, will ever relish that music. It is an alien tongue, full of deeps and rippling shadows, uncomprehended of those who know nothing of lonely places; full of thrills and silences such as are not encountered among the habitations of men. It echoes the multitudinous voice of nature, and distils

* Secker & Warburg. 25*s*.

> the smiles and tears of things non-human. This man listened, all alone; he overheard things to which other ears are deaf – things terrible and sweet; the sigh of some wet Naiad by a reedy lake, the pleadings and furies of the genii – of those that whisper in woodlands and caverns by the sea, and ride wailing on thunder-laden clouds, and rock with ripe laughter in sunny wildernesses. Brahms is the test. Whoso dreads solitude will likewise dread his elemental humour.

'Is not that', demands Miss Cunard triumphantly, 'written by someone with a great feeling for music?'

One's own feelings are mixed: is it, or isn't it? Douglas was twenty-eight when Brahms died in 1897, and it is important to realize that he was at his most impressionable during the years of the composer's greatest fame and influence. Even so, the thought of Brahms and those naiads. . . . The work referred to, so Douglas told me, is the A major Intermezzo, No. 2 of Op. 118 – a charming enough piece, but evocative of elves and genii, surely not.

To return to Mrs Draper; the suggestion that Douglas between the ages of thirteen and twenty-four applied himself exclusively to music is absurd. During that period he was at a Midland preparatory school, at Uppingham, at the Gymnasium at Karlsruhe, in Paris for a year, in London cramming at Scoone's for what was then the examination for the Diplomatic Service, which he passed (top of the list) in 1893. He was, indeed, taught the piano as a child; and applied himself to music during the six years at Karlsruhe, but not exclusively. He was equally interested in zoology, mineralogy, and the classics; and in acquiring French, Italian and Russian in addition to his native German and English. His interest in music, in fact, was what one would expect in a youth largely brought up in Austria and Germany, no more and no less. As to that story about being a pupil of Anton Rubinstein, it is just one of his leg-pulls. When I was a child I met several old ladies who were 'pupils of Liszt'. This meant that they had once played, perhaps, one of his 'Consolations' to the Master, been commended, even embraced, and granted the purely honorary title of 'pupil'. It was quite out of the question for Douglas to have been a pupil of Rubinstein's who, between tours, held a few exclusively 'Master classes'. The confusion has probably been increased by the fact that he was a friend of *Artur* Rubinstein, who is also a wonderful

pianist, but many years his junior. Liszt and the ladies is nearer the mark. What actually happened is told by Douglas himself in *Alone*.

> I once performed, not at my own suggestion, his insipid Valse Caprice to the great Antoine [*sic*] Rubinstein, who was kind enough to observe: 'Yes, yes. Quite good. But I rather doubt whether you could risk playing that in a concert'.

This has the authentic Douglas note. It is only a step to the pupil-master relationship. A master of the art of dead pan, Douglas was a gaily malicious leg-puller.

In fact, Norman's taste in music was extremely conventional, not to say stodgy. One of the paradoxes of his nature was that he was as much of a conservative as an iconoclast. At Bludenz in the Vorarlberg he had lessons during the school holidays from the local choirmaster, Joseph Renner, who took him through fugues and partitas of Bach and a Beethoven sonata or two. He also showed him some piano music of his old teacher, Rheinberger, 'delicate and profound stuff'. Now, Rheinberger was an excellent *musikant*, but no genius. Yet this is how Douglas writes of him:

> The music of the past, filtering through the medium of his robust country-bred personality, yielded a blend of autumnal mellowness. Rheinberger has none of the aridities of the town-bred composer. I feel sure his upbringing among hills and woodlands gave depth to the character of his work, and nobility of expression.

This is sheer imagination. Rheinberger's work reeks of the organ-loft. Hills and woodlands have no more place in his well-wrought but academic pieces than have naiads, elves and genii in Brahms's staid intermezzo. Incidentally Norman says that Rheinberger was called 'father of the organ sonata because he brought it back to its original purity'. It is difficult to see what he means. Rheinberger was a master of counterpoint, but he shows the influence of Bach less than any of his contemporaries, except in limitations of registration. He has much more in common with Schumann and Brahms. He developed the organ sonata from the point where Mendelssohn had left it, and could be called the father of the *modern* organ sonata, whatever that may be. 'Original purity' – no! Rheinberger was a typical minor 19th-century romantic.

I do not say that Norman was not a musician of the

amateur, drawing-room type. 'In the matter of sheer noise, I am something of an expert, having once, as an infant prodigy, broken five notes in a single [*sic*] masterly rendering of Liszt's Polonaise in E major.' His teacher, 'himself a pupil of Liszt, genially remarked, "Now don't cry and don't apologize. *A polonaise like yours is worth a piano*".' There are ironic undertones here. Of course, to play the work at all implies a degree of skill, and it was to keep up a certain standard of piano playing acquired from Albert Fuhr at Karlsruhe that the lessons from Renner were undertaken. There is a delightful picture of Fuhr in *Looking Back* – 'a sad-looking man, with a drooping moustache and a large family of daughters'. There is also an amusing comment by the teacher on the pupil's performance of a Chopin Mazurka: 'You made quite a pretty Ländler out of it'. This is revealing: we can hear the accurate but unimaginative performance – it was accurate, I am sure, or it would never have been made by the admirer of Brahms and Rheinberger, the conservative who even as a child disliked the iconoclastic Wagner, beloved by his Scottish grandmother. He was, after all, a fossil-lover. . . .

All this is not to say that Norman was unmusical. He liked music up to a point, but it was never one of his passions, whatever some of his admirers may think. Nor had he any real insight into it, any more than he had into the poetry of Milton. Look at the less than amateurish transcript (on page 332 of *Looking Back*) of the 'Neapolitan' fisherman's song, said by its gypsy singer to be the work of 'the great *maestro* – Riccardo Wagner'. It is a simple little tune, easy enough to jot down, one would have thought. Yet it took 'many hearings' to capture and is accompanied by clumsy triads in woefully uncertain harmony. Also, I think that a 'true musician' would have made more notes of the tunes in 'London Street Games'. The deficiency is partly, no doubt, due to his lack of real musical equipment; partly to sheer indifference.

In *Alone* Douglas wrote:

> I know a little something about music, having studied the art with considerable diligence for a number of years. Impossible to enumerate all the composers and executants on various instruments, the conductors and opera singers and ballet girls with whom I was on terms of familiarity during that incarnation . . . all of which may appear when I come to indite my musical memoirs.

Again, the tone is ironical, as when he announces that he has written 'a sonata in four movements, Opus 643, hitherto unpublished, and played the organ during divine service to a crowded congregation'. I think he must be referring to two separate periods in his life, the first being his years at St Petersburg in the 'nineties, when he was Third Secretary at the British Embassy. In *Looking Back* there is a fascinating picture of old Eduard Strauss, who came to St Petersburg to give some concerts with his own orchestra.

> He came, a decrepit and painted mummy, beautifully dressed – he must have worn stays – with grey hair and a moustache dyed coal black. These concerts, which he conducted in jaunty style, were a great success. The drum, with its nervous pulsations, is the life of such music, its very heartbeat; Strauss's drummer, for accuracy of tempo, delicacy of touch, and rapidity of vibration, was astounding, impeccable. At one of these concerts old Auer, violin-soloist at the Imperial Opera House, was sitting next to me and said: 'We have no such drummer in the whole Empire. . . . This man is not human: he is a natural phenomenon. He does not interpret music: he is the music itself'.

'A natural phenomenon': the authentic Douglas note, of the man more interested in life than in art. Douglas the historian, the chronicler of the curious, comes out in his note, in *Alone*, of his meeting with old Lachner, which made him 'perhaps the only person alive who has shaken hands with a man who shook hands with Beethoven and heard his voice'. Rheinberger had been Lachner's pupil at Munich. Did Norman know this, I wonder? It was the sort of link that pleased him.

The second period was between 1910 and 1914, when he was in London acting as assistant editor to Austin Harrison on the *English Review* and Muriel Draper had her studio in Edith Grove. Paul Draper, her husband, was a lieder singer, a pupil of von Muehlen, and most visiting musicians – Thibaud, Ysaÿe, Casals, and Rubinstein (Artur) amongst them – came to her house at one time or another to play. Douglas was a constant and a privileged guest. He appears again and again in *Music at Midnight*. Muriel Draper, like Nancy Cunard and Kenneth Macpherson, has succeeded in catching the precise rhythm and accents of his lively speech, as did Lawrence in *Aaron's Rod* and, better still, Compton Mackenzie in *Vestal Fire*. Aldous Huxley in several of his novels – notably in *Those*

Barren Leaves – parodies Mr Keith rather than Norman Douglas. Which brings us to *South Wind*.

Mr Keith is not a self-portrait. Yet there is a great deal of Douglas in him, and it is interesting that he should be made so completely unmusical. There is no mention of music in *South Wind* except of a derogatory nature. Keith says: 'It annoys me not to comprehend the power of music. I would give almost anything to the person who can satisfy me that what I hear is not a succession of unnecessary noises'. Later in the book, speaking of Pepys, he says: 'There is only one thing that troubles me about him – his love of music. It was so obviously sincere. He not only liked it; he actually understood it. Music, to me, is a succession of sounds, more or less painful'. Dr Johnson was totally unmusical, and there is more than a touch of Johnson about the pedagogic Keith, as there was in his creator.

There is, however, one illuminating episode. This is when Keith provides gypsy music for his guests:

> Occasionally the older people would pick up their instruments – bagpipes of sheepskin, small drums and gourd-like mandolines – and draw from them strange dronings, gurglings, thrummings, twangings; soon a group of youngsters would rise gravely from the ground, and without any preconcerted signal, begin to move in a dance, a formal and intricate measure, such as had never yet been witnessed on Nepenthe.

'Is this music?' asks Keith. 'If so, I begin to understand its laws'. This is relevant to the notes on *Old Calabria* and *Fountains in the Sand* which follow.

There are various references to music scattered through *Looking Back*. There is the dotty old American millionairess, Mrs Webb, who 'would think nothing of rushing from Paris to Vienna in her car to see "her dear Leschetizky". Vainly one conjectures what these two can have had in common, since Mrs Webb barely knew the difference between a piano and a pianola'. There is the discovery that Anton Dohrn, director of the Marine Zoological Station at Naples, was a friend of Brahms. There is Madame Olympe – a pupil of César Franck's – at St Malo in 1918 playing Beethoven sonatas. There is 'G. H. Townley', the Burlingham of *Vestal Fire*, who is stated to have been a pupil of Clara Schumann. I have sometimes wondered if this may not be John Ellingham Brooks, the friend

of E. F. Benson, who gives a very different account of his musical abilities in *Final Edition*. I regret not having asked him this.*

What else? There are the trumpets in *They Went*. That is all. It is a short list of references for an 'accomplished musician' who wrote over twenty books. I think the truth of the matter is that Norman had at one time been interested in music and that quite suddenly he became indifferent to it. This is not so uncommon a phenomenon as one might think. One of the most musical men I ever knew was afflicted – there is surely no other word for it – in the same way. This was Balfour Gardiner, who not only abandoned composition but could not even bear to hear music played, although he enjoyed the company of his innumerable musical friends. In his case, it was perhaps due to an immense fastidiousness, combined with intense self-criticism. In Norman's case I think music simply got crowded out. There were other more important things in life to enjoy. I could never get him to go to a concert, although I do remember one afternoon in London playing for him (Bach and Brahms), which he professed to enjoy. He preferred nature to art; he was no æsthete, with his robust extravert's nature, his insatiable curiosity. His finest writing about music is to be found here and there in his second and third books, *Fountains in the Sand* and *Old Calabria*, not in the later *Alone* or *Looking Back*. Here music is related to nature and to life; it is part of the texture.

In Chapter 20 of *Old Calabria* he describes a mountain festival, 'a vast picnic in honour of the Virgin', the Madonna di Polino:

> Two thousand persons are encamped about the chapel, amid a formidable army of donkeys and mules whose braying mingles with the pastoral music of reeds and bagpipes – bagpipes of two kinds, the common Calabrian variety and that of Basilicata, much larger and with a base key which will soon cease to exist. . . . On all sides picturesque groups of dancers indulge in the old peasant's measure, the *pecorara*, to the droning of bagpipes – a demure kind of tarantella.

He falls asleep, to dream of Tunisia:

> . . . Methought I heard the guttural yells of the fruit-vendors, musketry firing, braying of asses, the demoniacal

* Sir Compton Mackenzie assures me that 'Townley' and Brooks were totally dissimilar. 'Townley' – the Burlingham of *Vestal Fire* – *was* a first-rate pianist. His real name was Thornton and he invented the dinner jacket. Sir Compton also tells me that Norman, during his Capri period, enjoyed Wagner played on gramophone records, F F F !!!

groans of the camels – was it really a camel? No. It was something infinitely worse, and within a few feet of my ears. I sprang out of bed. There, at the very window, stood a youth extracting unearthly noises out of the Basilicata bagpipe. To be sure! I remembered expressing an interest in this rare instrument to one of my hosts who, with subtle delicacy, must have ordered the boy to give me a special taste of his quality.

The festival ends in a fantastic procession:

> . . . like a many-coloured serpent it wound out of the chapel, writhed through the intricacies of the pathway, then unrolled itself freely, in splendid convolutions, about the sunlit meadows, saluted by the crash of mortars, bursts of military music from the band, chanting priests and women, and all the bagpipers congregated in a mass, each playing his own favourite tune.

This is admirable: one can both see and hear. Excellent, too, is the passage describing his search for the double tibia:

> The old Albanian guitar of nine strings has already died out, and the double tibia – *biforem dat tibia cantum* – will presently follow suit. This instrument, familiar from classical sculpture and lore, and still used in Sicily and Sardinia, was once a favourite with the Sila shepherds, who called it 'fischietto a pariglia'. But some years ago I vainly sought it in the central Sila; the answer to my enquiries was everywhere the same: they knew it quite well; so and so used to play it: certain persons in certain villages still made it – they described it accurately enough, but could not produce a specimen. Single pipe, yes; and bagpipes galore, but the *tibia pares* were out of fashion whenever I asked for them. Here in the Greek Sila, I was more fortunate. A boy at the village of Macchia possessed a pair which he obligingly gave me, after playing a song – a farewell song – a plaintive ditty that required, none the less, an excellent pair of lungs, on account of the two mouthpieces. Melodies on this double flageolet are played principally at Christmas time. The two reeds are about twenty-five centimetres in length, and made of hollow cane; in my specimen, the left hand controls four, the other six holes: the Albanian name of the instrument is 'fiscarol'.

This nice mixture of practical information combining ancient tradition and present practice is Norman at his best. Like John Aubrey, he loved to preserve such things from possible oblivion. 'Put it down, put it down', was a constant cry. There are several passages in *Old Calabria* testifying to his

awareness of music – the section on 'The Angel of Manfredonia' has a description of a religious ceremony in a cave to the accompaniment of

> cheerful operatic airs from an asthmatic organ; the water drops ceaselessly from the rocky vault on to the devout heads of kneeling worshippers that cover the floor, lighted candle in hand, rocking themselves ecstatically and droning and chanting.

We are grateful here for his knowledge of music when we are told that the organist's repertory included extracts from *La forza del destino* and the waltz from Boito's *Mefistofele*. . . .

Old Calabria also contains a conversation which I think may have had a great effect on Norman. In any case, it serves to show how his feelings towards music were probably changing at this period. *Old Calabria* was written in London between 1912 and 1915, when it was published. It was the fruit of many expeditions stretching over the years from 1907 onwards both to Calabria and, Norman would add, to the British Museum. The conversation takes place in the chapter 'Chaos', an account of Messina after the appalling earthquake of 1908, mingled with happier memories of the city before the disaster. Norman recounts how in the public gardens, at night

> they were playing, if I remember rightly, the ever-popular *Aida;* other items followed later – more ambitious ones; a Hungarian rhapsody, Berlioz, a selection from Wagner. 'Musica filosophica,' said my neighbour, alluding to the German composer. . . . '*Non va in Sicilia* – it won't do in this country. Not that we fail to appreciate your great thinkers,' he added. 'We read and admire your Schopenhauer, your Spencer. They give passable representations of Wagner in Naples. But –' 'The climate?' 'Precisely. I have travelled, sir; and knowing your Berlin, and London and Boston, have been able to observe how ill our Italian architecture looks under your grey skies, how ill our music sounds among the complex appliances of your artificial life. It has made you earnest, this climate of yours, and prone to take earnestly your very pastimes. Music, for us, has remained what it was in the Golden Age – an unburdening of the soul on a summer's night.'

Here is the clue to the later indifference to '*musica filosophica*'. Norman himself left London in 1917, before the publication of *South Wind*. He shed the 'complex appliances of (our) artificial

life', northern music amongst them. (He would certainly never have returned to England in 1942 but for the exigencies of war.)

This was the last of the four decisive turning points of his life. The first was when he left St Petersburg in 1898, married, and settled in the Villa Maya on the Posilipo; the second was his divorce in March 1904, after which he moved over to Capri from the mainland and began 'pleasuring his daimon' which included planting and building the villa Daphne and starting to write in earnest; the third was his enforced return to London in 1910. I see that six years separate each date, and apologize to the shade of Muriel Draper. He was twenty-nine when he married and left the Diplomatic Service, thirty-five when he divorced his wife, forty-one when he returned to London, and forty-eight when he departed in 1917.

The reference to Brahms in *Alone* (written between 1918 and 1920) is a hangover, as it were. This explains its oddity. He is half in one world, half in another; and of course that Austrian birth and German upbringing couldn't be chucked completely overboard. The musical training, less elaborate than Muriel Draper and Nancy Cunard imply, was not wasted, however; as I hope I have made clear. Just two more quotations, this time from *Fountains in the Sand*, which was mostly written early in 1910, although not published until two years later. In the first he is describing some itinerant players near the town of Gafsa:

> This morning there arrived a blind singer or bard; he was led by two boys who accompanied his extemporaneous verses – one of them tapping with a pebble on an empty sardine tin, while the other belaboured a beer-bottle with a rusty nail: both solemn as archangels; there was also a professional accompanist, who screwed his mouth awry and blew sideways into a tall flute, his eyes half-closed in ecstatic rapture. . . . The music was not altogether original; it reminded me, with its mechanical punctuations, of a concerto by Paderewski which contains an exquisite movement between piano and kettle-drum – since the flute, which ought to have supported the voice, was apparently dumb, although the artist puffed out his cheeks as if his life depended on it.

The other quotation comes from Chapter 9, and is the most revealing of all. This is what he felt that music should be, this is the music his hellenistic, sun-loving nature loved best. He is writing of

> a charming Theocritean bit of country. . . . Only olives grow here; seventy-five thousand of them. Beside their silvery-grey trunks you may see herds of small but brightly tinted oxen reposing; the ground is pied with daisies and buttercups, oleanders border the streamlets, and the plaintive notes of the *djouak*, the pastoral reed of the nomads, resound from some hidden copse.

A far cry, this, from Brahms and Rheinberger; but where he wished to be. Yet the last time I saw him, three months before he died on Capri, the old man – he was nearly eighty-three – played me a gramophone record of the Brahms Intermezzo in A major, op. 118 No. 2. The pianist was Artur Rubinstein. High up on the gale-ridden island one forgot the sun-learned lessons; one was only concious of being with the last, and the most cherished, of the Victorians.

IN FAIR VERONA

Roy Walker

The stage should show a synthesis of speech and spectacle. Too often it has been a battlefield over which first one and then the other element has flaunted its temporary triumph. The Elizabethan stage was by no means the austere affair of bare boards and a passion that our more puritanical reformers pretend, and it affords no legitimate precedent for skeletal Shakespeare. But it was a theatre in which the spoken word was predominant, the poetry painted the picture and the actor dominated the scene. Towards the end of the last century, however, the spectacular element had so far gained the upper hand that Shakespeare's texts were slaughtered to suit the scene-shifters. The very proper reaction to this has, like most reactions, gone careering towards the opposite extreme. To hear some enthusiasts talk, and managements who need to economize on production costs are unlikely to discourage them, you might suppose that there was something immoral about sumptuous settings for Shakespeare. In fact, the only sane objective for Shakespearian producers in the twentieth century is to create a new synthesis of speech and spectacle. To do this it is necessary to reinterpret the second term. The nineteenth century notion that the true end of scenic art was to lend an air of verisimilitude to an otherwise bald and unconvincing narrative by a precise archæological and chronological pedantry was possible only in a time of dramatic decadence. The ultimate objective is nothing less than the visual equivalent of the dramatic poem itself. Only an artist who has had a clear vision of the values, the dominant symbols and the inner movement of a Shakespearian play can hope to create a setting for it that is not, in the last analysis, a nuisance. Even on the modern stage the technical difficulties of doing so may be virtually insuperable.

The stage's extremity is the screen's opportunity. Comparatively speaking, the camera has no visual obstacles to overcome, it need never face a producer with the choice between con-

tinuity of speech and action and the fullest variety of illustrative or interpretative scenery. What an opportunity; and at the same time, what a temptation. Every art has not only its true centre, but the bias it was born with. Drama, as the art of the spoken word, tends to look down on decor as an incidental trimming. The originally mute cinema habitually regards dialogue as a mere auxiliary to photogenic action, and like the fidgety adolescent it is cannot keep still for a moment without feeling uncomfortable. If, in the popular poll, the eyes have it – and to see what ugly rubbish they will put up with rather than read or listen it is only necessary to look in on the average television play, which seems to attain the visual standards of a poor supporting film of some fifteen or twenty years ago – that is because our shallowly extraverted age seems to have no philosophy of the relative importance and right relationship of the inner and outer aspects of experience, and what is worse no real sense of it. This sense, quite as much as the particular facilities offered by various artistic media, should guide our use of verbal and visual resources in the performing arts. However much it may have surprised the sort of theorists who are really only talkative technicians, the most completely successful stage productions of Shakespeare in recent years have been those in which the visual patterns partly translated the verbal ones into their own medium. Conversely, the best Shakespearian films have not been those of Orson Welles, who at least interpreted them in what were regarded as the more cinematic terms, but those of Olivier and Mankiewicz, where the characters were allowed to pause and think aloud without having their soliloquies sliced or spoken against a background that was constantly calling attention to itself by showing itself off from different angles every other moment.

If, as I think cannot be too often repeated, the film can never compete with the stage as a medium of dramatic art, of which the essence lies in the relationship that can be established between the actor and the audience in whose actual presence he is performing, it could, in my opinion, produce more complete integrations of verbal and visual image than any stage production, though there is always the danger of over-interpretation, of providing a sort of strip-cartoon equivalent to the rising tide of footnotes on which Shakespeare's lines float uneasily in the more learned modern editions. Renato Castellani's film of *Romeo and Juliet* is, however, the modern equiva-

kiss her, returns asking rather peevishly 'Where's he gone?' and shows no apparent interest in the other departing gentlemen. Most of the foreboding notes have disappeared from the text, there is no glimpse of starry sky in the balcony scene, Juliet pours out the drug from the vial into a glass as though taking medicine, and – another dramatic balance missed – Romeo buys no poison from an apothecary, but is content to stab himself in the tomb. On the other hand, Castellani has expanded to an episode the misadventure of Friar John that causes the letter to go astray. Some of these points, and it would be possible to make as many more, are not alterations made in the interests of spectacle, and I am afraid they therefore show that the adapter's failure to grasp the pattern of the tragedy goes deeper. Some of his inventions are, however, excellent. A massive iron grille separates Romeo and Juliet as the Friar marries them, a visible symbol of the barrier between their loves. And Juliet's wedding dress is hung on a basket-work lay figure which somehow looks like a hollow mockery, a sinister forewarning of the young bride dead and shrunken to a skeleton.

Not much acting has been called for, and not much supplied. The camera is almost a substitute for it, so rich are the visual impressions. Repose, certain angles of the head and occasional pleasure or agitation are almost all that the director seems to have required of his players. When one recalls John Barrymore's crazy delivery of the Queen Mab lines, in the American film of *Romeo and Juliet* twenty years ago, and the superbly sharp speech that matched the skilled swordsmanship of Basil Rathbone's Tybalt – I am interested to see from a recent book that these are the performances that remain fresh in Paul Dehn's memory too – one realizes how much is missing from Castellani's film. To be sure there is Sir John Gielgud to speak the prologue. Unfortunately nothing in the subsequent film comes anywhere near that masterly miniature. Susan Shentall speaks Juliet sensibly and sensitively, but her voice is breathy and apparently limited in range. Among other cuts she loses her denunciation of the Nurse – Pandar's indubitable predecessor – 'Ancient damnation!' No one could say that of Flora Robson's Nurse, anyway, who is a dear old soul. So is Mervyn Johns's Friar Laurence, what with starting lines three times over, having a little Latin back-chat with the brothers and keeping a pet rabbit. Norman Wooland plays Paris as though

he were still playing Horatio in Olivier's film, and that is about all except for Sebastian Cabot's Capulet, an inflated Philip Harben. There is still Romeo to be considered, or what Mercutio called (though not in this version) Romeo without a roe. Laurence Harvey is not exactly fishified, but he never suggests a grand passion. Indeed both lovers fail to generate the creative ecstasy that, even in death, brings together the sundered families. This is traditionally suggested by allowing the dead lovers to lie one across the other in what is half an embrace. In the film they both die on the floor and are neatly laid out side by side in the cathedral when the reconciliation of their fathers takes place. No wonder nobody says anything about putting up solid gold statues to them. Even Oscars would scarcely be deserved.

The limitations of Mr Harvey's Romeo have been underlined by his stage performance of the same part at Stratford this year. He quite simply failed to fill it. It is time the Old Vic dropped its emergency measure of giving leading roles to film stars because they have the largest following; and perhaps the failure of Laurence Harvey's Romeo will warn the Stratford Governors in time. The real and very considerable virtues of the Stratford *Romeo and Juliet* lay mainly in the production rather than the acting. So do the real qualities of Castellani's film. But in the significant use of spectacle Glen Byam Shaw with much more limited visual resources makes rings round the Italian. He employs a single permanent setting with slight variations for such scenes as the bedroom and the tomb. This structure in light wood drew various sallies from the critics. It was like a bathing pool in the Home Counties, they said, it was the utility furniture centre of Renaissance Italy. That it embodied any particular conception of the action of the tragedy was not suggested in any of the notices that came my way. Yet unless I am very much mistaken there was such an idea, not just about the stage mechanics, but of the pattern of the play. It could be argued that if the idea did not get over, it was a failure. But many things affect the experience of an audience of which they are not conscious. A spectator, other than a very observant professional critic or an electrician, who noted every lighting change in a production would almost certainly not be living in the performance as, fortunately, it is possible for most of us to do most of the time.

The Stratford setting consisted of two-storey buildings, one

at either side of the stage and set well back. These were made to suggest the 'two houses' whose factions immediately swarmed on to the stage from either side. The Prince made an effective central entrance to part them – temporarily at least. But, of course, the real problem is not to part the Montagues and the Capulets, but to bring them together. The setting hinted how this might be done. For over the heads of the fighting and quarrelling men the gulf between the houses *was* bridged by a curved balcony supported on light pillars so that there was a clear view of the sky above and below the balcony. This, to labour the point, was the level of love, where humanity was already half in heaven. The problem that was insoluble on the lower level of violence did not exist on the level of love. But there was no raising one weight without lowering another as sacrificial counterbalance. At first Juliet came down to the lower level and danced in the ball. How cleverly Mr Byam Shaw made the dispute between Capulet and Tybalt over Romeo's presence flare across the forestage, drowning the harmonies of the dance, hiding the graceful wheel of girls. Then in the orchard, with two stars showing briefly below the balcony, Romeo strained upwards to where Juliet stood on the balcony over his head. He climbed up to that balcony to descend with her to the bedchamber that would also be the tomb, and there the marriage of love and death was consummated. And so the pattern filled out to its inevitable end. On the level of violence Mercutio and Tybalt were killed and presently Romeo and Juliet lay there self-slaughtered with the Friar kneeling beside them. He had gone to and fro across the lower forestage like an old mole in the ground trying to make a clandestine marriage into a happy reconciliation. Above, on the level of love for the first time, Montagues and Capulets gazed down on their dead children and joined their hands in reconciliation. I cannot recall ever having seen this concentration of characters on the equivalent of the upper stage in any other production of *Romeo and Juliet*. But I was interested to learn from Nugent Monck the other day that he used this device in his productions of the tragedy at the Maddermarket Theatre in Norwich. If this is not a great conception of *Romeo and Juliet* and a truly poetic and Shakespearian vision of the play that Byam Shaw presented to us, then I think we might as well forget about the synthesis of speech and spectacle and make the most of Verona with Renato Castellani, whose film might almost have ended with the

ubiquitous James A. Fitzpatrick bidding a soulful farewell to old Verona, city of riot – and romance.

But in fact it is surely an impressive instance of a production Shakespearian in spirit and not only in text. It has been slowly dawning on me for some years that Glen Byam Shaw is probably the greatest living producer of Shakespeare. That it has taken me a long time to realize it is not entirely due to critical obtuseness. Byam Shaw is the rarest kind of artist in the theatre, the producer who has the humility to let the Shakespearian work of art control him, rather than impress his own personality on it. The outward sign of this is that when Byam Shaw invents a little piece of stage business we don't say 'that's good, I've never seen that done before' – we say 'of course' and as likely as not suppose that this detail has always been there where it obviously belongs.

There are further Shakespeare films on the way of which fairly high hopes may be reasonably entertained. Sir Laurence Olivier has conscripted virtually all the theatrical nobility for *Richard III*, Robert Helpmann is to tackle *The Tempest*, and Michael Redgrave presumably still hopes to film *Antony and Cleopatra* in Italy. One can sympathize with the determination of some of our leading Shakespearian actors not to fall into the hands of the ordinary commercial film producer. But it is unlikely that the completely satisfying Shakespeare film will be made by an actor who is starring in it. When are the studios going to send for Glen Byam Shaw?

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor of THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

SIR, – I applaud Mr Stanley Alderson's desire, in his article on 'Equality and Responsibility' in your October number, to find some way out of the dilemma of South Africa's opposition to the Gold Coast or Nigeria achieving the same status as herself. He is right to stress the need for some agreed procedure whereby newly independent countries can be admitted to the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference. But he is mistaken on one point, and another of his points is extremely arguable.

He is quite wrong in his assertion that 'a Governor-General is in fact a representative of the Imperial Government . . . appointed by the Crown on the advice of the British Prime Minister'. The Imperial Conference of 1926 declared that a Governor-General was not the representative of His Majesty's Government in Great Britain or of any department of that Government; he was the representative of His Majesty alone (Cmd. 2768, p. 16). The Imperial Conference of 1930 went further and declared that a Governor-General should be appointed by His Majesty on the advice of His Majesty's Ministers in the Dominion concerned (Cmd. 3717, p. 27). There is ample evidence that in fact Governors-General do not act as representatives of the British Government. That was one of their functions before 1926; but it is now carried out by U K High Commissioners.

The other point is that Mr Alderson continually equates 'Dominion status' with what may be called 'member status' – i.e., membership of a Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference. This is not necessarily the case. It can be argued that a colony such as the Gold Coast may be granted Dominion status by Britain, in the sense of full self-government as defined in the Statute of Westminster, but that this does not automatically involve membership of the Prime Ministers' Conference. The granting of Dominion status is fully within the competence of the British Parliament, and requires no concurrence from the

other member nations of the Commonwealth. The Gold Coast could acquire full Dominion status, in the sense that it was fully responsible for its own laws, defence, etc., and then find that it was excluded from the Prime Ministers' Conference, a body which presumably (since we know so little about its procedure) makes its own rules about membership. There would be great and justifiable resentment from the Gold Coast and elsewhere, but the fact remains that one can imagine an ex-colony being fully independent, and sharing the Crown with Britain, yet not attending the Conferences. It would have the substance of *independence*, but not the cachet of *equality* that arises from acknowledgment by the member nations of the Commonwealth. The two things are separate, although until now each has accompanied the other.

Yours faithfully,
BRUCE MILLER.

LONDON, W.C.2.
October 6, 1954.

To the Editor of THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

SIR, – Mr Geoffrey Wagner was not soundly enough beaten at his private school. In his article in your October issue – the very issue in which he takes Mr Stephen Spender so sternly to task – Mr Wagner begins a footnote as follows:

'Since writing this, a merger has been announced . . .'

I feel that there is no need to follow Mr Wagner into the byways of syntactical pedagogy, but that he will see where his error lies if I take the liberty of paraphrasing a song from Mr Disney's *Dumbo* (Mr Wagner is, I understand, something of an authority on the cinema):

I think I done seen about everything
When I see a merger write.

Yours faithfully,
GERALD KAUFMAN.

81 GRANGE AVENUE, LEEDS 7.
October 4, 1954.

BOOK NOTES

A HANDFUL OF BLACKBERRIES. By Ignazio Silone. (Jonathan Cape. 12*s.* 6*d.*)

Ten years ago in Rome there used to be animated discussions about two political figures who had just returned to Italy – Palmiro Togliatti and Ignazio Silone. They had once been closely associated in the Communist Party and both reputations had been built up in exile. Togliatti had spent some fifteen years in Moscow, people said he was more Russian than Italian, and admirers added that he was the only foreigner whom Stalin addressed familiarly. Silone had an enormous reputation in England and America as a writer, but Italian critics hated the very idea of him. One of them once told me that they would accept everything from the *Alleati* save the idea that Silone had written readable books. There was a certain amount of jealousy around, of course, because Italian writers only really *arrive* when they have been translated into French and English. But *maldicenza* seeps out of the Aurelian walls in Rome. People also said that he looked like a Swiss businessman, and anyway Silone wasn't his real name, his father was called Tranquilli. Togliatti was at least the real name of Togliatti, though he had often gone under the name of Ercole (Hercules).

Absurd, uncomfortable and hopeful days those were in Italy. Silone had little political standing and no followers – Togliatti was fortunate and assured of the leadership of what was already called one of the three 'mass parties'. The Communist leader was also Minister for Grace and Justice, and no politician save Sforza had greater charm for those Allied officers who were struggling with the intricacies of Italian political intrigue, and the hostility and distrust of the Allied forces above them. I remember the gentle wit in Togliatti's soft voice as he told about the riots in Regina Caeli ('Queen of Heaven' is the name of the main prison in Rome) and how neither warders nor police dared enter and confront the furious criminals who protested at being held in the same penitentiary as Fascists. Then, I forget how, the conversation turned to Silone. I half expected the change that came over Togliatti's face and voice, for though I often wondered how much he *believed* in the new Faith, he is a man who has never failed to *act* as if he believed in it, *als ob*. If Togliatti ever came to power, I realized, Silone's life wouldn't be worth ten lire. We were back in the age of theological hatreds that racked Edmund Campion in London and burnt Giordano Bruno in Rome.

The Communist Party will never forgive Silone, the supreme renegade in Italy. The Englishman or the American cannot even begin to conceive what it means to leave the Party in a country where its membership is greater than anywhere else in the West. The Party has been associated with all the details of the ex-member's life: his friends, his contacts are all based on the Faith. If he leaves, he is ostracized and a stupendous machinery of propaganda and lies is set into operation to destroy him. No wonder if he himself in his turn becomes bitter and suspicious. The Italian writer Elio Vittorini has had the same experience as Silone.

Problems of Party psychology are the real background of Silone's new novel. Rocco de Donatis, a Communist of some standing, has lost his faith. The Party clericals find out and use all the ways in their power to hound him down. As Italy isn't yet behind the Iron Curtain they can't seize him physically, or even separate him from his mistress; but for a while they make the latter spy on him and use her as a tool for denouncing him.

It isn't a good novel, for two reasons. One is that Silone himself enters into it too much, he is too patently using the form of the novel to put across a satire that it cannot carry. The other is that the construction is anæmic. There are good scenes, good as satire, but the whole is tied up with string, and the *élan* of *Fontamara* is somehow missing.

The satire is reserved for Communist types. There is Don Alfredo Esposito, a former Fascist tax collector who has now become a local Communist leader in one of those dilapidated villages that still preserve the outlook of the old Bourbon kingdom. This is a fair enough portrait, as indeed Fascism and Communism and alas, Christianity itself, are to the *arriviste* essentially means for his own advancement. But I am not quite happy about the way Esposito originally became famous – by pleasing the ex-Duce. 'He had plucked a live hen, swiftly and completely, without provoking the slightest complaint on her part and indeed to her visible satisfaction'. Fascist *Gerarchi* used to do things almost as silly or horrible as this in the company of the virile Chief, but if I am right about the symbolism (plucking equals collecting taxes, the willing hen equals the poor defeated taxpayers), is it not a trifle heavy-handed for a novel? Another example of a Communist type is the 'Red Churchwoman'. She is one of those hundreds of thousands of muddled Italian voters who cast their choice for Giuseppe (unsure whether he is Saint Joseph or Giuseppe Garibaldi, the emblem of the Communists and fellow-travellers – indeed it must be admitted that in these days of mass-produced art they look rather alike in their portraits).

> The Divine Saviour had appeared to her clad in a long red robe. He did not utter a word, but He showed His heart, on which the new

symbols of the Hammer and Sickle were engraved in gold. The Red Churchwoman immediately ran to tell her confessor and the secretary at Party headquarters about the miraculous apparition. Both of them, but not for the same reasons, besought her not to divulge the news.

The Party spies are true spies of the well-known Fascist-Communist type.

The dialogue is mainly between Communism and Catholicism, both in confused primitive forms, and this too is legitimate, as these are the two main forces in Italy, and pretty well everything else is squeezed in between them. And as to this the situation is anyway much more truly presented by Silone than in that over-rated book by the near-Fascist Guareschi – *Don Camillo*. In the dissension between the two, Silone's sympathies are unmistakably on the side of Catholicism, so much so that some readers have wondered whether he is on the point of joining the Church. I do not think this necessarily follows, however. On the political plane the majority of Italians, if faced with a choice between the Vatican and the Kremlin, will surely choose the Vatican. This view is taken by Liberals and by democratic Socialists, who nevertheless dislike intensely nearly everything that the Vatican stands for. That is to say, though they very much criticize the excesses of the Catholic party in Italy, they think it is in no way the danger to freedom (their own freedom) that Communism is.

I think this common-sense point needs emphasizing now and again, lest we forget it. Silone's priests are on the whole not unsympathetic. They have the vices that we do not mind very much – as with Don Giustino Tarocchi, who acts as midwife and doctor as well as priest, and is an expert in accouchements, being often the father of the baby born. And they have a good deal of that easy-going tolerance which is characteristic of many country clergymen in Italy. Standards of discipline, education and moral estimates are all rather different in the South. Indeed it is in the treatment of his religious characters, such as Don Nicola and the dying Jew Stern, that we can best see Silone's own attitude to religion, which (apart from his anti-Communism) seems to me the gist of what Silone wants to express. The author is a profoundly religious man, and his sense of Gospel Christianity is one of the things that separate him from most of his Italian contemporaries. He may well, throughout his life, have sought a concrete faith – in the search his Communist experience (*vide* 'The God that Failed') would then only have been one episode. (It is notable that in this book Communism is always presented as a dogmatic faith that people swallow whole – an evil and twisted faith.) Or it may be that he has always had an 'intuition of a spiritual destiny in man' or an 'ethical passion' which he sought to express first in one form then in another. (Rocco, the hero, was

expected to become a priest before he joined the Party.) This kind of anguish makes Silone seem typically modern and perhaps explains why he is more widely read outside Italy than most other Italians. Probably the Italian who came nearest to him was the late Professor Ernesto Bonaiuti, a scholar and priest who was unfrocked by the Vatican for Modernism. But Silone has also a certain kinship with some of the so-called 'left-wing' Catholics in France who have no real parallel in Italy, where religion tends to be so much less 'educated' and so much more formalistic.

BERNARD WALL.

THE KING MY BROTHER. By Cyril Hughes Hartmann. (Heinemann. 21*s*.)

International politics, both past and present, have so stupifying an effect on my mind that most written accounts of their intricacies are to me only a little less baffling than those forms on which the Inland Revenue begs us to reveal the source of our incomes. I was therefore astonished to find, on reaching the end of *The King My Brother*, that I understood, at any rate temporarily, what the Secret Treaty of Dover was about. Astonished and also very grateful, which may be the reason why I incline to approve of the Treaty; Mr Hartmann having made clear to me the gist of that famous transaction, I feel in honour bound, almost, to accept his opinion of its merits.

Still, when it comes to discussing the ethics, or the wisdom, of this old Stuart-Bourbon *entente*, I think it better to stay on the fence, where, safe from blundering, I can concentrate on the human beings who are, after all, the heart of this enchanting book's matter. What the King of England and the King of France laid their heads together about in the late 1660's is history, and history is not everyone's cup of tea; but what Charles II and his sister Henriette, Duchess of Orleans, said to each other in their letters is a study of mankind, so 'proper' and so engaging, that it must surely charm even those to whom the past is – as Harriette Wilson might have put it – a dead bore.

Although the Duchess, Charles's younger sister, and sister-in-law to Louis XIV of France, was an important enough architect of the Secret Treaty for it to have been sub-titled *Le Traité de Madame*, she was not one of those dogged *intrigueuses*, who, as Madame de Lieven did, meddle in politics for the sake of flattering their own self-importance. From her letters it is clear that Madame's chief interest in the affair sprang from personal affection; a desire to oblige her brother-in-law being plainly subservient to a determination to serve her brother.

Family solidarity apart, these two Stuarts were bound together by a love which, in each case, the pattern of their lives had intensified. To Henriette, a faithful wife to her most unrewarding husband, Charles represented that figure, so essential to women, a man to look after; all the little attentions and tendernesses that the epicene Orleans had no use for, she diverted, in spirit, to her brother who, being not only a rake but a king, and also extremely intelligent, knew, and few better, the value of affection without any strings to it. Though the Channel lay between them, this brother and sister were ever loving companions.

They both wrote admirable letters, and how well these have been used by Mr Hartmann, who, leaving Charles and Henriette to speak for themselves, has so persuasively, and with the true scholar's hand, filled in the background.

It is a background thronged with figures, and among them that misdirected but appealing young man, James, Duke of Monmouth, stands out very pleasantly. He visits the French Court (one recalls Madame de Sevigné's 'the Duke of Monmouth, looking handsomer than ever'), captivates Madame and is himself captivated by her, but on returning home has to be scolded by Charles for forgetting to write her a 'roofer'. He appears again at Newmarket races, where the Abbé Pregnani, a French emissary with a self-advertised flair for astrology, relies for hot tips on the stars, but, so the King tells his sister, 'had the ill-luck to foretell wrong three times together, and James believed him so much as he lost his money on the same score'.

Poor Monmouth! At Newmarket, all he lost was his money, but in the end that too ready belief in those who predicted his good fortune was to strip him of everything, even life.

AUDREY LUCAS.

THE STRUGGLE FOR MASTERY IN EUROPE 1848–1918. By A. J. P. Taylor. (Geoffrey Cumberlege at the Oxford University Press. Pp. 638. 30s.)

Mr. Taylor is our most accomplished diplomatic historian and, with Mr Trevor Roper, the leading exponent of hard-headed realism in analysing historical trends and political affairs. Both traits go together; *Realpolitik* is applied realism, and realism is easiest to apply in 'foreign' affairs, i.e. in dealing with countries other than one's own. Home politics are invariably tainted with emotionalism; foreign affairs are, or were until yesterday, the domain of pure statecraft. *Raison d'état* is a concept as old as the European state system; indeed its emergence as a guiding principle accompanied the birth of the genuinely sovereign state in the age of absolutism, after the passions

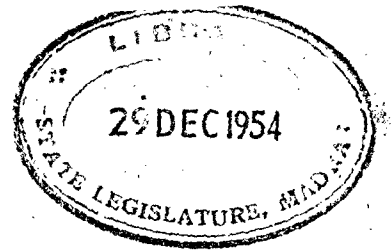
of the 'wars of religion' had exhausted themselves. The absolutist governments which signed the peace of Westphalia in 1648 had freed themselves from the straitjacket of principle: Richelieu subsidized the German Protestants, while suppressing Protestantism at home; the Catholic League conspired against the Habsburgs. Such freedom from prejudice has remained the ideal of diplomats and diplomatic historians down to our own age. Now and then, as with Bismarck, it is realized; the kind of international order which then emerges for a while looks stable to subsequent ages, although on closer inspection it is seen to resemble a nuclear system held together – i.e. prevented from exploding – only by the constant manipulation of a precarious balance. When the balance breaks down because one of the component parts has swerved from its course the entire system explodes and *Realpolitik* ceases to be practicable. It then becomes the business of diplomatic historians to identify the cause of breakdown and by implication to propose the construction of a new and stabler balance.

Mr Taylor's theme is the dissolution of the post-Napoleonic order, although his actual starting-point is the revolutionary upheaval of 1848, which delivered the first serious shock to that edifice. Quite logically he ends his account in 1918, when the system was swept away for good. He might have placed more emphasis on the intrinsic connexion between the unsuccessful attempt at democratic reconstruction in 1848 and the catastrophic sequel to world war seventy years later. But that would have brought 'domestic' politics into the centre of the picture and spoilt the symmetry of an elegant intellectual construction which, for all its sophistication, rests upon the traditional concepts of diplomatic history. In Mr Taylor's account the European system of the nineteenth century is seen to operate in conformity with the logic of 'pure' statecraft. Not that he is unaware of the anonymous forces – social, political, economic – with which statesmanship had to contend; but what matters to him (what mattered also, we may be sure, to the protagonists) is the way in which fixed national and territorial interests assert themselves through all the permutations of war, defeat, revolution, and change of government. Austria, Prussia (subsequently Germany) and Russia; Britain, France, Italy, and the minor Powers, combine with and against one another, maintain a balance, shift from one camp to the other, measure their forces, pursue their interests, betray or desert their allies or their alleged principles, in an endless dance of molecular entities held together by a balance which always threatens to break down, and which eventually does break down, to the great astonishment of all concerned, save the general staffs and the professional diplomats; who had known all along how precarious it really was. And even these professionals were taken unawares by the violence of the explosion, and quite incapable of directing the

destructive energies accumulated during the preceding age of relative peace and intensive industrialization. On this analysis there is little point in searching for the origins of the so-called Great War of 1914–18; the war was inherent in the system, and the system was brought to an end by the war.

No doubt this is true; and it should be added that Mr Taylor's mastery of the sources is such as to discourage all but the most heavily armour-plated specialists from trying to challenge him on his chosen ground. (Not that he is difficult to read; far from it – he excels in lucid compression.) One's reservations about the picture he draws concern the limitations of his method. There is something to be said for abstracting from issues and influences other than those that habitually enter calculations of *Realpolitik*; but abstractions must be viewed as such. In reading this brilliant shorthand account of European politics from 1848 to 1918 one is conscious of a pattern which sociologists (to say nothing of pseudo-philosophical synthesizers *à la* Toynbee) are liable to miss; but one is conscious, too, of a great deal that is left out or taken for granted. The balance of power doubtless constituted a self-perpetuating mechanism which enforced certain standards of conduct on the Powers; and when it broke down – in the last analysis, according to Mr Taylor, because Germany could not or would not accept a subordinate place in Europe – there was no escape from general war. But the fact that the system was shaken in 1848 and then destroyed in 1918 – both years of revolution – indicates that its operation was equally conditioned by an internal balance of forces: specifically, by the ability of the traditional ruling classes to manipulate the new industrial society. The epoch of William II was, among others, an age in which the remnants of an aristocratic society tried to exploit the 'productive forces' of an emerging social order which could no longer be governed in the ancient manner. Mr Taylor admits this for Austria-Hungary, and for the nationalities problem generally, but the principle has wider application. Then, were not those people – socialists like Parvus and imperialists like Joseph Chamberlain – justified who around 1900 saw a growing disharmony between the new economic forces and the structure of the traditional national state? Mr Taylor, like a good left-wing liberal, tends to regard imperialism as a nuisance. Was it not rather, as Trotsky put it during the First World War, a consequence of the rebellion of the 'productive forces' against the straitjacket of the European state system? Such questions do not detract from the value of Mr Taylor's work, which will hold its own for a long time as a matchless introduction to the subject. They merely suggest that his method, like all methods, has its limitations.

G. L. A.



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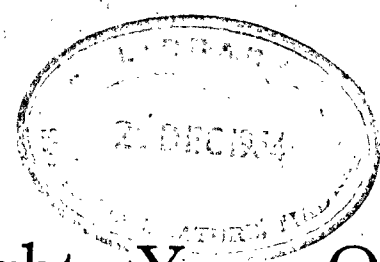
A NEWLY DISCOVERED POEM

"The Christ of Ammergau"

by

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

The poem was dictated by him to Sir James Knowles, his intimate friend and the founder of this Review, and will be printed, by permission of the present Lord Tennyson, together with the account of its composition.



Eighty Years Old

TO the world chorus which salutes Sir Winston Churchill on his eightieth birthday we wish to add our own modest voice. Sir Winston has lived long enough to receive all the praise his service to the nation and mankind has earned and all the honours he is willing yet to bear. His birthday, then, is an occasion not to celebrate his greatness but to show the warmth of our feelings for him.

Sir Winston is one of those few men who in old age have achieved wider fame and greater power than they had in the prime of life. His brilliant youth was followed by years of failure. True, the brilliance remained and mellowed and the spirit did not falter. He still lived life as if it were a cavalry charge, but the temperament of an hussar is not that of a statesman. He did not acquire the discretion, the reflective wisdom, the understanding and tolerance of men, which are required in those who occupy the highest offices of state. Both Baldwin and Chamberlain seemed wise to exclude him from their Governments. Not until he had reached the common age of retirement in the first year of war did Churchill become Prime Minister; and even then he was chosen to head the coalition because the leaders of his party were failing as conspicuously in war as they had done in peace.

* * * *

IT is not only fame and power that have come to him late in life. He is loved by those who hated him and there is now a kindly conspiracy to forget the hasty deeds, the foolish judgements and bitter words which kept him out of office for so many years. Indeed, it is the fashion to remember only that Sir Winston was right on the supreme issue of the 'thirties, the reality of the German menace, and to forget that he was wrong about everything else. In England we have no need to re-write the embarrassing chapters of biography in our national encyclopædias. We trust to our memories, and they seldom disturb us by retaining what is painful. Only the Celts in these islands have kept their historical memory. Even to-day the Welsh still talk about the time Winston Churchill sent the cavalry to Tonypandy to subdue the striking miners. And that was more than forty years ago.

It is in the places where Sir Winston is known best that he is best loved: above all, at Westminster. When he appears on the Treasury Bench it is as though an old and beloved squire was joining his villagers at a parish meeting. Of course nobody is quite sure whether on a particular day he will prove to be Squire Allworthy, radiant with benevolence, or more like Squire Western, impish and feignedly irascible, though ready perhaps to throw a sardonic wink at Nye the poacher. Sir Winston has his moods, and all of them are respected. He is often compared to Gladstone, but the comparison is inapt. In his later years Gladstone, as Trevelyan puts it, developed an aptitude for miscalculating forces and mismanaging men. He began to lose wisdom at the age when Churchill began to acquire it.

* * * *

IN these past months Sir Winston has almost risen above the party battle. He knows better than anybody that at this moment in history, after fifteen years of economic boom, it is more of a sham fight than ever it has been. Never in his long political life has there been so little bitterness between party leaders, so few differences about immediate problems. This accord has been brought about because Mr Attlee no less than Sir Winston has recognized reality. When he was returned to power in 1951 Sir Winston knew that the Tory Party was fighting for its life. One rattle of the sabre, one whiff of unemployment, and all the fears of the 'thirties would revive in the minds of the electorate. How easy it would have been to arouse those fears if Sir Winston had marched in step with Mr Dulles or listened to the plausible theories of deflation preached by the orthodox economists! How easy it would have been to start a new and bitter phase of class warfare by laying a cold Tory hand on the structure of state welfare! The old Whig saw the danger and saved the Tory Party. All thinking people, no matter what their political allegiance, recognize this as a successful government. Whether it has improved its standing with the electorate is another matter. People to-day seem to expect more than any Government could provide. Surely it was not vanity or love of power that determined Sir Winston to remain as Prime Minister, but this need to prove that there exists a wise alternative to Labour; this need, and the hope that he might play as noble a part in creating world peace as he had done in waging war.

* * * *

OLD politicians, digging into their memories on Sir Winston's birthday, must think it one of the miracles of our time that he has won such universal affection. No politician of the 'twenties was more hated by the working class than Winston Churchill; no politician of equal eminence had so little understanding of them or their leaders. He appeared to be the most dangerous and arrogant enemy of organized labour. When he spoke at Walthamstow in 1923 he needed the protection of mounted police against the fury of the people, and he afterwards likened this crowd of London workmen to a pack of Russian wolves. Behind the non-conformist faces of the Labour leaders he saw Muscovite tyranny and he regarded the General Strike as a sinister revolutionary plot. Yet, ten years later, the Communists, the left wing of the Labour Party and the radical forces which supported Sir Stafford Cripps's movement for a Popular Front welcomed his leadership of the anti-fascist cause. 'From Pollitt to Churchill' was the slogan of the day. The movement failed miserably. Orthodox Labour would have nothing to do with either wing and threw Sir Stafford out of the party. But in 1940 it was orthodox Labour with Liberal support which refused to join a coalition led by Neville Chamberlain and thus virtually made Churchill Prime Minister. In his coalition Government he learned from his daily association with Mr Attlee and Ernest Bevin that courage and patriotism are not the monopoly of any party in this country. His admiration for his old antagonist of the General Strike was profound. Perhaps he saw Ernest Bevin as the man Winston Churchill might have been if he had been born in a cottage instead of a ducal palace.

* * * *

MUSING aloud at a semi-private gathering a few months ago, Sir Winston said that the things which unite him with Mr Attlee are more important far than those which divide them. It is not only personal association with Labour and the charity of age which have altered Sir Winston's judgements. The Conservative conscience was as deeply shocked when the forces of the Right tore down democracy in Germany, Italy and Spain as Labour's was by the bloody and tyrannous development of Stalin's socialism. Mr Attlee's sombre reflections on the Russian Revolution are matched by Sir Winston's orations on the rights of man. It is this common belief, this revived fervour for democracy, which enabled Britain to fight as an undivided Nation and preserves its unity to-day whether Mr Attlee or Sir Winston is Her Majesty's First Minister.

NORTH AND WEST OF SUEZ

Mark Alexander

Some months ago – not long before it was disclosed that President Naguib had connived in a plot against Egypt's present rulers and had been arrested – the 'Council of the Revolution' decided at one of its regular sessions to endow Cairo with the tallest and most magnificent skyscraper in the Middle East. According to present plans, it is to have thirty floors, with ample space for housing all the 'revolutionary institutions'. Its projected establishment on Bab el Hadid Square is part of a more comprehensive project – fathered by Abdel Latif Boghdadi, a member of the Junta – to turn Cairo into the most resplendent capital city in the East. At about the same time one of the leading Cairo newspapers predicted that within twenty years atomic energy would so transform the aspect of all Arab countries (by then united in a federation) that the disposal of surplus wealth would become the principal problem.

It must have been with surprise that readers of the same paper discovered on the back page some indications of coming trouble in the now familiar form of reports about anti-Government activity among the pupils of Cairo's secondary schools following the agreement with Britain. Shortly thereafter these obscure rumblings among the school desks irrupted into what appears to have been an attempt to assassinate the Prime Minister, followed by mass arrests of Moslem Brotherhood supporters, and official charges that a general massacre of Junta members and their military supporters had been planned by adherents of that now proscribed organization. Further interesting disclosures followed in rapid succession. On November 5th, a brief report from Cairo to *The Times* recorded without comment that an important official of the Brotherhood, writing from his cell in a military prison, had suggested terms on which peace might be restored between the Government and the Brotherhood. The proposals (which were duly published in the Junta's daily newspaper, *Al Goumhouria*) provided *inter*

alia that further arrests of members of the organization should cease and those already arrested for suspected complicity in the alleged assassination plot should be released. In exchange the Brotherhood would dissolve its so-called special (secret) organization, surrender its arms, and abstain from political activity and in particular from agitation against the Anglo-Egyptian agreement. Although this proposal seems to have fallen on deaf ears, it served to draw the public's attention to the existence, within the Brotherhood, of an underground organization, sometimes estimated at 10,000, which indeed has been known for some years to possess arms left over from the unsuccessful Palestine campaign of 1948. These might be described perhaps as storm-troopers. It is not clear what term should be applied to the secret terrorist organization, the so-called *Fadayin*, which exists within this wider setting and numbers several hundred members who for years have specialized in acts of violence, such as the assassination of the Premier, Nokrashi Pasha, in 1948. Perhaps more will be learned about the organization of this apparatus of terror if and when the Government which claims to have rounded up most of its adherents succeeds in bringing its leaders to trial. What is already clear is that the attempt on Colonel Nasser formed part of a politial campaign directed against the recent Anglo-Egyptian treaty.

The Suez agreement had been attacked by the opposition since the day its provisions became known. During the months of August, September and October, mutual recriminations grew fiercer and the issue became, for the Government, a fight for survival. Officially, of course, there was no opposition in the country; the old parties, among them the Wafd, had been dissolved long ago. The Communists were illegal and the 'Moslem Brotherhood', though permitted to exist again since April 1954, was supposed to have given an undertaking to refrain from all political activities. In fact there was very active opposition, and worst of all from the Junta's viewpoint, it was co-ordinated if not united. In the summer of 1953 the Communists had reached an understanding with some of their old Wafdist friends and as a result a new Popular Front, *Al Gabha al dimokratia al mutahida* (United Democratic Front – U D F) had been founded, with a newspaper of its own, *Al Gabha*. The 'Front', which was mainly active among the students and the intelligentsia of Cairo and Alexandria, charged the Junta with having sold out to Western imperialism.

and in its publication came out in favour of a pro-Soviet orientation.* The U D F was temporarily weakened by the arrest of some of its leaders, such as Abu Bakr Hamdi Seif el Nasr (*son of* a former Wafdist Minister) and Ibrahim el Bikar, who were among the defendants at the great Communist trial in August. But it continued to exist and its attacks upon the Government became more violent. Nor was this the only form of Popular Frontism: U D F comprised only a relatively small circle of pro-Soviet Wafdists, especially from the ranks of the former 'Wafdist Youth'. But the right wing of the Wafd did not reject such an understanding either. The only chance of the old corrupt leadership of the Wafd to make a political comeback lay in outmanœuvring the Junta by more extreme nationalist and 'anti-imperialist' slogans. While domestic reform was out of the question, anti-Western slogans did not cost anything. The Wafd's enthusiasm for democratic ideals has never been overwhelming, but parliamentary democracy contained the promise of a return to the golden years of 1950–52, the era of *enrichissez-vous*, and an effective guarantee against heavy taxation and social reform. The Wafdists still lived on the memory of great days, they had been the party of Zaghlul and of a younger and better Nahas, and some credit was given to them by members of the intelligentsia who disliked military rule.

Taking only those Wafdists who genuinely favour a 'Popular Front' with the Communists, one has again to differentiate: there are Communists who have infiltrated into the Wafd, or Wafdists who have been converted to the teachings of the late Joseph Stalin and been told to stay where they are and work from within. Then (probably the most numerous group) there are the fellow travellers, led by such figures as Mustafa Moussa and Dr Mohammed Blag, leaders of the 'Wafdist Youth' who are prepared to go most of the way with the Communists, but not yet all of it. Finally there is Dr Mohammed Mandour,

*The 'Front' goes back to the formation of the *Talia* (Vanguard) group in 1945–46, when the Communists and the Wafd already collaborated. Some of the leaders of *Talia* are now once more coming forward in the U D F. But the history of Egyptian Communism, with its numerous rival factions and 'fronts', is a subject too intricate to be dealt with here in detail. It will be discussed at some length in the writer's *Nationalism and Communism in the Middle East*, to be published in the United States next spring. 'Communists' in our present context refers to members of *Haditu* faction in Egyptian Communism.

the ideologue of the Wafdist left wing, a Socialist, very much in opposition to the powers that be, but at the same time critical of Stalinism, and therefore suspect in the eyes of the Communists, who greatly prefer to deal with right-wing Wafdists unspoiled by such dangerous ideas.

U D F is not the only 'front' organization established by the Communists. In collaboration with one section of the Moslem Brotherhood they also formed the 'National Democratic Front' (*Al Gabha al Watania*) the continuation of the 'National Front' of 1951–52 which contained the D M N L, Ahmed Hussein's 'Socialists' and some 'front' organizations. Ahmed Hussein's importance rapidly diminished after 'Black Saturday', and the Brotherhood then became the main partner of the Communists. But the Brotherhood was itself internally divided: the most recent events indeed largely constitute the history of its internal scissions.

No more than an outline of the factional grouping is possible here. There is, to begin with, a group of Communists who have infiltrated the Ikhwan (Brotherhood) and established their cells inside the organization. A news item chosen at random from the Egyptian press (*Ahram*, September 17th, 1954) reports the arrest of Taleb Hussein, a school teacher at Khanka, and of Abdel Salah Hanafi Mahmoud, both members of the Moslem Brotherhood, for distributing leaflets headed 'Down with the Fascist, terrorist government', and slogans in a similar vein, obviously incongruous with the ideology of the Brotherhood. It should be recalled that in Egyptian Communist literature the Brotherhood had always been called a 'Fascist organization' up to 1949. In the following year a new theory was developed according to which Fascism was impossible in colonies and dependent countries, and an alliance with these groups was stated to be both permissible and desirable. The present pro-Communist faction in the Brotherhood is small but very vocal, and has its members concentrated in strategically important places such as the Cairo and Alexandria universities, as well as Al Azhar and such opposition centres as the city of Tanta.

Another group, headed by Hassan el Hodeibi, the former 'Supreme Guide', now charged with terrorism, opposed military rule for reasons not dissimilar to the resentment of the Wafdist leadership. Prior to the coup of July 1952 and the deposition of Farouk, this group had been a major political

force in the country, and its leaders clearly were not going to let themselves be relegated to the status of some cultural association. On domestic issues they are reactionary: Hassan el Hodeibi is the typical conservative *bien pensant* of the old regime, and nothing appeared more ludicrous to those who knew him than his new role as a dangerous revolutionary in flight from the authorities. But Hodeibi is a mere figurehead leading forces much stronger than himself, and it was they, in collaboration with the pro-Communist faction, who in September transferred the leadership of the Ikhwan to Syria, now the most 'progressive' country in the Middle East. A third faction is the old group around *Al Dawa* ('The Appeal') headed by Salah Ashmawi, who in September declared that his opposition to Hodeibi was based exclusively on a divergence of principles. Actually the rivalry between the two men for the post of Supreme Guide had been notorious for years, and when Hodeibi came out against the Junta in 1953 it was only natural that Ashmawi should join the Government. Though basically no less anti-Western than its rivals, this group supports the Suez agreement and stands for the social reforms opposed by the Hodeibi factions. Finally, there are in the Brotherhood some 'honest people who have not yet made up their minds', to quote Sheikh Hassan el Bakouri, himself a former member of the Ikhwan and now a Minister in the Government. Their influence is obscure.

Opposition propaganda against the Anglo-Egyptian agreement mainly dwelt on the reactivation clause, whose meaning was distorted and frequently altogether falsified. Gamal Abdel Nasser and his colleagues countered by meeting journalists, trade unionists and students' representatives, and replying at great length to their questions. The Brotherhood charged the Junta with having secretly met Israeli leaders at Haram el Sheikh, near the Gulf of Aqaba, and discussed a peace treaty with them, a charge which was quite untrue. The Junta replied by arresting the Israeli freighter *Bat Galim* at Suez, on the curious grounds that it had attacked Egyptian ships (which brought it the support of the Ikhwan for a day), and by suggesting that the Moslem Brotherhood was secretly allied to the Zionists and had staged the 'Black Saturday' of January 1952. Sensational revelations on these subjects were promised, but unfortunately have not been forthcoming.

The real centre of trouble throughout these weeks of unrest

lay in the universities, the pivotal point of politics in Egypt and most other backward countries. The Ikhwan-Wafdist-Communist coalition is strong in the universities and the three upper grades of the secondary schools which have provided the main contingent for all important political demonstrations in recent years. Many so-called 'student demonstrations' are in fact staged by pupils of the secondary schools, not by university students. Adherents of the Ikhwan are the strongest organized body, but their political opinions are so vague as to make them easy victims of the more sophisticated Communists who long ago overtook the Wafd among the students. A British observer who studied at Cairo university has remarked of the members of the Ikhwan that 'they would not come down to brass tacks at all, but talked vaguely and without details of economic reform and a return to the principles of Islam. Only on the virtues of political assassination were they precise.' To counter the probable outcome of such tactics, the Junta tried to forestall demonstrations against the Suez agreement by dismissing several dozen teachers, suspected members or supporters of the U D F or the N D F. But the universities and the secondary schools remain weak links in the chain of control now fastened on Egypt.

Another source of trouble is the Army Command itself. When Naguib took over in July 1952, the Communists announced grandiloquently that some members of the Junta were Stalinist sympathisers (Khalid Mohiedin, at present Minister of the Interior, and Colonel Yusef Zadik were mentioned by name) and *World News and Views*, the organ of the British C P, described 'one third of the Junta' as 'our people'. This of course was highly exaggerated; yet two Army officers, one of them a former commander of Farouk's bodyguard, were among the defendants at the recent trial (September 1954) of Communists in Cairo. More important, the Moslem Brotherhood really did have members and sympathisers among the 'Free Officers'; one of them, Rashad Mohanna, has been ousted and given a lengthy prison sentence. However, since General Naguib himself has lost all political influence, and many younger officers have been purged, sent into exile or given less important positions of command, any attempt to unsettle the present regime would have to come in its first stage from within the Junta, and it is here that the opposition is now making its greatest efforts.

There can be little doubt that the overthrow of the Junta by the U D F, or a kindred coalition headed by General Naguib or some other figurehead, under the pseuso-democratic slogan 'Back to Parliamentarianism', would be an unmitigated disaster for Egypt, her neighbours, and practically everyone concerned except Moscow. This unfortunately does not preclude the possibility that the present regime, through shortsightedness or worse, may decide to follow a course as disastrous as any proposed by the opposition. Colonel Nasser and his friends have shown far greater readiness than General Naguib to carry out reforms on the home front, even though it should hurt some of the vested interests. They have scored some successes, but have thereby encouraged a growth of megalomania among some members of the Junta. There has been a note of aggressiveness which recalls the behaviour of the less reputable dictators of the 'thirties. One seems to note conflicting trends. Anwar es Sadat, editor of the Junta organ *Al Tahrir*, and several of his colleagues have strongly attacked religious and nationalist fanaticism as one of the sources of the present evil, and urged the necessity to act against the Brotherhood in terms recalling Kemal Ataturk's fight against the mullahs in Turkey in the early 'twenties. The word tolerance has again become fashionable for the time being. On the other hand there have been broadcasts to North Africa over *Sawt el Arab* (the transmissions of Cairo radio to the Arab world) which have caused *Le Monde* to describe the official responsible for them as a minor Goebbels. The position of Egyptian Jews has deteriorated in comparison with their status under General Naguib. Relations with Israel are clearly due to become a major problem in Egyptian foreign policy if the Junta continues to see its main field of action in foreign rather than domestic policy. 'After Suez, Palestine', is a popular slogan, but few observers believe that the Junta contemplates war against Israel in the near future. Yet mere threats will hardly cause Israel to give in to Arab demands, and an 'unplanned war' may ensue, especially if the Junta should be hard pressed at home and come to regard war against Israel as a means of strengthening its internal position. Recent Western promises of arms supplies to Egypt have probably increased this danger to some extent.

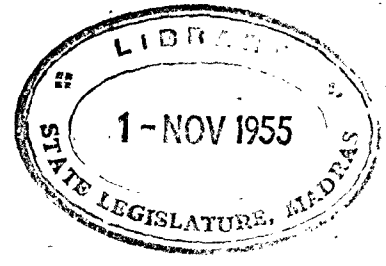
Egypt is not alone in being in a troubled state. Syria, having got rid of Colonel Shishakli early this year, went to the polls in September and October in what were probably the

freest elections in the history of that country. Unfortunately they resulted in stalemate, and the present regime is not likely to last for many more months. The influence of the People's Party has considerably declined, while that of the Nationalists, who were in power for many years prior to 1948, has risen – but not enough for a comeback. The Socialists doubled their representation, but they too cannot decisively influence Syrian politics through parliament. Khaled Bakdash, the leader of the Syrian and Lebanese Communist party, was elected in his native Damascus – the first Communist parliamentary deputy in an Arab country. But these facts convey only part of the picture, and the smaller part at that. The differences between the People's Party and the Nationalists are rather less distinct than those between the Democrats and Republicans in the U S A in a non-election year. Both include heterogeneous elements and interests, ranging from the far right to the left – from pro-Americanism to a radical pro-Soviet attitude, and economically from feudal landowners to the urban lower middle class. These differences are refracted through the personal antagonism between various chieftains, accumulated under thirty years and more of Syrian history. In consequence these two parties are unlikely to forget their quarrels and form a stable government. Syria, therefore, is once more heading for a dictatorship; a few months will undoubtedly be enough to discredit the present regime. *Que le parlement était beau sous Shishakli!* The interesting feature of the recent elections (and of Syrian politics in 1954 in general) was the strongly anti-Western flavour of the slogans employed by most politicians. Those who appeared on an extreme anti-Western platform, such as Khaled el Azm, received (with open Communist support) the most votes. The motives of such an orientation are very similar to and frequently identical with those of the Wafdist leaders in Egypt: a reactionary policy at home goes hand in hand with neutralism and anti-Westernism in foreign policy. This, and not the election of a solitary Communist deputy, is the most disconcerting aspect of the Syrian situation. A more encouraging feature has been the victory of Socialist candidates over feudal nominees in some of the latter's strongholds, such as Hamma. The Socialists had provoked the ire of the Communists by resisting some of the more sweepingly obscurantist demands of the Syrian branch of the Moslem Brotherhood. This, the Communists said, was

tantamount to sabotaging the Popular Front: the foreign political orientation of the Brotherhood was quite correct, and that after all was the decisive criterion. In the end, however, the Socialist *Ba'ath* party appeared with a neutralist programme, too, which was only logical in view of the competition in anti-Westernism between most candidates. The Communists had made great efforts to gain key positions in the peasants' organizations which have come into being during the last two or three years on the pattern of the Indian *Kisan Sabha*. But while they have succeeded in this in the Sudan (the only other Middle Eastern country where peasants have become an active political factor), the Socialists provided an effective alternative to feudalism in Syria. Their neutralism seems forgivable at present, at least while they have no opportunity of doing much mischief, and hope exists that they will mend their ways.

Within this steadily darkening scene, the situation in Iraq needs no comment. The present regime may cling to power for another few years, but most people will be surprised if it does. The regime in Jordan is paternal (despite King Husain's youth) and authoritarian, but not corrupt, and it would be unfair to compare the situation in Amman with the catastrophic state of affairs in Baghdad. But the recent elections in Jordan and the grave disorders thereafter, in the course of which demonstrators took over the capital and strong Army units had to be brought up against them, have shown that in this country, too, the Government has now antagonized the whole intelligentsia. It has virtually compelled opposition parties to make common cause with the Communists, and there is little doubt that the latter will soon dominate the united opposition front. Only one member of the pro-Communist 'National Front' (this cover name appears now in all Arab countries) was elected, but those who failed to do so (e.g. Qadri Toukan and Abu Hajle in Nablus), lost only by a few hundred votes. Most of the politically conscious among the younger generation support the 'Front': the signatures to a recent 'Front' appeal circulated among Jordanian girl students in Cairo read like an extract from the Palestine Arab social register: Husseini, Abdul Hadi, Dajani, Toukan, Abdul Latif, etc. This support does not come from the refugee camps, the inmates of which are pre-occupied with other problems, but as usual from among the intelligentsia and the younger generation of the leading

families. Jordan thus appears to be heading towards trouble, unless the new middle class is given an opportunity to participate on equal terms in shaping their own country's affairs. The present political regime would have ideally suited the Amman of 1920, a Beduin village with 2,000 inhabitants in mud huts. It is out of touch with the realities of the Amman of 1954, an almost modern capital of 170,000 inhabitants. This is one of the main problems all over the Middle East: not, however, the only one.



VESPAS, VESPERS AND THE EVIL EYE

Bernard Wall

The *jettatura* doesn't exist in England, though there is something like it in the Celtic countries. In Italy it is still real, and even when people don't believe in it with their reason, the thought of it makes them uneasy. 'It exists because people *think* it exists,' said my friend, Maria, at lunch yesterday. 'I don't believe in the *jettatura* or the *malocchio*,' said Amelita firmly (she is Neapolitan). 'But don't you make the signs against it?' I asked. 'Of course I make the *signs*.' The *jettatura* is a spell cast by someone who has the Evil Eye, someone known as a *Jettatore*. A *Jettatore* '*porta sfortuna*' – brings misfortune – on anyone who comes into contact with him or her. There are various ways of countering the evil spell. One is making horns with the forefinger and little finger of each hand. Another is touching the hump on a hunchback. Others are rather more intimate and obscene. If you are observant, when a well-known *Jettatore* enters any public place, a *salon* or a *trattoria*, you will see people's hands creeping under the table or behind their backs. They are making the sign. It is almost an automatic gesture. And though I wouldn't normally make it myself, I have enough of a Catholic and Celtic background to know what the feeling is.

Indeed soon after I arrived in Rome this autumn it became a standing joke that the *jettatura* had been cast upon us. It began with our car which, after a journey of a thousand miles almost without incident, went wrong in every way as soon as we entered the radius of the Aurelian walls. A taxi bumped into us; the taximan swore by the Madonna and Saint Joseph the Unfortunate that I had no brakes; in my fluster I forgot that getting the blame in first is a special Roman tactic, to which the classical answer of the Anglo-Saxon lies in saying in English: 'I'm terribly sorry, but I can't understand what you're talking about. . . .' Instead I argued in Italian, and this immediately attracted the attention of a policeman who found my accent strange – might I not be a spy, or a black marketeer, or someone from a remote part of Italy merely pretending to be a foreigner?

He asked me to prove that my brakes were adequate. I tried to start up the car. The self-starter refused to make contact – just the inconsequent tremolo. . . . 'Let's push,' said my wife, who was once a hockey-captain. A crowd collected – it all happened just outside Rosati's bar, where half the people I know in Rome are habitués. I looked apprehensively round to see if the Moravias were there, or Marcel Pagliero. But no, it was not yet the hour of the *aperitivo*.

The tone had been set. From then onwards the car never failed to behave as though it had a *jettatura* on it. Crowds of youths would gather round to give '*una spinta*' – the word means 'push' – and off it would career with a rousing cheer for 200 yards and then stop again ridiculously. Amateur lawyers and amateur mechanics would gather round us giving interminable advice, but it seemed impossible to find anyone who would make it work. Also it looked appallingly dirty and old in Rome – the city with a mania for new things. Not only the car went wrong, but its repeated *pannes* wove a hideous pattern over our search for an apartment; we would just be *en route* somewhere when it would stop, panting, and we would miss the apartment; it prevented me getting in touch with people and began involving me in enormous expenses.

Now, there is only one *Jettatore* in Rome that I know – for purposes of convenience I will call him Borgia – and I began half-jokingly to ask my friends whether Borgia really could have cast a spell on me. 'He hates you enough,' said a friend, 'but I don't believe in the *jettatura*; besides, I don't think he's in Rome at the moment.' Then two further disasters happened. By a series of misfortunes we took an apartment that I hated; and finally, as I was asking my way, someone stole my passport. So I yielded at last and made the sign against the *malocchio*. Then I noticed that my daughter had already formed the habit of drumming her fingers against tables and chairs in the shape of the horns.

* * * *

One way of seeing a city is looking for an apartment. For readers who don't know the post-war city of Rome, perhaps I should explain that it is one of the most extraordinary examples of rapid growth in the world. The city Pope Pius IX governed until 1870 had about 200,000 inhabitants. The city even I remember as a boy thirty years ago had far fewer than a million inhabitants. In those days it was what we now call 'Old Rome'.

It was always appallingly noisy, though heavy traffic had not yet begun – remember Nietzsche's protests against the Piazza Barberini? When they only had the human voice at their disposal the Romans managed to make something special of it, a premonition of the unique noisiness you can make with motors, wirelesses and gramophones. But in the last thirty years the growth has been vertiginous. The population has more than doubled and vast new quarters have come into being, so that historical Rome is merely '*il centro*'. The traffic is so appalling in the narrow old streets that it is hard to think what the solution can be, unless the authorities throw down the Aurelian walls and drive highways straight through regions now thick with classical ruins and Renaissance palaces (a solution the average Roman in the street, who is more interested in engines than in art or religion, would like). As it is, they are building an underground.

So far as I can make out, this expansion of Rome has been pretty continuous since 1870, save for years of war. In his quite unbalanced but brilliant book, *Rome*, Zola describes the mania for speculative building that developed in the city after its annexation to Italy. (Murray, the guide-book man, writing in the eighties, said that the Piedmontese had destroyed more in ten years than the Popes in two thousand.) The Roman temperament is almost maniac about any kind of gambling. People pour money into jerry-building, films, apartments – and there is a vast extension of the credit system. (As an Italian acquaintance said the other day, in Rome you even buy your shoes on hire purchase.) As with other cities in the process of furious growth, the inhabitants of Rome are no longer predominantly Roman. They have come from all over Italy, from Trieste, from Palermo, from Sardinia. Yet, though they have swamped the old Rome of Pius IX and the Trastevere dialect, little by little they pick up Roman characteristics. What on earth do they do – all these hundreds of thousands of people who have created vast new quarters that now extend for miles into the Campagna, uprooting trees, scattering an eczema of blocks of white flats across the countryside?

The New Rome reminds me of an American city (Los Angeles, I believe, has grown equally fast) or of a South American city. It is behaving as though a vast deposit of oil had recently been discovered beneath the green Campagna – only there is no oil. There are no industries except the cinema – the power and wealth of the cinema here is not yet appreciated in

England, but Rome is second only to Hollywood in the film world. Innumerable civil servants have come here to carry on the business of government – bringing with them money from places such as Milan or Turin where they build motor cars and have all kinds of modern factories. There are twice as many embassies as anywhere else because of the Vatican – but the pilgrims who come to Rome, whatever goods they involuntarily leave behind owing to the robberies practised on them, can only contribute a tithe to this immense urban complexity in which the Vatican itself seems swamped. The new Rome is a pleasure city, with its wonderful climate and its innumerable servants and hangers-on. With the film stars we associate pashas in our minds – perhaps because they seem to like the same pleasures. But besides all the rich men there is a *demi-monde*, largely international, of beachcombers, drug addicts, prostitutes and perverts – they were first revealed to the world with Capocotta and the Montesi scandals.

The New Rome is *nouveau riche* and seems vulgar and provincial beyond measure to those who only know the middle and lower-middle-class world of London and Paris. In the French and English capitals the middle classes have existed for centuries, they have become cultivated, and indeed are probably the backbone of European culture. Not so in Rome. There is still a genuine Roman proletariat, and there has been an (unhealthy, so they say in other cities) aristocracy, but never much of a middle class. This has grown rapidly since 1870 and consists of people who have got rich quick by pitiless exploitation. The most successful of them ape Western civilization by having large cars, drinking whisky and smoking Camels, but these things are no basis of a culture in Italy or anywhere else. The difficulty is that the only 'metropolitan' thing Rome has ever had about it since the ancient world has been the Vatican.

Now one of the most fascinating fields for bourgeois exploitation is the apartment racket. There are thousands of people wandering round Rome looking for apartments like Dante's lost souls – Americans, English, Scandinavians, non-Roman Italians – and around these unfortunates has developed a wonderful game of double-crossing. For the man who wants to get rich quick without working, one of the ways is to buy an apartment on the hire-purchase system, put in five pounds' worth of furniture, and sublet it to people who have urgently to find somewhere to live in Rome. On top of an exorbitant rent (by

London standards) the landlord demands a huge deposit in advance – and in bank-notes, for cheques might always bounce.

Looking for a furnished flat under these new conditions was an unforgettable social experience. In several days I visited about six or eight furnished apartments. We went into all the business of the *doppio servizio*, or double service. This is a sacrosanct thing with the middle classes in Rome, and blocks of flats built only last year are provided with it. It consists of extra wash-bowl and lavatory accommodation for the *donna di servizio* – the servant – so that the employer should never come into contact with her even indirectly. In an apartment on the Aventine this was proudly explained to me by a fat man in a dirty dressing-gown – he was the kind intelligent Italians know as a *commendatore*, that is to say, he had two gold teeth, enormous buttocks, and had he not been in carpet slippers he would have been wearing co-respondent's sneakers.

The *commendatore* talked on and on about '*fiducia*' (the word means 'trust'). We could have *fiducia* our car wouldn't be stolen if we left it outside – especially as it was old and of a foreign make and if we padlocked it. He had special *fiducia* in us, and for that reason would only ask for two months' deposit in advance – i.e. 160,000 lire cash down (just under £100). It was a comfortable apartment and the *ambiente* was *signorile*. There was a peculiar hole in the wall without windows or air, about five feet by two. 'This,' he said, 'is the bedroom of the *donna di servizio*. You see, there is no contact.'

Or is it that *qui s'excuse, s'accuse*? I thought.

The next apartment lay in Monteverde Vecchio. It is a hill beyond the American Academy and the Porta San Pancrazio. Ten years ago I used to go up there in the early afternoon to take a stroll – a relief from the monotony of swearing at our superior officers in the privacy of our own *ufficio* in Via Veneto. In the churchyard of San Pancrazio I used to listen to the birds in the tufted pine trees, and there too, on a stone bench, I remember reading Winkelmann (in an Italian translation) and Virgil, and never a soul would appear. The road marches with the walls of the Villa Doria Pamphili, a vast expanse of gardens with cypresses, olive trees and pine trees. The apartment itself was just a modern eczema in a new block, but it overlooked these gardens. There was a telephone, newly installed but not yet 'alive'; *communicazione* would occur in *una quindicina di giorni*.

The proprietress was waiting like a spider on the balcony. With her was her cousin – *mio cugino l'avvocato* (she slipped in the last word, meaning 'solicitor', as often as she could). The ornaments in this apartment were those coloured glass flowers the French and Italians put on tombstones. The walls were jerry-built, of papier mâché. In the two bedrooms, oleographs of the Sacred Heart looked down from above with blasphemous leers. I saw some of the other tenants entering the house; I heard their radios. The *ambiente* reeked of the *piccolo borghese*. 'But how can you say it is *piccolo borghese*,' the proprietress protested; 'one of the neighbours owns the *pasta* shop, and one is a dentist.'

I went away in disgust and sat in the local *trattoria*, a decent old-fashioned place with a pergola of vine-leaves, drinking Frascati and telling my woes to the landlord. In all countries it is part of the innkeeper's business to listen sympathetically to tales of human folly – he is a kind of auxiliary of the priest and the doctor.

When I returned to the apartment it was apparently ours. There was a fiendish noise of motors revving up. Plainly, the *jettatura* was still operative.

'I have removed the Sacred Hearts,' said my wife.

'I will try to work with ear-plugs,' said I.

* * * *

What has changed Rome most of all is the petrol engine. Elsa Moravia told me that one day she happened to overhear a conversation between two boys of sixteen or eighteen. It was a typical Roman conversation:

'She's so beautiful.'

'So well made . . .'

'Sensitive to the slightest touch . . .'

'So responsive . . .'

'Such beautiful lines . . .'

And only at the end was the New Rome revealed.

'She drinks hardly any petrol.'

'A litre for fifty kilometres.'

She was a Vespa.

You would expect to escape the whine and roar of the Vespas and other *motorini* in the country. But not a bit of it. Half the evening I listened to their deadly roar as with throttles full open and silencers cunningly removed they mounted the long hill up to Porta San Pancrazio. It was like living over a motor-racing

establishment. It was like the rape of the Sabines, too, for each young man bore his prey with him, the flat-faced contented girl, on the back, on the handlebars, smiling at the tremendous virility of the noise he could make with his motor. And the young man, concentrated on driving at the maximum possible speed and impressing the girl, would lean forward as if he were urging his steed over hurdles.

The proprietor of the *trattoria* is an oldish man.

'Of course no one can sleep when *they* come,' he said. 'And during the day they roar up, buy two cigarettes, and, while they are buying, the girl makes the motor roar.' Hundreds, thousands of them, the new young Romans, all alike, with crimped hair and cheeky faces, each with his girl. '*Ah, siamo tutti motorizzati,*' said the *padrone*. '*Cosa vuole?*'

'The smaller the motor the bigger the noise,' I said, being banal.

'Of course it is not always so bad,' he said. 'When the weather is good *they* come out. But in the winter much less. *They* go to the cinema.'

After a few days the weather broke and there were fewer *ragazzi* taking their Sabines to be raped on the road to Civitavecchia. But the passion for motors in Rome is part of the passion for newness. As the intelligent son of a friend of mine said, 'With you *le macchine* are a *means*, with us they are an *end*.' The *macchina* is a kind of symbol of the person's standing. In addition, *macchine* have a very definite sexual significance. For the *commendatore* – I mean any *commendatore*, not the particular one on the Aventine – or a prosperous business man, the car serves the preliminary stages for seducing his platinum-blonde (dyed) secretary. For this reason it has to be as new and shiny as possible, and he too has to drive at a furious pace so as to *far figura* and exhibit his manliness. For her the motor car she sits in is part of her equipment, like her clothes. There is a chestnut about subconscious parallels between sex and petrol engines. I can't help feeling, however, that the boy on the Vespa loves his Vespa more than he loves the girl whom he is going to seduce with it; he would do without the girl rather than the scooter. And that is as much a revolution in the mentality of young Roman men as the possibility of going out with a male on a motor cycle is a revolution in the habits of girls.

Yet I have an uneasy feeling that such people in Italy could easily be the backbone of some new and disastrous political

movement like Fascism. Fascism and Communism may depend on social conditions – it may well be that the workers proper incline towards Communism, as the lower-lower-middle classes inclined towards Fascism – but they also depend on education, or rather the lack of it. What are these poor people on *motorini* to do? Their ignorance is abysmal. They can just spell their way through the sporting journal and read the figures on the *Totocalcio* paper (a sort of 'Pools'). They are the natural victims of propaganda, of all the lies they were told when they were babies by their parents who for twenty years were victimized by Fascist propaganda (this propaganda has never really been got entirely out of the heads of the Italian masses, even when they think it has). And the huge propaganda machine of Communism can only work to disrupt and confuse all coherent thought amongst the ignorant. As for parliamentary government, how many people (*a*) know what it is and (*b*) want it?

* * * *

There is a story in the book by Bartolini which was the foundation, but no more, of the film called *Bicycle Thieves*, about thieves and police in occupied Rome. The chief personality in the book wanted to find his stolen bicycle. So he stopped a policeman and said: 'Where are the thieves working to-day?' 'What day is it?' asked the policeman. 'Oh, it's Sunday. They wouldn't be here to-day. On Sundays they operate in such and such a place.' That is the bones of the story, though I have forgotten the exact version. The fact is that *ladri*, or thieves, in Rome are viewed by many people, including, I think, the police, as a phenomenon of nature like volcanoes and earthquakes. And if someone gets robbed it is partly his fault; he is an imbecile for not locking everything up, he is like a man who deliberately strolls amongst the hot cinders of an eruption.

The *ladri* have every kind of trick and they rarely work singly. There are the *ladri* who slit open your pocket with a razor blade in a crowded bus so as to get at a wallet. There are the station *ladri*, who have suitcases without bottoms. These they place over smaller suitcases whose owner is buying his ticket – and when he looks round, lo, his suitcase has mysteriously disappeared, and the real thief says he has seen another *ladro* making off with it. *Ladri* hang about at street corners looking for likely prey: a foreigner who has lost his way, someone slightly tipsy.

It is worth a *ladro's* while to spend the whole day mooching about in the Piazza del Popolo just watching and watching for something to turn up, somebody to whom he can offer his help, for instance. But one of the disconcerting things is that there are three or four different kinds of police, as well as the *ladri*. Some of them wear plain clothes, and one is never quite sure whether they are really police or *ladri* themselves – one of the tricks of the *ladri* is to pretend they are police and in that way worm themselves into the confidence of the innocent.

Now that day I was thinking very much about *ladri* and *poliziotti* because Stendhal's *Chartreuse de Parme* had once again become my bedside book – it is much the best novel about Italy ever written by a foreigner – and also there had been an unfortunate cultural incident several days earlier in Venice. One of the English cultural delegates at a congress had socked a policeman in the Piazza San Marco, and the men of culture in Rome said the policeman had gone to hospital for a week and the English cultural delegate had spent the whole time of the congress in prison. As soon as this delegate had been freed conditionally and had returned to Rome, I set out to see him. Unfortunately I wasn't thinking about *ladri* enough, because while I left my car for two minutes to enquire the way one of the *ladri* – as I have said – slipped his hand in and stole my passport.

So off I rushed to the *Questura*, or central police station. There at the entrance of a massive and hideous building was a policeman being besieged by a group of foreigners who understood no Italian. He was telling them that if they had come to register as foreigners they must wait until the *ufficio* for foreigners opened, which would be towards five o'clock.

'But mine is a special case,' said I. 'I can't register. I have been *rubato*, robbed.'

The policeman was young and smiling, probably a Neapolitan like most policemen (the Neapolitans are the Irish of Italy).

'*Allora*, that is quite different,' said the policeman. 'Those who have been *rubati* can come in immediately. Have these others been robbed too?'

'He wants to know whether you've been robbed,' I said to an English couple next to me.

'Not yet, fortunately,'' said the woman in an 'off accent'.

So those of us who had been *rubati* were allowed to troop in; we were the privileged ones. I entered a small room where there

was a young official with a typewriter. He got up and motioned me to a seat, invitingly and politely.

'*Rubato?*' he said cheerfully. 'But of what?'

'Of my passport,' said I. 'The *ladri* stole it out of my car.'

'*Soltanto il passaporto*,' he said politely. 'Was there any money in it?'

'No.'.

'Passports,' he said, 'they usually turn up in about a month. Our *ladri* don't want passports. Of what use is a passport to a *ladro*? They naturally feel in a car for anything there, and when they find it is only a passport they put it back in the post and eventually it comes back to us. In nine cases out of ten our *ladri* return passports. Now if there had been money or clothes it would have been different. Are you sure there was no money or clothes? Did they puncture your tyres?'

'No,' I said.

'They often do,' he said. 'They then come and offer to help you. And while you are looking at the tyre they take everything inside the car. They think of everything. *Però non si sturbi, signore*, your passport will be found. Which thieves was it?'

'I don't know,' I said.

'You must always lock everything up,' he said. 'Our thieves are very clever. But *non si sturbi*, we will have your passport back in a month.'

I then went on to make another *denuncia*, or declaration of residence, to a melancholy man with drooping moustaches in another room. He asked for my father's Christian name and my mother's maiden name. I had such things ready, for I remembered how, thirty years ago, we had to give my grandmother's maiden name when my mother was robbed of £10 at the altar rail in the Church of the Cappucini. When the man had spelt out these difficult names he asked me for my passport.

'But that is the whole point,' I said. 'I have been robbed of my passport!'

'Who robbed you of your passport?'

'If I knew, would I be here?' I said. '*Ladri* of course.'

'Which *ladri*?' he asked.

'Oh, ordinary *ladri*,' I answered.

'But you can't register without a passport,' said drooping-moustaches.

'Oh, then what can I do?' It seemed desperate.

'Better not register,' said the man. 'Or wait until your pass-

port is found. Perhaps in a *quidicina di giorni*. Who knows?' With his cigarette holder elegantly between his fore and middle fingers, he picked up the next *denuncia*.

* * * *

Geography always misleads the unwary. The British Empire was an empire because it lay in different places with large gaps of water in between; the Russian Empire wasn't an empire – or isn't – because it is all solid and one colour on the map like a country. And so people think of 'England', 'France', 'Italy' as similar kinds of entities, differing in shape and location, but where the same terms obtain.

And the idea is hopelessly misleading. United Italy is a very late construction and you can see the seams where it was sewn together everywhere. Old traditions die hard; what they really do is emerge in entirely new and disguised forms. Sometimes they don't even do that. Habits of administration, habits of life, are created by long history and eighty or a hundred years can't abolish them. So the strange mixture of bureaucratic habits here, deriving in part from the Austrians, in part from the Papal administration – presided over by lay *Monsignori*, a unique and peculiar race – partly from the southern Bourbons. A bureaucracy goes on doing things simply because they were so done by the preceding generation.

How much deep down is changing? I ask myself. This 'Americanization', with the gigantic advertisements for Coca-Cola and Esso covering the Campagna, involves strange contrasts. There is the man with the Esso truck, but there is still the man with the donkey laden with tomatoes. The wireless blares out American popular tunes of twenty years ago, but the servant sings her ancient songs in dialect. Count Mosca is still in his office somewhere in the 'Centre', and Fabrice del Dongo, member surely of one of the ancient Papal families, has merely changed his horse for an Alfa Romeo.

The *Chartreuse de Parme* drives back my mind once more to the arts of seduction. When I was a boy there were two traditional places for amorous overtures. One was in the trams, where people were crowded up against one another like sardines and you could hardly go a mile on the Circolare without hearing a girl's screams. The other was at High Mass, where there were crowds too and people always look very smart. The young man, as often as not an *ufficiale*, would take on a longing appearance and edge

towards the signorina of his desire as the priest proceeded with this protracted form of Mass.

'*Dominus Vobiscum*,' the priest would intone, holding out his arms to the people.

'*Ah signorina, che belle gambe, belle gambe*' ('what beautiful legs!'), the young man would say. It is traditional since the time of Dante that you should hope for rendezvous in church. Dante used to stare at Beatrice in church, and Petrarch saw Laura first in church. And in the streets in those days young men always dropped their eyes to examine a girl's legs after they had examined her face.

Yes, there has been a change that links up with the revolution of the *motorini*. For one thing, legs have entirely gone out of fashion; nobody says '*belle gambe*' any more. The buses are still as crowded as the trams used to be, but I haven't come across a single sexual situation. The young men are ruder, they push their way in together, often leaving the women on the pavement unable to mount. There seems no place for the wilting lover in this world of angry machines.

* * * *

The churches, too, are as crowded as ever. During the High Mass on Sunday at San Pancrazio the cortile is crammed chock-a-block with motor cars and Vespas. There is still the type of man who leans on his umbrella, and as the bell rings for the elevation of the Host, creating something of a silence, his voice sounds loud as he continues his conversation with his neighbour:

'*Allora ho bevuto un po' di caffé . . .*'

But the only lovers I have observed seem to be those passionate newly-weds who are so sympathetic to a man in middle age.

There is a sermon which is naturally about the Madonna. It always was in Italy, but now in addition this is the 'Marian Year'. A sermon in Italy is a kind of theatrical performance; the preacher declaims with a rhetoric which dates right back to the Romans and was revived with the Renaissance. It has a kinship with baroque architecture and with grand opera, and people love it. His voice becomes sorrowful as the grave, melancholy, slow; then rises to heights of passion. The words are carefully poised. 'Not only this and that, my *cari fratelli*, but also that

and the other. Not only wisdom, but also justice. Not only hope but also charity. Consider . . .'

A few days ago Pope Pius XII expressed his satisfaction in a radio message to Sicily at the decision, made unanimously, by all the Sicilian hierarchy of bishops to the effect that the statue which was seen to weep in a peasant's house in Syracuse really did weep. The Papacy tends to be rather cautious about miracles that happen in the South, but for this one there was very much evidence – so I have read in the *Messaggero*, which is a semi-official Government newspaper.

Outside the Church of San Pancrazio there sits a beggar. One of his hands is lacking. Either it never grew or else it got cut off in an accident. It is his greatest asset, and Sunday is his big day. He pushes it towards the people as they emerge from church. Everybody in Rome gives money to beggars, and he does well. Romans are generous. Some give him ten lire so as not to have to look at his hand. This, however, doesn't work, as he insists on exhibiting it all the more; he stretches it out to take the little note. Others are afraid, perhaps, of what he will say if they *don't* give him ten lire – beggars may invoke the Madonna to make all your issue arid if they are frustrated. Then he might, just *might*, have the *malocchio*. . . .

* * * *

The morning of the traditional *festa* of *Ognisanti* I strolled along the top of the Janiculum, past the huge and hideous monument to Garibaldi, in the direction of the Church of Sant' Onofrio, where Tasso is buried. The first of November was a day of brilliant hot sunshine, the height of Saint Martin's Summer. I went as far as the stone that has engraved on it the quotation from Martial telling us that from here you can see the whole seven hills. I knew they were there, shimmering in the mist, but they have become less identifiable in the last 2,000 years owing to the heightening of ground level with the interminable rubble. From San Giovanni in Laterano, the first palace of the Popes, far on the right, beyond Santa Maria Maggiore, beyond the Quirinal palace to the Villa Medici, where Galileo was imprisoned, and then towards the Castel Sant' Angelo, where the Popes sought asylum against enemies invading Rome.

Everybody was out for the *festa*. Vespas and *motorini* weaved

their way past Negro and Chinese priests and innumerable nuns. School children were playing with gas-filled balloons.

In the Piazza San Pietro there were enormous crowds waiting for the Pope to appear from the church where he was pontificating. He emerged at midday and was carried round the piazza on his ceremonial chair borne on the shoulders of his guards. There was the paraphernalia of Gounod's Papal hymn and of the Swiss Guards and Noble Guards – all the pomp of the oldest court in the world. The milling crowd raised cheer after cheer. The Pope had proclaimed the Feast of Maria Regina, which followed the day after the Feast of Cristo Re. The ceremonies and declarations were being broadcast on the Vatican radio, the Italian radio, the French, the German Swiss, the Dutch, the Irish, the Spanish, the Portuguese and Radio Free Europe.

Back in the *trattoria*, over a coffee and a Tuscan cigar, I talked with my friendly waiter.

'Here there's been a great *movimento* to-day,' he said. 'A very big *movimento* of foreigners and people from north Italy and everywhere. It's to do with something, *io non so*, something the Pope is doing – *be'* – a coronation or *qualchecosa del genere. Roba del Papa insomma . . .*' He shrugged.

Obviously he wasn't impressed by Maria being the Regina. But how could any new Elizabethan doubt who was effectively monarch in Rome?

FOOTNOTE TO THE ABOVE. The *ladri* have returned my passport, exactly as the Questura said they would. It arrived back at our Consulate in the Piazza di Spagna within three weeks. My daughter has now been aggressed by a man in a *filobus*. He was one of the middle aged auto-erotic types, and so he in no way invalidates what I have written about Roman youth. Besides I think it would be bad taste to overlook men like the Rillington Place murderer, the late John Christie (*Ripressi* the newspapers call them here) who have roamed at large in London.

PHILOSOPHY AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

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Rudolf Bultmann's essay on de-mythologizing the New Testament was as much a reaction to the second world war as Karl Barth's commentary on *Romans* was to the first. And there is a sense in which, however opposed the two theologians may be at the moment, the work of the later is a natural development from that of the earlier. Each is concerned, as every theologian worth his salt is concerned, to mediate the New Testament message to men in the contemporary situation. Barth presented the message as sheer challenge, as a Word of God that descends perpendicularly from above upon men, whether they will hear or will forbear. In time, he came to deny any point of contact in human nature for the Word; the Word must itself create such a point. Bultmann does not wish to abate the challenge in the least, but he is keenly aware that it is possible to evade it, because it is so often presented to men in language that no longer possesses reality for them. The imagery of the New Testament is so strange as to be a stumbling-block that must be somehow removed if the offence of the Cross is to be faced. In technical terms, the New Testament must be de-mythologized.

There was something so startling in the suggestion, it was expressed moreover so frankly, that decision for or against it became imperative. The result was a continuous stream of controversial literature, in the main hostile. A selection from this literature under the title *Kerygma und Mythos* was published in two volumes, of which notice was taken in an earlier number of this journal (June 1953). An English translation has since been made available. For those who, like myself, find themselves in sympathy with Bultmann, it cannot but seem that he has been distressingly and inexplicably misunderstood. Some of his critics speak, for example, as though he proposed to discard the New Testament in large part and replace it by Heidegger's philosophy. He has, of course, no desire to touch the rich imagery of the New Testament; it must be preserved as it is,

so interpreted as to make it intelligible and convincing to
to whom at present it is strange. Nor is he making one
tempt to commend the Gospel to the modern mind by
; it of everything to which objection could possibly be
Rather does he seek to leave the modern mind no excuse
ading the challenge of the Gospel.

so often happens in a debate between Protestant theo-
is, it is the Catholic onlooker who sees most clearly what
take. Catholic critics of Bultmann agree with him that he
ıply finding a new application for the Lutheran principle
stification by faith. They claim, to be sure, that in so doing
ıas put it out of court by a *reductio ad absurdum*. On the Pro-
ant side, Hans-Werner Bartsch, in his essay on 'Kerygma
d Geschichte' in *Der gegenwärtige Stand der Entmythologisier-
gs-debatte*, agrees with their diagnosis though not, of course,
ıth the death-sentence with which they follow it. What is at
ake may be put in the form of a question: does faith in the resurrection of Christ, for example, rest on a previous estimate of the historical evidence for that event, or is it wholly independent of such considerations? To urge the former, Bultmann would say, is to make our standing as Christians dependent in some measure on our intellectual level, which would put it in dire peril at once. Faith in the resurrection is rather to receive the Cross as victory here and now, so to receive it that we are inwardly transformed thereby, to die and rise again with Christ. Assessment of historical evidence may follow on this, for those whose calling requires them to concern themselves with it; it is emphatically not a precondition of faith.

So far, the debate had been conducted among the theologians. Since, however, one important part of Bultmann's thesis is that contemporary existentialist philosophy furnishes a language with which to reinterpret the New Testament imagery, there was widespread desire for a pronouncement from a philosopher of front rank on the subject. An invitation was given to Karl Jaspers, and the address he gave in response is reprinted in the third volume of *Kerygma und Mythos*, recently published. It may be said at once that his attitude to Bultmann is surprisingly hostile. Those of us who were familiar with the thought of Jaspers as it has developed over the years anticipated that, here at least, there would be understanding and sympathy for what Bultmann is trying to do. For does not Jaspers himself attach great importance to myth as a vehicle of truth, while

calling for it to be appropriated personally and interpreted in the language proper to philosophical discussion? Might not Bultmann's project have been welcomed by him as moving towards that revival of Biblical religion in a form that can be living and convincing to-day, as he has more than once desiderated? In fact, however, Jaspers appears to reject everything in Bultmann except what appears to many of us the most questionable element: his historical scepticism that reduces the figure of Jesus to such diminutive proportions that one wonders how the Christian religion ever arose. On the other hand, his criticisms are sometimes penetrating and at least at one point he detects a serious weakness in Bultmann's position. In what follows, I shall not trouble the reader with the niceties of the debate, but shall content myself with a brief account of features that may be of more general interest.

1. In the last resort, of course, everything turns on the fact that one man is a philosopher, the other a theologian, or, to be more precise, a New Testament scholar who stands within Lutheranism. As Bultmann rightly points out in his reply to Jaspers, he has a duty at once to the New Testament, to those who will have to preach from it, and to those who will listen to their preaching. For Jaspers, on the other hand, the New Testament is merely one of a great number of books, philosophical, religious, or purely literary it may be, that stimulate and direct him in the quest for truth. What is for Bultmann the burning question: how he is to make intelligible to this generation a book that contains the revelation of God in a form appropriate to the first century but not to the twentieth, simply does not arise for Jaspers. Paradoxically enough, he can accuse Bultmann of evaporating from the New Testament imagery the very truth it is meant to convey, not because that imagery means more to him, but because it means less. It is not a treasure he must find some means of sharing with others, but an *objet d'art* to be preserved from injury.

Hence, like so many others, he makes the mistake of thinking that Bultmann is engaged in one more effort to accommodate the Gospel to the modern mind, a strange mixture of rationalism and orthodoxy. He is rationalist because his criterion of truth is furnished by the scientific world-view, orthodox because the irreducible minimum at which he arrives in the end is not, as usually with liberals, the historical Jesus and his message of the Fatherhood of God, but items of dogma,

eschatology, the call to decision, and the saving Word. In this, as indicated above, there is a serious misunderstanding. Jaspers would affirm, from his own point of view, that myth, whether in the New Testament or elsewhere, is essential and not to be translated into some other form. There is a touch of blasphemy in all this language about de-mythologizing. Our task is so to live with and into the myths that we can recover the power with which they were originally charged. The truth they contain is always existential, to be incorporated into life and not merely rendered into propositions. Of course, myths are always inadequate and sometimes perverse, so that we need to be critical over against them, and to that extent Bultmann is correct. But they remain indispensable.

If, however, I understand Bultmann aright, he does not propose to dispense with the New Testament imagery, but only to interpret it. A translation is no substitute for the original, and – this is of great importance – the original must be preserved with the utmost care, because each generation will need to make its own translation. That Jaspers is not so far from Bultmann as he imagines is made clear by one of the most impressive sections of his essay. He describes the minister of religion as called, in his pastoral activity, to mediate the truth offered by the New Testament to those who are in his charge. So doing, he must, as Jaspers puts it, listen to the speech of God and speak this himself again to the needs and perplexities of his time. Only in this situation of responsibility for another is it possible to express what the Bible contains; no exegesis, no existential interpretation such as Bultmann's, avails for this. The minister can only help another as he has himself entered into the rich world of myth and imagery, appropriated it as revelation, and wrought it into the fabric of his own personality. That such a calling is a genuine one the philosopher may not doubt, though it is altogether different from his own. It is one he must view with respect and wonder.

To this Bultmann has a ready reply. Granted that the minister's duty is of this order, is he to be left without any assistance in discharging it? Is there of necessity such a gulf between personal faith and exegesis? Can anyone enter into the world of the New Testament at all adequately without some preliminary discipline such as theology? Of course, one may do so for oneself by purely devotional reading, but even so one may fall into the pit of literalism or be guilty of arbitrary selection

of texts. What Bultmann is seeking to do may legitimately be described as making possible just that communication between person and person that Jaspers estimates so highly. The theological faculty equips the minister for the cure of souls, as the medical faculty equips the physician for the treatment of his patients – and Jaspers recognizes the force of this analogy. As we shall see, it may be argued that Bultmann's particular approach to the New Testament does not in fact do this, that it is too academic, but this is not the point at issue here.

2. It is clear from what has already been said that the philosopher differs from the theologian because, highly as he may regard the New Testament, he cannot attach the same significance to it as the other does. There is the further point that even where he is personally a Christian – as Jaspers does not claim to be – he has not, *qua* philosopher, any denominational allegiance. Now, save in some exceptional cases, a theologian is also a member, even an official, of some particular communion. Bultmann is certainly an unashamed Lutheran. But Jaspers is quite without sympathy for Lutheranism. Justification by faith, faith in a saving event, he tells us frankly, is for him utterly repellent, unintelligible, and fraught with the most disastrous consequences. Presumably it suggests to him the transfer of punishment from the guilty to the innocent, imputed righteousness, and a divine sentence declaring someone to be what all the world knows he is not! That is to say, Jaspers has not taken the trouble to penetrate to its inner meaning; in his own words, he has not lived himself into the myth.

This is not the only difference at this point, however. What follows from it is even more serious. As a Lutheran theologian, Bultmann is committed to use the principle of justification by faith as selective. It puts the New Testament in a position of superiority to the Old Testament, and within the New Testament it assigns special value to the Pauline literature. It is in fact the criterion by which the relative value of the various parts of the New Testament is to be judged. The result is that Paul and John dominate Bultmann's account of New Testament thought, the Synoptists furnishing material for a brief introduction and the later works representing a decline from the original message. For Jaspers, on the other hand, the whole Bible is the starting-point and its value lies in its diversity. As he reads the Bible, it presents us with different types of religion: law and prophecy, Synoptists and John, and so on, no one of

these with more authority than the others. Being of such a character, it imposes no doctrine on us, but stimulates our freedom to choose between its various possibilities. For him the high points of the Bible are the Hebrew prophets and the Synoptists. He finds Paul repugnant as he does Lutheranism, and John blatantly anti-Jewish and dogmatic.

It is easy to say in reply, as Bartsch does, that in this Jaspers has merely betrayed his ignorance, that theological scholarship has long since ceased to pit one section of the New Testament against another, so that we now read it as a unity instead of a collection of books, the unity being derived from the message that is common to all those books. In my judgment, the layman's verdict on such a matter has equal right with that of the expert. The latter tends to work with the New Testament as it appears after going through a process of critical sifting; the former can report the impression it makes on the unsophisticated reader in its present form. I doubt, too, whether the fact that the Pauline literature bulks so large in the New Testament justifies our using it as the standard by which the rest is to be judged. It will be a sad day if ever we succumb to some learned theory that will enable us to evade the challenge of the Sermon on the Mount, for example. The unity of the New Testament, as I see it, is to be found in the common life and loyalty by which it is sustained, not in any body of teaching that can be traced everywhere in its pages.

3. I come now to the point at which the criticism of Jaspers seems to me to have full validity. Bultmann uses the philosophy of Heidegger to provide the terminology in which the New Testament is to be reinterpreted for our time. It describes the human situation as the New Testament does, albeit in very different language, but it knows nothing of the deliverances the latter offers. So doing, it opens the mind to the acceptance of the Gospel. Jaspers belongs, like Heidegger, to the school of thought that is influenced by Nietzsche and Kierkegaard, but there is a compound of agreement and divergence that finds expression in the use of the term 'existentiel' for Jaspers and 'existential' for Heidegger. 'In existential analysis we try to win a scientifically objective knowledge of what has meaning only as existentiel.' In simpler language, Jaspers finds in Heidegger the attempt to grasp and expound as general truths about man what can only be understood aright as it is apprehended personally and taken up into the life. That is expressed in

propositions which can only be conveyed by hint and symbol; what should be the truth that transforms my being becomes one more item of knowledge to be added to the existing stock.

On this view, Bultmann has adopted the wrong medium for his reinterpretation of the New Testament to our time. He has made what was a new and delivering proclamation of God's intervention for man into one more set of ideas about man. I must confess that precisely this is the impression left on me by the two volumes of Bultmann's *New Testament Theology*. His critics are surely right when they ask whether expressions such as 'the understanding of one's own existence' really gain in comprehensibility as against the statements of the New Testament itself. If the original is difficult to follow, the translation provides little help for those who have not mastered the argument of *Sein und Zeit*. The warmth and glow of the Pauline message seem to be dissipated under Bultmann's treatment, while of the historical Jesus little is left except a voice calling to decision. The New Testament needs to be read as a book that concerns the reader personally; Bultmann makes of it one that has much that is wise to say about man. His treatment is too academic and fails to communicate the faith that doubtless lies behind it.

Bultmann's reply to this criticism is that, after all, he is a theologian and that theology is an academic discipline, a scientific one in the wider sense of the German *Wissenschaft*. He is not writing as a preacher whose duty is to persuade, but as a teacher charged with giving systematic instruction. That only shows his failure to grasp what the existentialist movement stands for. It seeks to make us aware of a dimension of truth that is inaccessible to academic treatment, that must be personally appropriated and can be expressed only by arguments that are confessedly but pointers to that which argument can never attain. In his three-volume *Philosophie* Jaspers has succeeded in presenting in systematic form his insights into a truth that can never be systematized. The philosophical exposition vibrates with the sense that here is something that transcends all exposition, so that proofs must be received as symbols and scholarly paragraphs read as a call to responsibility and decision. At the risk of ceasing to be academically respectable, the theologian must learn to expound the New Testament in that way. What is existentialist will be his approach to the subject and the method he adopts, not the philosophical categories he employs.

THE PASSING OF ANTI-CHRISTMAS

J. A. R. Pimlott

It goes without saying that all is not well with Christmas. That is part of the tradition. It must be admitted that canned plum-puddings are a sad decline from Mrs Beeton, that present-giving has been carried to extremes, that the æsthetic standard of Christmas cards tends to be low and in inverse ratio to their relevance, that celebrations in hotels and restaurants are an indifferent substitute for Christmas round the family hearth, that for many the festive season is an endless chore and an economic burden. And much more. Perhaps the most serious criticism is the commercialization of Christmas customs, which some people think is still on the increase. How widely it is felt was strikingly illustrated by the views which were expressed this year where they might least have been expected – among the spokesmen of organized business. Protesting to the conference of the National Chamber of Trade in October against 'the tendency of the shops to damage the spiritual and traditional significance of Christmas by introducing Father Christmas in the middle of November', Mr A. McTaggart-Short, for example, asked: 'Are we so materialistic, so selfish, and so concerned only about the money we are going to get into our pockets?' And the conference passed a resolution deprecating the appearance of Father Christmas in the shops earlier and earlier each year. It was pointed out afterwards that Father Christmas was in fact being installed at several London stores during the second half of October.

There is genuine concern about some of these manifestations, and particularly about the exploitation for commercial purposes of aspects of Christmas more sacred than Father Christmas. What, however, in the light of history is chiefly noteworthy about the contemporary criticisms is neither their gravity nor the depth of the conviction with which they are held. Judged by the standards of the past they are remarkable rather for their lack of vehemence and for their peripheral character. They are directed against the form which is assumed by customs that are

taken for granted, and not against any of the major observances or the principle of celebrating Christmas as either a religious feast or a secular holiday. They are in the last analysis criticisms not of Christmas but of society.

This used not to be. Nothing about the modern Anglo-Saxon Christmas is more distinctive than the absence of what for convenience may be called Anti-Christmas – the opposition to Christmas in its religious or secular aspects, or both, which has almost always *hitherto* struck a discordant note among the celebrations.

Anti-Christmas is coeval with Christmas – in a sense preceded it – and, if only on account of its antiquity, the passing of Anti-Christmas after more than 1,500 years would be worthy of record. But the story is also interesting for the light it throws on the evolution of Christmas and the nature of Christmas as a social phenomenon to-day. Christmas was reshaped in the nineteenth century against a background of hostility which seemed on the point of prevailing when the revival began. In the reasons for the decline of Anti-Christmas is also to be found the explanation for the triumph of Christmas and the virtually unchallenged hold it has now attained even where it would have been repudiated a generation or two ago.

Anti-Christmas took several forms in the nineteenth century. There were first of all those whom Charles Lamb in 1827 summed up as 'Puritans, Muggletonians, Anabaptists, Quakers, and that UnWassailing Crew'. They were the inheritors of Puritanism on both sides of the Atlantic. As often as not they were wholehoggers who would have *no* part in either the religious or the secular celebrations. They associated the former with the Pope, and the latter with the Pope and the Devil. Christmas was an evil to be shunned like gambling and liquor, and a duty lay upon the good Christian to protect the younger and the weaker brethren from its seductions.

This attitude is vividly exemplified by an incident in 1857 which Sir Edmund Gosse recorded in *Father and Son*. Philip Gosse would 'denounce the horrors of Christmas until it almost made me blush to look at a holly-berry', and it was a strict injunction to his household that no difference whatever was to be made in the meals on December 25th. The maids were, however, secretly rebellious. They made a small plum-pudding for themselves and – the goodness of their hearts outrunning their discretion – invited the young Edmund to partake of a slice.

This he did, but the maids were unlucky. The indulgence so smote the stomach and the conscience of the boy that he ran to tell his father: 'Oh! Papa, Papa, I have eaten of flesh offered to idols.' 'Where is the accursed thing?' demanded Philip Gosse, and rushed to the kitchen, seized the remains of the pudding, and 'with the plate in one hand and me still tight in the other, ran until we reached the dust-heap, when he flung the idolatrous confectionery into the middle of the ashes, and then raked it down into the mass'.

In its violence and poignancy this story reflects the unusual personality of the chief actor and may owe something to the gift for dramatization of his son. But it illustrates a state of mind which was common among the sects which did not celebrate the Nativity. Many more shared the less extreme views of William McGonagall, the Scottish ballad-monger:

> The way to respect Christmas time
> Is not by drinking whisky or wine,
> But to sing praises to God on Christmas morn,
> The time that Jesus Christ His Son was born.

Anti-Christmas found its most extravagant expression among the stricter Protestants and in Scotland – where in any case the popular celebrations centred on the New Year. At the other extreme were those whose objections stemmed from rationalism. They looked upon Christmas as a superstitious anachronism. In the 'sixties, for example, the newly married Russells of Amberley made a point of treating December 25th like any other day, though on one occasion Kate Amberley admitted that they had plum-pudding, and they lapsed more or less altogether when their children came of Christmas party age. Bernard Shaw helped to popularize the view that the revival of Christmas was an astute move on the part of commercial interests. 'Christmas,' he wrote in 1897, 'is forced upon a reluctant and disgusted nation by the shopkeepers and the press; on its own merits it would wither and shrivel in the fiery breath of universal hatred.' Mr Aldous Huxley restated the same theme as recently as 1937. 'It became necessary to stimulate consumption, to provide the home public with reasons, or better still, with compelling unreasons, for consuming.' 'Christmas was canalized. The deep festal impulse of man was harnessed and made to turn a very respectable little wheel in the mills of industry.'

For the most part anti-Christmas sentiment was less coherent. It was based not on doctrine or ideology but on the lack of positive appeal of the festivities. In *A Christmas Carol* Dickens indicted those who regarded Christmas as a wasteful interruption of economic activity, a criminal extravagance by the poor and all who ministered to their self-indulgence, and a form of licensed blackmail practised on the well-to-do by servants, tradesmen, nephews, poor relations, and charities. ' "If I could work my will," said Scrooge, "every idiot who goes about with 'Merry Christmas' on his lips should be boiled with his own pudding and buried with a stake of holly through his heart." '

This same lack of positive appeal meant that for others, especially in the upper middle classes, the secular Christmas was a tiresome and meaningless ritual. 'Beyond all doubt,' said Adolphus Ward in his biography of Dickens in 1882, 'there is much that is tedious in the *cultus* of Father Christmas.' 'What change has come over us,' asked the *Spectator* in 1890, some fifty years after the publication of the *Carol* and the introduction of the Christmas tree to Windsor Castle, 'that the season associated with gladness has become universally distasteful? . . . Christmas would not be Christmas, if many people had felt about it formerly, what we may almost say that everybody feels now.'

All this made up the latest chapter in an age-old story. The modern Christmas is the product of tensions which go back to pre-Christian times; and, though other elements have entered in, Anti-Christmas throughout the ages has been mainly a reaction to the paradox of Christmas – the contradiction between the Nativity celebrations and the pagan and neo-pagan observances. The secular Christmas is descended from the pagan mid-winter festivities which were general in the ancient world; the Feast of the Nativity was instituted in mid-winter in the hope that it would supplant the traditional festivities in the affections of the people. The hope was only fulfilled in part, and Christmas as an institution in which Christian and pagan customs were synthesized was the unforeseen result of a tactical retreat which was forced on the Church by the refusal of plain men and women, like Philip Gosse's servants, to give up observances they had inherited and continued to cherish.

In the face of popular resistance the ecclesiastical authorities were forced to compromise. They decided to tolerate the less objectionable of the pagan customs, pending the firm establishment of the Nativity feast and as a means to the easier suppression

of the more offensive. The main objective was achieved, but the plan none the less miscarried, and a compromise intended to be temporary became permanent. The heathen 'Yule', purged of its worst features, merged with the Christian festival, and 'Christmas' was the outcome.

But the compromise was unstable. There remained a basic incompatibility between the secular and religious elements which always threatened the latter. The balance between the tolerable and the positively objectionable was precarious, and the popular taste had a tendency to prefer the worse to the better. The generality of ecclesiastics enjoyed their Christmas as much as the laity, but the popular Christmas was a constant cause of anxiety to conscientious moralists, theologians, and administrators.

The revival and spread of frankly pagan customs had to be resisted. As late as the seventeenth century John Aubrey recorded that the people in Yorkshire would dance in the churches after service, and as they danced would sing 'Yole, Yole, Yole.' The Boy Bishop and similar ceremonies – which were descended from the Saturnalia – were an implicit threat to authority and even doctrine. A long war of attrition culminated with their final suppression in the sixteenth century. A different technique was employed against the lewd and often impious song dances or 'carols' which were imported from the Continent. They were gradually purged and assimilated as a medium of instruction and worship. The Christmas carol – one of the chief glories of the English medieval Christmas – represented a victory of Anti-Christmas so complete that its dubious antecedents were soon forgotten. There was also the licence into which the traditional merry-making so easily degenerated, the gambling, drunkenness, low songs and dances, the disorders, which came to be associated with the season. 'These holy days of Christmas,' said a fourteenth- or fifteenth-century preacher, 'that were ordained to God's worship, now be turned to great offence to Almighty God. . . . He that can most ribaldry in speaking or in singing, he is most set by, and he is called a jolly fellow and a stout reveller.' 'The great solemnity of Christmas,' said Wycliffe, was celebrated with 'gluttony, lechery, and all manner of harlotry'.

Anti-Christmas was thus not a Puritan innovation. The attack which the Puritans launched on the secular Christmas was in a well-established tradition. When William Prynne asked

why Christmas could not be observed 'without drinking, roaring, healthing, dicing, carding, dancing, Masques and Stage-playes which better become the sacrifices of Bacchus than the resurrection, the incarnation of our most blessed Saviour', he was restating a theme which had been familiar in the Middle Ages and enjoyed the support of many of his own contemporaries who did not share his religious opinions. It was under Mary that the Boy Bishops died out; neither Mary nor Elizabeth seems to have appointed a Lord of Misrule, and steps were taken under Elizabeth I, James I and Charles I to suppress the disorders which marked the celebrations at the Universities and the Inns of Court.

The attitude of the Puritans towards the secular observances was exceptional only for its absolutism. Where they broke new ground was in condemning the religious celebrations. This was part of the attack on 'Popish' festivals generally, but the special popularity of Christmas and its pagan elements made it additionally objectionable. There was also a political side. When the soldiers arrested John Evelyn at church on December 25th, 1657, they charged him with praying for Charles Stuart as well as breaking the ordinance against the keeping of Christmas Day.

The usual view is that the proscription of Christmas was an experiment that failed – rather like Prohibition in the United States. So it was. What, however, is more significant is how nearly it succeeded. It is arguable that if the authorities had pursued a more temperate policy, and in particular if they had concentrated on the secular observances and tolerated church services, it would have come off. There were popular outbreaks when the authorities were particularly clumsy, and the ban was widely disregarded. But the number of outbreaks was small and, far from being aggressive and confident, the advocates of Christmas were very much on the defensive. 'Old Christmas,' wrote a Royalist journalist in 1653, was now in town, but 'few him do regard'. In *The Vindication of Christmas*, which was published in the same year, Father Christmas can find nobody to take him in until he reaches a remote Devonshire farm; and the author is anxious to stress the innocuous character of the celebrations there. 'We discoursed merrily, without either prophaneness or obscenity,' and played 'harmless sports' such as hot cockles and shooting the wild mare.

What is certain is that Christmas did not regain its former

vitality after it was restored in 1660. Where the feudal tradition was strong it continued to flourish on the old lines for several generations. Sir Roger de Coverley and the Grandissons kept the traditional Christmas. But in London and increasingly elsewhere the decline was marked. Among the Dissenters, the Scots and the New England colonists, the Puritan attitude persisted. Sir Roger de Coverley was gratified 'for that a rigid Dissenter, who chanced to dine at his house on Christmas day, had been observed to eat very plentifully of his plum-porridge'. Generally speaking, however, there was the less temptation to lapse because Christmas failed to recapture the loyalty of those for whom there were no doctrinaire difficulties. The traditional customs were kept up chiefly as a matter of form and as an excuse for merry-making. 'To the generality,' said the *London Magazine* in 1754, 'Christmas is looked upon as a festival in the most literal sense, and held sacred by good eating and drinking.' But Anti-Christmas took its possibly most deadly form in the scorn of the fashionable and sophisticated. 'I cannot help being so ungenteel,' wrote one lady to another, 'as to send you the good wishes of the season, though to any of the fine folk of that town it would certainly be an affront.' According to the *London Magazine*, Christmas to persons of fashion was worse than Lent or the empty town in summer. The boisterous merriment and awkward affectation of politeness among the vulgar drove them out for the holidays; those who remained did not know what to do because there was no public place where a person of fashion could appear.

There was every reason to think that as a secular institution Christmas would go the way of May Day and other obsolescent festivals. 'The dying customs,' said Washington Irving, 'resemble those picturesque morsels of Gothic architecture which we see crumbling in various parts of the country, partly dilapidated by the waste of ages, and partly lost in the additions and alterations of latter days.' What G. K. Chesterton called the 'feudal Christmas' – the Christmas of Bracebridge Hall and Dingley Dell – had become a social anachronism and obviously had no future. A festival which was devoted to merriment without any deeper emotional content might have developed on the lines of Easter Monday or Whit Monday. It could not have been much more. Dickens was not alone in seeing the sterility of such a conception. 'What have you done this "merry Christmas," ' *Punch*, for example, asked its readers at about the

time the *Carol* appeared, 'for the happiness of those about you, below you? Nothing? Do you dare, with those sirloin cheeks and that port-wine nose, to answer – Nothing?'

The answer to Anti-Christmas was the reshaping of Christmas which took place roughly between 1840 and 1914. It revived because it acquired a new psychological and social content corresponding to the requirements of the age; obsolescent customs such as mumming and Twelfth Night disappeared and new institutions evolved to meet the new needs. The Christmas tree, the Christmas card, Father Christmas as he is known today, and for practical purposes the Christmas present, are each of them nineteenth-century innovations. Material factors played their part. The increasing strain of modern life increased the need for a mid-winter holiday. Rising prosperity and changing social ideas assured its survival and were to lead to its prolongation. Boxing Day was recognized by law in the 'seventies, but for many people the Christmas holidays now in practice extend beyond the statutory two days. But the changed emotional connotations of Christmas are much more important. Christmas became the festival of the child and, to an extent hitherto unparalleled, of the family as a whole. The need which it filled as an expression of family unity grew as the loosening of ties within the family was added to the social and economic forces which had caused families to be scattered as never before. By a natural extension Christmas developed into an annual reminder of a broader unity – the solidarity of the bigger family which was represented by the nation, the Empire, even mankind. The chief message of *A Christmas Carol* had been the responsibility of neighbour to neighbour, class to class, at a time when traditional social relationships were dissolving and the existence of the 'two nations' threatened social unity. The royal broadcasts, which have taken their place in the Christmas ritual within the last generation, symbolize and emphasize the unity of the Commonwealth as a great family with the monarch as its head. The still wider meaning of Christmas for the common man has never been better demonstrated than by the unofficial truce of 1914, when British and German soldiers exchanged gifts and played football.

The ideals and sentiments which find expression in the modern Christmas owe much to Christianity, but like the institutions which developed in the nineteenth century they are not specifically Christian. The clue to the recent history of Christmas

he virtually total divorcement of the secular from the ious festival. In a sense the circle has been completed, and e pre-Christian situation over again. The secular Christ- rich in meaning irrespective of its Christian associations. are, as it were, two festivals which happen to coincide. practising Christian can take part in both.

his also provides the clue to the routing of Anti-Christmas. t was a negative reaction to elements in the celebrations which emed to threaten true religion or a rational organization of ociety or whatever it might be. It ceased to be relevant when Christmas in its secular aspects had been refashioned to the needs of society and, as far as it was based on religious convictions, when the religious denominations became less conscious of their differences than of the points they had in common as against the non-Christian majority.

It is said that members of the United States Congress were afraid to vote against the establishment of Mother's Day because it would be represented as a vote against mothers. To vote against Christmas would be a vote against family unity, social solidarity, a well-earned break for the worker, and the innocent pleasures of childhood. Anti-Christmas has become anti-social, and it is noteworthy that in searching for 'negative reactions' to Christmas an American inquirer, Professor James H. Barnett, had to turn to a psycho-analytic casebook. It had been found that two female patients who had strong hostile feelings about Christmas 'were projecting aggression on to Christmas activities and symbols'. One of them had had 'a traumatic emotional deprivation during an early Christmas'.

It is no wonder that the voice of Anti-Christmas is silent. It does not follow that it will never be heard again. Perhaps even now there are unnoticed whispers which will grow in volume. There are signs, for example, of a reaction in Church circles against undue emphasis on pagan symbols such as the Christmas tree and the encroachment of the secular on the religious Christmas. This tendency – it can hardly be called more – has been discernible not only among Roman Catholics (who have probably been more successful than most Protestant churches in keeping the ecclesiastical separate from the secular celebrations) but in other denominations. There was, for example, an interesting correspondence in *The Presbyterian Messenger* in 1950 in which a leading Presbyterian layman, Mr J. M. Ross, drew attention to the incongruity of introducing Christmas trees into

church and criticized the prominence they were sometimes given. Why not, he asked, go the whole way and dress the minister as Father Christmas? But the three ministers who replied to Mr Ross defended the practice. As for the Church of England, a contributor to *Theology* not long ago made the different but related point that the prolongation of Christmas backwards was interfering with the proper observance of Advent-tide.

Are these pointers to a new phase in the story of Anti-Christmas? There is no doubt that many religious people believe that even for churchgoers the secular Christmas has assumed an exaggerated importance as compared with the Christian celebrations, and that some churches have been too anxious to come to terms with it. It would be too much to say that there are the beginnings of a movement among churchpeople to redress the balance, but it would be a logical reaction to what on a Christian view can only be regarded as a dangerous disproportion.

It is not, however, the purpose of this article to forecast the future. All that it is safe to say is that Anti-Christmas will speak again when the Christmas pattern ceases to fulfil the needs of society or important sections of it.

FAULKNER'S CONTEMPORARY PASSION PLAY

Geoffrey Wagner

There is a now celebrated entry in Gide's *Journal* where, shortly after the last war, we find this sage, advised by André Malraux, reading Dashiel Hammett and William Faulkner as if of equal significance. It now seems that this was but one characteristic instance of the power exerted on discriminating but war-weary European minds by American literature between 1945 and 1950. It was part, too, of a natural interest in the new colossus which was to guide, if not control, our European destinies. From the excesses of this interest, which rapidly reached the status of *engouement* in France, the language similarity tended to protect our own critics, although some of the more excitable, like Cyril Connolly, committed themselves to encomiums they might well now want to withdraw. Perhaps we can say that the enthusiasm achieved its zenith in the award of the Nobel Prize to William Faulkner in 1949 (his American predecessor being Pearl Buck in 1938), its nadir in the obscenity case, a few months ago, of our own 'Hank Janson', an author who fabricates the tough, nihilistic American model with meretricious, and metronomic, effect.

For what would Matthew Arnold, let alone Edmund Gosse or Desmond MacCarthy, have thought of Europe's first literary prize going to the creator of the following characters: a scarred, semi-paralysed, eventually blind war veteran, probably impotent (Donald Mahon of *Soldiers' Pay*); a voyeurist murderer, an impotent who as a child cuts up kittens with scissors and ends by raping a girl with a corn-cob 'gnawed bone-clean' by rats ('Popeye' Vitelli of *Sanctuary*, thus provoking the 'Philosopher with a Corn-cob' attack by Wyndham Lewis in 1934); an exhibitionist mulatto who murders a nymphomaniac white spinster (Joe Christmas of *Light in August*); a castrated lunatic (Benjy of *The Sound and the Fury*); a nymphomaniac thief (the girl Quentin of the same book); a mad arsonist (Darl of *As I Lay Dying*); an abortionist who refuses a suicide pill, not because suicide is a crime, but in order to perpetuate as long as possible the memory of his adulterous love (Harry of *The Wild Palms*)? It is,

of course, immediately possible to set in contrast to this painful portrait gallery upright members of the Sartoris family and lovable fertility symbols, like Lena the 'Blessed Virgin' of *Light in August* or Eula of *The Hamlet*, but the emotional persuasion, the vitality, in Faulkner is often to be found behind some of the most unattractive characters ever assembled between non-clinical covers.

Certainly it was this literature of disgust, this *animalisme américain*, which was seized on after the last war by certain French writers, varying in both ability and sincerity from Jean-Paul Sartre to Boris Vian, 'Le Menteur' of *Les Temps Modernes*. Faulkner seems fully conscious of this disgust, and it is epitomized in his novels, I think, by reiteration of characters being sick (vomiting). For instance, I noted that in *Sanctuary* Gowan, Temple, Benbow and the small boy Uncle Bud were all sick; Henry Sutpen vomits in *Absalom, Absalom!*; the reporter's vomit in *Pylon* 'burst out of his mouth as though his entire body were trying in one fierce orgasm to turn itself wrongsideout' – later we meet him 'his shirt and awry tie stiff and sour with vomit'; in *The Wild Palms* Charlotte vomits up her abortion pills and then, in her own words, 'I used the basin and washed them off and took them again. Where's the bottle?' There is vomit on Cash's lips when he is thrown up by the river in *As I Lay Dying*, and, if this is not explicit enough, he vomits again later on. Violence in church, a Faulkner motif (as in the assault on Ellen Coldfield at her wedding), accompanies Christmas's vomiting into the pulpit of the Negro chapel where he has wandered in *Light in August* – 'It's the devil! It's Satan himself!' – and where he curses God. In this last novel there is a very fancy suggestion indeed of cunnilinctus with toothpaste in the same connexion: this occurs in the scene where Christmas is sucking toothpaste out of a tube belonging to an attractive dietitian (she is white, thus adding the piquancy of miscegenation) who is being ravished on the other side of a curtain – he vomits shortly afterwards, needless to say; and finally a National Guardsman vomits when he sees Christmas castrated by the Aryan Captain Percy Grimm. There are, incidentally, sexual suggestions in the scene where the woman performs her parachute jump in *Pylon* which simply could not be explicated on these chaste pages. Perhaps it was to be expected that the creator of these predicaments should turn in his old age to religious subject-matter.

For in the Strindbergian world Faulkner created in his

roman-fleuve, twelve novels now, of Yoknapatawpha County total futility is the dominant mood. A horse kicks a man, the man kicks back. A girl gives herself to a fellow picking cotton simply because her own sack happens to be full at that moment. 'The reason for living was to get ready to stay dead a long time,' remarks a character in *As I Lay Dying*. The reporter in *Pylon* describes life as one long evasion of a man following you with a blackjack, until one day the blackjack falls and you can lie down gratefully and relax. 'There's a curse on us,' is a phrase that re-echoes, rather redundantly, throughout Quentin's section of *The Sound and the Fury*. It is little wonder that the convict of *The Wild Palms* returns to the security of his prison, for this is the world of 'shallow affects', as the psychiatrists call it, the 'witches' sabbath' of the Soviet critics (like M. Mendelson). There is a hint of this abnegation in Faulkner's latest novel, *A Fable*,* when the runner says that the loneliest experience of all is breathing, but he is corrected later on when the Marshal delivers his long appeal to the Corporal and says that 'nothing . . . is as valuable as simple breathing'.

For lately, like many another creator of significant despair, Faulkner has been giving us more 'positive' works, such as *Requiem for a Nun* and *Intruder in the Dust*. It was hard for most critics not to feel some disappointment with the former, a play published in 1951 as a coda to *Sanctuary*. In fact, so 'positive' was the new approach to this old problem that I noted that in the later work Temple was supposed to have been genuinely in love with Red. There is little justification for this in *Sanctuary*, where Temple's feeling for Red is presented as no more than nymphomaniac desire. It must be admitted, however, that Faulkner's deliberately arcane method does permit this sort of thing: it would be possible to conceive a sequel to *Light in August* with quite a different interpretation of Joanna's death than is generally accepted now. Meanwhile *Intruder in the Dust* raised controversy over Faulkner's attitude to the Negro question in the South, critics finding him both for and against Negro emancipation, according to their persuasions. Here Irving Howe, author of a splendid study of Faulkner, a model of American criticism at its best, helps us out, I think.

For if the Compsons represent Southern patricians *in extremis*, and 'Popeye', with his 'vicious depthless quality of stamped tin',

* William Faulkner, *A Fable*. To be published next year in England by Chatto and Windus at 15*s*.

contemporary urbanization (as Malcolm Cowley suggests), then Faulkner implies that industrialism works as a force of attrition in the South. But, Howe points out, it is precisely industrial values that have done most to break down the colour bar in America. And Faulkner is himself aware of this, too, I feel sure, when reading a passage in *A Fable* in which he writes of Southerners fighting in the Civil War 'to abolish the Negro by freeing him from them who might bring Negroes among them'. Faulkner does not seem to me to have any set attitude on this subject. He is primarily an artist and his best books have few bigoted beliefs one way or another. It may be possible to suggest, however, that one can sense a certain dilemma in his Southern work: on one hand, as a sensitive writer he naturally deplores injustice, such as that of the colour bar. On the other hand, his particular literary gifts do draw him to the genetic individuality of the semi-feudal state, to the direct transmission of experience latent in the serf-lord relationship. This is a problem common to our times, and this relationship equally attracted D. H. Lawrence and Yeats. After all, Yeats admired peasants and aristocrats and liked an artistic transmission between them uninhibited by mechanical relationships; he hated injustice and was able to write (and rewrite!) Fascist marching songs. In a rather more complex manner Lawrence also detested the relationships interposed by the machine; he yearned for direct human contacts and created in his Don Ramón a character singled out by Rolf Gardiner as the Fascist hero *par excellence*. There may possibly be signs that Faulkner dislikes industrial values, but further than this it is not fair to push him.

Unfortunately in these last 'positive' works, however, to which one can now most definitely add *A Fable*, he has been wrestling with an angel and, to be brief, one wishes that he wouldn't. The evident moral of *Requiem for a Nun* is that we must believe, that faith alone is all-important. Nancy tells Temple at the end of this play. 'All you need, all you have to do, is just believe. So maybe –' 'Believe what?' Temple comes back. 'Just believe,' Nancy answers. The runner echoes this to the old Negro in *A Fable*: 'Maybe what I need is to have to meet somebody. To believe. Not in anything: just to believe.' Now this may be sincerely felt, and in the form of a Nobel Prize address it makes heartening hearing, but unless it is dramatized, unless it is made over into art, it tends in a long novel to degenerate into literary evangelism.

A Fable is one of Faulkner's longest novels, nine years in the writing, and as if sensing some crisis in his literary career he has moved away from the American scene for it. Excluding the epilogue called 'To-morrow', the action takes place in one week in May 1918* in France – 'the cradle of the liberty of the human spirit'. (This is not the first work Faulkner has set in wartime France, nor is it, as Professor Carvel Collins observes, his first fictional Passion, for there are elements of a systematic Holy Week in *The Sound and the Fury*.) On Monday morning an attack is to go in. The officers and N C O's go over the top, but the other ranks refuse to follow; what is more, the enemy make no retaliation. In short, a French regiment of some 3,000 men mutinies (a study of this theme in recent American fiction might well be revealing). The symbolism is explicit. It transpires that a Corporal (Christ), a 'foreign' Frenchman of 'Middle-European nationality' (Jewish), has won over the entire regiment, as well as the Germans confronting it, to a form of pacifist Free Masonry (Christianity, or perhaps a sort of Toc H). Accordingly, when the attack fails to go in and the truce spreads along the line, the Corporal and his twelve comrades (the twelve Apostles, who include a Peter and a Judas) are charged with refusing to face the enemy.

The general commanding the Division, however, a Frenchman called General Gragnon (Cæsar), irascibly demands that the whole regiment be executed for mutiny, and they are in fact all pulled out of the line. At the same time, in a sub-plot concerning an R A F pilot, an English Jew called David Levine, a German general has been flown over to parley. The whole incident is reported to 'the old generalissimo', the Supreme Allied Commander, none other, one supposes, than Marshal Foch himself. Foch, whose past life here includes a period of monastic retreat (the withdrawal of the hero from experience, like Moses, before returning to influence the world), apparently represents God the Father ('the Giver of all life' as he is called in one place). However, few of these characters can be pin-pointed to a one-to-one symbolism and the old Marshal contains elements of Jehovah (versus the New Testament Corporal) and of his own opposite, Satan. This reversal of roles within a single character is mirrored

* Reviewing *A Fable* for *Partisan Review*, V. S. Pritchett imagines the date to be 1916; Robert Coughlan, in his recent *The Private World of William Faulkner*, proves an equally careless reader, ascribing the mutiny to 1917.

in the action. Thus, although the Corporal turns out to be th Marshal's illegitimate son (by a peasant woman called Marth or Magda), the Marshal tempts the Corporal with a reprieve a the end, on a hill, offering a bribe of power over man in typically Satanic manner. At the same time this scene seems to show the Marshal as God the Father offering a reprieve to His Son, a sort of contemporary agony in the garden, the reversal of roles serving to satirize the reversal of values in the modern world – 'Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done' (Luke xxii, 42). Faulkner's Corporal resolutely refuses a reprieve for inciting to mutiny, he knows that he must go through with it now, that the war was 'his own destiny', that 'fate would use it to prove him to his father . . . and victory itself would be that day when at last you would see one another face to face' (cp. *Paradise Lost*, III, 260–65). So the Corporal rejects the offers and suffers the death penalty on Friday.

There is almost everything there could be in this legend: the Corporal's birth in a stable, the miracles of healing the sick and of the loaves and the fishes, 'the wedding and the wine', the last dinner, the breaking of the bread, the three crosses, the thieves, the crown of thorns (here barbed-wire), even the eventual resurrection, for the Corporal's coffin is found empty at the end. The work abounds in trinities*, from the three generals 'powerful as archbishops in their trinity' (here a Cæsar-trinity) to the three women who wander rather obviously through the work (Faith, Hope, and Charity). These women consist of the Corporal's 'wife', a young Marseille whore or Mary Magdalene (surely the theme of the saintly prostitute has been written out by now), the Corporal's mother, Marthe, and his aunt Marya, who is insane – 'She has flies up here,' as one character puts it. There is a Negro minister, a fine character called the Reverend Tobe Sutterfield, who seems to spring from the Yoknapatawpha repertoire and quite literally plays the part of the Baptist ('I bears witness'); there is the Wandering Jew motif – a British colonel and an American captain both saw the Corporal dead

* It is significant that the racehorse, nursed by the trinity of horse-thieves, is constantly described as running only on three legs. This perhaps reduces the racehorse to the proportions of the Biblical ass, on which Christ rode. The Palm Sunday symbolism in turn connects with the humility of the spoon, which in certain sects is used to administer the Sacrament and of which much is made at the end of *A Fable*.

in 1914 and 1917 respectively; there is a British runner who has experiences reminiscent of St Paul's; there is even some textual interpretation of the Gospels thrown in for good measure, Faulkner's explication of Christ's relationship to Peter varying here from de Sade's.†

It is impossible to doubt the integrity with which Faulkner has applied himself to this theme; every possible attempt has been made to vitalize the story, but it is still difficult to take interest in it. It is all very well to approve in the abstract 'man's enduring anguish and his invincible dust' as theme, 'his infinite capacity – no: passion – for unfact'. But the theme must be made over into art. The Corporal, as Christ, is shadowy and vague, and while this may be reverently religious in treatment, such does not make an artistic character. The old Marshal makes an immense plea for human dignity at the end, a long enlargement of Faulkner's own Nobel Prize address, but I am afraid that it is the more negative aspects of the book which carry the artistic truth. (Malcolm Cowley disagrees, finding this 'temptation' scene at the end 'one that might be compared with Dostoevski's fable of the Grand Inquisitor'.) One notices at once how the story comes to life in the long aside – previously published, in 1950, as 'Notes on a Horsethief' – dealing with the theft of a racehorse in the American South. This depicts another trinity, this time of thieves, comprising the Negro minister, the 'no-aged' or 'middle-ageless Negro man' with his 'Roman Senator's head' (the Cæsar motif again), the Cockney groom, 'fatherless, wifeless, sterile . . . the world's portionless and intractable and inconsolable orphan', and their child jockey. Again the book springs to life in the section dealing with the British flyer, who eventually shoots himself in a latrine (I refer to the first section called 'Tuesday'), just as a French chaplain also commits suicide, in this case with a bayonet, thus providing

† In *A Fable* Faulkner has a lengthy comment on the text 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church' (Matthew xvi, 18). In his long conversation with Justine on religion, the Comte de Bressac is made by de Sade to suggest that Christ approved of sodomy, His teaching supposedly consisting of subtle pro-homosexual puns and innuendoes – 'The Marquis de Bièvre never made one quite as clever as the Nazarene's to his disciple: "Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church"; and they tell us that witty language is one of our century's innovations!' Presumably the Comte de Bressac would have given a similarly scabrous reading to Matthew xvi, 23.

the detail of the spear in the side for the Corporal's 'crucifixion'. There are powerful individual scenes of action, too, as in the shooting of the Quartermaster-General at the end, but it is hard to rid oneself of the impression that this is a heavily padded work.

It is not that the manner is obscure. *A Fable* is actually one of Faulkner's most accessible works. We are assisted by the time divisions instead of, as is usual, being held up by them; the lorries drive the mutineers into the Place de Ville of Chaulnesmont on 'Wednesday' in Section I. The long Section VII is called 'Wednesday Night' and goes back logically to the girl who fainted from hunger during the first scene. Faulkner's elliptical method, here minimal, succeeds when it is functional. At its most complex it proves brilliantly so in *The Sound and the Fury* when it is necessary that we learn the truth by obstacle, as Cowley puts it, that the meaning should retreat before us in order that we may fully experience the imbecility of Benjy. Lawrence Edward Bowling contributed a pioneer study of this novel to the *Kenyon Review* for Autumn 1948, and it seems to me to justify every obscurity. Since then, however, there has been rather a lot of writing on Faulkner's famous 'rhetoric'. Indeed, he might now claim, with T. S. Eliot:

> En Amérique, professeur;
> En Angleterre, journaliste;
> C'est à grands pas et en sueur
> Que vous suivrez à peine ma piste.

One might add that Faulkner was always ready to drop his difficulties even in his involved 'great' period (1929–32) for the purposes of *Light in August*; for this is a straightforward novel excepting the stream-of-consciousness flash-back into Christmas's boyhood, now a fairly usual method for handling a retreat from the original narrative. And perhaps the clue to Faulkner's intention is provided by that nice phrase at the opening of the sixth section of this very novel – 'Memory believes before knowing remembers.' This suggests that the problem is less one of technique than of ideas. Faulkner usually solves technical problems satisfactorily and the blanketing of understanding by his style, that of seventeenth-century baroque prose really, imposes a necessary delay on the reader. But more recently this prose has tended to grow overloaded. Howe observed danger signals in *The Wild Palms*, as when Wilbourne says of his life with Charlotte in Chicago:

> It was the mausoleum of love, it was the stinking catafalque of the dead corpse borne between the olfactoryless walking shapes of the immortal unsentient demanding ancient meat.

And what, if one pauses to analyse it, does the following description of Grandlieu Street in *Pylon* really mean – 'the butterflyspawn against the choraldrop of the dawn's biding white wings'? There are relics of Hart Crane or Thomas Wolfe gone stale in *Requiem for a Nun*, or requiem for a noun as Peter de Vries calls it, also – 'one unanimous golden affirmation ululated the nation's boundless immeasureable forenoon'. But in the earlier works this rococo was set against terse modern dialogue and was in a sense itself a comment on the contemporary predicament. In *A Fable* one sentence runs for three pages, culminating in the word 'immortality', while Foch himself has a twenty-six-line sentence. Indeed, the dialogue is now becoming rather like a parody of Henry James. In *Requiem for a Nun* Temple frequently speaks as follows:

> What else did I – as you put it – come all the way back from California for, not to mention a – as you have probably put that too – faked coincidence to save – as I would put it I suppose – my face?

This is bad enough in Temple, but when Marshal Foch starts talking this way I feel sympathy with Horatio in a similar situation, 'Is't not possible to understand in another tongue?' So Foch tells the Corporal:

> We are two articulations, self-elected possibly, anyway elected, anyway postulated, not so much to defend as to test two inimical conditions which, through no fault of ours but through the simple paucity and restrictions of the arena where they meet, must contend and – one of them – perish.

The turgid, near-porridgy texture of Faulkner's descriptive prose may match the theme, with its incest and decay, of a work like *Absalom, Absalom!* It is possibly even suitable for the dialogue of Southern patricians and poetic Negroes to-day – indeed, the 'rhetoric' of *A Fable* best suits Section VI, the old Negro's story – but it is surely disconcerting to hear a twentieth-century Army general say, as a matter of course, 'From the loins of man's furious ineradicable greed sprang the captains and the colonels to his necessity.' This appears all the more strained in a work where there has been a painstaking effort to

catch the nuances of British soldiers' speech; this is done well, and thoroughly (even down to a British warm being referred to as 'a warm'), but even so I noted that men about-face instead of about-turning, and cartridges are called shells. And would it really be possible, even at that stage of the war, to have a twenty-seven-year-old British brigadier, 'less than four years out of Sandhurst'? There are more serious unrealities in the flippant way captains address general officers, in the unlikelihood of the Supreme Allied Commander dealing with petty offenders in the town where he finds himself, in the absurd stoicism exhibited throughout by nearly everyone – this is, I presume, the cliché of the tough American, a legacy no doubt from Hemingway, just as *A Fable* also bears its legacy from Gertrude Stein:

> because people are really kind, they really are capable of pity and compassion for the weak and orphaned and helpless because it is pity and compassion and they are weak and helpless and orphaned and people though of course you cannot, dare not believe that.

There are, of course, some telling descriptions throughout this new work, the infantry returning from the front 'like the faces of sleepwalkers looking backward across nightmares', and our sympathies are often powerfully enlisted against those responsible for wars, 'the priests of simple money' as Faulkner calls them. (Controversy has already begun as to whether this is a pacifist novel or not; on the whole it seems to me to say that war is evil, but that some wars are necessary.) Yet Faulkner is clogging more and more of his prose, in this way reversing Yeats's progress towards purification. Take one of the more successful passages from *A Fable*:

> Then the sunset gun went from the old citadel, deliberate and profound, as if a single muffled drumstick had been dropped once against the inverted bowl of hollow and resonant air, the sound fading slowly and deliberately, until at last, with no suture to mark its close, it was lost in the murmur of bunting with which the flags, bright blooms of glory myriad across the embattled continent, sank, windless again, down.

This is effective enough, to be sure, but why may not more of these words be allowed to do their own work? 'Bright' tends to be contained in 'blooms'. 'A drumstick' is bound to be 'single'. So many impingements on the consciousness begin to cry *Fire!*

at us too often. We fail to react. One wonders if a pruned version of this passage would not touch off our responses, and the same responses in us, more readily:

> Then the sunset gun went from the citadel, as if a muffled drumstick had been dropped against the bowl of air, the sound fading, until at last, with no suture to mark its close, it was lost in the murmur of bunting with which the flags, blooms of glory across the embattled continent, sank down.

It is fatal for a writer to have one eye on posterity, let alone on American dons. His work will only deaden as a result. In his 'great' period, the period of his own obscurity and poverty, Faulkner wrote as he pleased and did not shirk the fully contemporary scene. When all is said and done it may simply be that his gift is not suited to this new 'positive' approach. He has not improved in power on some of his most negative novels. And one is actually more uplifted, more conscious of man's 'infinite capacity . . . for unfact', after reading *Light in August* with its holocaust of an ending than after putting down the new novel. The negative books are, in fact, coming to mean more and more to us each year we draw nearer our thermonuclear doom, nearer to what Faulkner has himself projected in fiction so ably, namely, hyperbolic horror.

Anxious not to over-estimate, some American critics have to my mind erred on the side of severity towards Faulkner as a whole. Howe deprives him of the highest rank for the charge that others level: Faulkner has never had the fortune to be grounded in a literary tradition; hence he lacks ability to transfigure his work, to make the everyday universally significant, in the way that George Eliot (on whom Howe rests his comparison here) could. Henry James puts it thus: 'The moral is that the flower of art blooms only where the soil is deep, and that it takes a great deal of history to produce a little literature.' But was there 'a great deal of history' to produce the Russian domestic novel of the last century? Possibly. In any case, Turgenev explains the same thing in a letter to Botkin in 1856, contrasting the great classical writers for whom everything was 'local', and *therefore* universal, with the moderns, who wrote for posterity and failed to transmute their work at all. Or again, as Flaubert complimented Turgeney, 'Tout en étant particulier, vous êtes général.'

In his best Yoknapatawpha work Faulkner has been 'local' in this special sense, and thus universally significant. *A Fable* seems

to me the reverse. Even in Faulkner's most powerful books, however, there is a certain failure in literary perspective perhaps. Howe points to a lack of depth in Faulkner's young women. But after all are not characters like Temple and Charlotte simply American representatives of the Fatal Woman of Gothic tradition, just as the blasphemy in the 'great' period is that of romantic agony? In fact, it is possible to say that lack of tradition, if it be such, has helped Faulkner satirize a *milieu* which lacks tradition. All the tradition in the world has not made contemporary English writers any more able in this respect than Faulkner. As Professor Harry Levin puts it, 'When Huxley and Waugh satirize the American way of life, it somehow resists their satire – not because it is invulnerable but because it is fairly tough, while their techniques are too brittle, their values too sentimental.' We in England have 'a great deal of history' but no novelist who begins to approach Faulkner in stature, with all his faults.

In *Situations I*, indeed, Sartre makes a more generous estimate of this fundamentally wonderful writer possible. Faulkner, Sartre says, has decapitated the future, especially in *The Sound and the Fury* (where one may note the watch motif in this connexion). Proust, Sartre goes on, and one can add Larbaud and others to his comparison, could not go as far as this; Proust could merge the future with the past, he could mix both in the flux of the present, but he was a French writer with his classical heritage behind him. He had to acknowledge a future, the something that follows after the now. The doctrine of *noblesse oblige* in literature, in which our ancestors are always looking over our shoulders, cannot be easily cast off by the European writer. No European, Sartre seems to be saying, could have pushed the contemporary preoccupation with time as far as has Faulkner. Yet Faulkner's conclusion in this aspect of his work seems to me precisely our predicament to-day. Living under the shadow of the hydrogen bomb, our future is now decapitated indeed. It is no longer necessary, that is, to point out that the state of the Faulknerian character is validated by being a *possible* position, a feasible statement in the face of nothing. It is, quite literally, our position now. We are the lost men Faulkner began to adumbrate some thirty-five years ago. The blackjack has not hit us on the back of the head as yet, but we are waiting. Or, as the old Marshal puts it in one of his Satanic moments in *A Fable*, 'We are all our own paupers, derelict.'

THE GAY APPRENTICE*

David Paul

'I do love anything absurd.' Jane Austen would have been surprised to share a preoccupation with Sartre and Camus, and would certainly not have recognized its results in their case as having anything in common with hers. Yet a word keeps some fundamental fixity of meaning, however wide its uses; and the contradiction, in the case of absurdity, can be explained by the fact that, like some other abstract terms, it is two-edged. It cuts in two different directions of meaning. Or, if you like, there are two totally opposite kinds of absurdity, one of them apparently devoid of any informing logic, and the other over-supplied with it. It is easy to see which of the two Camus has erected into a symbol and a principle. To the human mind, reasoning with all the authority it can derive from its own self-invented principles, the conditions of human life, with no faith or purpose imposed on them to give them shape, are ridiculously illogical. But to the same disposition of mind certain forms of art may seem ridiculous because they obey a set of arbitrary, esoteric and yet strictly logical rules. Such is the case of the *Alice* books, where character and incident, violent, eccentric and unpredictable as they may be, are felt to be based on a set of rules which are much more rigid in their application than any which can be discovered to apply to daily life. They are, in fact, the rules of a game. Any art can be dismissed as a kind of game. Pascal's condemnation of painting remains logically unanswerable. But then the laws of logic stand forlorn and sterile, midway between the unresponsive chaos of life and the equally feckless but happily self-centred systems of art.

Between Carroll and Camus, it may seem easy to guess to which side of the balances Jane Austen might incline. But, for an 'ignorant, unlearned female', she was curiously averse to the one-sided view. She was neither eccentric, intense, nor narrow-minded, and she was never ridden by a principle. Consequently,

* The Works of Jane Austin : Volume VI. *Minor Works*. Edited by R. W. Chapman. (O.U.P. 21s.)

though the absurd was always to signify comedy for her, and no despair, waste or tragedy, she shows a decided taste for both kinds. As a parodist, in her Juvenilia she has much in common with Carroll. But as an acutely reasonable person she was periodically fascinated by the other kind of absurdity, the motiveless inanity which seems to prompt certain kinds of talk and behaviour and to inhabit certain minds. Her letters show how abundant her real opportunities were in this field. And every one of her novels has at least one specimen culled from the great inane. Mr Collins, of course, comes at once to mind. In theory his leading motives are obvious enough. Obsequiousness and self-importance are complementary characteristics, but when they are both carried to Mr Collins's pitch of intensity they cancel each other out. Off-stage he is an easily accountable character; but the moment he appears he becomes something much more, because more incredible – a tremendous, mouthing vacuum.

One of the happiest of all the inanities is the slightest. Charlotte Palmer, in *Sense and Sensibility*, simply laughs. There is nothing else to her character. She has carried good-humour to a point just short of feeble-mindedness. She laughs at almost anything; above all, she laughs at her husband's outraged contempt for her. And her laugh has the effect, in the narrative, of a discordant, frivolous oboe suddenly and felicitously impinging on the ordered progress of a Haydn symphony. Charlotte is a rattle who laughs instead of talking. But the talkers were an early prey, and in one of the most serious of the early works, *Catharine*, we have an example of inanity in full spate. The heroine is having her first conversation with Camilla, a new, fashionable acquaintance from whom she had been hoping everything in the way of understanding and friendship, and gets only this kind of thing instead:

> 'You have read Mrs Smith's novels, I suppose?' said she to her companion. – 'Oh! Yes,' replied the other, 'and I am quite delighted with them – They are the sweetest things in the world –' 'And which do you prefer of them?' 'Oh! Dear, I think there is no comparison between them – Emmeline is *so much* better than any of the others –' 'Many people think so, I know; but there does not appear to be so great a disproportion in their merits to *me*; do you think it is better written?' 'Oh! I do not know anything about *that* – but it is better in *everything* – Besides, Ethelinde is so *long* –' 'That is a very common objection, I believe,' said Kitty, 'but for my own part, if a book is well written, I always find it too short.' 'So do I, only I get tired of it before it is finished.' 'But did not you find the story of Ethelinde very interesting? And the Descriptions of Grasmere, are not they beautiful?' 'Oh! I missed them all, because I was in such a hurry to get to the end of it –' Then from an easy transition she added, 'We are going to the Lakes this Autumn, and I am quite Mad with Joy; Sir Henry Devereux has promised to go with us, and that will make it so pleasant, you know –'
>
> 'I dare say it will, but I think it is a pity that Sir Henry's powers of pleasing were not reserved for an occasion where they might be more wanted. – However I quite envy you the pleasure of such a scheme.' 'Oh! I am quite delighted with the thoughts of it; I can think of nothing else. I assure you I have done nothing for this last Month but plan what Cloathes I should take with me, and I have at last determined to take very few indeed besides my Travelling-Dress, and so I advise you to do, when ever you go; for I intend in case we should fall in with any races, or stop at Matlock or Scarborough, to have some Things made for the occasion.'
>
> 'You intend then to go into Yorkshire?'
>
> 'I believe not – indeed I know nothing of the Route, for I never trouble myself about such things – I only know that we are to go from Derbyshire to Matlock and Scarborough, but to which of them first I neither know nor care. – I am in hopes of meeting some particular friends of mine at Scarboro – Augusta told me in her last letter that Sir Peter talked of going; but then you know that is so uncertain. I cannot bear Sir Peter, he is such a horrid creature –'
>
> 'He *is*, is he?' said Kitty, not knowing what else to say. 'Oh! He is quite shocking.' Here the conversation was interrupted, and Kitty was left in a painful Uncertainty, as to the particulars of Sir Peter's Character. She knew only that he was Horrid and Shocking, but why, and in what, yet remained to be discovered.

Catharine, written when she was sixteen, is Jane Austen's first attempt at serious fiction. It remained unfinished for more reasons than one, but chiefly I think because it was the first experiment outside the ordered confines and the comic symmetry of the high-spirited parodies, the explicit essays in absurdity which had so far been her favourite exercise. These are endlessly enjoyable in their own way. And they are never to be condescended to. They disclose an almost frightening maturity. No mind was ever less *naïf* or less sentimental than Jane Austen's. That is the quality in her which deters some people. To think even of Swift is to remember the sentimental self-exposure of the

Journal to Stella. George Eliot, at fifty or so, sitting down t write *Romola*, a novel of the Italian Renaissance, or Flauber setting out on a pilgrimage to Africa to prepare for *Salammbo*, are both glaring examples of a *naïveté* of which Jane Austen could not have been guilty, even at the age of sixteen. She would have seen as clearly through the realist fallacy as she did through the romantic fallacy when she wrote *Love and Freindship*.

It has always been a fatal temptation for the novelist to suppose that he can render life as it really is, or was at some particular time or place, and so forget that whatever he writes must be drawn from the reactions, subjective or objective, of his own individual imagination. Jane Austen's early work shows, I think, from the first that her intentions as a novelist were quite consciously to make out of life something that it was *not*; something better, simpler and more satisfying. Life is remote enough from the average operatic libretto. Yet the plot she used six times, with variations, is far more deliberately simple and artificial in its basic structure than most operatic libretti. The realistic detail with which she clothed it was not seriously intended to make the resulting novel a picture of life as she saw it. (Life as she saw it, in her letters, is quite a different thing, the more disconcertingly so for the casual resemblances.) It was intended to create a double conviction. Daily living has an edgeless indefinite quality which cries out for resolution – of the kind which can be found in music, mathematics or in the ordered shape of a story. But in the case of the story the ordered shape can only satisfy if it is informed with a sense of living which has been distilled from personal experience. This resolution of shape and content is carried to a more perfect pitch in Jane Austen's work than in that of any other novelist. We see and experience the life of her novels both from within and without, just as, in front of Van Eyck's portrait of Jan Arnolfini and his wife, we are both inside and outside the room in which the two figures are standing. And the painter's magic is achieved in the same way. The artifice of the picture as a whole is completely fused with the faithful rendering of each object it includes – an orange, a lap-dog, a pair of slippers, a mirror, and the man and woman making the supreme vow of betrothal.

Jane Austen's early burlesques were all essays in pure artifice. But in themselves they hold the key to the felicities that were to follow. And they were all aimed at that other non-Camusian, super-logical absurdity, some of whose rules have been admirably

defined in Elizabeth Sewell's *The Field of Nonsense*, a study which investigates the order and purpose underlying the apparently disorderly realms of Carroll and Lear. 'Nonsense', when applied to this field of writing, is of course an arbitrary term which has stuck, like the label 'metaphysical', to a certain class of poetry. Lewis Carroll was a mathematician, and no more systematic and logical mind than his ever applied itself to imaginative writing in English. The Alice books have no more nonsense about them than *Gulliver's Travels*. The element of parody is strong in both works, and the scope of each is carefully delimited so as to enclose it from all danger of appearing to be a reproduction of real experience. Carroll's aim, as elucidated by Miss Sewell, was to shut out all suggestion of the vague and the infinite and confine himself to a world of objects, numbers, places and persons in which the finite was absolute. He wanted to reduce the incalculability of life to a set of calculable rules. In order to do so he took some of the set rules of behaviour from daily life, some of the rules of games (chess and cards), and produced them to a logically complete absurdity.

In a similar spirit, but without any of his eccentricity, Jane Austen took the rules of the average novel of her day and produced them to absurdity in her burlesques. One of them, *Evelyn*, is a skit on the eighteenth-century cant of high-flown sentiment and high-minded generosity. It begins with a Mr Gower, a traveller, alighting at a village ale-house and asking the landlady, Mrs Willis, if there is a house to let in the neighbourhood.

> 'Alas! Sir,' replied Mrs Willis, 'there is *none*. Every house in this village, from the sweetness of the situation and the purity of the air, in which neither Misery, Illhealth or Vice are ever wafted, is inhabited. And yet (after a short pause) there is a Family who, tho' warmly attached to the spot, yet from a peculiar Generosity of disposition would perhaps be willing to oblige you with their house.'

Mr Gower makes for the place at once, and it is described with a precision and symmetry which was always to be a part of the writer's method:

> It was in the exact centre of a small circular paddock, which was enclosed by a regular paling, & bordered with a plantation of Lombardy poplars and Spruce firs alternatively placed in three rows. A gravel walk ran through this beautiful shrubbery, and as the remainder of the paddock was unincumbered with any other Timber, the surface of it perfectly even and

> smooth, and grazed by four white Cows which were disposed at equal distance from each other, the whole appearance of the place as Mr Gower entered the Paddock was uncommonly striking.

There follows a crescendo of absurdity in which names, numbers and things predominate and no detail is imprecise:

> 'Bring up some Chocolate immediately,' says Mrs Webb, the lady of the house. 'Spread a cloth in the Dining-parlour, and carry in the venison pasty. In the meantime let the Gentleman have some sandwiches, and bring in a Basket of Fruit – Send up some Ices and a basin of Soup, and do not forget some Jellies and Cakes.'

After the gift of her purse and the promise of 'an hundred pounds' which she knows her husband to have in the house, her husband enters, and as soon as Mr Gower asks them for their house it is his. When the daughters of the family come in, he falls in love with the eldest, who is instantly offered to him, with apologies for her fortune, 'which is but ten thousand pounds'. Once Mr Gower is married and installed, the target of the story changes from generosity to sentiment. He suddenly recollects his sister Rose, a *thirteenth* daughter, and her unhappy love-affair with a high-born youth whose angry father

> finding from his conversation how determined he was to marry no other woman, sent him for a fortnight to the Isle of Wight, under the care of the Family Chaplain, with the hope of overcoming his constancy by Time and Absence in a foreign Country.

He is drowned on the voyage, and all Mr Gower's efforts to vindicate and console his unhappy sister are put an end to when he returns to the family home at Carlisle and finds that she has quietly married a Mr Davenport. Returning to the village of Evelyn he finds that his own wife has died of grief in his absence. He marries the amiable Mrs Willis, Mr and Mrs Davenport are installed in the Ale-house, and all the threads of the story are carefully drawn in, as they always were to be, at the end. Even the generous Webbs are found to be happily settled in Westgate Buildings, Bath.

The material of *Evelyn*, as of the better-known *Love and Friendship*, is almost wholly literary, though it is used with the vigour and acumen of a native imagination. Both touch the same extreme in the young writer's range of experiment. There is a steady oscillation of tone and purpose within this range,

dictated by the need for perfect balance, which is to continue throughout the later novels. In the early work there is a deliberate reaction from one method to its opposite; the two might be labelled artificial and naturalistic, and neither was ever to be dispensed with. It is the writer's triumph that in the mature works the two methods become indistinguishably merged. A scene in *Mansfield Park* or *Emma* – the play-choosing scene, or the game with the alphabet-blocks – may seem absolutely and effortlessly to the life. It is only the more so because it is sustained and held in by the artifice of the structure as a whole. The naturalness for its own sake, with no æsthetic purpose beyond it, would soon cease to tell – as it invariably does in all essays in that particular kind of fiction.

Catharine, the first essay in sober fiction, is a reaction from the self-imposed limits and the absurd symmetry of the burlesques. It is a study in outright indiscretion of a kind which the author was not to attempt again. How far it was to go we cannot guess. Perhaps it was left unfinished because, in a curious way, it has already gone too far. The heroine is an impulsive and lonely girl, an orphan, under the care of an aunt, Mrs Percival. Mrs Percival might be described as a widowed spinster, and her temperament – that of a mind dominated by the fear of life and of the sexual nightmare – while it has no parallel in Jane Austen, is prophetic of some of the women in Henry James and the early novels of E. M. Forster. Mrs Percival is a woman whose wishes are nearly always conquered by her fears, though the two remain constantly at war. Throughout the story she keeps up a chorus of comic, sinister irrelevance with her convictions that

> the whole race of Mankind were degenerating. Everything she believed was going to rack and ruin, all order was destroyed over the face of the world. The house of Commons she heard did not break up some-times till five in the morning, and Depravity never was so general before.

The real root of her concern for her niece is dragged to the surface when some friends whom she has to stay with her are unexpectedly joined by their son. Young Stanley proves to be a handsome, easy-going cad who at once makes a dead set at Catharine and puts her into a flutter. Mrs Percival at once asks her friends to send him away.

> 'I do not speak, Sir,' she continued, 'out of any disrespect to You. But I could not answer it to myself to allow of his stay:

there is no knowing what might be the consequence of it, if he were to continue here, for girls nowadays will always give a handsome Young Man the preference over any other . . . you will oblige me very much by desiring your son to leave Chetwynde or I cannot be answerable for what may happen between him and my Niece. You will be surprised to hear *me* say it,' she continued, lowering her voice, 'but truth will out, and I must own that Kitty is one of the most impudent Girls that ever existed. Her intimacies with Young Men are abominable, and it is all the same to her who it is, no one comes amiss to her. I assure you, Sir, that I have seen her sit and laugh and whisper with a Young Man whom she has not seen above half a dozen times. Her behaviour indeed is scandalous, and therefore I beg you will send your son away immediately or everything will be at sixes and sevens.'

Now the cat is out of the bag, and [illegible] to be the monster of sex. At least it is a monster in M[illegible] nowhere [illegible] was never to be that in her author's [illegible] of all fiction – of all art for that [illegible] exactly so than in the alertness and [illegible] novels, where it is put under a [illegible] without ever dimming or disguising [illegible] is a question of repression, and once [illegible] something decidedly sinister appears. The climax comes when young Stanley, chatting alone with Catharine in her bower in the garden, sees her aunt approaching, suddenly kisses the girl, and runs away. As soon as she reaches the bower, Mrs Percival gives way to a paroxysm of terror and rage, equally divided between concern for her niece's virtue – ' "*Profligate* as I knew you to be, I was not prepared for such a sight. This is beyond anything you ever did *before*" ' – and concern for her own health – ' "I must have caught a dreadful cold by this time – I am sure of being lain up all the winter by it. . . . I must and will have that arbour pulled down – it will be the death of me." ' By now the Bower, which gives the piece its sub-title, is taking on a significance, both potent and ambiguous, which seems to prophesy the strengths and weaknesses of the use of symbolism in many a later novelist. The trouble with the symbol is that it may attract a greater variety of meaning than the author is aware of or can manipulate. It may – as in Melville at his best – be the perfect means for conveying a complex of meanings which could not otherwise be expressed, and which cannot be divided; or it may – as in Melville at his worst – be a cloak for the activities of a

mind which does not quite know what it would be at. In the case of *Catharine* it is a symptom of the young writer contending with the unmanageable, with forces which have broken out beyond her purpose and threaten to disrupt her powers as a conscious craftsman. Yet the symbolic meaning of the bower is sufficiently clear and concentrated, even if it is not all conscious. It becomes the magnetic centre of the story because it is the Virgin's Bower; the symbol of Catharine's sense of her sexual maturity, of her wish for independence, for secrecy even, from her intrusive aunt. The aunt's determination to have it pulled down exposes the fact that her wish to protect her niece's virtue is in reality a destructive impulse. The whole situation is an odd one, outside the Jane Austen canon. It is such as a Henry James might have handled – one can imagine the New England setting – with infinite caution, and with an effect all the more sinister for being embedded in a magnetic field of shying conjectures.

It is not surprising if Jane Austen's first attempt at serious fiction went a little astray. It was her first foray outside the symmetrical bounds of burlesque, and the first attempt to use material which was not literary. Nevertheless it shows her unfailing gift for making any situation which she handled unmistakably her own, and unmistakably different from any of the others. She has the classic gift for endless variation of effect within a constant formula. This quality is strong even in *Sanditon*, which is otherwise the weakest of all her sustained efforts. It is her last writing, the work of an invalid who is determined to keep up a task. The romantic impressionistic qualities which some admirers have read into it seem to me to be the symptoms of weakness and uncertainty. The one decided quality about *Sanditon* is its change of focus. As a novel about a newly forming seaside resort it would have been a world apart from the other novels as they are worlds apart from each other. But the actual writing will not compare, for strength and surety, even with the best of the juvenilia, with *Love and Freindship* for instance, which is also a world of its own – and in a way a curiously prophetic world. The youthful Shelley fed his mind on just such novels as Jane Austen here chose for her target: and her quartet of high-flown lovers, all extravagantly youthful, all wildly romantic in their scruples and their lack of them, their determination to suit the action to the word, or to discover a bombast of words to suit their actions, forms a perfect and prophetic caricature of the world of Shelley, Harriet, Hogg, with

their parents, hangers-on, accomplices and enemies. Shelley is sometimes viewed as an unaccountable phenomenon, a flame come into being by a process of spontaneous combustion; but in his youth at least he was a perfect example of nature imitating art, and the art in question is more tellingly enshrined in *Love and Friendship* than it was to be later in *Nightmare Abbey*, Peacock's essay in the same genre, in which Shelley was explicitly chosen as his chief victim.

Having tested both the extremes of her early range, Jane Austen evidently decided to try to incorporate and reconcile them in what may be called the last work of her apprenticeship, *Northanger Abbey*. But literary burlesque and straightforward treatment of original material prove to be awkward partners, and it is the literary material which often threatens to become extraneous. Nearly all the felicities are on the other side. The continuous reference to *Udolpho* and other works of Ann Radcliffe grows tedious and laboured as the real content of the story takes on life. Then that life is almost suspended, while the literary parallels of the plot are slowly worked out. Having tied herself down to a specific programme, too slender in itself for a full-length novel, the writer has to fulfil it, but *Northanger Abbey* remains the most evidently laboured, in its latter half, of all her finished works It marks a crisis, ending the stage of youthful experiment and involving maybe more experimental pains and uncertainties than any other work had done, or was to do

From it she extracted the elements of her own formula, which she was to use with increasing mastery and variation through the rest of the novels As a formula for comedy it is as simple and as flexible as Racine's for tragedy But where the poet continually seeks to suggest the vague and the infinite in every syllable the novelist invariably kept to that particularity of place, person, season, number and thing which for her was the secret of felicity The infinite was curtained with the conventions of piety and gently shut out. That is perhaps the secret of contentment for any artist. Listen, on the other hand, to Baudelaire:

> Je ne vois qu'infini par toutes les fenêtres,
> Et mon esprit, toujours du vertige hanté,
> Jalouse du néant l'impossibilité.
> – Ah! Ne jamais sortir des Nombres et des Êtres!

Never to escape from the world of numbers and things has, for the artist, its own infinite compensation. Witness the contentment and fecundity of most of the great painters. The

infinite, like Nature, when shut out in one form tends to come back in another. And in the case of the artist who is content to work with explicit and limited means the infinite may re-enter in the variety of ends which the simple means can be made to serve. That is why it is dangerous to consider Jane Austen a limited writer. There have to be limits. To assume that she is not a 'big' novelist like Dickens is suspiciously like claiming that Mozart is not a 'big' composer like Tchaikovsky. To accuse her of narrowness or triviality is like condemning Vermeer for devoting a lifetime of painting, almost, to the corner of a room, or Cézanne for spending so much time painting apples.

In the transition from the gay apprentice to the sober craftsman there is no diminution in the formal rigour underlying all her work. It both increases and recedes behind the content. It is nowhere more hidden and more insistent than in *Mansfield Park*. This, the most complex and secluded of all her works, is the most deeply connected with the traditions of universal story-telling. Just as *King Lear* grew from a folk-tale which is to be found in its crudest form in Grimm, so *Mansfield Park* is rigorously and consciously based on the best-known folk-tale of all – on no other, in fact, than *Cinderella*. At first glance this may seem astonishing and absurd, but the parallels are too frequent and too carefully displaced not to be conscious. Fanny, the heroine, is virtually but not actually an orphan. Julia and Maria, with their coarseness and self-confidence, admirably serve the functions of ugly sisters, and Mrs Norris just as admirably fills the role of stepmother. And when the critical moment arrives Sir Thomas Bertram comes appropriately forward as the overpowering fairy godfather.

In a recent essay*, Lionel Trilling has remarked on the apparent deficiency of irony in the style of *Mansfield Park* as compared with the other novels. It may well present an almost forbiddingly demure face when the irony has so deeply entered into the soul. For the central irony is that Cinderella-Fanny, weak, submissive and priggish as she is, should refuse, should insist on refusing Prince Charming, against all the apparently superior and terrifyingly pressing counsel of her friends and her guardian. And the final twist to the irony is that she should prove to be perfectly right in her refusal.

It is odd indeed that one of the most often bedizened of fairy

* *Encounter*, September, 1954.

tales should be the origin of one of the strictest of novels. But there it is. Moreover, elements which have almost vanished from the tale are curiously restored in the novel. The element of ordeal, for instance, which relates Cinderella to the story of Cupid and Psyche, is most convincingly reinstated in the agonies of poor Fanny, secretly loving Edmund, openly pressed by Crawford, and having to submit to all the terrors of Sir Thomas's disapproval. Again, one of the most telling touches in the fairy-tale, the switch-back from the splendours of the ball to rags and cinders, has of course grown banal with repetition. But in the novel it is re-established in all its force. When Sir Thomas, to teach Fanny a lesson for her stubbornness, sends her off home to what he hopes will be a salutary taste of the poverty and meanness she was born to, the transition from the upholstered calm of the Park to the hard, bright vulgarity of Portsmouth effects one of the simplest yet most magical changes of key in all fiction. And it completes the irony of the re-interpreted fairy-tale. Prince Charming finds his Cinderella again, is not deterred by her poverty – and she still refuses him.

One wonders precisely what smile the author smiled when she wrote, apropos of Mansfield Park in one of her letters, that she was now writing a novel about ordination. But then, if it comes to that, what *is* the novel about? Perhaps it is simpler to say that, like a symphony, it is not about anything in particular. Certainly no simple basic theme could ever be more consummately orchestrated – or concealed. There is no faltering except in the final pages, where the ironic twist in the story leads to an awkward embarrassing compensation. I mean that paragraph where Edmund begins to persuade himself to love Fanny's light eyes instead of Mary Crawford's dark ones. All very well. But then Edmund and Fanny have been brought up together. Throughout the story he has been in every possible way her loving and considerate elder brother. That he should begin to consider himself as something else, however gradually, seems to bring into the atmosphere a faint whiff of – incest? It is queer, too, that, while any innocent reader would assume that in the play-acting episode Crawford and Maria are taking the parts of lovers, they are in fact – that is, in the play *Lover's Vows* – mother and son. No more than hints and dismissable shadows. Yet it almost seems as if the shadow of incest has to hover in the wings or else intrude into the midst of every purely domestic drama, from *Oedipus Rex* to – Ivy Compton Burnett.

PROGRESSIVE ART

Alan Clutton-Brock

. . .

It is a commonplace that Herbert Spencer's cheerful views about the future – 'Progress is not an accident but a necessity . . . It is certain that man must become perfect' – are no longer widely shared. Even the scientists who are daily confronted with a constant advance in knowledge and a persistent gain in power are nowadays more given to words of warning than of encouragement. But there is still one small section of the community which appears to subscribe to the doctrine of inevitable progress, and this, oddly enough, consists of the very last people whom one would expect to hold any such belief. Almost any artist or art critic of to-day must have had some opportunity of contrasting what is being done at the present time with works of the order of the Cathedral of Chartres or the paintings of Piero della Francesca and Rembrandt; yet it is precisely among those most concerned with modern developments in the visual arts that we find the last living descendants of the optimists of a hundred years ago.

In this they have exactly reversed the position as it was in the nineteenth century. At the time when faith in progress was strongest, artists and art critics such as Ruskin and Morris were among the first to hold a contrary opinion. 'The nineteenth century may be the consummation of all,' G. E. Street wrote with reference to medieval French architecture, 'but the evidences of its existence to posterity will not be one-tenth in number of those which such a reign as that of Philip Augustus has left, whilst none of them will come up to the high standard which in his time was invariably reached.' This view may be contrasted with the words of Mr Lucio Costa, a Brazilian architect, and an enthusiastic admirer of the work of Le Corbusier, when he addressed an international conference of artists organized by UNESCO in 1953. In his opinion the efforts and contributions of all nations are about to be combined; 'despite the seeming impossibility of reconciling them, the truth more probably is that all are converging on a common

meeting ground towards a new and world-wide synthesis.' And when this happens, 'the evolutionary process will then shift to a new plane, to the healthy rhythm of a cycle without precedent – the most productive and the most human in history.' By contrast with this Mr Henry Moore's commendation at the same conference of those public authorities which have 'the vision and the courage to commission forward-looking works of art' may be thought mild enough. But in fact Mr Moore could hardly have made this remark if he did not believe that a constant and inevitable improvement in the quality of works of art was occurring. If things are getting worse, then public authorities would surely do better to commission backward-looking works of art; if things are going to stay much the same then there seems to be no advantage in encouraging the artist to look either backwards or forwards.

There is one obvious drawback to belief in progress, that it is depressing to be living in a present which must be in every way inferior to the future; nothing, for example, could be more exasperating than to be convinced that medical science would discover the secret of perpetual youth in precisely a hundred years' time. This thought appears to weigh on a good many people's minds and perhaps it is one reason why science fiction has lately become a most popular form of literary entertainment; in spite of all its triumphs science is going too slow and it is therefore agreeable to be able to outstrip it in imagination. But in the visual arts there is no such easy remedy, no obvious substitute in fantasy for the works of art of a thousand years hence; it is natural that there should be some confusion of mind among those artists and art lovers who show the most impatience with the painfully regular passage of time. One body in particular, the Institute of Contemporary Arts, appears to have made a considerable effort to find some way out of an awkward dilemma; according to its chairman, Sir Herbert Read, its declared aim is 'to bring into existence the art of the future.'

On the face of it this might mean one or other of two things, either that the object of the Institute is to bring the art of the future into existence in the future, or that its aim is to bring it into existence in the present. But the first alternative will happen anyway, whatever the Institute may choose to do. It is not as if anything at all was predicated about the art of the

future; it might be reasonable to aim at bringing a particular kind of art into existence in the future, but, as it is, you might as well form a society to induce people to behave in future as they may in future chance to behave. So there remains the second alternative, and at first sight this may seem a not wholly absurd undertaking and one that a good many people concerned with the arts might accept without further reflection as a worthy objective; it bears, for example, some resemblance to what Mr J. M. Richards put forward in a broadcast talk as a desirable state of affairs, that 'advanced expert opinion' should lead one generation 'half-way towards the next'. But how is this to be done? It would be easy enough if the Institute of Contemporary Arts, or advanced expert opinion, were endowed with the gift of prophecy; it would then only be necessary to look into the crystal, tell artists what was there, and instruct them to imitate it. But if for the moment we reject this method there seems to be only one way in which it could be arranged that the artist of to-day should produce the art of to-morrow. If the Institute, like other institutes and academies in the past, should exert itself to prevent any and every change of style, if it succeeded in promoting an art as conservative as that of ancient Egypt, then, and then only, might it be able to achieve its aim; under such circumstances the artist of to-day would undoubtedly be practising an art identical with, or very closely resembling, that which his descendants would in due course be compelled to produce.

But this seems hardly compatible with the views of Sir Herbert or with the activities of the Institute during the last few years and I am not altogether sure that he is not in point of fact relying on the gift of prophecy. In an article in the *New Statesman* last year in which he defended the award of the first prize to Mr Reg Butler in the Unknown Political Prisoner competition, Sir Herbert explained that the jury, of which he himself was a member, chose the work most likely to appeal to 'the renascent sensibility of the people of the future'. If this was merely a question of ordinary foresight, of inferring what is likely to happen in future from certain tendencies in the present and the past, then the most obvious conclusion to come to would be that sensibility will be less acute in the future than it is to-day; there appears to have been a gradual dilapidation of taste since the industrial revolution and at present there does not seem to be any sign that the process, though it

may sometimes be checked, can be finally stopped. But this is only part of the general objection to belief in progress in the arts, and if for the moment it may be considered a satisfactory. guess that human sensibility is going to improve then we are at once confronted, as the jury in the competition should also have been confronted, with a further difficulty; what we like now, and even what the jury liked, will in that event almost certainly not appeal to the more refined taste of our descendants. Thus without the gift of prophecy the jury could not hope to predict what critics who must inevitably be better than themselves will one day admire; if their assumption about the future was correct, then the jury's choice, unless supernaturally guided, was bound to be wrong.

A less drastic remedy than attempting to bring the future into the present is to try to be content with the bustle of change around one, to go where this is most perceptible, and to encourage every activity that contributes to it; it is reassuring to be all the time aware that even if things are not moving fast enough, they are still moving. So perhaps it is not altogether surprising to find Sir Herbert Read writing, in the course of a survey of art in Europe at the end of the Second World War, that 'my whole reading of the history of art tells me that change is the condition of art remaining art.' No doubt everyone reads the history of art, just as everyone reads history, in his own way, but a more usual interpretation of it would be that there have been long ages during which a single style has been maintained with scarcely any perceptible alteration; by comparison the periods remarkable for development and change seem to have been extremely brief. Thus the same immediately recognizable, highly realistic style persisted in palæolithic art for a period which has been variously estimated but which must by any count have been longer than the whole interval between the dawn of civilization and the present day. And throughout these many thousands of years, as during the many centuries during which Egyptian art persisted with scarcely more variation, the absence of change may quite conceivably have been a condition of art remaining art while the occurrence of change was certainly nothing of the kind. It is hard to resist the conclusion that Sir Herbert has read into the past, as many other prophets have done, what he considers desirable in the present. There can be no doubt that he does like change and even wishes, it would seem, that there was rather more

of it at present than there is. Thus in the same essay from which I have quoted he deplores the absence of revolutionary artists at the present time and observes that 'if a new generation arises to dethrone the giants of the past, no one would give it a warmer welcome that I.' No one, indeed; he has always been on the side of the latest angel and ready to die on the most recently constructed barricade.

Artists and architects, as well as art critics, have been burdened in recent years by the slow passage of time. Some have tried the milder remedy of welcoming change and constantly altering their style, but others, and in particular the school of architects and designers who believe in the doctrine of functionalism, have made a more direct and interesting attempt to plunge headlong into the future. The theory of this school is, of course, that a building or other object will be beautiful if it is fit for its purpose, or at the least that it cannot be beautiful unless it is fit for its purpose. A remarkable use of this theory, and one that illustrates the difficulty of applying it, was made in all seriousness by Mr Montgomery Belgion some time ago. He attacked a proposal that Westminster Abbey should come under the protection of the Commissioners of Works as an ancient monument, on the grounds that the building was beautiful owing to the purpose for which it was built, which was to be a church; if it was handed over to the Commissioners it would no longer be a church and so would cease to be beautiful. But a foreigner who did not happen to know about this little detail of administration might presumably still think the Abbey beautiful, and who can say that he would be wrong? Similarly if a machine can be beautiful when it is not working, and books by functionalists usually invite the reader to admire photographs of beautiful motor cars in repose, would it not be equally beautiful if some essential but invisible part of it had been covertly removed? So it seems as if a beautiful object ought to look, rather than be, fit for its purpose, and once this kind of pretence is admitted we are back where we started from with an art of expression or even imitation. Nor is it difficult to see what is being expressed or in some instances directly imitated.

Functionalists always say that they are designing for a machine age, and this is naturally assumed to be the present time. But the character of their work does not always bear out their contention that they are strictly concerned with the

fitness of their artefacts for any function these may have in the circumstances of to-day. Thus Mr Costa, in the address from which I have already quoted, discusses how children are to be trained to like inhabiting, which their parents do not, the kind of building that architects in general and Le Corbusier in particular, are determined to give them; they are to be provided with constructional toys out of which to build models of the new type of dwelling to which they must in due course be reconciled. Thus the building is not to be made fit for the human being, but the human being for the building; he is to be scrubbed and got ready for a Le Corbusier tenement as though he were going to church. Moreover, this training is to take effect when the children are eventually grown up, but the dwelling is to be designed or even built at the present time; the architect's vision of the future is to have precedence of the needs of to-day.

This vision is not, and could hardly be expected to be, peculiar to himself; it has much in common with those notions about the future which most of us have derived from novelists and other prophets. There are, of course, a number of prophets of doom who describe, as Richard Jefferies did with remarkable imaginative power in *After London*, the breakdown of industrial civilization. But if these are neglected, and they are not likely to appeal to any believer in the progress of the arts, it seems to be agreed that in time to come our descendants will be waited on hand and foot by machinery, that everything will go very much faster than it does now, and that a universal asepsis will reign. So the architect, as much inspired by the Utopias of the modern novelist as the Gothic revivalists were by Sir Walter Scott's dream of the middle ages, designs the 'machine à habiter'. This does not actually give its inmates any more electric light, hot water, television and so forth than a thatched cottage can easily, and much more cheaply, be adapted to provide. But it does give the appearance of doing so, and in art it is the appearance, not the reality, that matters. The dwelling house must therefore be made to look like a machine, or sometimes like the factory which houses machines, even though it is nothing of the kind; paradoxically enough, the functionalist might almost be said to have made architecture a more imitative art than it has ever been before. From time to time attempts have also been made to make buildings look as though they were intended to travel at high

speed, but this aspect of the future is usually brought out in smaller objects; pieces of sculpture and electric irons are stream-lined as though they were meant to whip through the air at more than a hundred miles an hour. An imaginary asepsis, as well as some resemblance to machinery, is very easily suggested by the use of smooth surfaces and the absence of ornament; drawing-room furniture can readily be made to look as if it had been designed for an operating theatre. Because they pretend in this way to go ahead of time, the works of the functionalist school, and even of the rather less arid school of designers and architects that has developed out of it, offer the nearest equivalent to science fiction that the visual arts can hope to provide.

More generally, faith in progress, the race to get into the future, has the effect of persuading a number of artists as well as critics that there is at any given time one kind of art which is more advanced than any other, and that this is uniquely worthy of imitation, admiration, and support. The distinction between this illusion and the mere pursuit of fashion is a fine one and the effects of the two are scarcely to be separated; no doubt the average artist who is much concerned to keep up with the times is in fact inspired by a mixture of the two motives. But that there is a difference is shown by the existence of a two-party system in the arts, the left supporting innovation and the right what is usually called tradition but which sometimes consists of the decidedly untraditional practice of copying photographs of important people on to canvas. No such conflict between progressives and reactionaries commonly disturbs the world of fashion or animates the pages of its magazines, and it is to be observed that this conflict helps to sustain the illusion, which again hardly exists among the devotees of pure fashion, that progress is continually occurring. Thus, whenever a new style succeeds in ousting an old, this is not merely regarded as a success for one of two equally valuable conventions, such as happened when one neolithic tribe overcame another and imposed its own method of decorating pottery on the people it had conquered; it is welcomed as a victory of light over darkness.

The history of art is full of delusional theories of æsthetics, and, indeed, the whole of the Italian Renaissance might be said to be founded on a delusion about the merits of Roman sculpture, so that faith in progress might very well have no

harmful effect whatever on modern art. But in fact there seem to be some practical disadvantages in holding this belief. It takes time and in the past has often taken several hundreds of years to develop a style and discover all its possibilities, but nowadays it is quite common for an artist to change his style, not gradually as his talent develops but abruptly as the result of some outside influence, three or four times in the course of his life. The notion that some particular kind of art is at any given time more progressive than any other also has the unfortunate effect of preventing the development of local styles. This is particularly obvious in countries remote from the centre – at the moment this still seems to be Paris – in which what are supposed to be the most advanced styles are invented. In recent years the artists of the United States, Canada, Australia, and many other widely separated countries have made the most strenuous efforts to plunge into what the author of a recent book on Canadian painting called 'the stream of modern art', and this has largely taken the place of previous attempts to form a national style by painting such scenes as are considered most characteristic of the country. Even if such imitations were not all too likely to be sterile and slavish, to fly round the world from one standardized airfield to another would hardly be less interesting than to observe the influence of Picasso and Mondrian extending from China to Peru.

THE MISSING STAGE

Richard Findlater

'Never since the closing of the theatres in 1642,' says Mr Ronald Watkins, 'has a play of Shakespeare's been performed in the conditions for which he devised it'; yet such a discrepancy has not appeared, until recent years, to present any kind of a problem to the panjandrums of literature and the stage. The disappearance of those conditions has, indeed, been regarded as a victory of progress over barbarism, and for 300 years the texts have been 'improved' by jackasses in greasepaint and gown who have ignored their original staging at the Globe. But throughout this century, with the growing realization that Shakespeare was not merely a great soul but a great stage manager, there has been a gradual transformation in the arts of Shakespearian revival; and to-day it is widely recognized that the wooden octagon on Bankside, with its platform stage and permanent architectural setting, was an indispensable instrument in the creation of the world's greatest poetic drama.

In the rediscovery of Shakespeare's stage, and the application of its lessons to contemporary production, an all-important part was played by William Poel. To his pioneering and prophetic talent, underrated in his lifetime and overlooked since his death, a long overdue memorial has now been erected by Mr Robert Speaight – commissioned by the Society for Theatre Research, whose enterprise in this field is a welcome extension of its valuable and vigorous work. Mr Speaight's book * not only presents a conscientious portrait of Poel and his work – 'He was important not only for what he taught but what he was' – but, in so doing, illuminates the obstacles to any resurrection of the Globe, and, indeed, to any radical transformation in English theatre arts; and Poel's story is worth detailed consideration because it raises, obliquely but unmistakably, the central problems of the twentieth-century stage.

Poel's career, as depicted by Mr Speaight, is a striking

* *William Poel and the Elizabethan Revival* (Heinemann, 21s.).

illustration of the seminal power of heresy, and the limitations of the conscientious objector, in the unholy trade of the theatre. The son of a well-to-do Victorian civil engineer, Poel escaped the orthodox education of his class because of frail health, and his childhood encouraged both the nonconformity and the self-righteousness which were, it seems, features of his mature character. Throughout his life Poel rejected the theatre of his day with uncompromising and absolute scorn. At an early stage he made up his mind that 'it is useless to communicate one's ideas to professionals', and there is no doubt that the restrictions which this imposed upon his work misled not only the public but also himself about the true extent of his discoveries. Yet, as Mr. Speaight says:

> Poel was a man with a vision. He was to walk through all his life holding fixed before his inward eye something that no one else saw quite as he did. It was not an idea that could be trimmed and adapted by discussion; it was a view of art, which was fundamentally a view of life, and it had to be accepted or rejected as a whole.

His mission was to reform the methods of Shakespearian production then in vogue, but 'he believed in the stage before he believed in the Elizabethan stage': 'a profoundly religious man,' although a fervent anti-clerical, he had 'a mind singularly free from greasepaint' – perhaps too free, indeed, to make a lasting impression upon the theatre. For Poel was one of those Puritan rebels recurrent in the history of the English stage who, seized by a passionate love-hatred of the playhouse, seek to transform it into something nobler and purer than the mere mummers who serve its baser uses: he was a Puritan without a party, just as, in Mr Speaight's words, 'he was a man of the theatre who never really had a stage: that was his paradox and his problem.'

Apprenticed to a firm of building contractors when he was seventeen, it was not until 1872, at the age of twenty, that Poel paid his first visit to a theatre; but in 1875 he saw Tommaso Salvini in *Othello*, and this experience was 'the turning-point in his whole life' – just as it was, seven years later in Moscow, to the young Stanislavsky, who took Salvini as his model. (Of Salvini's Moor in 1884, Henry James wrote: 'With its tremendous force, it is magnificently quiet, and from beginning to end has not a touch of rant or crudity.') Poel's taste, in revolt against contemporary English acting, had been partly formed

by the visits to the Princess's in 1874 of two French companies, which 'gave Poel a permanent standard of acting values'; but it was 'the essential rightness of Salvini's approach to acting and the consummate ease of his technique,' in particular 'the testing of every effect by reference to the text,' which awoke Poel to the cause he was to serve with such devotion for the rest of his life. Mr Speaight can throw small light upon the details of this conversion, but soon after seeing the great Italian, Poel attempted to make a career upon the stage, and in 1876 he joined Charles Mathews's company in a tour of *My Awful Dad* – the prelude to two wander-years in the provincial theatre. No grand design was in his mind, but 'he wanted to find out what this place, the theatre, was really like; he wanted to discover all he could about the science of acting; he wanted, above all, to study Shakespeare.' As a general utility man in Dublin and Liverpool, touring with Osmond Tearle, or trudging the Northern moors with a troupe of strollers, Poel received a practical education in the ways of the English theatre, though he can have found meagre evidence of a 'science of acting' or a study of Shakespeare. The old touring organization, after 150 turbulent years, was now on the verge of destruction in the revolution of the new theatre industry, but Poel took his turn in begging the patronage of local bigwigs, loading up the wagon when the show was over, and playing 'juvenile, heavy, leading and comedy parts'. On one occasion he had to leave behind a pair of trousers to pay his landlady, and pawn his watch to pay the company's fares: he learned how the acolytes cheat and starve, but he did not discover another Salvini.

This experience was supplemented, after Poel's return to London, by a solo provincial tour in which he gave recitals from Shakespeare, Sheridan and others; and in the summer of 1879 he formed 'The Elizabethans', whom he described as 'professional ladies and gentlemen whose efforts are specially directed towards creating a more general taste for the study of Shakespeare.' (Their costume recitals, however, also gave provincial audiences the chance to study such works as *Eugene Aram* and *The Iron Chest*.) It was 'The Elizabethans', Mr Speaight suggests, who confirmed Poel's theories:

> The very simple conditions of these performances threw the actors back upon the text, and Poel himself was forced to compare the acting editions of Shakespeare then in use with the original.

Mr Speaight compares Poel, briefly, with Jacques Copeau (*Donnez-moi un plateau* nu):

> There was the same desire to recover an ancient purity for the stage, even if this involved some loss of present accomplishment. There was the same belief that the commercialism of the modern theatre forbade the kind of work he wanted to do. There was the same readiness to cut loose, once and for all, and to accept the consequences without complaint or cavil.

The comparison is just, instructive – and dangerous: for to the reader of Mr Speaight's book how diffused, ramshackle and repetitive seem Poel's productions, for all their pioneering courage and wisdom, put beside the coherent achievement of Copeau. In the difference between the two men, indeed, lies one key to Poel's failure – and to a root problem of the modern Shakespearian stage. He was a man not only without a theatre, but without a company: and, in the last resort, this was due not to the stupidity of English players or the pressure of finance but to Poel's own misunderstanding of the actor's art.

Copeau believed in the actor. He realized that, if any revolution in the theatre was to be carried through, the actor had to be remade; but the process of discovery and development was a co-operative adventure, the work of a closely knit team under his leadership. 'His actors,' says Michel St Denis, 'received a very detailed training of voice, body and imagination, which fitted them to act in the sort of modern plays which would demand of them the same difficult standards as the old classics had done': moreover, he 'made it his job to see to the individual education of his actors.' Among his pupils were Louis Jouvet and Charles Dullin; the Compagnie des Quinze and the Grenier-Hussenot, among other companies, stemmed from his work; and, says M. St Denis, 'in less than forty years he achieved his ambition: authors finally did respond, if not to his appeal, at least to that of his disciples, and they recaptured the contemporary stage.'

How different is the tale of Poel! For each production, staged in one public hall after another, he assembled a new scratch cast, usually under-rehearsed, often incompetent, frequently bullied. Like Copeau, he sought to re-educate his players, but he treated them – too often – without love or charity: they were puppets, to be taught their lessons and then dismissed. Professionals usually would not 'take his tones' – the freakish system of musical speech-delivery he had evolved, single-handed, as his

Heath Robinson contribution to the theatre arts – and so he preferred to engage amateurs, who were more amenable to his persuasion. Even so, however, they never remained long enough under his tuition for complete success: 'he could pay his actors little or nothing for their pains, and they could only work with him at odd times.' In performance,

> they were still automata, repeating, imperfectly, his tones and gestures, not fully understanding why they must speak and act in a way that would make their sisters ashamed of them. If Poel had been able, or had wanted, to retire, like Copeau, into a rural retreat and work for six months with a few chosen actors, the results would have been far more persuasive.

I wonder. It was not a question of being able, but rather of *wanting*, to go into retreat with 'a few chosen actors': lack of money, for a fanatic such as Poel, would have been no obstacle (he subsidized his own experiments to the tune of £5,000); lack of a policy – and, above all, lack of faith – was surely the fundamental trouble. Unlike Copeau, he did not believe in actors – although he had the good fortune or the flair to unearth at least one of near-genius, Dame Edith Evans, and although Sir Lewis Casson, Lillah McCarthy and others were among his admiring victims; and it is difficult to conceive that, even if Poel had ever acquired the theatre of his dreams, he could have held a company together and shaped with it a new contemporary drama. Mr Speaight throws some light upon this side of Poel's work in descriptions of his absurd behaviour at rehearsals; 'for some reason,' he says, 'Poel did not think that actors could begin to perform until they were prostrate with hunger,' and 'it was not in Poel's nature, once he was launched on a production, to set any limits to the powers of human endurance.' True, Mr Speaight goes out of his way to say that 'this most exacting of directors never forgot that it was upon the actor that, in the last analysis, everything depended,' and tells several anecdotes of Poel's kindness and understanding; yet it seems evident, from the record of his work, that Poel seldom had time to reach the last analysis. His priorities, perhaps, were confused.

One result of his distrust of the professional actor was his eccentric addiction to putting women in men's parts, first shown in 1895, when Lillah McCarthy read Romeo and Leah Bateman read Mercutio in a recital of *Romeo and Juliet*, and subsequently growing into a notoriously bad habit.

> No convincing explanation of this disconcerting practice was ever given; but at least he never claimed that it was Elizabethan. Probably he found women's voices easier to modulate; and actresses were generally more willing to give him the time he needed for rehearsal. He was indifferent to the sex of the performer and the sense of the play provided that the actor or the actress spoke in tune.

How revealing is that admission! He dictated to his actors the 'tunes', or inflections, which he believed were necessary for the delivery of Shakespeare's poetry, while prompting them in what he called an 'exaggerated naturalness'; from Charles Mathews, in his early days, he himself had learned how to give an illusion of rapidity while speaking slowly, and he based his system of voice-training on the key-word – giving to every Shakespearian sentence the same 'tune' that a sentence of identical meaning would have in modern conversation. Yet in spite of this persistent emphasis on 'tunes' and voice, and although Mr Speaight says that 'for Poel a play was primarily a thing heard,' he is obliged to admit elsewhere that Poel 'had little ear for metrical values or their reinforcement of dramatic meaning,' and that he was 'quite insensitive to the melodic line of a speech.'

Here, then, is one of the flaws in the theory of this intransigent perfectionist: although the guardian of Shakespeare's music, he himself was on occasions tone-deaf. What is more, the champion of the integrity of Shakespeare's text was himself a bowdlerizer and an improver. In *Measure for Measure* he changed 'he has got a wench with child' to the less dangerous news that 'he will shortly be a father,' he avoided the word 'bawd' as far as possible, and he substituted 'self' for 'body'. In *Richard II* he cut to shreds the soliloquy in the scene of Richard's murder. 'It is strange indeed,' says Mr Speaight, 'that a man capable of these amputations should have been both admired and derided as a purist of textual integrity.' And he cut *Troilus and Cressida* with a 'strangely insensitive' perversity; which rouses his biographer to an indignant protest: 'In the name of what principle, we may ask, did he censure Sir Henry Irving for cutting Shakespeare when he himself took such liberties with the text?' Again, the enemy of the proscenium stage frequently put productions behind a picture-frame, or fixed his actors into copies of celebrated paintings.

> He would pay Jennie Moore thirty shillings a time to make exact copies of dresses from pictures in the National Gallery. In one production he instructed Nugent Monck to kneel in a particular attitude, holding a candle. This pose made no kind of pictorial or dramatic sense, until it was discovered, long afterwards, that Poel had taken it from a design in an ancient Missal.

There were, it seems, grounds for William Archer's complaint that he was 'a non-scenic Beerbohm Tree.' Such contradictions show that even Poel could not cut himself off entirely from his own time and from theatrical realities – which is not surprising: what is surprising is that, with traditional hubris added to his own self-righteousness, he considered that – in the last analysis – he knew better than Shakespeare.

Tunes or no tunes, then, there was good reason for Archer's comment on a Poel *Twelfth Night* described in the programme as 'Acted after the manner of the sixteenth century': Archer's emendation was 'Staged (more or less) after the manner of the sixteenth century and acted after the manner of the nineteenth-century amateur.' To the end of his life, it would appear, Poel never advanced far beyond 'The Elizabethans' – bardolatrous ladies and gentlemen giving recitals – in his promotion of the actor's art.

* * * *

Poel's failure to train a new generation of actors was, as I have indicated, partly a failure of his character and method; a far greater contribution to English acting was made by Sir Frank Benson, who for thirty years kept alive the Shakespearian repertory in a company which was, as Miss M. St Clare Byrne says, 'the only real nursery of Shakespearian talent in England.' Yet this was also a failure of the English stage. It was Poel's misfortune to launch his lone-wolf campaign for putting the theatre right at a time when acting styles were being transformed by social and economic pressures outside his control. When he began his playgoing, it was still possible to see the old tradition, as illustrated by Creswick's Hamlet at Drury Lane: Poel found this

> stagey to a degree that reduces to a minimum any interest in the characters or their fates. When individuals walk about the stage with measured steps, stand in symmetrical positions, raising their hands first to their breasts, then towards the heavens, then towards the earth, making recitals of every

speech they utter, I feel sure it is fatal to all interpretation of character. I am glad a revolution has come to pass.

It was in reaction against this conventional playing, and against the Lyceum tradition of Irving, that Poel turned to his docile amateurs and transvestite ladies; yet these, in turn, seemed to unsympathetic witnesses to be 'making recitals of every speech they uttered', without the theatrical impact of the old, incorrigible barnstormers. Moreover, the revolution which Poel welcomed (it is not clear what he had in mind) served to delay the maturity of a new kind of Shakespearian acting for many years: the rediscovery of the Elizabethan stage was accompanied by a radical reorganization of the theatre industry, which made it difficult to translate theory into practice.

The concentration of a rapidly multiplying population in the towns, the decay of agriculture and rural life, the spread of elementary education and the rise in living standards all helped, at the end of the last century, to dissolve the old social and cultural patterns and fostered the creation of a vast entertainment industry. Anti-theatre inhibitions were weakened by the development of transport, and from the 1870's onwards the stage became increasingly respectable as it became the outlet for surplus capital and the source of large profits. Amateur actors from the middle classes began to penetrate the ranks of the professional stage (Poel, himself, was a representative figure), and in time the Church veered round to recognize the theatre as a moral force in the nation's life. The general reduction in the size of playhouses, the institution of electric light, the abolition of the pit, and the arrival of a new middle-class audience – these factors all shaped the style of a new generation of actors, whose influence still persists to-day as the dominant mode of English acting. In the history of the theatre this was an inevitable and necessary process, and a new subtlety, intimacy and truth of performance – especially in comedy – emerged from the revolution (influenced by such actors as Charles Mathews, from whom Poel had learned so many lessons). Yet, for the rehabilitation of the Elizabethan Shakespeare, the curse of the new style was its gentility. Henry James noted in 1880 that 'the art of acting as little as possible has . . . taken the place of the art of acting as much,' because of the invasion of middle-class amateurs; the sons and daughters of doctors, dons and clergymen, who entered the theatre in increasing numbers, brought their manners into the drama; but though the days of rant and caricature were

over, 'the drawing-room quietness of well-bred acting' – as Mathews called it – was scarcely compatible with the revival of the King's Men at the Globe.

The theatre revolution also affected Poel's crusade in another way: it made it more difficult, in the long run, for him to find a stage of his own and for his heirs to experiment outside the proscenium stage. His ambition was to rebuild the Globe, in London or Stratford, which could have been done 'at any time before 1914 for the small expenditure of £5,000'; but in the meantime he presented his productions on a series of improvised makeshift stages, never finding any permanent home or centre in which he could have naturalized his dreams. Mr Speaight's book illustrates the erratic pilgrimage – Gray's Inn, St George's Hall, and the Egyptian Hall of the Mansion House; the Lecture Hall of the Victoria and Albert Museum; the Conservatory of the Royal Botanic Society; the Ethical Church, Bayswater; the Holborn Empire and the Chelsea Palace (when a platform stage was built out over the stalls); the Royalty Theatre, 'converted into as near a likeness of the Old Fortune Playhouse as was possible in a roofed building' – for one production only. It is a freakish but heroic record: had Poel no alternative? Certainly, the new prosperity and centralization of the theatre industry, with the development of the long run and, later, of the syndicate, made it more difficult for the pioneer to experiment in a building of his own; and with the rise of metropolitan land values the new London playhouses soon represented a capital investment too massive to be disturbed by theories about platform stages. The proscenium stage was established as the one and only form, within which actors and directors had to make their peace with the Shakespearian ideal.

Poel himself would be content with nothing less than the Globe, and, for want of a Vieux Colombier, his work was dissipated in a hundred scattered experiments. Each time he began all over again; he never consolidated his work or changed his ideas in the living collaboration of a permanent company; and yet he himself – apparently so intransigent – was obliged to make continual compromises all along the line. That is one of the most illuminating aspects of his work as outlined in Mr Speaight's book. He compromised with the text, chopping it about to fit his own whims; he compromised with the proscenium stage, pushing his 'Elizabethans' into tableaux behind the picture-frame; he compromised with contemporary taste

and manners. To say this is not to minimize Poel's importance or attack his integrity: compromise is the condition of theatrical success. If Poel had been less afflicted by hubris and had acknowledged the need for compromise in theory as he did in practice, his achievement might have been all the greater. But that is a forlorn hope:

> It was the essence of Poel's achievement [says Mr Speaight] that he remained, intransigently, the man he was: His work, though it was based on a theory, was far more than theoretical. It was the effect, highly practical within its limits, of a total, an integrated personality. It was an achievement of character, even of difficult character, before it was an achievement of intelligence.

That achievement should not be underrated, for, whatever his shortcomings and contradictions, Poel's influence was of decisive importance – in the creation of the Maddermarket Theatre and the Marlowe Society; in the discovery of Dame Edith Evans; in the historic production of *Everyman* (though he himself said, 'I do not believe in the future of religious plays'); in the work of Granville-Barker, and through him in the work of Sir John Gielgud. His place is assured in the history of the English stage.

* * * *

The problem which Poel posed remains unanswered to-day. Thanks in part to his influence, 'no producer' – in the words of Mr Anthony Quayle – 'can ignore the Elizabethan staging of the play. That must be his point of departure.' Mr Tyrone Guthrie has said that 'There will be no drastic improvement in staging Shakespeare until there is a return to certain basic conditions of the Elizabethan stage'; and Sir John Gielgud, pleading the same cause at Oxford, has asked: 'What could be more worth while than to study and rehearse the plays under the new conditions which such a background imposed; to know that once the playhouse had been seen or accepted for the first time, neither critics nor public would expect anything *except the play*.' Yet a return to such 'basic conditions' is impossible in the proscenium stage of most British theatres: Mr Speaight quotes the case of Glen Byam Shaw's 1946 production of *Antony and Cleopatra* at the Piccadilly:

> He was obliged to place his permanent 'Elizabethan' set so close to the proscenium that there was very little room to manœuvre in front of it. But if he had not so placed it, the actors performing on the upper levels would have been invisible from the upper tiers of the auditorium.

Moreover, the architectural compromises at our two deminational theatres – the Old Vic and the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre at Stratford – have proved to be singularly unsuccessful: their apron stages, even after expensive revisions, are incorrigibly inflexible – ideological after-thoughts now beyond repair – and although there is a greater degree of intimacy between audience and the actor, at Stratford in particular a moat still yawns between the stage and the stalls. Mr Speaight believes, with reason, that 'the best solution we have seen in recent years was Miss Tanya Moiseiwitch's set for the Histories at Stratford in 1951,' which 'had the sovereign merit of being architecture rather than decor.' He adds, however, that 'the problem is strictly insoluble, and the intransigent genius of Poel saw it to be so. That is why he worked in the wilderness. That is why he only succeeded when he took his audience as well as his actors away from the proscenium. . . .'

The case for a reconstructed Globe – with its platform stage, its Elizabethan façade, its yard for the groundlings, and its three encircling tiers – seems unanswerable. It is to be hoped that such a building can be erected in time for the quater-centenary of Shakespeare's birth in 1964. Yet such a reconstruction would solve none of the main problems. First of all, Poel's more fanatical supporters rest their case upon a fallacy – that the architecture comes before the poetry, that a new Globe would foster a new drama, that a platform stage would generate a Betterton or a Burbage. But the King's Men of the old Globe were part of a culture which included the bear-baiters in Paris Garden, the jeering crowds which watched the public disembowelling of political offenders, the brawling, nut-cracking Elizabethans who surged into the theatre yard for a diet of blood, thunder and poetry – all of them beyond artificial respiration. How can Shakespeare's Globe be rebuilt without Shakespeare's audience and Shakespeare's actors? And how far should historical fidelity, in such a building, be carried – should we dispense with electric light, plumbing and actresses?

An architectural solution, in isolation, is of small value and, although a reconstructed Globe would be of great value as a workshop and a museum (with a substantial revenue from the tourist trade), it would be absurd to put any faith in it as the

answer to the living theatre's dilemma. Nobody could afford to build more than *one* Globe: for many years to come majority Shakespeare must be staged in the playhouses we have *now*, and if these are to survive – and with them the theatre itself – productions must appeal not only to the student and the specialist but also to the public at large. Whatever new stages may be tried, whatever lessons may be learned in a new Globe, the results must be accommodated to the picture-frame stage.

To theatre reformers, however – and God knows we have need of them to-day! – the message of Poel's career is plain. It lies not in the make-believe Elizabethanism of an imitation Globe, but in the need for rebellion against the fashionable tyrannies of taste established in the *status quo*, without denying the ineluctable, indispensable tyranny of the audience. It lies, above all, in the need to evolve a new acting style *before* you create a new stage, and to harness both ambitions to the service of a new contemporary drama – the proper end of all campaigning in greasepaint.

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor of THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

SIR, – In his criticism of my article 'Equality and Responsibility', Mr Bruce Miller is talking constitutional law where I was talking fact. Is there racial discrimination in the United States? Or political oppression in the U S S R? These questions cannot be answered by reference to the American and Soviet Constitutions. Nor can my contention that the British Prime Minister advises on the appointment of Governors-General be rebutted by quotations from the declarations of Imperial Conferences.

I did not, as Mr Miller perhaps suggests in taking my remark out of its context, contend that appointments were made *only* on the advice of the British Prime Minister – for instance, I said that 'each Dominion [is] keeping its end up by insisting more and more upon native Governors-General.' Does Mr Miller believe that when a Governor-General is appointed in, say, Canada, the British Prime Minister knows no more about it than the Prime Ministers of South Africa and Pakistan? A Governor-General is the representative of the Crown, not of the British Government – but does Mr Miller believe that the Crown is no more closely associated with the British than with the Dominion Governments?

For practical as distinct from theoretical purposes I did indeed equate Dominion and 'member' status. That was the point of my article. I contended that if the Gold Coast were slighted by being given 'full responsibility' without 'full membership' she would promptly secede and become an independent state like Burma – and that India, Pakistan and Ceylon might well secede in protest. The attitude of these countries differs so greatly from that of South Africa that no amount of 'consultation' will settle the matter. It can be settled only by the early establishment of 'a procedure whereby corporate decisions can be made' – but upon this Mr Miller and I seem to agree.

Yours faithfully,

STANLEY ALDERSON.

LONDON, N.W.8.
October 30, 1954.

BOOK NOTES

CALL TO GREATNESS. By Adlai E. Stevenson. (Hart-Davis. 9*s.* 6*d.*)

One of the inferences that can reasonably be drawn from the recent mid-term elections in the U.S.A. is that, barring accidents, Mr Stevenson will probably be the next President, whether in two or six years' time. It is profitable to take this opportunity, provided by the publication of a series of lectures delivered by him at Harvard University in March 1954, to see what kind of President he is likely to be. The portrait is fairly easy to draw—much easier than that of most future Presidents before their election, because he is one of the most articulate candidates for the position that there has ever been. He will not be a 'typical American', like Eisenhower or Truman; rather he will be the kind of man that old-fashioned American opinion traditionally distrusts – one who has grown roots in Europe, and liked growing them. Nor will he be the kind of sophisticated American, like Roosevelt, who must fall over backwards not to be taken in by the British, and therefore can find no escape from committing himself insensibly to seeing more liberalism in a Stalin than a Churchill. Nor will he be a log-cabin President, nor an advocate of 'normalcy'.

These are Presidents he will not be. What, more positively, will he be? He will be an empiricist rather than a moralist: a sort of non-philosopher king. His foreign policy will be that of Mr Kennan (the Kennan of *American Diplomacy* 1900–1950 rather than Mr X of *Foreign Affairs*). If co-existence is still with us, he will be likely to consolidate it; but also, in Sir Winston's phrase, to safeguard it diligently. If China is not yet recognized by the U.S.A. when he comes to power, it certainly will be when he relinquishes power. At home, he will equally certainly advance the trend in the direction of the welfare state: he may even succeed in separating social security from socialism among the stereotypes of American public opinion. All his responsibilities will be carried with deep seriousness: not for nothing do the words 'ordeal . . . peril . . . burden' dominate the titles of his three lectures. But it is unlikely that gravity will prove entirely incompatible with levity in an 'egg-head' who is capable of joking about himself as such in Latin; a politician who has defined the politician as a man who meets every fresh problem with an open mouth. Urbanity is the word for his mental make-up. He looks, on this form, like being a very European sort of head of

state, likely to follow what we think of as a characteristically British line of policy.

So far, to British ears, Mr Stevenson sounds almost too good to be true. He may, indeed, prove not to be true: the path to the White House is strewn with the broken hearts of ex-future Presidents of the U.S.A. What is worse, he may be true but not so good; for a characteristically British line of policy may not be at all a good thing to have the U S A follow, even from our own point of view. We are so complacently accustomed to contrasting our own traditional skill in world affairs with the brashness and inexperience of the Americans that we forget too readily how it was that the present international *détente* was brought about: not simply by British dexterity, but by the contrapuntal interplay of that with American toughness and strength. If there were no American toughness to hold back, British dexterity might well by now have lost three-quarters of Europe to the Iron Curtain as well as half Asia. An American diplomacy which holds itself back instead of having to be held back may be a liability instead of an asset; and that is what Mr Stevenson might very well give us.

These inferences drawn from three hastily prepared lectures are no more than academic speculation two (or six) years before the event. But whether he wins or loses, at least we can count on many more such distinguished performances from one who has already done much to show what a splendid vehicle of expression is the American branch of the English language.

C. M. W.

A HISTORY OF THE CRUSADES. By Steven Runciman. Vol III, The Kingdom of Acre. (Cambridge U.P. 35*s.*)

The third volume of Steven Runciman's *History of the Crusades* is the most interesting of the brilliant trilogy; and this is perhaps connected with the fact that it has very little to do with crusading. The dictionary definition of a Crusade is 'a Christian expedition to recover the Holy Land (especially Jerusalem) from the Mohammedans'. In this sense there was very little crusading done in the thirteenth century, with which this volume is concerned; and there was very little Christianity, in any but the most formal sense of the word, about the way it was done. More than once 'crusading' leaders actually refused to accept possession of Jerusalem when it was offered to them, in return for territorial gains of their own elsewhere. Even the saintly King Louis IX of France believed that he would be effectively contributing to his pious purpose by invading Egypt instead of Palestine. The one significant achievement of the crusaders during the century was the seizure and sack of Constantinople and the usurpation of the Byzantine Empire in 1204; and what

that signified was one of the most disgraceful and unnecessary disasters in European history. It is a relief to turn to the really novel and important part of the narrative, which is concerned with the Mongols.

The first two volumes of the *History of the Crusades* were notable for the lack of an identifiably heroic people to fill the background and give continuity to the story. There were individual heroes, such as Baldwin in Volume I and Saladin in Volume II; but the peoples they led were beneath the standard required for epic greatness. The Franks were uncivilized and deplorable; the Mohammedans were past their colourful novitiate and had not yet reached their final climax of greatness under the Ottomans; the Byzantines (no doubt the author's favourites) were pathetic in their decline. The clash of the Crusades came when neither East nor West was at its apogee, and neither was wholeheartedly sure what it was fighting for: it was a parochial, somewhat aimless, often sordid squabble, in which only the east-west traders knew what they were really after. With this third volume, for the first time, a great new people appears on the scene, and Professor Runciman's deliberately muted prose begins quietly to vibrate:

> By temperament the tribesmen were used to give their leaders an unquestioning obedience; and the leaders, from bitter experience, knew that they must now obey the Khan. His (Jenghiz Khan's) subjects had also, like all nomadic tribes, a yearning to move beyond the horizon, and a fear lest their pasture-lands and forests should be exhausted. The Khan offered them new countries and great booty and hordes of slaves. It was an army of cavalry, archers and lancers mounted on swift ponies, men and beasts accustomed from birth to hard living and to making long journeys across deserts with very little food and drink. Such a combination of speed of movement, discipline and vast numbers had never before been known.

These were the allies who presented themselves to the Christians against Islam in the thirteenth century and were refused.

Looked at from the Frankish point of view, it is easy to see why the Mongols were unacceptable as allies, even though they might with a little more sympathetic effort have been completely converted into a great Christian Empire. A glance at the map – at the mere contrast in scales – is enough to show, as it always has been, the incompatibility of *Weltanschauung* between Europe and Asia. The same contrast can be seen to-day between the titanic imperialism of Soviet Asia and the parish-pump politics of Western Europe; and Jenghiz Khan would have smiled as ironically as a Soviet Marshal at British self-adulatory pæans on the vast campaigning distances over which their armies fought in the Second World War, 'from Mersa Matruh *via* Italy, across Europe to a Victory parade in Berlin.' This is about the scale on which the Crusades were also fought; and to a Mongol (as also formerly to an Arab) it was, so far as distance goes, the equivalent of a few weeks' annual route-marching. The contrast in scale, as in temperament, is implicit in the geographical conformation of the two continents: for just as the Franks were incapable of a nomadic campaign-technique over thousands of miles, so the Mongols were incapable of the concept of the nation-state which was already forming itself in the European consciousness. Whereas both religious and political conceptions divided the Franks from Islam, only political conceptions divided them from the Mongols – but the division was just as unbridgeable. Whereas the Mohammedans classified mankind into the 'House of Islam' and the 'House of War', between which there could be no fixed frontier but only a fluctuating battle-front, the Mongols, in Professor Runciman's words, 'did not recognize that independent foreign states could exist'. From the European point of view, there was little to choose between these fine distinctions; and there still is little to choose to-day.

Here then is a real conflict, a real dilemma, and therefore a real drama to replace the preliminary bouts and shadow-boxing of the first two volumes. The third is as a result easily the most interesting and stimulating of the three; and its interest lies chiefly in what it foreshadows rather than what it concludes. It is not until the epilogue that the true and terrible contribution of the Crusades to history stands revealed. Until these last chapters, the climax is never really reached: Constantinople is still in Christian hands, the Mongols are still unconverted to Islam. The epilogue is thus no anti-climax. It provides in some ways the best reading in the three volumes, though everything that goes before is an essential contribution to it. The whole is written with Professor Runciman's habitual economy of language in the austere modern idiom. If it had been written a century ago, it must have been at least three times as long; which is not to say that it might not have been more easily digestible.

C. M. W.

JOHN GIBSON LOCKHART. By Marion Lochhead. (John Murray. 25*s*. net.)

Discussing the *Life of Akenside* by Peter Cunningham, John Gibson Lockhart wrote to John Murray:

> I think it very poor and pert, and him a very small creature, not likely to be serviceable in the *Biographies* for he has the ambition to be a Johnson with hardly the brains to be a Birch. Where shall the workers be found that know how to combine humility with care and zeal?

Since such were the virtues that Lockhart cherished in a biographer, he would have been gratified to think that in the centenary year of his death the story of his life was to be written, and by one equipped with the very qualities that he himself held in particular esteem. It is left, however, to the contemporary reader to savour the full flavour of the contrast which emerges between the vitriolic capacities of the self-styled 'Scorpion that delighteth to sting the faces of men', and the all-pervasive benevolence of one who is not only a conscientious and zealous worker, but also one of the blandest and most forgiving of biographers.

The reader, it is true, may have some difficulty in sharing that benevolence. To understand all is not necessarily to pardon all, and the latent excitement underlying the attacks on Keats and on Leight Hunt is a manifestation that arouses, not indignation only, but distaste of a very particular kind.

> It is, however, very difficult [Lockhart once wrote], no one knows it better from experience than I do – for a man with a pen in his hand to forget rules and regulations, that he approves ever so much in his own mind – not to indulge any rooted feeling of hostility, however he may previously have resolved to keep that for a more proper place.

What, then, was the more proper place? At what subterranean source was this stream of venom fed? No clue is offered, and indeed the circumstances of his life are such that it would be difficult enough to find one. Lockhart, we are told, was the most filial of sons (but we would like more evidence of this) as well as the most devoted of brothers. He was an admirable son-in-law. He was a tender and affectionate husband. His love of children, wrote a friend, was unusually strong – 'it was womanly love'. The evidence accumulates; without, however, effacing the darker side of the picture. (Fifteen years after the notorious *Endymion* review: 'I hope you will murder some other Tennyson' Lockhart wrote to Croker, who patently required no such encouragement.)

Although the central enigma of Lockhart's character is not solved (appropriately, perhaps, his motto was *Heart in Fetterlock*) Miss Lochhead's biography illumines many new facets of his life and personality. It sets us down in the midst of his domestic circle and permits us, with an unwonted sense of intimacy, to share the joys and sorrows of his daily life, both at Chiefswood and, in later years, in Sussex Place. The many delightful family letters which it contains, no less than the professional letters to Murray and Croker, add materially to the value of a most equable and engaging book.

BETTY MILLER.

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