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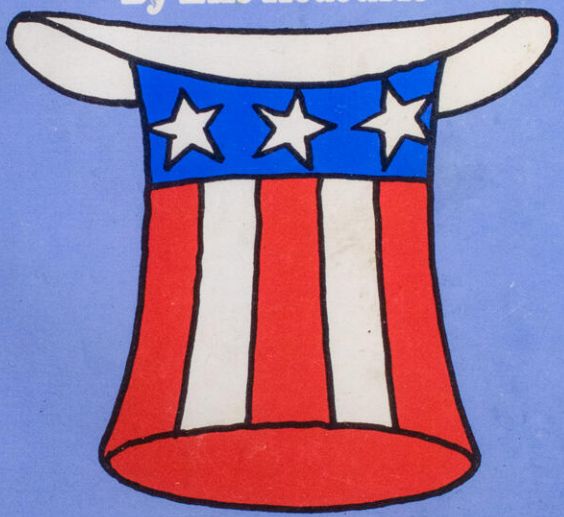

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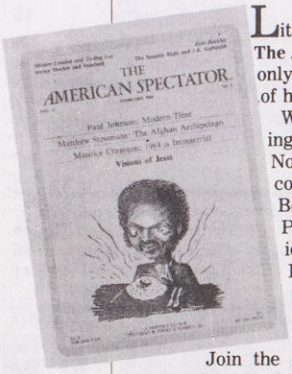

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Penelope Lively

A Long Night at Abu Simbel

In Cairo they had complained about the traffic and at Saqqara Mrs Marriott-Smith and Lady Hacking had wanted a lavatory and blamed her when eventually they had to retire, bleating, behind a sand-dune. She had lost two of them at Luxor airport and the rest had sat in the coach in a state of gathering mutiny. Some of them were given to exclaiming, within her hearing, "Where's that wretched girl got to?" At Karnak the guide hadn't shown up when he should and she had had to mollify them for half an hour with the shade temperature at 94 degrees. On the boat, a contingent had complained about having cabins on the lower deck and old Mr Appleton, apparently, was on a milk pudding diet, a detail not passed on to the chef by the London office. Julie knew now that not only did she not like foreign travel or tour leading but she didn't much care for people either. She continued to smile and repeat that they would be able to cash cheques between five and six and that no, she didn't think there was a chiropodist in Assuan. When several of them succumbed vociferously to stomach upsets she refrained from saying that so had she. They sought her out with their protests and their demands when she was skulking in a far corner of the sun deck and throughout every meal. In the privacy of her cabin she drafted her letter of application to the estate agent in Richmond where there was a nice secretarial job going.

At Edfu the woman magistrate from Knutsford was short-changed by a carpet-seller, to the quiet satisfaction of some of the others. At Esna Miss Crawley lost her traveller's cheques and Julie had to go all the way back to the temple and search, amid the pi-dogs and the vendors of basalt heads and the American party from Minnesota Institute of Art (biddable and cooperative, joshing their ebullient blue-rinsed tour leader). They all called her Julie now, but on a note of querulous requirement, except for the retired bank manager, who had tried to grope her bottom behind a pillar at Kom Ombo, and followed her around suggesting a drink later on when his wife was taking a nap.

None of them had read the itinerary properly. When they discovered that they had an hour and a half to wait at Assuan for the flight to Abu Simbel they rounded on her with their objections. They wanted another plane laid on and they wanted to be assured that they wouldn't be with the French and the Japanese tours and Lady Hacking said over and over again that at least one took it, for goodness' sake, that there would be adequate restaurant facilities. Julie got them, eventually, into the plane and off the plane on to the coach, where the guide Fuad promised by the Assuan agency most conspicuously was not. She went back to the airport building and telephoned; the Assuan office was closed. The man at the EgyptAir desk knew of no Fuad. She returned to the coach and broke the news in her most sprightly manner. The American coach and the French coach and the Japanese coach, smoothly united with their Fuad or their Ashraf, were already descending the long road to the temples in three clouds of dust.

They said their say. The coach driver spat out of the window and closed the door. They bumped across the desert. Lake Nasser lay to their right, bright blue fringed with buff-coloured hills. Those who had sufficiently recovered from their irritation at the non-appearance of Fuad exclaimed. Those who had not continued loudly to reiterate their complaints. The coach driver pulled up at the top of the track down to the temple site. They disembarked. Miss Crawley said she hadn't realised there was going to be even more walking. They straggled off in twos and threes and stood, at last, in front of the blindly gazing immensities of the god-king. Mrs Marriott-Smith said it made you think, despite everything, and Miss Crawley found she had blistered both feet and the chartered surveyor's wife was sorry to tell everyone she couldn't, frankly, see a sign of anywhere to eat. They stood around and took photographs and trailed in the wake of the guided and instructed French and Japanese into the sombre depths of the temple and when they were all out of sight Julie left them.

She walked briskly up the hill to where the American coach, its party already aboard, was revving its engines. She got on and went with them back to the airport, where, with a smile, she deposited an envelope containing twenty-two return halves of Assuan-Abu Simbel-Assuan air tickets with the fellow at the EgyptAir desk. She then boarded the plane, along with the American party. They were shortly joined by the

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chronic rebellion will always unsettle the West's compromises with the imperial occupiers. It was the insubordination of the Polish people, starting in 1980, that dealt the death-blow to the pseudo-*détente* of the Carter and Brandt unrealism. We could neither assist nor forsake the Poles, but nor could we believe any longer that the Soviets were observing the Helsinki Agreements. Let us entertain no further illusions: the third Europe is never going to calm down.

The compromise has also failed because the USSR has never given up its aggressive policy towards Western Europe, contrary to what its supporters claim—not even at the height of so-called "*détente*." The one-sided "armaments race" in which the initiative was taken by the East; threats and manipulation of terrorist and pacifist movements; invasion of the territorial waters of a neutral country, Sweden, by shoals of submarines; rampant technological theft and espionage; destabilisation *via* the South (in Africa, the Lebanon); overt attempts to influence electoral processes—one loses count of all the methods used by the USSR to frustrate the will to political independence in democratic Europe and sap its determination to defend itself.

So, clearly, the vote on 17 June—despite the inevitable overlapping of home affairs and European affairs—should be taken as much more than a vote about the Common Market. European public opinion and French politicians with views as divergent, in other spheres, as Jacques Chirac, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, and François Mitterrand are aware of the need for Western Europe to have a unified political will and a common defence.

WHAT MIGHT BE THE AIMS of such a "post-Yalta Europe"? Let me list five. Firstly, to deprive the Soviet Union, by our firmness, of all hope of any Westward expansion of its power or influence. Secondly, to organise and strengthen Europe and its defence to such effect that the USSR understands that that hope really is chimerical and that *Realpolitik* dictates that it should be abandoned. Thirdly, to wake up to the fact that Soviet acts of aggression in other continents are equally acts of aggression against ourselves and to let the USSR know that we hold it responsible for the actions of its proxies and mercenaries. Contrary to a cherished illusion, there are no specific "North-South" relations, at least none that cannot ineluctably be recast at East-West relations. Fourthly, to sustain and propagate democratic movements in the world. And, finally, to build, on these foundations, a true *détente* with the USSR, that is to say a *détente* based not on the abuse of trust and on Soviet extortion but on genuine negotiations, aiming as far as possible to give help to the peoples of central Europe and to settle the open German question as a matter of the first importance.

Yalta was never the inauguration of some "*politique des blocs*", of two symmetrical blocs, but the birth certificate of the only real bloc, namely the Soviet bloc. To give unambiguous notice of this new analysis of East-West relations, there is no longer any reason why the West should not officially abrogate the Yalta and Helsinki Agreements. The Soviets have never observed them in any case; and the obligations they contracted

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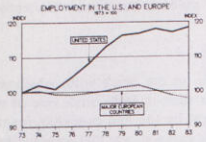
under them have never existed in their eyes. Those agreements are therefore *de facto* null and void. Why not say so?

American Dynamics



AT THE Democratic Party Convention in San Francisco there were 3,850 delegates and 13,000 journalists, or 3.37 journalists per delegate, to cover a non-event. We knew in advance which candidate (Mondale) would receive the nomination, as decided by the well-established system of primary elections, and it has always been a foregone conclusion that the Republican candidate would be Ronald Reagan.

In fact the real information about the United States is to be found not in the sideshows which the party conventions have become, but in a fat, invaluable, annual publication: *The Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1984 edition. That is the place to look for the means to gauge the evolution of American society since 1970, since the *Abstract* incorporates the findings of the census of 1980, compared with those of the 1970 census, and of course it includes all the other statistics of the period 1980–84. Undoubtedly it is these basic realities, more than anything else, which will decide the outcome of November's presidential election. Yet bear in mind that in all democracies the voters make their choice as a function of their real situation, certainly, but also as a function of the image they have of it, or which has been fashioned for them.

In 1981 and 1982 the American economy endured the most painful moments of the crisis which set in at the start of the 1970s; and on the other hand in 1983 and 1984 it has achieved a recovery which sets these two years above the highest growth rates of the post-War period. President Reagan will therefore have presided over a violent contrast: the two years of the crisis's lowest recession, followed by the two years of the strongest recovery. In fact the highest mean economic growth rate took place, in the United States as in Europe, during the decade 1960–70: it stood at 3.9% per annum. Growth then fell to an annual mean of 3.1% between 1970 and 1980. For let us not forget that what we call *la crise* was never anything worse than a deceleration in growth. This fell to zero in the two dark years of 1981 and 1982, only to shoot up to 6.2 in 1983 and to the equivalent of 9.7% per annum in the first quarter of 1984! According to the latest estimate, the rise in GNP should therefore come to around 7.5% for the full year. This activity naturally affects employment: 6.5 million Americans have found or regained work since the start of the recovery, and 1,350,000 in May and June of 1984 alone, according to an announcement by the Department of Labour on 6 July. The unemployment rate, which had risen above 10%, has recently fallen to 7.1%, an important figure in electoral terms because it is lower than when Ronald Reagan took office.

Add to this picture the fact that for the first time inflation and

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Japanese and the French. The plane left on time; it always did, the stewardess said, truculently, glancing out of the window at the solitary airport building tipping away beneath.

THE MAGITOURS PARTY continued to devote themselves to the site. They gathered in front of the stone plaque unveiled by Gamal Abdul-Nasser as a memorial of international collaboration for preserving a human heritage. The other tours were now wending their way up the track to the coaches. "Peace at last!" said Lady Hacking. "I don't know which drive me dottier—those American women screaming at each other or the French pushing and shoving." Mr Campion, the senior police inspector, being in possession of an adequate guide-book, assumed the role of the absent Fuad and briefed them on Rameses the Second and on the engineering feat involved in hoisting the temples to their present position. The party, appropriately humbled by the magnitude of both concepts, moved in awe around the towering pillars of the temple and the equally inhuman 20th-century shoring-up process within the artificial hillside. They all agreed that it was frightfully impressive and well worth coming for. Those still suffering from internal disorders were becoming a little fidgety, and Mrs Marriott-Smith was longing for her dinner, but on the whole the mood was genial. They emerged from the temple and sat around admiring the lake, tinged now with rose-coloured streaks as the late afternoon sun sank towards the desert. Some of the women put their woollies on; it was extraordinary how quickly it got chilly in the evenings. Mr Campion read out more from the guide-book. None of them paid any attention to the distant hootings of the coach driver, at the top of the hill. Someone said "That damn girl's vanished again."

The coach driver, hired for so long and no longer, hooted for five minutes. Then, in the absence of any instructions, he threw his cigarette out of the window and drove his empty coach back to the depot.

THE SUN HAD ALMOST COMPLETELY SET when the first of them reached the airport building. The stragglers, including the grimly stoical Miss Crawley, now hideously blistered, continued to arrive in dribs and drabs for another quarter of an hour. It had been a good two miles. It was Mr Campion who discovered the envelope with the flight tickets, shoved carelessly to one side of the EgyptAir desk. And it was another ten minutes or so, as the party slowly gathered around him, subdued now and in a state of mingled fury and apprehension, before the penny dropped. "I simply do not believe it", said the chartered surveyor's wife, over and over again. The EgyptAir official, subjected to a barrage of queries, shrugged, impassive. Those on the edges of the group, who could not quite catch what was going on, pushed closer, and as the enormity of their plight was conveyed from one to another, the murmurs grew louder. Mr Campion, determinedly keeping his cool, concentrated on the EgyptAir fellow. "When is the next plane, then?" There was not another plane; the last plane left each evening at five-thirty. "Then", said Mr Campion with restraint, "you'll have to call Assuan, won't you, and have them send up another plane." The EgyptAir official smiled.

"Oh, rubbish", said Mrs Marriott-Smith, "Of course they can send another plane. Tell him not to be so silly." The EgyptAir official shrugged again and made a phone call with the air of a man prepared, up to a point, to placate lunatics. The outcome of the call was clear to all before he put the receiver down.

"All right, then", said Lady Hacking, "we shall just have to endure. Ask him where the local hotel is."

The police inspector, a man accustomed to matters of life and death, did not bother to reply. The woman's manner had been getting on his nerves for days anyway. He simply pointed towards the long windows of the airport building, overlooking a vista of desert enlivened here and there with a scrubby tree or a skulking pi-dog and sliced by the single runway. The sand, now, was lilac, pink and ochre in the sunset. The rest of the group also followed Mr Campion's pointing finger. "Heavenly colours", said the Knutsford magistrate. She had tended to display artistic sensibilities since the first morning in Cairo Museum.

The dismay, now, was universal. "I don't *believe* it", said the chartered surveyor's wife. "You'll damn well have to", snapped her husband. The group, with appalled mutterings, surveyed the uncompromising reality of the airport hall. There were half a dozen rows of solid plastic bucket-seats in bright orange, welded to a stone floor with a thick covering of dust, two or three plastic tables, and a soft-drinks counter attended by a young boy who, like the EgyptAir official and the several cleaners or porters, watched them now with mild interest. There was also the EgyptAir desk, on which the official had placed a grubby sign saying CLOSED, some tattered posters on the walls of the Taj Mahal and Sri Lanka, and a great many overflowing rubbish bins. Those who had already sped into the ladies' lavatory had found it awash at one end with urine and attended by a woman who handed each client a dirt-spattered towel and stood expectantly at their sides. Lady Hacking pointed accusingly at the swilling floor; the woman nodded and indicated one of the cubicles from which fumed a trail of sodden toilet-paper: "Is no good." "Then *do* something", said Lady Hacking sternly.

It was now six-thirty. The group, with gathering urgency, had converged on the soft-drinks counter. It was Miss Crawley, a late-comer, who revealed that all that was left was half a dozen cans of 7-Up and four packets of crisps. Those in possession of the only three packets of sandwiches and the single carton of biscuits sat watching, in defiance or guilt according to tempera-

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ment. "There are thirteen of us", announced Miss Crawley loudly, "without anything at all." The principle of first come first served was in direct collision now with some reluctant flickerings of community spirit. The two retired librarians offered a sandwich to Mrs Marriott-Smith, who accepted it graciously; they did not offer, it was noted, to anyone else. The temperature had now fallen quite remarkably. The few who had coats put them on; most people shivered in shirt-sleeves and light dresses. The architect who had served in Libya in 1942 reminisced, as he had done before—too often—about the desert campaign. The chartered surveyor's wife told everyone that bloody girl would be bound to get the sack, if that was any comfort. Miss Crawley, with a sigh, took a book from her bag and began ostentatiously to read. A clip-eared white cat lay on one of the plastic tables, luxuriantly squirming. The Knutsford magistrate reached out to stroke it; the cat flexed its claws and opened a red mouth in a soundless mew; Miss Crawley observed without comment.

Outside, it became dark. The EgyptAir official was no longer there. Those sufficiently interested—and resentful—pin-pointed a bungalow at a far corner of the airfield in which lights cosily glimmered. The soft-drinks boy continued to slump at his counter and the ladies' lavatory attendant emerged and squatted on the floor outside. The one remaining porter or watchman came to squat beside her, smoking and exchanging the occasional desultory remark. They ignored the Magitours party, who were now dispersed all over the hall in morose clumps, sitting on the upright bucket-seats or leaning against the EgyptAir counter. The architect tried, unsuccessfully, to get together a foursome for whist. Those who were unwell sat near the lavatories, grim-faced. The Knutsford magistrate offered the cat a scrumpled ball of newspaper; it lashed out a paw and she withdrew her hand with a squeak.

"I hope it's not rabid", said Miss Crawley with interest, "you have to expect that, in places like this." The magistrate examined her hand, on which beads of blood had appeared. "Oh *dear* . . .", said Miss Crawley, "I wonder if it's worth putting on some antiseptic." The magistrate, glaring, applied Kleenex.

IT WAS AT AROUND NINE-THIRTY that the feelings of those without provisions of any kind became insupportable. The mutiny was provoked by the revelation that the surveyor's wife was in possession of a cache of oranges, Ryvita, and Garibaldi biscuits which she now attempted furtively to distribute among those of her choice. The murmurings of those excluded became impossible to ignore; Mr Campion, eventually, rose to his feet, crossed the hall, and had a brief and gruff word with the surveyor's wife, who bridled angrily. He then cleared his throat and announced that given the circumstances some kind of kitty situation as regards food might be a good idea. This produced a small assorted pile which Mrs Campion, with evident embarrassment, divided up and carried round on a tray borrowed from the soft-drinks counter. The several sick said they didn't want anything, prompting further complex and minute division. These comings and goings caused a considerable diversion, so that it was some while before anyone—including his wife—noticed that there was something wrong with old Mr Appleton. He sat slumped down in his seat, intently muttering and emitting, from time to time, a sort of bark that was neither laughter nor a cry of distress. His wife, with as much embarrassment as concern, leaned over him, murmuring exhortations. Presently one of the librarians bustled across with a bottle of mineral water. Aspirins were also produced, and a variety of throat lozenges.

"Poor old chap", said the Knutsford magistrate. "Mind, I've been thinking all week he was ever so slightly gaga. What a shame." Others declared that they weren't surprised—this was enough to unbalance anyone. "You know what it makes me think of?" said the Knutsford magistrate. "That place in Orkney—Maes howe. Anyone been there?" No one had; those for whom she had already overdone the widely-travelled bit returned emphatically to their books or their magazines. "Oh, it's quite extraordinary—you really should go. B.C. three thousand or something, but the fascinating thing is these Viking inscriptions by some sailors who spent the night there in a storm and one of them went barmy." There was a silence. The cat, writhing seductively, wrapped itself round the magistrate's calf; she pushed it away with her bag.

"How does your hand feel?" enquired Miss Crawley.

"Perfectly all right", said the magistrate with irritation. She watched the cat, which sat lashing its tail. Miss Crawley lowered her book and eyed it. "Of course all the animals out here look unhealthy. What *is* that on its mouth?"

At eleven o'clock the only functioning ladies' lavatory packed up, a circumstance causing a frail-looking and hitherto silent woman to burst into ill-concealed sobs. Someone else's husband admitted some amateur plumbing proficiency, rolled up his sleeves and braved the now softly rippling floor. "Good chap", said the police inspector loudly.

The attendant at the soft-drinks counter wrapped himself up in a tartan rug, lay down and was seen to fall instantly into deep and tranquil sleep. "Lucky sod", said the architect. "Mind, we used to be able to do that, back on the Halfaya Ridge."

"Oh, do shut up about the Halfaya Ridge", said Mrs Marriott-Smith, her voice inadequately lowered. The architect, a more sensitive man than was superficially apparent, and who had shared a genial lunch-table with her and Lady Hacking only yesterday, sat in bristling silence. "Ssh, dear", said Lady Hacking. "Of course, these people aren't made like us physically. It's something to do with their pelvises. Haven't you noticed how they can squat for hours?"

"What absolute nonsense", muttered the police

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inspector's wife. Lady Hacking swung round, but was unable to identify the speaker.

The party, by now, had divided into those determinedly enduring in as much isc'ation as possible and those seeking—tacitly—the faint comfort of collective suffering. One or two had tried to clean up a section of the floor and lie down upon it, inadequately cushioned by newspapers and the contents of handbags, but soon gave up. A few people, drawn to authority, had settled themselves around Mr Campion, as though in wistful belief that he might yet effect some miracle. Old Mr Appleton continued to mumble and bark; his wife, now a little wild-eyed, plied him with mineral water.

Mrs Marriott-Smith said, "Oh my goodness, it *can't* only be half-past midnight. . . ."

"Tell you what", said the chartered surveyor's wife. "We should do community singing. Like people stuck on Scottish mountains." She giggled self-consciously. "Don't be so damn silly", muttered her husband. Miss Crawley, lowering her book, stared with contempt: "A peculiarly inappropriate analogy, if I may say so." No one else spoke. The chartered surveyor's wife got out a powder compact and dabbed angrily at her nose.

A DETACHED OBSERVER, arriving now at Abu Simbel airport, could not have failed to detect something awry. The complex lines of hostility and aversion linking the members of the Magitours group were like some invisible spider-web, grimly pulsing. Apart from the small group of acolytes around Mr and Mrs Campion, the bucket-seats, in their uncompromising welded lines, were occupied in as scattered a manner as possible. Married couples were divided from other married couples by an empty seat or two. Solo travellers like Miss Crawley and the Knutsford magistrate sat in isolation. The two retired librarians had fenced themselves off, pointedly, with a barrier of possessions spread over two unoccupied seats. Old Mr Appleton's barking and muttering had cleared a substantial area around him; he appeared, now, to be asleep, his jaw sagging. From time to time someone would cough, shuffle, murmur to spouse or companion. An uneasy peace reigned, its fragility manifest when someone grated a table against the stone floor. "Some of us", said Lady Hacking loudly, "are trying to get what rest we can."

It was at one forty-five that Mr Appleton, apparently, died. He sagged forward and then toppled to the ground with a startling thud, like a mattress dropped from a considerable height. His wife, for a moment or two, did nothing whatsoever; then she began, piercingly, to shriek.

Everyone stood up. Some, like the Campions, the Knutsford magistrate and the librarians, hurried over. Others hovered uncertainly. Miss Crawley, moving to a position where she could see what was going on, said loudly that one must assume a stroke, so there probably wasn't a lot to be done but in any case there was no point in crowding round. Those trying to offer assistance had split into two groups, one devoted to Mr Appleton, the other admonishing his wife, who continued, with quite extraordinary vigour, to scream. "Hysterics", said Mrs Marriott-Smith. "Something I know all about. We had a girl for the children who used to do it, years ago. Someone should slap her face—it's the only thing."

Mrs Campion, her arm round Mrs Appleton's shoulders, was imploring her to be quiet. "It's all *right*. Everyone's doing what they can. Do please stop making that noise. *Please*." Mrs Appleton paused for a moment to draw breath, glanced down at the prone body of her husband, and began again. "Be quiet!" ordered the police inspector. "Stop that noise!" The librarians and the magistrate were arguing about whether or not to turn Mr Appleton over. "I tell you, I *know* about this sort of thing—he shouldn't be moved." "Excuse me but you're wrong, I know what I'm doing. Is he breathing?" "I don't think so", said the magistrate, her words unfortunately falling into a momentary respite in Mrs Appleton's screams, and serving to set her off again nicely.

The soft-drinks attendant had unfurled himself from the tartan rug and, along with the lavatory attendant and the porter, stood watching with interest. "Tell them to get a doctor", said Lady Hacking. "I should think that's the best thing to do."

"Shut up, for Christ's sake, you stupid woman", said the police inspector. There was a startled silence; even Mrs Appleton, briefly, was distracted. Lady Hacking went brick-red and turned her back. The chartered surveyor's wife burst into frenzied laughter. The Knutsford magistrate, kneeling over Mr Appleton, looked up and snapped that she didn't frankly see what there was to laugh about just at the moment. Mrs Appleton had been led to a seat somewhat apart and was being damped down, with some success, by Mrs Campion. Mr Campion, having picked up the receiver of the phone on the EgyptAir desk and listened for a moment, was trying to convey to the porter that the EgyptAir official must be summoned. "Is sleeping", said the porter. "Office closed." "Give him some *baksheesh*", advised the architect. The police inspector, a big man, ignored this; he leaned forward, seized the porter's jacket in either hand, and violently shook him. The lavatory attendant uttered a shrill cry of outrage.

"Frightfully unwise", said Mrs Mariott-Smith loudly. "That simply isn't how to deal with these people." Interest, now, was diverted from the Appletons to the EgyptAir counter.

The porter, muttering angrily, picked up the phone, and, presently, was heard to speak into it. "Tell him to bloody well get over here at once", said Mr Campion, "and bloody well get on to Assuan for us."

"The man doesn't understand English", said Miss Crawley.

"At least some of us are trying to *do* something",

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hissed the magistrate. "Which is more than can be said for others."

Miss Crawley stared, icily: "There's no need to be offensive."

Lady Hacking, tight-lipped, was sitting stiffly while Mrs Marriott-Smith spoke in a mollifying undertone. "I have no intention", said Lady Hacking loudly, "of getting involved. One simply ignores such behaviour, is what one does." The chartered surveyor's wife gazed at her, beady-eyed.

The porter had put down the phone and was loudly reiterating his grievances. "All right, all right, old chap", said the engineer. "We've got the message. Calm down." Mrs Appleton continued keening; Mrs Campion, still in attendance, was becoming visibly impatient. The woman who had been reduced to tears by the collapse of the surviving ladies' lavatory was again quietly weeping. "I just want to be at home", she kept saying. "That's all. I want to go home."

At this point Mr Appleton twitched convulsively and made an attempt to roll on to his back. "He's coming round", announced the magistrate. "Good grief! I thought he'd croaked, between you and me." The librarians, with cries of encouragement, heaved him into a sitting position.

The porter, shrugging, looked meaningfully at Mr Campion: "Is O.K. now." "Go to hell", said the police inspector, advancing towards Mr Appleton, who was heard to ask where he was. "Don't tell him", advised the engineer. "It'll be enough to knock the poor fellow out again."

Mrs Appleton, supported by Mrs Campion, was led across to her husband and began attempting to brush the dust off his trousers and jacket while reproaching him for giving everyone such a nasty shock. The old man, ignoring her, allowed himself to be helped up into a seat; he stared round, wheezing. "That's the ticket", said the police inspector, patting him on the shoulder.

The EgyptAir official arrived, tieless and with one shirt-tail untucked. The porter fell on him in noisy complaint. The police inspector, cutting in, took him aside. "Spot of *baksheesh* might save the situation", said the architect. Mr Campion continued, in quiet but authoritative tones, to explain that a member of the party had been taken ill, and was undoubtedly in need of medical attention, but that fortunately the immediate crisis seemed to have passed. "Man not dead", stated the EgyptAir official, aggrievedly. "No, I'm happy to say", said Mr Campion.

AND WHEN, PRESENTLY, dawn broke over the desert and a grey light crept into the airport building the scene there was one of, if not peace, at least an exhausted truce. A few of the Magitours party, done for, were in restless sleep; the others, raw-eyed, sat staring out of the windows at the reddening desert or braved the lavatories to attempt whatever might be done by way of physical repairs. The librarians graciously offered cologne-soaked tissues. A few people ventured outside for a breath of air and even wandered a little way along the road to the temples, at the far end of which those stone immensities, in their solitude, were contemplating yet another sunrise.

And when, three hours later, the first flight from Assuan decanted its passengers the arrivals found the place occupied by a party of people grim-faced but composed. Members of a Cook's tour bore down on them: "I say, is it true you've been here all night? It must have been ghastly!" Those who saw fit to respond were deprecating. "The odd little *contretemps*", said Lady Hacking graciously. "But on the whole we muddled through quite nicely." Miss Crawley, in sepulchral tones, warned of the condition of the lavatories. The librarians, gaily, said it had been a bit like an air-raid in the war, if you were old enough to remember. Mrs Appleton, supporting her husband, who was demanding a morning paper, valiantly smiled. The wan appearance of the party was defied by an air of determined solidarity, even perhaps of reticence. "The thing was", said the Knutsford magistrate, "we were all in the same boat, so there was nothing for it but grin and bear it." The exclamations and queries of the Cook's tour members were parried with understated evasions. Mrs Marriott-Smith assured the new arrivals that the temples were absolutely amazing, unforgettable, no question about that. "Absolutely", said the police inspector heartily. "Extraordinary place." There was a murmur of agreement and, as the Cook's tour filed towards their coach, the Magitours party, rather closely clumped together, made their way across the sand-strewn tarmac to the waiting plane.

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Paul Johnson

The Media & the Presidency

A Balance-Sheet of an "Ongoing Confrontation Situation"



"In no time, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the networks and the news magazines had let themselves be converted into White House bulletin boards."

This remarkable statement, from ex-Secretary of State Alexander Haig's memoirs,[1] reflects the extent of the victory achieved by Ronald Reagan in the 20-years' war between the Media and the Presidency. The origins, progress, and outcome of the war are complex but worth exploring because they tell us a lot about the American system of government.

In 1965, on the eve of the war, Walt Disney and his engineers created a giant animated Abraham Lincoln for the New York World Fair. Lincoln was chosen as the ideal President. The monster automaton was capable of 48 separate body-actions and no less than 17 changes of facial expression. These included, Disney claimed, "serenity" and "reserve." But above all, "dignity had to be the constantly sounded keynote."

Dignity, indeed, is the note sounded by the Washington Lincoln Memorial itself. In its colossal size and the way in which it "speaks silently" through the writings carved into its stone walls, it recalls the awesome statues of Rameses II at Abu Simbel. Dignity is the characteristic the Americans most want to associate with the Presidency. This dignity was progressively destroyed by the media during the 20-years' war. It is Reagan's achievement that, by ending the phase of open warfare, he has given dignity back to his office. He has thus restored the *status quo ante bellum*—or, perhaps one should say, *ante Nixonum*.

The American media are uniquely privileged because the First Amendment forbids Congress to pass any law abridging freedom of speech or of the press. It thus has constitutional status. Yet it is a curious fact that, until the second half of the 1960s, the media were usually content to allow themselves to be used by the White House. Theodore Roosevelt invented the technique of the "exclusive" press interview to make a political point or bring pressure on Congress. Woodrow Wilson used the press to elevate himself to the role of sea-green incorruptible world statesman; and though his actual legislation (especially the Espionage Act of 1917) was fiercely repressive and anti-libertarian, journalists treated him like a demi-god and failed totally to expose the fraud of his last eighteen months in power, when he was physically incapable of discharging his office.

Warren Harding, who had run an Ohio newspaper himself, loved the press and they loved him. He called them by their first names, and himself opened the White House door to them, greeting them on the steps. On the spur of the moment he would invite them aboard his private railcar, or even into the White House parlour, for what he called "food and action", i.e. poker. But a hint of the shape of things to come followed soon after Harding's tragic death, when Bruce Bliven, in a notorious series of articles in *The New Republic*, created the mythology of the "Ohio Gang." Thereafter, for an entire generation, Harding's reputation was trodden firmly into the mud in endless newspaper articles and books by journalists, so that now, in the popular consciousness, he stands—quite unfairly—at the head of the list of "bad" Presidents. If the media could destroy a dead President, how long would it be before it crucified a live one?

Calvin Coolidge held the press at bay. He would not employ a press secretary or hold on-the-record conferences. But reporters who submitted written questions to his saturnine factotum, C. Bascom Slemp, got surprisingly frank answers in Coolidge's own handwriting. When, in August 1927, he decided he would not run for a second term, he summoned 30 reporters, told them "The line forms on the left", then silently handed each a 2-by-9-inch slip of paper on which he himself had typed: "I do not choose to run for President in 1928." While he was in office, the press would not or could not touch him. But once he went they began to chip away at his reputation, which by the mid-1930s was in ruins. As for Herbert Hoover, that brilliant but desperately unlucky man was already in irretrievable trouble with the media long before he left the White House. During the 1932 campaign the Republican strategists had only one message for him: "For God's sake, keep yourself off the front page!"

It was Franklin Roosevelt who began the emotionally charged flirtation with working journalists which was one of the contributory factors in the later 20-years' war. No president ever exploited the media more comprehensively. He used them to speak directly to the people, from the moment when, on 12

[1] *Caveat*. By Alexander M. Haig. Weidenfeld £12.95.

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March 1933, he opened his first fireside chat on the radio with the words: "I want to talk for a few minutes with the people of the United States about banking." That "*with*" was characteristically effective, and characteristically false. Most newspaper proprietors hated him; most reporters worshipped him. It is a most curious fact that media people always prefer aristocrats, like Roosevelt and Kennedy, who have inherited their money, to those, like Hoover and Nixon, who have made it on their own.

It was not that FDR treated the press well. Any photographer who took shots of him getting into or out of his car was certain to have his camera smashed by the Secret Service. He took money off reporters at poker—sometimes quite large sums—but the fact went wholly unreported. So did his anti-Semitic remarks, his infidelities, his wife's passionate attachment to another woman, and his vicious use of executive power.

Most of the White House skulduggeries later used by the media to bury Richard Nixon alive were invented by Roosevelt: a special "intelligence unit"; stenographers in secret cubicles to record conversations; recording tapes supplied by RCA; bugs in hotel rooms (including his own wife's); use of the FBI, the Justice Department, and the IRS to "get" opponents on an enemies list; above all, phone-taps. None of this was ever reported in FDR's lifetime; in fact, most of it began to leak out only in the late 1970s, some 30 years after his death and canonisation. There is evidence, indeed, that FDR got reporters to cooperate actively with his dirty-tricks operations, especially in giving what he terms a "hard time" to colleagues in his own administration.

THE AMOROUS PROTECTION which the media gave Roosevelt was later extended, on an even greater scale, to John F. Kennedy. Kennedy courted the press—journalists still recall with awe that the first visit he paid after he knew he had won the Presidency in 1960 was to the columnist Joe Alsop—and he used it ruthlessly. The media created the myth of the Hundred Days; they sustained the mirage of *Camelot*. Kennedy's foul language, which in Nixon was to become a mortal offence, was never referred to. Nor was his incessant womanising or the fact that, as President, he kept a Washington apartment for his mistresses, one of whom he shared with a Chicago gangster. Kennedy's abuse of the power of the FBI, the CIA, the IRS and the Justice Department (especially in his war against US Steel) was never explored in his lifetime. Indeed, like Roosevelt, the media screened him from public scrutiny long after his death. When *The New York Times* published its selection of the Pentagon Papers in June 1971, it ignored or played down the real sensation they contained—the 1963 Kennedy coup against Diem, including his murder. In its handling of the Papers, the *Times* extended its protection even to mere Kennedy cronies, such as John Kenneth Galbraith.

AT THIS POINT, it is important to make clear what the media can, and cannot, do to a President.

Certainly, they can affect his image, both positively and negatively, during his lifetime and posthumously. What they cannot do, or only to a limited extent, is to help or hinder him in elections. Editorial support as such does not seem to tip the scales either way. In 1934 the great majority of US newspapers wrote editorials supporting the Republicans: yet this was the only modern mid-term election in which a President saw his party gain seats in both houses. Two years later, in 1936, with over 80% of the newspapers editorially against Roosevelt's re-election, he carried every state except Maine and Vermont, and beat Alf M. Landon by 27,752,309 to 16,682,524, the biggest popular plurality in US history. Harold L. Ickes, FDR's Secretary of the Interior, wrote in his diary: "Never, in my recollection, have the newspapers conducted a more mendacious and venomous campaign against a candidate for president and never have they been of so little influence. . . ."

In fact, as Roosevelt's media support increased, in 1940 and still more in 1944, his electoral support declined, and it was left to Harry S. Truman, in 1948, to reverse the trend by winning a surprise victory against overwhelming media hostility.

Again, Dwight Eisenhower seemed impervious to media opposition in elections. On average, Presidential poll-ratings drop by six points a year: Eisenhower's popularity rose by 2.5 percentage points a year throughout his first term. In 1956, against the media's candidate, Adlai Stevenson, he won by a landslide. Four years later, despite unprecedented media support, Kennedy won only a narrow victory over Nixon—if, indeed, he won at all. Nixon pinpointed the decisive factor to a group of 36 party elders in Chicago's Sheraton-Blackstone, the night the Republican convention nominated him: "If you ever let [the Democrats] campaign only on domestic issues, they'll beat us. Our hope is to keep it on foreign policy. . . ." Unfortunately for Nixon, the 1960 election was the only one since the War in which foreign policy was not a big issue.

It is true that Nixon "lost" the first of his TV debates with Kennedy, when the latter's men secretly turned up the heating to make Nixon sweat. But Nixon outperformed Kennedy on radio where his voice, confident and resonant, won votes. 1960 was the most crooked election of modern times—the Kennedy clan bought the West Virginia primary to torpedo Hubert Humphrey's campaign, and in the vote itself the returns from both Illinois and Texas were falsified. Where the media were most helpful to Kennedy was in their persistent failure to expose these frauds.

Both the last two landslide results were won against the media, which backed George McGovern in 1972 and opposed, and even ridiculed, Ronald Reagan in 1980. Indeed, the impotence of the media in elections is probably increasing. One reason is that Presidential campaign machines now possess far more sophisticated means to monitor, analyse and so manipulate public opinion during the actual campaign than anything available to the media.

For instance, Richard B. Wirthlin (of Decision Making Information) who planned Reagan's 1980 campaign and is again in charge this year, has for 20 years been perfecting a computer simulation method called PINS (Political Information System). This combines five factors mathematically linked on the computer: continuously updated survey information, historic voting patterns, assessments of party strength in each state, plus a control factor of subjective judgments by

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Republican politicians. Wherever he is during the campaign, Wirthlin communicates by briefcase computer with PINS the moment his 300 local operatives have completed their nightly survey. He can also test tactical options by asking PINS to predict the results of choices. In the 1982 mid-term elections PINS was used to predict the outcome of 500 electoral contests and got only three wrong. Experience shows that in order to influence elections you must be accurately informed about what is happening during them. This year Wirthlin activated his PINS system from the beginning of September. No media boss has access to knowledge of anything like this quantity and quality.

WHERE THE MEDIA are important, and in a negative sense can be decisive, is in the presentation of the activities and character of a President between elections. Therein lay the immediate origin of the 20-years' war which began under Lyndon Johnson. As he confessed in his memoirs, he doubted whether a President, however well meaning, could govern effectively against the "natural" bias of the East Coast media: "I did not believe . . . that the nation would unite definitely behind any Southerner. One reason . . . was that the Metropolitan press would never permit it. . . ." Johnson was apparently proved wrong—until 1966. This was because Johnson was a strong, activist President. And incredible though it may seem to us today, the East Coast media, and especially what I call the Seven Deadly Sinners—*The New York Times, The Washington Post,* ABC, CBS, NBC, *Time* and *Newsweek*—had since FDR's time consistently supported Presidential action against Congressional inaction and hotly defended the use of executive privilege. The media wanted a strong President who would behave in a decisive manner on the international stage. It emphatically endorsed President Kennedy's dictum: "It is the President alone who must make the major decisions on our foreign policy." During the McCarthy scare, for instance, the *New Republic* wrote (1953): "The current gravitation of power into the hands of Congress at the expense of the Executive is a phenomenon so fatuous as to be incredible. . . ." *The New York Times* applauded Eisenhower's defence of executive privilege before the Un-American Activities Committee. Congress, it wrote, had "no right to know the details of what went on in these inner Administration councils." *The Washington Post* said that Ike was "abundantly right" to protect "the confidential nature of executive conversations."

Johnson benefited from this predilection for presidential strength when the "Bobby Baker scandal" broke in September 1963. The press saved his Presidency. His attempts to pervert the course of justice in the Baker case, and in particular to destroy the key witness, Don Reynolds, were far worse than anything Nixon was accused of ten years later. Johnson leaked secret government files to Drew Pearson to destroy Reynolds's credibility; he instructed the IRS to harass his friends and associates; and Reynolds, advised his life was in danger, left the country. The media did little to expose these activities. They cooperated with the President in his harassment of Senator John Williams (Republican from Delaware) who was demanding a full-scale inquiry into the Baker scandal. *The Washington Post* printed a false story, which it had not checked, that Williams had hidden microphones in his office to get material in the Baker case.

THE HISTORIC TURNING-POINT came with the escalation of the Viet Nam War following the implementation of the 1964 Tonkin Gulf resolution. The East Coast media, hitherto staunch supporters of the war, turned against Lyndon Johnson and against the notion of a strong Presidency. *The Times* deserted him in 1966, *The Washington Post* the following year. The networks became first neutral, then hostile. Johnson, who was obsessed by the media—he had three, sometimes four TV sets switched on simultaneously in his little room off the Oval Office—later said his morale was reasonably good until James Reston and Walter Lippmann turned against him. By August 1967, James Deakin, Washington correspondent of the *St Louis Post-Dispatch*, could report: "The relationship between the President and the Washington press corps has settled into a pattern of chronic disbelief."

The destructive power of hostile media lies not in open editorial condemnation but in covert, almost unconscious, misrepresentation of news. This is what destroyed LBJ. There were two decisive occasions. The first was the Viet Tet Offensive, 30 January 1968. Designed to achieve a complete tactical success and detonate a mass-rising, it failed on both counts—but it gained a wholly uncovenanted and overwhelming media victory in the US. Peter Braestrup's exhaustive study of the Tet coverage, especially by the networks, shows how General Giap won his media victory.[2]

Following close upon Tet came the New Hampshire primary on 12 March 1968. Johnson lost heart when his vote sagged and was told by the media that this was because he was too hawkish on Viet Nam. In fact research later revealed that he lost the primary because he was not hawkish enough: among anti-LBJ voters in the primary, hawks outnumbered doves by three to two. Pollsters reported that Jewish voters formed the only identifiable group favouring withdrawal. By mid-1968, 80% of this group (which had solidly backed the Korean War) thought US involvement "a mistake." But among all voters, support for withdrawal was never above 20% until after the November 1968 election, by which time the decision to pull out had been taken.

THUS THE MEDIA DESTROYED a powerful and self-confident President. It got the taste for blood, and the Nixon victory in 1968 whetted its appetite for more. As David Broder put it the next year: "The men and the movement that broke Lyndon Johnson's authority in 1968 are out to break Richard Nixon in 1969 . . . breaking a president is, like most feats, easier to accomplish a second time round." Moreover, Nixon was a natural media enemy, himself engaged in a bitter 30-years' war

[2] Peter Braestrup, *Big Story: How the American Press and Television Reported and Interpreted the Crisis in 1968 in Viet Nam and Washington* (Westview Press in collaboration with Freedom House, Boulder, Colorado, 1977). See also Robert Elegant, "How to Lose a War," ENCOUNTER, August 1981.

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with the press. It dated from the decisive role he played in bringing to trial Alger Hiss, the archetypal East Coast intellectual, WASP beauty and so media hero. In a brilliant essay, Lionel Trilling showed how decisive was the Hiss episode in the media vendetta against Nixon, so that when the latter was finally broken by Watergate, many in the media believed Hiss would, as a matter of simple moral logic, be rehabilitated.[3]

The open media war on Nixon, which began with the very outset of his Presidency, was fuelled by the narrowness of his victory in 1968. He got 43.4% of the votes cast, against Humphrey's 42.7%, and in a low poll (61%) that meant little over a quarter (27%) of all voters. He did not carry a single big city. Hence the first move in the media "breaking of Nixon" campaign was the attempt to deny his Presidential legitimacy. Nixon crushed it with his highly-successful Silent Majority speech of 3 November 1969.

But the campaign was soon resumed. It is important to note that the effort to get Nixon impeached long antedated the Watergate break-in. The signal for it to begin was the publication by *The New York Times* of its version of the Pentagon Papers in June 1971. This episode is examined at length by Russ Braley in his book *Bad News: The Foreign Policy of The New York Times*,[4] published this year, and no reasonable person can read it without reaching the uneasy conclusion that in the early 1970s the *Times* was in some respects a very unscrupulous newspaper.

It is significant that Neil Sheehan, of the paper's Washington staff, who was in charge of the *Times*'s presentation of the Papers, had already urged in the *New York Times Book Review* that Nixon be put on trial for Viet Nam war crimes. That was the reason why Daniel Ellsberg gave Sheehan the Papers in the first place. The Papers were an enormous dossier which, when analysed, showed that mistakes had been made by many people over a long period. The tendentious *Times* selection pointed the finger of guilt principally at Nixon. It ran the first enormous part of the story (front page plus six entire inside pages) on the evening Nixon's daughter Tricia married Edward Cox in the Rose Garden. The *Times* presented the Papers, as Joseph Alsop put it at the time, in "a grossly mendacious manner." Where the *Times* led, the *Washington Post* puffed behind. Henry Brandon wrote in the London *Sunday Times*: "What used to be an undeclared war between the press and the American government has now become a declared war between, on the one hand the *New York Times* and now the *Washington Post*, and on the other the Nixon Administration."

The *Times*'s ostensible justification for printing classified papers stolen from the US government was the excessive secrecy of the Nixon régime, which it termed (in 1972) "the most closed . . . the most secretive, the most removed and remote from the public, the most hostile to criticism, of any Administration in modern times." In fact one fault no modern American government can ever be accused of is keeping too many secrets. My old editor at the *New Statesman*, Kingsley Martin, who had been visiting Washington since the early 1920s, used to describe the growing volume of official material which engulfed the media from the early 1950s as "censorship by publication." There was too much for the press to make head-or-tail of it, and for many years I. F. Stone ran a highly successful *Newsletter* precisely by wading through the turbid waters pouring from the official founts and picking out valuable pieces of flotsam the media had missed.

PUBLISHING THE Pentagon Papers, especially in a tendentious and politically-motivated form, was an affront to the democratic state. Nixon responded with an injunction, which the *Times* denounced as "an unprecedented example of censorship." This too was disingenuous, since the *Times* had recently set a precedent itself by refusing to publish authentic security investigations of Leftist members of the State Department, and had denounced Otto Otepka for leaking them to Congress.

However, on 30 June 1971 the Supreme Court ruled six to three in favour of publication. In a highly emotional majority opinion, Justice Hugo Black (who had not of course read the Papers in their original form) declared that the press had a "paramount" duty to prevent the government "from deceiving the people and sending them off to distant lands to die of foreign fevers and foreign shot and shell." He "commended" the *Times* and other papers "for serving the purpose that the Founding Fathers saw so clearly."

The Court vote and Justice Black's opinion were an open invitation to disgruntled Administration officials and bureaucrats to leak with impunity. It was immediately followed by another *Times* story giving away the whole US negotiating position in the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks. The *Times* was riding high. As Harrison Salisbury put it: "The *Times* has come to fulfil a new function: it has become that Fourth Estate, that fourth, coequal branch of government, of which men like Thomas Carlyle spoke." But such power could be described in another way, in the words Rudyard Kipling wrote for Stanley Baldwin in 1930 when he denounced the Beaverbrook-Rothermere press: "Power without responsibility, the privilege of the harlot throughout the ages."

Nixon, too, put it differently: "We've got a counter-government here, and we've got to fight it. . . . This government cannot survive, it cannot function, if anyone can run out and leak whatever documents he wants to." The White House response was to set up the "Plumbers" unit. It is important to get the cause-and-effect clear. It was the *Times* which began the dirty-tricks warfare, and Justice Black who legitimised it. Nixonian plumbing was a defensive response to aggression. In due course, CREEP followed, and the trouble was that the functions of the "Plumbers" and CREEP got confused: therein lay the origin of Nixon's downfall.

But at the time Nixon was able to trump the *Times*'s Pentagon Papers ace by the electrifying announcement, on 15 July 1971, of his invitation to visit China. That was a secret he *had* managed to keep, and it restored the momentum of his Presidency. To be sure, the *Times* pursued its impeachment hints. At the end of May 1972, it published, under a fake Presidential seal, a two-page advertisement paid for by the

[3] Lionel Trilling, *The Last Decade: Essays and Reviews 1965–1975* (New York, 1979), pp. 185–203.

[4] *Bad News: The Foreign Policy of The New York Times*. By RUSS BRALEY. Regnery-Gateway, $12.95.

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National Committee for Impeachment, purporting to be an official indictment. *Times* pressmen were so angry at the deception and tone of the ad that they were with difficulty persuaded to print the paper at all. A few days later the *Times* warned that, if Nixon won the election in November, there would be "a hell of a lot of talk about impeachment."

What the media could not do, however, was prevent the voters giving Nixon their support. George McGovern was the archetypal media candidate. As Nixon remarked with relish after McGovern's nomination: "Here is a situation where the Eastern establishment media finally has a candidate who almost totally shares their views . . . the country will find out whether what the media has been standing for these last five years represents the majority thinking." The media élites certainly stood by their candidate themselves. A Columbia University study, printed in the journal *Public Opinion*, showed that news-media personnel in the higher-income brackets voted 81% for McGovern, 19% for Nixon. Another study by the same team showed almost the same breakdown among élites in the movie industry: 18% for Nixon, 82% for McGovern.

The American people thought differently. Nixon was re-elected by a landslide. George McGovern carried Massachusetts, where his running-mate Sargent Shriver delivered the Kennedy machine; he won the District of Columbia, which a coalition of blacks and bureaucrats had made the safest of all Democratic fiefs. But he won nothing else; he could not even carry his own state. The rage of the Eastern media, which had run no less than four Nixon scandal stories, including Watergate, during the campaign, was awesome. As one editor, a man who (according to William Safire) "hated Richard Nixon with the same blind devotion he had worshipped John Kennedy", put it: "There's got to be a blood-letting."

THE RESULT was Watergate, the third and finally successful attempt by the media to destroy Nixon. In modern times, there have been three serious outbreaks of public hysteria in the United States. The first was the Red Scare launched by President Wilson's Attorney-General, Mitchell Palmer, in 1919. This was probably the most serious in terms of the numbers involved: 6,000 arrested, hundreds of prison-terms, thousands of extraditions. The second was the Un-American Activities wave of the late 1940s-early '50s. The third was Watergate, 1973-4. The media played a prominent role, usually a contemptible one, in all three. But whereas Senator Joe McCarthy and his associates were never really able to involve the judicial process in their witch-hunt and had to be content with the powers of Congressional committees, both Mitchell Palmer and the Watergate hunters were able to form tripartite coalitions of Media, Congress, and the Courts.

The point is vital to grasp. The media alone could never have broken Nixon. It needed both Congress and the Courts as allies. Congressional backing was vital, because the Bobby Baker case showed that a Democratic President under attack could use the Democratic majority in the Senate to stifle any serious investigation. Nixon's real weakness was that the Democrats then still controlled both houses; and it was this fact which in the end made impeachment possible and so dictated his resignation. Without the Democratic majorities in Congress, Nixon would have survived Watergate.

But, equally, a mere Media/Congress alliance was not enough to do the trick. The role played by the Courts, and especially by Judge Sirica, was vital. *The Washington Post* "broke" the Watergate story in October 1972, before the election. Nothing happened. It was only after Sirica engaged in what, in any other context, would have been denounced by the Eastern media as judicial terrorism, that Watergate took off. All those involved in the break-in were first offenders. For a simple case of "breaking and entering", in which nothing was stolen and no resistance offered to police, five men were sentenced by Sirica to 40 years each and one to 35 years, conditional on their talking. Howard Hunt, the only one who refused to talk, got a final sentence of 20 years in prison plus a $40,000 fine.

This was a clear case of "cruel and unusual punishment." But there was no protest from the media. Nor did the media complain when, one by one, various White House officials, some of whose involvement was very marginal, were dragged through the Courts, often on flimsy charges, and in a number of cases forced to plead guilty since the only alternative was endless litigation, lawyers' fees and bankruptcy. The role of the Courts in aiding the media witch-hunt is harrowingly described by one of the victims in a book entitled *The Terrors of Justice: The Untold Side of Watergate*.[5]

THE MEDIA SEEM to have taken the view that the moral necessity to destroy Nixon was so overwhelming that all constitutional standards, all rules of decency indeed, had to be suspended. Their élites believed that the Nixon Presidency, despite the recent landslide victory, was in some deep, almost metaphysical sense, illegitimate. They felt that they somehow incarnated the constitutional soul of a nation which had been deceived by Nixon, and that it was their moral duty to stage a *putsch*, and restore true legitimacy. In the 1920s the German conservatives had felt exactly the same about Weimar. In 1936 the Spanish Army overthrew the Spanish Republic from comparable motives.

Such self-delusion and hubris on the part of the media can alone explain that extraordinary lack of balance during the Watergate spasm, which struck so many European observers at the time and must surely strike most Americans today if they can bring themselves to examine the dismal record with open minds. Some abuse of executive power is common to all governments, and is probably inevitable. The record shows that Nixon had abused his power rather more than Truman and Eisenhower, rather less than Kennedy and Johnson. It is right that the media should expose such abuses. But the attack on Nixon lacked any rational proportion. The obsession of *The New York Times* with Watergate is revealed by study of its index. In the index for 1973, the entry for WATERGATE covers 90 pages of small print, each index page listing an average of 38 stories, themselves averaging 1,000 words. So in 1973 the *Times*

[5] Maurice H. Stans, *The Terrors of Justice: The Untold Side of Watergate* (Dodd-Mead, 1978).

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printed over three million words on the topic. In 1974 it printed another three million.

Much of the media assault on Nixon now seems almost unbelievably petty. Hundreds of stories were published stressing Nixon's bad language, as revealed by the tapes. Yet when one of the media's Watergate heroes, Senator Mike Gravel of Alaska, referred to the Republican whip, Robert Griffin of Michigan, on the Senate floor, as "You motherfucker!", the *Times* suppressed this little episode completely, the rest of the media following suit. Again, when at the height of the uproar Nixon was obliged to pay back-taxes of $432,787, over a technical error in the delivery of his Vice-Presidential papers to the National Archives, the *Times* gave it front-page treatment under an eight-column banner headline, with exactly "the same visual impact", to quote Theodore White, "which had announced the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour in 1941. . . ."

The behaviour of the media over Watergate was often inhuman, sometimes subhuman. Perhaps the most vivid summation of it was given by the columnist Jim Bishop: "Immediately after Watergate there was a silence, as though a bleeding man had slipped into a shark pool. After that, it was a feeding frenzy. The press corps shredded the President and his men. They were skeletonised. . . ." One might add: it was rich blood, too. The two *Post* reporters who broke the story, and its editor, are all now wealthy men.

With the fall of Nixon the Imperial Presidency collapsed, and the vacuum was filled by Congress, the Courts, and the Media. Some people talked of "media imperialism", others of "judicial imperialism." By the late 1970s, there were no less than 70 limiting Congressional amendments on the Presidential conduct of foreign policy. It was even argued that, under the War Powers Act 1973, the President was no longer Commander-in-Chief, and that the decision whether or not US troops could be sent abroad would have to be left to the Supreme Court.

The cumulative effect of all this nonsense was a rapid decline of American authority and prestige in the world, and a corresponding expansion of Soviet influence. Gradually it became apparent to all that, each in their own way, Congress, the Courts and the Media were designed to redress power, not to exercise it. The media in particular did not know what to do once they had destroyed Nixon. They had, however, learnt the art of presidential execution and continued to practise it. Gerald Ford was presented as a clumsy buffoon, stumbling his way in and out of aircraft. What, if anything, lost him the 1976 election was his off-the-cuff remark: "I don't believe that the Poles consider themselves dominated by the Soviet Union." A detailed study of timing and polls indicates that the voters did not recognise this as a mistake until the media told them it was—a rare instance of the media influencing the course of a campaign. As for Jimmy Carter, the media set to work on him the moment he set foot in the White House, turning his unfortunate family into an interminable soap opera of low comedy and implied corruption, which occupied hundreds of thousands of column inches in the *Post* and other once-balanced newspapers.

The reputation and influence of the media declined sharply in the late 1970s, partly because ordinary people began to see the consequences of the Watergate hysteria, partly because they resented the constant denigration of national leaders. A survey-analysis published in 1979 indicated a significant reversal of popular attitudes: whereas, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, people tended to support the expansion of government activity but resented the growth of Presidential power, by the late 1970s they wanted to cut back on Big Government but expected the President himself to reassert his leadership. The media, which demanded Big Government but a small President, were the inevitable victims of this reversal. On 29 June 1981, ten years exactly after the *Times* published the Pentagon Papers, the pollster Louis Harris reported: "People's trust in the accuracy and truth of the news they get from TV and the newspapers declined during the last decade. They are most wary about news emanating from Washington. . . ."

If the media were the victims of the new mood, Ronald Reagan was the natural beneficiary. Against unconcealed and at times almost frantic, media hostility, he won first the Republican nomination, then the Presidency by a landslide. Almost until polling day, powerful and once-respected media voices discounted the possibility of a Reagan victory. But it was all in vain: once Reagan got access to nationwide TV he spoke over the heads of the media to the voters, and offered them what they wanted—putting the clock back to before Watergate, a return to a strong Presidency. The proportion of the electorate who said they understood what Reagan stood for rose steadily during the year 1980, from 30% to 70% a fortnight before the poll. Wirthlin rightly described Reagan as "the greatest electronic media candidate of all time", the only person "who can hold 80% of any audience for 30 minutes." Against such a prodigy, there was little that the hostile media could do.

For the best part of four years, Reagan has maintained his ascendency over the media, surviving a number of real policy failures with spectacular aplomb. Among his media critics he has induced a mood approaching despair, like assassins confronted by a superman whose force-field deflects their bullets. But Reagan's success is not entirely due to his own skills and personality. Brilliant manipulation of the media by his White House staff is also responsible. They have learnt the lessons of Watergate thoroughly and have, in effect, cunningly reversed the Nixon approach to the media. Right from their first entrance to the White House, they were determined to master press and TV, and get them to serve Reagan's purposes. The best analysis of their methods is given in General Haig's book. Unlike Nixon, they treated journalists not as irreconcilable enemies but as potentially corrupt supporters. They supplied selected reporters and editors with confidential government material. Having once got key figures in the media hooked and dependent, they could and did exact favours in return. It was a case of bribery by secrets; and it worked.

Of course the victims were other members of the Administration outside the White House, not least Secretary of State Haig. If he delivered "a sensitive memorandum for the

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President's eyes only in the early afternoon" he would find "line-by-line quotations from it on the evening news." Leaks, complained Haig, had been a growing problem in the four previous Administrations, but under Reagan "they were not merely a problem, they were a way of life, and in the end I concluded that they were a way of governing. Leaks constituted policy; they were the authentic voice of government. . . ." And in consequence, as he wryly observed, the great media institutions, which had destroyed four Presidents in succession, had been turned into tame White House "bulletin boards."

That, then, is the story of the 20-years' war between the Media and the Presidency. It illustrates the old Greek maxim that hubris is followed by nemesis. It also provides a more comforting assurance that, in a living democracy like the United States, an excess of power in any of its components—executive, legislature, courts, media—will, sooner or later, be curbed by the actions of the others and, not least, by the voters. So all's well that ends well—until the next crisis.

This Bloody X

Knit one, purl one.
My mother's midnight needles
paced me down the stairs,
I spied him through the door-jamb,
hunched, in overalls,
huge above my book,
his bewildered finger
floundering across the page.

The headmaster had written
"Your son should leave",
but my father—slate discarded,
farm-labourer at twelve—
said lads in our family
ripened slow as turnips;
he would learn algebra,
and teach me.

His rubber rasped the paper
with solid strokes,
like the scuff of his matchbox
on our polished soles.
Knuckles forced a pale reflection
from his forehead;
he groaned into his sleeve,
"What is this bloody *X*?"

For months he grappled symbols
while I twisted on my pillow,
and my mother clicked colours
from the fire. Then, one night,
he plucked me from my bed,
planted me in wellingtons,
set me in the moonlit yard.
His eyes shone from a puddle.

"Algebra is broad, lad.
X can be a milk-churn,
this new-cut furrow, shadows
of a pitchfork on the barn."
His arms embraced his acre.
Inside, as he stabbed the coals,
my mother stirred the cocoa,
needles crossed beside her chair.

John Latham

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Elie Kedourie

Disastrous Years

When US Foreign Policy Fumbled & Stumbled



PRESIDENT GERALD FORD'S defeat at the hands of Mr Jimmy Carter in November 1976 is generally ascribed to the cumulative effects of the Viet Nam débâcle and the Watergate scandal. The incoming President promised a new start. No more "Watergates", no more "Viet Nams": the United States would once more be seen to uphold the democratic faith, defend human rights, and augment general peace and prosperity. Four years later President Carter suffered a devastating defeat at the hands of the voters, and went out of office with few of his proclaimed objectives realised. Such a disappointing outcome is no doubt generally inseparable from the ambition to exercise power—so evanescent is power and so powerless, so much subject to the mocking tricks of fate, that the spectacle of its pursuit can only inspire melancholy reflections on the vanity of human desires.

In the case of President Carter one can perhaps be more specific. The ultimate failure of his administration, as we may see from his own memoirs,[1] and those of his Secretary of State[2] and his National Security Adviser,[3] was implicit in its beginnings. In a retrospective chapter towards the end of his book, Professor Zbigniew Brzezinski remarks that Carter was tempted by the vision of a grand accommodation with Brezhnev; and he goes on—

> "That temptation was derived from Carter's intense and instinctive desire to go down in history as the peace-maker. On more than one occasion . . . I used with him the formula 'you first have to be a Truman before you are a Wilson' in arguing that our first priority must be to revive global respect for American power, after the debacles of Watergate and Vietnam, lest our pursuit of principle be confused with weakness. Carter agreed cerebrally, but emotionally he thirsted for the Wilsonian mantle—and this was sensed on the outside and generated the unfair but damaging charge of vacillation."

Carter entitles his memoirs *Keeping Faith*. With whom (or with what) is never very clear. Brzezinski's remark may throw light on this ambiguous expression. The *faith* perhaps was meant to be kept with those principles and doctrines armed and armoured with which Carter assumed his presidential duties.

At the very start of his presidency he expounded them in a well-known speech given at Notre Dame University in May 1977, a sentence from which serves as an epigraph to one of his chapters, but on which the memoirs are otherwise silent. The speech heralded a new era, in which "we are now free of that inordinate fear of communism which once led us to embrace any dictator who joined us in that fear. . . ." The US had once "fought fire with fire, never thinking that fire is better quenched with water." But the people had now found their way back to their principles and values and regained their lost confidence. The President disclosed the lineaments of a new world, and announced a new policy. In the world revealed to his vision:

> "Colonialism is nearly gone. A new sense of national identity now exists in almost 100 new countries that have been formed in the last generation. Knowledge has become more widespread. Aspirations are higher. As more people have been freed from traditional constraints, more have been determined to achieve, for the first time in their lives, social justice."

For this new world, he announced a new policy "based on constant decency as its values and on optimism in our historical vision." This new policy "must shape an international system that will last longer than secret deals." The new policy "can no longer separate the traditional issues of war and peace from the new global questions of justice, equity, and human rights", for just as the American nation could not, in Lincoln's view, have existed half slave and half free, so now we "know that a peaceful world cannot long exist one-third rich and two-thirds hungry." To feed the teeming millions Carter proposed that the "Western democracies, the OPEC nations, and the developed Communist countries" should "co-operate through existing international institutions." The Westerners, OPEC, and the "developed" Communists cooperating! Vance, Yamani, and Gromyko joined in concourse wild of jocund din, almost as if Groucho Marx were spending a night, not at the opera, but at the United Nations. . . .

[1] Jimmy Carter, *Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President* (Collins, 1982).

[2] Cyrus Vance, *Hard Choices: Critical Years in America's Foreign Policy* (Simon & Schuster, 1983).

[3] Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Power and Principle: Memoirs of the National Security Adviser* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1983).

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As if this was not enough, the new President proposed other heroic labours to the American Hercules. Majority rule had to be made the basis for political order in southern Africa, and a "rapid and progressive" transformation of southern African society effected. The President, again, "reaffirmed America's commitment to human rights as a fundamental tenet of our foreign policy."

In all this rhetoric there was a most dangerous vagueness about the character of the ends to be encompassed, the relation of these ends to the interests and security of the US, and the costs involved in pursuing such grandiose and elevated aims. For instance, anyone with the sketchiest knowledge of modern history will be aware of the unpredictable consequences, cumulative in their destructiveness, of a "rapid and progressive" deliberate transformation of any society. A Lenin, a Mao, a Pol Pot, welcoming this Bakuninesque "creative destruction", will be eager and resolute in unleashing such a transformation—but the President of the United States?

WHEN, HOWEVER, DILEMMAS had to be faced and decisions taken, gone was the gay abandon of these fine orations. The handling of the so-called "Neutron bomb" issue serves as an example.

The production and deployment of this bomb had been under discussion by NATO for some years. Finally, in March 1978, it was agreed that the US would make a decision to produce the weapon, but that it would forgo deployment of it in Europe if the Soviets would forgo deployment of the *SS-20* missile. The President had approved these decisions and the North Atlantic Council was set to meet on 28 March to approve the arrangements formally. But on 26 March Carter cancelled everything. "He had a queasy feeling about the whole thing . . . his Administration would be stamped forever as the Administration which introduced bombs that kill people but leave buildings intact." (Actually, Carter—and the Europeans—should have understood that, if worse comes to worse, the "people" such a weapon kills are the enemy tank commanders, and what it leaves intact is an inhabitable environment.) The European governments were attempting to push all the political costs on him and "this was unfair." "I made the point", writes Brzezinski, "that leadership means making the decisions which the Europeans are not prepared to make."

From Havana to Tehran



THE AFFAIR OF THE Soviet brigade in Cuba which erupted in the summer of 1979 showed the same hesitant and nerveless stance. Reliable intelligence seemed to indicate that a Soviet brigade, complete with headquarters and a regular table of organisation, was now in Cuba. Both the President and his Adviser were very concerned at this news and were considering what action to take. A Senator standing for re-election who had been officially briefed on this issue made the matter public. Various political figures started to make belligerent statements: and the Secretary of State himself publicly demanded the withdrawal of the brigade, declaring that the *status quo* was unacceptable.

The Soviets dismissed the issue and refused to back down. Rather it was the President who did so. Fearing that the Cuban complication might threaten the ratification of the SALT II treaty—which he considered to be a great achievement—he now made a speech in which he said that the presence of the Soviet brigade, which was indeed an armed brigade, posed no direct threat to the US. It was "no reason for a return to the Cold War." The real danger was nuclear destruction, to avert which SALT II had been negotiated, and he now urged its ratification. It was, of course, true that a Soviet brigade in Cuba could pose no serious threat to the US; the whole issue may indeed have been a minor or even a phoney one; but this was not the point. The point was that the US publicly took great exception to a Soviet move, and then showed no readiness to do anything about it.

In Brzezinski's judgment it was only by 1980 that Carter had a foreign policy which—as he chooses to put it—"combined the good virtues of Wilson's and Truman's." What must have been a milestone in the President's education is recorded for us in his Adviser's memoirs. The episode took place at Guadeloupe where a Four-Power "Summit" meeting was taking place in January 1979. The Shah's régime was then in dissolution, and word reached Washington that the Iranian generals were threatening a massive crack-down, possibly involving a lot of bloodshed. From Washington, the Secretary of State phoned Guadeloupe "in considerable agitation" to ask that the generals should be dissuaded from such a course. But after a long conversation Carter, fortified by notes being passed to him by Brzezinski, refused Cyrus Vance's request. However, it seemed to Brzezinski that Carter was quite concerned about the possible bloodshed, "and I mentioned to him after the conversation was over that, unfortunately, world politics was not a kindergarten."

But it is by no means clear that, to begin with at any rate, pupil and tutor did not share the same predilections. Brzezinski declares that he expected Carter to be an "activist" President and felt that "being close to him was the best spot for an activist person like myself." Afterwards, when all was consummated, he came to think that the policy of the administration had been "overly ambitious." But the question is why Brzezinski reaches such a judgment only in retrospect. Why did it not occur to him at the very outset that the President's programme was plainly impossible of accomplishment?

It is clear that when this activist Adviser to an activist President took up his post in the White House no such thoughts assailed him. Part I of his memoirs is entitled "Comprehensive Initiatives"; and these initiatives had to do with a "comprehensive" settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict—with the "progressive and peaceful transformation of South Africa toward a bi-racial democracy"—with bringing about majority rule in Zimbabwe—with making "a major emphasis on human rights" a component of US foreign policy. And these were only some of the goals which the Adviser set for the President. But

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the USA is a world power with a thousand and one emergencies and difficulties, large and small, to cope with every day. Attending to them, while keeping their eyes on such global visions and schemes, the President and his advisers became like jugglers jumping from meeting to meeting, from topic to topic. The analogy is Brzezinski's.

Another image recurs in his memoirs to describe this uncomfortable train of life: time and again we find him speaking of "overload": of decision-making circuits being heavily overloaded, of competing goals coming into conflict with one another, and with the pressing requirements of strategic reality. The world is no doubt full of disagreeable surprises, but that the administration found itself hobbled, frustrated, hamstrung was not the fault of a wicked world. Its misfortunes were inherent in the very style it chose to adopt. Of all the schemes listed by Brzezinski only one was realised—that of majority rule, so-called, in Zimbabwe. But the masterstroke which handed Rhodesia over to Mr Robert Mugabe was Lord Carrington's, not President Carter's, and what this famous victory did for US or British interests is not exactly self-evident.

WHATEVER THEIR DISAGREEMENTS on other issues, Brzezinski and Cyrus Vance, the Secretary of State, were at one in the belief that the US should conciliate and attract the Third World, and Black Africa in particular. In Vance's words:

> "Change was and is sweeping through Africa, and those who identify with it will be able to influence its direction. . . . If the United States stands for democratic, peaceful and just change, we will be able to help shape and guide the change in ways consistent with our values and interests."

The policy, however, rested on illusion and misjudgment. What is called "the Third World" consists of a collection of largely poor states who, in themselves, can weigh little in the strategic balance, the elements of which must remain on the one side the USSR and its satellites, and on the other the US with its NATO and Japanese allies. The Third World remains a murky and unstable area in which the two sides must jockey for power and influence as best they can.

In this jockeying, it is little use for the United States to "stand for democratic, peaceful and just change." This in effect has meant US support for policies of "decolonisation"—support which the Carter administration continued and indeed intensified. But to judge by the fierce hostility which the United States generally encounters among Third World states this traditional support has availed it little. Decolonisation has not meant—and could not possibly mean—"democratic, peaceful and just change", still less that "full political participation by all the inhabitants of the country" which Cyrus Vance thinks would follow the dismantling of white domination in South Africa. The cry for "One Man, One Vote", for "majority rule", is in reality a sinister litany, heralding here oppression, corruption, and massacre. In any case, "one vote", once only. As is clear for anyone to see, decolonisation has meant the installation in more or less precarious power of grasping bosses and rough military officers whose least worry is democratic, and peaceful just change. It is by no means clear that their authority is truly more legitimate than that of the departed colonial rulers; nor, as experience has shown, would they be more tender to the interests of the Great American Democracy than those erstwhile rulers. With them, of course, deals have to be made—and also unmade—as occasion requires. They would be all in a day's work, nor should they occasion heart-rending heart-searchings about whether to choose between power and principle, or how to fuse the two. Far from being the hard choices of Vance's title these are artificial dilemmas, in which only certain beautiful souls find it exciting and delectable to luxuriate.

Stumbling in East Africa



CONSIDER SOMALIA AND Ethiopia. Somalia was a Soviet satellite and Ethiopia within the Western camp. A *coup d'état* deposed the Emperor of Ethiopia in 1974, and a left-leaning military régime replaced him. In February 1977 a Marxist faction among the soldiers led by Colonel Mengistu killed its opponents during a meeting of the military committee and reigned in its place. The Carter administration denounced the new régime for its abuse of human rights, terminated arms assistance, and generally distanced itself from it.

Somalia had irredentist claims over the Ogaden which, it claimed, was inhabited by fellow-Somalis and to which the Ethiopians were therefore not entitled. Encouraged by the American abandonment of Ethiopia, and by Washington's offer of "defensive arms", the Somalis invaded the Ogaden. The new rulers of Ethiopia had themselves appealed for help to the Soviet Union, and the latter eventually abandoned Somalia—including their naval facilities in Berbera—in order to become the backers of the much more important Ethiopia. Soviet activities in the Red Sea and the Horn of Africa were profoundly disquieting to the Shah of Iran, to the Saudis, to Egypt, and to the Sudan. They were, therefore, very encouraged by what seemed to be US support for Somalia—not because they, or anyone else, cared much about obscure and sanguinary disputes between Ethiopia and Somalia, but because this was a signal that Soviet designs were going to be resisted. The Shah and the Egyptians were indeed encouraged to send arms to the Somalis who, having invaded the Ogaden, seemed to be sweeping all before them. Mengistu appealed to the Soviets who promptly airlifted military supplies, thousands of Cuban troops coming with the weapons. This was a moment of truth.

What did the US do? What did Vance advise? We have it straight from the horse's mouth:

"On August 4 [we read in Vance's *Hard Choices*], Richard

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Moose, our wise and skilful assistant secretary for African affairs, called in the Somali ambassador and told him that although our agreement in principle to provide defensive arms to Somalia still stood, their involvement in the Ogaden prevented its implementation. On August 18, Philip Habib told the Somali ambassador that we also would not approve transfers to Somalia of U.S.-manufactured arms in the hands of third countries while Somalia was involved in Ogaden."

In October, and again in November, the Somalis appealed once more for arms, but the Administration was virtuously adamant. Aggression had to be shown not to pay:

> "As long as Somalia continued its invasion of Ethiopia [Vance's bleak sermon went], neither we nor our Western and African friends . . . could do much to help. We had to direct our efforts to limiting the conflict and getting Somalia out of the Ogaden so we could provide assistance without serious damage to our African policies."

Vance was thus holding up the Soviets and the Cubans as the virtuous champions of international legality, expending in this cause blood and treasure, while he ventured no more than pious exhortation.

"Our African policies!": After this, which African—or, for that matter, which Middle Eastern leader (vastly experienced as each one of them has to be in the lore of the jungle)—would not be convinced that the Americans are definitely not the people to go tiger-hunting with? Which of them would not fear that, when the crucial moment came, he might be left in the lurch with, for all consolation, a high-minded *aide-mémoire* about our solemn duty to respect the basic human rights of the tiger and the jackal?

At the height of the Ogaden crisis, Cyrus Vance advised the Somalis to accept mediation of their quarrel by the Organisation of African Unity. The Secretary of State was a firm believer in the efficacy and benignity of such bodies. In the reflections which conclude his memoirs he affirms that they can often provide the most effective setting for resolving international disputes, and that they "provide an indispensable mechanism for solving problems we cannot hope to solve alone." Vance's disposition, then, was to see conflicts and disagreements between states as justiciable, and international organisations like the UN or the OAU as the equivalent of a supreme court which affords a hearing to parties in dispute and delivers judgment; or else to see these conflicts as "problems" for which a team of devoted and single-minded scientists works out "solutions." Neither analogy can offer much assistance to those who have to defend national interests, who know that sovereign states recognise no superior, and that international disputes are not technical conundrums for which you can seek solutions.

These illusions, which Vance shared with many in the US Department of State, confused diplomacy with foreign policy, looking upon it as an instrument of conciliation or arbitration rather than simply as a technique for promoting national objectives.

The negotiations with the Soviet Union about arms limitation and reduction, which issued in the abortive Salt II, are a textbook example of technique taking over policy. Arms negotiations were, of course, a centrepiece of Carter's foreign policy. Such negotiations, however, could never of themselves bring to an end, or even alleviate, the open rivalry and the latent conflict between two suspicious Superpowers, one of whom professes an activist and expansionist ideology, adamantly resists verification *in situ*, and is known to have repeatedly violated arms control agreements. These negotiations should be seen as one way among many of jockeying for advantage.

Arms reductions do not prevent wars. Nuclear arms reductions, in particular, will not prevent the devastation of cities and the extermination of large numbers of people, since, however reduced in number, enough weapons will still remain at the disposal of the combatants to encompass such destruction. At best, reciprocal reduction may alleviate the economic burden of armaments for both sides; but this is a relative, not an absolute benefit, since it might pay one side to bear this burden, on the calculation that the other side is less well able to bear it and will sooner or later find it crippling.

But in Vance's memoirs these fundamental issues are overlaid and smothered by endless, abstruse and minute calculations about MIRVs, ICBMs, ALCMs, SLBMs, MXs, ACLMs, GLCMs, SLCMs—calculations which the Secretary of State took extremely seriously, over which he spent a great deal of time and ingenuity—finally to no purpose, and which serve to give his acronym-splattered pages the appearance of a wizard's book of spells.

Solutions, Comprehensive



Brzezinski, I have already noted, complains of the overloading which resulted from an over-ambitious policy. Diplomacy as "technique", pursued almost for its own sake, becomes a fetish and results in another kind of overloading in the Department of State, as indeed in other comparable foreign ministries.

Dr Kissinger has described the Department of State as a cable-machine: the glut of communications, the volume of the paper-flow, makes it difficult for a Secretary of State, as for the foreign minister of any state with world-wide interests, to master and dominate the issues, unless he is exceptionally industrious, clear-headed, and strong-minded. Otherwise he risks becoming the mouthpiece of the departmental brief, and the prisoner of departmental special pleaders who, as Dr Kissinger has also pointed out, prosper and proliferate in such a

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milieu. These so-to-speak structural characteristics of large foreign ministries have led chief executives, who are ultimately responsible for policy, to establish small foreign-affairs units under their own control and for their own guidance. Thus the National Security Council was set up in the White House, and a similar kind of secretariat under President de Gaulle in the Elysée Palace. Lloyd George's so-called "Garden Suburb" was an early prototype which may serve to warn about the pitfalls lurking in these arrangements, as also Neville Chamberlain's reliance on Sir Horace Wilson in policy-making and negotiations with regard to Germany and Italy. The felt need for such arrangements seems clear, in spite of the drawbacks and disadvantages. Both Vance's and Brzezinski's memoirs testify to the irksome and sometimes damaging frictions and quarrels between the Secretary of State and the National Security Adviser—quarrels which, again, do not nullify the need for the head of a government not to be overmastered by his ministry of foreign affairs.

Vance and Brzezinski were, of course, chosen by President Carter, and the higher appointments in the Department of State likewise naturally reflected the preferences of the new Administration.

In a series of articles which appeared in *The New Yorker* in June 1980, Robert Shaplen discussed the work and opinions of David Newsom, the Under-Secretary of State for Political Affairs under Vance. Shaplen makes the point that many high officials in the Department of State represented the 1960s generation which opposed Viet Nam policy. Of these he mentions Anthony Lake (who was the head of the policy planning staff, and in 1970 had resigned from the Department over Cambodia); Richard Holbrooke (Assistant Secretary for East Asia and the Pacific); and Richard Moose (Assistant Secretary for African Affairs).

On Shaplen's showing, Newsom shared the same attitudes. He admired Andy Young, the permanent US representative at the United Nations, as one of the few persons in recent history able to show understanding for the "developing world"; he proclaimed the creation of Zimbabwe as "a truly great diplomatic accomplishment"; and he favoured "flexibility" in dealing with Viet Nam. Newsom also revealed that the Department had wanted to give $10 million in aid to the Sandinistas in Nicaragua. There were others such as Leslie Gelb (head of the Office of Political-Military Affairs), William Maynes (Assistant Secretary for International Organisations), and Patricia Derian (Director of the Bureau for Human Rights and Refugee Affairs), who all supported the world-wide active prosecution of a simple-minded human rights policy. Whatever his initial views, it became progressively more apparent that Brzezinski could not see eye-to-eye with the style and substance of the policy which these and other State Department appointments signalled and signified.

THERE WAS, HOWEVER, ONE ISSUE on which Carter, Vance, and Brzezinski were all agreed. This was the urgent need for a "comprehensive solution" of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The arguments in favour and the main lines of such a policy were set out in the so-called Brookings Report of 1975, composed by a committee on which Brzezinski himself had sat, together with Professor William Quandt (who came into the National Security Council with the new Administration to deal with the Middle East). This Report proclaimed the urgency of settling the Arab-Israeli conflict and advised that the US should work together with the USSR in order to achieve a settlement. The new President agreed with these conclusions, and the quest for a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict became one of the main objects of the new administration.

It must be said that to have set such an aim for the US does not argue very sound judgment. This is clear in retrospect—but it would have been just as clear when the whole futile business was being initiated. In the first place, it is derogatory to the standing and dignity of a Great Power to seem so eager, so intent on achieving an object, the achievement of which lies in the gift of a collection of contentious and quarrelsome small Powers. The very attempt is thus likely to prove self-defeating. To eschew activism, to maintain an enigmatic and sibylline silence, to have one's good offices solicited and begged for, much more becomes the kind of power the US is. It is also very doubtful whether there is such great urgency—for those not directly involved—in the Arab-Israeli conflict being "settled." If this conflict were to be settled tomorrow, the Middle East would still remain the same treacherous quicksand for the outside Powers. It may even be the case that the very existence of this conflict prevents the eruption of other, even more dangerous, conflicts. In the event, Carter and his advisers were to discover, painfully, that Iran and Afghanistan would cast a much longer shadow than the quarrel between Israel and her neighbours.

EX-PRESIDENT CARTER puts forward two particular reasons for the urgency with which the quarrel had to be tackled. Both refer to the events which accompanied and followed the Yom Kippur War. If another such war were to erupt Israel's only friend was likely to be the USA, and by reason of the unwillingness of its allies to facilitate the movement of supplies (an unwillingness unmistakably shown in 1973) the Americans would have great difficulty in maintaining an adequate flow of arms and ammunition if the Arabs chose to wage a prolonged war of attrition.

But this lack of cooperation by the NATO allies raises far more serious issues than the supply and re-supply of the Israeli army. For a doctrine has come to be accepted in NATO—a doctrine for which US behaviour during and after the Suez Crisis of 1956 was to a large extent responsible—that the Alliance does not operate outside the strictly defined NATO boundaries. With the increase in Gaullist, anti-American, and neutralist sentiments in Europe and the débâcle in Viet Nam, governments had become increasingly reluctant, whatever the dangers, to intervene, or to assume responsibility for, or even to provide facilities, or diplomatic support for, the US in any contingency or emergency outside the NATO area. Here was a serious matter, compared with which the logistics of arms supply to Israel was a trifling issue, which would anyway find a solution within the framework of a settlement of the larger problem. But there is no indication in these memoirs that the Carter

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administration gave any thought to a matter which affected the very character and efficacity of the Alliance.

In the second place, the Arab-Israeli conflict seemed very urgent to Carter because of OPEC, and the embargoes and interruption of oil supplies which accompanied and followed the Yom Kippur War. But the OPEC issue transcended by far the Arab-Israeli conflict. OPEC did not simply mean embargoes and interruptions. It also meant a steady, remorseless, and enormous transfer of resources from the consumers to a cartel of producers. This had all kinds of consequences for employment in industrial countries, for the international economic order, for the proper functioning of the world banking system, and for the welfare of poor countries, for whom the Carter administration professed such solicitude. OPEC also meant that the Western Powers, now eager to "recycle" the petro-dollars, lost a traditional lever of policy, namely arms supply. In their thirst for "recycled" petro-dollars, the Western Powers became ready unconditionally to supply arms of all kinds and in any quantity to the OPEC countries. An Arab-Israeli settlement would not do away with this disagreeable and dangerous state of affairs. But in Brzezinski's, in Vance's, and in Carter's memoirs, OPEC—like Nicaragua, like Andy Young—is the dog which did not bark in the night.

ASSUMING THAT a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict really was urgent, how did one set about securing one?

The Carter administration thought to take up once more the Geneva Conference which at the end of the October 1973 war put a formal seal on the cease-fire agreements between Israel, Egypt and Syria which Henry Kissinger had been chiefly instrumental in negotiating. The Conference would now serve as a forum for peace negotiations. The Soviet Union had been represented at the original meetings; and this would be a convenient means of involving it in the new negotiations, as the Brookings Report had recommended, arguing that "otherwise" the Soviets would impede a settlement. But if it served their interest to do so, surely their presence at a conference would not prevent the Soviets from taking this course. Indeed, a seat at the conference might make it easier for them to play a spoiling game. Brzezinski's original idea was that the Soviet Union would be involved only after the main lines of a settlement had been agreed; but it is extremely doubtful whether it would have acquiesced in this plan.

In any case, the Administration soon enough decided to work for a settlement jointly with the Soviets. The President, it appears, wished thereby to improve US-Soviet relations, and the Secretary of State was also very keen to follow this policy. He, it seems, considered the Israelis to be a stumbling block to the success of his policy and wished to have a showdown with them, and bring them to heel. Matters went so far that a joint US-Soviet statement was actually published on 1 October 1977. The statement provoked a great deal of opposition on Capitol Hill and in the press, and within a few days it had become a dead letter.

As well as gratuitously offering a partnership to the Soviet Union, the Administration had also wished to see a joint Arab delegation negotiate with the Israelis at the Conference. To construct such a delegation from the fissiparous, querulous, and mutually suspicious Arab states was so clearly a fantasy that one marvels how grown men could have entertained it even for a minute. To persuade the Israelis to treat with such a delegation, containing representatives of the PLO in one guise or another, would have been like belling the proverbial cat. No one in Washington proved able or willing even to try it. The whole scheme was a flop; but then, if a thing is impossible it should not be attempted in the first place.

WHAT FOLLOWED ON THIS FAILURE "stunned" the Carter administration and threw it into confusion —these are the expressions used by Brzezinski, Vance, and Carter. The deplorable event which evoked this reaction was the late President Sadat's announcement of his desire to visit Jerusalem and seek to negotiate for Egypt a peace treaty with the Israelis. The same epithet occurs in Moshe Dayan's report in *Breakthrough*[4] of some informal chats he had with US officials during the Camp David negotiation in 1978. Sadat's move, according to Dayan, had surprised everyone, and "the stunned American Ambassador to Cairo had thought fit to telephone Sadat and tell him that if he was not certain that he would really be visiting Jerusalem, it would be prudent to prepare an immediate retraction. . . ."

These feelings are quite difficult to account for. If it was so important to settle the Arab-Israeli conflict, then surely Sadat's initiative held the best promise of defusing it, and eventually making it expire, so to speak, out of inanition. For if Egypt withdrew from, and did not afterwards rejoin, the anti-Israel coalition, the risks to the outside world of a Six-Day War, or a Yom Kippur War, would recede and eventually vanish: without Egypt, no combination of Arab states would feel strong enough to try conclusions with the Israelis. But both the White House and the Department of State were fearful of a separate Israeli-Egyptian Agreement. Even after Camp David, in September 1978, we find Brzezinski writing in his journal that if Begin "can get away with it, he will obtain a separate treaty and then the whole structure of peace in the Middle East will crumble"! But why should it crumble? Because the Saudis and the Jordanians will "react negatively"! It is hard to see how a negative reaction by these two states could, by itself, lead to a crumbling of peace in the Middle East. Furthermore, the US is in a real sense the protector of both Jordan and Saudi Arabia; its power and influence is immeasurably greater than theirs. And if their negative reaction was so fearful, why should they not be persuaded to take a more positive one?

In the aftermath of Camp David, Vance went to see them and came back to say that both Hussein and the Saudis were "cautious and timid." Sadat (who seemed to be contemptuous of the Arabs as "Bedouins" who counted for little) and the Americans were in hopes that their timidity might be overcome. Brzezinski himself obtained, in March 1979, a

[4] Moshe Dayan, *Breakthrough: A Personal Account of the Egypt-Israel Peace Negotiations* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1981).

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secret Saudi pledge not to adopt any damaging sanctions against Egypt, but in the event the pledge proved worthless.

THE US ADMINISTRATION having thus first contemplated with horror the unexpected prospect of an Egyptian-Israeli peace, and then taken up the project and brought it to a successful conclusion, failed in the end to exploit its success, allowing its opponents to create an anti-Egyptian front which its own Arab friends felt compelled (or were too intimidated to decline) to join. This was maladroitness of a high order.

Carter and his two senior collaborators devote a great deal of space to the minutiae of the Camp David negotiations, and to their efforts as arbitrators and go-betweens. And they did no doubt discharge an important and valuable function. But, when all is said and done, Begin and Sadat were at Camp David because they did want an agreement. Failure for them would have been quite as serious as for President Carter. What they strove for in these arduous negotiations was to attract the USA to their side. As Brzezinski remarks, Sadat saw Camp David as an opportunity to "collude" with the US against Israel; and the same no doubt goes for Begin. These complicated manoeuvres resulted in the curious and unworkable provisions relating to Palestinian autonomy, in which Egypt agreed with Israel on arrangements involving Jordan, the West Bank and Gaza, about which these parties were not consulted and to which they did not give their consent. What may conceivably be said in favour of these provisions is that they provided a way by which Egypt could, if it wished, disentangle itself from the Palestine question, which from first to last had brought it nothing but grievous loss.

Failure in the Gulf



WHILE THE HULLABALOO about the Arab-Israeli conflict, SALT, etc. was going on and monopolising all attention, an emergency was in the making which involved the régime in Iran—a régime which was a pillar of US and Western interests in the Middle East. This emergency was the most serious foreign policy test of the Carter administration, a test which the President and his leading officials failed, jointly and severally.

The American administration, to be fair, had inherited an unstable and potentially dangerous situation. Following the British withdrawal from the Gulf in 1971, the then US Administration (under Nixon) was unwilling itself directly to provide the military and naval means to protect US (and Western) interests in an area crucial geopolitically, and vital economically. Instead, President Nixon and Dr Kissinger thought to rely on Iran and Saudi Arabia as the twin pillars on which Western security was to rest. This was a jerry-built policy, resting on flimsy foundations, since neither Iran nor Saudi Arabia could be a bulwark against Soviet power.[5] Even if they had had the resources and the trained manpower to be so, their stability and political orientation depended solely on the prestige, skill and forcefulness of an autocratic ruler, or of a ruling family. Far from providing protection for Western interests, these régimes would themselves have to be protected from external and internal threats. This parlous situation does not seem to have been appreciated either by the officials in the Department of State or the Department of Defence, or by the incoming President and the leading figures of his Administration.

The complacent assumptions which obtained in Washington are exemplified by *The Clouded Lens: Persian Gulf Security and US Policy*, a study which—ironically—appeared when the policy which it defended and praised had already been irretrievably ruined. Its author was James H. Noyes (Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Near Eastern, African and South Asian Affairs from 1970 to 1976) and it was prefaced by a laudatory foreword from the pen of William S. Porter (sometime Ambassador to Saudi Arabia and Algeria, and Under-Secretary of State for Political Affairs).[6] From this opuscule there emanate sweet melodies and secret harmonies, all interdependence, balance, equilibrium. Thus Porter:

> "The entire canvas, as it now stands, tends to vindicate those who formed, advocated and applied our policy for the Gulf region, despite the resistance of those who considered it to be unworkable and the world energy crisis fictional."

"A wider equilibrium", sang Noyes in moving strains, "is being achieved. And the reciprocity of which every equilibrium is composed consists, for the West, in dependence on Gulf oil resources and a concurrent opportunity to sell large quantities of goods and services to help offset the financial consequences of this dependency." The beneficent cycle—recycle, rather—majestically proceeds, oil sheikh devouring oil consumer; consumer and consumed, mystically united, in the end are one.

THERE IS NO EVIDENCE that the incoming Administration questioned the credibility of this vision, or the realism of the policy based on it. It seems to have assumed that the Shah was a powerful ruler who was also heavy-handed and oppressive. The duty of the United States, it was concluded, was to make his rule more civilised, and more in tune with enlightened and agreeable liberal methods. The new officials in the Department of State and in the White House did not disguise their fastidious distaste for this rich and autocratic potentate, and the President shared their distaste. When the Shah came to Washington on a state visit, in November 1977, Jimmy Carter (as he now tells us) addressed his fellow-ruler in tones which seem more than a shade hectoring:

"I am familiar with great improvements which have been

[5] See, in ENCOUNTER, June 1979, J. B. Kelly's post-mortem, "Of Valuable Oil & Worthless Policies."

[6] James H. Noyes, *The Clouded Lens: Persian Gulf Security and US Policy* (Hoover Institution Press, 1979).

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made in your country, but I also know about some of the problems. You have heard of my statements about human rights. A growing number of your own citizens are claiming that these rights are not always honored in Iran. I understand that most of the disturbances have arisen among the mullahs, and other religious leaders, the new middle class searching for more political influence, and students in Iran and overseas. Iran's reputation in the world is being damaged by these complaints. Is there anything that can be done to alleviate this problem by closer consultation with the dissident groups and by easing off on some of the strict police policies? . . ."

All this talk of "a new middle class", mullahs, and so on, searching for more political influence, rested on a radical misjudgment of the character of politics in Iran, and on a misplaced analogy between such politics and those of Western countries. And as late as November–December 1978, when the Shah's régime was within weeks of collapsing—as we learn from *Debacle* by Michael Ledeen & William Lewis,[7] perhaps the best book on the Iranian crisis to be published so far—Patricia Derian, the human-rights crusader in the Department of State, sent her deputy Steven Cohen to Tehran to ensure that the US Ambassador "would continue to remind the Shah of America's commitment to human rights, and that the Iranians would not be subjected to a savage repression. . . ." The disorientating and demoralising effect of this nagging on the Shah should not be minimised.

He was also being constantly and tirelessly reminded by the American Ambassador—reinforced (Ledeen & Lewis tell us) by the British Ambassador, Sir Anthony Parsons—before and during the terminal crisis of his reign, of the necessity of affording greater participation to groups and individuals whom he had hitherto firmly excluded from political power and influence. The Shah must have known that such initiatives would be taken as a sign of weakness and would encourage attacks on the régime of increasing ferocity and ruthlessness. But as he did not attempt to resist his friends' advice, he could not have been the self-assured and merciless despot who made the flesh of the beautiful souls in Washington and London so pleasurably tingle and creep.

The diaries of Parviz C. Radji, the Shah's last Ambassador in London, *In the Service of the Peacock Throne*,[8] skilfully conveying a feeling of *fin-de-régime*, record some choice bits of this empty self-righteousness. There is Miss Alexandra ("Gully") Wells, a luncheon guest of the Ambassador's who, in a thank-you letter, forthrightly lectured to the effect that "nations, like individuals, should always try to behave better, and not worse, than the lowest common denominator if they have any regard at all for moral and human values." There is Miss Joan Baez, the well-known entertainer, who affirmed in a BBC interview that "the Shah watches as women and children are killed before his eyes." There is Mr Philip Roth, the well-known novelist, who piously refused an invitation to dine with Radji, "inasmuch as you are the official representative of a régime whose methods of putting down political opposition and suppressing freedom of expression I find wholly repugnant. . . ." There is Mr Arthur Miller, the well-known playwright, who courageously demonstrated against a visit by the Shah to New York, and on being asked by a reporter if he realised that the Shah was a friend of the US sternly replied: "Yes, but he should also be a friend to his own people." And there is *The Times* (of London), which remonstrated in a leader of January 1977 against the degree of repression used in Iran and sagely advised that economic growth "should be accompanied by progress towards a more humane and tolerant society", otherwise the Shah's régime—no doubt like Lenin's and Stalin's—would be swept into the dustbin of history.

WESTERN LIBERALS would have been astonished to learn that in 1977–78 the Shah was of their persuasion. Whether the reason was a respectful study of Western newspapers and their pundits and "opinion-makers", or anxiety about the limits of Washington's support, or the personal weakness which seems to have lurked in his character, disastrously to manifest itself at moments of crisis, the Shah appeared in his last two years to govern with a most uncertain touch. He dismissed ministers and officials who had faithfully executed his policies, and later on in panic had them arrested and thus, in effect, encompassed their murder at the hands of his successors. This was the case with—among others—Amir Abbas Hoveyda, for twelve years his Prime Minister, and General Nassiri, the head of SAVAK. Capricious repression was succeeded by concessions which proved useless, since they were thought to have been dictated by fear. He lost control of a population which, long passive, had been destabilised and made restless by his ambitious economic policies—policies made possible by the ruthless and unconscionable way in which he and his associates in OPEC had "stung" the oil consumers.

The moment of truth came for him in the summer of 1978, when demonstrations, agitations, and disturbances swept the country in the face of which the authorities remained strangely passive. At the end of August the Shah dismissed Amouzegar whom he had appointed as Prime Minister the previous August. Amouzegar was an economist and what they called a "super-technocrat", clearly not a man to confront and master emergencies. Presumably with the Shah's approval, he had abolished subventions and grants to mullahs and to religious schools, which most probably fanned the discontent. Amouzegar was replaced by Sharif-Emami. His programme, as the US Ambassador William H. Sullivan describes it in his very informative memoirs, *Mission to Iran*,[9] was to feed the crocodiles. He lifted censorship of the press, allowed the broadcasting of parliamentary debates, and declared that all political activity would be free of government control. The crocodiles promptly became more hungry. He also had Khomeini expelled by the Iraqis from Najaf where he had been in exile for some thirteen years, and whence he was directing an increasingly effective stream of denunciation against the Shah through Iranian pilgrims to the Shi'ite holy cities.

In 1975 the Shah had made his peace with Iraq by suddenly and treacherously abandoning the Kurds who were in rebellion

[7] Michael Ledeen and William Lewis, *Debacle* (Knopf, 1981).

[8] Parviz C. Radji, *In The Service of the Peacock Throne: The Diaries of the Shah's Last Ambassador to London* (Hamish Hamilton, 1983).

[9] William H. Sullivan, *Mission to Iran* (Norton, 1982).

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against Iraq and whom he had been supporting for some years. This made it possible for large numbers of pilgrims to visit Iraq and carry back with them to Iran cassettes filled with the Ayatollah's message. Sharif-Emami thought that if Khomeini went to Europe, his propaganda would become ineffective. He had reckoned without the Western media, concern about whose activities is so evident in Radji's diary.

SHORTLY AFTER Sharif-Emami's appointment, a very large demonstration took place in Tehran. This jolted the Shah, who proclaimed martial law country-wide on 7 September 1978. The following day there was another large demonstration at Jaleh Square facing the Parliament. Demonstrators and soldiers clashed. The troop commander, having earlier warned the crowd that the gathering was illegal, now ordered his men to fire. Over two hundred died.

This initiated another cycle of riot and repression, which lasted until the Shah threw up the sponge at the end of the year. But the repression was half-hearted, frequently countermanded, and did not fit in at all with the policies which Sharif-Emami was following. The same uncertain hand was evident when, after Tehran was burnt by the mob on 4 November, the Shah instituted a military government headed by General Azhari. As Azhari told Ambassador Sullivan, the soldiers were only allowed to fire in the air, no matter how badly they were abused or how heavily they were pressed. The effect of these orders was profoundly to demoralise them. The military government was military only in name.

Azhari asked Sullivan to tell his government that the country was lost because the Shah could not make up his mind. In the space of a few months the régime found itself in mortal peril. The Shah clearly was floundering. He wanted a firm hand to guide him and stiffen his back, if Iran was not to be lost to the Western Alliance. But neither London—which had a great deal of influence—nor Washington was willing to provide the necessary inspiration and support.

From Sir Anthony Parsons's recent memoir, *The Pride and the Fall,* [10] we learn that in mid-October, with Sherif-Emami's approval and support, he and Ambassador Sullivan called on General Óveissi, the Martial Law Commander, to deny rumours that Britain and America would favour a military takeover of the Government:

> "We wanted him to know that these rumours are baseless. Both our governments favoured progressive democratization as the only way to solve the crisis. A reversal of this process would face us with severe problems of domestic opinion in our own countries. The effect of a military *coup* on Iran's Western friends and allies would be disastrous."

According to Zbigniew Brzezinski, on 24 October Sullivan and Parsons again told the Shah that in their view a military solution was a non-starter. "To my knowledge", the National Security Adviser declares, "this important judgment was not approved by the White House." But on the strength of his own, of Carter's, and of Vance's memoirs, there is every indication that it would have been approved. As Brzezinski says, reliance on force was not instinctive with Carter. Nor was it with Vance either. It was also idle to expect the European allies to encourage the US to be forceful. If they did, the encouragement was of the gratuitous and academic kind afforded by disinterested bystanders desultorily watching a match from the sidelines. As Brzezinski writes:

> "I was startled one day in late 1978 when the very able and acute British Ambassador, Peter Jay, representing a Labour government not noted for its martial fervour, pressed me at some length on whether our Administration had the will to apply American power. . . . I found his inquiry disturbing, for it came at a time when we were fiercely debating our response to the Iranian crisis, and I knew that Jay's British counterpart in Tehran was advocating acquiescence to the anti-Shah movement. . . ."

The Shah asked more than once that a decision to crush the disturbances should be taken for him. Vance, supported by the President, refused. He was, indeed, utterly opposed to any attempt by the Shah to stage a showdown. On 19 November, from Moscow, Brezhnev warned the US not to intervene in Iran; the following day Vance denied the accusation that the US intended to interfere in the affairs of another country. Finally, at the beginning of January 1979, the Secretary of State openly told the Shah to go.

THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION WAS WILLING to see him go, because it had persuaded itself that it could live quite comfortably with the alternative, even that a new régime would institute democracy and human rights, and thus bring about something it had always devoutly desired.

There were many voices arguing that a deal could be made between the army and the mullahs which would re-establish tranquillity. From Tehran, Ambassador Sullivan argued that Khomeini and the armed forces were anti-Communist; that the younger officers were generally pro-Western; that economic ties with the West would subsist; that on returning to Iran, Khomeini would play a "Gandhi-like" role; and that elections would be likely to produce a pro-Western Islamic republic. . . . In Washington there was a chorus of academic and official voices singing the praises of Khomeini and of the National Front—a collection of insignificant politicians, followers of Musaddiq, whom the Shah had emasculated and whom Khomeini, later on, had not the slightest difficulty in brushing aside. Mr Henry Precht, in charge of the Iran desk at the Department of State, strongly denied that Khomeini held the views which a few months later everybody was aware Khomeini had indeed long held. What was attributed to the Ayatollah, Precht affirmed, was at best a collection of notes taken down and presumably misunderstood or distorted by students, and at worst a forgery. . . . Mr George Ball, who was asked at Brzezinski's initiative—which he later came to regret—to develop a long-term policy for Iran, came up with the curious idea of transferring the Shah's powers to a Council of Notables who would represent the various political interests in Iran, as

[10] *The Pride and the Fall: Iran 1974–1979.* By ANTHONY PARSONS. Jonathan Cape, £8.95.

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though notables were to be found capable of independent political action.

BUT IT IS ACADEMIC FANCIES, scattered broadcast in those last months of 1978, which take the booby prize. And among them, surely the most captivating notions were those paraded by Mr Richard Falk (who professes international law from his *cathedra* at the University of Princeton) in the Spring 1979 issue of *Foreign Policy*. Combining profound Orientalist scholarship with acute political judgment, and a first-hand knowledge of Iran (having visited Tehran no later than the previous December), Professor Falk carefully distinguished Shi'ite Moslem doctrine from "the harsher Sunni variety that currently prevails in Saudi Arabia, Libya and Pakistan, and other Moslem nations." Khomeini's entourage, Falk assured his readers, were "committed to a struggle against all forms of oppression", particularly as the constitution proposed by Khomeini "has been drafted by political moderates with a strong belief in minority rights." Contrary to reports about Khomeini's attitude to Jews, women, etc., his Islamic Republic could be expected to have a doctrine of social justice at its core. It would be flexible in interpreting the Koran, keeping it open to amendment and adaptation based on contemporary needs and aspirations—in short, exactly like the enlightened jurists who were producing such marvels of progressive judicial interpretation in the USA itself. And to all these good things we were bidden to add the not inconsiderable bonus that the Islamic republic will be "a stablising element geopolitically."

Bitter Lessons



THE SHAH LEFT in January 1979, and power formally devolved to Dr Shapour Bakhtiar of the Iranian National Front, a Tehran intellectual who had no standing either with the army or religious personalities, and who could in no way provide inspiration or leadership. But the army remained, though bereft of its commander-in-chief, the Shah. Could it assume power?

Brzezinski was in favour of encouraging a military *coup d'état*; Vance and Carter were against. The issue was academic since the army was without a head and its generals proved incapable of acting in concert. The President anyway had decided that Khomeini in Paris should be approached, "to allow", writes Vance, "his representatives in Tehran to reach an understanding with the military and the Bakhtiar government on a process in which all could participate in reshaping the Iranian political system." These were chimeras. But the Administration allowed itself to be gulled by Khomeini, who sent a message that intervention by the army would harm American interests, and that if they did not interfere he would quiet things down. His associates said—and the State Department believed them—that Khomeini intended to set up a government drawn from "moderate secular politicians", with the Ayatollah remaining in the background as the guiding political and spiritual force of the revolution. But the Americans had to keep away from Bakhtiar, for he was a goner.

These threats were hardly necessary since the Department of State was—it is not too much to say—itching to see the Ayatollah's friends installed in power, and the Ayatollah himself benignly presiding from Qom over a virtuously democratic régime. Ledeen & Lewis report one senior official telling them that "we became convinced that the system of theocratic government espoused by Khomeini augured well for American interests in the region." Other officials "even spoke of Khomeini's theocracy as an Iranian version of the New England town-hall meetings during the American Revolution." As for the ineffable Andy Young, when the Revolution was over, the whole world, he declared, (with prescient penetration of the awesome kind proverbially attributed to seers and holy fools), would come to recognise Khomeini as "some kind of saint."

BETWEEN KHOMEINI'S RETURN in triumph to Tehran in February 1979 and the occupation of the US Embassy and the detention of its inmates as hostages the following November, the Carter administration doggedly attempted to establish and maintain good relations with the new régime. It was to this end that the Shah was kept out of the US. (Brzezinski mentions the piquant detail that a negative answer to an appeal on the Shah's behalf by his sister which Vance's deputy, Warren Christopher, drafted was addressed to . . . *Ms Pahlavi*.) Spare parts were supplied for the weapons which the new government needed to use against the various uprisings, and particularly that of the Kurds, which now threatened its authority.

The official US view of relations with Iran during 1979 may be summed up by a statement which Mr Harold Saunders (the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs) made to a Senate subcommittee at the end of July. He declared that he did not sense a strong anti-American feeling among the leaders of Iran: "I don't sense it as something that makes the relationship unworkable among much of the leadership." His State Department colleague, Henry Precht, was in Tehran towards the end of October, reportedly offering further help in equipping the armed forces. And on 1 November, four days before the storming of the Tehran Embassy, Brzezinski met in Algiers the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the new régime, and told them that "The American government is prepared to expand security, economic, political, and intelligence relationships at your pace."

It is, thus, owing to a profound and systematic misunderstanding of the Ayatollah Khomeini and what he stood for that a large number of diplomats were kept on at the Tehran Embassy; that few precautions were taken to defend the Embassy compound; and that the Shah was at last grudgingly allowed to come for treatment to New York.

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CARTER'S LAST YEAR IN OFFICE became the year of the hostages. Or rather, he made it so by his actions and speeches. As he says at the very beginning of his memoirs, "More than anything else, I wanted those American prisoners to be free."

The 55 remaining hostages were, of course, held illegally by a régime from which anything could be expected. They were public servants entitled to all the protection which their State could vouchsafe them. But as public servants in a hostile country they were also in a comparable position to soldiers who have to face the enemy. It could not possibly be the case that their liberation should have absolute priority, that the head of the State should desire it "more than anything else." This is like a general saying that he puts the safety of his combat troops above anything else. This overmastering desire, repeatedly and dramatically voiced, incited their captors to believe that the longer they kept their prisoners the more concessions they would be able to extract from the anguished President, and the more exquisitely they would be in a position to humiliate him.

The President was driven to all kinds of unseemly contrivances in ever more desperate efforts to have the hostages released. His White House Chief of Staff, Hamilton Jordan, has chronicled in *Crisis*,[11] some of these contrivances. The Shah had somehow to be disposed of, and Jordan was sent on a mission to General Omar Torrijos in Panama to find a refuge for him. Various go-betweens suggested unlikely schemes, and Jordan went on many a wild-goose chase. At one point a left-wing Parisian lawyer and an Argentinian businessman claimed to be able to effect the hostages' release, and eventually the lawyer was taken to see the President who had to listen to a long sermon about the excesses of the Shah and American guilt. "Christian" Carter at length interrupted:

> "I have to go now. All we want is our hostages back, and, after a decent interval, relations with Iran based on mutual interests and respect. We do not want anything else—just these two things. . . . If I knew what they wanted, maybe I could be more forthcoming. . . ."

The PLO were asked to intercede; and as we are reminded, the Libyans were also approached.[12] This was done through the President's brother, the hapless Billy Carter, who was registered as an agent of the Libyan government. Nothing availed, and the hostages were freed at the end of Carter's term only because the Iranians wanted the release of the huge assets which he had ordered to be frozen in the United States—the only action Carter took which proved of any use—and because they were afraid that Carter's successor would prove to be much tougher in his dealings with them.

Following the capture of the Embassy, Brzezinski believed that the hostages should not be the only preoccupation of the US: "I was painfully aware that at some point perhaps a choice between the two might even have to be made." It is not evident from Carter's and Vance's memoirs that they were alive to this dilemma, or even dimly conscious of it.

Brzezinski was prepared to consider military action against Khomeini. However, less than two months after the Embassy was seized, Soviet troops invaded Afghanistan; and in Brzezinski's eyes this ruled out a military strike. He changed his mind because he believed that it was imperative now to forge an anti-Soviet Islamic coalition, and that this would be hindered by forcible US action against Khomeini. This notion of "an anti-Soviet Islamic coalition" was doubly fanciful, in that the Muslim world, far from being a monolith, was riven by deep rivalries and tenacious enmities which a Soviet attack on a small and remote Muslim state such as Afghanistan could not possibly banish; and because it was extremely difficult to see what such a coalition, even if it somehow came into existence, could possibly effect, either politically or militarily.

On the contrary, the case for some forcible action in the Persian Gulf or Iran was made stronger by Soviet action in Afghanistan—the more so since the US had allowed adverse developments in Afghanistan, from the spring of 1978, to take their course without reaction or even comment. A Communist *coup d'état* took place in Kabul in April 1978. The US not only kept mum, but David Newsom, the Under-Secretary of State for Political Affairs (who was sent to have a look in July), advised that economic assistance should be continued lest the prospect of any influence over the new régime should be lost.

This was one of the American actions which baffled and worried the Shah. Why should a Communist régime be given US assistance? Was it stupidity? Was it some deep Machiavellian calculation? Alas, poor Shah, not all the modernisation in the world would have enabled you to fathom the mind of a thoroughly modern American liberal.

TARAKI, WHO HAD CARRIED OUT the Kabul coup of April 1978 and become President of Afghanistan, was murdered (in September 1979) by his Prime Minister and fellow-Communist, Hafizullah Amin; and in December Amin himself was murdered in the course of the Soviet invasion which he was said to have requested.

The Soviet invasion did not come as a surprise to the US. Brzezinski declares that in July and again in September 1979 he had warned of what was impending, and Carter had instructed that greater publicity had to be given to the growing Soviet involvement. The Department of State apparently proved reluctant; and as late as mid-December David Newsom objected to a press backgrounder on the subject, "on the grounds that this might be seen by the Soviets as US meddling in Afghanistani affairs. . . ." When the invasion took place, Cyrus Vance and his deputy Warren Christopher objected to a proposal of Brzezinski's that Carter should tell Brezhnev that SALT was now in jeopardy.

President Carter, it would seem, now followed Brzezinski's advice and issued his "Gulf doctrine" (in a State of the Union message of January 1980) to the effect that any attempt by an outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf would be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the US, to be repelled "by any means necessary, including military force."

Carter followed this up the following May with a speech at Philadelphia which illustrates Brzezinski's remark that by

[11] Hamilton Jordan, *Crisis: The Last Year of the Carter Presidency* (Michael Joseph, 1982).

[12] Roy Assersohn, *The Biggest Deal: Bankers, Politics and the Hostages of Iran* (Methuen, 1982).

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1980, some four years on, Carter had a foreign policy. Carter now said that *détente* with the Soviets had to be based on deterrence. As he confessed at the time, he had been learning more about Soviet imperialism "in a few weeks" than in "all the previous years."

But neither "the Gulf doctrine" nor the chimerical "Islamic coalition" really did anything to undo what Brzezinski recognises as the strategic counter-revolution in America's global position effected by the Soviet implantation in Ethiopia, the collapse of the Shah, and the invasion of Afghanistan. All these grave events took place within the lifetime of one administration.

Were they productive of any advantage? Did they, in the broken pieces of inadequate policies, leave any personal mark? Perhaps only this: that by the end of their four years in office the members of the Administration had—one assumes hopefully, for is not hopefulness central to the tradition of which they are such distinguished exponents?—made some little progress in their political education. And, as the same tradition holds, for the sake of education, no cost, no sacrifice is too great.

Beanfeast

Considering the way we live,
The slim chance that we may not be
Bombed out on starch and additive,
Detoxified or gluten-free,
It's not surprising chaos grows
And violence feeds a yawning want,
Dosed up on cellular lactose,
Wheat flour and antioxidant;
Destabilised by fish and chips
And wrapped and paste-injected pies,
The crude fuel of apocalypse,
Our failure to metabolise.
Plagued as I am throughout this Lent
With images that still adhere
Through moribund advertisement
To smoke and photogenic beer,
I grow confused and come to wish
For non-addictive, childish need,
The sacrament of liquorice,
The penitence of aniseed.
We eat too much and what we eat
Is poisonous, no longer real,
The candied fruits are incomplete
Without their shot of cochineal;
Our meat and fish so deeply fried
They merge into the cardboard plate
As unrelieved, emulsified
Monosodium glutamate.
Meanwhile those millions in the East,
Unconscious of our ends and means,
Our technological beanfeast,
Our fun and junk-food gelatines,
In black and white and wave on wave
Reproach us with their single look
And while collectively they starve
We separately choke.

John Levett

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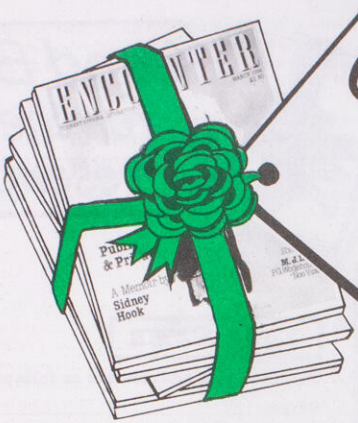

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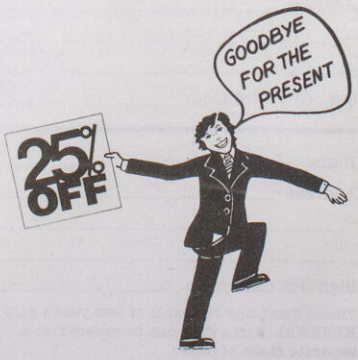

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COLUMN



AH, WELL, as the old showbiz song so nearly puts it, There's no business like chauvinism. One of the laughable aspects of the Los Angeles Olympics was the complaint, from foreign competitors and their governments, that American television was giving a biased picture of the Games. Too many shots of US athletes, too much jubilation when they won. It may well have been true: but what did we hear each day on the aloof, impartial, non-chauvinist BBC News? You've guessed it: "Another bronze for Britain!"—followed, if we were lucky, but way down near the end of the bulletin, by the names and achievements of the actual winners.

It's a far cry from the Olympic spirit; but then sport, like travel, notoriously narrows the mind. So, it seems, does political discussion of defence. To judge from some recent British Labour Party statements, the real villains in the nuclear arms race are the Americans, our allies, not the Russians whom we're trying to deter. After Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Afghanistan, this seems about as objective as the reporting on more peaceful races through the LA smog.

Of course, the phenomenon's familiar. When President de Gaulle was casting his shadow and his veto on the European Community, hosts of wise and timorous advisers—in politics as well as in the press—kept urging the pro-Europeans not to "provoke" him by sticking to their principles. Some of these appeasers got quite cross about it, blaming their bolder friends for the excesses of their opponents. The reason? It was safer that way, and might have some effect. Our friends and allies we could influence: de Gaulle was out of reach.

Not that I'm trying to equate the General with the Kremlin. However much havoc he might have wrought in Europe, de Gaulle was unlikely to unleash a nuclear holocaust. But, *mutatis mutandis*, the parallel is clear. It's easier to pick on your pals.

Especially when other factors complicate the relationship. "Anti-Americanism" used to be the blanket term for them; but they were always more complex than that simple yah-boo word. "Complex", indeed, is probably right. To get to the bottom of European feelings about the United States, it may be helpful to board the psychiatrist's couch.

YOU SEE, DOCTOR, it's like this. To me, "America" first meant an accent. Adults used to call it "talking through your nose"—although what they had in mind was actually closing off the nasal passages when speaking, producing a hard adenoidal rasp. Some Americans still talk that way. One theory claims that it's to exclude the stench of city streets; another, that it's due to a dry climate. Heard, as I've heard it, through the thin walls of an old-fashioned Paris hotel, the sound has a sawing monotony: "Wear-rare, wear-rare, wear-wear, rare-rare. . . ." But then most of my American friends make fun of it too.

What we children meant by "an American accent" was something different. It was the short *a*, the sounded *r*, the *o* pronounced as *ah*. "I cyan't parrk in that laht." Nor was it only the way words were pronounced: it was also the speech-tune. In many cases, this had a breezy, knowing, disc-jockey's flipness. "That's the way the *cookie* crumbles"—or the mock-dismayed "Oh-oh!"

Where did we hear this smart patter? On the sound-tracks of screen comedies; occasionally, during World War II, in the Bob Hope, Jack Benny, Fred Allen, and Edgar Bergen shows rebroadcast in Britain. Against the tame gentility of much native entertainment, the imports had enormous glamour. So, of course, did gangster movies. Snap-brim fedoras, pencil-thin moustaches, loud ties, and two-tone shoes were not what our elders favoured, except maybe in Soho. To us they promised a raft—often a George Raft—of vicarious excitement.

I remember coming home from Warner Brothers pictures in a ludicrously heightened state. Every shadow concealed a gunman. I was one of them—by turns quarry, hunter, hoodlum, and private eye. To my parents I snarled home-made wisecracks. I put my father's shoes under the curtains at the french window, the toecaps protruding, to simulate an intruder. I groped my way to bed with a burglar's flashlamp.

The first Americans I saw in the flesh were GIs, playing baseball in a London park. They were a welcome sight: Europe's rescuers, in well-cut uniforms, tall, rich, and supple, backed by a great industrial power. And yet they were strange, like the game itself. Their faces were smooth, slightly plump, and surprisingly pallid. No rosy cheeks here: just ready grins.

Another surprise came when I met some American students on vacation in France just after the War. They had exotic paraphernalia—Hershey bars, Camel cigarettes, Chiclets, Bantam Books, seersucker jackets. They also had a car, and were amazingly hospitable. On one occasion, no fewer than twelve of us crowded into it. Their wisecracks weren't quite up to the cinema; but wisecracking was their normal discourse, much of it drawn (as I realised later) from a common fund of formulae. There was the Groucho manner: "I've heard of five o'clock shadow, but this is ridiculous." There was the *New Yorker* pastiche: "Department of Lost Allusions." There were parodies of slogans I'd never heard: "It's a bird—it's a plane—it's . . . the Good Humor man!" We had a riotous time. The summer over, we exchanged addresses and telephone numbers. At Christmas, I sent cards. Greetings came from Norwegians and others I'd met in similar ways; but from the Americans, nothing. It seemed quite hurtful. Afterwards, I wondered: was the address-book routine just part of the camaraderie? Were my cheery acquaintances bad at writing letters? Hadn't we really got on together as well as I'd thought? Later still, it occurred to me that if I turned up on their doorsteps there'd probably be a rapturous welcome. But by that time I'd lost their addresses.

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GRADUALLY, AMERICANS CEASED to seem so disconcerting. As friends and fellow-students they fitted in, with none of the clumsiness expected from a Yank at Oxford (or Cambridge, or elsewhere). Their free-and-easy style concealed hard work and erudition: many had even *read* the political philosophers we glibly discussed in our essays. Now and then, I'd catch a hint that they saw the British as amateurs, taking too much for granted the amenities of Stratford-upon-Avon, Wells Cathedral, or the Scottish moors. Some were assiduous sight-seers, others adroit culture-vultures. You want the best seats? We have them—join us. It wasn't a matter of money, but of knowing the ropes and joining the right queue. It was very understandable. Time was short: the Atlantic was wide: chances might not be repeated. In their shoes, we'd have done the same.

So far, so good; but there were still surprises. Some of my most intellectual American friends were devoted to comic strips—this in the days before they became a faddist cult. Li'l Abner and Pogo were the favourites; but snide remarks revealed a knowledge of Dick Tracy and Dr Kildare. Was it a childhood fixation, caused by the over-indulgence of parents warped by Dr Spock? Kids were big in America, if not big business; Dennis the Menace, we gathered, was virtually reportage.

This fed a hoary European myth—the myth of American naivety. "They're just like children, really", British imperial settlers used to say of their "native" subjects, unaware that the compliment was being returned. Stomping round the tropics in sola topis and very long khaki shorts, our Empire-builders looked like big boy scouts. No less bizarre, in the eyes of Europeans, was the garb of the world's new élite, the American tourists. Blue-rinsed ladies in Bermuda shorts; elderly gentlemen in baseball caps and flowered Hawaiian shirts hanging loose outside their trousers: it became the stereotype of a thousand satirical cartoons. What we failed to notice, very often, was how many of the cartoonists were American.

THEN CAME THE FIRST VISIT to America—and the first of innumerable shocks. Some comfortingly confirmed the juvenile stereotype: "dry" States, Disneyland, dance music in elevators, weak coffee, endless ice cream, pappy hamburger buns, twaddle on television. Others were first-hand glimpses of the obvious. The land was huge, with a Sahara in the middle; towns stretched out to an infinity of low-rise suburbia; people would drive for miles to a dinner party. With a few famous exceptions, one place looked much like another: no wonder American labour mobility was so high. "Going for a country walk" was a virtual impossibility: "WALK" meant mainly what traffic lights told you to do. Descendants of the pioneers, Americans were gregarious. The open front lawn was as typical as the Frenchman's high wall; strangers and foreigners were welcomed with immense warmth. The land of opportunity led to giant conglomerates, but also to the pullulation of small enterprises. Where in Britain could you have a suit made to measure overnight? Above all, despite the language, America was as foreign as the typography of its street signs. Stretches of the telephone directory read like Hamburg or Naples, Puerto Rico or Shanghai. And the melting-pot was vastly greater than the sum of its parts. "The one thing you'll learn in the United States", said a Belgian friend of mine, "is how different from the Americans we Europeans all are. . . ."

It's as true today as it was a quarter-century ago. Every generation discovers it afresh. One of the best-sellers in Paris last summer was a paperback of American proportions—766 pages on *Les Américains* by the former New York correspondent of *Le Figaro*, Léo Sauvage.[1] Originally published in hardback a year earlier, the book overlaps with the first Reagan presidency; but much of it seems to have been written during the Carter interlude. It tells French readers a great deal that Anglophones already know—about big business, about millionaires, about organised labour, about race, about culture and the mass media, about recent foreign affairs. But the chapters on these subjects contain some sharp reminders and *aperçus*, notably on how workers' efforts to reform both the Miners' and the Teamsters' unions were brutally suppressed. And on other areas of American life Sauvage produces facts and figures that are probably new to all but the expert Americophile. I for one shan't easily forget his account of Emporia, Kansas, centre of the slaughterhouse trade, where the Iowa Beef Processors at that time killed 16,500 head of cattle a week and, using carcasses from elsewhere, cut up 3,400 a day.

The real juice of Sauvage's book, however, is in his personal reactions to a country and people he knows and likes. His "first Americans", like mine, were GIs. He was struck by their dislike of the way Soviet soldiers kowtowed to officers, as well as by Soviet incredulity at modest Americans' wealth. But his first real shock came with American eating habits. He was sitting opposite an army captain who looked like Gary Cooper.

> "He had in front of him a rare steak, which he covered with a thick layer of reddish sauce, from a bottle which I had instinctively pushed away from my plate. It was the first time I had seen ketchup and found out how it was used, but that was not what bothered me. After putting a good forkful of this mixture in his mouth, he washed it down with a long drink from his glass. This—no mistake was possible—was a glass of cocoa and milk."

Other surprises were more agreeable. Sauvage, habituated to the tenor of the French press, used to silence his Parisian colleagues with a cutting from *Time* magazine, in which a reader called Eisenhower "a golf-playing idiot." He was equally impressed by American free speech when he saw Gore Vidal's play *An Evening with Richard Milhous Nixon and. . . .* What other country in the world, he asked his newspaper's readers, would have tolerated such *lèse-présidence*?

Witty, elegant, and with a touch of pedantry in his style, Léo Sauvage reminds me a little of Pierre Daninos. But whereas Daninos's "Major Thompson" is a skit on French prejudices about the British, Sauvage's Americans are genuine—from Ralph Nader, who "speaks to a single person as if he were addressing a crowd", to the egregious Ray Kroc, President of

[1] *Les Américains*. By LÉO SAUVAGE. Marabout (Belgium), 1984.

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McDonald's fast-food chain, who declares: "Work is the meat in the hamburger of life." Such quotations may suggest condescension. In fact, Sauvage continually shows his respect for the commonsense Americans he meets. On Viet Nam he writes:

> "It was when hostility to the war reached the average American that it also conquered Washington, for the average American is the only person Washington fears.
>
> The students, including the hippies and yippies, had certainly formed the avant-garde; but their efforts had also boomeranged. The workers, above all, were obviously physically repelled by these boys and girls who claimed to be seeking them out. Their language and behaviour, doubtless designed to disguise their essentially bourgeois origins, led hippies and yippies to alienate more workers than they recruited.
>
> As for the pacifists who had joined the young protesters because they had no such prejudices, or had overcome them, many were not slow to distance themselves again when the 'organised militants'—Trotskyites, Maoists, etc. —surreptitiously pulled out from a cover or a cardboard roll the flag of the Vietcong.
>
> The average American had long ago lost whatever enthusiasm he had ever had for Saigon. Nor did he feel any for Hanoi. Subsequent events have proved that it was the average American who was right."

Praise for the silent majority? Hardly, but a just tribute to something that most Europeans find sooner or later in the United States. Allow for the slight disappointment, the twinge of unrequited love we all feel when Americans turn out not to be Gary Cooper, or Bob Hope, or Groucho, or George Washington or Abraham Lincoln. Allow for the vulgarity, the commercialism, the unplanned *dreck*, the violence, the organised crime. Allow for the physical distance that separates America from Europe, and the Western seaboard which turns the other way. Allow, if you're British, for the paradox of a foreign country that uses and threatens to engulf your own language. Allow for the imperial withdrawal symptoms common to Britain and France. Then look at a few more instances of the blindingly obvious.

Yes, America is vast and energetic. Yes, American society encourages excesses. Yes, there'll always be minor friction between allies. But America was built from the dreams of disappointed Europeans. The US Constitution was a rejection of tyranny and a celebration of democracy. Americans' undue fear of government intervention is the obverse of their love of liberty. They've taken the risk of freedom—and shown its ugly side. But when the crunch comes, they pull back. They rejected Barry Goldwater and Richard Nixon; they rejected Viet Nam. Twice, they rescued Europe in war; in peace, they have funded and defended her. It's hard for us not to resent our duty to be grateful. It's hard not to mock American manners, quail at American political rhetoric, snap at the hand that helps us keep the peace. Looking at New York's old-fashioned skyscrapers and immigrant slums, it's hard not to feel *Schadenfreude*: so much for the glamorous city of our childhood films. It's hard, too, not to feel that since Viet Nam, Iran and Beirut, another vision may be fading: is the *Pax Americana* going the way of the *Pax Britannica*?

If so, we owe our friends some fellow-feeling. Most of all, we owe them partnership. And that can only be complete when Europe grows more united. Equality is the real cure for the inferiority complex we brought to the psychiatrist's couch.

M

Spider

Tarantula and black widow are exotic species
tropical and fatal in a crate of bananas,
but harmless and altogether domestic is this
homespun familiar Euclid of the campanulas

weaving his slender threads from the blue flowers
of the chalklands, three denier to catch the wind,
yet so strong that even the preposterous gale tires
finally, drowsing in the net where it is skeined.

Sweep him from the stair corner, then, if sweep you must
this image of elegance, strength, sheer simplicity,
though happy the man who could spin out of his dust
half such an idle, magnificent web for posterity.

John Gohorry

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Vernon Scannell

A Victorian Honeymoon

Her features in the frame are pale and blurred,
Imprisoned in the glass. Her hairbrush soars
And swoops and rises like an ivory bird
About her stormy head. The misty gauze
Of chiffon at her breast is startled by
A rose's crimson wound; her gaze implores
Reprieve, or answer to her brimming "Why?"

And there is no reply. She knows that she
Must grow accustomed to this bitter taste,
The gravy of despair. Outside, the sea
Repeats incessant prophecies of waste
And now its slow, unvaried voice contains
A salt intelligence which must be faced:
There is no hope of rescue from these chains.

The links are insubstantial, and they seemed
Not long ago to gleam, a golden prize,
The goal of which, since girlhood, she had dreamed,
Its aureate sparkle dancing in her eyes;
But now, they are custodial; these chains
Are fetters on the spirit; they chastise
Insulted flesh with unimagined pains.

It was another world when it, and she—
Or, rather, that seraphic girl who died,
Whose days were like a charmed eternity
Of summer picnics—were transmogrified:
Green paradise transformed to tenebrous cave.
Her beauty torn, voice shrilled. The tales had lied:
No hope of princely rescue by the brave.

Her husband soon will come and she must smile;
She cannot tell him that it hurts. All day
They trudged the foreign pavements, mile on mile—
Museums, churches, statues—then the bay
As sunset bled across the sky and sea;
Sad twilight as the pilgrimage of grey
And hooded waves moved shoreward ceaselessly.

Then back to this. She smells tobacco-smoke.
It sickens her. She thinks she hears his tread
Outside the door. She feels self-pity choke,
A bitter, caustic potion: pain and dread
Compose their plaint, but pride aborts the cry
Which freezes in the glass; she lifts her head
And sees reflected eyes, resigned and dry.

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Peter Reading

Not Elegy

[This isn't elegy but
thanksgiving; therefore invert—
place the pentameter first and the
hymn/hexameter after.]

April—the Met. Office says
warmest since records began.
Pure cerulean of sky and, be-
hind the cottage, thick-fleeced ewes

suckle robust new Clun lambs,
celandines gleam from sunned turf,
first of the season's *Phylloscopus*
warblers *hweet* from the pleached thorn,

primrose—[enough of this crap.
Sounds like the Plashy Fen School.
No *list* of species can ever be
more than gross insult to them—

patronised tweely by bards
(awfully keen on Wild Life)].
I shall confine myself merely to
bringing forth a scrubbed table,

setting it down in lush grass,
placing rich wallflowers, just cut,
fumous of uncloying honey, and
to the business of olives,

watercress, paprika, rice,
breaking moist pizza apart
(anchovies, capers and sharp oreg-
ano bruised into fragrance),

sloshing out goblets of light
sap-green cool Tokay d'Alsace,
cascading Vichy, bright sparkle of
glassfuls frosted to fjord-cold. . . .

[All he could do was *report*
horrible and (some) nice things.]
There is an impotent gratitude
goes with godless well-being.

Elsewhere, the world is to-cock;
here though, quite simply, this hour
glows as amongst the most joyful (old-
fashioned word) in a short life.

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NOTES & TOPICS

London Commentary

Scargill's Way

By Edward Pearce



"THE DECLINE OF THE ENGLISH MURDER" was the title of a celebrated short essay by Orwell. There is some purpose in applying oneself to the decline of the English strike. The old-time murderer in the Orwell piece was a dentist or solicitor, perhaps Chairman of his local Conservative Association and a prominent teetotaller; he should have conceived what used to be called "a guilty passion." Murder, as he approaches it, is something accomplished with skill, detail and craft; only by a tiny overlooked slip is he detected. But crucially he has undertaken murder because of his respect for the proprieties, a respect which makes murder so much less shocking than adultery.

The great thing with metaphors is not to push them. No one who looked at strikes in the late Jurassic period of residual public civility, would want to compare Frank Cousins with Dr Crippen. Though anyone who looks at the ruined condition of London and Liverpool docks may feel that *somebody* should be helping the police with their enquiries. We have had figures in Britain like Jack Dash and Derek Robinson (of British Leyland), who, as destroyers of employment by ruining the enterprises concerned, are in the class of Dr Palmer of Rugeley or George Joseph Smith. But what distinguished murder-as-it-was from the newer sort, for Orwell, was the casual indifference of the new killer—he exampled the "Cleft Chin Murders" of 1944. There is no hypocrisy, something which is central to a good murder, because there is no conscience. Still less is there any passion for respectability, only a crude psychopathic indifference such that the element of tragedy or downfall is non-existent. There is just a casual, amoral, affectless slaughter.

We are talking about Arthur Scargill, are we not? This bizarre man, our industrial cleft-chin killer, has been part of the British political scene since 1972. Then, in his very early thirties, he organised a private army of enforcers to block supplies of fuel during a pit strike. The story has been told *ad nauseam* of how, at Saltley Coke Depot in Birmingham, a feeble and ill-prepared Chief Constable reluctantly ordered gates to be shut against lawful supplies because Scargill had more men than he had. He played a similar if slightly less dramatic role in the second pit strike of 1974 which provoked Prime Minister Edward Heath into the disastrous vote-of-confidence general election of 1974. As for Saltley, it became to Scargill a pair of crossed swords on the map, a sort of Naseby in that submerged civil war for which he candidly yearns; though to compare the tipsy rabble who have made up his violent pickets recently with the New Model Army is a blasphemy to good Cromwellians—and Cromwell is not the political leader with whom Scargill is most commonly compared.

The present strike represents something different in kind from earlier strikes. It is unflinchingly violent. The flying pickets are ungovernable, with their leaders happy to see them so. There is no opposition of any kind within the Executive Committee of the National Union of Mineworkers, but there is the most emphatic opposition among miners themselves. For the first time in 60 years a major coalfield is sitting the strike out. It is a strike imposed by a species of fraud, individual coalfields being called out but a nation-wide ballot refused. Having three times sought and three times been refused a decision on ballot in favour of industrial action, the President of the NUM wisely ignored this bourgeois mechanism and attempted to make waves from Wales, Scotland, Kent, and his own South Yorkshire which would capsize the doubters into a sea of his choosing. Once Nottingham (and a useful scatter of pits throughout other coalfields) refused to join—and indeed conducted their own ballot and resolved against a strike—violence, coercion, face-to-face intimidation and street pressure—politics of a nastiness we have not seen on the mainland of Britain this century became almost routine.

According to the guidelines of the Trades Union Congress, no picket line organised to advise workers to stay away from work should contain more than six men. Places like Orgreave and Ollerton have seen 5,000 men lurch, furiously braying, into a village to impose their comradeship. Is the law being broken? "There is only one law", says Scargill, "Never cross a picket line." Otherwise anything goes. Buses used to take working miners to the pit-head have been burned out, cars smashed, windows kicked in; theft by pickets is extensive, a measure of drunkenness the regular condition of the frontline troops.

All this is accompanied by a hero cult of the leader. "Ar-thur Scar-ar-gill, Ar-thur Scar-ar-gill, we'll support you ever more", they sing to the tune of *Bread of Heaven*. Compared with the late James J. Hoffa, now set in cement, Arthur Scargill is surely an ideal trade-unionist; compared with the *mafiosi* tactics of the Teamsters, the conduct of his enforcers may be the very pink of chivalrous rectitude. But we here in Britain make our comparisons with what we know, with what we are used to experience. And for us Scargill represents a precipitous, crazed plunge. And ironically, nobody minds this more than some of the Old Left who have led strikes themselves with some regard for civilised conduct.

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AT ABOUT THE SAME TIME as the pit strike in which Scargill made his name, the Heath Government suffered a defeat which caused them to wrap up their industrial strategy and consign it to the box-room of foregone good intentions. This was the Upper Clyde Shipbuilders sit-in run by Jimmy Reid, at that time the brightest young thing in the British Communist Party. In a *Guardian* article, Reid has bitterly condemned the fraudulent means by which the current strike was started, the disregard for the union's own domestic law, and in particular the contempt for the individual secret ballot.

Reid's own conflict with the authorities was a very different affair. Workers at the four Scottish shipyards (which were indeed uneconomic and which the Heath Government should not have continued to subsidise), nevertheless conducted their protest in an almost immaculate fashion. There was no alcoholism, which in Britain's hardest-drinking city was astonishing and the product of the old-style puritanism which certainly used to be one of the saving graces of the CP. There was no rough stuff and only a couple of instances of vandalism, from which the strike committee immediately dissociated itself. Ironically, at that time nervous fear of violent revolutionism was stronger than it is today. Indeed, the chief reason behind Edward Heath's thinking when he killed dead his own earlier rational decision is supposed to have been the message of a jumpy Chief Constable of Glasgow that he could not guarantee peace in the city.

Yet this was sheer panic on hypothesis panic. Reid's men—and they were never organised and dispatched as troops—at all times maintained discipline; they broke one modest civil law, that of trespass, in their own work place—a highly technical transgression. They marched, they didn't loot. They threw no fire-bombs, intimidated no families. They kicked nobody. They stole nothing. They behaved in the way that anyone with respect for the traditional working class would have expected. A dozen years have passed and we can say "Look here upon this picture, and on this. . . ."

What has happened in the interim cannot entirely be put down to the tin-foil glitter of Scargill's personality, though one Left-wing General Secretary remembered with a shudder of distaste an encounter between Scargill and a miner who shook hands with him and immediately burst into tears. Scargill uses old-fashioned inducements to get some of his way. He has had no trouble from the moderate wing who make up half his executive, for the simple reason that a great part of their pensions is discretionary and in the sole hands of the President! Attacked and abused by howling heavies on the approach to headquarters (which have been translated from London to Sheffield), menaced with violence and clearly understanding that failure to support the President's correct line might mean a very straitened old age, those who had a duty and have abandoned it, are pitifully submissive.

What does one make of the cringing response by the Trades Union Congress, agreeing to order its members not to cross NUM picket lines? For a week before the TUC met at Brighton there was talk of a monster picket on the Conference itself. The thousands who had swayed and booted their way through Notts and Derby pit-towns would smash up Brighton. (Actually, if anywhere must be smashed up I would as lief it were that nasty little Soho-on-Sea. Correction, no town should be smashed up, but that blowsy confection of fake-antique dealers and the gay scene could do with a wash.)

Talk of smashing was all that was needed for the TUC to make its services available, while its leading figures privately briefed anyone in sight on their private loathing of Arthur Scargill and their private disgust at his tactics. What is the nature of the man and his powers if opposition to him within the trade unions has to be voiced as if it came from an underground movement? The answer came from Eric Hammond, the new leader (following Frank Chapple) of the Electricians Union, who dares to express his loathing of Scargill publicly. "Most union leaders", said Mr Hammond, "are looking over their shoulders at their militants. I'm looking over mine at my members. . . ."

The elaborate democratic procedures of Chapple's EEPTU, working on a computer which twice a week updates membership data to within 96% accuracy, is the clear result of their having once been run, 25 years ago, by a group of corrupt, ballot-stuffing Stalinists. Even so, in the need for Mr David Basnett of the General Workers and Mr Gavin Laird of the Engineers to deliver abject, prideless little speeches of submission I don't really believe. Fear of prospective mayhem played a part; the inadequacy of the personalities of some of those submitting played a further part.

But violence itself is the phenomenon which should preoccupy us. It is the coming of something which has been feared for a decade—the transfer into the streets of our paramilitary football terraces. It had been thought that these atrocious louts would find expression through the National Front or some other vehicle of neofascism. Instead, the people who have made Association Football unbearable have set about doing as much for industrial relations. If Scargill were a good Marxist, and he is far too much the child of the Me-generation to be that, he would appreciate that objective factors determine events. Charismatic leaders can only be the parasites of history.

Now, there has been a sociological trend in the last ten to fifteen years—for crowds at soccer matches to surrender the order and good conduct which were usual not very long ago, and turn into chanting bands in pursuit of other supporters to beat up. The scenes at an International in Paris this spring and rather earlier in Turin, and the habit of going armed with lengths of pipe, iron bars, and large and small knives represent the latest points on a graph which looks like the edge of primitive man's flint axe. Upon that sociological trend Arthur Scargill, that finished primitive, is straphanging. Whatever he may have done to incite, however much money he may have put up from union funds actually to pay flying pickets their *per diem*, he could not operate without the earlier breakdown in standards of behaviour which has made large groups receptive to the idea of smashing up things.

We have lost a good many inhibitions lately, and never have inhibitions looked so good. Society stays together from an irrational urge to conform. And how many folios have been printed, sneering at, kicking the feet from under conformity, deriding inhibition, bidding us toughly to let it all hang out? There are a thousand symptoms of what happens when the irrational wisdom of convention and good manners are surrendered. The dead drug-taker on his mortuary slab is one

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of them; Scargill's witless militia shouting obscenities at "pigs" and "scabs" is another. When one order collapses a new conformity emerges: obedience to the wishes of the stronger enforcer. You stay away from football matches—and if you chance to see them in the street, you don't argue with the fans as they roar along and gaily kick in the odd window. Similarly, if you are a member of the TUC you submit and accommodate.

Weakness, however, hardly stops at the TUC. The present Government has handled the pit strike in a way which gets credit only for the resources of police drafted to stand in the way of the Street-Captain and his troops. But having given themselves new legislation on which punitive actions could have been brought costing the NUM millions of pounds for illegal picketing, they have not chosen, have not *dared*, to use the legal instruments they themselves created. The National Coal Board will litigate or not litigate as the Government says Yea or Nay, but Ministers have hidden behind the nominal autonomy of the NCB which provides them with the usual legal forms of words convincing to nobody but a politician or a civil servant.

At the same time we have Peter Walker, Minister for Fuel and Power, that curvilinear politician, preposterously advocating yet greater investment in the coal industry, though he and his department know that past promises on investment have been over-performed and past promises on productivity under-performed largely because 15% of the older and most inefficient pits devour £330 million of the subsidy. The Government has authorised the NCB to offer generous severance terms (or job guarantees) on near-football-pool terms, essentially because fear of the miners' old-style industrial power is ingrained in government and reinforced by Scargill's new brutalism.

The Government stays its hand. It hasn't surrendered yet, if only because it is every bit as fearful of what the public and its own supporters (who hold identical views on the topic of the frantic Captain) would do to it.

In truth everyone is afraid of violence, and accordingly it is good and practical politics to use violence. The worst that can happen to Scargill is that TUC support will prove ineffective, as so many trade union leaders devoutly hope. But in this case he will have open to him the old *Dolchstoss* argument. "We would have won, but the cravenness of our own supposed allies let us down. We have been betrayed by the lickspittles of capitalism." (He can continue eloquently in this semi-automated, visitor-from-Uranus vein for hours.) There is a tolerable chance that he will take out of talks a fudge so loaded his way—what else is the wretched Walker for?—that it can be represented as a victory for the class struggle, led by a militant vanguard.

If that is the way it goes, I would think that a sociological trend will have been given a helpful shove on its way. Violence works (and the threat of more of the same); the fire next time. Morally, for the sake of humane behaviour, this fearful, prancing little Fifth-Monarchist among trade-unionists, this vicious exploiter of viciousness, ought to be thumped into submission—with writs, with sequestration, if necessary with the criminal law imposing exemplary punishments. We have come past the stage where we need to worry about making martyrs, for there is a substantially greater risk of making winners. By the obvious and available constitutional means which it has created and feared to use, the Government should defeat an indefensible strike and the reprehensible means by which it is being conducted.

About one thing Scargill is entirely right. You can have extra-parliamentary action, and if you pull the right shots you can destroy, if not quite a Government, then that Government's will to function at all. I also have this old-fashioned feeling that if one is up against something inherently evil (as the present campaign is, and the old Upper Clyde strike most emphatically was not), then on grounds of morality you actually ought to resist it. Governments are feeble things, given to bullying and cringing by turns, but if they don't understand this point they will, no matter what their nominal political strength, turn themselves into creatures who have been measured and found inadequate.

The old-fashioned murderer, as all our books tell us, came to a sticky end, often after an affecting show of piety in the shadow of the gallows. A political equivalent for Scargill—comprehensive, unambiguous, unequivocal defeat—is, as used to be said, "the unique deterrent."

Paris Notebook

By Jean-François Revel

A "Post-Yalta" Europe?



Did Europeans know what kind of Europe they were voting for on 17 June? Does Europe have a clear picture of itself? Not yet, and it is probably that lack of precision that is responsible for the conspicuous lack of interest shown by the electorate—which stems, I think, more from perplexity than from indifference. Why is the vision Europe has of itself a confused one? To understand this, I think we have to go back to the origins of that vision—that is to say (*"monstres dont á regret je cite ici le nom"*[1]) to Yalta and its ratification at Helsinki in 1975.

What, you may ask, is the point of indulging in diplomatic archaeology? There are three reasons: it was at Yalta, in 1945, that the problems were born with which we are still living, namely the subjection of central Europe to the Soviets and the division of Germany; it was at Yalta that most of the mistaken ideas and false attitudes crystallised that have continued to influence European diplomacy to this day; and it is Yalta, finally, that Western leaders ritually invoke today whenever they need to justify their passivity in the face of some fresh act of Soviet aggression.

Occasionally one of them will speak, as President Mitterrand

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did in 1981, of the need to "get away from Yalta (*sortir de Yalta*)." But get away from which Yalta? The reality or the legend? Getting away from the real Yalta would mean calling into question the Soviet stranglehold over Central Europe, which is a product neither of regular treaties enjoying any kind of validity in international law, nor of a free choice on the part of the states concerned, nor of their peoples' right to self-determination. Getting away from the encrusted legend would mean stamping out the myth of a partition of Europe between the Soviets and the British and Americans, a "condominium" allotting to the Americans and to the Soviets spheres of influence on which their respective preponderances would bear in an identical fashion.

So is it a question of "throwing off the yoke" of this supposedly existent "condominium"? In other words, of promoting (in opposition to the Americans) a neutralist Western Europe (which would in all likelihood promptly become subject to the Soviet Union). Or is it a question of ending the lie of partition? To clear up and, if possible, exorcise Yalta we must also—I would even say, first and foremost—take account of the viewpoint of the peoples of central Europe. They consider that they were simply handed over to Stalin by the British and Americans. One cannot blame them for feeling that way. But apparently, given the military situation on the war-torn ground in 1945, the Western Allies were scarcely in a position to stand in the way of Soviet ambitions.

As Moscow saw it, every country liberated by the Red Army had to become Communist. "Anyone who occupies a territory imposes his own social system on it, for as far as his army is able to advance", Stalin told Djilas in April 1945. So the Allies applied themselves to containing this annexationist thrust. As Jean Laloy has put it (in an essay in *Commentaire*), at Yalta "*il y eut non partage, mais barrage.*" Some would say the barrage was a somewhat elastic one, but it must be remembered that in Stalin's mind the occupation of Central Europe was only the first step towards the domination of the whole of the continent. Hence Moscow's opposition to—and the frantic campaigns of the Western Communist parties against—the Marshall Plan, the North Atlantic Pact, and later on the Common Market—everything, in short, that helped put Western Europe out of the Soviet reach.

Is it illusory to think that the British and Americans could have achieved more at Yalta than they did? Had the Western negotiators confined themselves to a realistic analysis of their forces in relation to those of their voracious ally in order to negotiate with him as tightly as possible, they would have taken more precautions and been in less of a hurry to consign the future of so many lands and peoples to Stalin's sole care. But they arrived in Yalta already imbued with a whole philosophy concerning the democratic vocation of the Soviet Union, Stalin's generosity, his word being his bond, his fundamental moderation, and so on.

These fine feelings hardly predisposed them to fight tooth-and-nail for the nations that the Red Army was busy liberating from Nazi occupation only in order to occupy them itself. The novel feature of Yalta was that it was, I believe, the first time in the history of diplomacy that a body of negotiators so completely cast caution to the winds and themselves became, among themselves, the finest advocates of an opponent's position. Their rose-tinted vision of the Soviet system and of Stalin as an individual was so far removed from the real facts as to be often comical. The quotations are legion—from the lips of Roosevelt, Hopkins, Eden, Harriman, Davies, and Stettinius, either at the time of Yalta or shortly afterwards—that set one cackling with laughter before they plunge one into despair.

To be sure, it is unfair to condemn a policy in the light of elements accessible only to hindsight. But the Yalta negotiators overlooked other very tangible facts of which they had, or could have had, knowledge. It was their own semi-ideological prejudices, not the balance of forces, that prevented them from taking these into account. In this way—and this is probably the key fact about Yalta—they established a pattern of negotiation with the Soviet Union that set a fashion in the West which is still with us today.

That pattern is founded on the principle that we Westerners have to put ourselves in the Soviets' place and probe their intentions, not in order to be able to defend ourselves more effectively but in order to predict the concession that is going to dispose them favourably towards us—all in the hope that this may induce them to reciprocate. According to this idea, the responsibility for starting things always lies with the West. It is incumbent on us to detect the causes of Soviet irritation and to put them right, even at the expense of our own security. Above all, we must guard against casting the slightest sacrilegious glance over the Soviets' *chasse gardée* for fear of "violating agreements" about private hunting preserves.

On the other hand, when the Soviet Union for its part goes back on its word, invades or destabilises a country, or commits some other particularly nasty act, that apparently violates no agreement. On the contrary, it probably stems from the West having failed in our duty at some point or other, or let the USSR down in some way in terms of what it expected of us. This framework of East-West relations was erected at Yalta. The method reached its culmination at Helsinki in 1975 and in the "foolish years" that followed.

In essence Yalta, as ratified by Helsinki, was a deal by which the democracies ingloriously sacrificed the freedom and national independence of Central Europe in exchange for peace of mind for themselves and Soviet non-aggression with regard to Western Europe. It is abundantly clear today that the deal has fallen through.[2]

The deal has fallen through, first of all, because the peoples of Central Europe will have none of it. For more than 30 years they have been in a permanent state of unrest, resistance, and open revolt. In fact the continent of Europe is divided not into two but into three. Between the Soviet Union and ourselves there is *une troisième Europe* that will not give up and whose

[1] "Monsters I am loath to name here", Racine, *Bérénice*, II, ii.

[2] This was the subject of a challenging conference organised in Paris on 14 and 15 May this year by the European section of *Résistance internationale*.

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chronic rebellion will always unsettle the West's compromises with the imperial occupiers. It was the insubordination of the Polish people, starting in 1980, that dealt the death-blow to the pseudo-*détente* of the Carter and Brandt unrealism. We could neither assist nor forsake the Poles, but nor could we believe any longer that the Soviets were observing the Helsinki Agreements. Let us entertain no further illusions: the third Europe is never going to calm down.

The compromise has also failed because the USSR has never given up its aggressive policy towards Western Europe, contrary to what its supporters claim—not even at the height of so-called "*détente*." The one-sided "armaments race" in which the initiative was taken by the East; threats and manipulation of terrorist and pacifist movements; invasion of the territorial waters of a neutral country, Sweden, by shoals of submarines; rampant technological theft and espionage; destabilisation *via* the South (in Africa, the Lebanon); overt attempts to influence electoral processes—one loses count of all the methods used by the USSR to frustrate the will to political independence in democratic Europe and sap its determination to defend itself.

So, clearly, the vote on 17 June—despite the inevitable overlapping of home affairs and European affairs—should be taken as much more than a vote about the Common Market. European public opinion and French politicians with views as divergent, in other spheres, as Jacques Chirac, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, and François Mitterrand are aware of the need for Western Europe to have a unified political will and a common defence.

WHAT MIGHT BE THE AIMS of such a "post-Yalta Europe"? Let me list five. Firstly, to deprive the Soviet Union, by our firmness, of all hope of any Westward expansion of its power or influence. Secondly, to organise and strengthen Europe and its defence to such effect that the USSR understands that that hope really is chimerical and that *Realpolitik* dictates that it should be abandoned. Thirdly, to wake up to the fact that Soviet acts of aggression in other continents are equally acts of aggression against ourselves and to let the USSR know that we hold it responsible for the actions of its proxies and mercenaries. Contrary to a cherished illusion, there are no specific "North-South" relations, at least none that cannot ineluctably be recast at East-West relations. Fourthly, to sustain and propagate democratic movements in the world. And, finally, to build, on these foundations, a true *détente* with the USSR, that is to say a *détente* based not on the abuse of trust and on Soviet extortion but on genuine negotiations, aiming as far as possible to give help to the peoples of central Europe and to settle the open German question as a matter of the first importance.

Yalta was never the inauguration of some "*politique des blocs*", of two symmetrical blocs, but the birth certificate of the only real bloc, namely the Soviet bloc. To give unambiguous notice of this new analysis of East-West relations, there is no longer any reason why the West should not officially abrogate the Yalta and Helsinki Agreements. The Soviets have never observed them in any case; and the obligations they contracted

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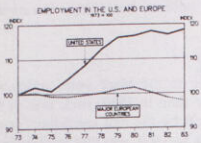
under them have never existed in their eyes. Those agreements are therefore *de facto* null and void. Why not say so?

American Dynamics



AT THE Democratic Party Convention in San Francisco there were 3,850 delegates and 13,000 journalists, or 3.37 journalists per delegate, to cover a non-event. We knew in advance which candidate (Mondale) would receive the nomination, as decided by the well-established system of primary elections, and it has always been a foregone conclusion that the Republican candidate would be Ronald Reagan.

In fact the real information about the United States is to be found not in the sideshows which the party conventions have become, but in a fat, invaluable, annual publication: *The Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1984 edition. That is the place to look for the means to gauge the evolution of American society since 1970, since the *Abstract* incorporates the findings of the census of 1980, compared with those of the 1970 census, and of course it includes all the other statistics of the period 1980–84. Undoubtedly it is these basic realities, more than anything else, which will decide the outcome of November's presidential election. Yet bear in mind that in all democracies the voters make their choice as a function of their real situation, certainly, but also as a function of the image they have of it, or which has been fashioned for them.

In 1981 and 1982 the American economy endured the most painful moments of the crisis which set in at the start of the 1970s; and on the other hand in 1983 and 1984 it has achieved a recovery which sets these two years above the highest growth rates of the post-War period. President Reagan will therefore have presided over a violent contrast: the two years of the crisis's lowest recession, followed by the two years of the strongest recovery. In fact the highest mean economic growth rate took place, in the United States as in Europe, during the decade 1960–70: it stood at 3.9% per annum. Growth then fell to an annual mean of 3.1% between 1970 and 1980. For let us not forget that what we call *la crise* was never anything worse than a deceleration in growth. This fell to zero in the two dark years of 1981 and 1982, only to shoot up to 6.2 in 1983 and to the equivalent of 9.7% per annum in the first quarter of 1984! According to the latest estimate, the rise in GNP should therefore come to around 7.5% for the full year. This activity naturally affects employment: 6.5 million Americans have found or regained work since the start of the recovery, and 1,350,000 in May and June of 1984 alone, according to an announcement by the Department of Labour on 6 July. The unemployment rate, which had risen above 10%, has recently fallen to 7.1%, an important figure in electoral terms because it is lower than when Ronald Reagan took office.

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unemployment are falling together, in contrast to the years 1970–80, when they were growing simultaneously, and one might conclude that Reagan could look upon his electoral campaign and his prospects for re-election with some serenity. Yet to convert this "economic miracle" into electoral victory is not so easy a matter as people think. Logic may require it, but there are a number of factors which could thwart that logic. Some of these factors are rational, others less so—which does not prevent them from influencing public opinion.

FIRST AMONG the rational factors is the fact that despite the crisis (admittedly sporadic) of the years 1970–80, in the long term these were years of progress and improvement both in American standards of living and in the quality of life. Consequently, Americans may be led into relativising the present recovery in spite of its exceptional vigour, and perceiving it merely as a return to the norm, after the two disastrous years of 1981 and 1982. The negative features of the past decade are in fact outnumbered by the positive features, although the press and research institutes have stressed or announced the former more loudly. One of the most meticulous observers of American society and its movements of opinion, Ben Wattenberg, has just completed a book with the bizarre title of *The Good News Is the Bad News Is Wrong*. Not all the bad news of the past decade has been wrong, alas, but nor has it been so tragic as has been thought. Here are some examples.

Throughout this period there has been criticism of the deterioration in the environment, increasing air and water pollution, rising radioactivity, the toxicity of some new medicines, and more and more unhealthy living conditions. Yet since 1970 life expectancy has grown faster than at any other moment in the history of the United States. Furthermore, this gain derives from prolonging the lives of adults, not from the near-elimination of infant mortality, as was the case during the first part of the century. An adult of 40 now has a life expectancy nearly five years greater than in 1950 and three years greater than in 1970. If modern American man is living in a more and more unhealthy and rotten environment, how is it that he is living longer and longer?

Again, twelve years ago Paul Ehrlich, the Stanford University biologist, published a famous best-seller called *The Population Bomb*. Straight away a "Population Crisis Committee" was founded, with the object of averting a demographic explosion in the United States. And this at the very moment when the birthrate was starting to fall, eventually to reach the same low level which now prevails in Europe. Not that this counts as good news either, nor does it confirm the explosionist alarums of yesterday's futurologists.

The average per capita income grew by 2% per annum between 1970 and 1980, falling by 21% compared with the previous decade (2.6%)—which is not pleasant, but which amounts to a slower advance, not a retreat. As for employment, it went from 81 million jobs in 1970 to nearly 106 million in July 1984. So in fourteen years the American economy has created 25 million new jobs, more than the entire French working population. Over the same period the gross number of jobs fell by 3 million in Europe. The American recovery is benefiting all categories, young people and blacks included. Yet even if employment and the standard of living have made remarkable progress in the last two years, this may not be considered by the voters a fact so miraculous that they owe some special thanks to Reagan. Between 1976 and 1980, in the thick of the second oil crisis, America created 11 million new jobs, rising from 90 to 101 million, but Jimmy Carter was beaten all the same.

REAGAN'S FATE also depends on the black vote, which will count more heavily this year than in 1980, since one of the results of the campaign fought by the first candidate for the Democratic nomination, Jesse Jackson, was that some millions more blacks than usual were registered on the electoral lists. This greater involvement will not work in favour of Reagan, who has cut welfare spending (this mainly benefits the blacks, who constitute the majority of the poorer categories). That Reagan has in fact not reduced welfare spending in absolute terms but slowed down their annual *rate of increase* (as so many countries are forced to do in the present economic atmosphere) will not endear him any the more to the categories concerned. The sum earmarked for welfare spending in the budget for 1981 was 367 billion dollars; in the budget for 1985 it is 403 billion dollars (in constant terms at 1983 dollar value). But the predominant electoral concept may well remain the quite irrational one of massive reductions.

The average incomes of blacks in the United States have grown slightly more quickly since 1970 than those of whites, but starting from a much lower level; and it remains very much lower than the national average. The recession of 1981–82 hit them harder than the rest of the population, since their rate of unemployment is double the white rate. Unemployment among young blacks accounts for 29% of the 20–24 age-group. For comparison, remember that according to the latest OECD statistics (published on 21 June 1984), unemployment affected 24.7% of young people in France, with a forecast rise to 28.5% in 1985. The United States is at present the only OECD country where youth unemployment is diminishing: it has dropped from 17 to 13% since 1982 for the whole population. Thanks to the US welfare programmes, the percentage of the population living below the so-called "poverty line" has been reduced by two-thirds in a quarter of a century. It stood at 6.8% of the population in 1979, rising after 1980 and then falling again; it now stands at 8% compared with 22.4% in 1959. A high proportion of welfare spending goes to subsidies to students. There were 522,000 black students receiving higher education in 1970 and 1,127,000 in 1982. France has only 850,000 students, yet the total black population of the United States is roughly half that of the whole French nation.

THUS, DESPITE the economic crisis, and all the more so with the recovery, American society—like all societies which are allowed to respond to the market—remains an enormous equalising melting-pot, a powerful machine for the manufacture of the middle class.

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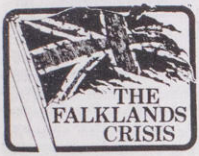
It will need to cultivate that talent assiduously in the years to come. For the big new factor of the last ten years for the United States, alongside the fall in population, is the rise in immigration. Between 1970 and 1980 the United States received some 4,493,000 legal immigrants and between 3 and 5 million *clandestins*, illegals, which means from 8 to 10 million new nationals in ten years—the most powerful injection from abroad since the great waves before 1914. But most important, until 1960 some 82% of immigrants were of European origin; since 1970 the figure has been 18%! All the rest come from Latin America and Asia. If the present trend goes on, and it is hard to see what might change it, within a century, *less than half* of America's citizens will be of European origin—and that may contain some historic implications for Europe.

"Finlandising" the Falklands?

A Baltic Precedent—By James Cable



"It is evident", wrote an Argentine ex-Ambassador in 1982, "that since the 2nd of April, still more since the 14th of June, the government of Great Britain is light-years away from the possibility of envisaging any solution based on total or partial recognition of Argentine sovereignty."[1] Bonifacio del Carril, at least, has clearly recognised that the war transformed an already daunting diplomatic environment. What General Haig once suggested or Mr Pym may have considered now lies among the wreckage on the ocean floor. Face-saving formulae no longer offer, if indeed they ever did, any escape from the triangular clash of interest, emotion, and sheer distrust. There may well be no way through this thicket, but Argentina could at least seek a different path in her continuing quest for sovereignty.

Señor Carril, however, did not suggest that his own government was any nearer to accepting the need to restrict that sovereignty by full autonomy for the islanders, that other obvious ingredient in any compromise that may be conceivable, not today, but after a fundamental change in the political and emotional climate. But for such a compromise there is a remarkably similar precedent.

In January 1918 another island people had to cry for help. The foreign soldiery, they complained, were behaving like savages in a conquered country. "The islanders are in constant fear for their lives and property."[2] The 20,000 inhabitants of the Åland archipelago of 9,000 islands[3] at the mouth of the Gulf of Bothnia may, it has subsequently been suggested, have been crying out before they had been seriously hurt; but they had some reason for anxiety. The 2,000 soldiers of the Russian garrison had joined the Bolsheviks and were imperfectly controlled by a revolutionary committee of uncertain intentions. The arrival of White irregulars from mainland Finland, then ravaged by civil war, was initially welcomed, but led to actual fighting on the islands and brought rival contingents of Finnish Reds to the assistance of the Russians. The Swedish-speaking islanders found it natural to appeal to Sweden, ruler of the islands from 1157 until their cession (together with Finland itself) to the Russian Czar in 1809.

The Swedes came, evacuated the hard-pressed Finnish Whites, and gave the islanders fleeting reassurance—only to be replaced by the Germans. These cleared the islands of Russians and Finnish Reds before leaving for mainland Finland to help the Whites. Fighting on the islands was over; but five armed incursions in as many months had been too many for the peace-loving inhabitants. They renewed their appeal, first expressed in an impromptu plebiscite at the end of December 1917, for "union with Sweden."

Finnish objections were vehement. When Finland declared her independence of Russia in December 1917, Finns of every shade of opinion took it for granted that the new state should include the entire territory administered by the Russian Governor-General in Helsingfors. (Independent Argentinians, a century earlier, had similarly considered themselves sole heirs to the jurisdiction of the Spanish Viceroy in Buenos Aires.)

Although the Ålanders pursued their objective by reiterated appeals to Sweden, to the Great Powers, to the Peace Conference in Paris and finally to the League of Nations, the

Sir James Cable *is a writer on international relations and naval affairs; his books include "The Royal Navy and the Siege of Bilbao" (Cambridge University Press, 1979), "Gunboat Diplomacy 1919-1979" (n.e. 1981), "Britain's Naval Future" (1983), and "Diplomacy at Sea" which Macmillan Press are to publish early next year. Sir James retired from the Diplomatic Service in 1980 as Ambassador to Finland, having held various posts in Europe, South America, and South-east Asia. From 1971-75 he was Counsellor, Contingency Studies, Head of Planning Staff, and Assistant Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. His previous contribution to* Encounter, *"Who was Surprised in the Falklands, and Why?", appeared in the September-October 1982 issue.*

[1] Bonifacio del Carril, *El Futuro de las Malvinas* (Buenos Aires, 1982), p. 50.

[2] Anna Bondestam, *Åland vintern 1918* (Ålands Kulturstiftelse, Mariehamn, 1972), p. 59.

[3] According to the Finnish Embassy in London there are only 6500, but the Åland Islands are as hard to count as Finnish lakes.

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outcome was predictable. The Swedes gave constant diplomatic support, but shrank from actual conflict with Finland. The Great Powers considered their own political interests, and these determined the eventual decision by the Council of the League in 1921: sovereignty to Finland; a large measure of autonomy for the islanders; and demilitarisation of the islands. The Council of the League called it "an acceptable compromise based on considerations of common sense and political expediency."[4]

AND THE PRINCIPLE OF self-determination? The Ålanders and their Swedish backers (both of whom wanted a plebiscite to settle the issue) constantly appealed to that principle, for it commanded general lip-service after its proclamation by President Woodrow Wilson in his famous "Fourteen Points." Few members of the League relished the idea of its application to their own territories, and the Belgian and Swiss members of the Commission of Enquiry appointed by the Council had particular reasons for repudiating any right to "linguistic secession." The third member was American (even though the United States had not joined the League), but he gave open priority to the need to strengthen Finland as a bulwark against Bolshevism. As a Finnish writer of Åland origin said many years later:

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Today, of course, the enshrinement of self-determination in the Charter of the United Nations notwithstanding, even three million is often not enough, much less the 1,800 in the Falklands. They have so far been more fortunate in their chosen patron; but the little support Britain won from international opinion in 1982 was for her response to aggression, not for her rejection of the crude Argentine doctrine that "*en las islas Malvinas no hay pueblo que pueda autodeterminarse* (in the Malvinas there is no people capable of self-determination)."[5] And from the United Nations the Falklanders can expect only considerations of political expediency remarkably similar to those which prevailed in 1921—largely at British instigation, incidentally. (The British delegate, a little conscience-stricken, then consoled himself with the comment: "I really think we have avoided a war between Finland and Sweden.")

Although the Åland compromise of 1921 was accepted by both Finland and Sweden, it remained an irritant in their relations for many years and initially commanded only grudging acquiescence from the islanders. In the years before the Second World War the Ålanders were disturbed by mainland antagonism between Finnish- and Swedish-speaking Finns. They were involved in many fiscal disputes with the central government in Helsinki, and in the late 1930s had stubbornly to resist Finnish proposals (then endorsed by the Swedish government for interested reasons of their own) for the remilitarisation of the islands. Nevertheless, Sundblom and Björkman—the island leaders arrested by the Finns for high treason in 1920, but pardoned by the Finnish Government before they could begin their prison sentences—spent all those years presiding over, respectively, the parliament and the autonomous administration of the Ålands. Even if it took Molotov's equally self-interested intervention (which frightened off the Swedes) on 31 May 1939 to put a stop to Finnish plans for peace-time remilitarisation, the islanders got their way. During Finland's two wars with the Soviet Union, the Ålanders suffered little, escaped conscription, and provided only a voluntary Home Guard for local defence.[6]

THE SUCCESS OF the Åland compromise naturally owed much to the national characteristics of those concerned. Swedes and Ålanders are pacific people and the Finns are law-abiding. The extensive privileges of the islanders were respected. They elected their own parliament, which chose the island administration. Some powers were reserved to the Finnish President (represented by a Governor who had to be Swedish-speaking and chosen in agreement with the Åland parliament); others were shared. But the official language was Swedish, and the control exercised by the Ålanders over the acquisition of either property or the island franchise effectively prevented the feared influx of Finnish-speakers and preserved the special character of the island community. Since 1955 Åland has had its own flag; the inhabitants still escape Finnish

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IT IS EASY to dismiss the relevance of all these achievements by remarking that Finland, unlike Argentina, is one of the last civilised states left in today's intemperate world. It was not always so. The Åland leader Sundblom may have exaggerated, in December 1917, when he deplored anarchy and violence as natural ingredients of Finno-Ugrian blood; but he was not entirely mistaken. The Finns had earned their reputation as "the Spaniards of the North." The Civil War of 1917-18 not only caused over 31,000 deaths, [8] but had grim and lingering consequences; it is still a controversial subject today. In proportion to the populations involved, the killing and persecution of Finns by Finns was an even more obvious deterrent in 1921 to an Åland compromise than is, today, the Argentine record of recent and savage civil strife.

Nor was the existence in mainland Finland of a Swedish-speaking minority any more reassuring to the Ålanders than the smaller (relatively as well as absolutely) English-speaking community in contemporary Argentina. On the contrary, from Mannerheim onwards, many of the Finnish leaders who were most insistent on unfettered Finnish sovereignty over the islands were Swedish-speaking.

On grounds of pure moral principle (seldom a significant factor in international relations), there is not all that much to choose between Finnish attitudes in 1921 and Argentine in 1984. Both were asserting legalistic claims, stemming from *raison d'état*, to islands whose inhabitants did not want them. Both had rather poor records for the treatment of their own nationals. Both argued that later political developments had cancelled out the past and given them new credentials.

The questions arising from this comparison are not for today, when none of those concerned would consider them, but for some distant tomorrow. Would Argentina ever agree to the kind of restrictions on her sovereignty which Finland accepted? Would either the Falklanders or their British supporters ever trust Argentina to keep her word as Finland did? And how might such a compromise be approached?

On this last point the Åland precedent is again suggestive. The Finnish parliament passed the first law granting autonomy to the Åland Islands on 6 May 1920, six weeks before the dispute was even referred to the League of Nations and more than a year before the Council eventually reached a decision. This step was much criticised at the time as a tactical error, for the continuing opposition of the Ålanders and Swedish diplomatic pressure inevitably persuaded the Council of the League to treat the 1920 Law as a minimum, requiring substantial improvement if an acceptable compromise was to be reached. What the Finns lost in bargaining terms, however, they may well have gained by persuading third parties of their good faith. Legislation already on the statute book lent added credence to promises to improve it—and these promises were kept.

Whether similar action by Argentina would ever suffice to establish her good faith will naturally depend on the pattern of her political and administrative conduct, both at home and abroad, during the intervening period. There is a considerable credibility gap to be bridged, and it will take more than words to do it. But, if this vexatious dispute is ever to reach an acceptable compromise, Argentina will have to admit that autonomy for the islanders is a condition for Argentine sovereignty over the islands and to take the initiative in putting her acceptance beyond all reasonable doubt.

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Emotion, fortunately for us all, is transitory in its intensity. But neglecting the force of emotion will destroy the validity of any intellectual equation. Unless the conflicting emotions [10] of the Falklands dispute can be resolved, no agreement is conceivable. At present, by the brute force of historical circumstance, the ball is in the Argentine court. They must either take an initiative, painful as it may be, which is capable of breaking the emotional deadlock, or they must be content to tough it out. The future is always uncertain and the costs of inaction would not fall on Argentina alone. But Argentina is the *demandeur*, and hers must be the first move.

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On this last point the Åland precedent is again suggestive. The Finnish parliament passed the first law granting autonomy to the Åland Islands on 6 May 1920, six weeks before the dispute was even referred to the League of Nations and more than a year before the Council eventually reached a decision. This step was much criticised at the time as a tactical error, for the continuing opposition of the Ålanders and Swedish diplomatic pressure inevitably persuaded the Council of the League to treat the 1920 Law as a minimum, requiring substantial improvement if an acceptable compromise was to be reached. What the Finns lost in bargaining terms, however, they may well have gained by persuading third parties of their good faith. Legislation already on the statute book lent added credence to promises to improve it—and these promises were kept.

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outcome was predictable. The Swedes gave constant diplomatic support, but shrank from actual conflict with Finland. The Great Powers considered their own political interests, and these determined the eventual decision by the Council of the League in 1921: sovereignty to Finland; a large measure of autonomy for the islanders; and demilitarisation of the islands. The Council of the League called it "an acceptable compromise based on considerations of common sense and political expediency."[4]

AND THE PRINCIPLE OF self-determination? The Ålanders and their Swedish backers (both of whom wanted a plebiscite to settle the issue) constantly appealed to that principle, for it commanded general lip-service after its proclamation by President Woodrow Wilson in his famous "Fourteen Points." Few members of the League relished the idea of its application to their own territories, and the Belgian and Swiss members of the Commission of Enquiry appointed by the Council had particular reasons for repudiating any right to "linguistic secession." The third member was American (even though the United States had not joined the League), but he gave open priority to the need to strengthen Finland as a bulwark against Bolshevism. As a Finnish writer of Åland origin said many years later:

> "when a group of 30,000 seeks to follow its own way, we speak superciliously of 'separatism'; when three million people do the same, we play *Finlandia*."

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A Special Book Section

Philosophy & Psychology

A Portrait of Teiresias

Steiner's Antigones—By RUTH PADEL



READING is making yourself vulnerable. So says George Steiner in *Language and Silence* (1979). Certainly reading *him* you must agree to be vulnerable, or else, as some do, you resist altogether. For one thing, you have to endure the fact that you have a far shorter reading-range than he, and always will. But the rewards of your vulnerability are immense. He lets you see further into the dark—and also into the strength of vulnerability—than you have gone by yourself. He is, after all, a priest of reading, with all the power that priestly vulnerability can earn.

Like all his books, *Antigones*[1] is fundamentally about reading. For Steiner, texts exist; demonically. The particular text to be read here came into existence, in Greek, as long ago as the 430s BC. It has been read, reworked, reinterpreted, lived and lived through, ever since. Steiner uses it two ways. Millennia of philosophic and poetic attention beat upon and illuminate the text. But simultaneously he lets it illuminate the length of European reading.

Antigones is in three parts. You might say it has Classical sonata-form. The first contains the greatest themes and their most grand statement. Here Steiner discusses formative figures of 19th-century Germanic and indeed European culture: Hegel, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Goethe, and—with special magic—Hölderlin. He shows how Sophocles' *Antigone* inflamed and inhabited their philosophy and poetry, and also how philosophies shifted interpretation of the text itself. His reading of these writers is detailed, steady, and exciting. The texture of this first movement is intense but even; all in a grand and major key.

The second movement is more mystical, more loosely structured. We enter a more speculative, centrifugal mode. Steiner passes to France. We move backwards and forwards in time. One of the book's themes, in fact, is the tension (which literary history must observe) between timelessness and particularity of time and place. He introduces myriad *Antigones*, with photographs. He brings before us the *personae* of the play (with one exception) and their after-lives from Euripides through Brecht to Derrida. Within this section rises the book's central hypothesis: that in our Western psyches Greek mythic figures map out the figures of our speech and also the categories through which we experience the world. They still provide our imagination with its syntax, whether we are introduced to them personally, through education, or not.

The third movement is at first hearing more melodically fragmented. It is a movement of variations, cumulatively intricate. This is Steiner's reading of professional scholars, in their private confrontations with the text. He moves through successive passages of *Antigone*, interweaving those technical discussions with the readings of Hegel, Kierkegaard, Heidegger. Just as in the first movement *Antigone* was present in his reading of these writers, so their writings are alive in his reading of Sophocles now. Like any composer, he brings back phrase-patterns from his first movement to colour thematic material in the third. One effect of his interweaving is to show both how necessary and how limited (on its own) philological reading can be. Such reading gives a solid basis to philosophic uses of the text; but without philosophy it can mistake trees for the wood. The last word in line 423: should its last letter be *a* only? or *as*? It is Steiner who shows how "far-reaching" this distinction is, in terms of emotional and moral weight. But then he undercuts the problem by pointing out how crucial all uncertainty is to the design of this particular passage: its textual uncertainties are "symptomatic of the intended and necessary complication of the dramatic episode and its recital." Then, suddenly and convincingly, we hear how very suspect any interpretation is. Interpretation "stands in the way" of the text.

Steiner acquiesces in that activity, of course. Let us stand, he says almost shyly, in the way of more passages. It is all we can do. What he asks is that we do it responsibly, and never think our reading is complete. His own "understandings" are "provisional." "They will change, with age, with my renewed experience of the text. . . . But such changes are no guarantee of a clearer, more adequate grasp." The "hermeneutic motion"[2]—the name he bestowed on our impulse towards a

[1] *Antigones*. By GEORGE STEINER. Oxford University Press, £15.00.
[2] In *After Babel* (1976).

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text, the intimacies we commit with it, and what we carry from it—is a *motum perpetuum*. Since the act of reading means infinite vulnerability to the text, the result of that act, our "reading" of it, is also infinite, and infinitely vulnerable to change.

My reading of *Antigones* is as vulnerable and provisional as any. Steiner himself, by everyday standards, reads consciousness and its history obliquely. He is the author who pictured that history through the developments of artificial lighting: "In what ways have the conventions . . . of linguistic change been modified by the voluntary prolongation of the lit portion of existence?"[3] He licenses our own odd angles to his text, as long as we are responsible about it.

On my reading, then, provisional and oblique as it may be, *Antigones* is the chronicle of an encounter between two absolutely opposed figures; an encounter which lasts all through European history and on into our future. Steiner intermittently treats Sophocles' text itself as a myth which thinks through us. For him, the confrontation of Creon and Antigone packs within itself *the* five major human conflicts: man against woman, maturity against youth, state against individual conscience, living against dead, human against divine. No other text so fuses these five archetypal forms of confrontation.

You might question that "*the*." Why only five? What about, for instance, racial conflict, which informs the confrontations of *Othello* or *The Merchant of Venice*? But I think Steiner wants to concentrate on conflicts which happen—as those of Greek tragedy mostly do—within a single family; and therefore, if we take the family also as model for the psyche, within a single self. It is only special psyches which suffer racial conflict on their own internal stage. Inner conflict, confrontations between aspects of one mind, must be Steiner's final target. Creon and Antigone stand within us. Such a meeting "can take place in the most banal setting. The commonest daylight will do." Steiner's collections of photographs—moments in ballet, opera, theatre, film, in which the two opponents lock their divided gaze—are emblems of an eternal conflict in the European, Greek-made soul. They "embody the Manichean perception of human existence from which dialogue and drama spring." But self-consciousness, as we know it, springs from that perception too.

SELF-DIVISION, THEREFORE, is the master-key to reading, not just the text round which *Antigones* is built, but Steiner's text itself. In his two sections on Hegel (which ought to be given to everyone who cares at all) about tragedy, or Hegel, or philosophy he produces a Hegel using *Antigone* to write towards "self-scission"; who is himself self-divided, through his writing life, about Antigone and what he takes her to embody. A Hegel writing against himself: is there also a Steiner writing against himself? For so much of Steiner's work, Judaism—with its role in European history—is central. Here Steiner shoulders it to the margin. Hebraic thought-patterns

[3] *On Difficulty* (1978).

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appear only in the section on Kierkegaard, as counterpoise to Greece, as alternative model of guilt. In making the *Greek* myths central to our imagining and speaking, Steiner is writing against the story-patterns of both Testaments, New as well as Old. It is true that these were late-comers to Western consciousness. But compared to the myths Sophocles is working with, they are only about 400 years belated. Philo of Alexandria writes on the drunkenness of Noah by the first century BC. Steiner resists them, I guess, in self-scission: because they are so central to himself.

He is writing also against the Shakespeare in himself. He who has dealt so long with Shakespeare[4] concedes here that "Shakespeare's inventions and speech, his dicta, similes, symbols, pervade our culture." To underline that point, he often distorts those dicta himself: "Translation cannot render nor commentary circumscribe. . . ." Yet he makes that concession in reminding us, approvingly, of Wittgenstein's massive *distrust* of Shakespeare as a writer whose world is "impartial, perhaps indifferent, in regard to God." Steiner's present Shakespeare avoids the raw material of myth, attends to "the child in man", refuses "any unification with reality and with it the intolerant immensity of the mythical moment. The *Oresteia*, the *Antigone* . . . *Tristan und Isolde*, lie outside Shakespeare's kaleidoscopic, *secular* humanity." You may agree with this or passionately disagree. But I hear underneath it a self-divided author, who attends so deeply to Shakespeare that although he stays linguistically vulnerable to that extra-ordinary language, he resists the world it comprehends. In *Antigones* he treats that world, like those of both Testaments, as a rival in our psyche to Greek centrality. The Creon of the Bible, the Creon of Shakespeare, are forced aside in the author's allegiances, to make way for the Antigone of ancient Greece. *Antigones* not only chronicles but embodies a conflicted encounter in the outside world, which also stands for conflict in a single self.

THE BOOK'S MAIN ARGUMENT, on which discussion of the many rich issues rests, is as follows. Whenever a society deeply suffers from, or is sharply aware of, any one of these five archetypal conflicts, then *Antigone* lives again. Under such conditions, Sophocles' play is retranslated, interpreted, re-enacted. New versions appear. The play informs real lives, as a story about a brother and sister in Nazi Germany demonstrates. The political and socio-sexual relations, the generation gaps of the day, live through this text and it lives newly through them.

Out of these five conditions of conflict, Steiner spends most of his direct attention on the confrontation between the personal and the political. His chief Creon is Nazi Germany. That, of course, is one reason why he begins the book with 19th-century *German* readings of *Antigone*. The very culture that values Antigone so vehemently in the one century itself embodies her oppressor in the next. Steiner raises implicitly here the question that shadowed *In Bluebeard's Castle* (1971). Do erudition and a passionate absorption in the values which Antigone is read to represent, contain within themselves the seeds of their own barbarous negation? Let her love Hades, then, if she must love, says Creon in Sophocles. German culture acts in *Antigones* as Steiner's emblem of self-scission over time; just as the Berlin Wall is "the *incommunicado* in the politics of man made visible in space."[5]

There is an added twist to this. Steiner argues, convincingly, that *Antigone*'s privileged place in 19th-century German attention was at least partly caused by the impact of the French Revolution on European imagination. The play was superseded in obsessive appeal only in the 20th century by *Oedipus Rex*, after Freud had loosed the Oedipus complex on to the European stage. (These spin-offs from the main argument are fascinating—Steiner suggests an approach to cultural history through a new medium, namely the value which each society places on particular Greek plays.) First, therefore, the *French* crisis sparked off *German* valuing of *Antigone*; then a *German* incarnation of Creon revivified *French* responses to the text, not least by Anouilh. Behind *Antigones* stands the conflict-torn relation of Germany and France.

THERE IS ONE KIND OF CONFLICT, though, and one related mode of reading, which Steiner has left out. He agrees he has; but I think his grounds here (and only here) for doing so are inadequate. I wish he had honoured feminist readings more. He well understands, indeed he assumes it, how in a Greek tragedy the discourse of a woman, speaking out, is in itself a symbol of challenge to some *status quo* from a culture whose institutions aim to keep her in. Our own epoch fulfils abundantly, in its awareness of a relationship between writing and sexual difference, the conditions under which he says *Antigone* emerges; as you might say his own book proves. Steiner himself is responding to the climate of his day. Yet he cites only a review dismissive of feminist observance of the play, at a time when marvellous graduate work is being done (for instance under Mary Jacobus at Cornell) on the presence of *Antigone* in Virginia Woolf's essays and novels. Steiner may think this trivial compared to the internal dialectic of Hegel; I don't. Steiner himself has written tellingly of the differences in male and female discourse and of the way texts are shaped by those differences.[6] *Antigone* is a force in some of the texts which have changed this century's ways of reading women. *The Years*, for instance, contrasts men and women through the way they read—especially the way they read *Antigone*. Man is the scholar, "guardian of beautiful words." Woman upsets ink on her father's history of his college. "Nature did not intend you to be a scholar, my dear", he says as he blots it. Man opens a book "without hurry or flutter"; woman, "to cover her loneliness." Male youth (at Oxbridge) reads *Antigone* thrilled with his own expertise, sipping his father's wine. Woman remembers that play ("She never could remember names") only as "the one about the girl who. . . ." The scholar quotes publicly, in Greek, Antigone's statement, "I was not born for hating-with but

[4] E.g. in *The Death of Tragedy* (1961) and in *After Babel*, Chapter 1.

[5] "A note on *limes* and *translatio*", *PN Review* 37 (1984).

[6] "The Distribution of Discourse", in *On Difficulty*; "Speech as translation", in *After Babel*.

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loving-with." Woman is excited by the sound; he will not tell her what it means. "It's the language", he says. He guards that language from her, ending the novel as the play's desiccated, elderly translator, whose "movements were from habit, not from feeling." Yet *her* lyric, hypnopompic vision of Antigone lies at the novel's heart. Could not the author of *On Difficulty*, whose "Novel-Reader" on the cover was, after all, a woman, have given a little more direct attention to sophisticated feminist readings of this text? They would, after all, support his case.

BUT LET US GO ON to more central areas still. Steiner has always been a master of metaphor. *Metaphora* (a "carrying-across"), trans-lation, re-lation, trans-fer, trans-mission: these movements, embodying a "portage" or passage across some dangerous frontier, with the tragic possibility of breakdown, are passionate links in the chain of all his books. So what are the metaphors in this text which offer us a passage to its heart?

The main image of *Antigones* is a homecoming. Steiner is coming home—to a prime text, to ancient Greece, where European consciousness acquired its grammar, and to Greek scholarship, one of the greatest European institutions, patriarch of all other scholarships and reading modes. For Steiner, Europe *is* reading; is a treasured accumulation of reading strategies. The decline of the West is identical with the attenuation of those strategies. His sophisticated and profound sense of what tragedy may be is interwoven with the tragedy of a "central Europe" which, in Milan Kundera's phrase, "longed to be a condensed version of Europe itself." Steiner's identity was mapped "by Leningrad, Odessa, Prague and Vienna on the one side, and by Frankfurt, Milan and Paris on the other." "Central" Europe must now be for him—so obviously that he need never say so—the archetype of that tragic error or self-scission which invades the history of communication, between persons, states, or different aspects of a self. Old and young, male and female, he said in *After Babel*, use language as a weapon and defence against each other in their "fatal" co-existence.

With *Antigones*, then, he is coming—in a conflicted homecoming—to a conflicted home, to a special "centre" of European imagination: an ancient text which still offers Europe (conflicted down new frontiers from those that mapped it in the past) metaphors and characters for its present stage. On the cover of Steiner's new *Reader*[7] is a photograph of Prague—under snow. A central, tragic city, buried alive; like Antigone. "In Sophocles", he says, "heroism does not blunt tragedy. It makes it more wasteful."

It is in the light of all this—whether artificial or not—that we should take Steiner's suggestion that Greek mythological *personae*, "shadow-myths underneath our metaphors", actually *are* figures in our speech and thought even now; that they live in the relationships we make with each other and ourselves; that some features of our own grammar "cor-

[7] *George Steiner: A Reader*. Penguin Books, £4.95.

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respond, at depths perhaps unrecapturable to formal analysis, to the meeting of sensibility . . . with categories of experience"; and that those features are Greek. No wonder direct confrontation with them, naked in the text of Sophocles, is coming "home."

Steiner's other crucial metaphor, here, is the drawbridge. The "fortress" of the text, the "fortress" of the self, appear in the early parts of the book; towards the end, they are mediated by Coleridge's simile when Steiner quotes it:

> "Between us and the text runs a '*drawbridge* of communication'. . . . Such a bridge can be lifted. If it is, the text is made mute."

The drawbridge metaphor is itself the lowered bridge to Steiner's direct meeting with *Antigone*. It is a sacramental moment in his text. In his Massey Lectures[8] he analysed the theories of Marx, Lévi-Strauss and Freud as if they were mythologies, endeavouring to fill a void left in our understanding of ourselves now that formal religion has largely abandoned us. But in his own vision of what reading is, that vacancy is filled by reading itself. His language for relation with the text is often drawn from humanity's relation with God. "It has, I believe, been given to only one literary text to express all the principal constants of conflict in the condition of man"—that "given" could almost be "vouchsafed." The readers behind his reading, here, are especially Walter Benjamin and Heidegger; as the motto from Benjamin which prefaces *Antigones* makes clear: "Insight only occurs as a lightning-bolt. The text is the thunder-peal rolling long behind."

WHAT ABOUT THE TECHNICAL ASPECTS of his reading here? Since my own horizons have been mapped by Greek tragic texts and philological attention to them, I have no idea how the third part of *Antigones* will strike a reader who has neither shared this mode of reading nor lived with this Greek text for long. It may come over as an adventure. As he passes through his chosen passages of *Antigone*, Steiner has organised a brilliant guided tour, through safe windows, to classical scholars' assumptions and aims in reading. It is enlivening, and very well done.

For myself, though, I find sorrow in it. I know that Steiner's very richness of reading, his ease in reference, amidst the emendations, to Kierkegaard, Hölderlin and the rest, will put off many "guardians of beautiful words." He threatens scholars with the vulnerability and limitations of their reading. "Philological authority is no talisman", he says:

> "The equipment of awareness and feeling of classical scholars, grammarians, editors are, in themselves, highly specialized and intensively reductive agents. They narrow in depth. . . . Housman's own perception of 'the lofty character of Creon' . . . stems from, bears upon, his subjective emendation of the second word in . . . line 746."

In his readings of *Antigone*, Steiner handles the forces in it which make it classic, keep it alive through millennia. But these are often tragically identical with the considerations which many scholars—not, of course, the best—keep at bay. Steiner will make them feel the treasure they guard does not automatically belong to them—and they'll hate that. While some will receive it warmly, many will resent *Antigones*' suggestion that guardianship of a magnificent text should be earned by the way you conduct yourself in its neighbourhood. Steiner's homecoming underscores the conflicted relationship of scholarship with its hoard. Scholarship ends up as another site of conflict, mapped by the *diabolus absconditus* of European communication.

But that is a private sadness; and anyway, Steiner does honour the great scholars, and builds his vision of what this tragedy may be upon their care. In his encounter with the play, I especially valued his insight into the role of the choral songs, those extraordinary, centrifugal visions which demonically extend the world in which dramatic characters interact as human beings. He is sensitive also to the musicality of tragedy. In this genre, as the Greek dramatists create it, aesthetic relationships—song to scene, episode to episode—make emblematic the personal relationships, as these are conveyed through their various rhetorical patterns. Steiner assumes this; and he sees not only the formal relation between one passage and another, but also the importance of that relation.

Above all, he illuminates the characters of the drama, both as persons in relationship and situation, and as images representing moral and emotional positions. Creon, for instance, initially insists that individual relationships are detachable. Hence "You'd be a good ruler, alone in a desert", his own son tells him. Yet by the end he is the one left caring for the individuals he has lost; we mourn human divisiveness through his grief. Antigone, however, is on the surface pre-eminently attached: witness that line which Virginia Woolf takes up. Her first word stresses attachment: it refers to her community of blood with her sister (Steiner has several instructive pages on it). Yet it is Antigone who hauls the language of hatred into the play. I'll hate you more, she tells her sister, if you don't betray me to Creon. She has betrayed her own principle—"loving-with"—by the end of the prologue. It is she who is the play's first and most concentrated image of "self-scission." Steiner brings this out complicatedly and beautifully. Sophocles, he says, as "master of solitudes", organises around the figure of Antigone a drastic isolation, in emotional and linguistic patterns of estrangement and dissociation. In and among considerations of individual character however, is an Antigone who stands, self-flawed, for Europe's attachment to its own tradition, with all its certitudes threatened and estranged.

THERE IS ONE FIGURE, though, whom Steiner does not analyse. It stands for himself: mediator, channel of communication between living and dead, between divine and human. Though he speaks of the chorus as interpreter, he takes Teiresias' prophecy, warning Creon of proper and improper conduct towards the dead, as the play's final interpretation of itself. "The meaning of Teiresias, the circle which he draws, are clear." While Steiner honours historicist readings of this

[8] *Nostalgia for the Absolute* (1974).

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speech he finds himself "almost unable" to stick to them. "The relevance of his saying negates all cautionary distance between us and the ancient text." He sees here "the lucid delineation of a planet on which massacres or nuclear warfare have left the numberless unburied dead." While he sets forth the intellectual dangers in "sensations of overlap, indeed of identity, between past and present", he indicates finally his own locus of identification; for, outside the academic readings, "Immediacy sets sensibility ablaze." He acknowledges implicitly his own self-chosen *persona* as Teiresias.

But what is Teiresias, in our times? Philosopher? Theologian? Poet-critic? Cultural historian? Which is George Steiner? *Antigones* is deeply concerned with the relations of philosophy with poetry and the reading of poetry. Language is the divisive drawbridge between them all. Yet the book's own language, structure, and meaning are as many-faceted as Teiresias' answers to Antigone's father, Oedipus, in that later play, *Oedipus Rex*. Steiner has explained that the interwoven organisation of *After Babel* "was itself meant to illustrate, to enact, the underlying theme of metamorphic transformation and semantic transfer."[9] I suspect that *Antigones* is organised on the same principle. It too is a hieroglyph. At its centre is the silence of the mediator about his own role in every movement of communication, including the relation of poetry to philosophy. Steiner's first title was a disjunctive question.[10] In *Extraterritorial* he considered the psyche that hangs between alternative linguistic worlds. *After Babel* considered speech itself as translation, with all its possibilities (*traduttore traditore*) of failure and treachery. He has always been concerned with the enigmas and conflicts of communication. What he does in *Antigones* is to give forces within those conflicts Greek mythic names. He has the authority of philosophies behind him; yet what he reports has the uncomfortable obliquity of Delphi.

PERHAPS WE DON'T NEED to decide what he is. Teiresias has always been misread. By an accident of history, it was a bust of Teiresias which the Renaissance took as its image of Aristotle. In 1444, Cyriac of Ancona saw on Samothrace a head he sketched and labelled ARISTOTELES. For 400 years, until authentic portraits did turn up, that drawing *was* the Renaissance's central philosopher; skull-cap on its head, eyes narrowed in thought. It was only in this century that the original—still sitting in Samothrace, that home of the Mysteries—was deciphered as Teiresias. What sits on that head is a sacred fillet now. Those eyes were blind. The European image of the philosopher who stood for the light of reason was derived from the Greek seer who alone has voice in Hades. Steiner's chosen counterpart, therefore, in his demonic text, is able to be read as both. In the end, it does not matter what he is. Like Teiresias, Steiner's *forte* is illumination through the dark. And we are all, philosopher or poet, vulnerable to that.

[9] Introduction to *George Steiner: A Reader*.

[10] *Tolstoy or Dostoevsky?* (1959).

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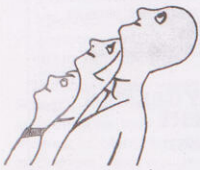

OVER THE LAST DECADE OR so, Women's Studies has struggled out of nowhere to demand, and largely achieve, recognition as a respectable academic discipline. The initial problem was to persuade the pundits that it had any content, and enough work has now been done to convince all but the most die-hard reactionary that many traditional academic subjects have not, after all, been as impartial as we had assumed, but have tended to see the world from a demonstrably male point of view. Women's Studies, like Black Studies, is a deliberate attempt to change that point of view. It firmly places women's experiences at the centre of inquiry and asks how things look from this new standpoint. The answer is that they look very different indeed.

Women, it is argued, would not have invented, nor do they accept, the dichotomies upon which so much of Western thought is based. The distinctions between active and passive, subject and object, public and private, economic and domestic, autonomy and dependence so beloved by the male intelligentsia do not exist in women's lives, the argument continues; they are at best arbitrary fictions and at worst blatant instruments of oppression. Seeing things from a woman's point of view involves doing away with such specious frameworks for analysis, and this in turn leads directly to the challenging of the accepted boundaries of existing disciplines. This gives rise to certain difficulties.

Perhaps the most serious is a problem about method. For all their weaknesses, existing disciplines tend to employ their own well-established methods of enquiry, interpretation and evaluation. If we are out of sympathy with some of those methods, at least we know what they are. So, as readers, we too will expect different perspectives to be given to a topic by experts from different fields. We will not expect any one of them to contain the whole truth but each to shed its own distinctive form of light, and we will hope that the pictures will complement and enhance each other. If the boundaries are removed, however, we either have to look for "the truth" in a blinding revelation, or try to work out the author's preconceptions and methodological bias. The former is almost certainly not available and the latter drives us back to a disciplinary stance.

In *Intruders on the Rights of Men*[1] Lynne Spender displays the problem. She contends that "our published heritage consists of records of men's experiences and perceptions" masquerading as objective truths. It is high time, she thinks, that "women's truths" were given equal weight and consideration. What is not clear is whether these "women's truths" are objective or just as biased as men's. If the former, then the word "women's" is redundant; if the latter then there seem to be no good grounds for recommending them or for vilifying the men. Not, at least, as far as objectivity is concerned.

Perhaps there is another option; we could, as she suggests, "have a notion of a society . . . where different 'truths' can be valued, rather than ranked or stratified." But now we need to know how to interpret this word "truths" and what criteria of evaluation Spender has in mind. The fact that she feels a need to enclose the word in quotation marks indicates that she is actually rejecting the notion of objective truth altogether. That she is perfectly entitled to do, but then it is difficult to see how men's truths could "masquerade" as such and impossible to write them off as false or even biased. Falsity and bias presuppose a criterion of truth. It is just as perverse to accord equal weight and status to varying women's truths, even where they conflict with themselves or each other, while denying any to men's. Subjectivity does not admit of that sort of irrelevant group selection.

Maybe the problem is not so much about the content of the two truths, but about their method of acquisition. Lynne Spender is also fond of enclosing the word "logical" in quotation marks, and recommending a retreat from logic—and therefore from thought—as a way of remedying men's mistakes. By "logical", however, Spender usually means "illogical", thus showing that she adheres to certain criteria of reasonableness herself.

IT IS NOT LESS THOUGHT that we need when men get it wrong, but more. The danger is that *that* claim is so often misinterpreted as a rejection of feeling and experience in favour of pure, abstract reasoning. The author of the short but extremely informative *Contemporary Feminist Thought*,[2] Hester Eisenstein, is tempted along these lines. In her introduction she writes:

> ". . . I do not subscribe to the belief that knowledge necessarily stems from detachment and measurement. . . . Rather I side with those who believe that understanding springs from immersion, from empathy, involvement and commitment."

Now that remark is especially curious from one who goes on to do some pretty fair and impartial critical analysis of other feminist writers. In view of the excellent commentaries which

[1] *Intruders on the Rights of Men: Women's Unpublished Heritage.* By LYNNE SPENDER. Pandora Press, £2.95.

[2] *Contemporary Feminist Thought.* By HESTER EISENSTEIN. George Allen and Unwin, £9.95, paper £3.50.

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follow, Eisenstein's partisan claim looks more like a ritual appeasement gesture than a genuine statement of belief. There really is no need to divide the world into those who measure (and are therefore uncaring) and those who are immersed (and therefore concerned with others), and Eisenstein is far too shrewd a commentator to think otherwise. Of all the pernicious false dichotomies which have dogged the progress of Western thought, this must be the one which has done and is still doing the most damage. It is the old thought *vs* feeling debate in modern dress. Only, this time round, feeling is the winner.

Eisenstein's own cerebral contribution in *Contemporary Feminist Thought* is impressive. She takes the trouble to clarify her thoughts before committing them to paper, and the result is a marvellously readable, clear, well-organised and perceptive piece of work. Rare among feminist writers, she offers an evaluation of current trends which implicitly indicates a different direction for the development of future feminist scholarship. The book is in three parts: the first looks at the work of some "first-phase" writers such as Kate Millett, Shulamith Firestone, and Juliet Mitchell, who saw the oppression of women as the result of socially constructed gender differences and who indicated the need for the creation of a more androgynous society. The second part traces the development of a woman-centred perspective through the work of writers like Adrienne Rich, Susan Griffin and Nancy Chodorow. These women saw gender difference as a source of strength for women rather than the cause of oppression, and treated womanhood as something to be celebrated rather than changed or hidden.

Part three is Eisenstein's own critique of the present situation. She argues that a woman-centred analysis which depends upon a concept of female superiority is as fatally flawed as its male equivalent, and she has one or two harsh words for those feminist psychologists who would have us believe that the only thing which needs changing is how women think about the world. Here again, barriers need to be brought crashing to the ground.

> ". . . it needs to be stressed that the psychological interacts with the economic, the social and the political. A feminist analysis that locates power only in individual psychology is both naive and damaging."

Which is just what Juliet Mitchell was arguing in 1966.

"Women: The Longest Revolution" is the title both of Mitchell's most famous essay and of the latest collection of her works, a substantial volume which contains pieces on psychoanalysis, literature, and feminism.[3] Of all the feminist thinkers of our time, Juliet Mitchell is the one who genuinely understands how to cross subject boundaries, though her contributions to psychology tend to be unnecessarily complicated and repetitive. She is at her best when discussing literature or feminism. Trained in two subject areas—literature and psychoanalysis—she never makes the mistake of throwing out all standards of criticism to make room for her

[3] *Women: The Longest Revolution. Essays in Feminism, Literature and Psychoanalysis.* By Juliet Mitchell. Virago, £5.95.

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sensitive insights. Rather she has an unerring sense of what is appropriate in any given context.

She does not need to strike expansive poses of feeling victorious over rationality. She knows how to use her considerable powers of reason, how to make them work for her and when to let them take a back seat. Rationality and romanticism, thought and feeling hold no terrors for her. In a brilliant essay on *Wuthering Heights* she uses the notions herself:

> "The greatness of *Wuthering Heights* lies in the *rationality* of its romanticism: the dialectic between the two constitutes the whole form and force of the novel. The astringent rationalism of *Wuthering Heights* can be seen in its deliberately controlled use of typical romantic devices: orphanage, ghosts, dreams. . . . This device allows Emily Bronte to explain all her characters, while presenting them with romantic and ontological intensity."

What Juliet Mitchell is confident enough to understand is that she does not have to side with anyone. Understanding can come to us through many different channels which can complement and enhance each other's output and do not have to compete for authenticity. Male and female human beings are far too complex and interesting to be defined by crude and simple alternatives.

OF COURSE, SPENDER AND EISENSTEIN are right to suggest that it is possible to hide behind facts as a way of avoiding having to face up to the realities of human emotion, particularly that of suffering. Bureaucrats the world over make a profession out of it—and it was a ploy notoriously used by Hitler's henchmen who presented the Final Solution as a problem in time-and-motion studies of how to transport, destroy, and dispose of huge numbers of physical objects. But that it is possible to misuse facts in this way does not mean that detachment and measurement are always a means of collapsing into chronic bad faith. Sometimes the facts really do speak for themselves in painfully clear and unambiguous terms; they need no elaboration. Indeed, sometimes elaboration would result in mere bad taste. In other contexts a recital of the statistics is just one way among others of looking at a situation.

Two very different recent essays about incest make the point. In "Pater Familias", one of the essays in *Fathers: Reflections by Daughters*,[4] Rose Rider gives an intensely moving personal account of her feelings and experiences as a victim of father/daughter incest. She does offer the occasional stab at interpreting her situation in more universal terms, but the real power of her writing lies in the stark simplicity of her descriptions.

> "I had long hair, long and golden, and my father loved me for that. It earned me praise and presents for a good little girl; he stroked it reverently, blowing it dry as I perched after my bath in a white wicker chair; he wound it tightly round his hand and dragged me with it to the floor."

Poor Rose. There is no need to follow that with a cool analysis of the ways in which children can be treated as objects or try to compound the horror with statistical information about the estimated number of Roses in Social Class Two in the Home Counties. Nor after this:

> ". . . I told him about a sixteen-year-old friend of mine who sat for eight hours in her own urine, brutally interrogated by two policemen while her step-father shared tea, sandwiches and dirty jokes with the officers next door.
>
> First my father asked if she was black. . . ."

THAT LAST PHRASE says more about the reality of racism and sexism and fear and hatred than any list of figures could do. Yet it would be quite wrong to see it as an improved alternative to the facts and figures on incest. For those we could do worse than to look at an article on "Father/Daughter Incest" by Judith Herman and Liza Herschman, published in *The Signs Reader*.[5]

Their much longer, self-consciously critical survey of incest is at its best when dealing with straight information. In one horrifying and revealing section they produce parts of a clinical case study of fifteen victims of father-daughter incest. After a series of facts and figures in table form they tell us this:

> "Only two of the fifteen women actually told their mothers. Both had reason to regret it. Paula's mother reacted by committing her to an institution. 'She was afraid I would become a lesbian or a whore.' Sandra's mother initially took her husband to court. When she realized that a conviction would lead to his imprisonment, she reversed her testimony and publicly called her twelve-year old daughter a 'notorious liar and slut.'"

That is a fact, reported by detached observers, but it cannot fail to move and it needs no further comment.

Herman and Herschman are at their best when quoting and reporting. They know what is important and what is not. They are obviously good, committed, and caring therapists; but they can still quote the figures. One of these—that 92% of the victims of the sex abuse of children are female and 97% of the offenders are male—is nothing if not fodder to the most dedicated of the "feel-don't-think" school of feminism.

The explanatory passages are less impressive and far less convincing. The authors clearly have a thesis to establish and will provide interpretations to fit it, rather than allow themselves a wider, more relaxed, speculative approach. Total dedication to an ideology is no better for feminists than for Marxists or some forms of Christianity. For example, they discuss the link between incest and patriarchy, and say:

> "A patriarchal society, then, most abhors the idea of incest between mother and son, because this is an affront to the father's prerogatives. Though incest between father and daughter is also forbidden, the prohibition carries less weight and is, therefore, more frequently violated . . . the

[4] *Fathers: Reflections by Daughters*. Edited by URSULA OWEN. Virago, £5.50.

[5] *The Signs Reader: Women, Gender and Scholarship*. Edited by ELIZABETH ABEL and EMILY K. ABEL. The University of Chicago Press, $28.75, paper $10.30; £21.25, paper £7.60.

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greater degree of male supremacy in any culture, the greater the likelihood of father daughter incest."

But they produce no evidence for this claim and their lack of statistics here is a very real weakness.

In these accounts we are presented with two very different approaches to a sensitive and distressing topic. Both are powerful in their own way, and it would be a rash commentator who set them up as alternatives. And is there any need to choose between them, to write the one off as over-emotional or the other as too intellectual? Why should we want to?

PART OF THE ANSWER is a real puzzle that most of us feel at some time about where we as individuals fit into the whole picture of the universe. At times we are acutely aware of how *small* we are in comparison to everything outside us, and incline to see our own hopes, fears, loves and hates as trivial and insignificant. At other times we are aware of ourselves as the centres of our universe, the focal point of all feeling, even the feeling of insignificance.

These pictures seem incompatible. But are they? Rose Rider is certainly not just a statistic; she is not *just* one of the millions of victims of incest. To her, her suffering is all; it fills her universe, it matters, and must not be trivialised. The suffering of Anne Frank was not just one six-millionth part of a total pool of human misery but the entire world of one little girl. Yet she *was* one of millions, and that story must also be told. Looking at the Holocaust through the eyes of one child or telling the tale as a documentary of the course of events are not mutually exclusive views of that sad period of history. Both are real and true and important. Asking which, in virtue of its form and irrespective of any internal merit or weakness, best represents the truth is like asking Bertrand Russell's celebrated question, "But which is the real table?" (Russell claimed to be puzzled by the fact that the table which he could see and feel was quite unlike the whirling mass of protons, neutrons, and electrons which "sober science" assured him it "really" was.)

Even historians have difficulty in telling it as it *really* is. Antonia Fraser has already received some stick from historians who find her latest book, *The Weaker Vessel*,[6] too anecdotal and from some socialist feminists who complain that it is not, as her sub-title promises, an account of women's lot in the 17th-century, but an account of the lives of upper-class women. The fact that much of her material is the writings of the women themselves, and that not many of the lower classes had the time or ability to commit their thoughts to paper, may have had something to do with that. Stick from all sides is what you expect, however, if you try, as Antonia Fraser does, to make the academic interesting and the fascinating scholarly. For my money (and you need rather a lot of it to buy the book), *The Weaker Vessel* is compulsory reading for those who suspect that the prevalent picture of women born before this last great wave of feminism as pathetic, neglected victims is probably only half the story. It is interesting to compare some of her remarks about the women writers of this era with those of Lynne Spender.

[6] *The Weaker Vessel. Women's Lot in Seventeenth-Century England.* By ANTONIA FRASER. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £12.95.

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In *Intruders on the Rights of Men*, Spender has a strong point to make about the deliberate suppression of women's writing. She uncovers conscious conspiracies and unconscious choices by men which have served to conceal a heritage of women's writing. The list is impressive, and her claims may be substantially true. Yet the brevity of her treatment of some notable figures and the fact that her references to them are mostly second-hand may make us wonder about the accuracy of some of her claims. For example, Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, is accorded twelve scant lines, including two quotations from Virginia Woolf. The picture Spender gives us is of poor "Mad Madge", ridiculed and reviled by literary critics; a brilliant mind neglected and unsung.

A RATHER DIFFERENT DUCHESS strides through the pages of *The Weaker Vessel*. To begin with, it was another woman, Dorothy Osborne, who apparently poked fun at Margaret and was "satisfied that there are many soberer people in Bedlam." Antonia Fraser affectionately remarks that the lady "admittedly did cut a fairly weird figure in society, at any rate where her costume was concerned", thus evoking the image of an eccentric and interesting don rather than a passive victim. As for her reputation, Fraser tells us:

> "Expressions of gratitude were published after her death in a special volume. . . . A letter from the Master and Fellows of St. John's College, Cambridge sets the tone: 'In your Poesy we praise that Life and native verdure, every way Confident with itself, Castillian like, it stands not still, nor boils over, but with a gentle stream doth touch our Ears and slide into our Minds. In your Philosophy we praise that lightsome and piercing acuteness, nothing constrained, nothing obscure: you render all things clear and genuine. . .'."

I know which Duchess of Newcastle appeals most to me. Yet Fraser tells much the same general story as Spender of the struggle of women authors for recognition. The difference is that her women struggle actively even if they fail, while Spender's are mere cardboard cut-outs who are only acted upon. And because Fraser's women *act*, their actions can speak for themselves.

PERHAPS THE HISTORIAN has an unfair advantage over the rest of us in walking the fine line between cold detachment and over-involvement. Trying to tell other people's stories, rather than simply using them to tell her own, allows her the best of both worlds. Telling one's own story is always a dangerous business, no matter how good the attempt at disguise, as first-time novelists often discover to their cost.

What makes one person's autobiographical account instructive and illuminating while another's is tedious or, more often, embarrassing? This is a question which many feminists prefer to avoid, since they have placed great importance on the primacy of individual experience as a corrective to the so-called objectivity of male analysis, but a reading of much which passes for feminist thought constantly provokes the query. Drawing on one's own experience is not the same as recounting it in minute detail. Only those aspects which are truly universalisable have the faintest chance of escaping being boring beyond belief to others, and even they need to be presented with uncommon wisdom or humour to signify. It is sometimes hard to remember that sad truth, but for those who forget it the way can be hard indeed.

The pitfalls inherent in the personal-experience approach lie in wait for Margaret Hebblethwaite who, in *Motherhood and God*[7] is memorable for falling into nearly all of them. She persistently confuses an experience-based theology with an account of her experiences punctuated by some alarmingly naive theology. She does know that more is needed. In her introduction she writes about motherhood:

> "I have tried to talk about this very common experience in a way that will make the reader say at the same time 'yes, that's it' and 'oh, so that's what it is'."

From this mother at least, she elicited exactly the opposite response. Not all of us see our relations with our children primarily in terms of success and failure, and many of us would recoil from recounting their infantile scatological pecadilloes in all their gruesome detail, even to make a point. Let us hope that her children's spiritual directors are hot on the old forgiveness line. What she reveals about them is enough to make Christopher Robin feel like a recluse. Unfortunately, there is no redemption through the theology. Remarks like "Heaven will be like coming out of hospital where you did not like the food and did not like the hours, did not like the people and did not like the room" provide little illumination about the next world, but tell us a great deal about M. Hebblethwaite.

However much it irritates our frocked brethren, it is clearly important for Christian women to reconsider their place in the traditional Church and to rethink their acceptance of certain attitudes and practices. It has long been a source of wonder to some in the women's movement that so many of their sisters could continue with their belief in a Church which reduces them to second-class citizens while relying so heavily on their labour and mere physical presence to keep the men in their positions of authority and power. But they do, and the more thoughtful of them are not turning their backs on the difficulties, but trying to reclaim or reinterpret Christianity. Elaine H. Plagel's article in *The Signs Reader*—"What Became of God the Mother? Conflicting Images of God in Early Christianity"—provides the kind of historical background essential to anyone embarking on this enterprise.

Another, more abstract side of the issue, concerned with the spirituality of women, is discussed by Madonna Kolbenschlag who is apparently a writer, a feminist, and a nun. The dust-jacket of *Goodbye Sleeping Beauty*[8] promises us that "With a sophisticated blending of literary psychological and theological insights the author probes the roots of women's failure to achieve personal autonomy and authentic spirituality." So sophisticated is this blending that I found it difficult to make

[7] *Motherhood and God*. By MARGARET HEBBLETHWAITE. Geoffrey Chapman, £3.95.

[8] *Goodbye Sleeping Beauty: Breaking the Spell of Feminine Myths and Models*. By MADONNA KOLBENSCHLAG. Arlen House, £8.95.

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much sense of the whole enterprise. Kolbenschlag also sees her book as a record of experience, but in this case, she claims, its authority is that it is a record of the experience of *all* women, not just herself. That is a mighty claim indeed. It might come as a surprise to at least some of them to learn that they have "failed" in this way.

OF ALL THE SUBJECTS we can spill the beans about, whether on our own behalf or others, sex has got to be the most dangerous partly because it is so mesmerising. *The Hite Report*, like *The Kinsey Report*, was a best-seller: incredible, but true. An anthology of fact and fiction entitled *Desire*[9] is bound to attract attention. Its subtitle is the more sober "The Politics of Sexuality", but, as is the case with most collections on the subject, you have to hunt among some unbelievable rubbish to find the real contributions to the discussion surrounding the puzzling phenomenon of female sexuality.

The introduction promises some weighty stuff on the questions with which serious feminist scholars are currently wrestling: questions about the "naturalness" of hetero-sexuality; the connections between sexual fantasy, desire and practice; the effect of class, race or colour on one's sense of sexual identity. It is therefore disconcerting to have to find one's way around articles with titles like "My Mother Liked to Fuck" or to come across short stories about a pubescent girl's sexual experiences with her puppy. This is particularly irritating when it is surrounded by much of real value. The contributions by Adrienne Rich, Rennie Simson, and Sharon Olds are among the more notable—and surprisingly there is one article by a man, John D'Emilio, whose "Capitalism and Gay Identity" is a version of a lecture based on parts of his well-researched book about the growth of gay communities and organisations in the United States. [10]

NO ONE WHO IS INTERESTED in sexuality or any other area of contemporary feminist thought can have failed to notice that Germaine Greer is with us again. In typical Greer fashion, nothing she says in *Sex and Destiny* [11] fits the current trends. By now everyone must know that she recommends chastity as a form of birth control and urges that convent-school girls should be instructed from an early age in the arts of detecting changes in the vaginal mucus and of breast examination.

Swimming against the tide is a Greer speciality—remember the reception *The Female Eunuch* got?—but her personal magnetism and sheer talent ensure that she gets away with it. The puny wave-making of some of her adversaries merely serves to make her more buoyant. It matters not whether one agrees or disagrees with Greer. She has already earned her

[9] *Desire: The Politics of Sexuality*. Edited by ANN SNITOW, CHRISTINE STANSELL and SHARON THOMPSON. Virago, £6.50.

[10] *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940–1970*. By JOHN D'EMILIO. University of Chicago Press, $23.00, £16.00.

[11] *Sex and Destiny: The Politics of Human Fertility*. By GERMAINE GREER. Secker & Warburg, £9.95.

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place in history by calling a halt to the current trends. But that is not enough.

WHAT THIS RECENT BATCH of writings shows is that exposing bias by denying the inevitability of existing criteria of critical judgment is one thing; redefining those criteria is another. Youthful feminism was joyfully efficacious in performing the first task. It is now time for the second.

We must not and we cannot go on allowing anything written by a woman of the correct political hue to be taken on board as genuine feminist scholarship. Apart from anything else, there is just too much of it about to allow total non-discrimination. A refusal to judge other women was a necessary prelude to the new thinking, but it was only the beginning. Non-discrimination is not only the product of tolerance; it can equally be the child of idleness or, more often, of fear. The proliferation of anthologies of slight works scattered liberally among the one or two pieces of real substance is becoming a serious nuisance. It is not only irritating but will actually prevent much of the good stuff from being read and discussed as it deserves. If Women's Studies is to take its rightful place among serious disciplines then it must come off the fence on the question of what constitutes a genuine contribution to feminist thought; and to do that, it must first admit that some efforts are worthless. It must be able to recognise and reject the humbug, and not allow itself to be bullied into accepting that any such rejection constitutes an affront to its essential humanism.

We deserve better than that. Solving the problem of method is the pressing challenge of the time, and it will be met by those who care enough about the substantial issues to stand firm against mindless prejudice wherever it is found.

Freud & Variations

Theories of Mental Disorder—By B. A. FARRELL



MOST PSYCHIATRISTS in this country would agree that their subject is not in a particularly satisfactory condition, and would probably diagnose this as due largely to the fact that they cannot explain the disorders that come their way. This stems in turn from their inability to provide the sort of explanation that their medical colleagues provide in other branches of medicine.

If you suffer from a pain in your back, a consultant will usually be able to explain this by reference to the malfunctioning of the spine or of the back muscles, or something of this sort. A psychiatrist is in a very different position. Apart from what are called "the organic psychoses", where the aetiology and pathology are known (at least in part), psychiatrists are not able to explain how the disorders of mental function that come their way result from bodily disorders. This means in particular, of course, that they cannot explain how mental disorders (the organic psychoses excepted) are the result and manifestation of the state and working of the brain and nervous system. In this respect, psychiatry is still where ordinary medicine was a couple of centuries or so ago.

There were certain scientific disciplines that helped to take ordinary medicine out of its stage of clinical symptomatology into what it is today. Accordingly, these sciences can be regarded as foundational or fundamental to ordinary medicine. In contrast, the sciences that are, or may be, fundamental for psychiatry are not yet strong enough to enable psychiatry to explain how mental disorders—notably, perhaps, schizophrenia and depression—are the outcome and manifestation of the malfunctioning of the nervous system. Since even psychology cannot yet cope satisfactorily with, for example, orderly normal thought, it is not surprising that psychiatrists cannot explain the disorders of thought characteristic of schizophrenia. Psychiatry remains, therefore, in its clinical and symptomatic stage of development.

This unsatisfactory condition encourages a variety of responses. For one thing, it opens the door to exaggeration, extravagance, and crackpottery of one sort or another. One such extravagant reponse is to be found in *The Therapeutic State* by Thomas Szasz,[1] who brings together a large number of recent and short pieces in which he presents and applies his well-known view about mental illness.

According to Szasz, the notion of mental illness which psychiatrists use is a delusive one. It applies to nothing; it is a myth. In ordinary medicine, to say that a person has an illness or disease is to say that there is something wrong with some part of her or his body. And it is this that is treated, not the mind. Therefore, "Mental illnesses do not exist; indeed, they cannot exist, because the mind is not a body part or bodily organ." In addition, Szasz appears to claim that it is always wrong to hospitalise anyone against his will, and advocates "the abolition of all involuntary psychiatry."

The calibre of Szasz's argument is very poor; he seems to

[1] *The Therapeutic State: Psychiatry in the Mirror of Current Events.* By THOMAS SZASZ. Prometheus Books, $22.95, paper $10.95.

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have learned nothing from the barrage of criticism into which he has run in recent years. There are very good reasons for not restricting the general notion of illness merely to states of which the bodily or organic aetiology and/or pathology is known in some degree. If this had been done in *general* medicine, it is difficult to see how the subject could have got off the ground at all. It is also clear that Szasz's moral principle, barring all involuntary confinement, is not indefeasible. It may be desirable to confine and care for a depressive, with strong suicidal tendencies, until he recovers, at which point he may then be grateful to the confiners. It is obvious, then, that the justification for confining a person, mentally ill or physically ill, depends on the overall consequences of our action. Whether we are morally justified in involuntarily confining Mr X, or not, has nothing logically to do with our view of the concept of mental illness.

Szasz's whole argument is chaotic. On the other hand, no doubt, his chaos of an argument has had the useful effect of drawing attention to the fact that we cannot do much to explain mental disorder. It has also, perhaps, made many psychiatrists re-examine the grounds for involuntary hospitalisation. But, unhappily, Szasz also goes on to apply his argument in a black-and-white, quite simple-minded way. For example, he dismisses Emil Kraepelin, Eugen Bleuler, and Sigmund Freud as "conquistadors and colonisers of the mind of man." And he rejects Sidney Bloch and Peter Reddaway's criticisms of Soviet psychiatry—they have recently followed up their book *Russia's Political Hospitals* (1977) with *Soviet Psychiatric Abuse*[2]—by saying that they are just as culpable of "coercing" and "torturing" people as the Soviet psychiatrists they criticise. These absurd consequences of his argument do not trouble Szasz at all. He does not begin to face the complexities and the realities of the central problems he raises.

CONTEMPORARY PSYCHIATRY also generates and sustains a very different response. For it can be argued that it is simply false to say we have no explanation of the non-organic disorders that come the way of psychiatrists. We can do something to explain schizophrenia and depression, and we can do much more to explain the neuroses and personality disorders, by resorting to psychodynamic psychology. This theory stems originally from the work of Freud. It explains by the use of a battery of concepts and generalisations about the role of unconscious motives, inner anxieties, the internal structure of the psyche, and the ways in which early development contributes to produce personal strengths and weaknesses; and by reference to our wishes, fears, purposes, intentions, and the like. It is preposterous: on a psychodynamic view, to suppose we have to wait upon the sciences fundamental to psychiatry (for example, neuro-chemistry and physiology) to do the job of explaining hysterical phenomena.

This response may sound plausible to many; but it runs into a veritable sea of troubles. To begin with, there are many different psychodynamic psychologies. Which is the one that explains the disorders? If we are cautious, and choose Freud's later version, we find that Freud and his theory come under heavy fire from various quarters.

One of these is historical. Serious doubts have been raised from time to time about Freud's veracity in his accounts of his own work and the beginnings of psychoanalysis. Recently Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson, in *Freud: The Assault on Truth: Freud's Suppression of the Seduction Theory*,[3] claims to have uncovered fresh evidence, partly from material hitherto inaccessible to all those outside a small psychoanalytic establishment. This fresh evidence concerns the circumstances which led Freud to give up his first view, that the seductions of childhood were genuine, for the view that "most" of them were fantasies. He did not give up his first view in the light of new evidence; he did so because of his wish to be reconciled with his psychiatric colleagues, and to escape from the professional isolation which his view had produced.

I am not an historian, and therefore do not possess the knowledge or expertise to assess Masson's case. I suspect, however, that much more evidence will be required before we can be reasonably assured about what went on in those early years. One thing, however, *is* manifestly clear. The Psychoanalytic Establishment is entirely in the wrong in restricting access to the unpublished documents to those of whom they approve. The reasons are obvious and need no

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[2] *Soviet Psychiatric Abuse: The Shadow Over World Psychiatry*. By SIDNEY BLOCH and PETER REDDAWAY. Victor Gollancz, £10.95.

[3] *Freud: The Assault on Truth: Freud's Suppression of the Seduction Theory*. By JEFFREY MOUSSAIEFF MASSON. Faber and Faber, £9.95.

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stating. What the Establishment should do, and as soon as possible, is to have the files ordered and opened to scholars in the way that is standardly acceptable.

Even if we suppose that Freud was fraudulent to some degree, large or small, we are still faced with the obvious questions: how valid is the theory? and how useful is it in the explanation of mental disorders?

One challenge to the theory, written by 1972, has just been translated from the French. Messrs Deleuze (a Professor of Philosophy at the University of Paris) and Guattari (a psychoanalyst) have given us *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*,[4] a large book in the tradition of Foucault and Lacan. "The imperialism of Oedipus", the authors tell us, has to be destroyed. For Oedipus is "a resistance", and essentially connected with "the intrinsically perverted nature of psychoanalysis."

> "The psychoanalyst reterritorializes on the couch, in the representation of Oedipus and castration. Schizoanalysis (which is what the authors apparently advocate) on the contrary must disengage the deterritorialized flows of desire in the molecular clients of desiring production."

These quotations are examples of their prose, and I trust they make it clear how impossible it is to give in a few sentences a fair indication of the nature of their attack on Freud. They write in a style which is dramatic and obscure; and do little to elucidate the large amount of jargon they employ. They present a long series of claims and questions, but it is difficult to disentangle what reasons they advance for us to adopt the non-Freudian way of talking they propose.

I confess that I am astonished and depressed that French thinkers in this field can write so badly. My protest is not an aesthetic matter. If the authors wish to communicate effectively (and presumably they do), then they should write in a way which will encourage the reader to go on reading, and will maximise the likelihood of him understanding what he reads. I suspect that a work like this is symptomatic of some malaise in parts of French life—an indication, perhaps, of cultural and especially philosophical isolation.

When we turn to the serious and influential challenges to Freud's theory, we find that these are very serious indeed. What sort of theory is it? It is apparently not a scientific one, since it cannot be tested. Is it like Darwin's theory? No, its logic is plainly quite different. Where does the evidence to support it come from? Primarily from clinical-like material obtained in the analytic situation. But *all* clinical evidence has to be treated with caution. Since the material from the analytic situation is the product of using psychoanalytic method, and the validity of psychoanalytic method is notoriously uncertain, the evidential value of the material is uncertain also. The upshot seems to be that we do not know what credence to attach to the theory as a whole. However, putting all these doubts and objections on one side, we can still ask: how far does the theory manage to explain mental disorders?

I shall be very rash and venture a tentative and inadequate answer to this large question. There is a wide agreement that, at best, Freudian theory does very little to explain the aetiology of schizophrenia or depression; and the same is true of other Freudian and psychodynamic stories, in spite of the efforts of Kleinians and others. These theories can, of course, be used to *order* the presenting data from patients by spinning an account of the patient's psychopathology. But there seems to be wide agreement that such accounts sound contrived, and are not particularly illuminating.

The position is different for some of the neuroses and personality disorders. There seems to be considerable agreement that Freudian theory does throw light on the aetiology and psychopathology of, for example, the hysterias (as they are traditionally called). It does help us to explain and understand these conditions, even though it uses clinically based and therefore indeterminate concepts; and even though the generalisations it contains are vague statements of tendencies. Moreover, though the theory stresses the role of items such as unconscious wishes, it also refers to (unknown) bodily and constitutional factors, and differences between people. But the theory is not able to bring together wishes, and the like, and bodily processes and conditions within one theoretical framework. So it cannot do much to dispel the puzzle of psychosomatic disorders, of differing responses to stress, and a variety of other puzzles about the incidence and nature of these disorders. We have good reason to believe that pieces of the theory are wrong (e.g. the theory of dreams, of instincts, of female sexuality); and that other pieces are not proven (e.g. the Oedipal story, and the assumption that unconscious states and processes play a large, influential part in our lives).[5]

There are some who take a different view of psychoanalysis and psychodynamics. These are persons who do not seem to be interested in viewing the work of Freud and psychodynamics as a contribution to psychiatry and a way of explaining mental disorders.

Thus Bruno Bettelheim, in *Freud and Man's Soul*,[6] claims that the translation of Freud in the *Standard Edition* is full of errors. For instance, Freud's word "*seele*" should have been

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[4] *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. By Gilles De Leuze and Felix Guattari. Athlone Press, £12.50.

[5] For a critical yet sympathetic reaction to psychoanalysis from British psychiatrists, see Michael Gelder *et al.*, *Oxford Textbook of Psychiatry* (Oxford University Press, 1983).

For examples of the way in which clinical material supports a psychodynamic account of neurotic conditions, see D. H. Malan, *Individual Psychotherapy and the Science of Psychodynamics* (Butterworth, 1979).

For a short cogent account of the psychoneuroses from an analytic-cum-dynamic angle, see H. J. Walton, "Psychoneuroses", Ch. 18 in Alistair D. Forrest (ed.), *Companion to Psychiatric Studies* (2nd ed., Churchill Livingstone, 1978).

For the psychologists' view of Freudian theory, see Seymour Fisher and Roger P. Greenberg, *The Scientific Credibility of Freud's Theory and Therapy* (Harvester, 1977); Paul Kline, *Fact and Fantasy in Freudian Theory* (2nd ed., Methuen, 1981).

For an introduction to some of the chief problems produced by Freudian theory, see B. A. Farrell, *The Standing of Psychoanalysis* (Oxford University Press, 1981).

[6] *Freud and Man's Soul*. By Bruno Bettelheim, Chatto & Windus/The Hogarth Press, £6.95.

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rendered, not by "mind", as in the Standard Edition, but by "soul." These mistranslations, Bettelheim says, are probably not due to mischievousness or carelessness on the part of the translators, but to "a deliberate wish to perceive Freud strictly within the framework of medicine." The consequence of poor translation has been to mislead readers about Freud, and to encourage them to view him as a natural scientist. In reality, Freud was concerned with "a humanistic undertaking", in which the goal of psychoanalysis is "a cultural achievement"—"the reclamation of the soul of man."

Bettelheim's argument seems to me a weak one. I am not a student of language, but I doubt whether he is either. He shows little appreciation of the problems that face translators—the difficult balancing of considerations, and the many fine judgments that have to be made. To object to the *Standard Edition* for rendering "*seele*" as "mind" needs much more support than he provides. It is only too well known that "*seele*" poses a problem for the English translator, and it may be much more objectionable to translate the word, in this context, as "soul." Hence I think that Bettelheim is unfair to the *Standard Edition*. It is possible, no doubt, that this translation has helped to lead the English-speaking world to regard Freud as a scientist, rather than as "a humanist." But I suspect that its contribution was minute, and was completely overshadowed by the influence of our scientifically oriented culture. Of course, Bettelheim can find evidence in Freud's writings to suggest that he was "really a humanist and a reclaimer of souls"—whatever this romantic Goethesque thesis may mean. But this is only one way of looking at Freud, and Bettelheim does not do nearly enough to show that it is the *right* way, and therefore obligatory on us.

Steven Marcus (Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia) also presents Freud as "a writer or cultural figure" in his book *Freud and the Culture of Psychoanalysis*.[7] Marcus offers us "studies in the transition from Victorian Humanism to Modernity." He starts from the premise that Freud is one of "a very small handful of intellectual presences who have presided over" this transition; and says that Freud's "reputation and place . . . have never stood higher or enjoyed a firmer security than they do today. . . . This extraordinary position of intellectual pre-eminence in modern life" is "only one among many of the odd circumstances" about our odd world, which we do "not adequately understand." Marcus then goes on to give us an account of the origins of psychoanalysis, of Freud's work in the *Three Essays*, and with Dora and the Rat man. He continues by discussing, *inter alia*, "psychoanalytic theory and cultural change", and ends with a postscript on psychoanalysis today.

I confess that I was disappointed in general by Marcus's book. From what I have said earlier, it is clear that his premises are hardly acceptable. I doubt whether it is true that Freud's reputation and place "have never stood higher or enjoyed a firmer security" among those people who are *professionally*

[7] *Freud and the Culture of Psychoanalysis: Studies in the Transition from Victorian Humanism to Modernity*. By Steven Marcus. Allen & Unwin, £15.00.

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involved in the relevant fields of enquiry and practice. It may be true of the general public in the USA. And it may be true that with this public, Freud occupies a position of pre-eminence. If so, then it would have been very interesting indeed if Marcus had gone on to explain this "odd circumstance", and thereby given us an account of how and why they came to fall so heavily for Freud. Of course, this is a difficult task, and one that it may be unfair to ask Marcus to undertake. However, he does not deal with the fundamental difficulties that face Freud's theory and practice, and does not refer the reader to the obvious sources which state the difficulties. He is therefore likely to meet the objection from the hostile critic that his book is yet another piece of propaganda from the Freudian industry in America.

WHEN ONE TURNS TO *Freud and the Mind* by Ilham Dilman,[8] one moves into a different world. Dilman proposes to help us understand Freud by "a philosophical criticism of his ideas"; and he writes within the tradition of the later John Wisdom and Ludwig Wittgenstein. In doing so he gives us what he calls "a controversial reading", in which he drops, for example, "Freud's mechanistic and causal language . . . the kind of universality he attributed to the Oedipus complex . . . the way he represented the relation between love and sexuality", and a number of other things. Dilman examines difficulties produced by Freud's central ideas—for example, the concept of the unconscious, unconscious fantasy, repression and self-deception, and the divisions of the personality. His book is an admirable exercise in this sort of philosophical work. It will help the undergraduate, and also, I think, the psychoanalytic or other practitioner, who finds it difficult to explain matters to a patient in Freud's meta-language—he can talk Dilmanese instead.

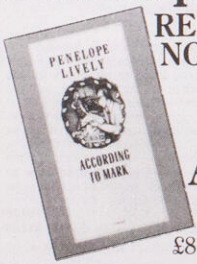
But the book also has great limitations. It produces the protest that Dilman is giving us his own Freud, a pseudo-Freud whose views he then explains in homespun ordinary discourse, thereby making them sound sweetly and gently reasonable. He represents Freud as a novelist, bringing order into the life of the individual mind. This obviously cannot be done without the use of concepts of *general* applicability, and he agrees that Freud offered us "a framework of ideas." Hence, merely by saying he is going to treat Freud as a novelist, he cannot escape the demand for supporting evidence for Freud's concepts and framework.

Moreover, the clarification of Freud's ideas which he offers runs into the well-known trouble which dogs work of his sort in the philosophy of mind. A general idea such as unconscious intention refers to something that the person *has*, now or at some other time. What is this that the person *has*? Dilman's elucidation—in ordinary discourse-cum-dispositional terms—is incomplete. Naturally, for it cannot cope with the categorical import of the expression "unconscious intention." It is not nearly sufficient, therefore, to do what Dilman does in effect: namely, to try to make Freud's ideas plausible by removing their conceptual difficulties and inducing us *en route* to fit them to our own experience—a sort of mini-self-psychoanalysis, induced by Dilman, with the usual consequential belief in analytic notions which ensues from being psychoanalysed! I fear that Dilman does little to remove the serious difficulties that beset Freud's theory, and little to support his own expressed belief in the value and importance of Freud's psychology.

Where, then, do we go from here in our understanding of mental disorders?

In *Body and Personality*,[9] Brian Wells argues that the body, as the total physical self, is the natural starting point when one seeks to arrive at a unified view of human personality. He makes a reasonable case for this stand, and his book will serve as a useful introductory read for the beginner in psychology. But if we are to get at the aetiology and nature of human malfunctioning, it is probably either necessary (as with the psychoses) or helpful (as with, for example, the neuroses) to try to dig down to the minutiae of our neuro-chemical functioning. One of the sciences fundamental to psychiatry is psychology, and psychologists are now in widespread cooperation with psychiatrists and others in the fundamental fields. They are also trying to use psychoanalytic and psychodynamic theories heuristically, and to bring what is of value in them into the corpus of established knowledge. For obvious reasons, it will

Penelope Lively



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[8] *Freud and the Mind*. By ILHAM DILMAN. Blackwell, £15.00.

[9] *Body and Personality*. By BRIAN W. P. WELLS. Longman, £4.95.

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probably be some time before these labours in the fundamental sciences yield critical dividends.

However, if a psychiatrist or worker in a related field reads *The Self and its Brain* by Karl Popper and John Eccles,[10] he may be inclined to say that we never will logically be able to display the thought of a schizophrenic or the neurotic fears of an agoraphobic as manifestations of the malfunctioning of the nervous system. For we are dealing here with two worlds—the world of physical entities and the world of mental states—and all we can say is that these interact, without being able to specify how the working of the nervous system produces a feeling of fear. So, psychiatrists and their co-workers may be tempted to say that they cannot really explain the mental disorders they are concerned with.

This book is full of stimulating ideas and meaty information about the nervous system, but in my view the argument is unconvincing. (For instance, the central notion of interaction is vacuous.) My advice, therefore, to scientific workers, psychiatrists, *et al.* is: do not be disturbed by this book. Further, do not allow yourselves to be disturbed by anything we philosophers say on the central issue of the relation between body and mind. Just sidestep us, and get on with your job. For I doubt if what we say will be of much, or even any, help to you. And it is the fruits of *your* labours which will determine in the end how we should talk about mind and body.

[10] *The Self and Its Brain: An Argument for Interactionism.* By Karl R. Popper and John C. Eccles. Routledge, £7.95.

Metaphysics & Morality

Studies of Ethics—By Thomas Baldwin



Derek Parfit's long awaited book *Reasons and Persons*[1] received massive public accolade from its first reviewers and was hailed as the greatest work in ethics since Henry Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics* of 1874. Similar praise was heaped more than a decade ago on John Rawls's *Theory of Justice*. Obviously the significance of this depends on what one thinks of Sidgwick and intervening moral theorists who, in Parfit's case, include Rawls. Faced with this consensus among the great and the good, I shall succumb to the temptation to raise some critical doubts about Parfit's book, though I certainly do not deny that it contains many interesting thoughts.

Parfit's main aim is to undermine the rationality of classical egoism, understood as the view that each of us need only care about our own good, and his strategy is to confront the egoist with two critics: first, the universalist who holds that we should care as much about the good of others as our own good; second, the lover of the present who holds that we need only care about our own present good. The first character is a familiar character in moral theory; the second less so, though familiar in the work of traditional moralists (e.g. Aesop's Grasshopper). Parfit's central contention is that the egoist cannot coherently repudiate both these critics: if he argues against the universalist that reasons for action are agent-relative (and thus need concern only his own good), then he should equally allow that they are time-relative (and thus need not concern his good at times other than the present); likewise, if he argues against the grasshopper for time-neutrality, then why not agent-neutrality, as the universalist urges, as well?

This is a clever argument. It would seem to lead to the conclusion that where Sidgwick discerned an antinomy of practical reason in the opposition between egoism and universalism, the true antinomy lies between the position of the lover of the present and the universalist. Parfit, however, does not seem to want to draw this conclusion, for he implies that the unique rational position is that of the lover of the present whose own present good is just the good of all. I cannot say, however, that I found any persuasive arguments for this last thesis, and I shall later look critically at one of them. But first I want to look back at the anti-egoist argument. It invites the rejoinder that there is a relevant difference between agent-neutrality and time-neutrality, in that different agents are different subjects of consciousness, with different interests, whereas different temporary selves (my past selves, my present self, and my future selves) are just temporally differentiated aspects of one and the same subject which alone has interests. Thus the grasshopper's present indifference to his future good is an irrational neglect of his own interest in a way in which the egoist's neglect of the interests of others is not irrational, since different people are not just aspects of some greater supra-personal being.

This rejoinder leads us into the topic of personal identity and the best part of this book. Parfit established his reputation through some justly renowned articles on personal identity, and in the third part of this book he restates his position in a lucid and convincing fashion. Very briefly, his view is that our concept of a person is unsatisfactory, in that though we use the concept in such a way that no two things can be the same person (contrast "person" here with "colour"), the criteria we employ in making judgments of personal identity through time do not guarantee this result. These criteria centre upon psychological

[1] *Reasons and Persons.* By Derek Parfit. Oxford University Press, £17.50.

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capacities, especially memory and its causes; the trouble is that we can coherently suppose that distinct human beings might satisfy all the criteria we now employ. As things now stand, this does not happen; but our concept of a person does not rule it out, and, as Parfit well describes, the divided consciousness of those whose brains have been split approximates to this unsatisfactory result.

One response is to try to formulate further criteria of personal identity to rule this out; but Parfit argues convincingly that none such are forthcoming. The result is that we need to rethink our concept of a person. One way to do so would be to allow that two things can be the same person; but Parfit ties the concept of a person to that of a self-conscious subject of consciousness and rejects this view; he argues instead that we should allow that what matters to us is not personal identity through time but the kind of psychological continuity through time which, as things now stand, yields personal identity. If our stream of consciousness were to divide we could not claim identity with either divided stream, but since we would survive in both this loss of identity should not matter to us.

Parfit is, I think, right about personal identity. But does he thereby establish this critique of egoism? Doubtless egoism has been formulated with an oversimple concept of a person, but Parfit needs to show that the egoist cannot accommodate the more complex account of personal identity by taking it that a person's interests include the interests of those in whom he or she will survive. Obviously this thesis needs careful examination, but it seems to me more defensible than the position of the lover of the present, which can only be made to look plausible by interpreting temporary selves as distinct persons, an interpretation not warranted by Parfit's account of personal identity.

As I mentioned above, Parfit's aim is not only to establish the rationality of the attitude of the lover of the present, but also to show that this attitude should be informed by a universalist identification of his own present good with the good of all. One argument for this also arises from his account of personal identity through time: once we are liberated by this account from an exclusive concern for ourselves, he suggests, we will see that it is irrational not to concern ourselves with just anyone's good. But there is a massive *non sequitur* here: the account of personal identity leads to the conclusion that what matters to us is psychological continuity, not personal identity. Yet since we are not psychologically continuous with everyone, the universalist conclusion is not supported at all; instead, I think, it is only the egoist one that Parfit wants to repudiate.

There is a great deal more to Parfit's massive book than I have here discussed; in the last part he discusses the problems which arise when we try to think about our duties to future generations, and he starts the book with a discussion of ways in which a moral theory might be self-defeating. Though there is much of interest in them, I found these opening chapters rather ill-judged and would advise readers to skip them.

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PARFIT'S CENTRAL argument revolved around the nature of personal identity, and this is the topic of one of a new series of books entitled "Great Debates in Philosophy" in which two authors develop opposing positions and then, briefly, criticise each other.[2] In this case Richard Swinburne kicks off with a defence of an old-fashioned position whereby personal identity consists in the identity through time of an immaterial soul. His argument starts off from much the same consideration as informs Parfit's position, namely that the empirical criteria do not guarantee personal identity through time; but, unlike Parfit, Swinburne wants to hang on to a concept of personal identity such that questions of identity always have a definite answer even if we do not know it.

Because such a determinate concept cannot be empirical, Swinburne invokes that of an immaterial soul. As he well knows, this is not a popular position these days, and he tries to defend himself against empiricist criticisms. But in the second essay in this volume Sydney Shoemaker, I think, undermines Swinburne's position. For he shows that the hypothesis of an immaterial soul as subject of consciousness is not one that our ordinary self-consciousness requires; thus to reject it, we do not have to take it to be a meaningless hypothesis, as Swinburne supposes. We can just view it as a perennially tempting fantasy from which sober reflection should lead us to withhold assent.

Shoemaker's chief aim, however, is not critical but constructive: he wants to combine his Parfit-like views about personal identity with a functionalist conception of human psychology. In this he is, I think, successful, but his thesis hinges on the acceptability of the functionalist conception, according to which mental states, particularly thoughts, get their content from their causal role in human life. It is precisely this conception of psychology which forms the topic of *Consciousness and Causality*, the second Great Debate in Philosophy.[3]

NORMAN MALCOLM LEADS OFF with an essay critical of this approach to psychology. Malcolm's essay has the considerable charm of a period piece; with his robust invocation of ordinary language, his dismissal of scientific psychology, and his frequent invocations of Wittgenstein, he reminds one of those

[2] *Personal Identity*. By SYDNEY SHOEMAKER and RICHARD SWINBURNE. Blackwell, £15.00.

[3] *Consciousness and Causality*. By DAVID ARMSTRONG and NORMAN MALCOLM. Blackwell, £17.50.

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heady happy days when philosophers thought they could do human psychology in their armchairs. David Armstrong, however, in a brilliant essay (the best piece of philosophy of all those reviewed here) demonstrates that philosophers have to provide an account of the mind which accommodates all the phenomena, including those thrown up by scientific psychology. Armstrong argues that it is indeed a functionalist theory which does this, and his argument is largely convincing.

However, there is one important point which Armstrong, I think, fluffs a bit; it concerns the issue as to whether the content of a thought is intrinsic to it or not. Malcolm had argued that if the content of a thought is determined by its causal role, and this causal role is not intrinsic, then the content cannot be intrinsic either: so, e.g., we get the absurd result that the thought that snow is white might have been the thought that ice-cream is bad for teeth. Armstrong accepts this result; but he should not have done so. The trick is to see that, for a functionalist, thoughts are not the brain-states which have complex causal roles, but are themselves these roles for brain-states; as such their content is intrinsic, just as the lines of a dramatic role are intrinsic to it, though their utterance is not intrinsic to an actor who plays this role. It is because thoughts are these higher-order entities that they can be realised in different ways, as Armstrong allows.

THE BOOKS I HAVE SO FAR discussed all exemplify to a high standard contemporary work in metaphysics. Two other areas of considerable philosophical activity at present are the critical history of philosophy and the discussion of substantive moral and political issues. The first is well represented by a new collection of essays on the philosophy of F. H. Bradley.[4] There has been a noticeable revival of interest in Bradley's work recently, partly occasioned by a sense that in some respects analytic philosophy has lost its way and needs to return to its roots to recover a sense of direction. This kind of interest in Bradley leads directly into a careful appraisal of Bradley's logic, especially his criticisms of the psychologism of J. S. Mill, and into a comparison of the views of Bradley, on the one hand, and those of Lotze, Frege, Husserl, and Russell on the other.

In this collection there are useful essays by the editors, Anthony Manser and Guy Stock, which deal with some of these matters, though neither brings out adequately the differences between Bradley and his realist critics, and the sense in which the latter felt that they could properly turn against Bradley his own criticisms of Mill. There are excellent essays by Candlish, Allard and Holdcroft on other aspects of his logic that are central to his metaphysics—his holism and his commitment to the principle of sufficient reason. Other essays attempt to confront Bradley's metaphysics head on—his views about feeling, relations, the self, and the Absolute; I am afraid that none of these seemed to me very illuminating. There are also essays on Bradley's ethical views, amongst which Wright's

[4] *The Philosophy of F. H. Bradley*. Edited by ANTHONY MANSER and GUY STOCK. Oxford University Press, £22.50.

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discussion of the conception of society, or the state, as a moral organism is outstanding.

Sissela Bok's book about secrecy[5] well exemplifies the second trend in present philosophical activity, the examination of substantive moral and political issues. Current disputes concerning an individual's right of access to data banks concerning himself or herself, and concerning the legitimate grounds upon which sources of confidential information should be disclosed, revolve around points that she discusses. One of the merits of her book is that she has brought together a fascinating collection of material that is both stimulating and easy to read; of the books reviewed here it is the one I would most readily commend to those with no acquaintance with philosophy. Her topic covers a familiar dilemma for liberals: on the one hand, liberalism surely favours an open society where nothing is secret; on the other, it also favours respect for privacy which requires some degree of secrecy.

Bok has no simple thesis about the merits or faults of secrecy to propound as she pursues her investigation through different areas of life (the family, religion, science, business, the state). As a rough approximation, she suggests that there is a presumption in favour of secrecy in private affairs and against it in public affairs; but she shows that in many cases this presumption is rebuttable—e.g. in the case of parents who unfairly demand secrecy from their children about the state of their marriage, or politicians who need temporary secrecy from the media in order to conduct negotiations. The result is a painstaking and persuasive moral inquiry into material which demands, not abstract general principles, but a careful grasp of the relevant facts. It is just the sort of moral inquiry that Bradley, the enemy of casuistry, would have approved of.

So far I have found much to commend in the books reviewed, but the last two in my batch seem to me to suffer from crippling defects. It is a curious fact that these are the only ones reviewed here which belong to series with an editor. One would have hoped that the editors might have spared a reviewer like myself the disagreeable task that lies ahead. Jennifer Trusted's discussion of free will[6] is intended to be introductory, and she begins with an exposition of some classical positions on this familiar perennial. The trouble starts when she develops her own views. On the basis of wholly unconvincing considerations she takes the view the determinists are committed to holding that we never have any reasons for our beliefs and that our feelings never influence our behaviour. Having thus constructed a straw opponent, it is all too easy for her to appeal to our commonsense self-consciousness to vindicate her libertarian conviction that we are free in a way that is incompatible with determinism, though most libertarians will not want to follow her in accepting that, as a consequence, values must be directly experienced.

The weakness of Trusted's arguments is clearly visible in her discussion of the "soft" determinist position of those like Hume who have sought to reconcile a belief in determinism with free will. She observes, rightly, that soft determinists hold

[5] *Secrets*. By Sissela Bok. Oxford University Press, £12.95.
[6] *Free Will and Responsibility*. By Jennifer Trusted. Oxford University Press, £12.50; paper £3.95.

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that freedom, in the sense required for the ascription of responsibility, requires that actions be caused by choices which agents make in the light of their own beliefs and desires (which are themselves caused); to this she baldly objects that causation of this kind does not account for the ascription of responsibility. But why not? On the soft determinist's account, the agent is clearly involved in the action, *via* the causal role of his or her beliefs, desires, and will. It is only by assuming that the criteria for responsibility demand the conception of the agent as an uncaused cause that she rejects this position. But this assumption just begs the question. Furthermore her position leads to the familiar problem for libertarians concerning the possibility of degrees of responsibility; since for her the ascription of responsibility is grounded in a metaphysical conception of the agent as uncaused cause, there is a sharp metaphysical distinction between cases in which an agent is responsible and ones in which the agent is not, which is not compatible with the conception of degrees of responsibility. One libertarian philosopher who accepted, and thought through, the radical consequences of this feature of the libertarian position was J.-P. Sartre. Trusted has a truly awful chapter in which she purports to discuss Sartre's views; but since she appears not to have read *Being and Nothingness* she merely displays her ignorance.

THE OTHER BAD APPLE in the bunch is M. J. Detmold's attempted refutation of legal positivism,[7] understood as the view that questions about what the law of the state is are distinct from questions about what it ought to be. Part of the trouble with Detmold's book arises from his style: he writes in a series of disjointed sections, with the result that the reader is not presented with fully-worked arguments, and he further obscures matters by alluding frequently to the importance of the mystery of the world and the need to found law on love. Nietzsche and Wittgenstein could use this style successfully, but humbler mortals are well advised not to; it is pretentious and irritating.

The core of Detmold's argument seems to be that those who administer a legal system, i.e. the judiciary, are committed to thinking that what the law requires is right. But it simply does not follow that there cannot be unjust laws; all that does follow is that judges should believe that the laws they are currently administering are just, and this belief may well be incorrect. As Detmold notes, his position draws on Hart's view about our internal attitude to rules—that in so far as we follow a rule we do not question its authority; Detmold's contribution is to interpret this internal attitude as expressive of love. Hart also insisted on the possibility of an external attitude to rules, in which we stand back and reflect critically on them; and it is the possibility of this attitude which informs the legal positivist's distinction between law and morality. Detmold seems to hold that no such external attitude is possible, for, as with a relationship of love, he thinks that the critical attitude is incompatible with the existence of rules. But we can clearly take up a critical

[7] *The Unity of Law and Morality*. By M. J. DETMOLD. Routledge & Kegan Paul, £15.00.

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attitude to the legal systems of other states without incoherence; so why can those of us who are not judges not do so for our own legal system?

I think that at the root of Detmold's argument is a misapprehension of the significance of G. E. Moore's paradox. Moore observed, rightly, that though we can in general acknowledge that many of our beliefs are mistaken, we cannot coherently believe something which we simultaneously believe to be mistaken. Moore's paradox applies to our moral beliefs, as to all others: "I think this law is just, but it is not" is not a coherent thought, and this is roughly the incoherence that Detmold seeks to find in the possibility of an external attitude to law, which, he holds, always presents itself to us as just. But in this case, as all others, the thought that we cannot coherently have may yet be true; hence Detmold's "refutation of legal positivism" collapses.

Portrait Gallery

They are for
the prevention of their use
as windows. Instead they
confront you with a likeness
that is not your own. In
the mirror the painter
held to them they are
reflected but with
a difference. They would not
recognise the dishonesty
of their smiles, the cracks
at the mouth's corners
large enough to be cruelty's
hiding-place. Linger
before this one who,
without consciousness of an age
other than his, would outdistance
perspective, or be timeless rather
by being himself. I forget
clothes, the lace collar fastening
him to his period, the topiary
of his beard. It is the eyes'
impudence in their denial
of death that gives me
pause, their unwillingness to put on
sackcloth for sin.
From a world
like ours, whose riches are
what it spends, I look at
him as he is, admiring his contempt
of the market, his lack of
investment in our insolvent
future; a portrait in short
of a gentleman not overdrawn.

R. S. Thomas

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The Murder in St James's Square

What "Diplomatic Immunity" for Terrorists?

By Arthur J. Goldberg



THE ADVENT of state-supported terrorism calls into question some long-held and widely-shared assumptions about the degree of immunity which should be accorded to diplomats, diplomatic missions, and diplomatic bags. The recent murder of British Police Constable Yvonne Fletcher by two Libyans who claimed immunity under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations has once again raised, tragically, the question of whether civilised nations can protect themselves against those individuals and governments which have contempt for treaties, conventions, and, indeed, for the rule of law itself.

The facts of the shoot-out at the People's Bureau have been extensively reported. Two gunmen in the Libyan self-styled "People's Bureau" in London opend fire on a crowd of peaceful anti-Gaddafi demonstrators. These demonstrators were conducting their legitimate protest on a sidewalk adjacent to the Libyan People's Bureau, yet the gunmen inside chose to shoot at them, killing Constable Fletcher and wounding eleven demonstrators and bystanders.

Ten days after this barbaric incident, the British Government provided the killers and their murder weapons with safe passage out of the country.[1]

On the same day that British police escorted the murderers to Heathrow Airport, Constable Fletcher was buried. At her funeral, the Home Secretary, Leon Brittan, stated that the British police were prevented under the terms of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations from storming the People's Bureau to apprehend the killers and bring them to justice. Mr Brittan asserted that Her Majesty's government could not act because the murderers, the premises of the People's Bureau, and the bags within which the lethal weapons were concealed were all immune, according to the Convention.

ARTHUR J. GOLDBERG *is one of America's leading lawyers. He served for three years as a Justice of the US Supreme Court, and subsequently as the Johnson Administration's Ambassador to the United Nations (1965–1968) and as Ambassador-at-large.*

Prime Minister Thatcher and the Foreign Secretary, Sir Geoffrey Howe, supported the Home Secretary's view in the debate in the House of Commons. With all respect, I disagree.

The Vienna Convention, like all treaties, must be sensibly interpreted. In this unruly age of state-sponsored terrorism, the Vienna Convention must not be construed so as to be a suicide pact for civilised countries. Treaties must be read in their entirety, with some provisions necessarily modified by others. Nothing could be more foolish than to accept a simple-minded, literal reading of each of the Convention's articles. The privileges and immunities granted by the Convention are rights declared in words; but rights declared in words are not to be lost in reality.

The purpose of the Vienna Convention is to grant immunity only to *bona fide* diplomatic agents, to *bona fide* embassies, and to *bona fide* diplomatic bags, but not to terrorists masquerading as diplomats. I believe that the two Libyan killers, the People's Bureau that housed them, and the pouches that contained their weapons do *not* come within the treaty provisions.

Under Article 4, Section 1, of the Vienna Convention, the host country has the right before accepting and accrediting a diplomat to review his nomination and, if it is deemed unacceptable, to refuse accreditation. Since the students loyal to Gaddafi seized the Libyan Embassy without notice, the British Government was deprived of its privilege, under the Convention, of declaring them *persona non grata* before their entry to Britain.

The British police, after a most summary interview with the Libyans conducted shortly before they departed, issued a statement saying that they were diplomats. How the police arrived at this conclusion is not clear. Diplomatic passports are not conclusive evidence on this point. I myself, for example, due to long American government service, have been issued a diplomatic passport by the US State Department as a courtesy. I am certainly not, however, a diplomatic agent as defined by the Vienna Convention.

Neither press reports nor the statement by the British government provides a satisfying answer to this question of

[1] Although Constable Fletcher was killed by a single shot, both gunmen were legally guilty of murder since they joined together in a felonious attack.

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whether the killers were ever accepted as diplomatic agents. If the murderers were not accepted as diplomatic agents by the British Government, then they were not *bona fide* diplomats entitled to the privileges and immunities afforded by the Vienna Convention.

Were they, or were they not, accepted and accredited diplomats? I put this question to the British Foreign Office, and my assistant (Mr David L. Stebenne) received a confirmation of the contention that the killers of Constable Fletcher were not accepted and accredited diplomats. The letter from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office was dated London, 24 July, 1984, and signed by Mrs J. C. Radice of the Protocol Department; a copy was sent to the British Embassy in Washington.

> "Thank you for your letter of 25 June about the status of members of the Libyan People's Bureau in London before the break in diplomatic relations between Libya and the United Kingdom. I am sorry that you have not had an earlier reply.
>
> The short answer to Ambassador Goldberg's question is No. The Libyan People's Bureau was taken over on 18 February 1984 by a Committee of Revolutionary Students. We were not notified of their names or individual appointments; in the absence of such formal notification, none of them enjoyed any form of diplomatic status. Nor, in the absence of a notified head of mission, did we accept any notifications of diplomatic appointments after 18 February.
>
> Between February and April we tried repeatedly to obtain from the Libyan Foreign Liaison Bureau the name of the new head of the Bureau in accordance with Article 19 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. We made it clear that until the position of who was in charge was regularised, we would be unable to accept new notifications of appointment; and that it would therefore become progressively more difficult to conduct business with the Bureau. We were eventually notified orally that Mr. M. Fitouri was in charge. We were still awaiting written confirmation of this at the time of the shooting on 17 April.
>
> I hope that this answers your question."

EVEN IF the British Government did accept the killers as diplomatic representatives, their conduct as terrorists constitutes a forfeiture of any right to be recognised as *bona fide* diplomatic agents. Furthermore, even diplomatic agents are, on occasion arrested, as in the case of diplomats engaged in espionage. Diplomats, after arrest, must plead immunity, and if entitled to it under the Convention, must then be released. In this instance, however, the British made no arrests. The British police merely conducted a brief interview with the Libyans shortly before they returned to Libya. This interview apparently was the result of a pre-arrangement designed to pacify the British public by allowing the government to say that the Libyans were at least "questioned" by the British police.

But, as the Home Secretary explained to the press, there is also the issue of an Embassy's inviolability. He claimed that the British police under the Vienna Convention could not storm the so-called Libyan People's Bureau to capture the killers and confiscate their weapons as material evidence.

Again, I disagree. Colonel Gaddafi's People's Bureau in London scarcely qualifies as a *bona fide* embassy whose premises are inviolable under the Vienna Convention. The group in charge of the building, as I noted earlier, is a committee of non-diplomats, for whom accredited diplomats are obliged to work. Genuine embassies do not function in this bizarre manner.

Furthermore, the London People's Bureau, according to reliable evidence, has harboured assassination teams directed by Gaddafi against Libyan dissidents. Murder factories are not embassies, and therefore do not come within the scope of the Vienna Convention. That treaty is designed to grant immunity to a proper Embassy devoted to diplomatic relations. Article 41, Section 3, of the Convention states that

> "premises of the mission must not be used in any manner incompatible with the functions of the mission as laid down in the . . . Convention or by other rules of international law . . . ."

Harbouring "hit squads" clearly does not come within the protection of that provision.

The People's Bureau in London, therefore, is not a *bona fide* embassy. It was, in my opinion, subject—under established rules of international law—to search and seizure by the British police after the murder of Constable Fletcher and the wounding of others.

The Home Secretary also claimed that the Libyan diplomatic bags could not be searched, despite official statements that the murder weapons were probably secreted within them and thus spirited out of Britain. While Article 27, Section 2 of the Convention states that diplomatic bags are inviolable, another related provision, Section 4, states that a diplomatic bag "must contain only diplomatic documents or articles intended for official use." Murder weapons hardly meet that requirement.

IT DEFIES REASON to interpret the Convention so as to prevent the opening of a diplomatic bag where there is substantial evidence that it contains murder weapons, or, for example, conventional or nuclear bombs. Any other interpretation of the Convention means that, by a too liberal application of its terms rather than a sensible one, we could all go up in smoke, since diplomatic bags could be used to secrete such weapons.

Apparently as a result of a storm of criticism by the British people and in the British press, the British Government now has embarked upon a different course with respect to the immunity of diplomats. Recently there was an attempt to spirit out of Great Britain a former Nigerian official wanted in his country for charges of corruption. In this very bizarre episode, he was drugged and placed in a crate, which was labelled and sealed as a Nigerian diplomatic bag. Notwithstanding, the British Government properly opened the crate, stating that it was not inviolable under the Vienna Convention, and rescued this Nigerian former official. If the Libyan example had been followed, the diplomatic crate would have been regarded as inviolable—and the crate, with the drugged Nigerian,

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dispatched to Nigeria in the Nigerian cargo plane standing by to receive it.

The contrast between the treatment of the so-called Nigerian diplomatic crate and the so-called Libyan diplomatic bag harbouring the murder weapon is not explainable, except that the British Government must have belatedly decided that immunity to the Libyan diplomatic bag, containing the murder weapons, was not tenable.

Further, the West German Government recently detained Soviet crates labelled as diplomatic bags because of information that they contained classified equipment embargoed for shipment to the Soviet Union. After a protracted stand-off, the Soviet Union permitted the West German Government to inspect the contents of these crates. Thus, the Vienna Convention was not interpreted as preventing such an inspection.

Thus, when the Libyan killers struck last April, the British Government could, within the terms of the Vienna Convention, have raided the People's Bureau, arrested the murderers, and seized the material evidence.

Lord Denning, the retired and distinguished former Master of the Rolls, independently concluded (according to press accounts) that, in view of the circumstances, the Libyans in the shoot-out in London were not entitled to diplomatic immunity under the terms of the Convention.

Why, then, did officials at the highest levels of the British Government consistently state that they could not bring the killers to justice because of the Vienna Convention?

THE ONLY POSSIBLE EXPLANATION is a reason never stated: that the government was justifiably concerned about the safety of the British Mission in Libya and of the 8,000 Britons who have elected, of their own will, to stay in Libya for pecuniary reasons. Further, while they may have been endangered, diplomats and commercial personnel who accept assignments in countries such as Libya, like soldiers in wartime, assume the risk of such assignments.[2]

If this was the real reason for the British Government's behaviour, I believe that its fear was unfounded. The United States, some time ago, broke off relations with Libya. It is an understatement to say that we Americans are more at odds with Libya and its quixotic leader than is Great Britain. Notwithstanding the freeze in US-Libyan relations, over 1,000 Americans still reside in Libya to assist in operating the oil-fields and other commercial enterprises. They do not appear to be at risk, nor do the American diplomats who remain in Tripoli, lodged at the Embassy of a friendly government in what diplomats call a "Special Interests Section." Colonel Gaddafi clearly values the technological help that Americans provide, and this is also certainly the case with respect to the several thousand Britons who have elected to stay in Libya. Other European countries such as France and Italy also have many nationals who reside in Libya in similar circumstances and have gone unmolested.

Thus the almost inescapable conclusion is that the British Government acted as it did to protect its commercial interests and its nationals in Libya, rather than for its stated reason that diplomatic immunity protected the killers. The only step Britain has taken in response to this crime is to sever diplomatic relations with Libya. Under the circumstances, this was simply a slap on the wrist. Business as usual is continuing between Britain and Libya. Some British diplomats remain in Libya, housed as a "Special Interests Section" in a friendly nation's Tripoli Embassy. Similarly, a number of Libyans will no doubt remain in London, also under a "Special Interests" arrangement.

Surely this terrible act of terrorism deserved more of a response than that. Libya has Embassies and Consulates all over the globe, many of which are now under the control of Gaddafi supporters like those who, until very recently, inhabited the London People's Bureau. Colonel Gaddafi has shown himself to be one of the world's foremost proponents of international terrorism, and he is supported with vast supplies of arms from the Soviets which greatly exceed the amount legitimately needed for Libyan self-defence. And of paramount concern is the possibility that Gaddafi may develop, purchase, or purloin a nuclear weapon for use as the ultimate weapon of terror. The real issue is how civilised nations can combat this threat to human freedom and the rule of law. Experience teaches that the very worst way to respond is to submit to terrorism. It is with great reluctance that I am forced to conclude that Great Britain did submit to terrorist blackmail in this instance.

SOME HAVE ARGUED that the Vienna Convention needs to be amended to take account of the abuse of diplomatic credentials and privileges by those countries which support terrorism. The practical problems involved in amending the Convention (agreement by all signatories) militate against such an approach, and in any event I do not believe that amendments

"Diplomatic Bags"

Dublin

A BLACKLIST of diplomats known to have links with terrorism is being drawn up to bar them from all ten Common Market countries.

Guidelines to end "terrorism cloaked by diplomatic immunity" have been drafted by Foreign Secretary Sir Geoffrey Howe and accepted by all his EEC partners at their Dublin meeting (12 September). Sir Geoffrey said yesterday in a BBC interview:

"Hijackings have been prevented by making it clear there will be no easy haven for hijackers in our countries. Now we are taking a common stand against this other kind of terrorism."

This confirms the impression that the Community governments have agreed not to accept as diplomats anyone expelled for suspected terrorism from another EEC country. This is the "black list", though Whitehall rejects the term.

The Foreign Office would not give details of the new agreement. For security reasons the pact is not being divulged in detail, but it is thought to cover gun-running by the use of diplomatic bags.

THE TIMES/DAILY MAIL

[2] While the Libyan government recently arrested five British businessmen for reasons not explained but apparently unrelated to this episode, according to press accounts two have already been released and the others are to be freed shortly.

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are necessary. The Convention protects legitimate diplomats, not terrorists.

The British Government is subject justifiably to criticism for its unfounded reliance on the Vienna Convention to excuse its failure to act against Constable Fletcher's murderers. That explanation, which I believe to be disingenuous, only serves to blur the distinction between lawless killers and responsible, accredited representatives of law-abiding governments. And that confusion poses a great danger, for when our citizens and subjects are told by their governments that there is no difference between the two, the result is to breed disrespect for all governments and, indeed, all law. If this is the price Britain and other civilised countries pay when they choose to submit to terrorist blackmail, I am of the view that it is a grave mistake cravenly to submit.

It can hardly be said that the aftermath of the Libyan shoot-out was Britain's "finest hour."

Having served as a US Army officer in Britain during World War II and (if in a rather small measure) shared Britain's ordeal, I know what kind of people the British are. But, in view of the Government's response to the St James's Square shoot-out, does Colonel Gaddafi—or any other terrorist?

AUTHORS

Penelope Lively's novel *According to Mark* has just been published by Heinemann, who earlier this year published her collection of short stories, *Corruption* (the title-story appeared in the March 1984 ENCOUNTER).

Paul Johnson was Editor of the *New Statesman* from 1965–70, and served as a member of the Royal Commission on the Press from 1974–77. His numerous books include *A History of the Modern World*, published in 1983 by Weidenfeld, who have this autumn brought out a paperback edition.

Elie Kedourie is Professor of Politics at the University of London and Editor of *Middle Eastern Affairs*. Among his publications are *Nationalism* (1960), *Arabic Political Memoirs* (1974), and *Islam in the Modern World* (Mansell, 1980); he is co-editor of *Palestine and Israel in the 19th and 20th Century* and *Zionism and Arabism in Palestine and Israel* (Frank Cass, 1982). His latest book, *The Gossman Confessions and Other Essays in Politics, History and Religion*, has just been published by Mansell. The illustrations to his article are by Lurie.

Vernon Scannell published his *New and Collected Poems 1950-80* (Robson Books) in 1980. His most recent book of poems, from the same publisher, is *Winterlude* (1982).

Peter Reading's most recent book of poems is *Diplopic* (Secker & Warburg, 1983). His next book, *C*, will appear early in 1985.

Edward Pearce is a leader writer and Parliamentary sketch writer on the *Daily Telegraph*, and author of *The Senate of Lilliput* (Faber, 1983).

Jean-François Revel writes regularly for the Paris journal *Le Point*, where these pieces first appeared. His translated works include *The Totalitarian Temptation* (n.e. Penguin, 1978) and *Without Marx or Jesus* (n.e. Paladin, 1972). His most recent book, *How Democracies Perish*, will be published by Doubleday later this year.

Ruth Padel has been Lecturer in Classics at Wadham College, Oxford, and at Birkbeck College, London. She now lives in Cambridge. Her study *In and Out of the Mind: A Portrait of Consciousness in Greek Tragedy*, is to be published by Oxford University Press, and her account of George Seferis's reading of Homer will be published next year by Anti Press in Athens.

Judith Hughes teaches in the departments of Philosophy and Adult Education at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne. She has for many years been involved in women's education—she is co-author (with Mary Midgley) of *Women's Choices* (Weidenfeld, 1983)—and is currently working on a book on children.

B. A. Farrell is a Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Oxford. From 1947–79 he was Reader in Mental Philosophy at the University of Oxford. Among his publications is *The Standing of Psychoanalysis* (Oxford University Press, 1981).

Thomas Baldwin, until recently a lecturer in the Department of Philosophy at the University of York, has now moved to Cambridge, where he is a lecturer in the Faculty of Philosophy. He has published several articles in academic philosophical journals.

Arthur J. Goldberg's article is a revised and extended version of his address to the Second International Conference on Terrorism, sponsored by the Jonathan Institute, which took place this summer in Washington, D.C.

D. J. Enright—Professor of English at the University of Singapore from 1960–70, Co-Editor of ENCOUNTER 1970–72, and a Director of Chatto & Windus 1974–82—is a freelance writer and teacher. His *Collected Poems* were published in 1981 by Oxford University Press, for whom he also edited *The Oxford Book of Contemporary Verse*, and his novel *Academic Year* was re-issued by Buchan & Enright this autumn.

Julian Symons is President of the Detection Club, and the author of over 22 crime novels. The latest, *The Name of Annabel Lee*, was published by Macmillan in 1983, when his study of Charles Dickens was reissued by Haskell House.

Leopold Labedz is Editor of *Survey* magazine in London and a Fellow of the Institute of International Studies at the London School of Economics. Among the works he has edited are *Revisionism* (1961), *Literature and Revolution* (1963), *The Sino-Soviet Rift* (1964), *International Communism after Khrushchev* (1965), *On Trial: The Case of Sinyavsky and Daniel* (1967), and *Solzhenitsyn: A Documentary Record* (1972).

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From Beyond the Tomb

On Editing "The Oxford Book of Death"—By D. J. Enright



How did it all begin? I can't for the life of me remember. Possibly it simply arose out of the sheer amount of lively writing there is concerning death—and such related subjects as heavens and hells, which tell us so much about this world and this life, and spirits and revenants who (because of some self-denying ordinance?) tell us so little about the after-life.

I do remember that, when I first proposed an *Oxford Book of Death*, the Press had some natural misgivings. Perhaps it sounded like digging one's own grave. What about a non-*Oxford Book* book, a personal anthology? That was fine by me—what could it be but a personal anthology?—and the obvious title sprang to mind. *The Distinguished Thing*—the words that Henry James heard so distinctly ("So here it is at last . . .") as he fell to the ground during his first stroke. After deliberation, however, Oxford stiffened its upper lip and changed its mind. *Aphorisms* and *Dreams* were on the way, *Marriage* was in the offing, so why not *Death*? Where was its sting?

Of the gathering of material I will say little, except that it was most enjoyable, alarming, anguishing, invigorating, entertaining—everything but boring. I found myself being drawn or pushed along paths I had known nothing of. Ben Jonson's poem on the death of his son pointed me to Drummond of Hawthornden's story of Jonson, away from home, seeing the apparition of his son with a bloody cross on his forehead, just before hearing news of the boy's death in the plague. A war poem of Wilfred Owen's brought in its wake a passage in which his sailor brother Harold told of meeting Wilfred in his cabin, as his ship lay off the Cameroons; unbeknown to him, Wilfred had been killed on the Western Front several weeks before. Ripe references dropped about my head; curious cases reached into my hands; the centuries coincided and clashed; death-beds were followed by funerals; intimations of various varieties of immortality were received; love conquered death and death provoked love; war, plague and persecution took their toll; revenants returned; children and animals demanded their say. I felt—as many a writer besides Blake has felt, and many a mere anthologist too—that I was no more than the secretary of some grand though obscure Managing Director. Then, when finally the typescript had to be handed over, I felt like one who has abruptly been made redundant.

Events at the typesetters had best be passed over lightly. In brief, the book died—the managing directors, man and wife, fell out; proofs were abandoned in crashed cars and mislaid in vanished minicabs; verse was set as prose and prose as nonsense; the computer ran mad of grief or terror and wiped out what had been set—and was then resurrected in record time and hot metal by the University Press.

Next came the question of how to sell the book. As wise before the event as they are after, the publisher's representatives shook their heads. Could they hope to persuade booksellers to place so dread an article on display? Book buyers are a nervy race, easily affrighted and sent running out into the street.

I knew what the reps meant. Some people are hard to please. When the well-disposed F. W. H. Myers asked a woman who had recently lost her daughter what she thought had become of the girl's soul, the mother replied pettishly: "Oh well, I suppose she is enjoying eternal bliss, but I wish you wouldn't talk about such unpleasant subjects. . . ." And early in the proceedings a friend in whom I confided had shaken his head too: "Marvellous idea! . . . But not exactly something you could give your wife."

Books are bought only for other people, the sole exceptions being the confused travellers leafing through paperbacks at bookstalls at Heathrow or in railway stations. I did my poor best to cheer up the sales force, reminding them of Edward Young's proposition, repeated by Nabokov in *Pale Fire*: "All men think all men mortal, but themselves." (Though in Britain it is considered helpful to wear a seat-belt, refrain from smoking, and belong to a trade union.) Turning such irrationality to our advantage, we should go after all men, including women.

Publication day came, and, like a foretaste of Judgment Day, so did the reviews. Practically every reviewer wondered who on earth one could give the book to ("It is not quite like saying it with flowers": Richard Holmes, *The Standard*); while

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the majority of them judged that, apart from this minor drawback, it was a book for all the world. (And practically every reviewer, even the most austere, quoted my not-quite-accurate quoting of Woody Allen, who wasn't afraid to die but just didn't want to be there when it happened. I had very nearly dropped the item as a little too flip.) In *The Tablet* Sydney Carter revealed that he would certainly have bought the book had he not already received two copies as birthday presents and a third to review. Although he might be thought to have a more than ordinary interest in the subject, a reviewer by the tide of Humber did complain that whoever had dreamed the idea up (blame not the publisher!) was guilty of an error of taste. On the other hand, *The Times Health Supplement* found the book (apparently quite unironically) "in the very best of taste." More ambiguously, the *Toronto Star* termed it "the anthology to end all anthologies."

IT HAD BEEN PROPHESIED that Americans would cringe away, the subject running clean contrary to their way of life, but in the event they lapped it up. Admittedly the *Boston Phoenix*, despite its title, cried out against "a compendium of morbidity from a publishing house that will anthologise about anything." But more representative were the *Santa Barbara News and Review* ("far more marvellous than morbid"), *The New York Times Book Review* ("very much a book of life"), and the *Chicago Tribune* ("a charmer, a mood changer, a delight"). And *Publishers Weekly*, listing it under "RELIGIOUS BOOKS", described it as "the sort of collection of fiction and faction that the civilised person might want to read in a limousine on the way back from the cemetery", adding that directly after the death of one's mother was perhaps not the best time to read it (though as it happened that was when the reviewer tackled it).

On this side of the Atlantic, however, the book clashed with the *New Statesman*'s way of life; its reviewer reckoned that an *Oxford Book of Frogs* or of *Fruit* would be more timely. Fortunately—when the permissions bill was totted up, I almost died—associations of undertakers were especially supportive, the Jewish Funeral Directors of America actually paying $150 for second serial rights—an expression which sounds like a form of resurrection.

It is good to be found of use. The *Library Journal* (USA) recommended the book to religious and health services personnel as well as the general reader, noting to my pleasure that the individual sections "proceed with a sensitive logic." The *Los Angeles Times* critic wished he had had the volume by him—"it would have been a godsend in that hour"—when called on to compose a memorial for a Jewish woman, a refugee from Central Europe and a lapsed Catholic convert. Praise also came from *Cultural Information Service*, NY ("The Magazine for Lifelong Learners"): "ideal for educators and public speakers, for amateur philosophers and lifelong learners." *Bereavement Care*, published by CRUSE (The National Organisation for the Widowed and their Children, not the missile), started off gratifyingly with "A wonderful rich source for counsellors and others wanting to dig out positive ideas, happily phrased, to support sad people with." (Thank you for those happy phrases, Shakespeare, Tennyson, Goethe,

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Proust, Plato *et al.*!) But alas the book then disqualified itself by including "black jokes and cynicism." The review concluded by disclosing that the right kind of anthology for the bereaved was currently being compiled by CRUSE.

THERE WERE, OF COURSE, the customary outcries of why isn't so-and-so represented, why has this been chosen instead of that. How can you possibly have a book of death without "*If I should die*" and "*They told me, Heraclitus*" (the anthologist will be scolded for excluding old favourites and also for including well-known pieces), Hemingway, Amy Lowell, Thomas Wolfe, Carl Sandburg, T. S. Eliot? (Let it be recorded that the editor was not permitted to excerpt from Eliot, not even "*Those who sharpen the tooth of the dog, meaning / Death* . . .") One complainant on this score, Lloyd Waddy of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, compensated by providing an item of his own: referring to the real-estate value of some cemetery, his mother once remarked, "People are dying to get over there." Likewise Anthony Burgess (*The Times Literary Supplement*), who found the compilation "mostly very heartening and sometimes even hilarious", offered his father's authenticated dying words:

"Bugger the priest. Give me a pint of draught Bass."

In the eventuality of a revised and enlarged edition—I should live that long—these items and others suggested by both reviewers and readers would certainly be added.

SOMEONE PROTESTED that Voltaire had more entries than the Bible. Actually each had nine—not counting two from the Apocrypha—and, in terms of words, 323 came from the Frenchman and 1,200 from God. There were—thank heavens for plurality!—some amusing cases of cancelling out. One American pronounced the anthology parochial, with too much British stuff, whereas another objected that there was too much foreign material in translation and appealed for a sequel, "entitled, perhaps, *The Oxford Book of Death by People Who Wrote in English*." It was, even so, the latter gentleman (in *The American Funeral Director*) who came up with the final answer to the who's-in-who's-out technique of reviewing:

"If there is a fault it is that, by including so much, it excludes so much."

Similarly, one or two reviewers thought the contents anodyne ("It will sell better in Bournemouth than Benares": RAIN, Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland), while one or two judged it too harrowing and warned readers not to dip into the book "unless you're feeling terribly healthy." (*The Spectator* envisaged customers asking for the object to be wrapped in a plain cover.)

The Jerusalem Post lamented that the *goyim*—who do die, "though not nearly as often as Jews"—were vastly over-represented, whereas *The Jewish Chronicle*, citing only Jewish contributors (Heine, Freud, Koestler, God), gave the impression that there were no *goyim* present at all. *Il Progresso* mentioned only Dante, Petrarch, Michelangelo, Leopardi, Belli, Pavese, Montale and Ungaretti; *Elseviers Magazine* noted reproachfully "*uit Nederland alleen Erasmus.*" *Parabola* (NY), subtitled "Myths and the Quest for Meaning" and from whom therefore one would have expected more than a tiny flash of serendipity, found nothing better to say than that the anagram of the editor, J. Endright, "seems too apposite to be believed."

So, all in all a rich harvest. (Of floral tributes, should I say?) Virtually the only journal in the world (outside Benares and Bournemouth) not to review the book was . . . oh dear, it was *this* one. I hope it won't expect me to pay for this advert.

Monkeys

i

Less monkeys than we were
But monkeys still,
We've lost that lovely art
Of swaying along through trees.
We shave; perfect a more
Inclusive way to kill
And then excuse ourselves by
Snivelling on our knees.

ii

Yet is that fair? They say
Gorillas couple face to face,
And while they couple, make
A noise like doves.
We should have much improved
Upon their loves.

Geoffrey Grigson

Fondazione Alfred Lewin

COMMUNICATIONS

The Beds That Don't Fit

On Labedz's "Orwell"—By JULIAN SYMONS



NO DOUBT Leopold Labedz is trying to tell us something about Orwell ("Will George Orwell Survive 1984?", ENCOUNTER, June and July-August 1984), but one can't be sure what it is. Perhaps that Orwell wasn't a socialist, didn't support the Labour Party, disliked *Tribune*?

Well, his "socialism" sometimes gets inverted commas, and there's a wistful glimpse of the possibility that he might now be a "neo-conservative": but no, in the end Labedz squares up to what is clearly a disagreeable fact, even though the inverted commas remain. "He did consider himself a 'socialist' and 'a man of the Left'." One may note, however, that the phrase does not run: "Orwell *was* a socialist and a man of the Left", but only considered himself such. The gist of the article, as I understand it (hard to be sure, because no sooner does Labedz scent a Left-wing fox like Hiss or the Rosenbergs than he's off at full gallop, Orwell momentarily forgotten), is that Orwell thought himself some sort of socialist in 1948, but would certainly be opposed to all Socialist régimes and parties today.

What might he favour? He might be a neo-conservative or a social-democrat, it is said, but "there can indeed be little doubt" about his attitude towards "the international conflict." In fact, however, this phrase leaves considerable doubt in the mind about just what is implied. Does it mean that a live Orwell would support American international policies in relation at present to Cruise missiles and Nicaragua, in the past to Viet Nam and Chile? I see no other possible meaning, but wish Leopold Labedz had spelt it out. He is not usually so coy.

I shall come back to this central question, but minor matters suggest the nature of Labedz's approach. He is one of those who look for secrets everywhere. He finds one in my "revelation" in a review that "having invited Bernard Crick to write Orwell's biography, Sonia Orwell 'later tried vainly to recant' the invitation." But this really was not much of a revelation, certainly not one reflecting badly on Crick as is vaguely suggested. Sonia Orwell's waywardness, vacillations, and dictatorial attitude towards Orwell's possible biographers were widely known. An example was her mean refusal to allow the American writers Stansky and Abrahams direct quotation from the works in their two books about Orwell. Crick did not mention the attempted recantation in his biography, something remarked with would-be meaningfulness by Labedz, because of Sonia Orwell's illness and the fear that mention of the matter would upset her further.

Labedz weighs heavily on Crick's book. I am criticised for calling the book the definitive biography, "which it most definitely is not." The point here is that the work contains masses of material to be found nowhere else, and is the biography that anybody interested in Orwell's life *must* consult. Whatever they may think of its style, however little they agree with its approach, that will remain true. Perhaps I should add (another revelation!) that I read the original typescript for the publisher and produced an 18-page report pointing out many minor errors, and what I felt to be misconceptions. Crick adopted some of my suggestions, ignored others, corrected the errors. No doubt other errors remain, although none is mentioned; but the attack on Crick as a simple-minded "progressive", and comparison of his biography with Raymond Williams's wretched little critical book, which is almost consistently hostile to Orwell, is surely misconceived—to use a gentle word.

THE ONLY FACTUAL ERROR I spotted was the dating of *Homage to Catalonia* as 1944, but there is a lot of selective quotation—from *Tribune*, for instance. It is fair enough to mention Orwell's unpublished letter about "Comrade Zilliacus", wrong to state that the paper's views "never once coincided with Orwell's own attitude to such problems as Communism, the Soviet Union and foreign policy." I write from memory, but there were many occasions when the paper's line and Orwell's were identical. The Soviet attitude to the siege of Warsaw was one of them. From the way that Labedz writes about Orwell's "persistent differences" with the paper, one might suppose that he had fallen out with it. That was not the case. During the years he wrote for *Tribune* he disapproved in particular of the paper's pro-Zionism and anti-Americanism, but he was more

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sympathetic to *Tribune* than to the *New Statesman*, or of course to any daily paper.

ANY TRUE VIEW OF Orwell must start from the central fact that he wanted to see a Socialist Britain. He never produced a blueprint of what that meant, but it implied more equality of opportunity, a nearer levelling of incomes, the abandonment of colonial power, an increasing reliance on mechanisation. He was aware of some of the dangers involved, the inevitable advance of bureaucracy and the replacement of individual skills by the machine among others, and wrote of them memorably in *As I Please* pieces. When he complained that there was "no symptom by which one could infer that we are not living under a Conservative government" it was such matters that he had in mind. The destruction of the Soviet myth, he wrote in a preface to the Ukrainian edition of *Animal Farm*, was "essential if we wanted a revival of the Socialist movement."

Labedz's article exposes various absurdities, some vile and others comic, in the attempts to fit this free-wheeling Radical into all sorts of progressive beds. For that many thanks. But Orwell does not fit any more comfortably into the pro-American bed carefully prepared for him here, in which he will generously be allowed the label of neo-conservative or social-democrat (but apparently not socialist), provided he is on the right—that is the American—international side. Can one imagine, we are asked, Orwell calling the Cambodian massacre a liberation? Of course not, but I can't imagine him approving "defoliation" in Viet Nam or the CIA-based destruction of Allende either. He had no particular liking for capitalist America. To those who thought *1984* was an attack on the British Labour Government he replied that if the book were related to America, "Ingsoc" could easily be replaced by "hundred per cent Americanism."

Orwell was careful about the company he kept. In 1945 he refused to speak for the League for European Freedom because it was an "essentially Conservative body" and "I belong to the Left and must work inside it, much as I hate Russian totalitarianism and its poisonous influence in this country." To quote Labedz on Crick and Williams, substituting his name for theirs: "One looks in vain in Labedz for this clear-cut reflection of Orwell's political attitude in the last period of his life."

"Animal Pharm"



AN ATTACK *on the "widespread but undeclared" use of hormones and other chemicals that speed the growth and increase the profits on farm animals reared for meat production, is made today by the Vegetarian Society. Meat has got the lot, be it "steak à la steroid", "entrecote oestrogen", or "McHormone burgers", the society claims. Over half the beef carcases eaten in Britain, as steaks, mince, sausages and burgers, come from animals treated with hormones and similar drugs to boost growth. Some animals are treated up to the time of slaugher.*

"Livestock producers have developed a scandalous disregard for the safety of the customer, who has no way of identifying these products."

Inquiries at 10 major retailers, including the leading supermarkets, indicated that none carried out tests to look for hormone residues in meat. Controls are few, and flouted:

"The black market thrives in Britain and the rest of the EEC. In Italy, illicit sales predominate. Holiday-makers might think of this as they tuck into their escalope of veal."

Drugs which should only be sold on prescription were still openly advertised to farmers. They included growth boosters containing hormones and arsenic compounds which could poison pastures, antibiotics, anti-mastitis agents which could get into milk, and tenderisers injected into animals just before slaughter.

Godfrey Brown

in The DAILY TELEGRAPH *(London)*

The Case of Julian Symons's Nostalgia

By Leopold Labedz

ACCORDING TO Julian Symons, it was for charitable reasons that Bernard Crick avoided mentioning in the *Introduction* to his biography of Orwell the fact that Orwell's widow tried to withdraw her invitation. Crick did this, says Symons, "because of Sonia Orwell's illness and the fear that mention of the matter would upset her further." Since in his *Introduction* Crick expressed his thanks to "the *late* Sonia Orwell" (which I quoted), we now know what a remarkable concern he has shown for her well-being even in the after-life. A true *finesse de sentiments*!

Julian Symons' explanation, coming as it does from an *aficionado* of detective fiction (the author of books on Agatha Christie and other crime writers), demonstrates his penchant for detection and logical reasoning. He leaves no room for doubt about any of the "secrets" to which I am supposedly so addicted; not even Hercule Poirot or Miss Marple could think of a more persuasive answer to my query. Unfortunately, Symons does not provide a similarly convincing explanation of *why* Sonia Orwell wanted to retract (or as he misquotes himself: "wanted to recant") her invitation to Crick to write the book.

The splendid precision of Symons' thought is no less visible in his other arguments. He defends having called Crick's book on Orwell "the definitive biography" by arguing that it "contains masses of material to be found nowhere else." But even if this were true, can it be a sufficient reason for superlatives? Many biographies contain new material on their subjects, without being designated "definitive."

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As for comparison of Crick's and Raymond Williams' works being "misconceived", I fairly noted that Crick's biography "does not suffer from the same excesses as the Williams book" and that "it is certainly a more solid and professional piece of work." I also stated that "it has contributed to the misinterpretation of Orwell and to his false 'new image'." I am glad to hear that Symons spotted only one factual error in my essay (the date of publication of *Homage to Catalonia*); but he should have noticed that this was corrected in the issue in which the second part of my essay appears. Miss Marple would not have missed this.

SYMONS SAYS THAT I am wrong to state that *Tribune*'s editorial line "never coincided with Orwell's own attitude to such problems as Communism, the Soviet Union and foreign policy." He asserts that "there were many occasions when the paper's line and Orwell's were identical", but he gives only one example: the Warsaw uprising of 1944. Symons' memory is mistaken. What he "remembers" are imaginative figments, as a rereading of past issues of *Tribune* confirms. I have already mentioned a large number of pre- and post-War *Tribune* policies which were directly contrary to Orwell's. But also during the War period, when Orwell collaborated with *Tribune*, it kept extolling Soviet "socialist achievements" and repeating Soviet propaganda (e.g. "the Second Front").

Tribune took a consistently pro-Soviet attitude on the Polish issue until the Warsaw uprising. After the discovery of the Katyn corpses, *Tribune* (30 April 1943) dismissed Dr Goebbels' "synthetic story" about "the Russian execution of thousands of Polish officers in 1940." It was worried that Soviet "suspicions will not be allayed by the Pilate-like attitude to the incident revealed in the official pronouncements of the British and American governments."

Politically, *Tribune* policy was never Orwellian. Already in its leader of 5 February 1943, *Tribune* welcomed "the Federation of Socialist States [in Eastern Europe] under the Soviet banner." On 7 May 1943, it reiterated this line:

> ". . . We take the opportunity again to restate something which cannot be repeated enough. The Russian Revolution and the Soviet Union were the first steps the people of Europe and Asia took out of international chaos which time and again led them to war. It marked the first steps to the attainment of a Socialist Europe."

But this ideological enthusiasm did not prevent *Tribune* (27 August 1943) from quoting with approval Stalin's propagandistic "assurances":

> "We have not, and cannot have, such war aims as imposing our will and régime on the Slavonic and other enslaved peoples of Europe. Our aim is no interference in the internal affairs of other peoples."

In its "Katyn" editorial, *Tribune* (30 April 1943) demonstrated its internationalist compassion by insisting that if "Poland is asked to swallow a little bitter medicine, it is only kindness to tell her that we would rather she swallowed it now than we should be forced to take a larger and more bitter dose later on." In contrast, here is what George Orwell wrote in *Tribune* (on 22 October 1943):

> ". . . the attitude of the Left towards the Russian régime has been distinctly similar to the attitude of the Tories towards Fascism. . . . On the whole, the intellectuals of the Left defended the Russo-German pact. It was 'realistic' like Chamberlain's appeasement policy, and with similar consequences. If there is a way out of the moral pig-sty we are living in, the first step towards it is probably to grasp that 'realism' does *not* pay, and that to sell out your friends and sit rubbing hands while they are destroyed is *not* the last word in political wisdom."

THE SINGLE INSTANCE that Julian Symons mentions is hardly one of "many occasions when the paper's line and Orwell's were identical." It is true that the Warsaw uprising was the one occasion when *Tribune* was explicitly critical of Soviet policy. But this exceptional stand did not mean that, even on this occasion, the premises of *Tribune*'s editorial line coincided with Orwell's own position (as indeed they could not, given its general attitude to the Polish question).

After the outbreak of the Warsaw uprising, *Tribune* wrote in its editorial of 11 August 1944:

> "For our part we salute the heroes of Warsaw, accord them our deep admiration and trust that even at this late hour the Allied leaders will give them the little help that stands between the victory of the people of Warsaw and destruction so near to their hour of liberation."

On 1 September 1944—exactly five years after Hitler attacked Poland, the day when *Tribune* announced that the Stalin-Hitler pact "had strongly reinforced the power for peace in Europe"—*Tribune*'s editorial, facing the Soviet betrayal of the uprising, stressed that "the battle of Warsaw . . . deeply touched public sentiment." It asked for a change of Soviet policy in this respect; but it also expressed its usual sentiments:

> "The more clearly Moscow understands that this is not a case of a small anti-Soviet clique taking a stand, but that it represents the great majority of public opinion in this country, the speedier the settlement will be carried out. It is a policy which has been driven beyond the limit by the hotheads inside the Soviet administration.
>
> All the same, it is also clear that anti-Soviet elements in America and in this country will utilise this genuine feeling to further their anti-Soviet plans."

In the same issue of *Tribune* Orwell wrote an *As I Please* column in which he expressed the very opposite concern. By no stretch of the imagination can it be considered "identical" to the editorial attitude of *Tribune*:

> "I know nothing of Polish affairs. . . . What I am concerned with is the attitude of the British intelligentsia. . . . The enormous majority of Left-wingers who swallow the policy put out by the *News Chronicle* etc. know no more about Poland than I do. All they know is that the Russians object to the [Polish] London Government and have set up a rival

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organisation, and so far as they are concerned that settles the matter. . . . Their attitude towards Russian policy is not 'Is this policy right or wrong?', but 'This is Russian policy: how can we make it appear right?' "

Orwell concluded his "message to English Left-wing journalists and intellectuals generally" with an appeal which "fitted" *Tribune* itself (and not just the *New Statesman*):

> "Do remember that dishonesty and cowardice always have to be paid for. Don't imagine that for years on end you can make yourself a boot-licking propagandist of the Soviet régime, or any other régime, and then, suddenly, return to mental decency. Once a whore, always a whore."

This was not exactly the vocabulary of *Tribune* which, even when for once it uttered a shy criticism of Soviet policy, continued to denounce those who resisted Soviet expansionism. (It is a not unfamiliar combination today as well.) In particular *Tribune* continually attacked "the reactionary Poles" for "poisoning Anglo-Soviet relations" (8 September 1944). At the same time one could read Orwell's outspoken criticisms of Soviet actions in the self-same *Tribune*. The two lines never coincided, nor were they "identical" in any instance.

Tribune came closest to an anti-Soviet position when after 63 days of struggle the Warsaw fighters were defeated. It wrote then (6 October 1944) that the "Lublin régime is not a victory for socialism in Poland. It is a reduction of Poland to a vassal state." But this was a flash in the pan, the exception that proves the rule. *Tribune*'s line excluded any such unambiguous position-taking, and after a momentary display of criticism, it continued its "progressive" editorial policies in contrast to Orwell's own formulations. Hence his "persistent differences" with the paper which now uses Orwell to falsify its own editorial history.

WHAT I WROTE ABOUT these "persistent differences" gives Julian Symons no right to imply that I suggested that Orwell "had fallen out with" *Tribune*. If this was so I would indeed have said it. I even mentioned Orwell's congratulatory message to *Tribune* on its tenth anniversary. It is an old polemical trick first to attribute to an opponent a statement he has not made and then assert that "that was not the case"; and Symons employs this method repeatedly. He ironically remarks that he is not sure what it is that I am trying to tell the reader about Orwell: "Perhaps that Orwell wasn't a socialist, didn't support the Labour Party, disliked *Tribune*?" No, says Symons, "in the end Labedz squares up to what is clearly a disagreeable fact. . . . He did consider himself a 'socialist' and 'a man of the Left'." What I was trying to say about Orwell in this 1984 year was that he is being hijacked by the "progressives", who blatantly misrepresent his essential message. If Symons shows no concern about this, I am afraid it is because, like Crick, he himself is not free from "progressive" clichés.

He splits hairs about my use of inverted commas, and reproaches me for saying that Orwell considered himself a "socialist" rather than saying that he *was* a socialist. As a matter of fact I did say that Orwell "underwent a political evolution from 'Tory anarchist' to revolutionary militant who then turned libertarian-democrat-socialist", which is a fairly precise description, and with no inverted commas around the word "socialist." But I also pointed out that "socialism" is not "a self-explanatory concept and its meaning self-evident", that the usages of the concept change, and that the post-1917 historical experience of its institutional implementation must be taken into account.

But Symons does not want to consider any such complications. For him Orwell has to be given a label which he approves, even though today it may have a different connotation than when Orwell (like most socialists) still accepted what he imagined to be its pre-1917 significance. Julian Symons makes a great song-and-dance about my occasional use of the inverted commas around the word "socialism"; but he himself used inverted commas in a similar way in respect to the word "progressivism" in his book *The Thirties: A Revolving Dream* (1960). In any case, inverted commas can indicate many different things, including semantic differences over time. In the present context an unqualified reference to Orwell's "socialism" can be misleading by implying support for the Left's recidivism. (If Symons is interested, I analysed the different uses of the socialist concept in my entries on "socialism", "social democracy", and "communism" in Alan Bullock's Fontana *Dictionary of Modern Thought*.) Orwell did not believe in socialism as the state ownership of the means of production. Like Symons, he gave it so vague a definition that it could just as well fit the concept of "welfare capitalism", nowadays denounced by almost all good "socialists." Anyway,

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Symons does not answer his own question: "What might he favour today among the socialist régimes or parties?" One thing is clear: on the socialist spectrum today—from the Fabians through the Trotskyists to the supporters of "really-existing-socialism"—anti-communism *à la* Orwell is a sin. Incidentally, I do not consider as "disagreeable" the fact that Orwell considered himself a "socialist" and "a man of the Left", if for no other reason than because if he had not, even fewer "progressives" would have listened to him and subsequently given up their "progressivism." Had he not been "a man of the Left", perhaps—perish the thought—even Symons, as his present attitude indicates, might not have been among their number. . . .

REFERRING TO MY REMARK about Orwell's attitude to "the international conflict", Symons finds it coy and thinks that I have not "spelt it out." If over 20 ENCOUNTER pages, which included references to Orwell's "cold war attitude"—to his fundamental commitment to the struggle against totalitarianism, and to his appeals to the Left about the need to choose "between Russia and America"—are not sufficient to make my meaning clear for Symons, nothing will be. For him it is just "the pro-American bed" and that is enough to damn it. He would not share it even with his erstwhile friend Orwell, who knew that without American support Western Europe would incur the fate of Eastern Europe.

To avoid the choice for which Orwell himself appealed, Symons indulges in the typical "symmetrism" of the "progressive" Left. He accepts the obvious proposition that Orwell would not call the Cambodian massacre a liberation, but says that he "can't imagine him approving 'defoliation' in Viet Nam either." What a characteristic example of a "progressive" mind-set this juxtaposition is!

Matching as equivalents a war-time action and the cold-blooded genocide of one's own civilians is not exactly original. Orwell criticised this type of reasoning in his polemic with Alex Comfort in *Tribune* (4 June 1943) during the War. There was yet another critic of this attitude. He denounced it at the time in *Tribune* (1 September 1944) in a polemic with the same Alex Comfort. He quoted him as saying: "Madmen are at present murdering Jews. Madmen are bombarding the cities of Europe. . . . Lunacy that kills Jews . . . lunacy that bombs Berlin!"—and he censured severely this kind of symmetry:

> ". . . only the foolish and the vicious can refuse to differentiate between the sadists who have deliberately tortured Gemans, Poles, and Russians, and the airmen who have bombed Berlin."

Who was this critic who so clearly refuted the standard manifestation of this type of symmetrism? None other than Julian Symons.

But like so many others Julian Symons did not escape "the recidivism of the Left." Some people once bitten are twice shy. Symons was bitten twice, but he is still not shy. Consider his polemical methods. In his paraphrase of my reference to Orwell's 1948 statement on the necessity of choice between Russia and America, he refers to Orwell's 1945 refusal to speak for the League for European Freedom because it was an "essentially Conservative body", and "one looks in vain in Labedz for this clear-cut reflection of Orwell's political attitude in the last period of his life." Julian Symons disingenuously puts a full stop in place of my comma in a sentence which goes on: "the years when he wrote *1984*", thereby amalgamating the earlier phase and the actual last period of Orwell's life, the one to which I in fact refer. After 1945 Orwell shed more of his earlier "progressive" attitudes and stereotypes, although (as I noted) "he died before he had quite shed them all." Consequently one cannot be sure what his present position about *internal* policies would (or would not) have been. This I emphasised repeatedly. I also indicated that he underwent some further evolution between *Animal Farm* and *1984* (i.e. between 1945 and 1948). But whatever his exact position in this evolution was at the time of his death, there can be no doubt of his attitude to *international* conflict; and no juggling of quotations and dates can change this. Julian Symons also no doubt knows of Orwell's efforts in this period to establish with Arthur Koestler an international organisation to mobilise intellectuals for the struggle against Soviet totalitarianism.

A last question. Why indulge in such casuistic acrobatics? Symons is obviously a man of the 1930s who cannot divorce himself from that decade. In *The Thirties: A Revolving Dream*, he wrote in the dedication:

> *For you whose thoughts are still a daze of heroes,*
> *This will appear a tale of half-men, zeroes.*
> *Freed from our hopes and monsters, dreams and terrors,*
> *Look tolerantly upon these lives and errors.*

Where does this all-too-human plea for tolerance end and sentimentality begin? Although Julian Symons emphasises that the attitude of the intelligentsia in the 1930s towards the Soviet Union "was the blackest betrayal of their own integrity", he still looks for excuses: ". . . they could not [*they could—L. L.*] be aware of the deceits practised upon them", and he extols "the moral attitude that stamped those of us who came to maturity in the Thirties." If the "progressives" were wrong they were wrong for the right reasons, even though their intentions were not always good. For Symons the dream is still "revolving." But as an historical fact it was a nightmare that brought only death and misery, mendacity and oppression.

In his book about the Thirties, he reflects melancholically that "History did not fit us for long." Now he confusedly ruminates about "the beds that don't fit" Orwell. He is a bad fitter, whether he deals with history or furniture.

Although intellectually he was less taken in by the imbecilities of the age than other "progressives"—he was a "premature" anti-Stalinist—it is clear that, emotionally, the link with the stereotypes of his youth has never been broken. When they were rehashed by the New Left in the 1960s, he embraced the new mode, as he did the old. *On revient toujours à ses premiers amours.*

Do we detect a hidden nostalgia for the Thirties in Julian Symons? He reminds me of the elderly lady in one of the French *boulevard* comedies of the 1920s who, when asked about her political opinions, replied that she still had a soft spot for Napoleon the Third. Asked again: "Why?"—she answered: "Because I was 18 then. . . ." Poor Symons—he was 18 when the Thirties began.

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LETTERS

"Sartor Resartus"

MANY cogent points were made in the Gerald Frost profile of E. P. Thompson's pacifistical ideology (ENCOUNTER, May). But none was, I think, so telling at the final crack—supercilious, but for all that supremely right—about the kind of political temperament which tries to make world-historic decisions and worries about the kind of jacket he thinks he ought to wear when going out to a public debate. As Frost writes, "Never has a lounge suit been endowed with so much world-historic virtue."

The style is the man, in the literal sense; and one wonders how debilitating such peculiarities are. Of course we all have our personal eccentricities, and I would hate it if mine were to be considered disqualifiers for holding sound and true opinions on the issues of the day. Still, it was proper and revealing for Frost to look at the type of mind which can trim itself to the cut of a piece of cloth. *Sartor Resartus* indeed!

I suppose the explanation will be found in the narrow ideological range of the Peace-fighters' cultural background. They were brought up on Left clichés, on adolescent "revolutionary" prejudices, on a handful of dog-eared little-Marxist-library pamphlets (often, alas, reprinted as Penguins) and the monotonous literature of "Social Protest."

Recently the F. A. Z. Magazine asked Petra Kelly to fill out the famous Proust questionnaire. The leader of the Greens and the German Peace Struggle cut a pitiful little figure: in my eyes, silly, naive, and uncultivated. "What are your favourite characters in novels?", and she replied: "There aren't any." But perhaps as a little girl she hadn't time for books since, as she says, "When I was twelve I wanted to go as an engaged nun to the Third World." Her heroes (or heroines) in the present are, of course, the real-life people of Greenham Common. Her most admired reformers are those titanic figures who started the Working-class and Feminist movements. The most contemptible figures in history are "militarists and patriarchs." Ask for her most beloved figure in history, whom else could it be but—Rosa Luxemburg. What range, subtlety, and breadth of spirit is shown here. (A glance at the devastating chapter on "Red Rosa" in Leszek Kolakowski's history of Marxism might have disabused her of the superficial notion that she really represented something more tolerant, balanced, reasonable and humanistic in the Marxian socialist movement.)

Still, I do not want to be merely supercilious. One has to concede that she does like the poetry of William Butler Yeats and the novels of Virginia Woolf, even if most of her idealism is formed by such great hearts as Alexandra Kollontai, Philip Berrigan, and Bertolt Brecht.

And what, you may well ask, does Petra Kelly choose to wear when she goes out into battle? Well, this much must also be conceded to her. She recently put on a laundered white T-shirt (no bra, of course) and crossed the Berlin-sector border into Eastern Germany. The message on the T-shirt, in good hand-dyed lettering, may not be the immortal aphorism she holds it to be—MAKE LOVE, NOT WAR—but, in the face of the People's Police of Communist authorities in East Berlin, it was a provocation which took some courage. She and her fellow-demonstrators were roughed up, and Petra took her share of the blows with some equanimity. Who should say that it would've been better for her to stay home in bed with a good book?

MARTIN H. KRIEK

Amsterdam

Bamboozle?

I HAVE just read the conversation between George Urban and Alexander Zinoviev in the May issue of your paper.

Forgive me, but is this piece an extensive joke, or is Zinoviev the best "plant" created by the *KGB* to deflate Solzhenitsyn and other dissident writers and to bamboozle Western intelligentsia on the same lines that they bamboozled a whole host of writers from 1920 till today (a story chronicled by Paul Hollander)? Maybe I am as naive as they were.

P. W. SINGLETON

Charlbury, Oxfordshire

A Marvellous Joke?

I HAVE NOW reread both parts of the Zinoviev interview (ENCOUNTER, April and May), and my original impression is reinforced. Zinoviev was pulling George Urban's leg.

Zinoviev has in his books and essays showed himself as one of the most marvellous satirists of the day. The way he fielded questions and mounted answers—well, the whole ENCOUNTER interview is one of the greatest "jokes" I have read. Did the interviewer see that? Did the editors? I hope that before long the author and the editor will reveal all.

MURRAY EVERETT

Washington, DC

Friedman's Paradoxes

DR MILTON FRIEDMAN ("Capitalism & the Jews, ENCOUNTER, June) examines some paradoxical manifestations in Jewish inclinations which in his assessment generally align members of the group with the Leftist-collectivist camp, rather than towards the free-market, capitalist forces. An up-to-date survey in the USA and Britain, I am quite certain, would not support Friedman's thesis today on the division of Jews politically, Left *vs* Centre and Right.

Officers and researchers in Jewish community matters in Britain affirm that there has been general turning to the Right among Jews in recent years. Fewer Jews voted Labour in the 1983 General Elections than in past elections; and the percentage of Jews supporting the Labour Party fell below the general average at the polls.

My stay in the USA from 1977 to 1982 (Labour Counsellor at the Embassy of Israel, Washington) entailed extensive contacts with the American labour movement and the Democratic Party's activists and officers, centrally and around the country. There too I discerned that Jewish sentiments and voting patterns have hardly remained frozen on the Left. American analysts have recorded shifts to the Republicans over the last decade or so which are not inconsiderable. Jewish supporters of the Democrats are considered to be grouped mainly in the Centre or slightly Right-of-centre, politically. (Dr Friedman's footnote references on the American record are all but one dated in the 1950s. The exception is a Moynihan book, 2nd edition, 1970. There are no references given to support the claims about British Jews.)

Examining paradoxes with regard to Jews recalls a meeting I had with a former Admiral of the Imperial Japanese Navy, rehabilitated and serving in a high post in a government agency in Tokyo, a few days after the conclusion of the Six Day War. The ex-Admiral was full of astonishment and admiration. He kept repeating, "Who would have thought [before World War II] that today the Japanese would be the world's best merchants and the Jews its most valiant warriors? . . ."

Dr Friedman seems to be on shaky ground as well when he cites the experience of Israel where (as he sees it) the struggle between the "two traditions" has seen private initiative prevailing over social democracy and central planning. How can he square this with the fact that the labour-owned and -controlled economy in Israel accounts for about a quarter of the nation's economy and employment, and includes some of the largest and most successful enterprises; or that Israel's biggest success-story, the highly efficient and productive agricultural sector, is largely based on the collective *Kibbutz* and co-op *Moshav* production units?

Dr Friedman isn't unique among American and European Diaspora sojourners in Israel to be disappointed with Israel's culinary perverseness. Bagel, cream cheese, and lox breakfasts, and corned-beef-on-rye sandwiches, have not yet made it on to menus in Tel Aviv or Jerusalem; or are at best dished out unenthusiastically to demanding foreigners. On the other hand the *falafel* (and other morsels of oriental cuisine) served up in Israel are superb.

BENJAMIN SELLA

Histadrut
General Federation of Labour in Israel
London

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Andropov the Anglophile

"This does not leave much room for the hopes so widely expressed . . . about [Andropov's] 'liberalism' and 'sophistication' as allegedly manifested in the devotion to English whisky and all that Western jazz. . ." (Leopold Labedz, quoted in the April Encounter, p.15).

If Andropov was seeking for (let alone "devoted to") English whisky, no wonder he pined away. In a considerable drinking experience, I have never met such a thing. What on earth can it be, I wonder—a sort of Anglo-Saxon poteen prepared by devotees of the Wicca in their monthly covens? Whatever it was, I'm sure it must have been awful, and very bad for his health. Couldn't someone have sent him a decent Laphroaig?

Douglas MacEwan

Hythe, Kent

Ed. Note: As is well-known, Russians (and indeed most Europeans) refer to all things British as "English", and fail to make the distinctions which Scotsmen and Welshmen *et al.* properly insist on. Hence the widespread usage of "a British accent" and "English whisky." If the late Andropov actually drank the stuff you can be sure it was the finest Scotch, possibly even twelve-year-old Laphroaig.

Ruling in The Queen's Reign

I would like to point out an error in Edward Pearce's article on the Commonwealth in your January issue. Queen Elizabeth is not Queen of Uganda—nor has she been since that country became independent. Uganda, like most Commonwealth countries, has its own head of state (although I would not dissent from Mr Pearce's assessment of the character of most of them, with the possible exception of the unfortunate King Freddy, whose deposition in 1965 was hailed by the *New Statesman* as a triumph for democracy).

The Queen is formally head of state only in that minority of Commonwealth countries which have not established the office of president or sovereign. These countries fall into two categories: (*1*) the old white Dominions, where there is still a residual sentimental attachment to the British connection (although even Canada and Australia are teetering on the brink of republicanism); and (*2*) a number of very small countries, mostly Caribbean islands. The latter may feel that retaining the Queen (or rather her personal representative, the Governor-General) as head of state gives them just a little more protection against the unconstitutional seizure of power by unrepresentative and fanatical minorities; and indeed the role of Sir Paul Scoon in Grenada lends some substance to that belief.

Mr Pearce's confusion is perhaps forgiveable, since even those whose job it is to know have sometimes shown similar confusion. For example, shortly after Pakistan first acquired a presidential form of government (in the early 1960s) a Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference was due to take place in London. The impending arrival of President Iskander Mirza threw the British protocol experts into a tizzy, since recent British experience afforded little guidance as to the appropriate reception of a Head of State who was also the working head of his own government. Consequently, although the President was coming in essentially the same capacity and for very much the same purpose as the more customary Prime Ministers, it was felt necessary to plaster London's public places with notices proclaiming a "State Visit by the President of Pakistan." We have grown wiser since then. Not only have Commonwealth presidents proliferated (to the extent that after Mugabe's election victory in Zimbabwe one of his more fervently ideological admirers hailed him erroneously—although perhaps only prematurely?—as "Comrade President"). We have also learned from experience that many of these exalted figures do not last for more than a year or two anyway.

Perhaps the definitive formula setting forth the role of the Queen in the latter-day Commonwealth was contained in the joint statement issued by Britain and India after the latter became a republic over thirty years ago. This was to the effect that, while India now had her own Head of State, she would continue to recognise the British sovereign (then King George VI) as "the symbol of our common association." This still remains the formal position to this day.

However, it could with some plausibility be argued that in recent years the *real* effective head of the Commonwealth has been not the Queen but the Commonwealth Secretary-General, Sir Shridath (Sonny) Ramphal. He it was who foisted an incompatible Attorney-General on Sir Paul Scoon with—as far as I am aware—no prior consultation. He it is who has taken it upon himself to stipulate as a condition of Commonwealth aid "the prior withdrawal of all foreign forces", notwithstanding the fact that most Grenadians want them to remain. Although the Commonwealth Secretariat's offices are in London, Sir Shridath did not apparently consider it necessary to consult either with the Queen or with the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office before making such a statement.

How many British people are aware that Britain's *de facto* position in the Commonwealth today is simply that of an ordinary member like any other, and indeed that Britain could even be expelled from the Commonwealth if a majority of its members in conference so resolved? This is not just fantasy. Such a proposition has actually been put forward in the not too distant past, although admittedly it was not taken too seriously by the majority of Commonwealth members.

Eric Taylor

Sheffield

Rousseau's "Chains"

In her article "Sex and Personal Identity", [Encounter, June] Mary Midgely falls into a common misconception of what Rousseau said in *Du Contrat Social*. She quotes the well-known sentence "Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains." She then adds that Rousseau demanded unchainment. This is not the case.

Rousseau immediately asks:

> "How did this change come about (i.e. the passage from freedom to chains)? I do not know. What can make it legitimate? That question I think I can answer."

His answer lies in the social contract under which the "chains" are voluntarily adopted by the individual in return for the security he gains by placing himself under the authority of the community.

> "What a man loses by the social contract is his natural liberty and an unlimited right to everything he tries to get and succeeds in getting; what he gains is civil liberty and the proprietorship of all he possesses."

He did not demand the abolition of the "chains"; he justified and praised them. Although, under the Contract, man "deprives himself of some advantages which he got from nature, he gains in return others so great, his faculties are so stimulated and developed, his ideas so extended, his feelings so ennobled, and his whole soul so uplifted, that, did not the abuses of this new condition often degrade him below that which he left, he would be bound continually to bless the happy moment which took him from it for ever, and, instead of a stupid and unimaginative animal, made him an intelligent being and a man. . . ."

Francis Keenlyside

Petersfield
Hants.

"Orwell"

The publication of Leopold Labedz's two-part article on George Orwell (Encounter, June and July/August) seems a suitable occasion to put on record a prediction that within, say, twenty years, journalists will be using "Orwell" as a generic term for totalitarians and mass-murderers. Most people already think that Frankenstein was the monster, not the doctor. And I myself have heard a fellow-worker (a college graduate) use the expression "salivating like Pavlov." At which another employee, a Russian émigrée, jumped up and shouted, "No! not like Pavlov! Like the dog of Pavlov!". . . .

Tohu W. Bohu

Arlington, Virginia

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Life & Letters Today

Westminster



ROYAL WORDS: *Mrs Thatcher has publicly disagreed with Prince Charles over his remarks linking crime with high unemployment.*

Although couched in velvet tones, her displeasure was obvious when she told MPs yesterday that the Prince was free to make comments which were controversial or "anodyne."

The Oxford Dictionary defines "anodyne" as "mentally soothing." But in general usage it is taken also to mean bland and meaningless.

DAILY EXPRESS

East Berlin

WHERE IS THE MISSING 0.12%? **Officially-approved candidates gained 99.88 per cent of the votes in East German local elections yesterday, the chairman of the Electoral Commission said.**

Herr Egon Krenz, a *Politburo* member, described the result as "a convincing expression of the close alliance between Party, State and People in our Socialist Fatherland."

REUTER

Bilbao

DIRTY: *Basque Catholicism exaggerates, and its religiosity also has a virulent philistine streak in it. The Mayor of Bilbao, a member of the ruling Basque PNV (Basque Nationalist Party), Jon Casanares, ordered all copies of a book to be withdrawn and burnt. He said the book, which had just won a literary prize awarded by the City Hall itself, contained "dirty words."*

The PNV motto—Jaun Goikoa eta Lege Zaharra ("the Lord above and our old laws")—was presumably explanation enough. The French Basque writer, Marc Legasse's inversion of this ancient slogan (Jaun Zaharrak eta Lege Goikoa—"the same old lords and the law from above") seems more appropriate in the light of this particular piece of obscurantism.

FINANCIAL TIMES

London

MARLBOROUGH COUNTRY: **One evening, I remember [Sir John Colville, Churchill's Private Secretary, writes], two bombs came whistling down as we marched briskly across the courtyard to the new underground bunker. I ducked smartly under an arch, but Churchill strode on unperturbed and asked me why on earth I was dawdling.**

When we arrived on the scene of excavation, Churchill, despite his 65 years, vaulted with surprising agility over one of the traverses he had had constructed. He landed on the other side in a pool of liquid cement.

"I think, Sir," said I rather impertinently, "you have met your Waterloo."

"How dare you," he replied. "And anyhow, Blenheim, not Waterloo."

SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

Westminster

STRIKING WORD: **In the Parliamentary debate yesterday, Labour's Joe Ashton called for an emergency debate to sort out the police in Nottinghamshire who have allegedly been treating the flying pickets of the National Miners Union, currently on strike, in an evermore outrageous way. Some 527 have been arrested, some for shouting "*scab*." The word "*bounder*" is apparently preferred by the police, though I [writes Colin Welch] would have thought it worse.**

DAILY MAIL

London

"CHUFFED": *Sir, According to a survey quoted in your issue of May 12th, 40% of women, if workmen whistled at them, would be positively "chuffed".*

Being unfamiliar with this word, I looked it up in the "Oxford Paperback Dictionary." It gave the following definitions: **1.** PLEASED, **2.** DISPLEASED.

THE ECONOMIST

Dublin

HAUGHTY CULTURE: **We spotted a sign in the garden of a hotel in Co. Wicklow, Ireland, which proclaimed: "Ladies and gentlemen will not, and others must not, pick the flowers in this garden."**

DAILY TELEGRAPH

Hanover, New Hampshire



TRUE BASIC: **Not since Polish oculist L. L. Zamenhof invented Esperanto has an artificial language attracted as many adherents as Basic, a computer language.**

The language has helped make many computer entrepreneurs rich, but the two Dartmouth College professors who invented it have only benefited by writing a Basic textbook. Now, they want to perfect their language and, they hope, make some substantial money as well. To cash in on Basic's business, the two professors have organized True Basic Inc.

They developed Basic—"Beginners All-purpose Symbolic Instruction Code." Computer languages of the era, principally "Fortran", were frustrating to learn because even simple ideas required complex instructions.

Basic consists of about 200 words that can be used to tell a computer to perform almost any imaginable task.

Despite its popularity, Basic is widely criticized by computer scientists. Basic program is likely to interweave ideas with almost Faulknerian complexity.

A committee of computer scientists and professionals who are developing a set of standards for all versions of Basic, say that True Basic will overcome those problems.

Many of Basic's problems are blamed on the many revisions it has gone through. "We don't recognize our own grandchild, as it were. We're concerned because people are learning street Basic."

WALL STREET JOURNAL

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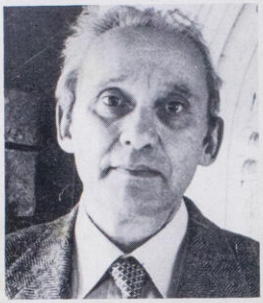

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