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ANALYSIS

THE oldest illusion in modern Europe is that the Communist Party is about to dissolve, and the Bolshevik state is about to break up. At regular intervals since 1917 this wet wash of idle hopes has sapped the stiffening will of the west. The usual combination of dreaming pinks and scheming reds is now at it again. The Kruschev speech has undoubtedly been a severe shock to the rank and file of the Communist Party ; so no doubt was the first revelation of the private lives of the Borgias to the faithful of the church. But it did not bring the church to an end ; on the contrary, its power subsequently developed. The fact is that to any movement with a real creed the failure, or the passing, of individuals is not an irreparable disaster. What matters is the idea, and the figure which creates the idea has therefore inevitable importance. But once a great idea lives, the changing of the janissaries has not so much importance as the passing of a fine debater, or manipulator, in a legislative chamber which is devoid of idea or principle but is readily moved by cluck and graft. It is therefore more interesting to enquire what are the motives behind the speech which appeared to cause so much damage to its own side, than to lose time in speculating on the early demise of communism.

Two Explanations of the Kruschev Speech

Two explanations of the Kruschev speech have occurred to us. The first derived from a possibility we first mentioned long ago which is now accepted as a probability ; Stalin was murdered. Such things are liable sooner or later to come out, and the well-trusted comrades responsible for the murder of their chief, after

sharing at least all his major crimes, may naturally feel it necessary to prepare party opinion for that embarrassing moment.

But the deeper motive requires much more enquiry ; the second explanation is altogether more interesting in its imminent effect. For some time past it has been quite clear that a fundamental change of line has been decided in the Kremlin. To us the only surprise was that it took so long in coming. Perhaps Stalin's rigidity held up the necessary decision, and was consequently more responsible for his liquidation than vices which in these circles are banal. From the moment the development of nuclear fission decisively ruled out large-scale war, a change of Russian strategy and tactic was sooner or later inevitable. Such a change meant in any case a far better chance of Soviet success than a classic military engagement, because both sides understand that business, and only one side so far understands the new business.

The new line means a relaxation of military tension and consequent disarmament, which it is reckoned must remove the last props from the tottering economy of western capitalism. Peace is now the game — brotherhood and sisterhood galore — peaceful co-existence with all that this implies. Swords are turned quickly into ploughshares, and the ploughs are used vigorously to plough in everybody else's crops. The men demobilised from Soviet industry are employed to increase industrial production, and the proceeds are used not to enrich Russians, but to impoverish Europeans and Americans by breaking their world markets through the systematic dumping of low cost goods. It is a far better game from the Soviet point of view, as we warned years ago, and is now so obvious that even Sir Anthony Eden felt impelled to add his warning, with the weight of a feather falling, a week or two back. But, of course, the game does not work half so well if everyone is on his toes to meet the threat of what amounts to a new form of war. So all the brotherhoods and sororities have to be mobilised for the great soften-up, from Fenner Brockway to Kingsley Martin ; and, after all, Sir Anthony Eden and Mr. Charles Chaplin recently gave the whole performance a flying start at Claridges.

Change of line must appear change of heart

The change of line has to appear a real change of heart. To this end what is more convincing than all the public confessions and public disputes within the Communist Party ? The seasoned

class-war leaders can, of course, be trusted to see things do not really go too far. A little self-flagellation in public makes an irresistible appeal to the whole of the masochistic left ; all social democracy is overwhelmed with a long repressed emotion. Mr. Kruschev may think it well worth while to give himself half-a-dozen in the best English public school spirit, in order to secure a popular front between the Socialist and Communist Parties in all major European countries. And Tito, Nenni, Bevan and Co. stand by to apply balm to the very slight lacerations of the body bolshevik ; it is a most popular exhibition.

The end of the first phase may well be the coy announcement that Kruschev murdered Stalin. What a hero he must then become, since the prime objective of allied war propaganda was to persuade men who had taken the most sacred oaths of fidelity to assassinate the avowed objects of their loyalty. We live in days when the halo of sainthood is easily acquired by a shot in the back of a comrade ; and such canonisation is all the easier for those to whom an oath, or any other obligation of trust or loyalty, means nothing. St. Kruschev is well on the way ; the culmination of the great process of softening-up the west for the final stroke of communism. Eden and Chaplin may have thrown their choicest custard pies at the Claridges slapstick comedy, but that innocent clowning may soon be completely eclipsed by the great new Rasputin drama. And silenced for ever will be the voice of that lost sheep of communism who wrote to *Tribune* the ingenuous enquiry : how they supposed that in a few short years a nation of illiterate peasants had been induced to take a leading position in the scientific life of the modern world, if a certain rough old chef had not broken a few eggs in making the omelette. Impious voice — Stalin is dead and the line has changed. Communism enters a new phase, which its promoters are determined shall be decisive.

Is Stalin possibly still alive ?

It is always encouraging to see what clowns the other side are ; it makes us more tolerant toward our own. Our own lot are at least sober, but it must now be admitted that in recent times, as well as in the longer terms of European history, the drunk seem sometimes to have been more successful than the sober. It is reported now that Mr. Kruschev has gone too far, in becoming conspicuously intoxicated in the inappropriate company of Mr. Nigel Birch. It is said he is due for removal, if not liquidation.

But this performance in front of the world press seems to have produced no worthwhile indiscretions ; he is merely reported as saying what anyone with any sense must know he is thinking : e.g. " We will show you in the west what economic competition means " ; and " he repeated the remark, very deliberately, twice," shudders the *Daily Mail.* Perhaps Mr. Kruschev resembles a very remarkable German for whom we once had a considerable regard ; he always observed judiciously, when driving a car, that he was only in danger when sober, because when drunk he knew he had to be careful.

But these lively manners of the sixteenth and eighteenth century are undoubtedly out of place when seated in a diplomatic parlour with Mr. Nigel Birch, and Mr. Kruschev may be due for a change. In any event, the only thing certain is that Russian policy will not change ; it is hard set on the new line. Only the drinking will be more discreet. And it was always more than doubtful whether Kruschev or Bulganin were the real men at all. We long ago surmised the time may come when the real men in government must disappear from public view. Modern science presents too many surprises, and modern crowds may soon exact too much time for serious work. It is even conceivable that Stalin is still alive ; after all, it was only necessary for Russian technique to make a corresponding advance in the realm of Madame Tussaud. The Russian dictator might have decided on a long-overdue change of policy, and have rightly considered that this would be facilitated by his own disappearance and shouldering of all past misdeeds.

But it is doubtful if men are yet so great. He is more likely to have been murdered by Kruschev than to have waved goodbye to his drunken stooge as he took off for the Caucausus, and serious work in the hideout of real government. Speculation must not roam too far, but it remains true that Kruschev may be only a stooge and that the real men may be behind him, whether they are totally concealed, or visible as — say — Malenkov. But even a stooge can get too drunk, and maybe Mr. Kruschev is due for a holiday. If you overdo it, you are not even qualified for parties with Mr. Chaplin and his friends ; except on the films their sobriety is as trite as their conversation, or as a speech by Sir Anthony Eden. And we may all be doing Mr. Kruschev a great injustice. He may be perfectly sober at home. After all, could anyone support the tedium of continual dinner parties with Eden, Butler *et hoc genus omne* — not to mention " social evenings " with Bevan and

Brown — unless anaesthetised by alcohol or some other powerful agent of reduced consciousness.

The next move : the popular front

Whether Kruschev is the real director of Russia's destinies or the puppet of another, whether he is a man or a minnow, the crucial question is what lies behind the unnecessary revelations of the Kruschev speech. And it seems that the only intelligible explanation is the intention to lend verisimilitude to the suggestion that the change of line is really a change of heart, and not merely a subtler means to capture the world. It was essential to communism that this idea should succeed in order to execute the prime strategic manoeuvre of the party for years past — the popular front. As Mr. Bevan so naively puts it : " if the Communist internationale is breaking up the first result will be much greater flexibility of political manoeuvre by the communists of the parliamentary democracies. It will no longer be possible to charge them with subservience to orders from Moscow, and so one of their principal political liabilities will be ended ". (*Tribune* 22.6.56) As he eagerly notes, the French and Italian Communist Parties quickly followed the Kruschev speech with a rapid tactical manoeuvre of apparent independence, which, it seems, immediately had the happy result of capturing Mr. Bevan. The ineffable Mr. Kingsley Martin is, also, an ecstatic victim : " communism has entered the age of babel," he trills in the *New Statesman*, and draws the logical conclusion that it has therefore deserted Marx for Martin. He notes from the relationships of Togliatti and Nenni that there is " a lesson here for the British Labour Party ". " Nenni despite the difficulties of the cold war has always managed to keep the conversations going. The British Labour Party has not." The hopes of Mr. Martin run high " despite the disastrous dinner party ". Yet a line of accidental sense intrudes into these roseate dreams of a popular front, in which communism abandons all its principles in order to be guided by Bevan and Martin : " Kruschev was taking a calculated risk ". Perhaps it was not so great a risk in his view, or in the view of whatever man or body of men decided on the revelation. If you have a creed — however misguided and criminal — which has withstood the trials and shocks of more than a century, and has conquered the allegiance of about half mankind, if you have party leaders in many countries who have stood together, suffered together and struggled together in many adversities, you

can rely on a certain solidarity even in a dangerous manoeuvre. It is a mistake for conventional democrats to believe that communists take their politics as lightly as they take their own. These men have graduated in the same staff college of political technique, and are united by the same religion. It is a mistake to believe prematurely that even a clash of interests between Russia and China will easily divide them. It is a childish error to assume that a blatant manoeuvre to catch the mugs of European social democracy entails the break-up of communism. After all Tito caught Eden, and everyone now has been let into the laugh. If only Kruschev could have kept sober enough to put up with his fellow guests at that genial dinner party he might well by now have caught the British Labour Party. But drunk or sober he has already caught *Tribune* and the *New Statesman*. And the popular front game looks like going far enough to be more than a laughing matter.

The investment boom, and the end of it

The seriousness of the economic situation begins to invade even the complacency of ministers. Stirring uneasily, they warn the country of the coming competition of the Russians on world markets at prices well below our production costs ; which has long been obvious. It seems that it is to be made the great excuse for failure to meet a situation which was coming anyhow. The progressive inability of Great Britain to sell sufficient goods on world markets to buy the foodstuffs and raw materials which the people of this island require, has not only been plain for the last twenty-five years but has been the subject of repeated public warnings, even at the cost of exclusion from political life.

The Russian manoeuvre follows inevitably the H bomb curtailment of the means of direct violence ; this phase of Soviet strategy has, also, long been obvious and explained. Its effect, however, is likely to be slower in operation than the normal breakdown of the system from factors which are inherent when escape into war is inhibited because war becomes too dangerous. Despite current shortages which are still a hangover from war-time dislocation, western capitalism has still found no means of meeting its basic problem. The productive power of modern science tends always in the long run to exceed current demand ; crudely stated, the politicians have not found any means of enabling the people to consume what the people produce. At present the investment

boom joins the armament boom to sustain demand. It is, of course, true that much machinery is obsolete after the war's long interruption of replacement, and any serious system would at present divert much production to capital goods. It is also true that within the present system of acute international competition it is necessary to replace machinery even slightly out-dated with febrile speed, if markets are not to be lost to the lower costing of a more mechanised competition ; hence the unavailing tears of Mr. Crossman and the slower witted among the shop stewards.

But as things are an investment boom will not long endure, unless a permanent and profitable market can be found for the greater quantity of goods which the new and more effective machines will produce. In fact when a serious doubt crosses the mind of the industrialists who are finding the capital for the new machines — a doubt whether the goods they will produce can be sold — a crash of confidence can occur which may easily pass all sane limits. At present all the parrots of politics are repeating the word investments, as a magic incantation without any further reflection on what investment is for, or what happens next. The ultimate problem of the system is to sell the goods that the machines produce on world markets in fierce competition with others using similar machines but paying lower labour costs, not to mention those who may be pushed into dumping their surplus on world markets well below production costs. America will certainly do this when home demand flags, and the Russians will certainly dump the production of their cheap slave labour even below their already low production costs in order to achieve their declared objective of breaking the western industrial system. Before any of these things have even begun the *Economist* notes : " at best we may find that we have bought stability at the cost of £300,000,000 or £400,000,000 worth of desirable things that we should otherwise have produced and enjoyed ". Mr. Michael Devonport puts the same point in the *Spectator* when describing Conservative financial policy : " it means balancing our international account with lower imports, lower exports and a lower natural output ". Even without the coming shocks, can a system so inherently misconceived endure ? Those who leave for their holidays in the summer of 1956 will do well to reflect on these things.

The euphemism that was once an empire

" United now neither by the crown nor by a tangible network

of imperial defence, nor by the sterling area, nor by a common foreign policy ; and divided, as ever, by language, culture, geography and religion, the British Commonwealth may seem one of those subjects that exist best only in the imagination or in the memory. . . .For Britain the principal advantage is that the Commonwealth is a shock absorber as the old empire crumbles away piece by piece. The Commonwealth idea is a salve mitigating the national humiliation that decline in imperial glory always brings in its train. . . .A euphemism . . . the Commonwealth represents at least a temporary shield from some of the gusts of world rivalry . . . a temporary posture for the present swiftly changing world situation." These are words taken from a leading article in the *Daily Telegraph* 26.6.56 welcoming the assembly of the recent Commonwealth Conference ; and the *Daily Telegraph* remains the most authoritative voice of the Conservative Party despite certain differences concerning the trivial topic of a transient Prime Minister. This is what the leaders of conservatism have done with the empire of Great Britain in the course of a single generation. We can think of no euphemism to describe them. We only note it is for this that these same men impede the union of Europe and a new flowering of the English genius. " Samson, you cannot be too quick."

EUROPEAN

MARXISM AS PHILOSOPHY

by A. JAMES GREGOR

> We have the firm conviction that it is not the practical attempts, but the theoretical presentation of communist ideas that constitute the real danger, for the practical attempts and attempts en masse can be answered with cannon as soon as they become dangerous, but ideas which overcome our intelligence, that conquer our opinion and on which our reason has hammered our conscience — these are chains which man cannot tear away from himself without tearing apart his heart — these are demons which man cannot conquer without subjecting himself to them.
>
> Karl Marx[1]

I

MARXISM, as a doctrine, is composed of three elements : (1) the "completion" or "fulfillment" of classical German philosophy ; (2) the revolutionary aspirations of French socialism ; and (3) a "further development" of classical English economics[2]. Within Marxism these components pose as "dialectical materialism", "historical materialism," and "Marxian economics".

[1] Marx, "Ueber Kommunismus," *Aus dem Literarischen Nachlass von Marx, Engels und Lassalle*, I, pp. 278 ff.

[2] Lenin, "Karl Marx," p. 19, "The Three Sources and Three component Parts of Marxism," pp. 70 f, *Marx-Engels-Marxism ;* Theimer, *Der Marxismus*, p. 27 ; Plekhanov, *Fundamental Problems of Marxism*, pp. ix f.

Our attention, in this essay, shall be devoted to the first of these considerations, the philosophy of Marxism: dialectical materialism. As we shall see it will be difficult to isolate the specifically philosophic concerns of the founders of Marxism — but, since a study of the entire system would far exceed the prescribed limits of this essay, we shall be forced (at the price of some artificiality) to confine ourselves to its realm.

II

The young Karl Marx was an "Hegelian of the Left", a member of a group of university intellectuals who had taken it upon themselves to revise, reinterpret and "develop" the philosophy of Hegel[3]. To these restless young men it seemed that Hegel had made unpardonable errors — he had neglected the "real" "revolutionary" implications of his "dialectical" philosophy in order to preach a reactionary quietism[4]. He seemed to advocate an intolerable conservativism[5] which belied the revolutionary implications of a dialectical system which construed change, process, as the fundamental characteristic of the world.

These youthful enthusiasts, faced with a political situation as explosively charged as our own, found Hegelian orthodoxy too inclined to airy speculations in the abstract world of thought. They faced political problems of revolutionary dimensions; a reactionary censor, and an orthodox pietism as well as feudal obscurantism. And somehow, they felt, the Idealist philosophy of their Master did service for the enemy. Gradually, therefore, the main body of these young "Hegelians" fell away from his philosophical idealism and were driven back to various materialistic postures[6].

Similarly for the young Marx, active in the local politics of the Rhineland, Hegelianism appeared more and more incapable of dealing with the problems which faced the liberal-democratic movement of which he was a member. Marx's difficulties seemed to resolve themselves only with the appearance of Ludwig Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity* and the philosophy of "positive humanism" it represented[7]. And it was this philosophy

[3] v. Grégoire, *Aux Sources de la Pensée de Marx: Hegel, Feuerbach*, pp. 133 ff.
[4] cf. Berlin, *Karl Marx*, chap. iv.
[5] Masaryk, *Die philosophischen und sociologischen Grundlagen des Marxismus*, p. 5.
[6] Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach* (International, 1941), pp. 16 f.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 18; Hook, *From Hegel to Marx*, pp. 220 ff; Barth, *Der Geschichtsphilosophie Hegel's und der Hegelianer*, p. 40; Adler, "Ludwig Feuerbach," *Wegweiser*, p. 157; Grégoire, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

which was to serve as the critical link between philosophic Hegelianism and revolutionary Marxism[8].

It is only the philosophy of Feuerbach which lends meaning to that of the young Karl Marx ; and it was upon the philosophy of his youth that Marx was to construct his system[9].

The philosophy of Feuerbach is today almost unknown to the anglo-saxon Marxist, a fact which has led, as a consequence, to the most amusing " interpretations " in Britain and America of Marx and philosophic Marxism.

III

Hegel had dealt with Ideas and their development. The real world of common experience was understood to be a product of the " real " self-activating world of Ideas.

To Feuerbach, Hegel's entire elaborate system, developed laboriously over many volumes, appeared to be nothing more than theology masquerading in the guise of Reason[10] — a theology which was, in turn, simply a projection, a sublimation, of man's real material needs, his impulses and interests, into the realm of the Absolute[11]. Theology was a " self-alienation " (*Entaeusserung*, *Entfremdung*) of man, a " compensatory projection " — and philosophy was its rationalisation.

Rather than deal with these " alienations " of man, these abstractions, Feuerbach contended that one must begin not with God or the Idea, but with the " real ", " concrete," " needy " man[12] who produced them. " Real," " natural " man, and not his " consciousness " or fantasies was to be the point of departure for Feuerbach's entire system[13]. Theology, philosophy[14] and natural science[15] were understood to be projections, " self-alienations " of just such " real men "[16]. Furthermore, being compensatory these projections answer some felt need on the

[8] Chamberlain, *Heaven Wasn't His Destination : The Philosophy of Ludwig Feuerbach*, p. 185.

[9] Adams, *Karl Marx in his Earlier Writings*, p. 54.

[10] Feuerbach, *Grundsaetze der Philosophie der Zukunft*, § 5.

[11] Chamberlain, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

[12] Hook, *From Hegel to Marx*, p. 229.

[13] Feuerbach, *Grundsaetze*, § 55 ; Jodl, *Ludwig Feuerbach*, pp. 33 f.

[14] Schaller, *Darstellung und Kritik der Philosophie Ludwig Feuerbach's*, p. 9 ; Feuerbach, *Saemmtliche Werke* (1846), II, p. 249.

[15] Feuerbach, *Saemmtliche Werke*, II, p. 264 ; Hook, *From Hegel to Marx*, p. 257

[16] Chamberlain, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

part of mankind[17] and are therefore conceived of as being historically " necessary "[18].

Feuerbach's, then, was to be a study of man in his real relations, in society[19]. He felt that only such a " positive humanism " might render comprehensible the comparative study of religion and the history of philosophy as well as resolve the antagonisms of subjectivism and materialism in natural science. Reality was to be neither " objective " nor " subjective " but " human ". The analysis of religion and philosophy had taught him that man was the measure of all things. Pressing his analysis further, Feuerbach maintained that " reality " too was to be what it was to man ; it was to be " real " only as an object of his need[20], of his " passion "[21]. To speculate upon a " reality " independent of man was, therefore, a fruitless preoccupation[22]. It is impossible for man to get outside, or behind his own experience[23]. If we are to know anything, " truth " must be discovered within experience, perception, sensation[24] — but such experience is an " alienation " of the sensing subject. Theology and philosophy are fantastic inverted images of man's needs — natural science is the real image of man's express needs. Just as the " object " perceived by the eye is the eye's manifest nature, just as light without the eye is nothing[25], so " reality " is what it is to man, a " reality " vastly different than it would be to a subject of different intrinsic nature[26]. Indeed this latter " reality " is a chimera, a figment, an abstraction, for we can never begin to conceive its nature. " Reality " is a " self-alienation " of man, for " . . . the object, to which a being necessarily relates itself, is nothing other than its own manifest being "[27].

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17 Hook, *From Hegel to Marx*, p. 255.

18 Feuerbach, *Saemmtliche Werke*, VII, pp. 219 ff ; Jodl, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

19 Hook, *From Hegel to Marx*, pp. 222 f, 258.

20 " . . . only that is real, at least for man, which is the object of his actual activity." Feuerbach, *Grundsaetze*, § 15.

21 " Only that is . . . which is the object of passion." *Ibid*, § 34.

22 Chamberlain, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

23 " Whatever the world is, it at least is what it looks like to man and his body. It is no less real nor more real than what it appears to those creatures who see with different eyes, touch with different ' hands ', . . . save that the whole comparison is fantastic, for we can never know how things appear to other organisms." Hook, *From Hegel to Marx*, p. 258

24 Feuerbach, *Grundsaetze*, §§ 32, 36, 39.

25 " In the object is the nature of the eye manifest to us." " What is light . . . without the eye ? Nothing." *Grundsaetze*, para. 7, 17.

26 *Ibid.*, para. 54.

27 *Ibid.*, para. 7.

There is not, of course, nor can there ever be, an absolute truth under this system. A sense perception, an experience becomes a truth only when it is found to be consistent with the perceptions and the experiences of others. Thus only "social man" accedes to "truth", for only others can corroborate the validity of our immediate experiences[28]. Only when so corroborated does an insight, a perception, achieve the status of a temporary truth. Obviously there can be no Absolute. As a consequence of more elaborate needs, more refined interests and more cultivated senses, developed historically, "reality" is perceived differently[29]. "Reality," when the object of a different need or interest, displays different characteristics than it had hitherto. "Truth" is altered. "Truth," consequently, is provisional, relative[30]. "Reality" can only be, therefore, "human" reality since it can only represent a meaningful relationship between man and the object of his need. Whatever it may be "in itself" we experience reality only in some meaningful relationship *to us*[31]. We come to know it in this relationship. We feel it, come to know it through handling it as a consequence of a given *human need*[32].

This, in essence, is the philosophy Feuerbach gave to Marx. It was neither a consistent nor a logically elaborated philosophy[33]. It was neither formally materialist nor classically idealist[34]. But it was rich with rebellion and insight, and it captured the youthful enthusiasm of Karl Marx.

IV

The extent of Feuerbach's influence upon the philosophic development of Marxism was revealed with the posthumous publication of Marx's *Oekonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre* 1844 about twenty years ago. With the assistance of these manuscripts the philosophical fragments found in the *Heilige Familie* (1844/45), the "Thesen ueber Feuerbach" (1845) and the *Deutsche Ideologie* (1854/46) weave themselves into some kind of consistent system.

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[28] Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, pp. 157 f.

[29] "The mystics and scholastics of the Middle Ages had no skill nor aptitude for natural science because they had no interest for nature. Where the meaning is not lacking neither lack the senses, nor organs." Feuerbach, *Grundsaetze*, para. 15.

[30] Chamberlain, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

[31] Hook, *From Hegel to Marx*, p. 257.

[32] Feuerbach, *Grundsätze*, para. 15; Hook, *From Hegel to Marx*, p. 258.

[33] cf. Hoffding, *A History of Modern Philosophy*, II, pp. 275 ff.

[34] cf. Lange, *History of Materialism*, II, pp. 247 ff.

Marx had accepted, as early as the " Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie " (1843/44), Feuerbach's thesis that all criticism begins with religious criticism[35], that all religion is the projection of man's needs into the reaches of the abstract — a fantastic reflection of man himself[36]. Pursuing still further Feuerbach's analysis Marx contended that philosophy, too, was an ideal projection of man's real needs[37]. Religion, family, state, law, morals and science were conceived to be " alienations " of social humanity, projections of that humanity[38].

Marx, like Feuerbach, would brush aside these derivatives and deal with their source. For Marx the source was man[39]. Speculation had hitherto occupied itself with " ideal " man while the " real " man remained neglected[40]. This " real " man, for Marx, as for Feuerbach, was needful, suffering, passionate man[41] who perceives " objective reality " only under the promptings of his " passion " and his needs[42], " alienating " himself in things[43]. Objects become " real " only when they are " humanised ", when man impresses, " objectifies " himself in them. This is simply Feuerbachian logic. The object is the manifest essence of the subject.

The first premise of Marx's philosophy, then, is that of Feuerbach's. Marx begins with " natural " man[44] with " natural " needs, in a " natural " environment, society[45], where these needs can be met. Subject to these needs man must be " passionate ", active in resolving them. In resolving these needs man " objectifies "

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[35] Marx, " Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie," *Die Fruehschriften*, p. 207.

[36] *Ibid.*, pp. 207 f.

[37] *Ibid.*, pp. 213 f.

[38] Marx, " Nationaloekonomie und Philosophie," *Die Fruehschriften*, p. 236.

[39] Marx, " Zur Kritik," *Ibid.*, p. 216.

[40] Marx, *Heilige Familie* (Rinascita, 1954), p. 45.

[41] " Man, as a being sensitive to objects, is a suffering (creature) and because of this suffering a passionate creature." Marx, " Nationaloekonomie," *Die Fruehschriften*, p. 275.

[42] " . . . the objects of (man's) impulses exist outside of him . . . and these objects are always the objects of his needs, objects indispensable . . . to . . . his essential forces." " Passion is the striving of the substantial force of man's being toward the object . . . " *Ibid.*, pp. 273, 275.

[43] *Ibid.*, p. 239.

[44] " Man is an immediate natural entity . . . furnished . . . with vital forces (which) exist in him as disposition and capacities, as drives . . . " Marx, *Ibid.*, p. 273.

[45] Marx, *Deutsche Ideologie* (International, 1947), p. 16.

himself in the objects to which his need has directed him[46]. In practice, in manipulating the objects of his needs, man " humanises " them, imparts to them human reality. For " reality " can only be *human reality*, a meaningful interaction of man with the object of his " passion "[47], *the product of man's activity in resolving his natural needs*[48]. In *praxis*, in action, subject and object, which are only abstracted in thought are one, restored to their real unity[49].

Only needful man " objectifies " reality by acting, in response to his needs, upon objects. Thus Marx repeats, materialistically, Fichte's idealistic formulation " the Ego creates the Non-Ego "[50] for the subject, activated by its needs, " alienates " itself in things, that is renders " real " to human awareness an " objective reality ". Without needs man would be compelled to no cognizance of things ;

[46] " Objects are objects of man's needs . . . " " . . . objects can only be the affirmation of one of my essential forces . . . Reality is as complex as are complex the determinations and the essential activities of man." Marx, " Nationaloekonomie," *Die Fruehschriften*, pp. 274, 242 f.

[47] " Just as music stimulates on the musical sense of man, and for the non-musical ear the most beautiful music does not possess any sense, so there is no object, because the object is only the confirmation of one of my essential forces, therefore it can only exist for me in so far as my essential forces are its subjective potential, because the meaning of an object for me (having meaning only for a corresponding sense) goes only as far as my senses go." Marx, " Nationaloekonomie," *Fruehschriften*, p. 242.

[48] " The older materialism (Marx) said, mistakenly regarded sensation as passive, and thus attributed activity primarily to the object. In Marx's view, all sensation or perception is an interaction between subject and object ; the bare object, apart from the activity of the percipient is a mere raw material, which is transformed in the process of becoming known." Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, p. 783 ; " Reality, therefore, according to Marx, is a subjective production of man ; production, however of man's sensuous activity (sinnliche thaetigkeit) and not of thought as Hegel and the other idealists had believed." Gentile, " La filosofia della prassi : la filosofia di Marx," *I fondamenti della filosofia del diritto*, p. 216.

[49] " . . . neither objective nature nor subjective nature is presented immediately as adequate to the human being . . . " Marx, " Nationaloekonomie," *Fruehschriften*, p. 275 ; " What is the subject without an object of which it is subject ? And the object without its respective subject — of what is it object ? Subject and object are correlative terms, the one carrying behind it, necessarily, the other. They are not, therefore, reciprocally independent, but they are inextricably bound together because their effective reality is a consequence of their relationship in the organism . . . and outside of which they are abstractions. The life of the subject exists in its instrinsic relations with the object." Gentile, *op. cit.*, p. 214 ; " *Praxis* is the process of knowing which Marx considers equal to Hegel's resolution of the antithesis between the ' unilaterality of subjectivity and the unilaterality of objectivity.' To separate them from practice means to separate the two terms in abstraction . . . " Mondolfo, *Il materialismo storico in Federico Engels*, p. 11.

[50] " Marx's thought seems to be the following : the non-ego is a product of the ego, that is an objectivization of it . . . " Scalia, *Il materialismo storico e il socialismo*, p. 16.

devoid of needs man could establish no meaningful relationship with things outside himself. The world would be devoid of content, sense and quality[51].

It is only with this understanding that Marx's first gloss on Feuerbach becomes comprehensible: "The chief defect of all materialism up to now . . . is, that the object, reality, what we apprehend through our senses, is understood only in the form of the object or contemplation (passively); but not as sensuous human activity, as praxis, not subjectively"[52].

"Reality" represents the "self-alienation" of man. "Nature" is the objectification of the subjective potential of man. This subjective potential manifests itself in the form of needs which seek corresponding satisfactions in the objective world[53]. Man's senses are, therefore, "goal-directed," "cultivated" to satisfy "essential needs". Man's needs increase with the complexity of society[54]. Man's "reality" becomes correspondingly more complex — the "reality" of social man distinguishing itself from that of man in isolation[55]. Such a world, product of man's real activity[56], cannot pretend to an absolute status as a "truth" or "reality" independent of that activity. For such "truth" involves historic elements, each stage of history marking a further

[51] ". . . the members of civil society are not atoms. The characteristic property of atoms consists in not having any properties and therefore no relations with other beings outside itself . . . The atom is devoid of needs, self-sufficient; the world outside it is an absolute void, that is, a world devoid of content, of sense and of expression, just because the atom possesses in itself everything in fullness." Marx, *Heilige Familie*, pp. 130 f.

[52] Marx, "Thesen ueber Feuerbach," I, *Fruehschriften*, p. 339.

[53] "Man posits, through alienation, his real, objective essential forces (Wesenskraefte) as external objects . . . these objects are the objects of his needs, the activity and the confirmation of his essential forces . . . Man is not only a natural entity but a *human* natural entity . . . therefore *human* objects are not the natural objects which present themselves immediately, nor human sensibility, what is immediate and objective is humanized sensibility and human objectivity. Neither objective nature nor subjective nature is immediately present as adequate for man. As all things natural must have a development so, too, must man have his history . . . history is the true natural history of man." Marx, "Nationaloekonomie," *Fruehschriften*, pp. 273 ff.

[54] "The education of the senses is the labor of universal history in its entirety up until this day. The sense constrained to raw practical need has only a limited sensibility." *Ibid.*, p. 242.

[55] ". . . the senses of social man are other than asocial man." Marx, "Nationaloekonomie," *Fruehschriften*, p. 242.

[56] ". . . in labor in the objective world man confirms himself as a generic entity (Gattungswesen). In labor nature reveals itself as his work and his reality. The object of labor is therefore the objectification of the generic life of man: because he . . . sees himself in a world of his own making." Marx, "Manoscritti economico-filosofici del 1844," *Opere Filosofiche Giovanili* (Rinascita, 1950) pp. 231 f.

level in the development of man through practical activity. "The dispute over the reality or non-reality of thinking that is isolated from practice is a purely scholastic question"[57]. The question is not legitimate. It has no meaning. It is not a genuine question at all[58].

Thus Marx emphasizes the "historicity" of "reality"[59]. "Reality" is "immanent" in man's real connections with the external world[60]. These relations are determined by man's essential needs and conditioned by the nature of the objects. Man's essential needs become increasingly complex and diverse with the increasing development of the society of which he is member[61]. Multiple needs motivate the multiplicity of real connections. The senses become "cultivated". The effects of this "cultivation" can be read in the disparity between the senses of primitive and civilised mankind[62].

Feuerbach spoke of man and his "essence", in the abstract — ahistorically[63] — while for Marx man is pre-eminently historical. For the needs which impel him to activity, and thereby to knowledge, are historically determined. Feuerbach, Marx contended, failed to appreciate the significance of his own materialism. Having resolved the religio-philosophical world into its secular origins Feuerbach failed to pursue his analysis. This analysis of the secular basis of man's consciousness was to become the preoccupation of the mature Marx. His tentative conclusions are generally referred to as Historical Materialism, or the Materialist Conception of History. What it amounted to was the study of the development of man's needs, the completion of

[57] Marx, "Thesen," II, *Fruehschriften*, p. 339. "Subjectivity and objectivity, idealism and materialism . . . lose their opposition only in society . . . one sees how the solution of these theoretic antitheses is possible only in practice . . ." Marx, "Nationaloekonomie," *Ibid.*, p. 243.

[58] Hook, *From Hegel to Marx*, p. 284.

[59] ". . . since the mind meets the world with a long historical development already behind it, what it sees, its selective reactions, . . . are to be explained, not merely as a physical or biological fact but as a social fact as well." Hook, *Toward the Understanding of Karl Marx*, p. 95; cf. Marx, *Heilige Familie*, p. 86.

[60] ". . . the real intellectual wealth of the individual depends entirely on the wealth of his real connections." Marx, *Deutsche Ideologie*, p. 27.

[61] ". . . the sensuous world around him is not a thing given direct from all eternity, ever the same, but the product of . . . the state of society . . . an historical product . . ." *Ibid.*, p. 35.

[62] ". . . the human ear enjoys something other than does the uncultivated . . ." Marx, "Nationaloekonomie," *Fruehschriften*, p. 240.

[63] Marx, "Thesen," VI, VII, *Fruehschriften*, pp. 340 f.

the task of Feuerbachian Humanism.

The philosophy of Marx, which we have here briefly outlined, made no claim to materialism. Marx was careful to distinguish his "positive humanism"[64] from the excesses of both classical materialism and contemporary idealism[65]. Indeed, it is difficult to understand how such a philosophy, in which the subject is distinguished by an active role in perception, could be classified as anything other than idealistic[66].

The logical conclusions of such a philosophical position seem obvious. There is no "reality" independent of mankind. "Reality" can only be a *reality for man.* To speculate upon what exists independently of man is a purely scholastic occupation[67]. In so speculating one speculates meaninglessly[68]. An ultimate reality, an objective reality is unattainable. A world "objective" would be meaningless, for nothing of man would be reflected there. To be known, a world must be a human world, a world humanised. An object without the subject, man, is as inconceivable as the subject, man, without the object[69]. Thought and being, subject and object, are a unity, wedded in practice, separated only in abstraction[70]. Truths are relative, transient, determined by the needs and nature of man — they are historical, dialectical. As society increases in complexity, and practical experiences multiply, a humanised reality becomes more manifest. The highest truth, then, is the conception of the world entertained by the most highly developed society, the most *human* society.

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[64] Marx, *Heilige Familie*, p. 9.

[65] "Here we see how the elaborated naturalism or humanism distinguishes itself from idealism and materialism and at the same time is the truth which unites them. We see at the same time that only naturalism is capable of understanding the action of universal history," Marx, "Nationaloekonomie," *Fruehschriften*, p. 273.

[66] cf. Adams, *op. cit.*, p. 92 ; Mondolfo, *op. cit.*, p. 9 ; Gentile, *op. cit.*, pp. 210 f.

[67] Gentile, *op. cit.*, pp. 220 f.

[68] "In a system, which posits as a fundamental thesis the intimate interrelation between the subject and the object, and which makes of one the product of the other, it becomes meaningless to ask if thought achieves objective reality. The subject cognizes everything which it produces, and nothing exists which it has not produced." Scalia, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

[69] ". . . objective reality becomes, for man, the reality of the essential forces of man, human reality, and therefore the reality of his own essential forces, all objects become, for him, the objectification of himself, objects which affirm and realize his individuality, his objects, and therefore he himself becomes object." Marx, "Nationaloekonomie," *Fruehschriften*, pp. 241 f.

[70] "The starting point of perception is not an object on the one hand, and a subject opposed to it on the other, but an *interacting process* within which sensations are just as much the resultant of the active mind . . . as the things acted upon." Hook, *Toward the Understanding of Karl Marx*, p. 95.

It was this idealism, fat with implications, not devoid of contradictions, that Marx left as a heritage to Marxism. Its contradictions he probably never became conscious of, its implications he never developed[71].

Marx gradually lost interest in the philosophical problem. Indeed, his development has been characterised as one from philosophical speculation to political activism[72]. It was left to later, and more enterprising "Marxists" to make something of the distracted philosophy of Karl Marx — and make something of it they did.

V

With the publication of the *Deutsche Ideologie* (1846) Marx's strictly philosophical labours came to an end. The remainder of his life Marx was to devote to the "laws" governing the development of the material basis of man's social life and consciousness.

It was left to Engels to elaborate the philosophic tenets of Marxism, a task toward which he was, at best, ill-disposed. He was averse to "theorising"[73], and his mind had been disciplined in the counting-house and the cafe rather than in academic study[74].

The principal products of his philosophic lucubrations appeared in the *Anti-Duehring* (published some thirty odd years after Marx's completion of the *Deutsche Ideologie*) and in *Ludwig Feuerbach* (which Engels wrote only after the death of Marx in 1883). The notebooks, which have been published under the title *Dialectics of Nature*, are the fruit of work conducted during the decade 1872/82, that is, a quarter of a century after the *Deutsche Ideologie*.

Until the publication of Marx's manuscripts of 1844 the "Marxists" could, with some plausibility, maintain that Engels was a faithful interpreter to Marx (although Gentile, Mondolfo, Scalia and Masaryk had argued effectively against such a thesis). But once these manuscripts appeared there could be no doubt that one could not accept both the philosophy of the youthful Marx and that of the mature Engels in their entirety, so pronounced are the divergencies.

[71] "(Marx's) earliest writings are the key to his ultimate system, whose philosophical presuppositions, however, he never fully formulated." Adams, *op. cit.*, p. 54, vide also pp. 211 f.
[72] cf. Buggenhagen, *Die Stellung zur Wirklichkeit bei Hegel und Marx*, pp. 8, 18.
[73] v. Engels' letter, *Briefwechsel*, I, November 19, 1844.
[74] cf. Buggenhagen, *op. cit.*, pp. 12 ff.

The philosophy which reveals itself in the works of Engels is indeed a strange bedfellow to the "positive humanism" of the youthful Marx. And it would be odd if Marx ever more than tolerated it.

It was Engel's notion that objects, the "material things", exist independently of the consciousness of men, and that the real world is in constant change, constant coming into being and passing away[75]. This "reality" is "reflected", "pictured" in the mind of man[76]. It is a pure vision, a contemplation. Primacy is given to the process being conducted in the "objective world" which is only passively "reflected" in human consciousness[77].

What we have here is the time-worn philosophy of materialist "representationalism". That is, (1) the world is "real" and independent of man's consciousness; and (2) the mind is passive and "reflects" this external reality[78].

How can we ever know that our immediately sensed mental "images" represent the "reality" which we posit existing independently of our minds? Since we can never abstract the subject and his natural limitations from the concrete unity of experience (in which subject and object both participate inextricably), how can we compare the "external objective reality" with the "image" it causes to glow fitfully in the mind of man? Could we, with any measure of philosophic certitude, discover a real correspondence between the sensory image of reality and the reality which is presumed to be its immediate cause?

Our knowledge of "reality" would always be mediated by sense organs the very nature of which necessarily limit our perceptivity. This is Kant's problem, and Engels succeeds in assiduously avoiding it. It was no problem for Marx because he denied it meaning. Human experience is man's only reality — an "objective reality" was, could only be, an objectification of man. Without a subject the object could have no meaning.

[75] Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*, pp. 21 ff.

[76] "Friedrich Engels . . . constantly speaks in his works of things and their mental pictures or images (Gedankenabbilder) . . ." Lenin, *Marxism and Empirio Criticism* (Moscow, 1947), p. 33; Adoratsky, *Dialectical Materialism*, p. 53.

[77] ". . . the world is not to be comprehended as a complex of ready made things, but as a complex of processes in which the things apparently stable no less than their mind images in our heads, the concepts, go through an uninterrupted change of coming into being and passing away . . ." Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach*, p. 44.

[78] cf. Joad, *A Guide to Philosophy*, p. 476.

Engels, however, although he admits that man's perception is conditioned by his historical and physiological limitations[79] and that the concepts with which man makes intelligible his "picture" of the universe are, because of the nature of speech and thought, only approximations[80], maintains, nevertheless, that a "real" world exists beyond human perception, a "real world" we shall never come to know[81]. "Mankind," Engels laments, "finds itself faced with a contradiction: on the one hand, it has to gain an exhaustive knowledge of the world system in all its interrelations; and on the other hand because of the nature both of man and of the world system this task can never be completely fulfilled"[82]. Thus there are two worlds for this type of "dialectical materialist". One with which we regale ourselves and the other, the mystic "real" one which exists in isolation from mankind, and which mankind can never know.

At this point the "Marxists" object that Engels had quite expressly stated (in an unconscious parody of the Marxian philosophy of praxis) that the "approximately" real world which we carry in our head was "real" or "true" as "far as it extends"[83].

And the measure of its extension? "The proof of the pudding," Engels would tell us, "is in the eating"[84]. If we can manipulate

[79] ". . . one is always conscious of the necessary limitations of all acquired knowledge, of the fact that it is conditioned by the circumstances with which it was acquired . . . Each mental image of the world system is and remains in actual fact limited, objectively through the historical stage and subjectively through the physical and mental constitution of its maker." Engels, *Anti-Duehring*, (International, 1939), p. 44.

[80] ". . . all thinking is 'abstract' since it works with general concepts and cannot but disregard a great deal of particular and unessential detail." Cornforth, *Dialectical Materialism*, I, p. 57; "Thought . . . produces a more abstract, more general reflection of reality than perception . . . reality (is) reflected . . . in the form of propositions. The fact that reflection in consciousness is the product of life activity, of the activity of the organism in relation to its surroundings, means that the consciousness of man, both perceptions and his thoughts, is continually conditioned by his experience and his social activity. What men perceive and what they think does not arise by a direct process of reproduction of external reality in perception and thought, but is conditioned by their experience, manner of life and social relations." *Ibid.*, III, pp. 35, 36; Guest, *A Textbook of Dialectical Materialism*, p. 52.

[81] The task of "formation in thought of an exact picture of the world system in which we live, is impossible for us and will always remain impossible." Engels, *Anti Duehring*, p. 44.

[82] *Ibid.*

[83] Jackson, *Dialectics*, pp. 67 f.

[84] Engels, "Socialism, Utopian and Scientific" *Marx Engels: Selected Works* (Moscow, 1951), II, pp. 92 f.

things to serve our own purposes then our knowledge of them is "true"[85]. But this criterion with which to judge the validity of one's "image" of the universe is one which Berkeley, Kant or Hegel might equally well have employed in their systems. Philosophy does not deny the efficacy of rational techniques. Neither Berkeley, Kant, nor Hegel denied that acting in a certain manner would result in certain practical consequences. What philosophy seeks is a consistent, systematic explanation of these common experiences, a rational justification for man's practical judgments. That men act in certain ways in order to effect practical results is known, what philosophy seeks is a rationale, a justification of these activities. Engels never succeeds in even approaching this goal. That man's practical activities are effective succeeds in telling us nothing concerning the ultimate nature of a transcendental world which exists beyond experience. Modern physics has advanced too far to permit us to entertain such naiveté. All of modern relativity physics argues against this mystification and duplication of worlds. The Fitzgerald Contraction and all its implications, to mention only one illustration, makes possible, indeed probable, an Alice-in-Wonderland world of any "reality" beyond the experience of man. Such a world is inconceivable. Experience only justifies man's experience — it can give us no clue of any transexperiential world, any transhuman "reality". Man's experience speaks only for man. It tells us nothing except that under certain circumstances, given man's perceptive and intellectual faculties, certain activities produce a series of results which we can learn to expect provisionally. We can expect the same series to follow the same causes. Whether this series follows because of the nature of man's organising apparatus, or because of the nature of the external world, or through the will of God, the "dialectical materialist" cannot legitimately say. The "Marxist" of this variety can give us nothing by which we can make a rational choice.

Engels was simply not competent to the task. Lenin, less competent yet, in attempting to elaborate and justify this naive philosophy fell into still more grievous errors. Not only did the mind "reflect" the material world, Lenin maintained that the *senses* "reflect", "copy," "image," "picture" and "photo-

[85] Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach*, pp. 22 f.

graph " it ![86] That Lenin was capable of taking such a position says much for his courage but little for his philosophical acumen. That the senses err, that they afford, at best, rough approximations of something independent of the individual's thought processes, is the first principle of science.

In the face of science Lenin exhorts " Marxists " to " trust " sense perception[87], to scorn those who have no " faith "[88]. He was forced to maintain this simple faith in the correspondence between sensory images and " external reality ", for once the relativity of sense perception is admitted, materialism, the naive materialism of Engels and " dialectical materialism ", becomes impossible. Our senses, far from copying or photographing " reality ", give us only rough symbolisms, the order and logic of which depend, at least in part, upon man. But to make the subject a determinant in knowing is to return to Marx's youthful idealism and to the tradition of modern European philosophy. For " to build a theory of knowledge on the hypothesis of the indissoluble connection between the object and human sensation is to land inevitably into idealism "[89]. It was the first Marxist, however, who had posited just such a connection, for " in Marx's view, all sensation or perception is an interaction between subject and object . . . "[90].

And thus Marxism was developed " philosophically " by Engels and Lenin, and Marxism is so much the worse for the encounter.

VI

That the philosophy of Marx withered with the years is attributable to the fact that its vitality was sapped by the increasing importance which historical materialism assumed at its expense. For Marx and Engels were ultimately to read inevitability and necessity into the social world of man in the form of " economic determinism ". As their faith in necessity

[86] " The senses give us faithful images of things . . . " " . . . sensations are images of the ultimate and sole objective reality . . . " " To regard our sensations as images of the external world . . . to hold the materialist theory of knowledge — these are all one and the same thing." " Man's perceptive faculty (is) a simple reflection of nature." Lenin, *op. cit.*, pp. 104, 127, 128 f, 160, passim.

[87] " . . . the subjectivists and agnostics . . . do not sufficiently trust the evidence of our sense-organs . . . " Lenin, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

[88] cf. *Ibid.*, p. 240.

[89] *Ibid.*, p. 68.

[90] Russell, *op. cit.*, p. 783.

increased their respect for the creativity of man correspondingly diminished. Man cannot be a free agent, a creative, determining factor in history, while at the same time an " historical course ", any historical course, is conceived of as inevitable. The confines of philosophy are too small to permit both notions.

Engels and Lenin abandoned the early idealism of Marx[91], which made of man a creative element in knowing, and consequently in the historic process. They drove themselves aground upon a naive materialism in the effort to maintain the " historic necessity " of socialism and all its theoretic implications. They conceived man as a passive " reflector " of dynamic processes going on outside him[92] — an untenable philosophical conception[93]. But this was the only position consistent with historical materialism.

That there are two " Marxist " philosophies seems obvious : the first idealistic, an advanced feuerbachianism, which extended to man a creative role in the making of his own history[94], the second, materialistic, with man a passive object of an inevitable historic progression[95].

The second philosophy has become the philosophy of modern communism, the first, discarded by the earliest Marxists, has returned into the sound tradition of European philosophy and has made its reappearance in our own time, through Sorel and Gentile, in the philosophy of Fascism on the one hand and through Pierce and James in the revolutionary idealism of Pragmatism on the other.

It is from this philosophy, pragmatic, activist, idealist, of which the young Marx was but a lesser representative, that the essence of the revolutionary ideology of tomorrow is to be derived.

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[91] cf. Hook, *Understanding Karl Marx*, pp. 32 f, 62 f ; Hunt, *The Theory and Practice of Communism*, p. 33.

[92] Marck, *Hegelianismus und Marxismus*, pp. 12 f.

[93] Masaryk, *op. cit.*, p. 512.

[94] " The materialistic doctrine concerning the changing of circumstances and education forgets that circumstances are changed by men . . . " Marx, " Thesen," III, *Fruehschriften*, pp. 339 f ; " ' History ' does not use man as an instrument to fulfil its own purposes." Marx, as cited in Ruehle, *Karl Marx*, pp. 84 f ; Brameld, *A Philosophic Approach to Communism*, p. 145.

[95] " What I did . . . was to prove . . . that the class struggle necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat," Marx, Letter of March 5, 1852 ; " What the bourgeoisie therefore produces . . . are its own grave-diggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable." Marx, *Communist Manifesto*, p. 21.

LITERATURE AND POLITICS III

SPENDER SPENT

by ALAN NEAME

ON March 12th last year, Mr Spender walked out of a Foyle's literary luncheon as a protest against some strictures of Viscount Samuel on recent English poetry. Mr. Spender was reported later to have said that there should be more controversy in English art: we were too genteel, but attacks should be made on occasions when it was possible to answer back.*

This study of the political and poetical achievment of the present editor of *Encounter* has two aims: to show first the extent of the irresponsibility underlying Spender's political poetry of the Thirties; secondly the exiguity and speciousness of his poetic talent, boosted for political reasons, and how it is now spent.

* * *

" My parents ", Mr. Spender wrote in perhaps his best poem, " My parents kept me from children who were rough." Alas, for the innocence of parenthood ; the lure of the forbidden ; the terrible fascination of those who never smile ! The ambivalence towards the roughs who " sprang out behind hedges

* The Editor invites Mr. Spender's reply in the columns of *The European.*

like dogs to bark at our world," the fear of " their muscles like iron and their jerking hands and their knees tight on my arms," and the desire to forgive, and be forgiven by, loved by, united with, those who never smile, led the wistful youth to encourage in his writings a cult of " progressive " massacre.

This son of a liberal home was soon to pen the most heartless line in English letters.

" In a new land shooting is necessary."

The massacre of the Kulacks in those remote times was regarded by these young men as a " release of individual energy ",[1] much as to our shame the Katyn Massacre is regarded as " unfortunate " but " non-proven " by our own contemporaries. By the time Spender was twenty-one, the parental prohibition against playing with the gypsies in the wood had brought him to full-blown idealisation of gang life, or more specifically red gang life :

> " Oh, comrades, step beautifully from the solid wall
> Advance to rebuild and sleep with friend on hill
> Advance to rebel . . ."

This poem, we know on his own authority, dazzled and horrified Vita Nicolson, and well it might. Spender had taken his place among the rough children; it was a spectacle to sadden any woman's heart : Eric (or Little by Little) gleefully draped in the reach-me-down football knickers of bully Flashman, cheering " our mob " from the safety of the touchline.

Some years later, when the Spanish Civil War broke out, Spender ceased to be a touchline supporter of the redshirts, bravely pledged himself to the " schematism of simplified thinking which divided all attitudes into those which were for communist revolution and those that were against it,"[2] labelling all those against it as fascist. He took the Party ticket. His self-identification with the roughs became official. Under his influence, Mr. Jimmy ' Younger ' did the same. Jimmy had been a member of the unemployed, and had after a chance encounter been asked by Spender to live in his flat and work for him: " The differences of class and interest between Jimmy and me certainly did provide some element of mystery which corresponded almost to a difference of sex. I was in love, as it were, with his

[1] *The Creative Element*, p. 141.
[2] *ibid*, p. 144.

background, his soldiering, his working-class home. Nothing moved me more than to hear him tell stories of the Cardiff streets of Tiger Bay."[3] Jimmy enrolled in the International Brigade. The less vocal of the friends went to Spain as a soldier ; the other, who maintained that " in a new land shooting is necessary," went as a journalist and this is his description of anti-fascist action :

> " We came to a machine-gun emplacement, and the gunner in charge of it insisted that I should fire a few shots into the Moorish lines. I did this, *positively praying* that I might not *by any chance* hit an Arab. Suddenly the front seemed to me like a love relationship between the two sides, locked here in their opposite trenches, committed to one another unto death, unable to separate, and for a visitor to intervene in their *deathly orgasm* seemed a *terrible frivolity*."[4]

This is what comes of advancing to rebel and sleep with friend on hill, of listening in emotion to too many tales of Tiger Bay. And this is what happened to Jimmy :

> " He looked fit and *bronzed* and young in his uniform." We went out into the square outside the cafe and then I realised that this physical fitness concealed an extreme nervousness. As soon as we were outside he said with great vehemence : ' You must get me out of here !' He went on to explain that he had changed all his ideas. He had come to Spain on an impulse, but now he knew that he did not want to die for the Republic."[5]

And this is how his patron helped him :

> " I said that I *might* ask for him to be transferred to some non-combatant position in the Brigade, but not for him to leave Spain . . . To return (to England) would make others wish to do the same. On the other hand, I thought that if he was ready to accept the *humiliation* of staying on *without* fighting . . . &c.
>
> " Finally I persuaded him to accept this point of view."[6]

Jimmy was imprisoned and nearly shot by a firing squad of his own side.

Some people may be impressed by this talk of love relationships, of orgasmic committals to one another unto death, by a poet *positively praying* (a Bloomsbury phrase) that he may not *by any chance* hit an Arab—would a Spaniard not matter as much? Some

[3] *World Within World*, p. 184.

[4] *ibid*, p. 223.

[5] *ibid*, p. 221.

[6] *ibid, loc. cit.*

people may approve the patronising subjunctive of "I *might* ask for him to be transferred to some non-combatant position", and the journalistic heroics about humiliation; the highminded lecture on the humiliating position of the non-combatant comes ill from one who thought it frivolous for himself to take part in the struggle.

The key to the riddle lies in the chapter called *Faith* of his recently published essay *The Making of a Poem.* "Like some other poets I am attracted by the life of power and the life of action, but I am still more repelled by them." During the period of the Civil War, Spender was probably at the height of his poetic power; the tension between admiration and repulsion produced the Marxist hymns to which I shall refer in more detail in the second part of this study. In the sphere of practical affairs, it was to that which repelled the poet even more than it attracted him, that he urged Jimmy and a whole generation of readers still sufficiently children of the romantic tradition to respect the words of poets as the words of true conviction. Like the priest of Moloch, Spender encouraged the impressionable and enthusiastic to leap into the furnace, while himself practising a mental reservation that kept him well beyond the reach of the flames. To what degree this discretion of his has undermined the credit of poetry as inspired legislation, he would do well to consider in his next volume of apologetics: with special reference to the lives of Shelley and Byron, who not only took up revolutionary attitudes in their verses, but allowed their attitudes actually to effect their lives to the extent of expelling them from the community into self-imposed outlawry. Their subsequent lives and deaths validated for their readers the ideals exalted in their verse. However chimerical these ideals may have been, they thus acquired the dignity of poetic truth. In Spender, as contrasted with these earlier social and political poets, we find our first example in English literature of the poetic reformer, revolutionary, legislator, who did *not* prove his belief in his own ideal propositions — propositions far more highly charged with danger and calamity than any scheme for pantisocracy or Greek independence. Did he not believe in them, even at the time of their formulation? Perhaps, not even then. Communism as hymned, with its necessary shooting that leads to an age of social justice, ruthless in its disregard for the past and individual values, (I paraphrase from *Inside the Cage*), was not necessarily a matter of belief — he has said so since himself.

The next problem is this. Can such a confidence trick be expiated

by confession ? In the essay *Confessions and Autobiography*, in which obliquely he apologises for the scandals of *World within World*, we read : " Self-revelation of the inner life is perhaps a dirty business. Nevertheless—even in its ugliest forms—we cannot afford altogether to despise anyone who—for whatever reasons—is the humblest and ugliest servant of truth." We may pass over the objection, and charitably agree. But if this servant of truth urges us to a course that he himself finds more repellent than admirable, what kind of service to truth does he perform ? Now, if he had found the course repellent, as cold-blooded cruelty well may be, but nonetheless more admirable than repellent, we could concede the difficulty of the choice and possibly sympathise with a painful solution. But to advocate that which is admitted to be more repellent than admirable reveals a conception of truth, that requires more than confession *without* reparation to sweeten it. And what sign of grace, what intention of reparation to the people of Tiger Bay or his dupes among the well-intentioned middleclass of the thirties, is to be found in the acceptance of a subsidy from Fleischmann's Yeast ?

War can be very cruel, and we remember Goya, particularly so in Spain. Atrocity-mongering against one side or another does no more than underline the cruelty of western man when serving an ideal. I should not therefore be taken as trying to heap all the cruelty on one side, or as indulging in fascist apologetics, when I mention that after massacres of 6,900 priests and nuns, and other releases of individual energy including, as El Campesino now reveals, inter-communist pogroms involving the British contingent of the International Brigade, the Red cause, to which Jimmy had been so generously sacrificed, failed. Fascism triumphed in Spain. Germany and Italy, as fascist as could be, began to trouble the continent. " With society to be saved from fascism,"[7] with the war to make the world safe for Popular Democracy, with the war not against the German people but against their fascist leaders, what in doubletalk did Spender mean when he told the University of Cincinnati that in 1939 " the outbreak of war removed the impulse of the anti-fascist movement "?[8] All the slogans : *Aid for Russia ! Open the Second Front Now ! Gaol Mosley !* and Ludmilla Paveloschenka who lectured on how to shoot fascists

[7] *The Creative Element*, p. 155.

[8] *ibid*, p. 156.

before an uncomfortable audience of dons in the hall of Balliol, vanish together down the memory hole. And Spender, when not only his friends but all his countrymen were committed to the anti-fascist struggle ?—like many a firebrand before him, forbidden by the doctor ever again to indulge in the terrible frivolities of direct anti-fascist action. The people of Tiger Bay took arms and died for a fascist-free society ; Spender to do him credit served in the Auxiliary Fire Service of Cricklewood. And lived—to complain in a British Council pamphlet that " although some painters were reserved to paint war pictures, no poet was reserved for the purpose of writing war poetry, or any other kind of poetry."[9] Admirable polarity of bellicosity and passivism. Now, to be sure, the impulse of the anti-fascist movement had gone; but not the animus ? For from his Council tract and from his Cincinnati lectures he neatly excluded all mention of Mr. Roy Campbell, whose irruptions into meetings of the London Poetry Society used to make Mr. Spender " look another way, pretending to smile."

The fellow-travelling poets of the 'thirties, with their songs of revolutionary destruction, exerted a strongly-shaping influence over the minds of their readers ; but not over the minds of the driving-belt makers whom Spender singles out for a handsome elegy—of that we may be reasonably sure. In times of economic hardship the poet who wishes to influence unemployed artisans and those who excel all others " in making driving belts " must either write for *The People* or join the pickets and bread queues. It takes a genius of Wesley's stature to move the poor by eloquence. Poems in the modern manner printed by Faber & Faber are only within the reach of the pocket of the oppressor class (i.e. the bourgeoisie) that " starves and deprives the poor." No, the influence was exerted on the literate middle classes whom it helped to condition to the coming anti-fascist pro-communist war : on those very groups in fact that, had the ideals of these communising poets ever been realised, would have been the first to perish in a Marxist England. Was this anything but a long-term strategy, to convert the intelligentsia to acquiescence in their own slaughter? Had these poets conceived a constructive plan for the requickening of a decadent society ; had they seriously regarded the welfare of the young men of Tiger Bay as an end, instead of encouraging these young

[9] *Poetry Since* 1939 (British Council) p. 10.

men to go out and fight and die for a cause as alien as irresponsibly espoused ; had they truly desired a " national community " where social obligation was justly distributed, whereas they advocated necessary shooting and bloodbaths ; they would not have made their assault on the confidence of the lettered. But Spender contends in *The Creative Element* that the self-confidence of the lettered had been destroyed already, that he and his colleagues were victims of the disease, not originators of it. It is like the arguments about war guilt.

Men of the thirties who desired a juster social system in good faith, was it to convulsed, backward, barbarous Russia encumbered, it would seem inescapably, by its Byzanto-Asiatic heritage that they turned ? Did not Denmark provide an example of an egalitarian society more relevant to England ? But Denmark was too dull. Russia had state trials and shooting. There were roughs in Russia. If doubt of this remains, the last verse of the driving-belt maker's *Funeral* should resolve it. Spender describes the rejoicing of the operatives :

> " No more are they haunted by the individual grief
> Nor the crocodile tears of European genius,
> The decline of a culture
> Mourned by scholars who dream of the ghosts of Greek boys."

This gibe at the European genius scarcely argues a reconstructive purpose. If the European genius is too corrupt to shed a cordial tear must not the time be ripe for some alien genius to replace it ? At which point one is faced with the question whether or not the ethos of Marx counts as European in this, or any other, context. By inference Spender regards it as non-European. Nonetheless, having advocated this creed of desperation and violence throughout the 'thirties, he recently assures the University of Cincinnati that " for nearly all writers, communism was a matter of conscience, not of belief."[10] The revolutionary poet now tells us that he never meant Revolution ; that he just had a duty to preach it. But the consequences for Tiger Bay, for a thousand Tiger Bays all over the world, of acting on such social teaching: loss of civil rights, refusal of U.S. visas, state trials in new popular democracies, mass deportations, all arising out of such scruples

[10] *The Creative Element*, p. 145.

of conscience mistaken for a Faith.

* * *

Now that Mr. Spender's *Collected Poems*[11] lie before us the legend of maturing genius must yield to the sad truth. The verses, strangely lacking in movement, pallid and cerebral, are those of a wistful character who twenty years ago had a hornet in his cricket cap. The ones that still retain a little of the sting of life are those written when the horrors of adolescence still hung about him, when the Marxist group was at its most co-operative. *My parents kept me from children who were rough* for instance still has something of the pathos of a young man's confessional writing: the urge that suddenly comes over the young hero of a psychological film to lean across some adoptive-motherly bosom and gulpingly confide : " Mrs. Abrahams (gulp), I was never (gulp) a very happy child ". The pendant earrings give a sympathetic tinkle ; the fostermotherly fingers emit the discreetest clatter of diamonds as they smooth the wistful brow. Yes, that picture has contemporary validity.

Granted then an element of pathos, we also find an occasional suggestion of wit. The poem *New Year* begins well enough :

> " Here at the centre of the turning year
> The turning Polar North,
> The frozen streets, and the black fiery joy
> Of the Child launched forth again . . ."

We note a tautness of language, all too rare in this student of Rilke, that suggests Spender had been studying the English Metaphysicals to good effect. The second verse opens with a very ingenious couplet :

> " I leave Him who burns endlessly
> In the brandy pudding crowned with holly."

The blasphemy is so deft, with its reference to Robert Southwell, its ambiguous participial phrase and its hint that Jesus only attends the Christmas parties of the well-to-do, that we look elsewhere in the poems to detect the wreckage of a rejected personal faith. We might spare ourselves the trouble. Even in *World within World*, Christianity is only mentioned once by name, and then in connexion with another poet's attitude towards it. The conceit and its ingenious expression are derived from other sources than personal loss of faith, as we

[11] Faber, 1955, 15s.

shall see from subsequent verses :

> " Cloak us in accidents and in the failure
> Of the high altar and marital adventure ;
> In family disgrace, denunciation
> Of bankers, a premier's assassination."

Confessional pathos, derived wit, finally Marxist vigour. Even the Marxist hymns, inspired by transient conviction, show a flabby diction at odds with the strenuous disciplines of the new creed. I do not think that there is one of these poems unmarred by insensitivity to the English tongue. I note particularly the recurrence of the imprecise adjective and adverb, usually abstract and always otiose. In *Oh young men oh young comrades* there are three examples in nineteen lines : Count your eyes as jewels and your *valued* sex : but if the sex is already *valued* by the young comrades there is no point in pinning it to the diamond ; Oh comrades, step *beautifully* from the *solid* wall : but the " great houses " of England are not built of paper like the houses of Japan. In *I think continually of those who are truly great* (surely the flattest first line ever acclaimed) there are at least three imprecise epithets in twenty-three lines, excluding *great*, the word to be defined : Whose *lovely* ambition ; never to forget the *essential* delight of the blood ; and left the *vivid* air signed with their honour. In *After they have tired* we find three examples in thirty-two lines: The *beautiful* generation that shall spring from our sides—strange obstetrics! following the disastrous line : The *palpable* and *obvious* love of man for man.

In the three poems quoted above there are thus nine imprecise or otiose words in seventy-four lines—a proportion of 12.2 epithets and adverbs doing no work per hundred lines of Socialist literature. Where does a Marxist draw his Plimsoll line ?

His three best poems, which have received admiration for the skill with which they reconciled the inventions of the technocratic age with the idiom of verse, are similarly disfigured. *Landscape near an Aerodrome* (31 lines) offers : the charcoaled batteries and *imaged* towers ; *Pylons* (20 lines) yields : roads that turn on *sudden* hidden villages : for what is suddenly found that was not previously hidden ? and: the green chestnut of *customary* root : the latter being peculiarly nonsensical, unless *root* is a misprint for *fruit*, but, the poet leaving the kind of chestnut tree in doubt, we cannot be sure whether the fruit would be the marron glacé, customary diet of the upper bourgeoisie in pre-revolutionary states, or the conker, cus-

tomary plaything and capital of the young alike in West Hampstead and Tiger Bay. *The Express*, that in other respects might be Turner's lurid express train translated into words, sports in the third line the flat simile *gliding like a queen* which no Marxist irony can redeem from fatuity.

I drew attention earlier to Spender's insensitivity to the English language and suggested that his admiration for Rilke might be responsible for his sloppy use of our language. This is perhaps not the only reason. Spender tells us in his autobiography that as a young man he did not really feel English, and describes his sense of difference.

> " When, at the age of sixteen, I became aware of our Jewish blood, I began to *feel* Jewish. At school, where there were many Hampstead Jews, I began to realise that I had more in common with the sensitive, rather soft, inquisitive, interior Jewish boys, than with the aloof, hard, external English. There was a vulnerability, a tendency to self-hatred and self-pity, an underlying perpetual mourning amounting at times to spiritual defeatism, about my own nature which, even to myself, in my English surroundings, seemed foreign."[12]

This self-revelation gives point to the otherwise mysterious participle in the first verse of *In 1929*, where the antagonists and the passive spectator of the Marx-Spender myth are brought together :

> . . . the new, bronzed German,
> The communist clerk, and myself, *being* English.

Why *being* English ? Why not *an Englishman*, for the free verse could well bear it ? No, he means something different. He means rather that he is not *always* English ; he is *being* English *now*. For a moment, a mood, a motive, an emotional posture. One cannot escape the feeling that, when Spender wrote most of his poems, he was *being* English ; he was writing *in* English, using English words, but thinking in some woolly foreign idiom.

Writers of the neurotic type often invest certain words with special emotional significance and seem compelled to use them over and over again. Thus T. E. Lawrence, as Richard Aldington has pointed out, uses " clean " to mean " cruel, destructive, dead ", and " sexless " when he means " homosexual ".[13] Spender's compulsion word during the Marxist period is " bronzed " as

[12] *World Within World*, p. 13.

[13] *Lawrence of Arabia—A Biographical Enquiry*, pp. 330, 335.

applied to male complexion. With its linked associations of colour, hardness, muscularity as of antique statues of nude athletes, it is just the word one might expect a "sensitive, rather soft, inquisitive, interior" dweller in a fog-shrouded, sunless, pasty-faced, northern, industrial city to apply to dream comrades :

" Jimmy looked fit and *bronzed* and young in his uniform."
" . . . the new, *bronzed* German . . ."
" Well-fed, well-lit, well-spoken men are these,
With *bronze-faced* sons, and happy in their daughters."

But note, this adjective is curiously imprecise as anyone can tell who has ever looked at the bronze statuary in the London streets ; it would take many hours of sunbathing for a Northern European to become that colour. But also note, that this adjective expressing approval of carnal beauty is applied in each of the above cases to men of whom the poet disapproves ideologically. Jimmy bronzed is Jimmy renegade to the Republic. The new bronzed German is the young Nazi. The bronze-faced sons are the sons of well-fed, well-lit, well-spoken merchants who have fat gardens well to southward of the maritime slums. The bronzed is at once love-object and hate-object. The bronzed destroys and is to be destroyed and yet is passionately envied. The will to love and the no to life ; Stephen, Dedalus or Dracula ?

Of Spender's more recent work I choose for analysis his own choice for his British Council pamphlet, *Poetry since 1939*. It is a sonnet from a sequence of poems entitled *Spiritual Explorations*, " an attempt" he says "to penetrate the very nature of human existence"—

Since we are what we are, what shall we be
But what we are ? We are, we have,
Six feet and seventy years, to see
The light, and then release it for the grave.
We are not worlds, no, nor infinity,
We have no claims on stones, except to prove
In the invention of the human city
Ourselves, our breath, our death, our love.
The tower we build soars like an arrow
From the earth's rim into the sky's,
Upwards and downwards in that blazing pond
Climbing and diving from our life, to narrow
The gap between the world shut in our eyes
And the receding world of light beyond.

What do we learn of the very nature of human existence ?

that we live until we die; that our only monument is stone. Rare thought. The unveiling of the mysteries is reserved to the sestet: life is like a heaven-rimming tower that parabolically soars, climbs upwards, dives downwards, to and from the meeting place of earth and sky. Is this not the same place all the time—the horizon? This parabolic structure is to bridge the gap between immanence and transcendence.

The initial conundrum (acknowledgements due to T. S. Eliot and Mistress Quickly: Lord, Lord, we know what we are, but we know not what we may be) is followed by a negative catalogue, a device not wholly mastered even by Victor Hugo, of modern rhetorical poets the greatest:

> "Un fleuve qui n'est pas le Gange ou le Caystre;
> Pauvre cour d'eau normand troublé de sels marins."

In terms of contemporary scientism, "world" and "infinity" are meaningless as applied to man; while the outmoded religious systems were never committed to such loose diction as this in their definition of creatures. Only the crudest optimisms have ever maintained man to be infinite, as distinct from immortal. Spender seems to be trying to refute some such unecumenical group as the Agapemonites of Spaxton; the mystery of existence so pretentiously tackled remains intact.

Let us examine Spender's manipulation of the fashionable abstract noun "invention", colourless and ambiguous. Invention is appropriate here neither in its general sense of "creative discovery" nor in its special usage of "rediscovery, as of lost treasures". "Inventory" would have been apposite. In plumbing mysteries must one mystify? If we however construe the lines, to mean that by inventing cities man can, in the stones of which the city is built, erect a monument of qualified permanence to his own endeavour, we find an artfully transferred epithet. It is the city that is of stone, while the invention is human. Much art to conceal little penetration.

For Spender and other advocates of "necessary shooting", the word "human" has the mesmeric effect of an incomprehensible; it wanders, as in Auden's celebrated lyric of guilty[14] love:

> "Lay your sleeping head, my love,
> Human on my faithless arm."

[14] "In such a poem as this one notices a degree of self-consciousness amounting to disillusion about the loved one. What Auden seems to be saying is 'I know love is an illusion, and I know that I am wrong to think my love, who is mortal and guilty, to be beautiful. But still I welcome the illusion'."—*Poetry since* 1939, p. 32.

Redundance of this epithet apart, for what else could the lover's head or poet's arm be if not human ? its position in the couplet is a matter of caprice and might, as far as meaning dictates, qualify " head ", " love " or " arm " in equal idleness. " Human " is a blank card in these poets' pack. See how much sharper the statement becomes if we substitute a picture card :

" Lay your gorgon head, my love . . ."

Since we are what we are . . . Dear God! Is this the end-product of the Graeco-Roman tradition?

And that is as far as Spender penetrates the mysteries of human existence during the years of anti-fascist struggle ; this the pietistic deposit in the pot, after the Marxist brew has evaporated. This is disappointing, for *being* Marxist, Spender showed signs of life. The appearance of his *Collected Poems* gives hope that the long unpoetic agony is over.

Of his prose style we need say little. The passage rightly anthologised in *Majority*[15] is that chapter from *World within World* describing his experiences in the Germany of the Weimar Republic—written in the style of Christopher Isherwood. Now, at independent maturity, he is capable of this : " Myself, I think that Auden has qualities of greatness, but the critical question will be decided by other critics than I."[16]

* * *

In this study I may be thought to censure Spender for *not* being a " proletarian poet ", for *not* having overcome his bourgeois, cosmopolite background. Far from it. I would not have him a Bolschevic ; I should like him to enjoy reading *The European.* My censure is for the advertised but poetically incompetent poet who successfully rides the Marxist bandwaggon when times favour Marxism, who from his safe perch urges Jimmy to avoid humiliation and fight for the cause like a man ; and who, when times are anti-Marxist, rides the anti-Marxist bandwaggon, a prig as ever; the man who will humiliate himself before the University of Cincinnati by pleading that the anti-fascist movement was finished in 1939, the first of the great years to Nuremberg. What is the motive in such a disavowal of sympathy ? There used to be a saying in Germany : *Unsere Ehre ist Treue* : we will be true, to

[15] *Majority* 1931-1952, Hamish Hamilton, 1952.

[16] *Poetry Since* 1939, p. 33.

old comrades, to ourselves, even our once sincerely held but now rejected beliefs ; we will keep faith with the past. Words heard with Walter in Hamburg, and forgotten with Toller in Spain. But what have you been, Stephen, if not priggish, irresponsible, infirm? Priggish in your professions of social idealism,[17] irresponsible in your advocacy of shooting, infirm at the swing of the pendulum against you. And what shall we call you after your acceptance of a subsidy from Fleischmann's Yeast ? Are you not now become the right hand of the oppressor, you self-appointed legislator for the young men of the 'thirties ?

Be braver, Stephen, as you set out on your new career as post-rough non-partisan editor for the Middle Left. How does the poem go ?

Feige Gedanken
Baengliches Wanken
Weibisches Zagen
Aengstliches Fragen
Sprengt keine Fessel
Macht dich nicht frei . . .

You remember the words better than I do . . .

Allen Gewalten
Zum Trotz sich erhalten
Nimmer sich beugen
Kraeftig sich zeigen
Rufet die Arme der Goetter herbei.

[17] *Forward from Liberalism, passim.*

A DIARY

WHY WAS SPAIN for many years boycotted and reviled and cast out from the nations of Western Europe ? Why is it that even to have said something so obviously true as that General Franco is a Christian gentleman should be enough to condemn a man in the eyes of writers for what Lord Berners used to call the New Stateswoman ? The answer is because, threatened by communism, the Spaniards found the energy and determination and courage to fight for their lives and their traditions. I thought this as I stood in the nave of the vast church at Jaén, where on tablets of stone are engraved the names of two hundred priests, murdered in the cathedral by reds almost twenty years ago. The sacristan, to make certain we understood what had happened, drew his finger across his throat and pointed at the floor.

★ ★ ★

As we drove through Andalusia they were getting in the harvest. The men wear huge straw hats and breeches and puttees ; they ride mules or donkeys with panniers to and from work, and for a few hours in the hottest part of the day they lie down to sleep in the shade of the nearest tree, looking very much like Ribera's *Jacob's Dream* in the Prado. The miracle of Spain, compared with other places, is that not only the cathedrals and treasures and landscapes are beautiful, but also the daily life and dress and occupations of the inhabitants. In the towns people seem less harassed, and sprucer, than town-dwellers elsewhere, but outside there is more to it than that. The country girls in bright skirts and handkerchiefs look like figures in Goya's early pictures,

the little boys like Murillos, the old people like Rembrandts. They are picturesque, not in the postcard way but like the greatest paintings.

Nowhere else have the women such shining hair, such gleaming teeth. Is it the water, or the bread, or the olive oil that makes them so healthy ?

★ ★ ★

After the burning heat of the city of Granada it is delightful to drive up into the hills of the Alhambra, through thick woods intersected by rushing streams.

We were shown over the palace of the Moors by an enthusiastic French-speaking guide. He exhorted us to try and use our imagination, to see the many-windowed rooms, with their complicated high domed ceilings carved in stalactite perspectives of painted wood and panelled with stucco cut into patterns, as they had been in the great days of the caliphate. " Il faut vous imaginer ça tout meublé avec des merveilleuses pouffes en cuir " he said. The walls, and arches carved like lace through which innumerable swallows fly in and out to their nests, are made of powdered marble plaster, and were originally painted in many colours, the dazzling effect being enhanced by stained glass in some of the windows through which the sun shone in an expensive kaleidoscope. The guide liked to dwell on the thought of these rich hues, and kept insisting " *des rouges, des bleus, des verts, de l'or* " ; he was rather cross when he overheard me saying that I preferred the naked stucco, as it is now. He made us look at the ceiling mirrored in a dark glass which he held on his coat sleeve, the honey-combing perspectives seemed to flatten so that one could clearly see the pattern. " What made you think of doing that ? " I asked him. " Ah, madame," he replied " ici on passe son temps à la recherche de toutes les beautés cachées de l'Alhambra ".

The chief beauties are the views from windows and doors, vistas across patios through fountains and arches and more windows to the hot, glittering distances and the mountains beyond. Or through an archway into secret gardens full of roses, oleanders, jasmine and myrtle, reflected in still water, smelling like a scent shop, warm and sweet.

Some of the windows look across the ravine of the Darro to

the Sacro Monte, a rocky hill riddled with the cave dwellings of the brilliantly dressed *gitan* who dance and sing all day and all night. They did not come originally from Bohemia, said the guide : " Ils sont venus ici de la vallée du Nil " — real gypsies, in fact.

★ ★ ★

In the gardens of the Generalife the sound of rushing water is everywhere. Indescribably lovely are the sights and scents and sounds of this enchanted place, whose name apparently means " sublime orchard ".

Here, among the most beautiful cypresses ever seen, they give concerts and ballets during the Granada Festival. Sadlers Wells this year, after the good (if obvious) choice of Act II of *Swan Lake* performed one of those really boring and silly ballets which make one despair of English taste. How can people old enough to remember Diaghilev (I do not, of course, refer to the talented young dancers) allow so much whimsy in the choreography, and such hideous mauve and orange dresses ? Despite the magical setting, this ballet about bird cages transported us at a single bound to a Chelsea tea-shop or West Kensington *Espresso* bar.

The Granada Festival, described by a French writer as the *mille et deuxième nuit*, is perfection. I wish the flood-lighting could all be white. The hills and gardens and fountains and cypresses and fantastic buildings are enough ; tinted lights are a little too much.

★ ★ ★

At the time of the Reconquest the Arab Palace was as much admired as it was in the days of Washington Irving and the water-colourists of the 19th Century. Ferdinand and Isabella lived there for a time ; Catherine of Aragon was brought up at the Alhambra. The hidden gardens, delicate arches, intimate rooms were exactly suited to 15th Century taste. But the Emperor Charles V belonged to another epoch ; his renaissance palace, awkwardly attached to the old one, although not very large is on a huge scale, as though built by a race of giants, in fashionable classical style.

A chapel near the renaissance cathedral in Granada contains the tombs he made for his parents, and his grandparents the

Catholic Kings, four marble effigies above the crypt. Joan the Mad lies beside her handsome husband with hands pressed together in prayer, but Isabel, as though she had prayed enough during her lifetime, has hers comfortably folded, and her marble pillow looks soft as down.

★ ★ ★

Just as every bar and hotel in Stratford-on-Avon is oak-beamed and half timbered, so in Granada are the hotels smothered in debased Moorish decoration — one soon learns to pick out the recurring pattern, seen everywhere, which reads : *Allah alone conquers* — and it makes a nice change from the debased Regency, or Louis XVI, or Elizabethan styles we are so tired of. Perhaps someone will begin a fashion for Moorish gardens and fountains carved with verses :

This is the crystal palace, he who looks on it will believe he regards the mighty ocean and be filled with fear.

The water runs like liquid pearls. How wonderful !

A vast sea whose confines are works of finest marble.

★ ★ ★

In the *Daily Telegraph* Late News column I read : " A tourist boycott of Spain by German Protestants urged today by the annual congress of German Protestant pastors. Resolution adopted by five hundred pastors from West and East Germany said Protestants should make no holiday trips to Spain as long as a ' hostile attitude ' against Protestantism prevailed there."

Poor things . . . But there is not much point, perhaps, in being a Protestant unless you occasionally protest against something or other ; the pastors are merely fulfilling their function.

It is their loss, and I doubt if they will be much missed. German Protestant pastors in Andalusia, where song and dance and music and gaiety and sunshine are part of life, or in the Alhambra where every scented garden, every gushing fountain, is a symbol of love and pleasure, would, to say the least of it, be out of place.

D.M.

THEATRE

T. S. Eliot's *The Family Reunion*

(PHOENIX THEATRE)

by MICHAEL HARALD

I HAD HOPED this month to demonstrate a devotion to duty quite exceptional in the annals of dramatic criticism, to bring back from a Roman holiday neither languors nor *longueurs* of the *mezzo giorno*, but instead a comprehensive assessment of the modern Italian theatre. Alas ! I chose the worst possible time, as my Italian friends warned me within an hour of my arrival. " June, you see, and the Civil Elections, and the fact that Signor so-and-so has quarrelled with his ex-wife, who, as you know, is the famous actress Signora so-and-so . . . and, of course, the high cost of theatre rentals. It must be very different in London, yes ? Yes . . . ? "

No. They are familiar excuses. I have made them myself, often enough, here in London to my Roman friends. " Well, you see, the Vic's struck rather a bad patch . . . June, you see, and the silly season, and the fact that Tennents have quarrelled with so-and-so, who's cleared off to Stratford in a fit of pique and Pericles . . . and, of course, the high cost of theatre rentals. It must be very different in Rome, yes ? Yes . . . ? "

No. But the Civil Elections were very exciting. In the Piazza Venezia, I found a magnificent M.S.I. bass who put more passion into slum clearance than any English actor of my time has found in Othello ; the Christian Democrat speaker in the Via Cavour was a bit of a bore, but he had the sense to reinforce his polemics with a splendid blonde who sang *Arivederci, Roma* to her own accordian accompaniment ; the Young Communist outside the American embassy held a great dagger in one hand and his hair in the other and offered to cut his throat if anyone present could prove that Palmiro Togliatti had ever accepted a single *soldi* from Stalin.

I accepted another three *soldi*worth from Brecht. The piece, as my more discerning readers may have guessed, holds a horrid

fascination for me. *I Tre Soldi Opera* was produced at the Teatro Quirino for — I choose to believe — my special delectation, and I stood at the back of the circle and hooted with the rest. It was a great joke, for the actors as well as the audience ; and it was played with rare speed and *bravura.* I also accepted two farces ; the first was entitled *Giulia,* I think, and I visited her under the mistaken impression that she was translated from Strindberg ; the second, *Io non ti conosco piu,* made me laugh a great deal, entirely defied critical analysis, and should be translated immediately for the edification of the Queen's reader of plays.

And from this to life and love below freezing-point, to the Furies which pursue and are pursued, to the neurotic's gyrations round the prickly pear, to a country house, stated to be in the North of England but, as Mr. Tynan wittily suggested, much nearer New England than Newcastle. To *The Family Reunion :—*

Firstly, and because I have perhaps dealt a little harshly in the past with the Phoenix enterprises, let me say that the play was finely produced by Mr. Peter Brook and finely acted too, for the most part. Mr. Scofield triumphed marvellously over his vocal affliction, and made more of a character of Lord Monchensey than Mr. Eliot had a right to expect — *did,* in fact, expect, for in his lecture, *Poetry and Drama,* the author makes it quite clear that he regards the leading role as a dramatic failure. Dame Sybil Thorndike's Dowager Lady Monchensey was grandly Euripidean, as befits the actress whom Mr. Eliot saw and praised in the *Medea* forty years ago ; and Miss Ffrangçon-Davies' infuriatingly oracular Aunt Agatha quite redeemed an unaccountable lapse in *The Mulberry Bush* recently and showed her to be one of the best half-dozen actresses in London. The minor parts — Mr. Eliot very nearly brings them to life — were perfectly cast and acted. Mr. David Horne's Charles, rich, rubicund, with a voice to match his complexion, hovering uncertainly on the brink of the great discovery that another man's horrors could be analagous with his own, is a performance that nearly reconciled me to the play. Stupidity is not a difficult thing to portray ; but Mr. Horne lets us feel with him the shattering impact of those first flickers of *enlightenment,* nearly at the end of his life, nearly at the end of the play :

It's very odd,
But I am beginning to feel, just beginning to feel

That there is something I could *understand, if I were told it.*
But I'm not sure that I want to know. I suppose I'm getting old :
Old age came softly up to now . . .

and his last few words, sighed in a voice which recalls Lear's "*I am a very foolish, fond old man . . .*" :

I fear that my mind is not what it was — or was it ? —
and yet I think that I might understand.

A beautiful performance.

When I first saw this play produced, ten years ago, in a tiny theatre, long before Mr. Eliot was properly launched as a West-end dramatist, I was one of those who clamoured for its wider recognition, for its place in the classic repertoire of that abstract National Theatre which never will know bricks and mortar. I was mistaken, I think. We were in the mood for myth in the mid-forties : Mr. Eliot's Harry/Orestes Monchensey came as a welcome heavy-relief from the more extroverted heroes of fact and flying-boots. The Eumenides were in vogue. But now, in this time, I cannot be stirred in the theatre by a static situation and a plague on a house :

It is possible
You are the consciousness of your unhappy family,
Its bird sent flying through the purgatorial flame.
Indeed it is possible. You may learn hereafter,
Moving alone through flames of ice, chosen
To resolve the enchantment under which we suffer.

Harry has killed his wife ; his father, many years before, had plotted to kill *his* wife. We learn a great deal about the circumstances of the father's failure as an assassin but very little about the son's neatly-executed crime, an event which prompts the entire action of the drama. The truth is, I think, that Mr. Eliot, even in his later plays, is not a dramatist, and is most rewarding when he frankly gives up the attempt to introduce dramatic point and impetus and allows the poetry to hold up the play. It is interesting, for instance, to compare a poem such as *Prufrock*, conceived, one fancies, as a piece of still-life, yet incontinently theatrical, with the last few minutes of *The Family Reunion*, where

the author, after laboriously assembling all the ingredients of a dramatic *finale*, including an off-stage death, lets the pot over-boil and sends the audience home supperless. Yet Prufrock, you will recall, after apologizing for the fact that he is sadly unheroic, convinces us at the last that —

> *We have lingered in the chambers of the sea*
> *By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown*
> *Till human voices wake us and we drown.*

CINEMA

An Exhibition and Four Re-makes

by VINCENT MURRAY

"EXHIBITION pronounced success" read the French student on his first visit to England, and promptly committed suicide. If he had taken time to investigate, however, he might not only have solved the cryptic message but have discovered that the exhibition referred to was the *Observer* Film Exhibition, "60 Years of Cinema", the opening of which I mentioned last month. By now so many detailed descriptions have been written and read of this really comprehensive and imaginative display that I must content myself with a few personal observations. Visual indigestion was the result of a first inspection of the beautifully designed rooms, but I found visits taking in just one section of the display each time were far more satisfying : the excellent lay-out of French pre-war cinema with its nostalgic stills and photographs of typical players of the period ; the fantastic world of Hollywood in the 'twenties ; the contrasting sense of high purpose in Soviet silent cinema illustrated by gigantic, blown-up stills from *Bronjenosyets Potyemkin* and other famous films. These three sections alone would have made the

exhibition memorable for me, but the trappings of cinema from its early days (plus the regular showing of classic films) to the contemporary wonders of the model cinema (where a film can be seen in the making) turn it into something fabulous. I cannot recommend it too strongly.

In contrast to the wealth of the exhibition (and as if to say : " You've seen the long-haired boys' idea of the film as an art ; now see what it is really like !") the standard of current film-fare rarely rises above a good commercial level. No less than four new films are re-makes of silent or early sound films. Marcel Carné's tame **Thérèse Raquin** is perhaps unfortunate in having its release so close on the heels of the Everyman re-issue of his splendid *Le Jour se Lève*, for its smooth, glossy surface and empty technical skill show up all the more by comparison. Judged solely in its own right as a film from a Zola novel, however, the film never bears more than a passing likeness to the original. Certainly Feyder's silent version captured much more of the atmosphere of the novel, and the characters had far more red blood in their veins than Carné allows them here. It has the smack of the prestige film about it : the reverent, but emotionally remote rendering of a native classic. Simone Signoret in the title-role comes nearest in spirit to the Zola ideal, perhaps, though in such a contest that is not saying very much.

Another Zola novel **Nana** receives similar treatment in a version by Christian-Jaques, which is as impersonal a production-line model as one can get. Once again the silent version (by Renoir) came nearer to the original (though with less success than Feyder's *Thérèse*), but even if one forgets the novel, there is little in the film to capture the interest. Martine Carol in the title-role seems to have little concern for anything but the dresses she almost has on, while Charles Boyer plays most unsympathetically as Muffat. **The Card of Fate,** a remake of Feyder's *Le Grand Jeu*, strikes me as being as boring as the original version. Feyder's at least had the superb Françoise Rosay in the lead, while contemporary box-office demands Miss Lollobrigida, thus limiting the interest to one plane only. To the list of three remakes, two inferior to, one as bad as their originals, a fourth, the latest Hitchcock, **The Man Who Knew too Much,** at least holds its own as a good thriller regardless of the fact that those familiar with his 1934 British version will find the new one inferior. For one thing, the familiar plot has been blown-up to more than feature length, and that means padding, a fatal element in the thriller. However, the man who has before now successfully interwoven a long, irrelevant central episode into a taut thriller is obviously not to be deterred by a mere matter of padding, and, sure enough, Hitchcock's visual skill combined with the required number of ' Hitch touches ' carries it off for nine-tenths of the time. The mis-handling of the Albert Hall sequence and the crude anti-climax I just cannot forgive, however, and the lack of a clear-cut sense of place (the locale is vague and inflated, like the photographic process employed) would never have been evident in a vintage Hitchcock.

NEW BOOKS

Citizens of To-morrow, **(Odhams Press, 3s.).**

MAJOR GENERAL T. WILSON, commenting on the recent report on British youth produced by King George's Jubilee Trust, of which he is secretary, is said to have used the melodramatic phrase *the battle of the gap* when referring to the years between leaving school and being called to the armed forces.

The report ignored the fact that discussion of the gap is academic because it need not exist. It took for granted that conscription has come to stay, or at least is something " which is likely to be with us for years to come ". Yet a volunteer army could be recruited without difficulty if the money squandered on the unwilling conscripts were devoted to higher pay and improved conditions for the regular soldier.

Meanwhile, the gap exists, and many of the problems of youth revealed by the report would continue if conscription were abolished. The Trust had undertaken its enquiry as a result of correspondence which had appeared in *The Times* in December 1951 and January 1952, correspondence primarily concerned with the problems of adolescence. But it wisely co-related the teens with the earlier formative years, and produced an exhaustive survey of the influences upon modern youth from the age of five to twenty.

The pre-school years are therefore outside the orbit of the report and this may be a serious omission in an age when babies are deposited in day nurseries and three-year-olds despatched to nursery schools (where other women are paid to look after them while their mothers are at work). But the problem of the working mother of the child at school is examined and a compromise solution advanced. The report lacked the conviction (or the courage) to recommend a change in the economic and social system which would enable men to earn sufficient to keep their wives at home. It suggested instead that mothers of young children should be provided with part-time work which would allow them to be at home when the child returned from school. This system would certainly improve the lot of the " latchkey child " who " lets himself in " to an empty house, where he prepares his own afternoon tea, but it is only a halfway step to the ideal of the mother devoting her undivided time and energy to the home.

At school the child is still frequently a victim of overcrowding under slum conditions, and the report advanced all the old panaceas of new buildings, smaller classes and more modern equipment. These remedies are excellent in themselves, but the report sensed that bricks and mortar do not constitute a school and that the most palatial building may be an empty shell. It

recognised the place of religion in the school (as did the Education Act of 1944, while rendering more precarious than ever the position of the denominational schools) but had nothing to offer to supplement religious instruction, no appeal to the spirit of adventure and service for which every child craves.

Out of school the child is subjected to the influences of horror comics, cinema, radio and television in a world where capitalism has discovered the vast purchasing power and potential market of the modern child's pocket-money.

At fifteen the average child leaves school and enters employment. Girls have no national service looming ahead of them and have every inducement to avoid the " blind-alley " job, with a prospect of an uninterrupted career before them, at least until marriage. But what of the boys with only three years before they must leave their jobs for the forces ? Shall they enter a trade or profession entailing an apprenticeship and apply for deferment of their national service until their training is completed ? A number adopt this course but the temptation is strong to regard the period of the gap as one in which to " eat, drink and be merry for to-morrow . . . . " in an age of full employment, when unskilled youths may earn high wages, the temptation is doubly strong.

The most unconvincing section of the report was devoted to these " gap " years — to the well-intentioned but largely wasted efforts of youth club leaders and social workers, vainly endeavouring to divert into table tennis and amateur dramatics the turbulant energies of frustrated youth. " The gap " defeats all such efforts.

What the National Servicemen think of the forces has been expressed so often (if only in the columns of the *Daily Mirror*) that it is well known. More pertinent is what the forces think of the conscripts. If we take the army as an example, the War Office reports that poor physical condition is " somewhat widespread " — a sad commentary on a system which provides no physical training for boys after leaving school unless they are sufficiently talented to play for a team and encourages the many to pay to watch the few perform. About one per cent of recruits are illiterate and another twenty per cent " of poor educational standard " — in a country which spends £1,000,000 a day on education. " Religious instruction appears to have been very seriously neglected in the lives of most recruits. Ignorance and apathy are prevalent amongst even the more intelligent men ". The characteristic of the conscripts which appears to strike the army most forcibly is their lack of self-confidence and initiative — the inheritance of a Welfare State which guarantees security " from the cradle to the grave ".

It would be unfair to condemn National Service without examining its beneficial aspects. Ex-conscripts and their employers almost invariably speak of improved physique and education, a broadening of the mind and a growth in self-confidence as a

result of the two years in the forces. It may be argued that the conception of " national service " is an antidote to the selfishness engendered by capitalist materialism, while service life provides opportunities for travel and adventure otherwise denied to youth. These advantages are real, but they are clearly separable from National Service. Mental and physical development is the responsibility of extended education, not of the armed forces.

G.V.

SCIENCE FICTION

A Private Volcano by Lance Sieveking (Ward Lock : 10s. 6d.).
G.O.G. 666 by John Taine (Rich & Cowan : 10s. 6d.).
A World of Difference by Robert Conquest (Ward Lock : 10s. 6d.).

IT IS RESPECTABLE enough nowadays, and the cautious addict no longer demands an anonymous dust-jacket. Published by sober houses, reviewed by sober critics, and even sponsored by *The Observer* — with a sober introduction by Mr. Angus Wilson, (*A.D.* 2500. *Heinemann :* 15*s.*), it is discussed seriously in *Punch* and the *New Yorker*, frivolously in *The Lancet* and the *Atlantic Monthly*. It is serialised on the B.B.C.'s Light Programme and the orthodox television service.

" It may, you know, become compulsory reading in our time," a bookseller friend of mine said gloomily. " Better sample it now, then you'll know what you're in for." . . .

I'm in for aerolites, aerodynamics, astronautics and astronomy ; abreaction, acrostics and aestho-physiology. Gog, golf and gold. Physics, too, of course, and planets, naturally enough. Plant genetics and plesiosauruses. Also the relativity of linguistic structures, advanced cookery and Samoan sex-techniques. This on the evidence of three new works which were recommended to me as fair samples of what is being written, sold and (presumably) read in enormous quantities these days.

I was perfectly at home with the first of the trio, and I was disappointed for that reason, and not because the author writes very badly. He does, but I don't care. His contract — which he didn't keep — was first to paralyse my faculties and then to tie me up in scientific knots. But *A Private Volcano* is the sort of book which might well have emerged from a collaboration between Chesterton, Wells and Arnold Bennett, forty or fifty years ago, on their dull days, with creditors on the doorstep. A young man of ideals becomes part-owner of both the Midas Touch and the Philosopher's Stone ; he carries the " stuff " —

black dust — around with him and distributes it to men of good will throughout the world. It turns all metals into gold.

> " As soon as a war seems really about to start, we'll turn their jet planes, big guns, ammunition dumps . . . and all the rest of the junk, into gold .... And then let 'em try to have a war, if they can."

I preferred Gog to gold. G.O.G. stands for " general order in genetics ", and 666 is, I'm informed, the number of the Beast in the Apocalypse. Mr. Taine, says the blurb, is a research mathematician, so —

> " What more natural than to confer 666 as a surname on the unsuspecting Gog, whose flaring, flat nostrils, hairy face, hairier body, heavy projecting jaw, and lumbering bulk were more like an awkward beast's than a man's anyway ? "

What indeed ? This is a delightful book. Mr. Taine's bacteriology, genetics and so on are not really intrusive — you can sit back comfortably and enjoy yourself, marking your favourite bits with a pencil. Mr. Wilson doubts whether science fiction is a fit subject for humour ; but I take him to be, like most of us, a collector of the unconscious variety. He would, I think, approve of Gog. I like :—

> " The expression of the large brown eyes was curious. They were clear and open, but somehow veiled . . . "
>
> and
>
> " Arkol was caught off his guard. His face went black. Instantly recovering his sauvity he tossed the insinuation in Brown's question slightly aside, and concentrated his wily skill on fabricating a plausible equivocation."
>
> and
>
> " Dorothy burst into the laboratory, her cap hanging over one ear, her hair dishevelled, and her uniform in tatters.
> " ' Come at once,' she cried to Brown. ' Gog has gone mad. The men can't hold him. I've called help.'
> " Brown grabbed his hypodermic kit and raced after Dorothy."

Mr. Conquest is a poet, not a research mathematician, and Mr. Taine's gems are obviously beyond his reach. *A World of Difference* is set in the year 2007, and it starts well :

> " His altitude was about eight hundred kilometres ; the little stratoyacht fell freely through the parabola which would put him into the atmosphere somewhere over the Aegean."

Page one, this ; and I'm dizzily out of my depth — or altitude — long before the end of the chapter, and rejoicing that my Concise Oxford is pre-S.F. Here, I would guess, is the *genre* at its best ; the story has plenty of plot, action and speculative whimsy, and — if you want it — a good deal of technical instruction, clearly presented. (I myself was interested most in a teletype machine called PACIC which churns out poetry of any period and in any style at the touch of a button : I shall watch Mr. Conquest's verse very closely in future for signs of mechanical fluency.) My main complaint is not that the characters in *A World of Difference* are bloodless — Mr. Wilson has warned me that the art is " poorest in character, physcological sensitivity (and) dialogue " — it is that the author too often and too obviously attempts to inject a flow of mid-twentieth-century red corpuscles into one or the other of his puppets ; usually his literary critic and amorist, Martin Stahlberg. These attempts terminate abruptly my suspension of disbelief — the closer Mr. Stahlberg gets to reminding me of Mr. Philip Toynbee, the less able am I to conceive of him circling the earth on a trans-polar orbit or womanizing on the Moon.

But it's all — isn't it ? — very harmless ; and it's easy to see now why it " would surprise " Mr Wilson " if many of its followers were to be found among the regular readers of serious fiction ". The reason for this is obvious : it isn't nearly *exciting* enough for the sort of reading which used to be called escapist. The serious reader in need of an easy thrill or two turns to detective fiction, or — atavistically — to Buchan, Sapper or Dornford Yates. At its *best*, science fiction is for the intelligent man who doesn't care for literature ; at its *worst*, it's for the man who *does* care, and has learned to dote on Amanda Ros and gloat over Marie Corelli.

It would be unnecessary for me to acknowledge a debt to Mr. Wilson's introduction to the *Observer* collection : it is surely self-evident. I cannot, however, agree with most of his findings ; nor can I myself see any outstanding merit in any of the stories ; but Mr. Wilson may well be in the right. Verne, Wells, Orwell in 1984 — they used to thrill me ; here, I never screamed once.

M.H.

Anglo-Saxon Attitudes by Angus Wilson (Secker & Warburg, 15s.).

IF I were a novelist I should think twice before allowing pre-publication extracts of my books to appear in newspapers. In some shiny journal a chapter from *Anglo-Saxon Attitudes*,

accompanied by huge caricature illustrations in full colour, nearly put me off reading the book. The editor had picked out a plum, one of Mr. Wilson's plummiest and most exaggerated baroque inventions : Mrs. Salad, charwoman and former lavatory attendant.

Mr. Wilson's fans know well that he excels at oddities, dotty old women, criminal spivs and guilt-ridden intellectuals ; the danger is, perhaps, that he might allow the richness and strangeness of his imagination to over-decorate his writing so that it became like a dinner of marrow bones and chocolate truffles.

In fact, however, Mrs. Salad's place in this novel is a minor one, no greater than Mrs. Gummidge's in *David Copperfield.* (If Mr. Wilson reminds us of Dickens, and he does, it is of a Dickens who has read Freud and lost interest in reform.)

Among the crowd of personages my favourite monster is the Danish woman, Inge Middleton. Here she is with the village children whom she has taught to sing German, French and English carols at Christmas :

> " And now it was a little Jutland peasant song that the children were to sing, and Ingeborg led them with a deep contralto, her well-supported pastel-blue bosom heaving, her grey eyes round with surprise. ' *Ole Dole, din, din,*' she sang, or that, at any rate, was what it sounded like to the smaller children, who, thus reminded that they were hungry, began to cry.
>
> " . . . ' And now little Maurice Gardner will sing a verse of *Holy Night* and we shall sing the choruses. Little Maurice is a very shy, special little boy,' she said to the audience, ' so we must all help him.' When no sound came from his terror-struck mouth, she bent down from the heavens above and placing her huge doll's face close to his, she asked, ' What is the matter, Maurice ? Have the trolls bewitched your tongue ?' so creating a deep psychic trauma that was to cause him to be courtmartialled for cowardice many years later in World War III."

No wonder her clever, rich, attractive husband (a professor of medieval history) left her; he comes back each year to join the family, children and grandchildren, for a frightful Christmas to which the foregoing scene is prelude. He dislikes most his son John, Inge's favourite child, a homosexual Labour ex-M.P. who earns large sums on T.V. fighting the battles of the little man.

Anglo-Saxon Attitudes is the best novel I have read for a very long time. Among its many merits, it has a plot of extreme fascination ; was the indecent fertility idol found by archeologists in the Anglo-Saxon bishop's coffin buried with him or was it planted there by a cynical practical joker ? But the title has another meaning besides, for the book is a portrait of some of the less agreeable attitudes of present-day Anglo-Saxons.

D.M.

KING LUDWIG'S PALACES

by ROBERT AICKMAN

MY IGNORANCE was boundless. King Ludwig II's palaces were built in the latter half of the nineteenth century ; they occupy sites specifically selected for their remoteness ; as architecture, they are generally supposed to be personal fantasias of the extremest kind : in most countries such structures could be depended upon to be derelict or perhaps demolished. I remembered what the Crystal Palace looked like before the conflagration. I mused upon the dismal decay, even in the centre of a capital, even under public ownership, of the constructions which in Great Britain come nearest to those of King Ludwig : the Marquess of Bute's additions to Cardiff Castle.

But in Bavaria the palaces, their parks, and their outlying grottoes and caprices, are, with only minor and perhaps temporary exceptions, in the most elegant and exquisite order ; and they are daily visited by such crowds that, reverentially though almost everyone behaves, one longs for a monthly Connoisseur's Day, to wander more nearly as the former owner wandered, alone and lost in a dream of the past. It must be added, however, that the King's extensive additions to the Munich Residenz were, with the rest of that beautiful fabric, destroyed by allied bombing during the recent war ; and that Hunding's Hut in the park at Linderhof was burnt down during the disturbances that accompanied the arrival of the Americans in 1945.

King Ludwig was the last man in the world who built personal structures on the grand scale. His buildings, however varied in style and detail, reflect a single taste and temperament, as surely as do the ballets of Diaghilev. He was the last ruler to take seriously what may be termed the promethean mission of monarchy, the divine duty of kings to bring splendour to earth and to justify art ; he started to build in remote places when he realised, notably through the general spleen against his inspired protégé, Richard Wagner, that his subjects cared little for heavenly fire or for a *Grand Monarque ;* and among his motives was the conviction,

stronger than mere hope, that he would receive in the future the acclaim and understanding which his contemporaries could not compass. He has astonishingly succeeded. If magnificence, elegance, and charm are the things you care about in life, then you should visit King Ludwig's palaces. It could be seriously claimed that they are the most beautiful buildings in Europe.

Herrenchiemsee stands on a forested island in the Chiemsee, and was the King's Versailles. The vast exterior is haunted as a palace in Russia ; but the interior is so unbelievably magnificent that no one with propensities to romance can be regarded as having lived who has not seen it. Every Saturday evening the principal apartments are lighted with candles, four thousand of them ; and in the astonishing Hall of Mirrors, two hundred and fifty feet long and with two thousand, one hundred and eighty-eight of these candles, there is a recital of Haydn and Mozart. By thousands, people travel to Prien ; thence by a splendid steam-tramway of best Betjeman style to the lakeside ; thence by paddle steamer, under the moon or the drifting mountain rain (which seems to deter no one) to the magic, tragic lake isle.

Linderhof, about ten miles from slightly distasteful Oberammergau, was the King's Trianon. It is a boutique of perfections, and in a situation which mingles alpine grandeur with the calm of an Englishman's park. There are extravaganzas : a grotto to end all grottoes, where the King navigated an underground lake in a silver barque, and there encountered a coloured and illuminated representation of the Venusberg scene in *Tannhauser* (the lighting being one of the earliest applications of electricity to stage purposes) ; a Moorish Kiosk from Napoleon III's Paris Exhibition ; a fountain that rises to the now unequalled height of ninety feet ; a rococo cascade ; and peacocks. Within the palace is perhaps the first mirror cabinet in the world. The King had a fondness for these halls of compound illusion.

Neuschwanstein, a few miles from Füssen, surmounts an immense pinnacle of rock, and is a shrine, a temple, a soaring forbidden city to the glory of Wagner and his creations. The King had spent much of his youth at Hohenschwangau (rebuilt by his father Maximilian II) on an opposite, lower peak ; and the whole region is the German romantic movement epitomized in nature. The overwhelming view from Neuschwanstein across the gorge to the vertiginous Marienbrücke recalls the Wolf's Glen in *Der Freichütz* as Weber perhaps conceived it. Near the Alpsee they

show you a line of hills like the coils of a vast dragon. Is it dead or sleeping ? Inside the Schloss the *Minnesinger* chant, the quest for the Grail becomes incandescent. There is a Throne Room . . . with no throne : " Something which the others ", says Herr Heinrich Kreisel in his excellent book about the palaces, " did not understand ".

And what (for us English) are the morals ?

The first seems to me to be that personality, taste and riches, provided that there are enough of all three, can engender the best at any time and in any place. The late nineteenth century is not usually regarded as a good period for art ; nor has Germany ever led Europe in the art of architecture. King Ludwig's architects are, in fact, little known : Dollmann, Riedel, Jank, and others : it was he who breathed life into them. Most astonishing of all is the merit of the detail. The flair for monumental planning and massing makes less demand upon artistic vitality than the hard toil of copious detail. Even the Gothic detail at Neuschwanstein, the most difficult of all for moderns, is amazingly alive. The range and vigour of the artistic florescence for which King Ludwig was responsible can be studied in the large and excellent Ludwig Museum at Herrenchiemsee. He was planning further exciting projects when he was pushed off the throne, incarcerated, and driven to suicide by his uncle, whose assertion that he was mad has since been found generally acceptable.

The second moral to be drawn is perhaps more subtle. Even in his lifetime, even to the end, the handsome resplendent King, glittering across the night snow in his six-horse sleigh (still to be seen at Nymphenburg), was loved by the great mass of his people. When the abdication party was nearing Neuschwanstein, Bismarck sent him word that he had only to return to his capital and *show himself.* (His failure to do so sprang from inner guilts and oppressions outside our present purpose.) And today there are the numberless pilgrims : for every one that is detached and analytical, there are a hundred seeking an ancient wonder to which King Ludwig was heir and master, but which the world, prostrate before the ravaging machine, has now lost, perhaps for ever. The master passion of our age is envy : but to visit these strange, tragic palaces is to be impressed again with man's deep ambivalence. They symbolise a dream of beauty and richness without which his life is wholly mechanical : and he half knows it. They are cloud-capped towers indeed.

LETTERS

EUROPEAN SOCIALISM

To the Editor of *The European.*
Sir,

Writing on European Socialism in your May issue Sir Oswald Mosley says, "The influence of many minds, the stress of controversy, and above all fresh facts will contribute to its development". Good! He continues, "We shall experiment, find out what works, drop a method quickly if it does not work, and follow success with every energy". Still better!

It is a truism that politics are made for man, not man for politics: no need, then, to wait for the nebulous "revolution in feeling as well as thinking" to ask a few relevant questions.

Is it Sir O.M.'s intention to confine remedial industrial action to a founder-ownership/worker-ownership (= capitalist/syndicalist) dualism? Wouldn't a multilateral approach be better, with a place for corporate organization, profit sharing and other schemes? These might, for a time, be an end in themselves in some industries, or they could be regarded as a transition to other forms of organisation.

Would the workers in a developed industry be able to veto a government decision to syndicalise them? To concede them this would be a great step forward on the path to democracy; it is more than the Labour Party, for all its mealy-mouthed moralism, ever conceded to the workers of the steel industry, or any other industry for that matter.

Let us go one further. If a number of alternatives are available, will the workers of a developed industry be permitted to choose their own kind of industrial organisation? To grant this would be positive down-to-earth democracy such as would put a plutodemocrat six feet under and make him turn when he got there. And you would be surprised how circumspect the workers would be in this matter; no British workingman is going to cut off the collective nose to spite the individual face.

Yours, etc.,
PERSISTENT QUESTIONER

To the Editor of *The European.*
Sir,

I suggest that your correspondent W. G. Shipley, in his criticism of worker's ownership in the July issue of *The European* is unaware of facts relating to industry in this country.

Are the workers of a large industry ripe for syndicalisation fit to judge whether one man should direct the factory more than another ? I would question even more the ability of the present owners of industry, thousands of absentee shareholders, whose only knowledge of an industry usually consists of the dividend produced by the share.

Throughout your correspondent's letter were traces of the old concept of society being divided sharply into the three divisions of upper, middle and lower classes ; two wars have brought radical changes, and through the mists of snobbery both actual and invented it is more and more difficult to classify anybody in a shifting society. Anybody who is not a parasite is a worker in industry ; from the floor sweeper to the manager or director, all are participating in industry.

The " Boss ", symbol of nineteenth century Marxism, pictured with a cigar, top hat, etc., has been replaced by thousands of anonymous shareholders. One is sometimes surprised at the relatively small shareholding retained by some " captains " of industry, until we realise that they are the men hired and elected by the ignorant shareholders to run their business for them. A careful examination of the boards of large industrial organisations in the blue chip class will show a fair representation of an industry participating in everything excepting profit.

W. G. Shipley's point about there not being enough men capable of directorial posts has no bearing on the question as to whether the workers are capable of electing them or not.

To me, as a worker, it is more important to accept the moral justice of syndicalism as a part of the whole of European Socialism, than to consider, as Mr. Shipley says " more precise arguments " on any " particular point ".

Yours, etc.,

KEITH GIBSON.

24 Mill Place,
Crayford, Nr. Dartford, Kent.

FATHER HUDDLESTON AND APARTHEID

To the Editor of *The European.*

Sir,

Allow me to express my sincere appreciation of Diana Mosley's review of *Naught for Your Comfort.* Father Huddleston aspires to canonisation in the Anglican calendar of saints. St. Trevor, the champion of oppressed Bantu peoples, of Kaffirs, Zulus, Hottentots, and the African races which have infiltrated into the Union of South Africa, lured by higher wages than those obtainable

in the adjacent British dependencies. In Father Huddleston we behold a modern St. Anthony resisting fanatically the devils of his own imagination, an ecclesiastical explorer returned from the African urban jungle to thrill susceptible listeners with tales of barbaric white savagery, achieving eminence overnight by a campaign of incredible hatred and misrepresentation.

The attempt to prevent the removal of natives from the indescribable hovels of Sophiatown to the new housing estate at Meadowlands was a masterpiece of clerical buffoonery. Imagine the reactions of the slum-dwellers of Hoxton, Stepney or North Kensington to a similar attempt to influence them against being moved at government expense to a new housing estate in, say, Hampstead, particularly if, as in the case of Meadowlands, the rents were lower and every modern facility provided. It might be relevant to suggest that African missionaries should come to Britain in order to investigate slum conditions here.

In South Africa Father Huddleston was presented by a subversive native organisation with a medal for " taking a leading part in the political struggle in South Africa ".

It is, perhaps, significant that the South African opponents of apartheid are the same people who have exploited native labour. They have no wish to see their profitable labour market disappear. Comparatively few of the white population of Johannesburg are of Dutch or French descent. Father Huddleston makes no reference to the model native townships near Pretoria, a predominantly Afrikaans area.

Dare any Englishman worthy of the name lay his hand on his heart and solemnly swear that it is no matter for concern if his future descendants are quadroons, or octoroons, or any other combination of mongrelisation ? Let us recognise the paramount importance of the preservation of the white race which has given to the world so much of inestimable value, and unite in resisting one-world multiracialism, which can end only in communism.

Yours, etc.,

J. G. E. BEDFORD

128 Uxbridge Road,
London, W.12.

THE PRESS AND MOSLEY

To the Editor of The European
Sir,

I was most interested to read in your last issue the sections "The Press and Mosley" and "The effect of Press Boycott." The Press bias towards Mosley is long-standing, so there must be some

reason for it.

The point is not so much that the Press fear Mosley (there is sufficient evidence that they do), but that they fear what he has to say.

Fleet Street, therefore, finds it safer to ignore a man it cannot answer than to print hostile articles about him, knowing full well the stinging reply it will receive. It appears to be avoiding this situation with the utmost care

"Analysis" mentioned the packed and enthusiastic meetings at Cambridge, Finsbury and Limehouse. This would by no means be complete without the mention of the largest and most enthusiastic meeting of them all, held at Kensington Town Hall. Sir Oswald had too many questions to answer, and questions were still awaiting answer long after the meeting was due to finish.

How true, also, was the remark that "people . . . like to read something of the doings of the men and the movement they support . . ."—less, of course, the Fleet Street trimmings like "Hangmen's Memoirs", "Virgin Births" and the flood of pin-ups now a hallmark of the popular press—and I am no old maid from Bournemouth, or a member of the Lord's Day Observance Society.

Yours, etc.,

John Jackson.

25, Englefield Road,
London, N.1.

BAGHDAD AND BALDOCK

To the Editor of *The European.*

Sir,

I think myself justified in commenting on Desmond Stewart's remarks about Baghdad, the Templars, and the Jacobite church for three reasons : first because I shall ever be proud to have lived for four years at Baldock in this county ; second because for my sins I was once stationed in Kurdistan which is the country of the Jacobite Assyrians or "Chaldaeans" (one of whom, a laundry-man called Hanna, curiously enough, did his best to teach me Arabic) ; thirdly because I was once daily and closely connected with Italian maps, those masterpieces of graphic technique and imaginative power.

I wonder what Mr. Stewart finds wrong about "the notion that the Italian name for Baghdad was Baldocco". The contemporary Italian translators of Rusticiana da Pisa, Marco Polo's "ghost" and fellow-internee whose Book of Marvels was taken down, with a view to the world public which it at once achieved, in French and not in Italian, called it Bagadet *but also* Baldach,

Baldacco or Baldocco. The Roman static umbrella known as a *baldachino* is so called because copied from the caliphal palace. The spelling Bagdad on Italian maps merely signifies that modern decadence has permeated even the *Instituto Tipografico Militare.* I myself have seen Italian maps tamely recording München and Stuttgart instead of the full-blooded Monaco di Baviera and Stoccardo of yore. Nor is it fair to jeer at our Hertfordshire Templars for coming home " without having *taken* Baghdad ". In the first place they had no orders to do so : the Crusades — *all* the Crusades — were wars of limited objectives and not the total ideological struggles *à outrance* which seem to be the only kind of war we can conceive nowadays. And in any case quite a lot of Templars had in fact been to Baghdad at least in a diplomatic capacity, which is more than one Frank in a million could claim, either during the Crusades or in Marco Polo's day.

The only other seriously suggested derivation for Baldock is the meaning " bald oak " but this in Old English would have been *balde ac* and in the linguistic area of Middle Anglia would have become Baldage in the modern period (compare the similar development of nearby forms such as Stevenage with the final *ac* element). And anyhow no spellings of Baldock previous to the thirteenth century are recorded : why ? Because it didn't exist until carved out of Letchworth parish for the benefit of repatriated Templars.

I should add with regard to the Chaldaeans whose acquaintance I made beside the Little Zab, that those Jacobites who did not become Uniates contracted an equally political and equally one-sided alliance with the Church of England, which sent them a mission in 1876. Mr. Stewart's " unfanatical " Iraqis, aided by the Kurds, conducted a fine promiscuous massacre of Jacobites and Maronites alike no longer ago than the days of Malik Yacu. Ask Nuri es Said what happened in those parts in 1933.

Yours, etc.,

ANTHONY DENT.

116 Hadley Road,
Barnet, Herts.

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