THE EUROPEAN

THE JOURNAL OF OPPOSITION

MARCH 1958 Vol XI, No. 1

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Any successes will improve chances of peace.

POLITICS BOOKS TRAVEL

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March - 1958
Number Sixty-one

Printed by Sanctuary Press, Ltd., S.W.1.

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ANALYSIS

MR. THORNEYCROFT says that Britain carries a burden which she cannot support without disaster. The rest of the Government say that to discard any substantial part of the burden would be a disaster. We say Q.E.D.: get into Europe, and share the burden. Never before have we had such crystal clear proof of the necessity for Britain to enter Europe quickly, and also to build the economy of the new Europe far quicker than it is now being constructed. There is not much time left. Of all the follies committed by British statesmanship in recent years, the failure to take the lead in European Union ten years ago is now shown to be the greatest. The recent resignations, and the controversy they have caused, have finally revealed the hopelessness of present policy and the helplessness of Britain's present position.

The last stage of clarity and courage.

Mr. Thorneycroft pointed out very clearly that Britain was trying simultaneously to do three things which were entirely beyond her individual strength; to maintain an adequate defence system in face of Russia; to maintain social services relatively heavier than those of America; and also to play banker to the sterling world. This last effort, in practical effect, now means depriving the home consumer in order to find a large export surplus for the dual purpose of meeting the crippling burden of debt called the sterling balances, and of supplying all the backward countries of the Commonwealth with the capital investment which we badly need for the equipment of our own British industries. If this was not what Mr. Thorneycroft meant, what did he mean? In fact, he said as much in reasonably clear terms. He admits every premise of our case. Why does he not draw the only possible conclusion and admit that complete entry into Europe is the only solution of an intolerable situation for Britain? He has shown much courage and considerable clarity of mind. The last stage of clarity and courage may not be beyond him.

Will Government's Micawber luck last?

Meantime the Government have a hope; and what a hope! World commodity prices have been falling for some time, and this is likely to be reflected before long in a general fall in the price level. So

the hope of the Government is that they may remain in their present position, standing quite still and doing next to nothing except flex their muscles and look tough, while prices actually fall as the result of natural forces quite outside their control; the outcome may then be claimed as the result of action by a strong and resolute government. The Government has one further hope of also avoiding the loss to our export trade that a fall in the commodity price level would normally involve, because some of our main markets are commodity producers and the fall in these prices would adversely affect their purchasing power. The hope of the Government is that before this occurs, the new American armament boom will revive the world market and thus save British exports. Hats are raised reverently to Khrushchev, the Sputnik and the American scare as the last hope of British Government. The one thing quite certain in an uncertain situation, is that whatever happens British Government will have had nothing whatever to do with it. They have made this country the helpless dependent of America, and their policy is an attitude of complete immobility, invariably accompanied by phrases as meaningless as Mr. Macmillan's proposal in another sphere for a non-aggression pact. They have had a long run of luck in the Micawber position, and they are waiting for something to turn up once again; what a hope!

Mr. Gaitskell, also, sees the part but not the whole.

Mr. Gaitskell as well as Mr. Thorneycroft has added to the confusion by speaking some simple truths. The interest of recent discussion is that all these politicians have been saying things which are *prima facie* contradictory, but are all quite true. They are all parts of the same whole, which they appear quite incapable of seeing as a whole. The whole to which it all adds up is, of course, the paramount necessity of the early entry of Britain into Europe.

Mr. Gaitskell said: " It is quite clear that unemployment and short time working were likely to spread in Britain. It was nonsense to say that British economy was over-strained at present. It was not. It had been stagnant for two years. Investment had increased. So had excess capacity, and the country ought to be expanding now " (*Times*, 24.1.58). That, of course, is all quite true, though it would be untrue to go further and to say that if the British economy were now running at full capacity it could simultaneously carry the three burdens to which Mr. Thorneycroft referred and which we have just discussed.

But the question arises why Britain is not running at full capacity, despite the great market demand at home and abroad and the urgent need for the unused production. The answer is that we are living on a knife-edge balance of payments, and the Treasury fears that any expansion would increase our import bill to a point we could not meet, and would create a buoyant wage situation which would price us out of world markets; result, exchange crash. This is one of the many tragic paradoxes in a doomed system.

A carrot for Sir Robert.

In these circumstances it does not help Mr. Heathcoat Amory very much to be informed by a letter of Sir Robert Boothby in the *Daily Telegraph* (6.2.58) that the Russians do not worry about the exchange position of the rouble at Zurich or New York. The British Chancellor would not be worrying so much about the exchange position of the pound if he had a population three times the size in an area many more times the size, which contained every foodstuff and raw material that man or industry could desire within an entirely self-contained system. In those conditions he would not even need the G.P.U. to see Mr. Cousins off. On this rare occasion, the carrot for Sir Robert. He should seek the will and means to implement the true perception of his good mind; Europe is the only solution for Britain. And entry must be speedy and complete.

Labour come to judgment.

Mr. Gaitskell would meet this situation with import controls and investment controls. In short, he is ready to return to the full Cripps policy; but it was precisely this policy which sowed the seeds of the coming disaster, whose first effects we are now feeling. That policy distorted the whole body of our economy in order to expand our export trade, and this makes Britain particularly vulnerable when the present world boom ends and an intensive fight for world markets begins.

It is of some interest to note that this fact has been very clearly, though incidentally, exposed by an able economist who is usually associated with the Labour Party. Mr. Nicholas Kaldor, writing in the *Spectator* on January 24th, stated: " Once the decision was taken immediately after the war not to block, scale down or cancel the war accumulated debt for the sake of the prestige of sterling and of the City of London, it was evident that Britain's international financial position could be restored only through vast

structural changes in the British economy. We needed more exports, not only to offset the loss of our foreign income and the post-war deterioration of our terms of trade, but also in order to attain a surplus on current account of pre-1913 dimensions . . . This required not only a huge increase in export capacity, . . . it required also a large increase in the proportion of current resources devoted to investment so as to enable us simultaneously to sustain a large export surplus and a satisfactory rate of growth of productive capacity. These are the world objectives of the Crippsian policy of austerity; and, whatever its shortcomings may have been, that policy had succeeded in 1949-51 in so transforming the structure of our foreign trade that the volume of our exports was one and a half times greater than pre-war whilst the volume of our imports was one-eighth lower."

Cripps increased British dependence on America.

Mr. Kaldor goes on to point out that the policy has not worked out as expected, in spite of an exaggerated devaluaton of the pound which gave an artificial stimulus to exports, and in spite of an "exceptionally favourable" situation. Finally he envisaged a "return to the system of Autumn 1947." . . . "If the American recession lasts for any length of time or becomes deeper." So the policy which Labour so warmly supported has made Britain so dependent on America that anything like a recession in that country will force us back on to a siege economy. It is clearly this position which Mr. Gaitskell is now beginning to contemplate.

So the Labour Party, under the leadership of Sir Stafford Cripps, was responsible for forcing the British economy into a more dangerous position than before the war, by further inflating our already disproportionate export trade and consequently increasing our already dangerous dependence on world markets. Labour's policy has left Britain in a really terrible position, when severe competition begins again on world markets. It has served no interest but that of the City of London, to which Mr. Kaldor makes reference at the beginning of his analysis; and in the long run this exaggerated and dangerous dependence on world markets will not serve even that interest, for the City dies if England crashes. Will the time ever come when real leadership in the City of London will realise there are greater services to be performed, and greater rewards to be gained, by honest and capable finance in the task of building

Europe-Africa than in the present dreary routine of liquidating a diminishing business which will soon be faced with bankruptcy?

A siege economy in order to meet the Sterling Balances?

Mr. Gaitskell now wishes to control imports and investments in pursuit of the same policy. Labour really is for restriction and against expansion every time. We are asked to move on to a semi-siege economy in order to maintain a swollen export trade to world markets. The British workers are to toil while Britain itself is to do without a large proportion of the consequent production, in order to pile up an enormous surplus of exports over imports, so long as we can sell them on world markets. The surplus will be used to repay the sterling balances and to invest in backward Commonwealth countries. The sterling balances were partly incurred by buying goods from countries like India at a high price for a common war effort, and partly by selling the primary products of Empire countries for dollars and using the proceeds directly, or indirectly, for the maintenance of the welfare state while Britain was running a deficit.

The Labour Party inadvertently makes Marx come true.

All this is part of the process of playing banker to the Sterling Area, of which Labour is an ardent supporter; and resources urgently required for home investment and for urgent British purposes are to be used by the Labour Party for the maintenance of this obsolete bankers' realm. This is one of the three burdens which all seem to agree we cannot simultaneously support. If crisis comes, will Government starve the social services, or denude Britain of defences in order to maintain them? Or will they pack up the Sterling Area in a hurry and declare Britain bankrupt, instead of liquidating it respectably while they still have the chance? Under Labour it appears most likely that we shall be made defenceless in face of Russia; under Conservatism it is more likely in such a situation that the social services will be slashed. One thing certain seems to be that the last cut will be in the amenities supplied by the British export surplus to Messrs. Nehru and Nkrumah. Sacred to the Labour and Conservative parties alike is the role of world banker to the Sterling Area, until it busts. British consumers must suffer, British investment must go short, British defences must be starved, and British social services must be threatened, because the iron law still rules that

Marx wrote that capitalism in its last phase must, more and more,

Britain must divest herself of a substantial proportion of the wealth she creates for these strange and remote objectives.
deprive its own people of the necessities of life in a policy of increasing immiseration, in order to export a surplus abroad which the laws of its economy would prevent its own people from consuming at home. It is left to the Labour Party, as a deliberate act of policy, to implement the Marxian catastrophe foreseen by the tribal deity; quite inadvertantly, of course, because most of the Labour leaders have never read a word of him; though Messrs. Strachey and Gaitskell cannot plead this excuse.

The sea is too big for the pond dwellers.

The alternative is to enter Europe, where all burdens can be shared, and within the viable area of Europe-Africa to organise a market which will enable the people of Europe to consume what the people of Europe produce. There, British industrialist, British worker, British agriculture, and British Dominion producer will all find the large market they lack today, and the best of British banking will find a constructive task which will bring it the greatest rewards it has ever gained. The best minds and firmest spirits in all those spheres are moving towards the larger life. But the sea is too big for the pond dwellers.

Fear at the summit of Russian debating strength?

The summit also seems to be too high for most of our statesmen to feel at home there, judging by the coy little ballet that is being danced around the base before meeting the Russians. Were they to start at the base or the summit, were they to agree before the meeting what is to be discussed, were they to settle anything before the meeting or nothing, did the Russians mean business or just another propaganda stunt, were we going to get anywhere or just take another dialectical hiding?—such are the apparent perplexities of Western statesmanship which are openly and endlessly canvassed in the press of Europe and America. To which the short answer is: cut the cackle; get into the ring with the Russians, and see. It really is amazing—even to those who believe themselves past surprises at the performances of our present rulers—this assumption that if it comes to propaganda, we must always get the worst of it. Yet it is this fear, apparently, which is most responsible for holding up discussions which might avert a world war. To this again the short

answer is: if none of you can see a communist off in an argument, make way for those who can.

Frequent conferences soon necessary to keep world going.

We believe the whole position of the West in this matter is completely misconceived. We believe that in holding firmly to our principles and our necessities of life, we shall have to meet the Soviet leaders not just once for a single triumphant or disastrous occasion, but again and again as part of the routine of world life. We shall have to meet them in private, and also debate with them in public. We shall have to develop the habit, attitude and relationship of being able to say to them during negotiations: "We are getting nowhere, you are just playing the fool, and if you don't stop we shall go out and tell the world about it. In fact, you know very well our case is so strong that if it comes to a show-down we can knock hell out of every Communist Party in every literate portion of the globe. So come off it and talk sense, or you're for it." From what we have observed of Mr. Khrushchev, we believe it would be possible to develop the most genial relations with him on that basis; and genial relations, of course, do not necessarily imply any shadow of trust or mutual confidence, any more than they do in horse coping. We believe this is the way to deal with the situation, with communism in power and with this particular customer in particular. Let us try our hardest to get sense in private negotiation, but always hold in reserve the decisive weapon of public debate, with which any Westerner worth his salt could beat them to it every time.

Why conferences cannot increase dangers.

Thoughts like these, of course, make the old world diplomats simply shiver. They were accustomed to a situation in which it was very difficult to get the old gentlemen together round the dinner table; and, if someone trod on someone else's toes, the dinner party broke up and world war could result. Above all you had to be very careful and very polite. But Khrushchev is neither careful nor polite; at least he is not careful in small things, only in big, and he is never polite. Also, if the party does break up in a row a war cannot now follow, because world destruction would result, and every one knows it. If the communists knew any means of finishing us off without being destroyed themselves, they would let it go quick enough without waiting for a row at a conference. And they will not start a world war which will destroy themselves as

well as us, just because they have got angry at a conference; they are much too seasoned in controversy and in struggle to act like petulant and suicidal children. The situation has changed fundamentally since the days of the old diplomacy. We are dealing with a different type and with quite different conditions; the basic change is that no sane man is going to have a war, however angry he is; because it means his death as well as that of the enemy. The risk is not deliberate action but accident, in the present balance of the world; and the first object of conference, and continuing conference, is as soon as possible to eliminate the risk of accident.

Rows at conferences inevitable but not fatal.

If we are ever to get anywhere, there will have to be rows which risk the temporary break up of conferences. If the worst happens, we shall simply be back in the present position: "all right, if you shoot we are both dead because I've got you covered too!" But to meet each other and to get to know each other and to find a *modus vivendi*, is the only way of running the world in present conditions without the risk of constant misunderstanding and consequent disaster.

What we need are politicians without plums in their mouths, men who can talk to the Russians without ever losing their tempers, because they too are hard and seasoned, men who can stand up to the Russian leaders, if necessary, and beat them to the punch in public debate; cold, hard, tough athletic types with winning manners, but also, with a winning wallop. It is no use sending governesses to meet gangsters; the world can be lost while they are wondering which bonnet to choose for the tea party, and Mr. Khrushchev does not drink tea. Let us make up our minds to meet the Russians not once, but again and again; ready for many a wrestle, expecting many a reverse, but determined never to let up until by exertion and endurance we have won the peace and disarmament.

How to end obstruction of disarmament.

Take, for instance, a recent Khrushchev performance when talking to Western diplomats (*Times*, 28.1.58). Asked why Russia did not agree to a meeting of experts to study the question of disarmament control, Mr. Khrushchev said: "When you don't know someone very well, you may let him enter your hall, your sitting-room or even your dining-room—but not your bedroom." How long would

he get away with this kind of nonsense at the conferences we suggest, if faced by clear headed and determined men? Supposing we placed on a conference table really practical proposals for effective inspection after disarmament (if science now makes that feasible, and if not, we are wasting time in discussing it); then really cross-examined the Russians concerning the grounds on which they would not accept the plan, or formulate a better. Khrushchev could not play around with chatter of dining-rooms and bedrooms in such a situation. If the Russian leaders would neither deal nor answer our case, we would tell them plainly we would go outside and expose the facts. Thus we should either shift them towards agreement, or face them with the destruction of the political position they so greatly prize; and rightly in present conditions. They just could not face a real drive for peace if they were clearly in the wrong.

Battle of ideas decisive: be ready to debate.

And, conversely, the West could not get away with a dead silence in face of Khrushchev's major move to secure the withdrawal of both American and Russian forces from Europe. If such a conference method were in regular usage, the West would at least have to defend their recalcitrance, first in private and then in public. The point is that both sides would be impelled towards sense for fear of losing their political positions. So let us remember that we cannot increase the risk of war by such method, because we would certainly have war today if war could occur without risk of world destruction. Force is paralysed; it is in our interest that reason should speak because reason is on our side, and can win for us a political battle which all fear to lose. We must be ready for the battle of ideas. The future of the world will now be settled by the most intensive political struggle that mankind has known.

Algeria is an European interest.

In Algeria, France defends an interest of all Europe. The reason is that a safe bridge between Europe and Africa is essential to the Europe of the future. It is therefore a tragedy that France has had neither sympathy nor assistance in this matter from the rest of Europe; rather the reverse. British Government was entirely interested in Suez; the lifeline of Empire which led nowhere, since the Empire at the other end was given away. British statesmanship lived entirely in the past, and had no interest in the bridge which led somewhere in the future; Algeria with all the oil resources, the

Sahara and the untapped wealth of Africa behind it.

The meaningless adventure in Suez wrecked the friendship with the main body of the Arabs in the Eastern Mediterranean, which could so easily have been used to assist a reasonable settlement in North Africa. If we had supported these Middle Eastern Arab countries with active sympathy and economic aid in face of Soviet expansion, we could have obtained in return all their influence to maintain what is vital to us at the only point where European and Arab interests clashed at all; namely North Africa. Once again Britain threw away the reality for the shadow. The tragedy is not relieved by the sour comedy of British Ministers casting at France supercilious glances of reproach while standing on the ruins of Cyprus; another scandal without a purpose. Whether a Frenchman is being virtuous or scandalous, he as a rule has at least some clear idea of what he is doing. French friendship is important, and Algeria is important; let us forget neither.

Can nuclear research spare a penny for medical research?

Who knows, a little sanity might one day come out of "summit" discussions. An eminent doctor wrote recently to the press a simple plea asking more money for medical research. He pointed out that if a small fraction of the sum spent in the research which resulted at worst in nuclear rockets and at best in shooting satellites into space, had been devoted to research into the working of the human body, we might now be on the way to preventing some of the diseases from which so many people die in early middle age.

It is a mad world, but no longer quite so plain silly as the period when the Prime Minister informed a young Minister just before the Labour Party came to office for the second time, that more money could not be granted for medical research unless the Treasury could be informed in advance what the scientists were going to discover. We have, anyhow, got beyond that; but it all takes time, in these days too much.

EUROPEAN.

THE KENNAN THESIS AND THE FATE OF EUROPE

by ROBERT ROW

THE SOVIETS are making their intentions plain in Europe. The Stalin era is definitely at an end. New methods quite distinct from those employed by the old dictator are in force. Mr. Khrushchev and his associates have clearly decided that nuclear war is too dangerous — despite their boasts of their ability to flatten American cities—and are shifting the conflict with the West to a basis which, in any case, suits them better.

As good Marxists (Mr. Khrushchev's claim) they must prefer a political and economic war to all-out military attack against their capitalist opponents. As good Russians they are cautious by nature; the history of their country shows a tradition for avoiding frontal attack. Above all, as good materialists, they cannot want nuclear war. They do not want American bombers to wreck the industries of which they are so proud, and which they have raised on the formerly virgin steppe by sheer, painful ruthlessness; American bombers can do this, and poison even Russian space with nuclear fall-out, though Russian ICBMs may be quicker off the mark and destroy American cities half-an-hour more rapidly. And since Mr. Khrushchev believes that communism is going to win this world he has no conceivable reason for wanting to destroy with his own rockets the loot in the West which he believes will fall to him eventually. He wants to take over London and Paris intact, not a radioactive desert he has created with his own missiles.

It is therefore reasonable to assume Mr. Khrushchev means what he says when he calls for a settlement in nuclear weapons and a Russian-American withdrawal from Europe. His move to political and industrial war is being demonstrated unmistakably.

Yet the ruling statesmen of the West persist in treating Russia as though Stalin were still alive. They are slow in understanding the great changes in strategy which the hydrogen weapons imposed from the start; they have no understanding at all of the remarkable ability of communism to change its tactics and adopt new methods of attack as changed circumstances dictate. Alarm is felt at the growing signs of fundamental economic trouble within their rocking international system, but there is no real appreciation of the extent to which communism will use this to disrupt the West.

Yet there have been warnings enough in Europe, and particularly in Britain, that everything had changed with the H-bomb. These came from Sir Oswald Mosley, whose pre-war predictions had been proved true, that a conflict with Germany would destroy British power and enhance Soviet power, not only militarily but also politically.

In March, 1950, Mosley published *The European Situation,* in which he wrote of the H-bomb:

> "It seems that any concentration of industry or life itself can now be destroyed by any state which has the technical means to produce sufficient hydrogen bombs and to ensure their delivery. The protection even of space and the power of dispersal begins to disappear in face of such weapons.
>
> "The Soviets cannot impose communism on the rest of the world with this weapon, even if they can obtain it. They can only make the rest of the world a desert, with the certainty that Russia, too, will become a desert. That is why wars between states in the old style may come to an end. We are reaching the period of the paralysed giants."

Nineteen months later, on October 27, 1951, Mosley wrote *An Estimate of Soviet Intentions* in the weekly paper *Union.* In this he pointed to the Soviet need, either to advance or retreat from their positions in Eastern Europe. They could not stay where they were, under the cloud of alarm and suspicion which Stalin had raised for the West, and they would not want to stay where they were in view of what they knew of the H-bomb. To advance would mean war, which all too likely they would lose in the end; to retreat, however, would bring certain advantages:

> "It is possible and even probable that the Soviets will evacuate East Germany and all the occupied lands of Europe. Certain strategic bases and raw materials may be retained. But not

enough of Europe will be held to provide any excuse for an attack from the West.

"What will be the effect of this historically successful military manoeuvre translated into the political sphere? The first effect will be entirely to frustrate any possible design which may be entertained in Western circles, to attack the Soviet. The Soviet gesture in favour of peace would be so spectacular that it would be out of the question for any men or parties to carry public opinion with them in beginning any war. The second effect would be to throw the economies of the democracies into considerable confusion. Having been stretched and distorted to a war basis the economies of the democracies would be suddenly relaxed into a condition of almost certain peace."

Mosley further developed this argument in two subsequent *Union* articles: his *War: East, West, or Nowhere?* of February 16, 1952, and *How to Oppose the Soviets* of June 21 and 28, 1952.

Had there been any precedent for Mosley's belief that a Soviet détente was coming? Russian history is full of strategic retreats in order to win decisively later on: that is how they broke the power of 18th century Sweden. Perhaps the most outstanding example in recent times was Lenin's policy at Brest-Litovsk, when he ordered Trotsky to sign away great territories to the Germans, in what seemed extreme defeatism, calculating on the other hand that the masses of German troops returning home would carry communism with them, a germ that would find favourable conditions in the "relaxed" and disillusioned Europe at the end of an exhausting war.

(Lenin miscalculated: most German ex-servicemen in the end became anti-communist in the ranks of national-socialism. Nevertheless communism flourished for a dangerous time on the streets of post-war Europe as the result of the economic confusion and the Marxian "internal contradictions" which followed that war.)

Mosley therefore had ample grounds for his warnings. Yet he was the first, by some years, to foresee the decisive impact on policies the hydrogen weapons would bring: ending Stalin-type aggression, under the fear of nuclear war, and indeed inducing the Soviets to seek a détente in Europe, to reduce the danger of the democracies making war in a crazy return to the old device for getting rid of their economic over-production.

By no means would this put an end to Soviet schemes for bringing down the West. Indeed, it would simply move the struggle on to ground where the Soviets have always felt at home—the arena of

political war, hastened and intensified by economic breakdown in the West.

★ ★ ★

Sir Oswald Mosley's predictions covered the period 1950-52; Professor George Kennan has now aroused world-wide interest in his series of Reith Lectures broadcast in Britain at the end of 1957. Mr. Kennan is a former American Ambassador in Moscow, and widely regarded as leading United States authority on the Soviets. His lectures have raised a hubbub of controversy on an international scale, yet Sir Oswald Mosley's articles of five to seven years before were received in utter silence. The Establishment and its press, radio, cinema and TV have for years adopted this tactic toward a political figure they dislike; no doubt, in addition, he was too advanced for them. But we are living (and so are they) in a very dangerous world: their petulence, vanity and failure to see the truth when it is pointed out to them may destroy us all yet.

Mr. Kennan's contention is that the danger from communism (and he makes clear that the Soviet leaders not only hate the Western system, but its peoples as well) is political, not military. "Nothing in the Marxist doctrine," he says, "suggests that the triumph of world communism is planned by force of arms. The Russian danger is mainly political, and for this reason European Communist Parties are more of a menace to the West than the entire Red Army."

Mosley made the same point in June, 1952, when he wrote:

> "Realism in the Soviets must therefore avoid open war in the West. It is now fairly plain that they are trying to do so. Their game is obviously to avoid a military decision and to fall back on their well-tried political measures of agitation and concealed violence."

He had already written in March, 1950:

> "... the Soviets can observe no reason for their desperation in the present situation. The reckoning of the Soviets, on any objective analysis of this situation, must be that they can afford to wait. Their Marxist creed, also, teaches them that they can afford to wait, because their opponents will collapse through their inner contradictions and the general rottenness of their civilisation. So any realists in Moscow will ask why they should climb trees to pick apples which will fall into their hands

in any case; particularly if climbing this tall tree at present means almost certainly a broken neck, and the fruit will be all the riper for waiting."

He had also at that time explained why, as Mr. Kennan says, "European Communist Parties are more of a menace to the West than the entire Red Army":

> "It is probable that we are entering a period of almost completely new forms of struggle, for which the past has only slight and partial lessons. In deep character the coming struggle will be a battle of ideas . . . At some point in the future the Soviets are, therefore, certain to carry the battle of ideas beyond the ordinary political struggle into the sphere of political violence. They believe they will win on this territory because they have a long experience in various forms of political violence, and have a long start in training for this struggle."

The basic Russian determination, says Mr. Kennan, is to exploit weakness in Western society. Armed force is a precaution, a weapon to be available in the last phase of capitalist collapse; but not a major instrument. There has been too great a simplification of Soviet motives by observers in the West, who believe the Soviet threat is mainly a military threat. This could be ended, they think, by one last glorious "summit" conference, when West and East could lie down in perfect amity. Yet this view completely ignores something far more important, the communist mentality itself, an outlook on life not only with an implacable hatred of Western civilisation but also an outlook which is the product of forty years of distorted Marxist reasoning and practice — blinkered by the theories and limitations of a materialistic ideology.

The Soviet leaders, Mr. Kennan continues, can never be influenced by paper treaties, but only by situations. For this reason he avers that general disarmament cannot be settled until certain political questions, territorial questions, are first resolved:

> "It is true that armaments can and do constitute a source of tension in themselves. But they are not self-engendering. No one maintains them just for the love of it. They are conditioned at bottom by political differences and rivalries. To attempt to remove the armaments before removing these substantive conflicts of interest is to put the cart before the horse. At every turn we are confronted with the fact that here is no way of evading these specific political problems—for the main

part territorial problems—in which all this tension and trouble has its real origins."

Most urgent, he believes, is the problem of the future of Central and Eastern Europe. Here he strongly criticises the way in which the last world war was allowed to come to an end. He points out that the authority of a united German Government was expunged on German soil and throughout large areas of Eastern Europe: Soviet and Western armies met in the middle of this territory and took control before there was any adequate agreement over its future permanent status.

This situation was the result of the "unconditional surrender" policy. So much for the men who ran the war.

The West, says Mr. Kennan, faces this problem today. The question is how to remove it. The East European satellites in particular are veritable powder-barrels: another Budapest or East Berlin might start off the nuclear conflict which Russia and the West both dread today. (This is precisely the situation of danger to which Sir Oswald Mosley pointed in 1950-52; the Soviets could not remain passive under this threat, they must advance or retreat. The possibility of an explosion makes a decision urgent: the grave risk of a fatal accident is indeed an incentive for both sides to a settlement.)

Yet it is clear, says Mr. Kennan, that Russia will not withdraw from the satellites without an American withdrawal in the West. "The mere fact of Soviet withdrawal, without any equivalent withdrawal on the Western side, would create a general impression of a defeat for Soviet policy in Eastern and Central Europe generally." Russia would "lose face"; an intolerable thing.

For the time being, then, we seem to have deadlock: the Soviets wanting withdrawal from a situation bristling with perils, but held there partly by "face" and partly by mistrust of the West—which in fact is governed by stupidity and failure to wrest the diplomatic initiative from the Russians rather than by any deep cunning.

What does the West fear today? The Russians invading West Germany if the Americans withdrew? Or would the Russians also withdraw if the Americans moved out? The question, Mr. Kennan asserts, is not whether Moscow "wants" a reunited Germany within an evacuated European zone: it is a question of whether Moscow could afford to stand in the way of it if a general evacuation were insisted upon by the West:

> "Gomulka not long ago promised the Polish people that the day the Americans leave Germany he will take up with the Soviet Government the question of the departure of Soviet forces from Poland. And it is clear that as Poland goes, in this respect, so goes the rest of the satellite area. Mr. Khrushchev has not specifically demurred at Gomulka's suggestion; on the contrary he has, in fact, even murmured things himself, from time to time, about a possible mutual withdrawal of forces, although he has intimated that the price of a Soviet withdrawal might be somewhat higher than what Gomulka implied."

Mr. Khrushchev has indeed "murmured" offers to this effect. On November 17, 1956, he announced at a diplomatic party in Moscow:

> "If you withdraw your troops from Germany, France and Britain—I'm speaking of American troops—we will not stay one day in Poland, Hungary and Rumania."

On February 20, 1957, he was reported in the *New York Herald Tribune* as saying to Mr. Alsop:

> "Soviet troops would be withdrawn to the national territory of the Soviet Union from all the countries in Europe where they are now stationed in accordance with existing treaties and agreements.
>
> "Meanwhile, Western European countries would also withdraw their troops stationed in the territories of other Western European countries.
>
> "The United States would also withdraw its troops to American territory from Europe and Asia, and along with that would go the liquidation of all foreign military bases."

The Times of June 3 last carried a report of his address to the American people over the Columbia television network, in which he made the same offer. Later in that month, June 18, he repeated his suggestion to the editor of the Japanese paper *Asahi Shimbun*. In East Germany, during a series of bitter speeches and comments on the stand-pat resistance of present Western leaders to real disarmament, he nevertheless stated for the fifth time what Sir Oswald Mosley has called "The most important thing said since the war." His fifth offer was reported in *The Times* of August 8, 1957.

Could the Russian leader now turn round (if Western statesmen were to take him up and press him to such an agreement for a

general withdrawal from Europe) and refuse to talk? As Mr. Kennan puts it, could he afford to stand in the way of the semi-independent Poles and their centuries-old dislike of Russian troops, after Gomulka also has talked in similar terms?

If he did, the West has a simple course. Sir Oswald Mosley pointed to it immediately after the first Khrushchev offer:

> "Whether it be reality or bluff, the answer is the same: get into the ring with him, instead of getting out of the drawing room because he is rude. If it is bluff, call it; then you hit communism. If it is real, pin him down; then you win European freedom.
>
> "A real business conference should immediately be called to consider it, and, if we get nowhere in private, we should insist on a public session where the Soviet position could be exposed to the world. By such means we can force them out of these occupied lands in the end; not by war but by political struggle, as we always insisted. If they say things like that and do not mean them, if they are then exposed publicly again and again as liars and tricksters, the whole political position of communism throughout the world will be finally destroyed."

Mr. Kennan in fact believes that this method would not be necessary; once the Russians withdrew from their satellites the great danger would not be the Red Army returning:

> "We must get over this obsession that the Russians are yearning to attack and occupy Western Europe, and that this is the principal danger. The Soviet threat, as I have had occasion to say before, is a combined military-political threat, with the accent on the political."

If American forces withdrew from Europe, he considers that the defence problem of the continental countries would be

> ". . . primarily one of the internal health and discipline of the respective national societies, and of the manner in which they were organised to prevent the conquest and subjugation of their national life by unscrupulous and foreign-inspired minorities in their midst."

For example, by Communist Parties. To guard against this, he recommends forces which might be

> " . . . paramilitary ones, of a territorial-militia type, somewhat on the Swiss example rather than regular military units on the pattern of the second world war."

★ ★ ★

It is clear that Mr. Kennan has reached much the same conclusion today as Sir Oswald Mosley did in 1950-52. His emphasis on the political danger rather than military threat has run also throughout Mosley's writings ever since the war. Mr. Kennan indeed uses almost the actual expression in pin-pointing the real communist danger (his " combined military-political threat, with the accent on the political ") which Sir Oswald used in *The European Situation,* written in March, 1950:

> " The Soviets will make a decisive advance into active political war. It will be a war of infiltration, conducted by political guerrillas who are now being trained, either under the guise of police forces or entirely in secret, within those zones of Eastern Europe which are under Soviet control. The struggle will then traverse the political-military borderline."

This is not to say that Mr. Kennan contributes fully to the ideas which Sir Oswald Mosley has developed for Europe. Mr. Kennan is an historian, not a political leader. He appears not to think of Britain as part of Europe: he talks of British troops leaving the Continent with American troops.

Again, he lays great emphasis on the German question itself, visualising Germany as outside of N.A.T.O. This has been seized on with glee by the professional German-haters of the British Left, such as Mr. Bevan, who publicly claims he was a Kennanite before Kennan. (Yet his paper *Tribune* did not mention Khrushchev's vital withdrawal proposals until they were six months old.) Mr. Bevan's concept of Europe is undoubtedly a neutralised Germany in the middle, kept isolated under the suspicious glare of a " security " partnership with the Russians (and the headquarters in Moscow?) and with perfidious Albion running loose on the outside, living on dollars but nevertheless snarling at Washington to show her " independence."

That is not quite what Mr. Kennan means. For example, the latter in his lectures hailed the " exciting " recent progress of European countries in welding themselves into a single economic

whole. Mr. Kennan must be considered sufficiently a realist to agree that a single economic whole must also be a single political whole, to be viable in this dynamic world. That is certainly true of his own country. The whole tone of his Reith Lectures suggests that a man of his breadth of mind looks upon Europe as a coming entity in every way. Therefore Germany cannot be isolated.

Where does Britain fit into this entity? With military and territorial deadlock in Europe (which can only be broken by new leaders, or science, or both) the Soviets are fast moving into the new form of conflict, economic warfare, plus political warfare. Britain is the most vulnerable target in that new-style war: she is in fact indefensible.

The world is entering the turbulent state of affairs experienced in the last world depression. And the lesson of the 1930s is that countries form self-defensive economic groupings when their trade is threatened. Two big self-sufficient groups exist today: Russia and America. Another one is forming: Europe. What is Britain going to do—stay out in the cold, and so take the full blast of the Soviet economic offensive that is now invading the Commonwealth with the deliberate intention of breaking Britain's markets there?

Undoubtedly world events will soon make up Britain's mind. It is probable now that the new Soviet tactics, entering new forms of war, will bring the downfall of present leadership in the West. In doing so it will release a new dynamic, thrusting up new leaders in the fundamentally anti-Marxist West.

Nothing less than a new dynamic is needed to break the dangerous deadlock with the Russians, and achieve real settlement based on differing systems working out their destinies in separate and self-contained areas of the globe.

RACIAL POLICY
IN
SOUTH AFRICA

by MARTIN PRESTON

"A separation of the races is the only perfect preventative of amalgamation, but as immediate separation is impossible the next best thing is to keep them apart where they are not already together."

—Abraham Lincoln,
Springfield, Illinois, 26.6.1857.

SOUTH AFRICA has a unique racial problem. It is one of the oldest colonial countries in the world, and the only one where the majority of the colonists have completely lost any sense of attachment to the European lands from whence their ancestors sailed, yet remain quite distinct from and outnumbered in their new homeland by other primitive inhabitants.

There are only three million Europeans in the Union. Sixty per cent. of these speak Afrikaans as their natural language (a simplified Dutch patois with German, French and Hottentot words) and regard South Africa as their motherland: a good proportion of the English-speaking minority, mainly descendants of several thousand settlers who arrived in 1820, are also completely South African in their loyalties. In other words, South Africa is a quite distinctive European country which happens to be the other end of Africa. Ten million Bantu (people of Negro-Hamitic origin, with black to brown skins) outnumber the Europeans by more than three to one. A million Coloureds (mulattos of very mixed ancestry who have, however, received little outside blood for over a 100 years) and half a million Indians complicate the problem.

The average Englishman's idea of South Africa is so fantastic that the average South African visiting this country is at first rather amused, and then very annoyed. The British press has pursued a ceaseless, bitter campaign against South Africa since the war. It

distorts out of all proportion the slightest anomaly in South Africa's race-conscious society, without attempting to give the background. It rarely gives the other side of any controversy it reports, and consistently excludes any information about the great positive achievements of the Union Government in the racial field.

It is not easy to explain South Africa's immensely complex racial problem to the average English reader who has been fed for so long with the egalitarian theories of social democracy, and whose only contact with a non-European is perhaps with a cultured student, or the better type of West Indian. Almost every emigrant to the Union leaves Britain influenced by these theories, this idea of the "average" non-European, but after he has been in South Africa a year or two, he nearly always finds, as one told me, "They just don't work." The fine ideals can often be seen to be disastrous in practice.

Racial segregation, or colour bar, is not an invention of the Nationalist Government. It is the historic policy of South Africa, based on a natural human preference to associate with one's own kind. But this preference is reinforced in the Union by the glaring differences between Europeans and the Bantu; the backwardness of the latter, their different morals, standards of hygiene and conduct. In fact the majority of the Bantu are quite content with segregation, which affords them exclusion from European and Indian competition. They themselves have never granted equal status to the stone-age Bushman.

General Smuts himself, a darling of social democracy, declared: "Segregation, both racial and geographical, is a strong urge in both the white, the black and the coloured peoples." It is inevitable that those non-Europeans who have become "Europeanised" and drawn apart from their own peoples—a very small number of Bantu, some Coloureds and Indians—suffer under such a system of social segregation. But South Africans are not blind to this disability, and the way to remove it is one of the chief points of controversy among them. To assume that the Europeans just don't care about these unfortunates is quite wrong—a deliberate lie voiced by the propagandists of social democracy, who are more interested in furthering their political ideals than the happiness of the non-Europeans.

It is notable, and particularly resented by South Africans, that the very same people who make out South Africa to be a terror state are particularly reticent about attacking the communists. Nor

do they "expose" and pillory racial or religious discrimination in India, Ceylon, Indonesia, Jamaica, Brazil—or Britain. In other words, discrimination is only used as an object of political obloquy if it is useful as a political weapon.

If there really is racial persecution in the Union, why is it that the Jews, who know more of racial persecution than any living people, bestowed their highest award on Dr. Malan in 1953 for his contribution to greater racial understanding? Has any English reader seen any reference to the vast amount of voluntary work which is done for non-Europeans by Europeans and their organisations like Rotary? Is it realised that the Bantu in South Africa is the equal of the European before the law—and this is not just theory, but is practised? Is it realised that non-Europeans have absolute freedom to organise their own political organisations and in fact do so? Is it known abroad that there is a lively non-European press, which is also completely free?

I have never seen in any British newspaper a single reference to the work the Union Government does to help the Bantu. Since the Nationalists came to power in 1948 over seven million acres of Bantu land have been brought under proper agricultural control and safeguarded against deterioration. Works have included 1,700 miles of contour walls, 650 miles of flood walls and 20,000 miles of grass strips to prevent erosion (the Union loses 300 million tons of soil annually through erosion—a serious problem); 6,000 miles of fencing, 350 drinking dams, 2,000 boreholes, and the reclamation of 150,000 acres from termites. The Government spends much money on the improvement of Bantu cattle and on instruction in modern agricultural methods. It has 900 instructors, half of them Bantu, working to improve standards of cultivation. The Native Trust operates a fleet of 350 tractors and over 600 lorries for the benefit of Bantu farmers. Professor Boyazoglu, one-time Secretary of Agriculture in Greece, stated in 1953 that Bantu in the Union were better off than many peasants in Greece, Italy, France, Spain or Portugal, for instance.

The Union Government spends a good deal *per capita* more on the welfare of Africans than any other territory in Africa—including British colonies.* Only in the Union are there such things as

* In 1951 *per capita* expenditure on social services and welfare of all kinds for Africans was £1 18s. 3d. in the Union, compared with £1 9s. in Southern Rhodesia, 10s. 10d. in Kenya, and 13s. in Basutoland.

pensions for African blind. There is a free health service for Bantu, pensions for the old and the disabled, school feeding, famine and drought relief and unemployment benefit. Mr. N. E. Dodd, a Director-General of the Food and Agricultural Organisation of U.N.O., has said: "I know of no place in the world where so much is being done by so few for the advancement of a native population."

Bantu housing is good enough to have become a model for low-cost home-building in other countries in and out of Africa. Educational services for Bantu are the best on the continent, and 28 per cent. of the Bantu are literate. India, despite her background of civilisation, has a literacy figure of 17 per cent. Haiti, an independent Negro republic since 1804, has only 8 per cent. literacy. From all this it will be seen that there is another side to South Africa, the brighter side that rarely reaches us in Europe. But to get a better understanding of the country, we should know something of its history.

South Africa is not a black man's land. When the first European settlers landed at the Cape in 1652, no Bantu had ever been there. It was uninhabited except for small, roving tribes of Bushmen and Hottentots, and the Bantu were a thousand miles away to the north, sweeping down into the fertile areas of the Transvaal, Natal and the Eastern Cape, which they had never seen before. Europeans from the Cape trekked into the dry interior, settling in poorer areas unoccupied by Bantu. Europeans and Bantu first met in any numbers 600 miles into the interior, in 1780, one hundred and thirty years after the first settlers landed at the Cape, although hunting parties made contact fifty years earlier. Later came armed clashes with the Bantu, sometimes over land, but more often in defence or retaliation against savage attacks. Ironically enough, the first seizure of Bantu-occupied land was not by settlers, but British armed forces, but this is unimportant. In fact, the amount of seizure by conquest practised by the settlers was small, and of no importance compared with Bantu seizures, who took their land from Hottentots, butchering them mercilessly. The Bantu were constantly fighting among themselves for possession of land. To this day the Zulu does not resent the European, who beat him in fair combat and is stern but just, but the non-belligerent Indian, who tricks him in trading deals, and whom he despises.

The European settlers brought an end to tribal war, and vassal tribes were able to emerge from hiding and settle down to peaceful lives. The behaviour of the Voortrekkers, a strongly Christian

people, was in marked contrast to the American pioneers, who forced Red Indians into war, then wiped them out.

A pattern of settlement was established: Bantu occupying the richer areas of the Transvaal, Natal and the Eastern Cape: the Europeans occupying the Western Cape, the Orange Free State, Central Transvaal and parts of Natal. Industrialisation is destroying this basic pattern. Bantu have flocked from their tribal areas to Johannesburg and surrounding towns on the Rand, and to other cities in the Union, just as the agricultural labourers of feudalism flocked to the towns of England at the onset of the Industrial Revolution. The urban Bantu lived in shanty towns or the new Government or municipal housing estates. Only 20 per cent. of the Bantu, however, are "detribalised" in this fashion, and the Government's intention is to prevent further detribalisation.

From this brief outline it will be seen that it is a fallacy to imagine that the European has no right in South Africa. The Bantu is equally an invader, and no one has suggested the territory should be handed back to the Hottentots! It is, in any case, questionable whether any peoples have the "right" to own vast tracts of potentially wealthy land and let it lie useless when more vigorous peoples are clamouring for outlets for their energies. It is interesting to observe that the very people who say the European has no right in Africa are fervent supporters of Israel, a state established by force of arms in a country that was not, like South Africa, empty.

The heart of South Africa's problems has nothing to do, however, with rights, which mean nothing in the hard, real world. It is miscegenation. This is the basic conflict between the South African and his critic, here lies the bedrock of all racial policies. Miscegenation is feared not only by the European, but also by the Bantu. A pure-blooded African has, in fact, greater contempt for mixed blood than the European. Tshaka, the greatest Zulu chief of all time, declared: "It would not do to allow good Zulu blood to be bastardised by a people not belonging to the same race." In 1953 the Bantu National Council called for strict enforcement of the laws forbidding sexual intercourse between Bantu and Indians. A Zulu would not even consider marrying a Shangaan (an inferior tribe), let alone a member of quite a different race group. A Coloured would not marry a Bantu, nor would an Indian, and a European would not marry a non-European, even were such marriages permitted. All races fear the breakdown of the sexual barriers which would inevitably occur were social segregation to end.

It is a phantasy that racial hotch-potch means progress. On the contrary, racially mixed societies show social instability and conflict. Whereas the absorption of closely related race groups into a homogeneous people has often proved stimulating (the Afrikaner stock itself was happily reinforced with French blood), miscegenation on a wide scale has never proved progressive, and miscegenation in history shows a positive correlation with the downfall of civilisations. The social democrats love to quote Brazil as an example of successful racial miscegenation. They do not tell you that Brazil is one of the most incompetently governed countries in the world, that its riches are fabulous yet its position in world trade is that of a bankrupt. Nor will they admit that there *is* racial discrimination in Brazil, and that negroes are at a definite disadvantage. In any case, the short period of miscegenation (in historical terms) in Brazil is inconclusive one way or the other. On the other hand, the eminent psychologist, Professor R. S. Woodworth, has stated that " while awaiting the final decision of science on the relative importance of heredity and environment, it is wise to allow considerable importance to heredity."* A denial of racial differences is also logically a denial of individual differences. This doctrine is held by those who believe in the influence of environment alone in forming character.

It is not particularly difficult to educate the native, by what Hitler called " the drilling technique," to the point where he makes a good doctor, lawyer or engineer, but this does not civilise the race overnight. An example of this is given by the coloured author, Learie Constantine,† who draws attention to medical students who acquire the European knowledge of medical science, but not the strict ethical tradition of the Hippocratic Oath. They return to their people and exploit their own folk for financial gain. The World Health Organisation has stated that expert judgments show negroes to be " unstable and spasmodic, almost invariably dishonest and inordinately vain, lacking staying-power, initiative, application and constructive ideas."‡

Being in the position of a civilised minority, the Europeans in South Africa feel strongly about the preservation of their race. While science is so inconclusive about racial theory, and the ill effects of miscegenation are so obvious in this imperfect world, they feel they

* *Psychology*, R. S. Woodworth.
† *Colour Bar*, L. Constantine, Stanley Paul.
‡ *Daily Mail*, 21.1.55.

cannot take the slightest risk. More than a million negro slaves imported into Iberia in the 14th and 15th centuries, for instance, were completely absorbed into the European population, leaving hardly a trace behind them. South Africans fear the same would happen to them were any concessions made to racial integration. For South Africa's critics racial integration is a rosy ideal which rarely affects them personally, but for every single South African it is a matter of survival. The critics say it is wrong for European civilisation to be equated with membership of a European race, but the South African, who lives with the facts all round him, does not agree that a university education civilises a native. It educates him. The two are correlated, but not the same. Western civilisation came about through interaction of circumstance, thought, individual achievement, racial characteristics and religion over three thousand years, and even the best education cannot give a native this background. The South African does not differentiate between himself and a Bantu because of skin pigmentation *per se*, but because the white skin has become the symbol of civilisation. The proof that South Africans are not just pigmentocrats lies in their treatment of the small yellow-skinned Chinese community. It is accorded equal status with the Europeans, and there is a good deal less disapproval if a European boy goes out with a Chinese girl in South Africa than there would be in Britain. This is because the Chinese community in the Union behaves in a perfectly civilised way, and the South African recognises the Chinese as a member of another ancient civilisation. Visiting Japanese are accorded the same status. No doubt if South Africa's Indians were all Brahmins, and behaved in the same cultured way as the Chinese, they too would have equal rights.

Mixed marriages and inter-racial sexual relationships are banned in South Africa by the Immorality Amendment Acts and the Mixed Marriages Act, but even before these laws, inter-racial relationships were few. Between 1940 and 1945 inter-racial marriages averaged less than 100 annually in a population of many millions. These laws were intended to plug the small existing "leak," and absolutely to prevent further miscegenation or the passing of black blood into the existing European stock (it has been said that in South Africa's history 250,000 near-white Coloureds have "passed" into the European group). In a race-conscious society like South Africa the lot of children of inter-racial unions would be a miserable one, just as Eurasians are despised and persecuted in Asia by non-European

races. One of the aims of colour bar is to prevent contacts which could lead to such unions. Colour bar, in other words, aims at preventing young people of different races from falling in love, which can be heart-breaking for them and is disastrous for their children. Bishop Walter Carey, an Englishman, has stated: "Nobody but a fool thinks that (mixed) marriages are, in themselves, either immoral or irreligious—but they are hopeless folly, and unutterably cruel . . . such free social life as would throw together young men and women of different races continually, except on occasions recognised as special, is wrong and must be firmly avoided."

Nearly all Europeans in the Union agree on their basic attitude to the Bantu, but there is great argument over how the plans for his advancement are to be put into effect. The United Party, the official Opposition, believes in the slow evolution of the Bantu in contact with European society. Their policy is Rhodesia's racial partnership —at an even slower pace. The Nationalists believe that the Bantu, especially at the increasing pace of education, will be discontented with such slow evolution with no immediate objectives, and that in fact the ordinary Bantu will find it impossible to develop in the face of European, Coloured and Indian competition. Their answer is Apartheid (pronounced apart-ate) or separate development. The essentials of Apartheid are:—

1. The conversion to Christianity of the Bantu peoples.
2. The protection of Bantu culture and interests against European and Indian encroachment.
3. The protection and stabilisation of European society by a gradual withdrawal of the Bantu labour upon which it at present depends.
4. The development of the Bantu and their tribal lands.
5. The prevention of miscegenation.

Apartheid is not an invention of the Afrikaners to suppress the Bantu—quite the opposite. It was first tried by a British Colonial Secretary in 1818, and the foundation of present-day racial policy was the Glen Grey Act, introduced by Cecil Rhodes when he was Prime Minister of the Cape Colony. If we venture beyond the Union, we find in Australia a system of apartheid to protect the remaining aboriginal tribes. The division of British India by a British Labour Government into India and Pakistan was apartheid for religious reasons, and differences there between Hindu and Moslem were less than they are in South Africa between European and Bantu.

Conversion to Christianity is an important basic principle of Apartheid, because Christianity is a civilising influence on the primitive Bantu mind and because it tends to release the Bantu from traditional attitudes which stand in the way of agricultural and industrial development, the real key to Apartheid.

The average Nationalist does not want to preserve Bantu culture from purely altruistic motives. That is obvious humbug, though it is only fair to point out that there are Afrikaner intellectuals who sincerely want to do this. Obviously the primitive agricultural practices and pagan ways of the Bantu, which prevent progress or even survival, will have to go, but Nationalists want to see the tribal structure adapted to modern ways rather than destroyed, so that the Bantu develops in easy stages. This, incidentally, is also traditional British Colonial Office policy, although the anti-colonial hysteria of modern times causes it often to be ignored. The sudden and complete exposure of natives to Western civilisation is not progressive. The breakdown of tribal life serves the industrialist by making the Bantu more easily available for employment in factories and mines, but it does not civilise him. Consequent frustrations may contribute to widespread discontent, and lay the foundations of a movement such as Mau Mau. To replace the unity of the tribe, in many parts of Africa the detribalised seek unity in trade unions or political parties or splinter churches, and seeking some purpose for this unity, find it in opposition to some other group, and in particular some other race. If, through the encouragement and improvement of peasant agriculture and rural industries, traditional communities can be held together, it will obviate the dangers of detribalisation and permit gradual adaption of the Bantu to Western ways. If the Bantu can develop his own form of civilised society, the danger of communism or some other insurrectionary movement fades.

The tribe, incidentally, is one of the few social units which is really democratic, yet works well. Of course Bantu who are detribalised need status and opportunity, and South Africa seeks to provide this in the reserves, by building towns there. The trend in the British colonies of Kenya and the Federation is towards the multi-racial society. But Sir Roy Welensky, for example, has admitted that the African leaders in his country have never accepted the idea of a multi-racial society, and want nothing less than African self-government, i.e., Bantu nationalism;* even at meetings of the

* *News Chronicle*, 4.1.57.

Capricorn Society, who preach immediate integration of all races, Africans shout "Europeans must be driven into the sea";† and Sir Edward Twining, Governor of Tanganyika, has admitted that a multi-racial society without miscegenation has never yet been achieved in human history.‡

South Africa has adopted a different method of buying off Bantu nationalism—by allowing it full expression in a way which is safe to the European. A *Manchester Guardian* correspondent recently called tribalism a "dynamic power" to be harnessed to nation-building, and said that an improved tribal system made natives less susceptible to the "modern type of saviour-politician." This is an important matter in South Africa, for its large numbers of detribalised are already susceptible to communism, and it is obvious the Russians will do all they can to organise another Mau Mau in South Africa, which is the chief source of uranium for both Britain and the United States. The South African Government closed down the Russian Embassy because of its clandestine activities among natives.

The Union is not only a source of uranium, but many other materials of vital strategic importance; it also dominates the deep sea route from Europe to the East. Apart from the political dangers, detribalisation—an almost complete abandonment of tribal traditions —has bitter results for the Bantu. Social breakdown leads to serious crime, broken marriages, sexual immorality, bribery and corruption, fighting and alcoholism. The prevalence of primitive gambling dens and illegal drink shops selling poisonous brews in the shanty towns cannot be blamed wholly, partly, or even at all, on colour bar or bad housing conditions. The exploitation of the detribalised by criminals of their own race is pitiful, and far worse than any alleged persecution by the European. In the village and the tribe the African knows where he stands. He has a certain status in relation to the chief, to his family, to the land. He knows his obligation, to work and to guard, and above all he knows that in old age or sickness he will be looked after by his relations, who would not think of shunning that obligation. But the urban Bantu has sold all this for a rootless existence, neither that of the traditional Bantu nor the European. In urban areas there are additional frustrations. The Bantu likes to laze. This may be considered civilised, but it brings him into conflict with his European employer, who seeks qualities in his workers which are completely alien to Bantu tradition.

† *Daily Telegraph*, 30.5.57.

‡ *Inside Africa*, J. Gunther. Hamish Hamilton, 1955.

General Smuts condemned any policy which sought to turn the African into a "pseudo-European," and the object of Apartheid is to allow the advancing Bantu to create his own form of civilised society in the reserves. These, plus added areas, are to be developed to support not only their existing population, but the increase in the Bantu population over the next fifty years as well. The Tomlinson Commission, a group of South African experts which investigated the prospects for the socio-economic development of the Bantu, recommended an expenditure of £105 millions on the reserves over the next ten years. As the Union spent £500 millions on the Second World War, capital accumulation is over £450 millions a year, and £40 millions annually is already spent on the Bantu, this sum is far from impossible, as the Government's critics like to make out. In any case, even were Apartheid abandoned, the same (or greater) expenditure would be incurred providing housing and transport facilities for the Bantu in urban areas. Rehousing inhabitants of the shanty towns is to cost tens of millions for two and a half million natives, and adequate transport facilities for the above in just six major cities is going to cost £35 millions.

Much propaganda abroad is made out of the fact that the Bantu, although they constitute the majority of the country's population, are only granted a small proportion of the Union's land surface (13 per cent.) as their reserves. The first point to make, and an important one, is that the European cannot be expected to hand over land which he is cultivating relatively well to the Bantu, who, through negligence and reactionary agricultural methods, has for decades ruined, and continues to ruin, good soil, despite the prodigious efforts of the Government to educate the Bantu in soil conservation and modern farming methods. The average productivity of maize is 2.5 bags per morgen in the Bantu areas compared with 6.64 bags per morgen in the poorer European areas, for example. The second point is that only 20 per cent. of the Union's land surface receives sufficient rainfall to make it cultivable—yet three-quarters of the Bantu reserves lie within this fertile zone. A single native reserve—Pondoland—could carry a European population of 20 millions, so it is quite possible for all the reserves in the Union to carry a Bantu population smaller than this in the year 2000. The Government's aim is urbanisation within the Bantu areas, so that light industries grow in and near the reserves, providing openings for the Bantu to become skilled, relieving the pressure of population on the land, and providing proper places for detribal-

ised Bantu to settle. Within the reserves are labour supplies and markets for the establishment of light industries, and raw materials are readily available. South Africa has workable deposits of almost every known useful mineral. Most of the reserves are near water supplies and good harbours, therefore ideal for industrial development. The Tennessee Valley Authority achievements in the United States are an example of how the scientific control of natural resources can revolutionise the economy of a large area of otherwise inhospitable and barren country. There are areas in the U.S.A. with virtually no rainfall that are agriculturally rich because of large-scale irrigation projects.

Apartheid, it should be remembered, excludes Europeans and European private investment from Bantu reserves just as it limits the activities of Bantu in European areas. I have met South Africans who are suffering under these ordinances, so it is plain that both racial groups are having to pay for eventual peace and stability. The European realises he will have to find the cash to pay for the primary services of power, transport, water conservation and irrigation which are needed to develop the Bantu reserves. He accepts this as the price of racial peace and the preservation of his racial identity.

Regarding the size of the reserves, it should also be remembered that the Union has been promised the three protectorates: Basutoland, Swaziland and Bechuanaland. It has pledged that these will be added to the Bantu reserves, raising them to 45 per cent. of the Union's land surface.

The most serious and most tenable criticism of Apartheid is that it is impracticable because the withdrawal of Bantu labour would result in the collapse of South African industry. 550,000 non-Europeans are employed in manufacturing industry, 300,000 in gold mining and 100,000 in the public services. But in fact, no proponent of Apartheid has suggested that all Bantu labour should be withdrawn overnight. The withdrawal would have to be a gradual process. Geographical separation would take place over several decades, and industry would have many years to adapt itself.

About half a million reserve Bantu work in industry today on a temporary basis, and similar 'migratory labour' would have to continue during the period of adjustment. The migrant Bantu will have the same status as the Italian in France or Belgium. Once again we notice that the very same people who rant about the evils of migratory labour would never dream of advancing aid to Italy

to help solve her unemployment problem (they would be more likely to cite the practice as a good example of the mobility of labour!), nor are they conspicuous for their attacks on Russia, where migratory labour is compulsory, not voluntary.

Labour in industry is to a great extent replaceable by capital, that is, machinery. South African efficiency experts say factory production could be increased 20 to 30 per cent. by reorganisation of a given quantity of labour, with expenditure on production equipment. In fact, a reservoir of "cheap" labour tends to cause economic backwardness. It discourages the introduction of modern machinery and restricts the local market for goods. Labour scarcity in the United States in the days of the industrial revolution encouraged the invention and installation of machines to replace men, and was a direct cause of contemporary American industrial greatness.

The Tomlinson Commission reported that the influx of Bantu into South Africa's cities is holding up mechanisation. A combination of greater mechanisation and more European labour, both by immigration from abroad and influx into the towns from the country, will ensure that industry does not suffer from Apartheid. An official of the South African State Information Office stated in December, 1956: "It is untrue to say that immigrant white labour would be more expensive, productivity-wise, than Bantu." Apartheid will force the introduction of a high-wage economy in the European sector, and the establishment of new industries in and near the Bantu reserves—far from damaging South Africa's economy, it ensures her industrial greatness and a rising standard of life for all her peoples.

OBSCURITY IN MODERN POETRY

by ROY MACGREGOR-HASTIE

IT has often been said of modern poetry that it is obscure; it has, indeed, been said of nearly every worthwhile poem during its period of modernity, and the allegations have not always ceased on its passing into literary history. But the accusation has been made more often during the last decade than at any other time, and no self-respecting poet or critic looking for the root cause of the widening gulf between poet and society can afford to ignore it. In many instances the 'obscurity' has nothing directly to do with poetry itself, but is an impression received on a first apprehension of the whole complex of the relationship between the poet, poetry and society as this exists in the 'fifties; and this impression is understandable enough when we realise that, at a time when every person and thing has been given a specialist label and place in the social pyramid, assessed at a computation of utility, the notion of value, as opposed to the economic concept of value-in-exchange is largely foreign both to the "popular critic" and "the people."

It is outside the scope of this essay to examine in detail the reasons for the isolation of the contemporary poet; what must be made more specific is the charge of obscurity (often obscurantism), and its validity questioned. Emotions, though simple in themselves, may become complex when manifested, and failure on the part of the poet to reduce this complexity to simplicity, to bring order out of chaos, is obviously a major defect in the quality of his mind and emotional system.

Some critics of contemporary poetry have complained of the choice of words made by the authors they are reviewing, have even gone so far as to suggest alternative words—presumably in the belief that a poem can be written by another intelligence after the original intellectuo-emotional complex has been satisfied; others have been more modestly content with suggesting that a rewriting is necessary, and have hopefully left the poets themselves to get on with it. And presumptuous though this critical attitude seems (typified by the American magazines *The Explicator* and *Blue Guitar*) it is nevertheless true that wherever the words used in a poem are used as a

shortcut to a meaning accessible only to a minority—a social, non-specialist, personally limited minority—it is a valid criticism to say that the result is obscure for the majority. The poets of the Social Reference Movement of the 'thirties often wrote as if everyone, including the industrial proletariat with which they hope to achieve a rapprochement, was familiar with the Christian names of their friends and with the undergraduate and post-graduate jargon of Oxford and Cambridge; this 'shorthand' was inevitably a meaningless scrawl for the masses at which it was directed, and served further to confuse.

Some poems, however, *are* written for specialist, minority audiences, just as some treatises in prose are written for specialist consumption, for the very good reason that a poet is a member of minority groups, social, economic and political with whom he may want to communicate. And though these poems will, if he is a responsible poet, form a very small part of his work, they will be, if he is sincere and not concerned with artificial universality, inevitable—and useful in assessing the background to the rest of his poems.

Where a poem is written full of: "... private, undergraduate jokes ..." (Alan Ross, *Poetry 1945-50*), as was much of the 'thirties' verse, it should be kept for private circulation among the friends for whom it was intended and, ideally, not released for publication until the last *Collected Poems*; otherwise the reader will feel much as one who accidentally intrudes on a family gathering, and his embarrassment will turn to a resentment, perhaps strong enough to discourage him from further reading.

It is often said, too, that poets "use too many long words," and that simplicity of language is conducive to simplicity of expression; but this is obviously not always so. Apart from the use of specialist words in a specialist context, the "simple synonyms" of which may have quite different meanings, the sound structure of a poem can be completely destroyed in simplesse, just as it can be made meaningless, as sound, in the beautifully sculptured verse of a 'cerebral poet.' No one would suggest that a minim could replace or be replaced by the equivalent number of crotchets or quavers in a piece of music whose shape depended on this fragment of its time dimension; similarly, no one should expect a replacement of a word in a poem, when that word is vital to the shape of the poem, and organic to its meaning, to do anything other than alter completely the impact of which the poet was the (presumably) best architect. The common

target of the " simplifier " is the Latin derivative—there is apparently some connection between Philistinism and an adulation of the Anglo-Saxon—and though this objection is clearly " rationally irrational," it is so frequently met with in the " popular press " that it begs mention. Miltonic splendour, it is assumed, is the property of an age to which splendour is copyright, and has no place in the uniform drabness, artificially illuminated by neon lighting and chemical dyes, which is the background to our lives in 1958.

As often as criticism of obscurity of language is the accusation of obscurantism in the *use of language*—one which has been levelled at most poets at one time or another, from Shakespeare to Dylan Thomas. In its least refined form this is an accusation of 'illogicality.' A man might say of Shelley: " Why write Odes to Skylarks, who cannot understand human speech, and if you *can*—justify the occasion of the Ode to an overrated bird (serenaded in turn by Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Clare, Meredith and others) how legitimate is it to say:

> Hail to thee, blithe spirit,
> Bird thou never wert . . .?

Either it is or it is not, a skylark, and therefore a bird. That is the First Law of Logic—either a thing is, or it is not."

This unrefined and unsophisticated carping can be most satisfactorily stilled by the relevant quotation from Hobbes:

> " Words are wise men's counters, they do but reckon by them; but they are the money of fools, that value them by the authority of an Aristotle, a Cicero or a Thomas, or any other Doctor whatsoever, if but a man . . ."

I have never heard it said today that Shakespeare was either unintelligible or obscure; and yet literalists, who knew nothing of poetry as a means to an end, have taken *his* words to be an end in themselves and criticised them for their departure from 'reality.' Here is a well known and well understood passage from *Twelfth Night*, the last lines strangely reminiscent of Thomas at his aurally most disciplined:

> If music be the food of love, play on,
> Give me excess of it; that surfeiting,
> The appetite may sicken and so die.
> That strain again, it had a dying fall:

> O, it came over my ears, like the sweet sound
> that breathes upon a bank of violets;
> stealing and giving odour.

Warburton said of this passage: " There is an impropriety of expression. We do not say that the appetite sickens and dies through a surfeit; but the *subject* of that appetite."

And Lettsom: " It is utterly impossible that Shakespeare could have described a sound as stealing and giving odours. Sounds sometimes tickle and sometimes torture our ears, but they are incapacitated by Nature from affecting our noses."

Most of the critics of this school thought Shakespeare had been misprinted and hesitated to blame him for the impropriety; Keightley writes:

> " A sound breathing is pure nonsense. Even Pope's correction (sound to south) does not remove the difficulty, for ' south ' alone, no more than north, east or west, is never used for the wind. It seems to me that the poet wrote ' south-wind,' and as the ' th ' was usually suppressed in south, north, etc., the printer pronounced ' sou'-wind,' or, it may be, ' sou-'ind,' which easily becomes sound in his mind, and so he printed it."

Furness, the editor of the 19th century *Shakespeare,* from which these comments are here quoted, makes a part apology for Shakespeare's lapse, couched unfortunately in the language of academic romanticism, but none the less reasonable:

> " We must remember that we are dealing with poetry, not prose; and surely in poetry, when imagination is once on the wing, a man may be supposed to take up arms, the shield of the faith nd the sword of the spirit, against troubles which come wave on wave upon him like a sea. Similarly, in the present line, one sense, that of hearing, may be, with swiftness of thought, supplemented or endued with the functions of the other senses."

It is perhaps encouraging to find that not even Shakespeare could avoid endangering his posthumous reputation in the hands of pedants; the boldness of his intuitive relation of different functions of the human organism, when there was no formal psychology to support his imaginative concept, seemed to the schoolmasters to be

another linguistic outrage to be condemned out of hand. No one has put forward the thesis that Dylan Thomas intended a language and a syntax different from those to be found in his collected works, that his printer's mind was confused at the moment of linotyping his verse and transposed the adjectives and nouns Thomas deliberately dislocated, due to some temporary aberration of his thought processes. What has happened has been the same sort of condemnation of his syntax and use of language from which Shakespeare suffered in another Age of Reason.

The novelty of the Thomas position is that since his death the pages of the little magazines have been filled by would-be poets who, seeing the popularity of this "obscure genius," have thought it sufficient to take words of no common significance, assemble them wilfully and hope that, in some magical way, a poem would be produced by a sort of spontaneous combustion of the unrelated elements of the 'structure.' Ignoring *The Force that Through the Green Fuse Drives the Flower, Light Breaks where no Sun Shines, Death shall have no Dominion, Fern Hill, In My Craft or Sullen Art* and *October Poem,* to name only half a dozen of Thomas's poems which are as intelligible, without being 'simple,' as any of Shakespeare, Shelley or Milton, the "school" of modern poets which would acknowledge a debt to Dylan Thomas as their unwitting founder-leader, have not only dislocated language to find meanings hidden in formal constructions, but have dislocated meaning itself—producing a body of work which is known to the public as 'modern poetry,' but is in fact neither modern nor poetry.

The obscurity of a Dylan Thomas derives from two circumstances, one of which was peculiar to the poet himself; Thomas was one of the first to realise that if the life of everyday, with its new technological modes, was to be again the concern of the artist, then the artist, and more particularly the poet, must recognise that the processes devised by technology for the increase of leisure can be used to heighten the cultural awareness of the masses. A man is divorced from his fellow members of society if he seeks a voluntary hermitage in the processes of the past; if the poem is an entity apprehensible ideally in the ear, then the mass media invented by science for its own purposes must be used to emphasise this fact to poets in embryo, and to communicate with the masses directly via the creations of a discipline popularly supposed to have supplanted art. Thomas, the greatest script writer of the sound broadcasting era, wrote in the knowledge of the nature of his artform as one, like that of the

musician, using the aural image to produce its true impact; the idea of crotchets on music manuscript being 'music' before they have been converted into the sound which initiates its existence was as foreign to Thomas as the notion that poetry could be seen and not heard, could be confined between the covers of a slim volume of verse and not spoken in the manner and medium in which it was conceived. Karl Shapiro touched on this aspect of Thomas's 'obscurity' in *Poetry* (November, 1955, Chicago):

> "Writers said of Thomas that he was the greatest lyricist of our time. The saying became a platitude. It was unquestionably true, but what did the word mean? It meant that, aside from the epic pretensions of many of the leading modern poets, there was only one who could be called a singer, Thomas."

It was no accident that every poetry reading Thomas gave was "a supremely artistic performance," nor that some poets wondered "How can we ever find our work before our eyes again."

The second of the reasons for the obscurity with which Thomas is charged, and because of which he has been instrumental in alienating from poetry the vast public he created, is one peculiar to his nationality. Many of the most intelligent of the Welsh have found a justification for their life and thought in contact with the English speaking world, and without that contact would have narrowed into the parochialism of the Welsh peasant; and yet, though their *raison d'être* is their membership of the larger community, their early life in Wales has tied them to the smaller, and these are ties never broken, not even by thirty years of voluntary exile. Thomas was a man born to the speech rhythms of a language he spoke imperfectly; trying to dislocate the syntax of the English he learnt in his youth to accommodate the rhythms of a Welsh he knew imperfectly, and in which he saw neither reason nor virtue in writing.

This was a difficulty experienced by Thomas, and not one encountered by most poets writing today in English, but it is interesting in its implication that the rhythms of poetry, which are the rhythms of speech at its most subtle and meaningful, *must* vary regionally in a racial complex which has no access to a Court of Appeal for pronunciation or syntax. Britain and America are the largest nation states without an academy able to make any definitive pronouncement on the language in which their poetry and prose is created, and, as Sir Lacon Threlford, the President of the Institute

of Linguists, has said, it makes a mockery at any attempt at universality in the use of word symbols for weight or excitement.

The tragedy of Thomas's early death was that it left alone to their own devices, without either formal or informal guidance, a number of poets who were looking for leadership in the poetic vacuum created by the abdication of Auden and the excesses of the post-war "neo-romantics." An extreme instance of the lengths to which they went to illustrate their 'difference' from the simplesse of the latter can be found in the well known story of the would-be critic who was induced to publish in his magazine (the *Angry Penguins*) an assemblage of words culled from a drainage catalogue and a railway timetable, set spatially to resemble the more recondite verse of Thomas's followers. The absurdity of this extreme idolatry of unintelligibility, in the hope or fear that it might represent the flowering of some hitherto undiscovered genius, is as great as that of the 'common sense' of the pedant at the other extreme, who can only find the word 'spade' to describe a spade, because the past usage of others is the limiting factor of his mind's working.

In 1956 I gave a series of talks on contemporary poetry for the Australian Broadcasting Commission, one of which attracted the attention of one of the spade-spade people; in a letter to the *A.B.C. Weekly* he wrote:

> "Language is of course produced by common usage . . . We have often wondered what will happen when all novels and poetry come to be written in the vernacular; what then will be the spoken language? . . . Nobody minds poets playing about with different forms, rhymes and rhythms, as the arbitrariness of this assists the dwelling imagination, but no literary man has any case for tampering with words which are already the property of the people, used trustingly by honest working men."

Now these remarks are worth following up, because unless we are quite clear in our minds as to the proper function of language in general we shall never be able to distinguish between obscurity and obscurantism in the use of words in poetry.

Briefly, language is an instrument for conveying ideas from one mind to another and can be, for us, either written or spoken, but it is not our possession of a system of noises and signs that distinguishes man from the lower animals—dogs, cats and elephants have languages, too, and most wild animals and 'pets' are capable of both reason and imagery—it is by the *extent* of our reason and

the *function* of our imagery that we are distinguished as a species. Pavlov's experiments have made us all familiar with the conditioned reflexes that can be produced in animals, with the way in which they can be trained to see significance in sound, or in a visual image of an object *as long as that sound or image has some direct relation to a bodily function;* it is, however, only man who is capable of using imagery disinterestedly, or rather, for an indirect satisfaction of the body. An animal is incapable of satisfying its own mind, of understanding the nature of an image as the object of another, not apprehended, image. It is wrong to say that animals do not respond to harmony and disharmony, but it is correct to say that in the presence of harmony they achieve only a sensuous satisfaction which is its own end, and which is apprehensible only by means of senses immediately after a stimulation or reminder of stimulation.

Many theories of language have been advanced since Hobbes first aimed his not very oblique blows at the Aristotleian Scholastics; few of them have done more than clarify his conclusions and remove the ambiguities that he, the arch enemy of ambiguity, left for his enemies to condemn. His theory of absurdity, though a negative theory, was no antiquated technique of logical analysis, and he did what he could to pave the way for a definition nomenclature, believing that definition was the 'gateway to certain knowledge and even to civil peace'; he pointed out that the function of speech determines its nature, and that where an exact description was to be given of an idea or of an object then the words themselves must be exact and incapable of misinterpretation; where ideas in the mind were concerned, he made an important qualification (if only by default) and postulated the necessity for two measures of exactness, depending on the type of motion observable in the idea itself and at its destination.

He suggested, in other words, that side by side with the geometry of normality, his first and last love, there could exist an algebra of abnormality. It is into this latter category that poetry falls, as decisively as prose into the former.

On the function of poetry, on the sort of 'motion' it produces or should produce in a well ordered mind, disordered in emotional complexity, T. S. Eliot had this to say nearly three decades ago:

> "We can only say that it appears likely that poets in our civilisation, as it exists at present, must be difficult. Our civilisation comprehends great variety and complexity, and this variety and complexity, playing upon a refined sensibility, must

> produce various and complex results. The poet must become more and more comprehensive, more allusive, more indirect in order to force, to dislocate if necessary, language into his meaning."

Eliot's great contribution to poetics was the freeing of poetry from the prescription of theme and language which had become insufficient for the twentieth century; and it is as true now as it then was, that the poet must not only concern himself with the few topics considered suitable some fifty years ago. Where many poets have made a mistake in the past is in the interpretation of Eliot, in the conclusion that to be comprehensive necessitates a quantitative extension of theme, instead of a qualitative one to which Thomas returned in many of his 'obscure' poems; the charge of 'lightness' can be levelled at many of the Victorian poets with as much effect as a charge of limitation of interest in the world beneath their hands. Where a poet genuinely finds a stimulus born of intelligent understanding and fellow feeling in industrial disorder—and, naturally and without deliberation "selects imagery from the machinery, slums and the social conditions" which surround him—then he is likely to write poetry of some social and artistic significance. Where he tries to be 'modern,' as Spender confesses he did, and ignores the nodal points of human existence in non-economic community, he is not likely to produce anything nearer to poetry than Bedwood Anderson's *The Crane.*

However, the contemporary poets, and by contemporary I mean those of the 'fifties generation in the English speaking world, Australia, New Zealand, the U.S.A., Canada, South Africa and Britain, who concern themselves with ploughing an old furrow deep (one which has lain unploughed for twenty years and is ripe for cultivation)—that of the relationship between what is best described as Nature, and society—tend to be difficult, not because they are writing beyond the sense experience of their readers, but beause their approach is a novel one. Theirs is a poetry not readily appreciable with the aid of an academic eye, nor even with any sort of eye at all; it relies for its impact on the shape of the sound into which it is properly rendered for the coherence of its ideas, the motion of those ideas, and the direction in which they move the listener, and later the reader.

A DIARY

IF you are waiting in Paris, or London, for an aeroplane to take you to Ireland and you happen to be one of those whose ears refuse to hear the messages of loudspeakers, you have only to look about for a priest or a nun to follow and you will soon find yourself safely in Aer Lingus. This has been my method for a good many years: but there is another. Women travelling to Ireland wear skirts about six inches longer than other women. I do not pretend to know why this should be, but it is an observable fact.

This was so, long before the Parisian and Roman dressmakers ordered another couple of inches off. The Irish pay no attention.

Others are less independent. I remember an old Paris concierge, who seemed to have been wearing the same black dress and grey woollen jersey for the past thirty years, being very cross about the new look's voluminous skirts: "ça empêche les gens de sortir," she grumbled. She was paying lip service to a cult.

★ ★ ★

On arrival in Dublin I saw a poster: WHY NOT RE-BUILD TARA?

Well, why not? Tara's halls, where the harp that once . . . No particular reason, I suppose, except that the reconstruction of a dark age monument might be frightfully ugly. It would be a puzzle to know what to do with it when it was finished (or what to do with *them,* if there were several halls). Harp recitals, of course, spring to mind.

Meanwhile it is not so much new building that should concern people in Ireland as the demolition of fine old houses. Just as in England, planners have only to see a well-proportioned, agreeable Georgian house, to hurry with their pickaxes; before you know where you are it has disappeared, leaving a gap which is quickly filled either by something hideous and "contemporary" or else by a villa of the cosy cot variety.

The Irish Georgian Society has just been formed with the object

of preventing, where possible, this unnecessary vandalism, and preserving the 18th century character of Dublin and other towns.

★ ★ ★

It is too late for the Society to save John Nash's Gothic castle, Shanbally, a pale grey house like a child's toy fort set in a park in County Tipperary with a view across to the Knockmealdown mountains. When I visited it lately on a cold afternoon the empty knocking of demolishers' hammers filled the air.

The castle was surrounded by an impenetrable barbed wire entanglement, as if they were ashamed of what was going on. At least I thought so at first, but perhaps they are really afraid that lumps of battlement will fall on the heads of the curious—not that there can be many visitors to this desolate and melancholy spectacle.

★ ★ ★

In any case the Irish Georgian Society can hardly be expected to save country houses which have failed to find a buyer. Too many roofs to keep in repair . . . It occurred to me that television might be the answer to the problem. A homeless dog, shown on T.V., attracts thousands of people to clamour for it, people who had never thought of keeping a dog before. If country houses, in danger of demolition for want of an owner, could be shown for a few moments each week, who knows what might happen? Some rich Surrey-dweller, who follows his local hounds through the rhododendrons of suburbia, might suddenly feel an irresistible desire to possess Shanbally in its lovely lonely walled demesne, in a country notable for the excellence of its hunting and fishing and gardening. Even if every house did not find an owner (and I believe many would) such a weekly programme would surely arouse widespread interest in the beauties that are being thrown away in England and Ireland.

★ ★ ★

Apart from the pleasure of living in well-proportioned rooms, another amenity most English and Irish houses built between about 1680 and 1850 have is the practical and comfortable sash window, which I believe originated in Holland and was brought over by

William III, to become a typical feature of our domestic architecture. Nobody who has lived with sash windows would wish to change for casement windows, which open outward and shake and rattle in the wind, or for french windows, which open inward and thus cannot be opened at all when the curtains are drawn.

The French call sash windows *fenêtres guillotine.* An old Irish house where I once lived had such windows of which all the sash-cords were broken, so when you put your head out of the window it came banging down, and you risked being literally guillotined and realised what a suitable name for them it can sometimes be.

★ ★ ★

There is a great future for tourism in Ireland now that duck and snipe shooting on the callows, and fishing, and sea-angling are to be advertised on the continent. Imagine the excitement of a Frenchman who has sat for years fishing in a canal in the hopes of hooking a tiddler once in a way, if he could spend his holiday coarse fishing in an Irish river—not to mention trout or salmon.

★ ★ ★

In their fight to keep up their circulation the newspapers are offering more and more grand prizes for little competitions — in English papers the favoured prize seems to be a holiday on the French Riviera, in a villa fitted out with champagne. The Irish papers on the other hand offer a holiday at Lourdes. As ten million pilgrims are expected there this centenary year I must admit that I would rather pay an armchair visit to the grotto by reading Monsignor Joseph Deery's extraordinary book *Our Lady of Lourdes* (which is serialised by the *Irish Independent*) than accept such an arduous prize, and would choose the alternative—a tractor.

ENTERTAINMENTS

Robert Bolt's FLOWERING CHERRY

(HAYMARKET THEATRE)

by MICHAEL HARALD

MR. BOLT is clearly an admirer of Mr. Arthur Miller: *Flowering Cherry* is a *Death of a Salesman* writ small and suburban. But what Mr. Bolt really needs is a stiff dose of Ibsen. I assume that he is familiar with *The Wild Duck*, and invite his opinion on an alternative ending to that masterpiece; an ending in which Gina packs her bags and deserts her husband, the windbag fantast who could never be brought to face reality; in which *he* drops dead a moment or two later with a heart attack. Let the dose include Shaw, and let Mr. Bolt consider a similar re-writing of *Candida*. No: the Hjalmar Ekdals world, the James Mavor Morells of Shaw's, the Jim Cherrys of Mr. Bolt's have wisdom in common as well as weakness. They are derided and disliked by men, but women seem to find them irresistible, and they are shrewd enough to choose wives who will stay the course. Nor do they, in the prime of life, drop conveniently dead; they outlive their wives and batten on somebody else's, straddling the generations and developing near the end a sad passion for schoolgirls. They live on to the age of Hjalmar's father, or longer, parasites all, to a greater or lesser degree: the happiest of humbugs.

Flowering Cherry (I have not Mr. Bolt's leave to alter his title, and would point out that it is as embarrassing for me to write, and for the printer to print, as it is for you to read)—*F.C.* is a play which truthfully written might quite easily have proved to be the

outstanding event of the London theatrical year. It is a short play which divides neatly and naturally into two acts. The first act is brilliant; full of detail, little of it irrelevant, all of it freshly and amusingly exposed. It is good enough, in short, to arouse expectations which, I suppose, no living English playwright could quite fulfil. In the event, Mr. Bolt's Act 2 shirked or modified the issues raised in Act 1, and disintegrated finally into the sort of facile melodrama I have already described.

For many years Jim Cherry, an insurance clerk, has nourished his soul and bored his iintimates with his recollections of a West country childhood. The grass was greener then, of course. Men were manlier, too; and his nineteen-year-old son resents the reminder, and straightens fairly easily the poker which his father had bent with a much greater show of effort. No son should do this sort of thing; it shows a lack of feeling and of irony; and it probably accounts for the fact that the boy regards Mr. Eliot's *Prufrock* (circa 1917) as being modern enough to emphasise the gap between his father's generation (Mr. Cherry is in his fifties) and the age of Rock 'n Roll. Mr. Cherry boosts his ego, shrivelled for lack of professional advancement, with the daydream of buying vast orchards and becoming a successful fruit-farmer. More of an eccentric hobby than a neurosis, really, all this; on a level with Hjalmar Ekdal's invention, which, you remember, lacked only the finishing touch of the decision where to begin it. Mr. Cherry's seed catalogues and drainage charts serve both as a diversion on a dull evening (this is a "no television" household, one guesses) and a barrier against the more tedious aspects of business and domestic life. He is drinking a lot of late, we observe; lacing his cider from the kitchen keg with gin (though he can hardly be blamed for this). However, in public he still contrives to keep up appearances, smacking his lips falsely at a mug of *un*laced cider, downing it with every appearance of enjoyment, and recommending it to his family and friends with the honest pride of one who himself invented the stuff. He has lost his job (one wonders how he got it in the first place and kept it so long); he steals money from his wife's purse, and lets her accuse their son, who is already—and accurately—under suspicion of petty-thieving. He flirts with his daughter's friend: this is harmless enough, for like most heavy men who are also heavy drinkers, he is sexually inactive. But it leads to a family row in which his daughter is revealed as a liar. Both son and daughter, then, would seem to have been corrupted by their father's example: a little far-

fetched, this, surely; and Mr. Bolt seems to agree, for he does not press the point and would have been wiser to omit it altogether as irrelevant to the main theme. Mrs. Cherry comes, as they say, and as *she* says, to the end of her tether. The children are old enough to fend for themselves. She offers her husband a "last chance," his first *real* chance. Fantasy shall become fact. They will sell the house and buy a fruit farm.

Now had the author wished to reveal Mrs. Cherry as the very incarnation of female cruelty, he could hardly have bettered this. Her husband's natural reaction to the offer might suitably be compared with that of a small boy who, having announced that he's an engine driver, is bundled onto the footplate of the Orient Express and told to drive it to Istanbul. The fruit farm is gratefully but firmly declined (perhaps next year—eh?—or the year after; these things need a lot of consideration, my dear); and Mr. Cherry prepares to accept another, and inferior, job in insurance. And here the play should end; possibly with the postman's knock and a batch of fruit tree catalogues. Mrs. Cherry is no Norah Helmer, no slammer of doors behind her. Nor do ripe Cherrys drop dead: fifty years on, perhaps, they dissolve in their dream and fade away. I earnestly counsel Mr. Bolt to burn the last page or two of his play, and to rewrite a good deal of the second act: then to bury it deep for five years, and revive it under a new and better title (which I will gladly supply) when the present production has been forgotten.

The difficulty—*impossibility*—here would be to forget Sir Ralph Richardson, who gives one of his most eccentric and authoritative performances. It is hard to convey in words the endearing zaniness that lurks behind the urbanity of this great comedian: in music one would get nearer the mark with the Eton boating song treated by Ravel in the *Bolero* manner. It is terrifying to witness the matter-of-factness with which he steers his role away from safety to the spot where the ice is thinnest. "Can he get away with this?" one wonders, and waits for the crash. A split-second later he is home again, blandly dismissing the notion that a sensible knight would ever go skating. His Jim Cherry has been gently criticised by my betters—I was about to say my colleagues! The complaint seems to be that Sir Ralph has turned a sprat into a whale; and no one would deny this. But it is justifiable, surely, on two counts. Firstly, this particular sprat *sees* himself as a whale, and Sir Ralph rightly plays him from his own viewpoint. Secondly, that the result, as well as being vastly entertaining, helps the play: a carefully-etched,

life-size "character" performance would almost certainly have underlined these weaknesses of construction and psychology which I have instanced, and several others which I have not. Jim Cherry is Superman in his own (or rather, his wife's) kitchen; and it is a measure of the excellence of Sir Ralph's interpretation that I—a maternally tactful son in my day, in my father's (or rather, my mother's) kitchen was only restrained from flinging my shoes at his sarcastic son and selfish daughter by the fear of hitting Miss Celia Johnson instead.

Miss Johnson obviously excelled as Mrs. Cherry, for she is a justly celebrated long-sufferer. She is also, within a small range, a crisp and clever actress. Other performances were adequate, all things considered—which means they should have been better. The play was efficiently produced by Mr. Frith Banbury, who cannot (in the absence of evidence to the contrary) be held responsible for the aforementioned finale which very nearly wrecked all his, and everybody else's, previous efforts.

CINEMA

Barnacle Bill, Lola Montes, Les Carnets de Major Thompson, The Ten Commandments

by VINCENT MURRAY

THERE must be something in our Welfare State which elicits a vigorous response to the dilemma of the individual. Nowhere is this more apparent than in cinema, and nowhere has it been more exploited than in the films of Ealing Studios. The latest, **Barnacle Bill**, carries on the tradition—probably the only valid national tradition in the British film. T. E. B. Clarke has written a typically leisurely script which, as far as one can judge from the result, has suffered little interference from Ealing's new American masters. In fact—perish the thought, though it does seem appropriate here—*Barnacle Bill* could have done with a little tightening

up in the early production stages, and a big commercial organisation like M.G.M. might well have performed this service. As it is, the joke about a pier registered as a ship seems over-long. Again it is the story of an individual and an ancient relic (remember the train, the cinema, the car?) standing firm in opposition to the will of authority: in this instance a local town council.

Perhaps a failing of the Ealing communal film-making method is its incapability of cultivating the personal style of a director. Working as a team much is gained in harmony, but something personal inevitably goes. None of the Ealing directors has been allowed a style of his own, and Charles Frend (whose failure to raise the *Cruel Sea* to the level of more than just another sea-story I have not yet forgiven), who directs *Barnacle Bill,* is no exception. What can one say about Guinness? Well, this time his rôle as the sea-sick 'ship's' captain is flimsier than one would expect, but even the most sketchily written part seems safe in his hands, and his variations on the stiff-upper-lip are a joy to behold. A pity about the riotous slapstick at the end, for the general mood hardly led one to expect it; but if you like that sort of thing at least it is well done.

Max Ophüls' last film (he completed it just before his death) turns out to be a travesty of his intentions. The script of **Lola Montes** called for a central situation broken up by a series of flashbacks relating incidents in the career of Miss Montes. The film was to have been in the director's familiar style: episodic narrative, careful attention to period atmosphere, elaborate camera-movement. The result has to be seen to be believed. One had heard how Ophüls was struggling from his hospital bed to prevent his producer from altering his conception of the film, and on his death the detailed alterations went on apace. There are now no flashbacks, no vivid contrast of mood between scenes of Miss Montes' romantic life and her final humiliation in the circus ring. The biographical scenes come first, and all the originally central circus episode is crammed together at the end of the film. Individal scenes bear the authentic Ophüls stamp—décor and settings are throughout fine to look at—but the sudden transitions from sequence to sequence seem too abrupt. Playing is uneven. Martine Carol has not the range necessary for the complex figure of Lola Montes—or should one perhaps refrain from judgment on a performance that was never intended to be pieced together in this way? Peter Ustinov and Anton Walbrook make their respective presences felt.

I don't think it is necessary to spend long on **The Diary of Major Thompson** *(Les Carnets de Major Thompson)*, a film to which I had been looking forward with relish. Was it not to combine the talents of Preston Sturges, Pierre Daninos (who wrote the original novel) and Jack Buchanan? They are indeed all present, but nowhere is there evidence of a happy blending of

talent. The story, about the publication of the Major's notebooks, would I think be almost incomprehensible to anyone unfamiliar with the original. The dubbed dialogue is extremely poorly recorded, making some voices frequently inaudible; the sequences are flung together rather than composed for comic or dramatic effect; the photography would disgrace even a British second-feature. Scarcely any of the wit of the original comes through in the stereotyped performances, and no help at all is forthcoming from Sturges' direction—oh for the days that used to be!

De Mille is still one of the greatest showmen in the whole colony of showmen. His new **Ten Commandments** is, as one would expect, one vast spectacle from beginning to end. His vulgarity is carefully calculated, for a lifetime of show-business has told him exactly what an audience will pay to see. His resolute obstinacy to technical progress in film-making, however, has always struck me as remarkable. One recalls the scene on the 'lot' with de Mille in *Sunset Boulevard* when Norah Desmond goes to visit her former director. The staging of his sequences was just as it had been in the silent days of cinema, and that, from the evidence in his latest film, is how it is today. Admittedly VistaVision offers him more scope for sheer sizeable spectacle than before, but he sees the new shape of the film as merely more space to fill, and not as a dynamic new canvas to experiment with. The costumes and settings in the film are beautifully reproduced in colour, and we are assured of their absolute authenticity. The characters themselves, however, are as wooden as de Mille's historical ones have always been. Nothing that Charlton Heston as Moses, or even Yul Brynner as Rameses can do brings true historical life to their rôles.

Shortly after the publication in this country of his autobiography *I Blow My Own Horn*, Jesse Lasky, founder with de Mille and Goldwyn of the Lasky Famous Players Company, died early this year. Lasky went on to form Paramount Pictures (with Zukor) after the great success of *The Squaw Man* (de Mille directing). His memoirs are written in lively vein and provide much valuable background information of the period before sound came in.

NEW BOOKS

La Vie de la France sous l'Occupation, Hoover Institute (Plon).

IF a militarily unprepared country declares war on a militarily stronger neighbour it must envisage the possibility of defeat. If this unprepared country is alone in the fight it will then have to accept the best peace settlement it can get. If, on the other hand, it has unbeaten allies it must await the final outcome of the war, enduring meanwhile, as best it may, occupation by its conquerors. All this seems self-evident, and would not be worth stating except that ever since 1940 an unrealistic argument about what should or should not have been the attitude of the French during the four year armistice has raged with inconceivable bitterness.

This was not a case where a stronger aggressor country pounced on a weaker country in order to conquer it. France declared war on Germany, not the other way about. And the consequence of this declaration of war might have been foreseen.

There were then, roughly speaking, four courses open to Frenchmen. They could completely withdraw from public life; or they could choose co-operation with Germany, working for the so-called New Order in Europe; or they could harry and sabotage the occupying power by every possible means; or they could hold a balance between these two extremes while waiting to see which side would win the war. The vast majority preferred to take this last course, and meanwhile were content for France to have a number of extremists on either side, to be ready for any contingency.

At the same time, it was also obvious that "resistance" was not analogous to, for example, the resistance of the Irish forty years ago to the English. In that case every act of violence might be thought to be hastening the end of a hated foreign domination. But there was never any question of Germany occupying and ruling France except for the duration of war. and therefore acts of violence were gestures of defiance which led only to immediate reprisals suffered by the whole population, and for that reason were disapproved of by many patriotic Frenchmen.

To hold the balance, to keep the life of the country going, defending its interests in every sphere and ensuring that a maximum of sovereignty remained in French hands was the difficult and ungrateful task performed with admirable skill by the brilliant Pierre Laval. That his efforts on behalf of France should have cost him his life

was due to the fact that he was a great opponent of communism, and at the end of the war it was the communists who ran France (and indeed all Europe) for a time. The surprising thing is that communist politicians and leaders of the resistance should have found non-communist Frenchmen willing to work with them. General de Gaulle's first act was to bring Thorez back from Moscow to a seat in the government.

These three large volumes of documents, collected and published by the Hoover Institute, contain the testimony of hundreds of men who worked for the Vichy Government, and in particular for Laval, between the armistice and the German retreat in 1944. Soldiers, politicians, diplomats, police, businessmen, all agree that Laval's tireless efforts spared his country the worst rigours of an oppressive occupation. His policy was to endeavour to save France from the harsh treatment meted out to Poland. One of his hardest struggles, of which there is massive evidence in these volumes, was to limit as far as possible the number of French workers sent to Germany. His method here, as elsewhere, was to prevaricate, argue and delay, and the difference between the numbers asked for and the numbers sent represents the success of his design.

Almost all the witnesses speak of Laval's love of country, and many end their testimony by saying that, had he had a trial, this is the evidence they would have given. Because he had no trial, the Hoover Institute, in the interest of history, has published this lengthy book. One of the witnesses thus sums up Laval's attitude: "Chez lui, le patriotisme c'était l'amour de son pays et non pas. comme chez la plupart des Français, la haine de celui des autres. Il voulait le bonheur des Français et comprenais que celui-ci ne pouvait être réalisé que dans la paix par une large compréhension européenne."

Laval, one of the first Europeans, had always worked for peace; he thought it a grave error for France to declare war in 1939. But in the hour of defeat he set himself to do whatever was possible, in the difficult circumstances, for his country. Forty million Frenchmen could not all find rooms in London's Connaught Hotel, somebody had to help them through dangerous, hard, disagreeable years.

Although *La Vie de la France sous l'Occupation* is immensely long it is far from dull—a great deal of it is of extreme fascination: small wonder it has been a best seller in France this winter.

The Hoover Institute should follow it up with an account of the collaborators—the Déats, Doriots and Darnands. Then the picture of these years would be complete.

D.M.

HOLLYWOOD AT WAR

A Retrospect

by DESMOND STEWART

AS a vehicle for the propagation of ideas, the film has no rival among the arts. This is true notwithstanding the fact that all the arts, to a greater or less degree, have been used as vehicles for propaganda, whether of a party line or of a personal viewpoint; notwithstanding the fact that all artists are potential propagandists.

Poets have sought to mould the world to their desire by sonnets. Milton's aim in writing *Paradise Lost* was avowedly one of *persuasion*; to justify the ways of God to man. Shelley wrote messages expounding his particular brand of anarchic socialism and inserted them in bottles which he launched into the sea. Ibsen and Shaw wrote plays with a social purpose, whether to vindicate the rights of housewives, or to express the point of view of prostitutes. Plato, Sir Thomas More, Samuel Butler and H. G. Wells, composed literary "Utopias" or "Erewhons" exhibiting the lines on which they would have liked to see society develop. Mussolini, in building his forum, employed sculptors who would create athletic figures of the type he regarded as virile and fascist. The Greeks had done the some, though their ideal was different.

More than all these older arts, with centuries of tradition behind them, more than poetry, more than drama, and far more than its own contemporary, radio, the cinema persuades and influences. This art, which is the remunerative property of a few, reaches the world, and daily alters the world; it is indeed the school of the twentieth century.

Some would deny the cinema's claim to be called an art. It is pure entertainment, they would assert, not art at all. It is in this aspect of the cinema that its vast persuasive power lies. It *is* entertainment if not pure and simple, then at least amusing. "Highbrowism" — that is, the conscious cultivation of something for reasons other than enjoyment—has not yet seriously affected the cinema. In the theatre men will sit on hard benches, and consent to be deeply bored by "highbrow" drama. In the cinema world, this is not the case. We go to the films expecting amusement and comfortable seats. If we hear that the seats at the Palatial are

uncomfortable, and the film dull, we do not go. But with great practical sense, the cinema-owners see to it that their seats *are* comfortable, and that their cinemas *are* palatial. (For physical comfort, a suburban cinema leaves a West End theatre far behind.) And the film-makers, especially those in Hollywood, make it their business to see that the film is amusing. Nothing "highbrow," nothing "minority," nothing that is not strictly "popular," will ever be shown on the million-dollar networks. The cinema is indeed an art—the most "artful" of all arts. Its aims may be low, but that is irrelevant. They are pursued with an intensity of purpose that would do credit to a sculptor, a poet or a choreographer. As a result, a film is swallowed by the eyes, ears and minds of the audience as pure entertainment; and its implications, the ideas behind it, are swallowed too, without their existence being suspected.

Dressed up as pure entertainment, the screen attracts us when we are tired, dispirited, or pessimistic; especially when we are perplexed. The cinema-magnates know this, and the Hollywood formula is the result. It presents a simulacrum of life that is yet better than life itself; a shadow-world that is pleasanter, richer, more enjoyable than the world we live in; a coloured world more gorgeous than our own; a world with no stray ends; a world where if boy meets girl, it means matrimony, not heartbreak; a world where good must triumph, or the film is not released; a world where money and virtue go hand in hand; a world where good poverty becomes rich in the last reel, and where bad poverty is made so ugly that when it is tranquillised we all breathe a sigh of relief. This is the world of the Hollywood formula; where every major problem is solved by a little kindness; where insoluble problems are not recognised, and soluble ones are quickly solved.

Before the Second World War Hollywood portrayed a fantasy-world better than the real world, into which any one of us could enter for one and ninepence. The entrance to this world, though cheap, was opulent. The vestibule of Paradise was called Ritz, Odeon, Granada, Splendid, Plaza, Savoy, Regal, Empire, names redolent of wealth and luxury. The ushers were polite. Tired little Everyman was treated as a king. No wonder the cinema-capital grew richer than Babylon! The cinema was the profitable preventive of revolution on the one hand, or intelligent thinking on the other . . .

Until the late thirties, Hollywood had no propaganda message other than the "formula." Things had been different in Soviet Russia. There, from the first, from 1917 onwards, all art had been

used as ammunition for the party. Music that was "bourgeois" was suppressed; bad music that was militantly political was praised. The cinema was in the forefront of the struggle by the Bolsheviks—never more than a few millions—for the soul of Russia. The Communist Party was lucky to have in Sergei Eisenstein a great artist who was also a loyal party-man. But even without him, the films produced would have had the same spirit, if not the same quality. The translator's note, printed as a preface to the English edition of Eisenstein's book, *The Film Sense*, brings out a long-standing aspect of the film in the U.S.S.R. "The purposive direction of the spectator's emotion is a social responsibility and all art in the U.S.S.R. is conscious of that responsibility—in films of peace as well as of war. This social function underlies every word of Eisenstein's film theory."

The film *Lenin in October* showed clearly the militant aspect of Soviet art. In the first scenes of this much-praised classic, Gorki is made to represent liberal humanism — reproaching Lenin the clear-sighted, with the severity then being used against internal enemies of the revolution. Lenin chaffs him with being "bourgeois," but by kindly treatment of an orphan child, shows that his severity is political, not personal. The rest of the film, with the White conspiracy, and the attempt to assassinate Lenin, is propaganda, intended to show that Lenin was right, and that only the extermination of counter-revolutionaries can safeguard the proletarian victory. As an instance of infiltrative persuasion in this same film one remark is worth recording. Assassination of a Bolshevik official takes place. The working- man detailed to do the job—at a political meeting—prepares to kill, but is overcome by the speech of the Bolshevik—who is appealing to the sense of unity of the working-class. His nerve fails him, and the aristocrat who put him up to the job is obliged to carry out the assassination himself. This villainous-looking reactionary at once observes how foolish it was to hire a working-man—since all working-men follow the Bolsheviks.

The democratic coalition against Nazi Germany found in the Hollywood machine a ready ally. The ideology of the new Germany counted Hollywood as almost the incarnation of evil, and the Nazi slogan "what is not race is dross" roused in the Californian medley a not disinterested sympathy for everything and anything that was anti-Nazi.

Posterity may judge that nothing inclined the American people towards war so much as the cinema. From the first years of Hitler,

Hollywood infused an ideological twist into its pictures. "American way of life" films, in which wealth on matrimony or the punishment of an unattractive criminal was the consummation, gave way to films like *Blockade, Confessions of a Nazi Spy*, and a hundred others in which anti-Nazi sentiments were expressed. A Hollywood magnate boasted later that in the years before Pearl Harbour every cinema was a centre of war-propaganda.

The years after Pearl Harbour are more interesting still. Till then, propaganda had been forced by overriding commercial considerations to be implicit, rather than overt. Embassies and foreign commercial groups could exert pressure if films, too openly hostile to the Axis régimes, were exhibited. America, and the vast overseas American film-market was not, like the Soviet Union, a closed area in which no minorities were allowed to exist, so that a *Professor Mamlock* could be produced, and made as explicit as the day. But after Pearl Harbour the Embassies were closed; the commercial organisations were taken over; propaganda could go towards its objective—the rallying of American public opinion, the unity of the allies, the defeat of the enemy.

Unlike radio propaganda, the cinema cannot overreach national frontiers without the permission of governments. Thus, the Hollywood magnates could concentrate on three types of audience; the American, the allied, and the neutral. They had no need to care what the enemy would think, as the enemy would not see the films they made. This was considered a great advantage, on the short view anyway. It enabled the producers to depict enemy countries and enemy nationals without reference to reality.

With these types of audience in mind, Hollywood set to work. Throughout the war, unideological love stories, musicals and crime-tales were out. If there was to be love—and of course there was—it must be against a background of heroism. Spies, fifth columnists and black-marketeers were to take the place of gangsters. Hollywood's Chinese population played the roles of "yellow-bellied" Japs; anti-Nazi refugees from the Zentrum, frequently non-Aryan, did the same for the jackbooted Nazis. In addition, a new type of picture was invented, a picture portraying Britain, China, France and even Soviet Russia, in flattering terms, with the aim of convincing the isolationists among the Americans that, in war-time anyway, the "American way of life" had its near-equivalent in other lands.

This was the programme. What was the performance? Whether

because Hollywood and its creatures were in fact further from reality than producers in other countries, or because a lavish formula could not be slimmed to suit new circumstances, the failure was outstanding. The new films might still be "slicker" and faster entertainment than the British films, or even German films, but they were far less convincing. No American film could compare with half-a-dozen leading British achievements; and for photographic excellence, all the wealth of Hollywood failed to produce a film as good as the German *Sieg im Westen. Desert Victory, Target for Tonight, In Which We Serve,* were successful films because they were made by men prepared to cope with the new circumstances of war in a new way. Romance was cut; so were histrionics; so were cheap jibes at the enemy; the result was effective realism, and an ounce of reality is worth a ton of celluloid. The Americans never escaped from the lure of "what the people want." If a film was to be made about stratospheric bombing, Miss Gable had to be concealed inside the hero's Fortress.

The "formula" worked in various ways to the detriment of different types of films. Where films about the "Home front" were sentimental, films about the enemy were made in simplified terms—everything in sharp black and white. The Nazi system—the Fascist was hardly dealt with—was dismissed as mere brigandage on the level of "Scarface," "Dillinger," and other blood-and-thunder crime-tales. Thus, though some kind of emotional impetus against Nazis may have been worked up, the real challenge of the totalitarian state was almost completely ignored. The films about allied countries were as remote from the realities of life in those countries as the coloured advertisements in the ten-cent American papers are remote from the truth about America: while the films about the fighting fronts were travesties of the truth.

To support these statements with examples is not difficult; rather there is an *embarras de richesse,* and one can safely claim that the examples are typical; one did not tramp miles in order to see them, and then pillory them; they were shown at every local picture house.

One of the highest rated films about America at war was *Happy Land* ("the ideals at stake," "the things we are fighting for," "what America means to me," etc.). The story was naïve. A fatal telegram informs Pop, in the inevitable small-town drugstore, of his son's death in the Pacific—a tragic theme, but treated so brashly that it caused more laughter than tears. Pop reviles fate, and asks if the war is worth the cost. Whereupon, to dissipate this natural surge

of pessimism, the shade of the dead son appears, large as life, and takes Pop on a tour of his past. Then, for an hour or so, the American way of life is revealed in all its conventional details: birth, courtship and death, against a whimsical background of drugstores, church, small-town social life, debutantes, bobby-soxers, soda fountains, calf love, the kisses of adolescence, and so on. The father is then answered; yes, the war is worth while, as it safeguards all this. The father finds satisfaction; few English cinema-goers can have shared it.

Of the films that set out to show "what we are fighting against," not all were so gloriously bad as *The Cross of Lorraine, Manhunt, The Night is Ending,* and *Hangmen also Die.* Let us consider one of the better ones. *Lifeboat* was directed by Alfred Hitchcock. It was produced after many unconvincing films on the "inside Europe" topic; and was designed to be a corrective to these and a serious attempt to define and symbolise the conflict underlying the Second World War.

The beginning was interesting. A lifeboat is seen bobbing amidst the ruins of a torpedoed merchant ship in the grey Atlantic. In the boat is Talulah Bankhead, a heartless war-correspondent; there is a shot of this mink-coated lady cynically photographing the bodies and debris that float by. One would have appreciated this portrayal of a heartless woman (with standards of sympathy so much lower than one's own) were it not that one felt that her ultimate regeneration was inevitable. Sure enough, it was. Enter other survivors: a democratic, rough-and-ready sailor, who subdues Talulah; a man with a gangrened leg; and finally a vast mountain of a Nazi sailor, from the submarine. The technique is excellent. The whole of its action is in the rolling lifeboat; the British director imposed at least this restraint on the picture. One sees nothing but sea, sky and boat.

Each of the allied survivors has a different plan. There is general confusion. No one knows where to go, what to do. The gangrened man gets worse. And then, into the breach steps, suddenly, the German. He has medical knowledge; he amputates the leg. He can navigate; he takes over the direction of the ship. Above all, he is strong, and can row. Thus far—and there were many critics who assailed the film for this—the fat, kindly lieder-singing Nazi is the natural master. But this was not the aim of the film. The *dénouement* was to furnish the propaganda. The fat, slap-happy German was *ruthless;* and in the night, when the one-legged invalid

screamed for water, he threw him overboard. Meanwhile, in his own pocket he concealed a small bottle full of water. This "fraud" is discovered; the disappearance of the gangrened man questioned; the direction of the ship's course suspected; and with a sense of outrage the survivors turn on the German and throw him overboard into the sea.

All this was meant to be acutely subtle. It was meant to be a refutation of the belief that efficiency is enough. Even the once callous Miss Bankhead is converted by her tough democrat to a state of mind in which she shares the full horror of her fellow survivors at the Nazi's "ends justify the means" doctrine. She shares, too, in the general pushing overboard.

This film made as brave an attempt as any during the war to display a fundamental moral difference between Allied and Axis outlooks. It was indeed a film that could be called profound, compared to the Prisoner of Zenda fantasies about occupied countries and glamorous resistance leaders. But the dialectics of *Lifeboat* will hardly live. For one thing, and this is an important criticism, there are too many loopholes in the argument. It could be reasonably argued that in certain circumstances ruthlessness is unavoidable; and that in this case the German, as the only one powerful enough to row the ship anywhere, had the best right to water. If he succeeded, there was hope for all; on the other hand, if the bottle of water were divided into half-a-dozen mouthfuls, it would have meant temporary appeasement, but final disaster. In addition to this, there was too much hairsplitting for effective propaganda. Those who reasoned would see the faults that I have mentioned; those who did not would be unable to see what the fuss was about.

In the third class of films, those about allied countries, *Mrs Miniver* and *Song of Russia* were among the most interesting. The first was written by Jan Struther. Greer Garson played what was meant to be a typically middle-aged middle-class English role against a background of most unEnglish splendour. Everything, especially death, was sentimentalised. And as though in deference to English snobbery, this failing was exhibited as an amiable virtue. Mrs. Miniver's son goes off to the war with the restrained histrionics fashionable since Hemingway, whereas the maid's follower goes off to the tune of well-bred leg-pulling and humour from his employers. This was a film where interest vied with nausea.

What the Russians thought of *Song of Russia,* it is amusing to hazard. It is unlikely that any other than foreign service officials

will have seen it. If they did, they would hardly recognise their homeland. For while thousands of Americans knew England fairly well, few knew anything more about Russia than they could learn from press-articles, or from the organs of pro-Russian societies. *Song of Russia* starred Robert Taylor as a leading American conductor who went to Russia just before the German onslaught. He marries a Russian girl in a Russian church; plays his Song of Russia to appreciative audiences of Russian workers; joins his wife in her fight with the partisans, and so forth. Seeing this film one began to wonder whether there had ever been a revolution, or whether the whole country had been suddenly turned into a replica of America, with nothing but high boots and singing farmers to distinguish it from the environs of Kansas City. Chromium plate modernity; popular priests; complete individual freedom; family life; these were the ingredients of this strange picture. It was not altogether surprising that the film was shown on the lesser circuits.

The first three types of film aroused disbelief, boredom and sometimes a jaded kind of amusement. The fourth American type, films about the fighting fronts, aroused indignation. Usually they were billed as "epics" or "sagas"; always they were served up as "tributes" to this or that section of the armed forces, rather than attempts to increase the profits of the film city. The war in China, the evacuation of the Philippines, the invasion of North Africa and Italy, the bombing of Germany, in a word, every aspect of the war then raging, was screened, often in technicolor. Even Burma was handled. The storm that greeted *Objective Burma*, when it was shown at the Warner Theatre in the last year of the war, was only a more intensified exhibition of the feelings that all these American "epics" inspired. But this was indeed a triumph of misrepresentation. Mr. Errol Flynn and a handful of American doughboys were credited with the total liberation of Burma. The fact that the British also helped was mentioned once, almost off-stage. The outcry that greeted this picture doomed it in England, but in other parts of the world it paraded its sham history to less critical audiences. If this explosion of popular indignation had come earlier it might have exercised a salutary effect on Hollywood producers. To quote Christopher Isherwood, "there is nothing more cowardly than a million dollars."

This brief review of Hollywood pictures, as war propaganda, illustrates two points which must be understood in order to produce films that will be successful both as films and as instruments of

persuasion. First, the maker of films must not be dominated by a formula; he must see new facts in a new way and treat them cinematically in accordance with the new vision (and if one is looking at war, the chances are that one will see with austerity, with sternness, with pity). Secondly, he will deal only with subjects he understands. He will imitate the restraint of good novelists who only write about things they have experienced and know for themselves; he will not write *Mrs. Miniver* or *Songs of Russia* by guesswork, for the result will be ludicrous. Disregard of these principles ensured that American films of the Second World War were second-rate and lacking in everything but a superficial competence of technique. When it comes to films that try to persuade, that have as their aim the "purposive direction of the spectator's emotion," technique is not enough.

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