

may be considered serious gaps. He does not as much as hint at a typology of the liberal mind and its epistemological presuppositions. David Hume could have been chosen as the archetype. Reality is unknowable, the best world is the com- modious one in which the David Humes, that is, the liberal and liberally thinking decent gentlemen, feel at ease. People feel at ease when there are no restrictions inhibiting their movements, in other words where they freely trade in mer- chandise and ideas . . . as long as free- dom does not include price rises by Arab sheikhs and pornographic literature by the Larry Flynts. In short, let's be free and decent. But, as Bell notes, "on a mass scale, economics has become geared to the demands of culture, and culture reigns supreme not as a moral meaning but as a lifestyle"—any lifestyle, not merely that of decent gentlemen. Where in liberalism, and its offspring, capitalism, is the moral (and cultural) compass telling it and society that there are norms higher than the freedom to trade and to publish?

This takes us to the second lacuna in Bell's volume: we find in it no outline of a theory of state and power. The author is "a socialist in economics, a liberal in poli- tics, and a conservative in culture"—in other words, an adept of the best of all worlds. The trouble is that such a world does not exist except in the mind of intel- lectual, comfort-loving people. The ques- tion concerning state and power cannot be eluded, even though it is fashionable to do so among the *nouveaux philosophes*, whether in France or in America. For the situation in which we find ourselves is one in which liberalism maintains itself at the price of suicidal compromises with *dirigisme*, on the one hand, and with cultural decay, on the other. It flourishes only in such vaporous minds as Giscard's in France and Suarez's in Spain. The liberal veils his eyes when power is mentioned because he thinks that the status quo he enjoys is not sustained by power but by

the consensus of decent sort of chaps like "me and you." Yet, power knocks at the door: in Heilbroner's description its name is *socialism*, and he warns the liberals not to entertain the illusion that socialism is already here in the comfortable form of the welfare state. The latter, he writes, is merely the nth mask of capitalism, whereas real socialism will be, if not totalitarian, at least authoritarian, plan- ning the economy and imposing its own (illiberal) cultural values.

Heilbroner tries to be reassuring; after all, if he is right about the ubiquity of capitalism, he addresses, even in the pages of *Dissent*, a capitalist-liberal pub- lic. It would be interesting to learn what Bell thinks of the emerging state and its power; in short, what kind of book would he write under the title of "The *political* contradictions of capitalism"?

Reviewed by THOMAS MOLNAR

Composer Under Communism

Testimony: The Memoirs of Dmitri Shostakovich, as related to and edited by Solomon Volkov; translated from the Russian by Antonina W. Bouis, *New York: Harper and Row, 1979. xli + 289 pp. \$15.00.*

THESE ARE THE MEMOIRS of the composer "Dmitri Dmitrievich Shostakovich, Dep- uty of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R., laureate of the Lenin and State prizes of the U.S.S.R. A faithful son of the Communist Party. . . ." (so the of- ficial obituary described him); taken down during the last four years of his life by a young Russian musicologist, brought to the West with the help of some "coura-

geous people,” and now published here, for the first time.

On May 12, 1926, his Symphony No. 1 was given its first performance, and the nineteen-year-old graduate of the Leningrad Conservatory became instantly a celebrity. Shostakovich's resourceful inventiveness and seemingly effortless technical brilliance, his adroit use of harmonic modernisms that titillated the hearers' ears without outraging their sense of traditional propriety, made the work popularly accessible; and he, to use his own words, “acquired a certain fame.” Within the next few years performances of the symphony by the most prestigious conductors and orchestras created for the young composer an international reputation and almost universal recognition of his great talent.

Shostakovich had been given rigorous training in piano and composition at the Conservatory, which he entered at the age of thirteen, and was a dedicated student. In *Testimony* he reminisces at considerable length, and with admiration, about Alexander Glazunov, head of the Conservatory from 1906 to 1928; a conservative musician who, nevertheless, gave him support and understanding. Repeatedly he praises the selfless integrity (so unlike the ruthless, back-stabbing self-seeking of the Party-line followers) of this survivor from the pre-Revolutionary era, who “lived in a terrible world that he didn't understand.”

After the success of the First Symphony the Soviet government began to take notice of Shostakovich. The officially commissioned, propagandist Second (“Dedication to October”) and Third (“May First”) Symphonies both conformed to the Party-line dictate, that the arts must reflect and celebrate the Revolutionary uprising and final victory of the proletarian masses. And in spite of their daring and aggressive “modernism” the composer remained immune from censure by the authorities—a privilege that he was not long to enjoy.

The opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk District* (“a tragic-satyrical opera,” the composer calls it) had its first performance in Leningrad in 1934. There it was given thirty-six times in five months, and in Moscow ninety-four times in two seasons; in the capitals of the West it was presented with sensational success. Then Stalin went to see it, and “left the theater in a rage.” And on January 28, 1936, an article, “Muddle instead of Music,” appeared in *Pravda*:

The listener is flabbergasted from the first moment of the opera by an intentionally ungainly, muddled flood of sounds. Snatches of melody, embryos of musical phrases, drown, escape, and drown once more in crashing, gnashing, and screeching.

“I'll never forget that day,” Shostakovich says, “it's probably the most memorable in my life. That article on the third page of *Pravda* changed my entire existence.” He had no doubt that the article had been dictated by “the Leader of the Peoples and Friend of Children,” Stalin himself. “All right, the opera was taken off the stage. . . . Everyone turned away from me. There was a phrase in the article saying that all this ‘could end very badly.’ They were all waiting for the bad end to come.” He, too, waited, his suitcase packed, expecting to be arrested—at night; for that was when they would come to take him away.

Solomon Volkov records, in his introduction, that Stalin had made a “private decision” that Shostakovich would never be arrested. The composer, meanwhile, had become (whether consciously or not, Volkov says) a “new *yurodivy*.”

Stepping onto the road of *yurodstvo*, Shostakovich relinquished all responsibility for anything he said: nothing meant what it seemed to, not the most exalted and beautiful words. The pronouncement of familiar truths turned out to be mockery; conversely, mockery often contained tragic truth.

His public acceptance, after the condemnation of *Lady Macbeth*, of Party discipline, and such a statement, made later, as, "I am a Soviet composer and see our epoch as something heroic, spirited and joyous," could appear, in the context of his life, to be characteristic actions of a *yurodivy*.

The first performance of the Fifth Symphony in 1937 completely rehabilitated his reputation. It seems apparent that in composing this symphony and for the rest of his career, during which he wrote nine more, Shostakovich had decided prudently to moderate his "modernism" and trust that those who had ears to hear would understand the hidden meaning of his music. In the preface to the symphony, for example, he writes of "optimism and the joy of living" portrayed in the finale; but in *Witness* he says:

I think that it is clear to everyone what happens in the Fifth. The rejoicing is forced, created under threat. . . . It's as if someone were beating you with a stick and saying, "Your business is rejoicing, your business is rejoicing," and you rise, shaky, and go marching off, muttering, "Our business is rejoicing, our business is rejoicing."

Fear is the *leitmotiv* of this book. Fear of the tyrants—not only Stalin, but his successors too. ("I wasn't sent to the camps, but it's never too late. After all it depends on how the new leader and teacher feels about your work.") Fear of the informers; the "pawns, toadies, screws, and other tiny souls"—the "citizen composers" who, during the 1948 campaign against the "formalist conspiracy" panicked, and "began hanging one another," and "knocked themselves out to avoid the list [of the 'main offenders'] and did everything they could to get their comrades on it."

To the Party-line critics and the "aesthetes" who "are equally against music reminding people about life, about tragedies, about victims, the dead," Shosta-

kovich responds with unequivocal demands for "brave music"—"brave because it is truthful." And the truths he would wish his music to communicate are harsh truths. He has no use for those who talk about "other, more noble aims of art . . . about beauty, grace, and other high qualities." He says, ironically, "Let anything at all go on around you, but serve high art, and nothing but, at the table."

His creative drives did not compel him to rethink and reinvent form. To him, content—what the work was "about"—seems to have been all-important. The Romantic symphony of Gustav Mahler undoubtedly was the springboard from which he took off. He praises the music of Stravinsky (who told him that he should go beyond Mahler), and says that he "is the only composer of our century whom I would call great without any doubt." But Stravinsky's "idea of the role of music" is not for him. It is difficult, indeed, to imagine that the Byzantine austerities of the *Symphony of Psalms* or the hieratic solemnities of *Oedipus Rex* could have influenced him, whose objectives were so opposed to those of the older, devoutly Orthodox composer.

It is when he discusses Mussorgsky, "probably the most *yurodivy* of the Russian—and not only the Russian—composers," that he reveals most intimately his conception of the composer's task. He has a "special relationship" with him. "In general," he says, "as I go over Mussorgsky's character and personality, I'm amazed at how much we have in common."

I always felt that the ethical basis of *Boris* was my own. The author uncompromisingly decries the amorality of an anti-people government, which is inevitably criminal . . . and it is particularly revolting that it hides under the name of the people. . . . The style of justifying villainy in Russia never changes, the stench of evil lingers.

All questions concerning the meaning and function of music begin for him with Mussorgsky, whose music is “always alive . . . and that means an argument with citizens grabbing each other by the lapels is not far behind.” He does not, however, speak of the pivotal influence on Mussorgsky’s style of folk music—the Russian native art that the Soviet rulers wantonly destroyed. (“It was destroyed forever because it was oral. When they shoot a folk singer or wandering storyteller, hundreds of great musical works die with him.”)

He is not a militant atheist, he says; but it is apparent that Shostakovich has no use for religion, which he is most likely to speak of as “superstition” or “false religiosity.” Stalin, who had had “all that religious stuff beaten into his head by his ignorant teachers,” was superstitious, and his superstition “touched on religion.” Profession of religious faith most often is a lie, or at least a superstitious delusion. Shostakovich derides Solzhenitsyn, with whom he had had a cordial relationship, for preaching religion and speaking out against lack of faith.

For those whom he calls “humanists” he has unqualified contempt. Some he names: André Malraux (“Has anyone ever asked André Malraux why he glorified the construction of the White Sea Canal . . .?”); Lion Feuchtwanger (“I read his little book *Moscow 1937* with revulsion”); George Bernard Shaw (“It was Shaw who announced . . . ‘Hunger in Russia? Nonsense’ ”); Romain Rolland (“It makes me sick to think about him”). “Famous humanists,” journalists, foreign tourists—delegations of “defenders of this or fighters for that”—all make him suspicious, convinced that they are unprincipled liars who care only for their own comfort and have no concern about the suffering and oppression that he and his fellow citizens have to endure. (“If

they don’t give a damn, then they don’t. And to hell with them.”) This distrust, often xenophobic, makes it impossible for me to believe that he would ever have thought of defecting to the West.

Shostakovich composed musical scores for forty movies—some of them glorifying the vilified leader, Stalin—for which he received money and prizes. His public utterances—probably ghost-written—followed obsequiously the Party-line. (*Yurodivy* or not, martyrdom was not his vocation.) He must have realized, eventually, that the early promise of his genius would never be fulfilled completely in that repressive environment, where to survive meant to compromise. (The *samizdat* counter-culture was not for him; nor were the dissidents’ manifestoes, which he refused to sign.) Nevertheless, what he had written, he had written.

A frightened man, withdrawn into himself at the last, and obsessed by death. “Fear of death,” Shostakovich says, “may be the most intense emotion of all.” He agrees with Chekhov, who thought that life after death “was all nonsense” because it was superstition.

There were no particularly happy moments in my life, no great joys. It was gray and dull and it makes me sad to think about it. It saddens me to admit it, but it’s the truth, the unhappy truth.

This book is not “literature.” It is the chronicle of a superbly gifted composer’s life under Communism; of friendships and enmities; of loyalties and betrayals; of some who survived, and others who were shot or imprisoned: a bitterly documented indictment of the malign dictatorship whose leaders and lackeys continue to suppress into uncreative conformity the homeland of Pushkin and Glinka, of Dostoevsky and Mussorgsky.

Reviewed by DONALD POND

A Modern Tocqueville

Politics and History: Selected Essays

by Raymond Aron, collected and translated by Miriam Bernheim Conant, *New York: The Free Press, 1978. xxx + 274 pp. \$15.95.*

In Defense of Decadent Europe, by

Raymond Aron; translated from the French by Stephen Cox, *South Bend, Ind.: Regnery/Gateway, Inc., 1979. xviii + 297 pp. \$14.95.*

RAYMOND ARON has long been a thorn in the side of the Marxists. He retired in 1977 as columnist for *Le Figaro*, from which he offered lively and pungent commentary on world affairs, and by which he supplemented an extensive list of book publications. Aron is a sage of the middle way. His adherence to the democratic path, to the free societies of Western Europe and of the United States, and his trenchant critiques of the Soviet system and the naive worshippers of the Marxist credo, have made Aron an effective dissenter from our fashionable ideologies. *The Opium of the Intellectuals* (translated into English in 1957) inaugurated this effort, and these two works restate the case for the recent past.

Both *Politics and History* and *In Defense of Decadent Europe* may be read as convenient companion volumes, the one a theoretical preface to the other. The essays range widely, from "Thucydides and the Historical Narrative" to "The Social Responsibility of the Philosopher." But, obliquely and directly, they elaborate a common theme, one that illuminates the discussion of the contemporary world in Aron's glance at "decadent Europe." Three essays in particular—"The Philosophy of History," "Sociology and the Philosophy of Human Rights," and "The Liberal Definition of Freedom"—best illustrate Aron's point of view.

History, to Aron, is a flexible, contingent, open-ended process. At every angle it reveals the unpredictable, variable, accidental turn of events. This perspective, he believes, is the triumph of the scientific, empirical study of the past. For the more we place the data of events under the microscopic scrutiny of history, the more clearly is revealed the possibility of alternatives and the opportunity for choice. No longer tenable, then, is the concept of universal history or any monolithic containment of the past by an all-embracing superstructure imposed on it. "There is no coherent historical whole, no possibility of conceiving man or of seeing a single idea in the time process."

Such a perspective of the human drama has often smoothed the path of nihilists. But Aron writes very much like the American pragmatists who applied the concept of the "open universe" to philosophy and life. For this pragmatic understanding of the world makes possible the course of human progress, a progress wrought by pragmatic adjustments to the world, by intelligence, by science and technology. Aron is consistently the defender of the open society that makes these applications possible. It is the traditional liberties, defined in the late eighteenth century by the United States and France, that liberated free thought, individual enterprise in the marketplace, and democratic participation in the life of the state. But as Aron knows, the free West sprang also from its sense that an abstract "nature" endowed human beings with basic rights. Here a curious universalism remained. Can free society maintain its legitimacy when the modern intelligence discredits such apparent anomalies as the rights of free speech and free thought? And what happens when a new kind of universalism, the universalism of Marxism-Leninism, arises to redefine the meaning of human rights?

The modern world wars between the spirit of Marx and the spirit of Tocqueville. For it was the French aristocrat,