
LETTERS

“Cuba and the Intellectuals”

It is BIGOTED to be anti-American; America is a capitalist country; therefore, opposition to capitalism is a form of bigotry. This syllogism, which underlies so many contributions to your pages, is implicit in Anthony Hartley's recent article on Cuba.

Provoked by Dr. Castro's nationalisation of American business interests in Cuba (or was there some other act of provocation that I missed?), the U.S. government financed, armed and planned an invasion. We who protested against this action are now accused by Mr. Hartley of “gleeful emotionalism,” “chauvinism and *schadenfreude*.” We are told, in fact, not that we were wrong, but that we ought to be ashamed of ourselves. As in *The Caine Mutiny*, the thesis is that intellectuals ought never to rock the boat, no matter how strangely the captain is behaving, because boat-rocking is a sign of arrogance and immaturity.

Towards the end of his piece, Mr. Hartley appears to be arguing that the only honest critics of America are those who come right out and declare their preference for the Soviet way of life. In other words, he excludes the possibility of a third course. So (you should pardon the emotive expression) did McCarthy.

In his reference to my letter to *The Times* on the Cuban adventure, Mr. Hartley is guilty of a subtle inaccuracy that I feel bound to correct. He says:

I have some sympathy with those signatories of the *Times* letter who insisted on the addition of the words “though not always in ways that all of us would approve” to the eulogy of Dr. Castro's economic activity.

Nobody insisted on any such thing; the phrase Mr. Hartley quotes was in the original draft. By suggesting, however, that it was added under pressure, Mr. Hartley is able to convey the idea that I, unlike some of my gentler co-signatories, am a ruthless believer that the end justifies the means. If this were the case, I would have to admit that Mr. Hartley had beaten me at my own game.

KENNETH TYNAN

London

1. Mr. Tynan should not attribute to me or to ENCOUNTER his own inadequate analysis of the nature of American society. Anti-Americanism and anti-capitalism are both capable of producing forms of bigotry, and, when they are combined by means of propositions as superficial and misleading as “America is a capitalist country,” the result is a particularly narrow brand of intolerance. Anyone is free to think (or to fail to think) in this way, but I would rather not have his errors in logic foisted on to me.

2. I should have thought it to be obvious that there were many other reasons apart from “business

interests” for American attitudes to events in Cuba, and I suspect that Mr. Tynan has missed a good deal. For instance, it apparently escaped his notice that half my article was devoted to a protest against the Cuban expedition. The difference between us is that I regard the Cuban expedition as a bad lapse on the part of a friendly country which shares many of the same democratic beliefs and traditions as ourselves, whereas Mr. Tynan seems to detect some more fundamental turpitude arising out of the “capitalist” nature of American society—the “monopoly trusts” and “merchants of death” riding again, a little long in the tooth, but recognisably their old hackneyed selves. I might add that I do not wish to deprive intellectuals of their boat-rocking fun, but that I reserve the right to protest when they look like swamping any craft that I myself happen to be in.

3. Naturally in terms of political and cultural theory there are many “third courses” which differ from both the American and the Russian way of life. However, at the end of my article I was talking about British foreign policy, and there we are in the position of having to make a choice, since the whole of post-war history has proved our inability to “go it alone.” Neutralists in this country are protected in their illusions by the realities of an American alliance at which they sneer. I do not find this position particularly courageous or commendable: it seems to me to combine priggishness and lack of generosity in equal proportions. As for Mr. Tynan's introduction of the late junior Senator for Wisconsin, it is the easier to pardon him the “emotive expression” in that I should have been disappointed had this particular cliché not appeared in his reply.

4. As for his final paragraph, I must say that I took the phrase “though not always in ways that all of us would approve” as indicating disagreement among the signatories of the *Times* letter. I still do not see what purpose the words “all of us” (as distinct from “we”) could fulfil other than that of demonstrating such real differences of opinion. And, if some approved and others disapproved of Dr. Castro's “ways,” then it seemed reasonable to suppose that the phrase had been inserted at the latter's request. However, I naturally accept Mr. Tynan's assurance that the words were in the original draft, though I feel that this is more an occasion for congratulations on the draftsman's dexterity than a refutation of my deduction that there were differences among the signatories. It might throw some light on the matter were Mr. Tynan to tell us which of Dr. Castro's “ways” he himself disapproves: Is it the abolition of elections? the imprisonment of Labour leaders such as David Salvador and the suspension of the right to strike? the dismissal of some two-thirds of the teachers of Havana university? the government control of the press? the seizure of *Dr. Zhivago* as counter-revolutionary literature? It would be interesting to know, for I am not aware that he has ever gone on record as a critic of any of the “ways” of the Castro régime.

ANTHONY HARTLEY

London

Oxford and Sociology

I READ the following in Mr. C. A. R. Crosland's article in the July issue: "But are Oxford and Cambridge really as good as Harvard and the Sorbonne? Their recent farcical performance over the introduction of sociology—a lamentable compound of hide-bound traditionalism and facetious superciliousness—makes one doubt it." I don't know how one would go about comparing major universities, but Mr. Crosland might at least get his facts correct.

It is not for me to speak for Cambridge, but to the best of my understanding a number of papers in sociology have been introduced into the Tripos and a number of posts, both University and College, have been created.

With regard to Oxford, no question of "introducing" sociology has arisen, since the subject in various forms has been taught for some time. What occurred was that it proved impossible to fill immediately a vacancy in a University Readership, and that the opportunity was taken for a general review of the position. Without pre-judging the University's final action, it is possible to say that legislation is being promoted both for the introduction of papers on the subject in the Final Honours School of Philosophy, Politics, and Economics, and for the creation of two senior posts instead of the one. It is hoped that this will be followed by a further expansion leading to the creation of an advanced (B.Phil.) degree in sociology alone. So far from exhibiting the qualities which Mr. Crosland professes to find, a great deal of time and hard work has been spent by the Social Studies Board and by a series of *ad hoc* committees including representatives of other major disciplines in order to discover the best means by which the University can contribute to the teaching and development of the subject. None of this activity has been secret, and it was up to Mr. Crosland, as a former resident member of the University, to find this out before committing himself to print.

MAX BELOFF

Oxford

"A Visit to India"

IT WOULD be as much a pity for anyone to judge the Indian scene on the basis of Mr. John Wain's "A Visit to India" (ENCOUNTER, May, 1961) as it would be to sense England's current intellectual climate on the same basis. Surely India needs critics—needs them badly in fact: one is tired of seeing somebody impressed by "the tremendous nation-building activity," "the mystic ethos," "the bewildering variety," and all that. But then it is too late in the 20th century to do another Beverley Nichols—even if under the ill-fitting guise of the post-war English flippancy and "tough-minded" sentimentality. One does not have to be a confirmed Marxist to attach more than a casual significance to the fact that the only person who could talk any sense to Mr. Wain was a "paternalistic

capitalist." One expects something better than that. . . .

To give the devil his due, Mr. Wain has made one really valid and useful point, namely, about the futility of translations by persons who are not native speakers of the target language. The moral is obvious—more native speakers of English should turn their attention to translating from Indian languages.

ASHOK R. KELKAR

Poona

ONE CAN SAFELY presume that by now the ever-present squalor, the wretched poverty, and immensity of numbers are fairly well-known features of the Indian scene; and delving anew with fresh accounts hardly contributes to exhilarating reading.

The impressions dwelt upon in the article are those of a casual visitor. Though it may not be accompanied by the enthusiastic approbation of all knowledgeable circles, a deeper quest like Mr. Koestler's essay on "Yoga" is certainly more welcome as it elaborates on a single subject about which the ordinary reader does not profess to know much.

It is gratifying to note Mr. Wain's unusual spirit of tolerance towards the Indian pattern of life. I sympathise with him in his experiences with beggars, cockroaches, Indian railways, etc.; and may I suggest for a future visit that if sordid dining-car waiters choose to bear down at him with handfuls of grimy cutlery, not to settle down in meek acquiescence but to fling them back with careful aim and to resort to bare hands (another quaint Indian custom?) for the consumption of the hotch-potch meal.

S. K. PANDE

Durgapur, Bengal

John Wain's Reply

I AM DISTRESSED to find that my article, "A Visit to India," in your May issue, has caused some annoyance and resentment among Indian readers. Letters have been reaching me—sometimes direct, sometimes through the ENCOUNTER office—which make this sadly plain. May I have a few lines of your space to try to soothe ruffled feelings?

The protesting and accusing letter-writers fall into two classes. First, those who are annoyed that I should have seen poverty, disease, dust, insects, or anything else of a regrettable nature in India. I understand the feelings of these correspondents, but can do nothing about them. Of course it is annoying, when your country is making heroic efforts to leap from mediævalism straight into modernity, to have visitors who write about your problems rather than your achievements. For that matter, a certain kind of Indian reader would probably dislike me for writing enthusiastically about the Taj Mahal. I did, of course, describe a

visit to a modern factory and its housing estate, and in terms of almost unqualified admiration. But to the reader who wants a publicity hand-out for "modern India," rather than a visitor's impression of the mixed India that actually exists, my article would naturally be offensive and I might as well admit it.

A second and more important class of correspondents are those who accuse me of discourtesy. As a guest of the Indian Congress for Cultural Freedom, I shouldn't (they think) have mentioned the occasional hardship in the form of dirty restaurants or insects. One very forthright critic even taxes me with "holding up to ridicule" the people who were doing their best for me. He is thinking in particular of my description of a night spent in Poona. I will refer in detail to this episode in a moment, but first there is an important matter of principle to be dealt with.

A writer, wherever he goes, is constantly tempted towards the documentary. His nature, as a writing animal, urges him to give some account of what he has seen. All writers succumb to this temptation; either they wrap it up as fiction, alter names and shuffle physical characteristics, or they try to keep imaginative and documentary writing fairly sharply apart, as I do myself. But in either case, if a writer travels, he writes about his travels in one way or another. *And he always gives offence.* It is impossible to describe people's homes, their daily habits, their social background, their conversation, their cookery, without either running them down or (what is probably more common) praising them in a way they find unacceptable.

Take, as the concrete example in this case, my description of that night at Poona. As I recounted, the arrangements for my stay had gone askew, owing to the fact that the Professor who was to have entertained me had to hurry to the sick-bed of a relative. So another host was found: the man I call in my article "the Principal." Especial indignation has been felt on the Principal's behalf. I described my strained, weary condition, the unpleasant restaurant we visited, my difficulty at first in making any contact with my host because of the uncertainty of his English. "Tea is made. I know I shan't sleep if I drink it, but I drink it. The evening slowly settles down into a nightmare. Then I notice the cockroaches." And so on.

Disgusting, isn't it? I take the Principal's bread and salt and then write insultingly about him. I spurn (retrospectively) the tea he kindly offers, I complain of trifling annoyances like the odd cockroach, I describe the evening he is working hard to make enjoyable as "a nightmare." In short, I'm a cad.

The trouble is that I can't escape my obligation to tell the truth. Travel, especially travel that one has to earn by working hard and meeting a lot of people, *is* sometimes a nightmare: to be whirled from place to place, to experience sudden changes of climate, to eat unaccustomed food, to sleep—or, more often, to lie awake—in strange beds far from home, to be continually meeting new people and trying to remember their names—every now and then it all becomes too much. After all, this is

my story about my visit to India. But there is a more serious defence. I had gone to Poona to see Indian education, or to catch what glimpse of it I could in one evening; and to meet the Principal, to go to his house, to hold some kind of stumbling conversation with him, was a privilege. And, though I've no doubt my way of recognising that privilege would not be very pleasing to the Principal or his friends, I did recognise it; I say, a little further on in my article—

I know, suddenly, that I am seeing Indian education, in the person of this little man, overworked and underpaid, living in his tiny house full of cockroaches. He wants so desperately to know what is being done in the world, and how he can distil some of that precious substance known as Education, and feed it to his pupils. . . . Good-bye, Principal! Indian education is another thing I shan't make jokes about any more.

Now I believe I am right in saying that however irritating such writing may be to an Indian, no one in the West could possibly believe that I was satirising the Principal, or looking down on him, or not appreciating his kindness. Indian education *is* an uphill struggle; it *is* conducted by men like him, and they *are* underpaid and overworked, and they *do* live in tiny houses with cockroaches in them. And in his annoyance that I should have seen so clearly the hardships, the overcrowding, the bad conditions, the Principal, if he did me the honour of reading my article, may have imagined that I was patronising him. Certainly some of his friends imagined it. And in so doing they overlooked the fact that I was paying him the one compliment that matters to a teacher above anything, praising him in the only terms that, to a teacher, are finally meaningful: the terms in which Chaucer praised his "Clerk of Oxenford": *Gladly would he learn, and gladly teach.*

I believe that line could be quoted of the Principal; those immortal words apply to him. The details about hardship, and dirt, and insects, are there because they are part of the story; I saw India with the eyes of a visitor from one of the (so far) pampered societies of the West, and I was writing my impressions mainly for other Westerners. The physical realities of the Indian scene *do* matter, in such an account; my trip was not an evening at the Cinera, but a real, sweaty, toilsome journey; like most Europeans who visit the tropics for short and sudden periods, I felt ill most of the time I was there. (After I got back, I had to go for treatment to the London Hospital for Tropical Diseases.) But I'm not blaming the Principal for that. I'm not even blaming him for the cockroaches. If it comes to cockroaches, I was once sitting at the breakfast-table in an extremely comfortable flat in New York when one dropped on to my neck from the ceiling. Will my American friends think me satirical, or patronising, or a bad guest, for remembering that incident? No—and I hope that, after their first annoyance has faded, my Indian friends won't either.

JOHN WAIN

London

A. J. P. Taylor

MR. TREVOR-ROPER's full-dress rebuttal of A. J. P. Taylor's account of *The Origins of the Second World War* must have been gratefully received by readers like myself who were appalled by the book and its reception by the critics. Reading Mr. Taylor on the subject was a distressing experience. Reading the reviews was positively traumatic.

The horror of the text itself with its false premises and falser conclusions, its suppressions and distortions, fades with the impression of its spuriously brilliant style. But one can neither forget nor forgive the reviewers who hailed it as a "masterpiece" of historical exegesis. The disturbing fact is not that Mr. Taylor should have written a thoroughly bad book, but that its badness was compounded and made dangerous by the critics.

However, your space and his time will have been well-spent if Mr. Trevor-Roper's article serves its somewhat understated purpose of warning us of the kind of arguments that will be used to justify Mr. Khrushchev's forthcoming demands on the Western World. It could help us to avoid being deceived and disarmed by that new breed of appeasers who are unlikely to be known as Men of Munich but may ultimately come to be called—and with equally deserved contempt—the Men of Berlin.

JOHN HUNTER

London

WHATEVER the truth about A. J. P. Taylor's book, Professor Trevor-Roper writes as the rhetorician rather than the historian when he contrasts "the British people, united in pacifism in 1936" with the same people "[going], in 1939, united into war." There were a good many pacifists in 1939; there were not, as far as I know, all that many more in 1936. What Professor Trevor-Roper could have said—and all that his argument in fact requires—is that the bulk of *non*-pacifist opinion was convinced of the necessity of war in 1939 as it had not been in 1936. Why not say so?

J. C. MAXWELL

University of Durham

Wain's Connolly's Toynbee

I CAN SWALLOW Wain on Connolly. I am disturbed by Philip Toynbee on Wain on Connolly. My mind sags under the weight of Wain on Toynbee on Wain on Connolly. But when I get to Toynbee on Wain on Toynbee on Wain on Connolly, I fail to see any longer any connection between anything and anything.

MARTIN SMALL

Oxford

AUTHORS

Harold Pinter is the young British actor and playwright who has scored a number of remarkable successes on the London stage. His play *The Caretaker* played for a year, and he is now en route to the United States for its première in New York. He was born in London in 1930, and among his other plays are *The Room*, *The Birthday Party*, and *The Dumb Waiter*.

Karl Jaspers is perhaps contemporary Germany's best-known philosopher. He was barred under the Nazis from university life, and returned to his chair in Heidelberg in 1945 to give his first lectures on *The Question of German Guilt*. His work on Nietzsche, which was banned by Goebbels, has not been translated, but there are about a dozen of his books which have now been published in England and the United States. He is generally considered to be "the father of Existentialist philosophy" (although in France the influence of Sartre and others came mainly through Martin Heidegger). His book on "The Bomb" under the title *The Future of Mankind* will shortly be published by the University of Chicago Press. He lives in Switzerland and holds the chair at the University of Basle once occupied by Burckhardt and Nietzsche.

Jacques Barzun is Professor of History at Columbia University. Though *Who's Who* records him as being part of the Faculty of Political Science, he has specialised in studies on the development of 19th-century culture. His best-known books include *Darwin, Marx, Wagner; Berlioz and the Romantic Century*, and *The House of Intellect*.

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