
LETTERS

"The Intellectual Review"

READERS of ENCOUNTER must be grateful for Sir Denis Brogan's brilliant article, "The Intellectual Review," in the tenth anniversary of this invaluable magazine. Quite apart from the just tribute to ENCOUNTER, the essay reads like a classic of its kind. Where else can one learn so much about the history of the magazine of ideas? Yet I feel that Sir Denis' primary interest in politics suggests the reasons for his failure to mention some of the great literary journals, both British and American, of this century. One looks in vain, in his essay, for references to *The Criterion*, *The English Review* (first under Ford Madox Ford, and last under Douglas Jerrold), *The Adelphi* (under Middleton Murry), or *The Calendar of Modern Letters*, a short-lived but immensely important critical journal of the middle-twenties; and where is A. R. Orage's brilliant *The New Age*?

In the United States, *Partisan Review* has been indispensable, but it was never the single tree that Brigham Young found growing in the Salt Lake desert when he said, "This is the place." There are others. *Ubi sunt: The Dial* (1919-1928), *Hound & Horn* (1927-1934), *The Southern Review* (1935-1942), *The Sewanee Review* (1892-), *The Kenyon Review* (1939-), *The Hudson Review* (1948-).

Surely there is a two-way traffic between political thought and literature; but Sir Denis seems to believe that it is one-way, from politics to literature, in a descent of increasing nebulosity, in which the journals I have mentioned are invisible. It is a little discouraging to see taken seriously the contemporary *Atlantic Monthly* and *Harper's Magazine*. The literary and the political, in ENCOUNTER, have been well balanced; the great value of the magazine has been in its astute awareness of both.

ALLEN TATE

London

I THINK that Mr. Allen Tate has a point, one that I considered before I wrote my article. But I decided that ENCOUNTER was, above all, a polemical magazine with a strong political bias, like *The Edinburgh Review*. I did not quite stick to my principles, but I tried to. It is impossible to be completely comprehensive. Even Mr. Tate is not, for he has omitted a review with first-class claims to inclusion on his terms, *Scrutiny*. I was brought up on Orage's *New Age* by an intelligent schoolmaster and on the Chesterton-Belloc *New Witness* (and the *London Nation*) by an intelligent father, but these weeklies are not, in my sense of the term, reviews; nor do I share Mr. Tate's contempt for *The Atlantic Monthly* and *Harper's*. It was in *The Atlantic Monthly* that I first read Hemingway's "Fifty Grand"; the November (1963) number con-

tains an admirable and lengthy review article on the Eisenhower memoirs, exactly of the type that used to be published in the *Edinburgh* or the *Quarterly*; and what I am told was the best political article I ever wrote appeared in *Harper's* December 1952 number, "The Illusion of American Omnipotence." The fact is that I don't take literary polemics or literary attitudes to politics as seriously as Mr. Tate does. Neither, I think, does ENCOUNTER.

DENIS BROGAN

Peterhouse,
Cambridge

Voltaire & English Scandal

IT WOULD BE GOOD, I think, for your readers (and writers) to know that the article by Lord Gladwyn has been read here in Paris with sympathy and much agreement. Nor need he worry about our being misled by the apparent Anglo-Saxon preoccupation with sex scandals and criminal coups. As Voltaire once wrote (29 March 1749) to an English friend—you will find the text in Besterman's little edition of Voltaire's letters just published (by Nelson) in London—

"... 'Tis a great pity that y^r nation is so overrun with such prodigious lumbers of scandals and scurrilities. However one ought to look upon 'em as the bad fruits of a very good tree, call'd liberty...."

Well put, I think, and in Voltaire's own English.

JEAN-PIERRE GROSSER

Paris

The Feelings of Machines

THE RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS of computers make fascinating reading in G. Rattray Taylor's article *The Age of the Androids* [ENCOUNTER, November]. Yet it seems that he agrees if only reluctantly with the "obstinate fact" (quoted from Michael Scriven) that when a suitably designed computer will be able to give the same responses as a human being, we shall have to ascribe to it feelings, love, understanding, free will, etc. He says that there are no logical grounds for refusing this, and italicises the word.

The denial that there are such grounds follows from the assumption that the meaning of words can be defined in terms of specifiable tests.

Suppose you express a doubt whether machines can have sentience. You will be challenged to state what are the responses by which you recognise the presence of sentience in man. If you cannot specify these, your doubts will be dismissed as meaningless. On the other hand, if you do give a list of these responses or accept your interlocutor's list of them, he will sketch out a suitable machine which gives these responses and claim to have demonstrated that a machine can have sentience. This is all. Detailed speculations about the design of machines having the mental and

emotional life of man are hardly relevant; the result is assured in principle by assuming that meaning can be defined in terms of specifiable tests.¹

But this assumption has strange implications. A. M. Turing has spelt them out in his famous paper of 1950, quoted by Mr. Taylor. He equates the problem: "Can machines think?" with the question whether a computing machine could deceive us as to its own nature as successfully as a human being could. In this experiment, lasting five minutes, both the machine and its human rival were to be hidden behind a screen and were to issue typed slips in response to typewritten questions. Turing estimated that in a few decades machines will be available which would succeed in misleading the audience on most occasions, and in his view this would mean that the machines were thinking. But, by the same token, a malingerer who successfully pretended during a medical examination to be in great pain would have to be recognised as actually suffering pain. The fact that we privately knew that he was not in pain would be excluded from consideration, just as we excluded from consideration our knowledge that the machine behind the screen is an insentient automaton which cannot have the experience of thinking. No essential distinction between a successful fake and a genuine specimen would henceforth be recognised.

Such logic confuses our outlook and corrupts the image of man. David Hume has said that, unlike the follies of theologians, which are dangerous, the follies of philosophers are merely ridiculous. That was true at his time, but to-day we live amidst philosophic mass movements and philosophy must be taken seriously.

MICHAEL POLANYI

Oxford

I italicised the word "logical" to bring out the character of Scriven's paper which was devoted to examining whether there is any method of detecting a fallacy in the computer's reply by logical means.

While I take Professor Polanyi's point I suggest, with respect, that his analogy of the man whom we "privately know" to be a malingerer misses the point since it implies that there is some absolute knowledge to which we can appeal. In the case of the malingerer we might appeal to physiological tests but there are no such tests for establishing whether a respondent is "a person." The question at issue is, thus, whether such a term is to be operationally defined or whether there is some

¹Of a neural network operating like a digital computer, John von Neumann wrote already in 1948: "A difficulty of principle [for] embodying any mode of behaviour in such a network can exist only if we are also unable to describe that behaviour completely." He denied this possibility. *Hixon Symposium* Ed. L.A. Jeffres (London and New York, 1951) p. 23.

discrete referent in the sense that is assumed by people who use a word like "soul." I take it Professor Polanyi believes this; the problem is to prove it.

G. RATTRAY TAYLOR

London

After the '30s, the '60s

It is *amazing* how historical error persists. The same mistakes that were being made in the 1930s are being repeated, for much the same kind of reasons, in the 1960s. In the 1930s "liberals and exiles" were "obsessed" by the crimes of Hitler, Stalin, Mussolini and Franco. We were accused of exaggeration; of allowing "despair" to guide our thinking; of being "obsessed" by a single idea; of being willing to risk the future of the League of Nations and of risking war because we dared to question the "sanctity of national sovereignty." We were constantly lectured by right-wing liberals that we should be more concerned about the tyrannies of Stalin than about those of the fascist dictators; and by left-wing liberals of the opposite danger.

What has all this to do with Mr. John Mander? Let him speak for himself:

South African liberals are understandably obsessed with the monstrous evil of *apartheid*. But are there not other "moral issues of universal significance" which one or other of us might like to see corrected by military interference? Tibet, Cuba, or East Germany, for instance?

(I close my eyes and I am back with Lord Halifax, Sir Samuel Hoare and Mr. Lennox-Boyd.) "It is certainly not good enough for anybody, and certainly not for liberals... to pretend that the infringement of sovereignty is a matter of indifference." (*Vide* the statements by the Anglo-German Link in reply to liberals like Eleanor Rathbone.) And, oh, that David Low (fresh from a wiggling from Sir Neville Henderson at the behest of Neville Chamberlain) were alive to read again about "the somewhat monotonous hostility of the British Press [which] may be doing a disservice to the enemies of *apartheid*" (*né* Nazism).

Having made this single point I would like to refer to two other major errors in John Mander's analysis of South Africa. The analogy between Israel and South Africa should have led him to recognise that there are more dissimilarities than similarities between the two.

Israel does not contain within itself a larger number of Arabs than Jews—nor was the disproportion so great in Palestine. The Arabs in Israel are a comparatively well treated minority; at least it should be conceded that they are not driven by ill-treatment and despair to plot violence against the state. Partition came to Israel as a result of UN intervention. Israel survived Arab hostility because, *inter alia*, she had powerful friends. The Western nations—though formally hostile—had an overriding interest in preventing Israel's destruction; so did the UN. Neither at the outbreak of the Palestine war, nor at any time since, were the

Life & Letters Today (II)

Washington

DID HE have a premonition of tragedy—that he who had set out to temper the contrary violences of our national life would be their victim? Last June when the Civil Rights riots were at their height and passions were flaring, President Kennedy spoke to a group of representatives of national organisations. He tolled off the problems that beset him on every side and then, to the astonishment of his listeners, he suddenly concluded his talk by pulling from his pocket a scrap of paper and reading the famous speech of Blanche of Spain in Shakespeare's "King John":

*The sun's o'ercast with blood: fair day,
adieu!
Which is the side that I must go withal?
I am with both; each army hath a hand;
And in their rage, I having hold of both,
They whirl asunder and dismember me.*

JAMES RESTON in the NEW YORK TIMES

London

PAIN'S HILL COTTAGE, Cobham, Surrey, once the home of Matthew Arnold, the poet, has been demolished. More than 20 new homes are to be built on the site.

THE TIMES

East Berlin

AN East German Communist publishing house has just published the famous handbook of Guerilla Tactics by the Cuban revolutionary, Ché Guevara. In the introduction the East German reader is promised a vivid picture of "how a people can overcome the oppressors and win freedom..." But a completely uncut and uncensored edition of this "guide to resistance" was not considered quite advisable. The original sketches with detailed instructions and technical recommendations for partisans and guerillas, have in the East German translation, been omitted.

DIE ZEIT

Nairobi

KENYA'S Minister of Information, Mr. Oneko, announced to day that he was banning the American Negro comedy "Amos 'n Andy" show from Kenya television. Earlier, the news that a filmed series of the show had been bought by the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation resulted in protests from American Negro organisations. Explaining the ban, Mr. Oneko said that the language in the show was well below that of the average American Negro. As this would have been the first impression many of Kenya's people would have received about the life of the Negro in America, it could be "quite misleading."

THE TIMES

London

FOR THE VERY WORD *insular*, which should be bracing with salt-spray and hospitality, long ago acquired drab, smug overtones, and each

year the bloodless old defeatists try to make us less of the islanders we are. What would the waiter say if you asked for Dublin Bay prawns? In England to-day you have to call them scampis. What must you do to be with it? Dress like an Italian, speak like an American, eat like a Frenchman, and talk incessantly about Brecht.

THE GUARDIAN

New Haven (Conn.)

DURING Professor Barghoorn's ten days in a Moscow cell, the only reading material he had were copies of Pravda—"fortunately I am able to read Russian"—and a copy of Theodore Dreiser's *An American Tragedy*. "Someone with a sense of humour must have given me that," he said.

DAILY MAIL

Westminster

IT IS nowadays a House of Commons in which the Churchillian chords have sounded for the last time in more than one sense. Sir Winston himself is no longer sounding them and anybody else who made the attempt would risk bathos.

What has happened to the novel and prose generally has happened to public speaking. Mandarinese (as Cyril Connolly would probably call it) has passed out of fashion. It came as naturally as frockcoats to Sir Winston and such members of his brilliant generation of politicians as Lord Samuel, but these days, in anybody younger than they, it makes the House uneasy and even suspicious.

THE TIMES

London

"DIG THIS RHUBARB," B.B.C. television's new programme, began last night. Each item, consisting of songs and talk, was made up of quotations—"anything that has been said, written, and sung." Clearly a great deal of research had been done resulting in a programme reminiscent of "The Age of Steam."

DAILY TELEGRAPH

New York

IN THE film adaptation of Jean-Paul Sartre's "Altona" play, the carelessness of the narration [writes Arthur Schlesinger] is fully sustained by the shoddiness of the writing. For all his philosophical pretension, Mr. Abby Mann, the scriptwriter, is unfortunately tone-deaf when it comes to words. Striving for poetic effect, he has one of his characters talk of a "close intimacy with death"—as distinct, I guess, from remote intimacy with death. Another wonders whether there is "anything evil with that heritage," and another says—and obviously not on purpose—"people like you and I." Thomas Edison and I. G. Farben and Gerlach, the fictional shipbuilder, are mentioned in the same breath as if they were three great captains of industry. A quotation from Santayana is ascribed to Goethe, and so on.

SHOW

Arab states ready to combine their efforts against Israel: the Arab League has been a monument of ineffectuality.

South Africa, on the other hand, has no friends worth speaking of; the UN is deeply hostile to her; all 32 independent African states have agreed (through the O.A.U.'s National Liberation Committee) to combine against her for various agreed purposes—though contrary to what Mr. Mander reports, the Addis Ababa conference did not commit them to military intervention beyond giving support to the South African liberation forces to wage their own struggle more effectively: this is an important distinction which neither Mr. Mander nor Lord Home (who made the same point in his recent UN speech) appears to have understood. By the time the challenge came in Israel, the Arabs were not only a minority but were demoralised and failed to present themselves as a serious internal threat.

His other great error (both in fact and in analysis) is his suggestion that in South Africa as in the Middle East "the attitude of the great powers will be one of careful neutrality; they will act to maintain the equilibrium." This was not the role of the great powers in the Middle East. After 1948 Russia was actively hostile to Israel, while the Western Powers were far from neutral in the way in which they sought to maintain the *status quo*. Since the middle 1950s the Western Powers backed Israel—culminating in British and French "collusion" over the Suez campaign.

But leaving these Middle Eastern errors aside, what makes Mr. Mander suppose that Russia and China will be "carefully neutral" in South Africa? Is it really conceivable that the West will work for an equilibrium against a coalition of the rest of the world on the South African question? Mr. Mander does not even take account of the possibility of Britain having a Labour Government in the next five years. But even under a Home Administration, how does he suggest that Britain could be neutral at the UN as the divisions ripen?

Surely, Mr. Mander should at least have considered the possibility that some or all of the great powers would not be neutral. If he is wrong on this point then so much else he says falls away. Nowhere in his analysis does Mr. Mander show that he has begun to understand the nature and purpose of the campaign for international sanctions—not even when he quotes from "Sandor's" explicit pamphlet. If he had understood, he would have been able to show that the purpose of international pressure is to avoid military intervention (in the sense either of an invasion of South Africa or of a UN military force being put into the country). The pressure by African states is for sanctions, not for military measures. That this is so can be easily ascertained by reading the proposals they have made at the UN. The aim must be to avoid, if at all possible, military campaigns; to

stop the danger of an openly racist struggle which would be a threat to world peace—contrary to what Mr. Mander says; and to minimise the risk of anarchy.

But if one's analysis of political forces are so wretchedly wrong, and if one can coolly opt for the sanctity of national sovereignty over the sanctity of human dignity and lives then, I suppose, one should not be too surprised about Mr. Mander's conclusions. Nevertheless, I welcome his contribution because it is essential that we should seriously debate the dangers implicit in the South African situation if we are to get the right kind of decisions at international level.

COLIN LEGUM

London

Arendt's "Eichmann"

THE EXCELLENCE of John Gross's review of "Eichmann in Jerusalem" by Hannah Arendt (ENCOUNTER, November, 1963), is vitiated by your staff writer who gratuitously appended the postscript to Mr. Gross's biographical sketch. "An unfortunately phrased critique in the *New York Times* by Judge Michael Musmanno...brought violent letters of protest from Dwight MacDonald and Robert Lowell among many others." This is dishonest. Wherein was the critique of Justice Musmanno "unfortunately phrased?" And why did you omit to report that the critique also brought many letters of commendation which the *Times* published together with those of Messrs. MacDonald and Lowell? I know about those letters of commendation because the *Times* printed one of my own.

Miss Arendt's defence of herself [in our present issue] will undoubtedly be instructive. But far more instructive, I suggest, would be an article explaining why an error-filled book and its careless author should be deserving of such respectful attention?

EDITH SAMUEL

New York City

[Mrs Samuel is too astir. Our paragraph tried briefly to sum up various pro's and con's in the U.S. controversy; it wasn't "dishonest," only concise. As for Judge Musmanno's phrasing, it was more than unfortunate—it was obtuse. His impassioned arguments against Miss Arendt's book in the *New York Times* were only undercut by unwarranted insinuations that she was "sympathising with Eichmann," that she had suggested that "Eichmann loved the Jews," etc. . . . Instructive, perhaps, for all the excited polemicists in this raging debate is the warning of the ancient writer who said, "In too much altercation truth is lost. . . ."—ED. NOTE.]

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quarterly spotlights one main topic

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It's never too late to read 20TH CENTURY: our autumn number on education, *LEARNERS*, was described by the "Teachers World" as "a large number of authoritative and stimulating essays... the value of this important contribution lies precisely in its capacity to promote discussion and encourage enquiry into the wider and deeper issues involved. Contributors to it include Donald MacRae, Tyrrell Burgess, Jo Grimond, Peter Laslett, Philip Abrams, Anthony Chenevix-Trench, Barbara Wootton, Basil Bernstein, Malcolm Bradbury, Ronald Fletcher, Mark Abrams & Sir Isalah Berlin.

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