
LETTERS

Noam Chomsky Replies

THE ISSUE OF AUGUST 1969 contains a discussion of my book *American Power and the New Mandarins* by *R* in which there are a number of false statements. He formulates the "essence" of my position as this: "American foreign policy is wholly evil, and necessarily so, because it is the direct reflection of a society which is also absolutely evil." No reference or citation is given to support this characterisation of my views. The reason is simple. It is entirely the invention of the commentator. I have never even hinted at, let alone expressed such an absurdity. On the contrary, I have repeatedly insisted that: "In the Western world at least, [intellectuals] have the power that comes from political liberty, from access to information and freedom of expression," that Western democracy provides them "the leisure, the facilities, and the training to seek the truth lying hidden behind the veil of distortion and misrepresentation, ideology, and class interest through which the events of current history are presented to us." My criticism is directed against those who fail to use or who directly abuse the political liberty and privilege afforded them in the Western democracies. And in fact, I repeatedly refer with praise to journalists, congressmen, scholars, resisters, and many others who have made use of the "high degree of internal freedom" that we enjoy. That *R* should read this as an indictment of American society as "absolutely evil" tells us something about his political attitudes, but nothing about mine.

R further attributes to me, without reference, the view that the United States is so evil that if it "was capable of having a conscience it would refuse to have a foreign policy at all." Once again, what I actually state is quite different. I urge that "American power and resources and technical skills must be used to build and not to repress or to 'contain' or to destroy," and I suggest that instead of delivering lectures on "the really substantial democratic values that have been in part realised in Western society," American intellectuals "should face a task that is infinitely more significant and challenging—the task of creating, in the United States, the intellectual and moral climate, as well as the social and economic conditions, that would permit this country to participate in modernisation and development in a way commensurate with its material wealth and technical capacity."

R states further that "when Professor Chomsky talks about Viet Nam or the Korean War we have left the sphere of rational discourse." I have never written about the Korean War. My few passing references to it are quite uncontroversial. I have written at length about the Viet Nam War, which I regard as a monstrous atrocity, and I am quite prepared to let the reader judge for himself the accuracy of *R*'s appraisal, which is, once again, given with no factual support.

R claims that my use of sources "at times...

seems to verge on falsification," and cites one example to support this allegation, namely, a case where, he claims, I invented a quotation. The facts are as follows. In my book I quoted several comments by D. F. Fleming and James Warburg on a speech of Truman's, and I mistakenly attributed their paraphrases to Truman himself (to compound the error I gave one quote as "all freedom is dependent on freedom of enterprise" whereas in fact the text has "freedom of worship and speech" in place of "all freedom"). Since I gave a precise page reference to the source from which the quotes were taken, the error was quickly discovered by a reviewer, and in the second printing (and the British edition) the quotes are corrected and correctly attributed. No further change was necessary, since the commentary of Fleming and Warburg was accurate and perceptive, contrary to what *R* implies, as the reader can determine by checking the original documents. This was a careless and inexcusable error, which I am happy to have corrected. It is not, however, a case of "invention" or "falsification." If there are other errors in the use of sources, they have not come to my attention.

These are the only alleged facts that *R* cites. The remainder of his remarks are mere diatribe.

NOAM CHOMSKY

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Cambridge, Mass.

[There is a reply by *R* to Professor Chomsky's letter in *Column* on p. 47 of this number.—Ed.]

Nietzsche & Insanity

MR. MACINTYRE has now changed his thesis [ENCOUNTER, Sept.]. In his article he had suggested that in "trying to create a new moral world" Nietzsche "perhaps destroyed his own power of reason." Now he claims that his concern was merely with "the particular intellectual content of incipient insanity in Nietzsche," which is an altogether different issue. But "Philosophy & Sanity" [ENCOUNTER, April] threw as little light on this question as it did on the causes of Nietzsche's madness. Indeed, the article ignored almost all of the documents that reflect Nietzsche's incipient madness.

Mr. MacIntyre's interpretation of Nietzsche's *Übermensch* is not as close to mine as he says. I would not dream of denying the vulgarity of the "culture-hero, the superman" whom he describes as "a particularly loud-mouthed and effective moral subjectivist." I had thought the subject was Nietzsche, but in his letter MacIntyre seems concerned to establish his own superiority "as a practitioner of invective" and an expert on "vulgarity." I cheerfully concede to him far greater merits than these. But unfortunately they do not redeem his caprice on "Philosophy & Sanity."

C. W. M. Whitty's observations about Nietzsche's madness are very close to those I presented along with some further evidence in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* and in my *Nietzsche*. This is hardly the place for me to recapitulate further details or

to discuss the relationship of a philosopher's life and pathology to his thought. But one comparison may help a little. We should not try to discredit Van Gogh's late paintings by pointing out that he was not altogether sane when he created them; neither should we say that his madness was the outcome of painting Van Gogh's pictures. The differences between the two men are legion, and Nietzsche was by no means indubitably mentally ill when writing his late works. While his philosophy must in any case be evaluated on its merits, it adds poignancy to know under what strains both men laboured and how desperately they clung to their creative work as long as they humanly could.

In the end Van Gogh shot himself; Nietzsche, of whom Freud was to say that "he had a more penetrating knowledge of himself than any other man who ever lived or was ever likely to live," failed to recognise the last moment and, despite his celebration of "death freely chosen, death at the right time," published during the same month, collapsed helplessly and more or less vegetated for another eleven-and-a-half years.

Nietzsche is far more interesting as a human being than are most great philosophers. But the problem of the place of reason in life and in philosophy is not only posed by his life but also explicitly raised in his philosophy. It richly deserves attention—more serious attention than it received in Mr. MacIntyre's article or could get in a short letter.

WALTER KAUFMANN

Princeton University

Astor, Sykes, Wheeler-Bennett

MR. ASTOR [ENCOUNTER, October] catches me nodding when I say that "no British official documents directly concerning... Trott have yet been published." It is quite true that the memorandum by Sir John Wheeler-Bennett, written in collaboration with Trott in 1940, has been published. It appeared in one of the quarterlies issued by the *Institut für Zeitgeschichte*. I forgot this. I am guilty of a mistake.

Unfortunately, not satisfied with pointing out the mistake, Mr. Astor proceeds to confuse the issue in his own inimitable fashion. "Mr. Sykes," he says, "was furnished with the [memorandum]. But, like Sir John, he evidently did not want to consider even the small degree of British responsibility..." for the failure of anti-Nazism in Germany. These two sentences unmistakably suggest, I think, that in spite of having the memorandum to hand, I preferred not to mention it in my book. In fact, if Mr. Astor will turn to page 318 of my book *Troubled Loyalty* he will find a brief record of the memorandum's composition with quotations from the most significant items in it.

Perhaps, however, Mr. Astor has deduced that I "did not want to consider... British responsibility" because I did not follow my account with a tirade. If so, I must tell him that to let the facts speak for themselves, leaving the reader to draw his own conclusions, is the method I try to follow in writing.

CHRISTOPHER SYKES

Wiltshire

Hobbits and Intellectuals

A Reply to Donald Davie — By KINGSLEY AMIS

I AM NOT SURE I got the total hang of Donald Davie's "Hobbits and Intellectuals" piece [ENCOUNTER, October]. To begin near its beginning: I cannot really see why a polemicist (like me) should not be taken seriously unless he gets too angry to want to go on living in his own country. This would hardly do as a general rule. Neither can I see how Davie can consider himself no less good a patriot than myself (or R), "perhaps a better," when he says he doesn't like it here and takes off. He is not in Kuznetsov's situation.

But these are small puzzles, and I think I understand his later, major metaphor about Creon, the person willingly in authority, *versus Antigone*, the person in perpetual opposition who is too spiritually grand ever to accept power and its corrupting temptations and whom he equates with my figure of the Lefty. I even agree with some of this, and am glad to find that Davie doesn't seem to like Lefties any more than I do. However, there are a couple of points, closely related, that I should like to take up first.

Davie is being a little perverse when he says what a good thing, in international politics, a "loss of nerve" can be. Such a failure would not have helped

us, or the world, much in 1805 or 1940. (I am prepared to argue about 1914.) Anyway, what Davie had to say on this topic has been overtaken by events, and as I write—just after Moratorium Day—we can view a loss of nerve on a scale and at a depth and with a chain of possible consequences spectacular enough to satisfy even him, I hope.

He also says he differs from me about "the alleged monolith of Communism." The notion that Communism is not monolithic and that this somehow makes a difference is actually a favourite crypto-neo-post Lefty one. Various simple answers to it suggest themselves. One is that Fascism, as practised in Germany, Italy and Japan was a good deal less monolithic than Communism has ever been and still managed to be both very unpleasant and very dangerous. Another is that it doesn't much matter to me whether a Communist gets at me with the bastinado or the knout, a missile or a machete—all that really divides them is how to bury us, as (or roughly as) John Kennedy put it. Perhaps Davie would deny that Communism is always and everywhere tyrannical and, whenever it thinks it can get away with it, aggressive as well: Korea, Malaya, Viet Nam, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, etc. It will

Life & Letters Today

London

SHOPPING WIVES were too shy to ask for one of the new sliced loaves. They could not bring themselves to say the name emblazoned on the packets—BUMS.

A few did buy the bread by simply pointing at it. But most settled for another brand. And sales of the loaves at NAAFI shops in Germany were a flop.

The NAAFI people realised the trouble—and decided that a tactful explanation was required. In a programme over the British Forces Broadcasting Service, they informed Servicemen's wives that the name of the Dutch-made loaves was pronounced "Booms." That did the trick. After nearly a year of being shunned, Bums bread is suddenly on the boom.

A NAAFI spokesman said yesterday: "Sales of the bread before the broadcast were not the success that had been hoped for. But since the correct pronunciation was explained, the bread has proved to be a sell-out. It's an excellent white sliced loaf."

The spokesman added: "We knew about its unfortunate name before ordering it. But it was decided that we must have the best bread available to Forces families in Germany—regardless of what it was called." DAILY MIRROR

London

ERIC PARTRIDGE arrives at the British Museum Reading Room every morning (Saturdays included) at 9.30 for his day's work.

Partridge, who is 75 this week, is the world authority on slang. He made the position for himself when he wrote a history of slang in 1933, following it up with a dictionary of slang in 1937.

Since then he has written about and collected clichés, Forces' slang, underworld slang, Shakespearean bawdy. . . .

Sometimes solving the mystery of a word is just hard slog. Like "phoney."

"Phoney" means a lot of things, from "pretended" to "spurious" to "disguised." Most people first used it in Britain in 1939. Remember the "phoney" war? But if you track it back you can find it in American writings as early as the 1870s applied to jewellery, particularly costume jewellery, sold by peddlars. At this point a red herring emerges, a jeweller's shop that existed in New York around this time called Forney.

For many etymologists that was enough. But Partridge dug deeper. Eventually he came on "fawney," a name used in the American underworld as early as 1850 for a finger ring.

But "fawney" goes back in England to the 18th century. The "fawney rig" was the name for the ring-dropping trick, much beloved of the sharper members of the underworld. One of them would drop a ring in the street, then turn and insist it was yours. You would say it wasn't, but he would insist it was. Eventually after a lot of argument, he would agree to give up his claim to it for a small consideration, say five bob. You gave him five bob, then discovered the ring was worthless. But why "fawney"?

Much later he remembered his social history.

In the eighteenth century there had been a large influx of Irish into England after the potato famine. Among them were many crooks who would have been adept at the fawney rig. Was this the clue? He looked up an Erse dictionary. There it was: "FAINNE" (pronounced fawney) meaning a finger-ring. DAILY MAIL

I HAVE RECENTLY [Kenneth Allsop writes] been the subject of some newspaper publicity, particularly in Scotland, and in almost every instance and every publication have been described as "the television personality."

This label seems to me vapid and valueless. My passport designation is "journalist," based, not unrealistically I think, upon 25 years as reporter, feature-writer or critic in the press and upon 15 years of visual journalism on television current affairs programmes. This causes me to wonder why "personality" has become attached to television and not to other activities.

Could it not, with equal relevance or irrelevance, be used in, say, "House of Commons personality" (M.P.), or "pulpit personality" (the Archbishop of Canterbury), "Divorce Court personality" (judge), or even "person personality" (psychiatrist). There remains, too, the wide open opportunity of calling Chi Chi "the Zoo animality." THE TIMES

London

A NEW BOOK edited by Tariq Ali has a frontispiece with a diagram which gives a simple, concise method of making a "Molotov cocktail"—a petrol bomb.

Tariq Ali said last night: "I am not sure about the diagram as a frontispiece. I would have preferred it as the book's cover. As a diagram of a Molotov cocktail it at least gives the right ingredients and would prevent the maker having his hands blown off."

Mr. Peter Owen, the book's London publisher, said the frontispiece bomb was a simple device. "You could find it in any kiddies' chemistry book. What child is going to pay 38s. to find out how to make it?"

A decision on publishing the bomb-kit diagram was being left to individual publishers abroad. "We felt that the student situation was less explosive in Britain than in other countries so there would be no harm in publishing it here." DAILY MAIL

Paris

THE French Academy, on its guard against the corruption of the French language by Anglo-Saxonisms, has just handed down the following ruling: "management" is okay provided it is pronounced in the French manner and mass-media is okay as "masse-media." EVENING STANDARD

Birmingham

THE BIGGEST aluminium rolling mill in Europe was closed last night after 300 maintenance workers walked out. They claim that a superintendent used a four-letter word to a shop steward and are demanding that he should be sacked. After the walk-out, at the James Booth plant in Birmingham, another 1,000 men were sent home. DAILY MAIL

have to get a bloody sight more polylythic than it is before I start treating different bits of it differently enough to make a difference.

Now to Creon and Antigone. "If Communism is not monolithic, neither is 'protest,'" says Davie. Well, protest isn't monolithic, no, whatever Leftists may pretend, and here is a serious weakness in the Antigone idea—it doesn't apply in enough cases. There is no evidence that the Russian protesters would refuse office of authority in a civilised Russia, as proper Antigones would; they might, and then again they might not. There is no evidence, to say the least, that none of our student rioters and their faculty accomplices are interested in power, and their heroes—Guevara, Castro, Ho, Mao—are Creon-men to a man. (Marcuse, largely unread, of course, is just a chap in an Establishment post who, so to speak, proves the rule, a Dean of Canterbury figure, or perhaps more closely analogous, in a different sphere, to Shakespeare or Michelangelo as they used to feature, when the hand of repression was heavier, in those self-justifying lists of great queers of history that ordinary queers used to carry about.)

Just as the trouble with Creon in all sorts of his incarnations—university administrator, educationist, Arts Council committee member, and whoever chose the new editor of the *Radio Times*—is that he has become worm-eaten with Antigonism, so the genuine Antigones, of whom there are probably a few left, have become infiltrated with little Creons. The latter will never actually attain the power they seek; if they ever get near it they will be gobbled up by the big Creons who know their business, just as in 1917. Those are the people who frighten me. And I don't care whether they turn out to be Stalinist or Brezhnevite or Maoist or Hoist or Castro-ite or Hoxha-ite (or Hitlerite) or whatever. As I said, it doesn't make enough difference.

KINGSLEY AMIS

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Translating Wittgenstein

PROFESSOR STEPHEN TOULMIN'S central point is the continuity between *Tractatus* (prised free from Russellian positivism) and the usual reading of the *Investigations*. A necessary part of the latter is Wittgenstein's case against private ostensive definition and hence against the logical possibility of private languages. Now in the *Investigations* Wittgenstein repeatedly uses "*hinweisende Erklärung*" to mean "ostensive definition," and Anscombe and other translators so give it (*cf. PI*, I, paras. 6, 28, 29, 30 and *passim*). Hence if the usual translation of "*hinweisende Erklärung*" is rejected by Professor Toulmin, the usual reading of the *Investigations* falls to the ground, and with it the continuity of that reading with *Tractatus* or anything else.

Fortunately the German is quite clear: "*hinweisende*," which means "pointing at," is an active participle describing "*Erklärung*," which means

"explanation or definition." If Professor Toulmin and Dr. Onubogu want a German form for "explanation (or definition) suggested by" some other thing such as "logical analysis," they must replace "*hinweisende*" by a past participle passive such as "*(dadurch) hingewiesene*," though this is a rather clumsy and doubtful form. What seems quite clear is that the original Toulmin-Onubogu translation does such violence to the German syntax and grammar that it cannot be accepted. Since the usual translation is essential for Professor Toulmin's general thesis, this is just as well.

MICHAEL LIPTON

University of Sussex

STEPHEN TOULMIN'S REFUSAL, in your May issue, to "accept" Michael Lipton's translation of *hinweisende Erklärung*, makes one wonder what Carlyle would have said if Mrs. Fuller had declared that she did *not* accept the universe. Moreover, it seems strange that Toulmin is not aware that Lipton's correct translation of the passage draws attention to two even more fundamental mistakes, one of grammar (*Analyse* and *Erklärung* are both feminine and therefore the *es* cannot refer to them) and one of idiom (*Unklar war mir*... means "I failed to see..."), in Toulmin's own translation.

These mistakes completely falsify Toulmin's original claim [ENCOUNTER, Jan. 1969, p. 62] that from this passage "we can now demonstrate how... Wittgenstein could see his books as successive attacks... on one and the same group of problems." Correctly translated the passage demonstrates the opposite.

PETER MUNZ

University of Wellington,
New Zealand

ALL SARCASTIC APART, Peter Munz's letter gives rise to one interesting and debatable question: not (to be sure) the philological one, about the correct translation of *hinweisende Erklärung*, but the philosophical one, about the relevance of this translation to my account of Wittgenstein's intellectual development. The correctness of Michael Lipton's translation "ostensive definition" (Peter Munz argues) falsifies my interpretation. But is this so? In fact (I shall reply) it puts me in a position to deepen my account by adding one further significant detail.

To clear the philological point out of the way: the testimony I have had about this from native German-speaking informants is conflicting. Still, if Peter Munz insists that *hinweisende Erklärung* just was the idiomatic equivalent of "ostensive definition" in the 1920s, then—given his qualifications—it would be silly of me to ignore that insistence. In any case, it should not be hard to put the matter beyond doubt: a quotation or two from early Carnap, or from German translations of early Russell, could clinch it.

However, if we suppose that Lipton and Munz are right on this point, what will follow about the interpretation of Wittgenstein's development? Only this, I believe: that the original cross-purposes between Russell and Wittgenstein over "atomic facts",

Protokolsätze, etc.—with Russell reading into Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* the epistemological doctrines of his own book, *Our Knowledge of the External World*, and Wittgenstein rejecting Russell's interpretation as a complete misunderstanding—extended also to the notion of "ostensive definition." Even today, we are so accustomed to looking at the notion from an epistemological point of view that we may forget that, like all "definition," it is at home first and foremost in the theory of language, rather than the theory of knowledge. (This very habit may have made me needlessly resistant to Michael Lipton's alternative translation.) It was possible, therefore, to accept the notion when explaining the *Verbindung der Sprache und der Wirklichkeit*—assuming that the ultimate terms and propositions of a logically perspicuous language acquire their meanings "ostensively"—without going on to use it also as the starting point for an entire epistemology.

This (I believe) is what Wittgenstein did; and I ought to have seen this point more clearly earlier since, so far from falsifying my interpretation, it strengthens it. In both phases of his philosophy (I should still argue) Wittgenstein was concerned with the same fundamental questions about the scope, limits, and meaning of language, as an instrument of expression, representation, and reason. In neither phase was he preoccupied with epistemological issues, and his change of direction in the late 1920s took place entirely within his account of the ways in which words and utterances are given a meaning within language.

STEPHEN TOULMIN

Alfriston, Polegate,
Sussex

The Tucholsky Complaint

I GREATLY ENJOYED Walter Laqueur's brilliant analysis of "The Tucholsky Complaint" [ENCOUNTER, October 1969], but I must point out that the description of the Germans as a nation of *Richter und Henker*—instead of *Dichter und Denker*—does not come from Tucholsky, but from Karl Kraus. This mix-up is very awkward, as Kraus even refused to meet Tucholsky, rejected all his advances and protested against his (Kraus') works being in any way coupled with those of Tucholsky, whom he called the author of poems in favour of the German war effort during the first World War (*Verfasser von Werbegedichten fuer eine Kriegsangeleihe*) and "*feuilletonistischen Mitarbeiter der buergerlichen Presse*" (*Die Fackel*, No. 857-863, p. 64-1931). A year later (*Die Fackel*, No. 868-872, p. 81) he castigated him for denigrating (*Verulkung*) Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht.

London

J. W. BRUEGEL

THE MIX-UP is not mine. Tucholsky did make use of the "*Richter und Henker*" phrase. But I am not a Krausologist and I have no reason to doubt Dr. Bruegel's explanation, namely that Kraus invented it.

London

WALTER LAQUEUR

AUTHORS

John Mander is a contributing editor of ENCOUNTER. His recent books include: *Berlin, Hostage for the West* (Penguin Special, 1962), *Great Britain or Little England?* (Secker & Warburg, 1963), and *Static Society: The Paradox of Latin America* (Gollancz, 1969; published in the U.S. by Knopf as *The Unrevolutionary Society*). He is currently engaged on a historical study of Anglo-German relations. His recent articles in ENCOUNTER include "Letter from Prague" (August 1968) and "Beirut, Damascus, Tel Aviv" (February 1968)...

Seymour Martin Lipset is Professor of Government and Social Relations at Harvard University's Center for International Affairs. His most recent book is *Revolution and Counterrevolution* (Heinemann, 63s.)...

Dennis Silk writes that his contribution in this number "is part of a book about Jerusalem written with the help of a grant from the Howard Foundation of Brown University. I should like to dedicate my piece to Arieh Sachs and Harold Schimmel, the two Ss or the one S, and to Ana Marcovici-Cleja..."

THE BOOK by **Noam Chomsky**, *American Power and the New Mandarins*, which is referred to in this number's "Column" and "Letters," has just been published in Britain by Chatto & Windus (42s.) and Penguin (8s.). *The Neophilias* by **Christopher Booker** is published by Collins at 50s. ...

ERRATUM: Due to an unfortunate printers' error in our November issue two lines were scrambled in **Anthony Storr's** article "Misunderstanding Psycho-analysis" on page 89. Lines 30-36 should have read: "Harlow's work with Rhesus monkeys suggests that even so profound a mental disorder as schizophrenia may be dependent upon disturbance in the mother-child relation, whereas quite a number of analysts (including Jung) have thought it likely that some chemical cause for schizophrenia would be discovered."

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