

can only be explained by a kind of conditioned reflex: revolutions, it implies, are bound to go the Communist way or, at least, to run against Western interests. Thus Washington delayed its own assistance at a time when it could have had a maximum economic and political effect, and it also actively discouraged the Western European governments. And as, for once, the French took the same stand, all the discussions about "aid to Portugal" got stuck—till the moment when it seemed clear even to the optimists that this aid would come too late and when all the conservative parties began, with apparent justice, to protest loudly against "throwing money away on a Communist régime."

It is worth recalling this at the present moment. Recent developments have opened up a new opportunity for the West to keep Portugal within its fold—if not as a "reliable ally" then at least as a well-meaning enfeebled friend. It would be a tragedy if this chance were to be missed again. It does not matter very much, at least in my view,

whether the kind of socialism that people like Mario Soares and Melo Antunes are striving for is necessarily the best social system for Portugal. It is even less important whether it is to the liking of Western conservatives (Gerald Ford or Giscard d'Estaing) or even of Social Democrats like Helmut Schmidt. What should really be kept in mind is the necessity to avoid, on the far west of the European continent, the emergence of a new Cuba or a new Chile. And, to a large extent, this will depend on the resilience of Western statesmanship.

WHATEVER MAY HAPPEN, one thing is certain. The revolutionary enthusiasm of 25 April 1974 is dead beyond resurrection. I am still haunted by the thought of a little placard which caught my eye amid the countless flags and banners at this year's May Day rally in Lisbon. *We must not let our carnations wither!* ran its inscription, clumsily daubed upon the white fabric. The touching exhortation was in vain. The carnations have already wilted.

At the pool

Not many even dared to start the climb,
I remember. It meant dodging the old lame
Attendant who never let children up there.

Forty-two feet, I think they said it was,
Into fifteen feet of unheated sea-water,
And because of the war there weren't even railings

On the steps or at the top. But those were glory
Days—1946 and a military
Band playing *Nights of Gladness* and I was up

There alone before I knew it, scared
Shitless, my friends signalling it was clear,
And I jumped. I jumped. That smack of soles and palms!

From the café and terraces above the pool
A round of cheerful applause from onlookers
And I was hero. I tell my wife all this.

And now, thirty-eight, sitting on that same
Terrace, drinking tea, trying to keep
My children from drawing attention to themselves,

I watch the pool like a hawk, praying
That no sodding little yobbo will try
To show off by going up those steps.

Christopher Wiseman

LETTERS

Indestructible Illusions?

YOUR COLUMNIST *R* consoles himself, and would console others, with the thought that, though "the balance has tipped decisively to the disadvantage of the West . . . in Europe", still "even here . . . history has not worked entirely to the advantage of the Soviet Union, for the means and the methods by which she has imposed and maintained her domination . . . have been such as to destroy almost totally the credibility of her claim to represent the cause of the oppressed peoples of the earth."

Readers of *ENCOUNTER*, and still more, writers for it, have no business so to delude themselves into pretending that what so clearly ought to be the case in fact is. For if there are any other illusions as indestructibly perennial as those about the righteousness of the first socialist state, these are the equally perennial illusions that some egregious monstrosity, or some accumulation of monstrosities, in the conduct of Soviet and other Communists will in fact permanently and irreparably discredit their obscene pretensions. And *R* himself, at the beginning of this same September column, discusses a painful example showing the falsity of his own complacent conclusion:

When the AFL-CIO wishes to honour a foreign visitor they choose the writer Alexander Solzhenitsyn; when the TUC does, it invites the ex-KGB chief Alexander Shepin.

To twist the knife a little further, we should reflect that twenty or even ten years ago our TUC would not have considered entertaining the *Führer* of the Soviet *Arbeitsfront*, even if he had not also happened to be a former controller of the Gulag Archipelago. But then twenty years ago the leader of the Labour Party would not have visited Prague to recommend that everyone should forget the Soviet "normalisation" of Czechoslovakia. And even in this last week in which *R*'s words were published Mrs Judith Hart, for many years a Labour Government Minister, visited Portugal to declare her solidarity with the Portuguese Stalinists and their allies, and her opposition to those "fascists" who are daring to resist a further extension of the Socialist Bloc. Mrs Judith Hart, MP, and her companion Mrs Audrey Wise, MP, are conspicuously not, as I'm sure *R* will join me in wishing they were, in trouble with their local Labour Parties.

ANTONY FLEW

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Baader-Meinhof & Nazi Words

THERE is no doubt, as M. J. Lasky points out in his article on the Baader-Meinhof gang [*ENCOUNTER*, June], an insensitivity on the German terroristic Left to the lingering usages of Nazi vocabulary. Words and phrases out of the Hitlerian past keep cropping

up in their speeches and manifestos as they attempt to do many of the same things—justifying illegality, rationalising violence, apologising for murder.

But it may not all be simple semantic insensitivity. Ulrike Meinhof was always a skilled manipulator of language, and it may well be that they have deliberately chosen certain categories from the Nazi ideology for their shock value, to harden themselves against all counter-attack, to force the public to get used to the idea of the iron (and even cynical) ruthlessness of the revolutionary vanguard. We do know that some of the young fellow-travellers were upset by what Lasky calls the "re-Nazification" of the German political vocabulary. And I now note that at least one member of the Baader-Meinhof gang put this point in his list of objections to the so-called pure Marxist-Leninist leadership.

There is in the August number of *Das da* (Hamburg), Klaus-Rainer Röhl's successor magazine to his notorious *Konkret*—"restructured" from under his nose by an oppositionist radical fraction—a document prepared in prison by Gerhard Müller, who was Ulrike Meinhof's last companion in the underground before the German police made their sweeping arrests in June 1972. It is entitled "NIE WIEDER RAF!" (RAF being the so-called *Rote Armee Fraktion*), and Müller complains that the gang from which he now disassociates himself has only brought discredit on the idea of a radical Left. One of the points he makes is in connection with the brutal murder of young Ulrich Schmücker, found "executed" in Berlin's Grunewald last year. The purge was carried out by his own comrades who had (or thought they had) reason to mistrust him. The decision to rub him out was made on the Left by a "*Volksgesicht*", a people's court. And the phrase which Müller finds disgusting was the same one used by the Nazis in their trials, especially of the 20th of July anti-Nazi resistance. Similarly, the kidnappers of Peter Lorenz in Berlin put him into a "*Volksgesängnis*", a people's prison. As the ex-member of the Baader-Meinhof group tries to remind his old comrades, this was the language of Freisler, Hitler's special judge for executions. He quotes the bitter words of the poet Erich Fried, ". . . Freisler is listening, all ears, in his grave and murmuring: 'ah a People's Court again, *Heil Hitler!*'"

JÜRGEN HAMM

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Two Mills, or One

I DO NOT SUPPOSE that even Professor Maurice Cranston's lucid and elegant essay will persuade your readers that they wish for a second review of Miss Himmelfarb's *On Liberty and Liberalism*. But, may I suggest that when he quite rightly praised the great brilliance of her book, he should have been a good deal fiercer in emphasising the perversity of the enterprise to which that brilliance was devoted?

Miss Himmelfarb essentially sets out to answer the question: Why did Mill write the essay *On Liberty*, when that essay contradicts everything else he ever