

periodization can do more than underline philosophical and historical precepts first formulated many years ago by R. G. Collingwood. But if we want to dispel a view of archaeology as "a very expensive way of telling us what we know already from history" then I put in one last plea, not for non-relevance so much as non-

exclusiveness. It matters not the slightest that we scavenge the past dressed in a motley collection of other disciplines' cast-offs and our own new clothes, provided we learn from each other and try a little less hard to teach; as our American historians of archaeology conclude, right now "dogmatism is what we need least."

---

## AUTHORS

---

**Miroslav Holub** is a Czech writer and poet. His translated works include *Although* (Cape, 1971) and *Selected Poems* (Penguin, 1969). His work in this issue was translated by Jarmila and Ian Milner.

**Henry Fairlie**, the noted British political commentator, has lived for the past few years in the United States. His books include *The Kennedy Promise* (Eyre Methuen, and Doubleday, 1973; paperback Dell, 1974). His most recent articles in *ENCOUNTER* include "The Lessons of Watergate" (October 1974), "Letter from Washington" (January 1973), and "Years of Intellectual Havoc" (September 1972).

**Peregrine Worsthorpe** is Deputy Editor of the *Sunday Telegraph* and author of *The Socialist Myth* (Cassell, 1971). The copyright in his essay is vested in *The Alternative* (Bloomington, Indiana 47401, USA). His regular Sunday column is distinguished by his penchant for (in Bernard Levin's phrase) "elegant paradox." In a recent piece, trying to explain the British Left's basic deference to Soviet perspectives by making a sharp analogy with the British Right's pro-American loyalties, he went so far as to write (*Sunday Telegraph*, 23 November):

"My own support of President Nixon, for example, long after the evidence of his criminality was overwhelming, sprang to a large extent from blind pro-American prejudice, an instinctive refusal to believe what I did not want to believe.

"The same applies to my refusal to be shocked by revelations about the iniquities of the C.I.A. So deep-seated, long-standing, and emotionally passionate is my love of the United States that Uncle Sam can get away with murder without causing me much concern. . . .

"As a life-long pro-American I find . . . there is so much about the United States today which I admire, and so much about Britain today which I despise, that in some ways my primary loyalty today is to the United States rather than to Britain. . . ."

A rare instance of self-criticism in contemporary journalism!

**George Steiner** is Professor of English and Comparative Literature at the University of Geneva. His most recent book, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*, was published

by Oxford University Press in 1975; his articles on Karl Kraus and on Turner appeared in the January and April 1975 issues of *ENCOUNTER*.

**Douglas Johnson** is Professor of French History at University College, London, and the author, among other books, of *A Concise History of France* (Thames and Hudson, 1971) and *The French Revolution* (Wayland, 1970). His article on the Dreyfus case appeared in the August 1975 *ENCOUNTER*.

**David M. Wilson** is Professor of Medieval Archaeology, University of London, and author of *The Anglo-Saxons* (rev. ed., Penguin, 1971) and *The Vikings and their Origins* (Thames and Hudson, 1970).

**John Bossy** is Lecturer in Modern History at the Queen's University of Belfast. He edited *The Spirit of the Counter-Reformation* (Cambridge University Press, 1968), and is completing a study of *The English Catholic Community 1570-1850*.

**H. C. Allen** is Professor of American Studies, University of East Anglia. His books include *The Anglo-American Relationship since 1783* (1960) and *A Concise History of the United States of America* (Benn, 1970).

**Vincent Megaw** is Professor of Archaeology at the University of Leicester, and author, among other books, of *Art of the European Iron Age* (Adams & Dart, 1971).

**Professor Sidney Hook** is Senior Research Fellow at the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, Stanford University. His recent books include *Education and the Taming of Power* (Alcove Press, London; Library Press, USA) and *Pragmatism and the Tragic Sense of Life* (Basic Books, 1975). An evaluation of his philosophy by Lewis Feuer, "The Pragmatic Wisdom of Sidney Hook", was published in the October 1975 *ENCOUNTER*.

**D. J. Enright** has recently published a new volume of poems, *Sad Ires and Others* (Chatto & Windus).

---

# MEMOIR

---

## An Autobiographical

### Fragment:

# The Strange Case of Whittaker Chambers

By Sidney Hook

IT WAS TO BE EXPECTED that the political downfall of Richard Nixon would lead to efforts to revise the judicial decision against Alger Hiss. It was Nixon's suspicions that Hiss's disavowal of acquaintanceship with Whittaker Chambers was untruthful that led him as a fledgling Congressman to pursue the matter further when his colleagues were prepared to drop it lest the House Committee on Un-American Activities fall on its face.

Regardless of Nixon's political fate, however, the conviction of Hiss never sat well with large and influential sections of liberal opinion. With the rarest of exceptions, the members of Hiss's very large circle of friends, co-workers, former fellow-students and teachers, political allies and neighbours refused to accept the verdict that he was a perjurer; and that he had perjured himself in the interests not merely of a foreign government but of one of the most terroristic régimes in human history whose programme called for the destruction of his own country. In the eyes of those who beheld Hiss as the very model of a New Dealer and Rooseveltian progressive, even to conceive of him as a secret member of the Communist Party, no less actively engaged in espionage as part of its underground apparatus, was to luxuriate in the fantasies of the politically unbalanced.

Almost all the books written on the Chambers-Hiss case have been pro-Hiss, some of them vehemently so. The intensity of the loyalty which Hiss inspired even among seasonal acquaintances is reflected in the reaction of a Columbia University Professor, a neighbour of Hiss in Peacham, Vermont, where both had summer homes. He had repeatedly scoffed at the convergent lines of evidence I cited as pointing to Hiss's guilt. He

declared them to be inconsequential and denounced Chambers as a pathological liar. One day I turned to him and asked, "What kind of evidence would convince you that Chambers was telling the truth?" To which he replied: "Even if Hiss himself were to confess his guilt, I wouldn't believe it."

The rare exceptions among those who knew Hiss were another Peacham neighbour, a Professor of Philosophy at Amherst College (Sterling Lamprecht), originally a strong partisan of Hiss but reluctantly shaken into belief of his guilt as the evidence developed; one of Hiss's attorneys, who withdrew from the case convinced that even if Hiss was not guilty of all the charges Chambers levelled against him, he was withholding important relevant truths; and a Sunday editor of the *New York Times* who was finally persuaded that Chambers' dealings in the underground had been with Priscilla Hiss and that Hiss was covering up for his wife out of conjugal loyalty. And possibly Felix Frankfurter! After Judge Frankfurter appeared as a character witness for Hiss at the first trial (which ended in a hung jury eight to four for conviction) I sent a message to him through Felix Cohen, the son of Morris R. Cohen, my former teacher at CCNY and Frankfurter's very close friend (Felix Cohen had been named after him). The message was that I had very good reasons to believe that Chambers was telling the truth in the light of which it would be unwise to go out on a limb for Hiss. Felix Cohen assured me that he had delivered the message. What effect it had, if any, I do not know. But Frankfurter did not appear as a character witness at Hiss's second trial. However, both he and his wife seem to have retained their faith in Donald Hiss (Alger's brother, also named by Chambers) to the last. Frankfurter's failure to appear as a character witness for Hiss at the second trial may have had nothing to do with my message.

WHEN I SENT THAT MESSAGE to Frankfurter my judgment was based not only on a close study of the evidence but on experiences that involved Chambers and his friends more than a decade earlier.

Since knowledge of the details of the Chambers-Hiss case is often inversely proportional to the degree of emotion it generates, it is necessary to provide some relevant background. The record clearly shows that Chambers did not seek to appear as a witness before the House Committee on Un-American Activities. He had told his story at the urging of friends to an American official in the State Department, Adolf A. Berle Jr., at the outset of World War II in 1939. The names on the notes Berle kept corresponded in