

displayed by the Arts Council—any more than that I myself would have had to attend a number of silly or unseemly performances and exhibitions to prove that such things went on, financed by Arts Council money. I didn't in the least mind dear old Richard Hoggart calling me a blimp, though if a blimp is one who does not see the need for reform and amelioration it may be thought some people still at 105 Piccadilly are rather more blimpish.

Certainly Roy Shaw's piece to my mind blimpishly lacked a sense of humour. My own attempts at that quality may well fall flat more often than not, but I enjoyed the meetings of the Literature Panel and the Literature Finance Committee I chaired; and I fear an element in them consisted of teasing some benefactors present and blackguarding some actual or potential beneficiaries. Hence, in the latter case, my use of "layabouts" (and I daresay other not entirely jocular characterisations).

Which leads me to more serious matters. I do not believe I have ever put my views in such an extreme or interperate way as to nullify the need to examine them. I know I have a fondness for the comic and occasionally for the vituperative: but that is just to add interest to the proceedings. I try never to criticise for the sake of criticism. I do not think Roy Shaw really addressed

himself to the gravamen of my article. Moreover, since I wrote it there have been several items or developments that have come to my knowledge, two of which I should like to get into the record.

First, the notion of the "democratisation" of the Arts Council, mentioned in my article in connection with a former Minister for the Arts, has been taken a stage further by a document issuing from the Labour Party (see *The Times* of 9 September). The long-term authoritarian perils of a largely elected Arts Council were discussed by Michael Schmidt in a striking talk on Radio 3 on 1 October (extracts in the *Listener*, 20 October).

Secondly, I wonder if the Council would have intervened in the affairs of the Institute of Contemporary Arts had it not been for that organisation's financial difficulties and demands. The Summer issue of the *New Universities Quarterly* contained a remarkable article by E. W. F. Tomlin reflecting on his visit to a play at the ICA. There has been, as Roy Shaw says, a new chairman and a new director there and performances such as Professor Tomlin witnessed may be things of the past. But can Roy Shaw assure us that the Arts Council will do its utmost not to finance elsewhere what Professor Tomlin succinctly calls "brothel-culture"?

Faint Hearts

WALK UP, walk up, Ladies and Gentlemen, and see the great arts patronage fight! On my right, dapper Lancashire-born Roaring Roy Fuller swings haymakers in all directions. On my left (no political allusion intended) Roy Shaw, the Yorkshire-born Gentle Giant, counters with a crafty elbow and gets in quite a few punishing jabs.

The ring for this exhilarating encounter is in fact ENCOUNTER magazine. In its current issue Mr Fuller, building society director, novelist, poet and indeed quondam Oxford Professor of Poetry, spells out just why, last February, he resigned from the Arts Council after serving hardly a third of his term as Chairman of its Literature Panel.

At Council meetings, it is said, he did not mince his words ("Most embarrassing", said another senior member to me, "the sort of thing that gets conservatism a bad name"). Nor does he in his ENCOUNTER article: "To have Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams on the Council indicates rather more than bad luck"—Lady Bracknell would have said it savoured of carelessness, Mr Fuller is more inclined to put it down to politically inspired appointments.

The Council's proceedings are, he says, "Byzantine." Too much money gets into the hands of "the idle, the dotty, the minimally talented, the self-promoters." Community arts, that seductive contradiction in terms, gets it in the neck, and so does Performance Art (the apotheosis of exhibitionism), not to mention "the hideous contemporary paintings purchased by the Council itself", and several magazines, "often pornographic, sometimes obscene", subsidised through his own Literature Panel.

THE COUNCIL'S RIPOSTE, written more in

calculated sorrow than in anger by the Secretary-General, Roy Shaw, will appear in ENCOUNTER'S November issue. Mr Shaw himself, as it happens, has been let off with a caution by Mr Fuller, as a relatively new boy having the right ideas, which may yet prevail. He is well able to parry some of Mr Fuller's blows, not least by pointing out that Mr Fuller seems not to have seen any of the things he denounces, outside the province of his own Panel, and except for those hideous paintings (I myself was reduced to refusing to attend any further meetings until one of these, a spectacularly repellent female nude, was removed).

Mr Shaw rightly points out that Mr Fuller spoils his own case by grotesque overstatement. But he has to swallow a good deal—such as claims of maintaining value-judgments by those who patently do no such thing. And what, as an Officer of the Council, Mr Shaw cannot do is to underline something much more important, in the long run, than wasting a very little of the Council's funds.

I MEAN the timid silence, worse than indifference and amounting to moral cowardice, displayed by far too many Council and Panel members. But if Mr Shaw cannot point the finger (and I have no idea if he would wish to do so) I can. I served on the Council's Drama Panel for ten years, on the Council itself for seven. It makes an admirable buffer between the State and the artist. I hope all concerned for the arts in Britain will resist the proposals now being made, under the specious, indeed downright false, label of "democratisation," to bring patronage of the arts increasingly under State or Party (any Party) control; a dangerous matter cogently argued by Michael Schmidt in an excellent

Finally, a word about the letters from Martin Bax and Jeremy Hutchinson, both of whom also waste space in personal criticism. It must have been obvious to Martin Bax that by delaying my article for so long after my resignation I tried to avoid sensationalism, and that any "vulgar display of personal publicity" (if newspapers like *The Guardian* taking the matter up may be so categorised) was not of my seeking or doing, and indeed is to me a fairly distasteful nuisance. It is quite pointless for him to rehearse the mediaeval history of *Ambit*: obviously I was speaking only of those issues of the magazine subsidised during my chairmanship of the Literature Panel (the subsidy had started before my time) and for which I therefore felt responsible. My worries about the pornographic and obscene elements in *Ambit* were shared by at least one member of the Council, and a public librarian who, when it was decided to send copies of subsidised magazines gratis to libraries, asked the Arts Council to desist in the case of *Ambit* because he thought it would give offence in his reading room.

Jeremy Hutchinson's abusive—and probably defamatory!—letter I think for the most part betrays itself. His quotations from my article are both inaccurate and misleading. My copy of the Report of the Community Arts Committee has notes and under-

linings throughout—in fact, by training and conscience I am a compulsive reader (alas!) of committee papers. Has Jeremy Hutchinson forgotten the many unsensational discussions of finance, premises and so forth that went on in Council and committee, which I took part in with scarcely a leg-pull? And I must not be taken to accept the accuracy of the remarks attributed by him to me. He can't surely, with a tape recorder in his coat pocket, have been Dobsonising the Council?

How depressing are the seeming failures of Roy Shaw, Martin Bax and Jeremy Hutchinson to address themselves to the dangers pointed out as seriously and carefully as I could in my original contribution to ENCOUNTER. Their various attitudes throw light on J. W. Lambert's revelatory article in the *Sunday Times* of 9 October (see box p.94) about some members of the Council and the Drama Panel thinking it futile to express unfashionable views. *L'esprit de lavabo*, the phenomenon might be called, except that after meetings I myself heard previously-unuttered criticisms not only in that location but also from former colleagues I can (despite what Martin Bax says) still appreciate as being of the opposite sex.

ROY FULLER

London

& Lost Nerves

Radio 3 "Personal View" a few days ago—not yet, I note, reprinted in *The Listener*.

But an organisation is only as good as the people who make its decisions: the Officers, of course, and even more, in this context, the Council itself and its advisory Panels. Too few of their members have been willing to ask the necessary questions or to speak their minds. I don't absolve myself.

I BECAME a Council member and Panel Chairman in 1968, when, some would say, the rot set in, in more senses than one. It was then right that the Council and its Panels should inform themselves of the various experimental developments which were bursting out all over. It was not necessary that we should so timorously have accepted so much that was so vociferously demanded—in the name, for example, of the once notorious New Activities, of which I saw a great deal. It is true that the Council has somewhat pulled itself together since those dizzy days; but this I suspect is rather due to the changing temper of the times than to any notable rallying of the Council's courage—if it were otherwise Mr Fuller would not have been driven to resign, or to express himself with such self-defeating vehemence.

The Drama Panel aimed deliberately for as widely a representative a group as possible in terms of age, background, special interest, ideology or what you will. In theory it had, to balance the possibilities of the theatre large and small, a great capacity for cross-fertilisation by constructive argument. In practice, as in other areas of society, the young radicals, bursting with passionate enthusiasm, quite rightly hammered away at what they wanted—but the experienced, the supposedly

level-headed, the intelligently detached (including critics, informed members of theatre boards, etc.) either didn't bother to come or sat sulking.

"GOOD GOD", they would mutter as they left the meeting, "what a load of rubbish." "Why didn't you say so?" Shrug. One member, eminently sensible I had thought, went away and sent in a memorandum much longer than this article explaining what he would have said, had he said anything.

I almost lost my faith in the uses of dedicated volunteers when confronted, month after month, with this stifled withdrawal—too often echoed in the Council itself; both bodies thus letting through much with which the great majority totally disagreed, and many of the sillinesses Mr Fuller often justifiably condemns.

WHY DID THOSE who are unpaid, and so have nothing to lose by asking those potentially awkward questions or saying what they actually think, so often relapse into mumbles or silence? Pure loss of nerve, I'm afraid: not even a feeble wish to drift with the tide, but mere terror of being thought old-fashioned, not progressive.

At least Roy Fuller cannot be accused of that sorry failing. Whatever the outcome of his slanging-match with the Arts Council, it may put heart into those who, without wishing to shut their eyes to the future, would really, given a touch of encouragement, rather not respond to rubbish with cringing acquiescence.

J. W. Lambert

in the *Sunday Times*

AUTHORS

William Trevor's most recent novel is *The Children of Dynmouth*, (Bodley Head, 1977).

Kenneth Minogue is Reader in Political Science at the London School of Economics and the author of *Nationalism* (1976) and *The Concept of a University* (Weidenfeld, 1972). His articles in *ENCOUNTER* include "The Guru" (August 1976), "Dr Spock Thinks Again" (July 1975), and "Defending the Single Realm" (October 1974).

Elie Kedourie is Professor of Politics in the University of London and Editor of *Middle Eastern Studies*. His books include *Arabic Political Memoirs* (Frank Cass, 1974), *The Chatham House Version* (n.e. Weidenfeld, 1976) and, as editor, *Economics and Economic History of the Middle East* (Cass, 1976). Among his articles in *ENCOUNTER* are "What Have We Become . . . ?" (August 1975), "Arnold J. Toynbee" (May 1974), and "The Lure of Revolutionary Revolution" (July 1972). The third volume of Richard Crossman's *Diaries* has just been published, and Professor Kedourie will return to this in a forthcoming issue.

Martin Esslin is Professor of Drama, Stanford University, and from 1963-77 was Head of Radio Drama at the BBC. He is the author, among

other books, of *The Peopled Wound: The Plays of Harold Pinter* (Methuen, 1970), *An Anatomy of Drama* (Temple Smith, 1976), and *Artaud* (John Calder, 1976). His most recent article in *ENCOUNTER* was "Media, Critics, and 'Medienkritik'" (February 1976).

Theodore Draper is the author of a history of American Communism (2 vols, 1957, 1960); works on Cuba (1962, 1965); *Abuse of Power* (1967), on US policy in Viet Nam; and *Israel & World Politics* (1968). He is at present at work on a historical analysis of America & World Power. His article was presented as a paper at a symposium on Intellectuals in Politics, sponsored by the Leonard Davis Institute for International Relations, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, in June of this year.

Ferdinand Mount is Political Correspondent of *The Spectator*. He is the author of *The Theatre of Politics* (Weidenfeld, 1972), and of a novel, *The Man Who Rode Ampersand* (Chatto & Windus, 1975). His previous articles in *ENCOUNTER* include "The Owl & the Water-Beetle" (January 1977) and "The Dilution of Fraternity" (October 1976).

Philip Hobsbaum is Senior Lecturer in English, University of Glasgow. His most recent volume of criticism is *Charles Dickens* (Thames & Hudson, 1973). Of his article in this issue he writes: "I should like to acknowledge the influence upon this article of various discussions with Rex Mitchell of Queen's University, Belfast. Needless to say, he is in no way responsible for my conclusions."

Tom Paulin is a Lecturer in English at Nottingham University, and the author of *Thomas Hardy: The Poetry of Perception* (Macmillan, 1976). His volume of poems *A State of Justice* (Faber) was the Spring 1977 Choice of the Poetry Book Society.

D. J. Enright is a poet, novelist, and literary critic, and has held various Chairs of English Literature in universities abroad; he was from 1970-72 co-editor of *ENCOUNTER*, and is now a director of Chatto & Windus. His recent books include a collection of poems, *Sad Ires & Others* (Chatto, 1975), and a novel for children, *The Joke Shop* (Chatto, 1976).

Ted Hughes' narrative poem, *Gaudete*, and **Neil Powell's** volume of poems, *At The Edge*, were published this year by Faber & Faber and Carcanet Press respectively.

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A NUMBER of North American readers are experiencing considerable delays in the delivery of the October and November issues due to industrial action by dock workers at US ports of entry. We have now made alternative postal arrangements which will operate for the duration of the dispute. We apologise to readers for the inconvenience caused by circumstances beyond our control.

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY WATMOUGHS LIMITED,
IDLE, BRADFORD; AND LONDON