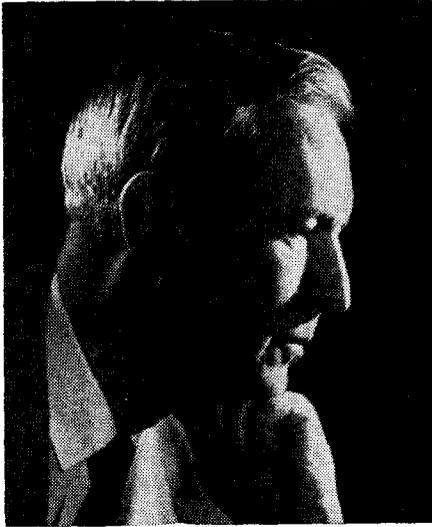


The Battle of the Brains



—Eida.

Jacques Barzun—savant of the book clubs.

“The House of Intellect,” by Jacques Barzun (Harper. 276 pp. \$4.50), attacks the absurdities practised in the name of art, science, and philanthropy. Harold Rosenberg, our critic, wrote *“The Tradition of the New,”* a volume of essays.

By Harold Rosenberg

“THE HOUSE OF INTELLECT” is an attack on our official intellectuals by one of our leading official intellectuals. It is another in the series of outbreaks (the more the merrier!) among our institutional thinkers inaugurated by such works as David Riesman’s *“The Lonely Crowd”* and William H. Whyte’s *“The Organization Man.”* Professor Barzun’s barrage should be the most effective, not because its target is more important but because it aims at one more accessible to criticism, that is, the activities of the mind itself.

The United States, Barzun declares, is ridden by anti-intellectualism. This is nothing new. But the present-day anti-intellectualism is the product of the intellectuals themselves, who play a greater part in our public life than ever before. Through them “the three enemies of intellect” have become art, science, and philanthropy. Efforts of the mind to establish clear principles comprehensible to all are everywhere coun-

tered by appeals to the inexpressible depths of “the creative” as manifested in art, by the pedantry of “method” borrowed from the physical sciences, by the sentimentalisms of “Everything for All.” Into every contemporary American institution the “expert” has insinuated his jargon; schools, corporations, government, foundations, “the communications” are beset by theories and techniques of learning without effort, of solving problems through misapplied research, of seducing the public mind into reacting without thinking—all these contributing to debase Intellect and corrupt its indispensable tool, the language in which we reflect and convey our thoughts to one another. America’s House of Intellect is falling through treachery from within.

As Dean of Faculties at Columbia University and savant of the book clubs, Barzun’s first resource in this mental infighting is intimate, everyday knowledge of what goes on in the lecture halls, publishing houses, TV round tables, committee rooms. His second resource is wit and a style without lumps. Barzun’s description of a luncheon conference in which the editors of a slick magazine “going intellectual” invite a hard-shell contributor to literary quarterlies to try the light touch is worth its weight in *crabs amandine*. “The editors are as honest in their proffer of freedom as in that of abundant cash, but they are noticeably nervous about the freedom.”

Barzun’s analysis of the specific forms of the anti-intellectualism of our intellectuals could not be more timely. Largely as a by-product of the cold war, but also out of urgent need to come up to date in education, government, and social life, America is in the process of translating “the pursuit of excellence” from a concept in philosophy into a program of action. The danger is that the energy generated and the money spent to encourage intellectual achievement will go to enlarge and solidify the very habits of thought that work against such achievement. Barzun has put his finger on some of the ideas, and even on some specific agencies, about which America needs to be sleeplessly wary.

Of course, “The House of Intellect” does not intend to attack art, science,

and philanthropy but only the abuse of their vocabularies and characteristic modes of thought. Barzun makes his case by citing the absurdities practised in the name of these great enterprises rather than through criticism of art, science, or the philosophy of generosity. Yet his book creates the danger of confusion, owing, at least in part, to a mixture of motives in the author. Barzun is not content to display the nonsense of artists, scientists, and liberal simperers, from which art suffers as much as does common sense; he wants to set up Intellect in a “house” of its own, beyond clear thinking in practice, to legislate over the other mental and psychic undertakings of man. Everywhere one meets in his pages Intellect with a capital “I” like an icon in the middle of the road.

But if Intellect is to become an independent thing possessed of power over art, science, and good works, we ought to be told who shall represent Intellect; the question becomes a social and political one. Barzun lays the anguish of Intellect at the door of democracy, but he does not, like Matthew Arnold or Cardinal Newman, discuss the larger implications of staking out a site for Intellect as an arbiter of values in a free society. Does he expect the House of Intellect to be built and inhabited by “people who love books more than automobiles”? “The House of Intellect” limits itself to polemic, which we hope will prove effective in deepening the present national discussion.

FRASER YOUNG’S LITERARY CRYPT NO. 836

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 836 will be found in the next issue.

FMOL MGMC FDL
BLPK-RTHRLWFLQ, MHQ
FDLXL GWPP SL
LPSTG-XTTN WH FDL
GTXPQ.

—GDWRDRFTL.

Answer to Literary Crypt No. 835

Ennui has made more gamblers than avarice, more drunkards than thirst, and perhaps as many suicides as despair.

—C. C. COLTON.

On These Beaches a Mighty Drama

"D Day: The Sixth of June, 1944," by David Howarth (McGraw-Hill, 251 pp. \$4.95), **"The Secret Invaders,"** by Bill Strutton and Michael Pearson (British Book Centre, 286 pp. \$3.95), and **"Invasion: '44,"** by John Frayn Turner (Putnam, 248 pp. \$3.95), recreate through British eyes the beginning of the end for the Axis. The author of "The Supreme Command," our reviewer Forrest C. Pogue was combat historian with units which landed on Omaha Beach.

By Forrest C. Pogue

FIFTEEN years ago on June 6, 1944, more than 100,000 British and American troops, supported by some 5,000 ships and more than 11,000 air sorties, established a foothold in Normandy, from which they launched the attacks which destroyed Hitler. The anniversary of this event has been marked by the appearance of two volumes describing the landings and a third book that discusses a small group which helped to make this and other invasions possible. A fourth title now being serialized, will be published next fall.

The three books differ widely in their approach. Strutton and Pearson in their story of COPP, the beach reconnaissance group that prepared

the way for invasions in various parts of the world, have stressed its contributions to the D Day victory. Howarth has attempted to sum up the tremendous odds, and the acts of courage which characterized the landings, by the device of a few personalized accounts drawn from hundreds of interviews collected in recent years. Turner has given a detailed picture of the operation, illustrating some phases with individual stories.

The authors are all British. And, despite their efforts to be fair, they suggest that the great problems on American beaches stemmed from American unwillingness to accept British special weapons and advice—and from what Mr. Howarth ungraciously refers to as a tendency of American planning "to be more spendthrift with the lives of their soldiers than the British."

While the writers are careful to list heavier enemy resistance and lack of air preparation on Omaha Beach as factors contributing to the numerous casualties in that sector, they assign as the chief reasons the failure of American commanders to make full use of the beach reconnaissance groups as guides, the launching of small craft too far from the beaches, in disregard of British practice, and the decision to accept only the DD tanks from among several special devices developed by the British to support the landings. They do not

account fully for the great difference between Omaha Beach's 2,000 casualties and Utah Beach's 200, although the two American corps used similar tactics and weapons.

In these and other arguments and in their treatment of much of the high-level discussions and decisions, Howarth and Turner have been content to accept as final the conclusions of the late Chester Wilmot's "The Struggle for Europe." This excellent, although often one-sided book, written by the BBC correspondent who accompanied Montgomery's forces during much of the European campaign, has succeeded in imposing twenty-one Army Group interpretations on much of the British history of the war. Indeed, Mr. Turner's bibliography lists no British or American volume of authority on the war which has appeared since Wilmot's book, published in 1952. One would never know, for example, that Wilmot's indictment of the U.S. Navy for holding in the Pacific landing craft needed for the OVERLORD operation—a charge repeated by Turner and emphasized on the dust jacket of his book—has been strongly challenged by Admiral Morison in his "Invasion of France and Germany, 1944-45," which was published in 1957.

"THE Secret Invaders" adds some new information to our knowledge of the development, training, and operations of the beach reconnaissance units. But neither Turner's nor Howarth's book has as much high-level material on the Allied or enemy side as Wilmot's book or Gordon Harrison's "Cross-Channel Attack," and neither can approach the Department of the Army's "Omaha Beachhead" and "Utah Beach to Cherbourg" for detailed information on U.S. operations.

Strutton and Pearson draw heavily on the personal recollections of the key figures in COPP for their account of activities in the Mediterranean, the Channel, and in the Far East. Unfortunately, as the authors admit, they "have used licence, though rarely, in recreating imaginatively some happenings from the detailed operational reports." The result is a "Rover Boy" approach to part of the narrative, which detracts from its value.

Howarth mars the historical value of his book in his selection of some thirty individual stories to create his picture of D Day. A slow-spoken farm boy from the South, a Jewish soldier from the Bronx ("small, cheerful, and efficient"), two British members of a tank crew, dissimilar in background (who are killed as one sings plaintively of his love "so



—U.S. Army.

American landing party on Utah beach—200 casualties compared to 2,000 on Omaha Beach.