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THREE YEARS

Culture and Politics in the Mid Twentieth Century

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THREE YEARS

Culture and Politics in the Mid Twentieth Century

From the *Britannica Book of the Year* volumes for 1950–2, including a previously unpublished insertion (41–81): remarkable detailed surveys of contemporary cultural and political history.

1949

I

THE YEAR 1949 was not notable for any revolutionary change or crisis in the development of thought or of art, or indeed of any form of human self-expression. But there were marked differences between the forms adopted by it in the principal areas of civilisation – Western Europe, North America and the Soviet orbit. In Western Europe the central mood was one of anxiety to avoid anything exaggerated or outré and too self-revealing, any suspicion of wishing to dramatise or romanticise either the present or the past, still less the future. As if conscious of the absurd spectacle presented by the extravagant cynicism and disillusionment in Europe after the First World War, the generation which succeeded the Second World War seemed determined not to be carried away by any wave of violent feeling, whether positive or negative.

It may be not unprofitable to bring this out by comparing some aspects of the year 1922, since, like 1949, it was divided by four years from the end of a great war. In Europe the early 1920s were marked by a sharp conflict between the ebbing, but still strong, current of liberal idealism which had created the League of Nations, which believed in open diplomacy and still, despite many failures and disappointments, seemed confident that a new and better order was surely, if somewhat slowly, coming into existence, bringing with it more liberty and equality and prosperity for individuals and classes and nations than any previous age. This optimistic faith was in some degree shared both by conservatives and liberals, victors and vanquished, at any rate in Western Europe. Arrayed against them were those sceptical and destructive persons who out of amusement and indignation exposed what they regarded as the shams, the

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muddles and the absurdities of their immediate predecessors – above all, the inflated values of that decaying Victorian establishment which had failed to prevent the brutalities of the great slaughter. They proudly flaunted their disbelief in, and indeed contempt for, tradition as a heroic act of testimony to the truth, however unpalatable – an attitude superior to the passive acceptance of systems in art and thought and life no longer tolerable to any moderately intelligent or honest man. The air was full of violent denunciation of old divinities and bold new experiments intended not to produce objects of lasting value, but to innovate and to shock.

This is the best-remembered characteristic of those years; any methods, however bizarre, were applauded, provided they looked as if they could shake the ignorant and complacent out of the exasperating dead level of their unperceptive lives. Often these experiments were mere forms of extravagant exhibitionism or hysteria, launched by individuals with little talent save as impresarios. At times they revealed a pathetic frustration on the part of writers or artists whose anguish exceeded their gifts, and whose works, to a later and more critical generation, seem worthy of sympathy but scarcely of admiration or respect or even interest. At other times they resulted in works of the most authentic and enduring genius; it was a period exceptionally rich in works both good and bad and artistically and intellectually most exhilarating.

II

The generation of 1949, as every available symptom indicated, was the opposite of this. Biographies are among the surest indications of the view of life for which the biographer, whether consciously or not, himself stands; and so far as he is typical of the mood of his generation, he will convey its thoughts and feelings for the most part more truly than its official heralds and prophets. If then we consider those of 1922, they represent either the last phase of the grand, old-fashioned Victorian tradition of competent and solemn monumental masonry, or else the exercise of sharp analytical skill compounded of the new sciences of psychology and sociology with which the authors, with varying proportions of gaiety and savage irony, struck out and demolished, pilloried and caricatured those of their predecessors who symbolised the most ridiculous or the most detested vices or tyrannies of previous generations. The tone in any

case was moral: enthusiasm or indignation, passionate defence or bitter exposure; there was a major battle in progress; the old values and the new were sharply distinguishable; the battle of the young against the old had never reached such heights of open and violent conflict. Both sides, even if they were not fully prepared to say what order it was for which they were fighting, were only too ready to specify what they were against; some stated their reasons in elaborate polemical tirades, others preferred direct action by word or painting or musical composition likely to outrage the enemy and in the end sweep him out of existence.

This was a far cry indeed from 1949 with its mood of sober nostalgia and cool appraisal: the great Victorians were amply commemorated in almost every literate country; in England alone two lives of Ruskin, two studies of Byron, massive books on Tennyson, Dickens and the Prince Consort appeared. Their writers were cautiously determined to say neither too much nor yet too little; the analysis was careful, judicious and morally neutral; the eminent dead were represented as burdened with an excess neither of virtue nor of vice – they were figures neither exceptionally great nor absurdly small, and although not overwhelming, were clearly considered as being far more impressive than either the biographer himself or his reader. The attitude was neither one of admiration nor disdain at the fact that those large beings once walked the earth. The reader was invited to inspect the more noteworthy characteristics of the persons described as part of a solid, and on the whole, more interesting world, worthy of the attention of the civilised and the fastidious, but not of sharp or eager advocacy.

At first this appeared a juster and certainly more mature outlook than that of a quarter of a century before. But if we compare the imaginative literature of the two periods we find that, if this is so, the price paid had been high indeed. For 1922 saw the appearance of these works (to take only those in English): among the older poets, new collections of verse by W. B. Yeats, Thomas Hardy, A. E. Housman; and then the true harvest begins – *The Waste Land* by T. S. Eliot, *Ulysses* by James Joyce, *Babbitt* by Sinclair Lewis, *Jacob's Room* by Virginia Woolf, *The Garden Party* by Katherine Mansfield, *Swann's Way* (the first volume of the translation of Marcel Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu*, by C. K. Scott Moncrieff); all these, particularly *The Waste Land*, *Ulysses* and *Babbitt*, were works whose influence on English was greater than that of any other

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contemporary writing. In this same year, moreover, there appeared such minor masterpieces as *Lady into Fox* by David Garnett, the *Puppet Show of Memory* by Maurice Baring, *Books and Characters* by Lytton Strachey, *The Second Empire* by Philip Guedalla, *Aaron's Rod* by D. H. Lawrence, *Mortal Coils* by Aldous Huxley, *Mr Prohack* by Arnold Bennett, *Heinrich von Kleist* by Gundolf, books by Wells and Galsworthy, Keynes and G. M. Trevelyan, two volumes of caricatures by Max Beerbohm; and a work of philosophical genius which had a greater influence on the development of logic and the theory of knowledge than any other of its time, the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* by Ludwig Wittgenstein. This is all stupendous enough in a year which was not exceptional in its own period; even allowing for the magic of distance it must be conceded that 1949 had somewhat less to show.

III

The most important single factor in 1949 was, of course, the continuation of the battle between the creeds – between Marxism and its various enemies – the greatest since the Reformation and its aftermath. This divided the world into hostile camps about which no all-embracing generalisations could profitably be made. In the West, imaginative literature, while not precisely in decline, showed no sign of any bold new beginnings. The best English-speaking novelists produced works of great technical perfection in accepted and familiar genres. Elizabeth Bowen, Ivy Compton Burnett, Henry Green, utterly different as they are in almost every respect, published novels which reflected acute moral and spiritual preoccupation with the fate of individuals hemmed in by and insulated against an aggressively impinging environment. The feeling was romantic, and to some degree nostalgic, the canvas not large, the problems were (unlike post-war writing in France) neither intellectual nor social nor metaphysical, but personal, not a direct expression of – although not untouched by – the psychological doctrines prevalent at the moment.

George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, which caused a considerable stir, was a tract of the times, dealing with the implications of the unchecked development of the ruthless control of the lives of individuals by political tyrannies which brutally crush and destroy human beings and forms of life in the name of official

ideologies scarcely believed in by the leaders themselves. The mood of general distrust of political nostrums and formulae as such, a sense of horror when faced by the inhuman consequences of doctrines and ideas unmodified by understanding or sympathy for the actual predicament of specific individuals or groups in specific situations, filled the writings of disillusioned writers who had broken with Communism (like the very gifted novelists Koestler and Silone), who denounced their past with varying degrees of anger or bitter and ironical satire. Even T. S. Eliot seemed caught by this ambiguity and lack of positive character; of all living writers in English he had had perhaps the strongest positive influence on other writers; he had an 'ideology' and a 'message'; his poetical dramas had conveyed his views as clearly as his left-wing opponents succeeded in expressing their own. But the performance of *The Cocktail Party* at the Edinburgh festival was less eloquent, more obscure and more elusive than even *The Family Reunion*. The zeitgeist seemed to have cast its spell even on his low-toned, carefully modulated voice. There was, on the other hand, a great deal of very distinguished work done in the field of criticism: Ernst Robert Curtius of Bonn published a masterpiece on the rise of the European tradition; and interesting and penetrating critical studies were published by Herbert Read, Edward Sackville-West, Lord David Cecil, Basil Willey, Cleanth Brooks, Van Wyck Brooks and Leavis; the bicentenary of Goethe's birth led to commemorations in many parts of the world and notable discussions of his genius and influence. Critical powers exceeded those of the creative imagination almost too obviously.

IV

The general mood in Western Europe was sober, sane, touched with scepticism, afraid above all of those excesses of cynicism and disillusionment which to a later generation seemed sentimental and infantile. There was neither great optimism nor great pessimism; above all, writers were anxious to convey the impression that they were adult, balanced, fully capable of surveying the contemporary scene, however dull or dangerous or hopeless, with the unprejudiced and unexcited eyes of long experience, not likely to be betrayed into giving themselves away by exaggerated passion for or against anything. The genuine romanticism of the wartime resistance

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against fascism, both Communist and non-Communist, was dying fast. The great three-cornered ideological war – between Catholicism, Communism, existentialism – which during the years immediately following the war dominated both the life and art of France and threatened to convert the latter into applied social theory, metaphysics, theology, everything but itself, diminished in importance. Mauriac and Claudel, Aragon and Eduard Sartre and Mlle de Beauvoir, continued to act as party leaders and banner bearers of the three movements; but some of their most gifted followers failed to retain their ideological purity. Some formally seceded; others returned to the practice of an art not primarily concerned with demonstrating the doctrine or preaching a particular way of life. And although France since the Renaissance had been – and still remains – the classical battleground of philosophy and religion, of highly self-conscious alignments of the least politically minded writers into this or that ideological camp, yet even there the claims of ‘pure’ literature were asserting themselves once more.

Aragon wrote a party novel, *Les Communistes*; Sartre continued to write existentialist plays and published a new volume of his great *roman-fleuve*. Camus published a remarkable historical play, *Les Justes*, about a political assassination in Russia in 1905. Neither Sartre nor Camus, after the fashion of their school, sought directly to suggest solutions to social or individual dilemmas in the manner of the realists, nor to discredit their importance in the drily cynical and deflationary manner of the Maupassant–Somerset Maugham tradition of amoral storytellers, nor yet to create lyrical or religious art like Mauriac or Cocteau. These once revolutionary writers, now no longer in their first youth, wrote and were widely read, and visited foreign countries and were duly acclaimed, but seemed more remote from the new mood than the surviving writers of the nineteenth century: André Gide and Maurice Maeterlinck (the latter died in the course of the year).

The climate of opinion was temperate, the attitude to life serious, meticulous, unsentimental, a little bitter and, in a restrained way, nostalgic. Julian Green was greatly looked up to; in France there was a minor revival of ‘daring’ literature, which dealt with sexual aberrations in a deliberately flat and unromantic manner which betrayed the still very powerful influence of André Gide and the modern US ‘tough’ school of novelists so greatly admired by him – Hemingway, Faulkner, Cain and O’Hara, the much-praised

Steinbeck. The principal characteristics of writing, both imaginative and critical, were (apart from the waning Communist vogue) freedom from dogma or crusading zeal, a kind of cautious humanism, respectful both of the truths and methodology of science and of the inner life of the individual, sensitive, tolerant, careful, observant, open-minded, civilised – almost a return to the civilised melancholy of Montaigne, but on the whole with little hope and little temperament.

This seemed true even of post-war German writing, which sought relief from the humiliating present behind the metaphysical smokescreen of the transcendental theology of such writers as Jaspers and Heidegger; the view of life was vaguely tragic but too remote to bring home the sense of the crimes and horrors of the immediate past, relieving the burden of particular guilt by a misty disquisition on its nature in general, in which the painful facts grew dim and invisible, written in quasi-theological prose for which the dark tradition of German and Danish mysticism and idealism was heavily drawn upon.

It seemed obvious that the post-war period in Western Europe had gone on far longer, because of the failure to achieve adequate social and economic reconstruction, than the similar period after 1918; and that, as happened then also, the romantic afflatus of the heroic years of war had become exhausted without producing an equally spirited reaction. The appetite for life which seems to require a certain degree of economic security and opportunity within the middle class (which continued to produce the majority of the writers and artists) had clearly not been achieved. The year 1949 was a time not so much of transition as of absence of forward motion, becalmed, with little wind to swell the sails.

If this applied to the field of critical and creative writing, in which no works of genius were born and even Malraux had ceased to be a revolutionary writer, great signs of originality and life could perhaps be perceived – combined with the prevailing unsentimental mood – in other spheres: Italian films, for example, among the most interesting artistic achievements of the day, displayed a capacity for natural vision, artistic sensibility and purity of purpose and freedom from rhetoric, or contrived pathos or solemnity, and so resulted in works of art more moving, poetical and true than anything achieved in any other country since the war. The reason for this may lie in the fact that Italy, with its creative energies so long constricted and

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perverted by a sterile despotism, possessed unexpended resources of feeling and constructive capacity not to be found in countries in which the writers and artists went through their greatest moral crisis in the late 1920s or the 1930s.

In music there was much charming and sensitive writing, particularly in France, Italy and Switzerland; the English composer Vaughan Williams produced a notable symphony, surprisingly modern in structure and sentiment. Interesting and highly skilful and agreeable but very non-revolutionary works were written by Ernest Bloch and Hindemith in the US, by Benjamin Britten in England and Dallapiccola in Italy. There was a revival of music in Germany; much was expected of a composer of partly Russian origin domiciled in Berlin, Boris Blacher. No new voice was heard, no new tendency asserted itself. The atonalists continued to experiment in their chosen medium, and much was written to expound the theories of its founder Schoenberg, but since the death of Webern atonal music seemed to exercise more appeal to the eye than to the ear. The technical skill of orchestras (though not of players of chamber music or singers) and the art of recording and mechanical reproduction appeared to improve in inverse ratio to originality and beauty of composition.

As for the visual arts, they were, as had often and monotonously been pointed out, dominated by the masters who were already in the full tide of their creative activity after the First World War – the painters Matisse, Picasso, Braque and Léger continued to overshadow their younger contemporaries; no national school could vie with that of Paris in this respect, but there was little new to record. The neo-Gobelin school of French tapestry and the occasional additions to their vivid brand of public art by the Mexican school did little to alter this general impression. Public appreciation of painting and sculpture rose as creative output diminished: the great exhibitions of painting in Paris and London and Switzerland held in 1949 were models of their kind, and excited much discriminating enthusiasm. Excellent critical studies were published on both sides of the ocean; commentators and interpreters appeared more gifted than their modern originals. The study of the history of art in English-speaking countries rose to heights of elegance and scholarship which made it the rival of the most distinguished masters of the subject in Italy and Germany, and Malraux's *Psychologie d'art* continued the noble French tradition of

writing about art by men of letters, the tradition of Diderot, Taine and Valéry. The refinement, imagination and uncompromising fastidiousness displayed by the Third Programme of the British Broadcasting corporation, and its musical and literary programmes, raised this experiment far above any consistent public effort of its kind attempted before; the state itself seemed to be adopting standards hitherto confined to cultivated amateurs.

In philosophy there was genuine progress. No common language could bridge the gulf between the great empirical school which dominated English-speaking and Scandinavian countries and the metaphysical and religious philosophies of Western Europe. The great revolution inaugurated by Bertrand Russell in the beginning of the century, perhaps the greatest since the seventeenth century, appeared in the 1920s and 1930s to be in danger of ossification in the great dogmatic schools of Vienna and Cambridge, and their many offshoots in Scandinavia and the US and elsewhere. There was some justice in the frequently made charges that the division of what could be said into empirical statements of fact and logical formulations of the rules of language mechanically eliminated, instead of solving, many problems which tormented generations of enquirers, and created an oversimplified form of utterance in which the finer differences became obliterated, and the problems posed by metaphysics were crudely dismissed instead of being resolved by the new technique. The progress of the subject in 1949, although not rich in major philosophical works, made possible far greater flexibility of expression, and so allowed the rich ambiguity of language to play its proper part in the conveying of those differences and similarities for which metaphysicians devised strange terminology, which in the end obscured and almost destroyed the purpose of the precise and therefore technical use of words. The most notable single work of this school of thought in 1949 was *The Concept of Mind* by Gilbert Ryle of Oxford University, a bold and imaginative volume written with uncommon force and freshness.

The philosophers engaged in this type of work seemed scarcely themselves aware of the magnitude of the transformation which they had been so rapidly effecting, or of the mass of philosophical writing during the last 150 years which they were rendering obsolete; seldom can so much darkness have been illuminated so rapidly and so successfully. The effects of this spread widely beyond the realm of technical philosophy, and standards of clarity and responsibility

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for factual statements insensibly rose in the fields of history, the social sciences and criticism generally. While empirical theories of thought and language on the one hand and the techniques of symbolic logic on the other progressed and developed, the older philosophical theories lost ground, at least in the major seats of Anglo-US learning; or at any rate recognised enough of their opponents' claims to be fruitfully transformed themselves.

Meanwhile, the more traditional types of philosophy, relying upon intuitive methods rather than upon those of the natural sciences and common sense, continued to flower in France and Germany and Italy, as well as the countries of Latin America; there existentialism fought with more orthodox Catholic rationalism, in particular neo-Thomism, or uncompromising Protestant faith; while the proponents of Marxist dialectical materialism in the orbit of the USSR denounced all philosophies in the Western world as equally bourgeois, decadent and false. Apart from the logicians and empirical philosophers and their allies among the psychologists and sociologists, whose subjects also were making swift if not always solid progress, the contending philosophers confined themselves to exposition rather than formal argument, each side remaining convinced of a sense of superiority; nor were there any inter-metaphysical techniques of communication between warring camps in terms of which either side could be made to recognise its own fallibility. This was particularly true in the field of ethics.

The general impression of the Western European scene was, therefore, one neither of an exceptional flowering of creative powers, nor of chaos or decadence; but of the pursuit of older directions with exceptional sensitiveness, competence, seriousness and moderation. As a result, its best achievements were not dull or mediocre, or extravagant, or counterfeit; but on the other hand they opened no new windows, and created no novel fields for the application of new technical methods. Individual works possessed a degree of originality and truth as great as any before them; they sprang from sober reflection and great critical sensibility, not exuberant imagination or an irrepressible desire to know or to enjoy, to do or to be, something in particular.

The situation outside Western Europe in the countries dominated by Communism and in the US was somewhat different. In the US there seemed less evidence of sensibility, but there was far more hope, and above all a far stronger sense of the crucial importance of the issues involved and of the need to speak out and declare oneself in a relevant fashion. No doubt, the quality of works like Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead* or Williams's *A Streetcar Named Desire*, still widely discussed in 1949, was inferior in kind and not merely in degree to the masterpieces of Ivy Compton Burnett, or Sartre or Elizabeth Bowen, or Edith Sitwell, or Mauriac, or Anouilh. But these works, and the great mass of documentary and journalistic description from which they sprang, represent a vehement interest in, and passionate feeling about, critical issues, which, however crudely conveyed and analysed, were a symptom of a conflict of attitudes which in its turn presupposed belief in the possibility of action, and a sense of the presence of boundless resources with which, and for the possession of which, the battle was being fought.

The US novel and play referred to above, which had provoked much admiring and indignant reaction in the US, fell flat in Europe, partly because their lack of intrinsic literary or dramatic interest was no longer half concealed by the urgent nature of the social problems involved or the blunt courage with which they were set forth. The situation in the US in certain striking respects resembled that of Europe twenty-five years before. The narrow streams of personal and fastidious art – for instance, that of Glenway Westcott, the novelist, or Samuel Barber, the composer, or indeed so rigidly isolated a province as that of Faulkner's south – were so many conscious deviations from that main current of literature and the arts which more truly focused the condition and the moods of the broad central stream of social life; they stood aside from that public arena in which intellectuals fought with philistines, where open and concealed rebels of the type so common in Europe during the previous half century 'unmasked' and 'exposed' the follies and the vices of the establishment or of tradition or of fashion. Above all, there was a feeling that an immense amount was at stake, that the future seemed sufficiently controllable by a concentration of human resources to make the issue genuinely uncertain, the battle worth

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fighting. The arts and letters of the US in 1949, whatever their other qualities, were the only true heirs to the great social tradition of the nineteenth century in Europe, with its moral idealism, bitter partisan feeling and those immense public issues which involved the artists deeply and influenced the general outlook of a generation. A great critic like Edmund Wilson was far more representative of the great line of European essayists and critics – Saint-Beuve or Taine or Mathew Arnold – than anyone writing in Europe in 1949. In so far as T. S. Eliot belonged to this tradition too, he derived from what was most American in him and not from what was most like his contemporaries among European men of letters.

In Western Europe this broad river seemed to be divided into isolated streams and pools. The French and English figures who represented the main tradition – the widely read ‘upper middlebrow’ novelists and poets and painters – were, with the solitary exception of Mauriac, minor figures, rightly made little of by serious critics, and aware themselves, with varying degrees of embitterment, of the fact that their *métier* had outlived itself.

Meanwhile, in the US, in the fields both of imaginative and quasi-historical, quasi-sociological writing, there was an effort to answer questions, to discover solutions of acute social and individual problems. It was accompanied by an increasing intolerance of heterodox views, by growingly severe tests of loyalty exacted by all parties and sects and movements, by demands for clear alignment, and charges and counter-charges, and declarations of war. And this, however exaggerated the results, and hostile to disinterested lives and humane forms of culture, was yet evidence of movement, and of passionate moral concern, and a capacity for heroism and uncompromising pursuit of ideals whose very fanaticism and violent collision was at any rate characteristic of the atmosphere in which alone major advances come into being. It was not political and economic predominance alone that led to the preoccupation with the US on the part of so many European writers.

VI

But if the US scene resembled, at any rate in the depth of its preoccupations and antagonisms, that of Europe before the recent war, the cultural conditions of the countries dominated by Communism went back to a considerably earlier period – to those

of the great religious wars of the seventeenth century or perhaps earlier still, to the ages of faith and heroic barbarism. In the USSR itself the campaign for undeviating conformity to the party line in the realms of literature and art attained new heights in 1949. The limited licence granted to nationalism, and even to a certain degree of personal self-expression, during the war years was finally revoked; a political storm, more violent and more widespread than that of 1936–7, began to gather force in the early months of 1949, and finally broke over the heads of all the liberal professions. The dramatic critics were among the earliest victims of this great campaign to standardise all forms of cultural life; adherence was demanded to the party line – a blend of primitive Leninism with an anti-Western chauvinism more violent than any known before, even during the severest purges of 1936–8. All Western influences, every form of alleged sophistication or insufficient saturation in the carefully prescribed brand of social content was condemned with unheard-of severity as ‘formalism’ or ‘grovelling to the West’. Those suspected of the least degree of nonconformity, among them nearly all the most honoured names among the survivors of the still quite genuine Russian culture of the 1920s and 1930s, were subjected to vituperation unparalleled even in the history of Marxist polemics; and although this was more difficult to achieve among the central European nations, where Western influence and liberal traditions had had a longer history, there too the immense levelling apparatus had begun to crush the native civilisations and impose the new uniformity.

This process now gained pace in Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland, and led to the replacement of their normal literatures by a vast stream of what could be best described as children’s or young people’s books, literally. The novel became the medium for the widest possible inculcation of the simple virtues needed by the regime, and the castigation of the more obvious vices opposed to it. Anything which diverted attention from this simple goal – the idealisation of the right kind of citizen in the simplest and crudest colours, calculated to make a strong impact on the least educated reader – was frowned upon as a dangerous form of diversion and a sign of disguised admiration for the corrupt and hostile West.

All art forms were subjected to this process; the state in 1949 imposed a degree of conformity to dictated patterns which exceeded all previously known examples of regimentation. Writers and

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musicians, critics and composers, historians, biologists, physicists, geneticists and even circus clowns confessed their crimes and humbly declared their gratitude to the Communist party for showing them the path to salvation. Attacks on the West grew more unanimous and violent; the mood was of a school which had been collectively punished for an infringement of discipline and was anxious to show every sign of contrition and zeal. Styles grew simpler, works of art more uniformly didactic than during the most unquestioning periods in the Middle Ages. Such originality and initiative as were left at all found expression in the relatively non-political corners of nursery rhymes and translations from the West European classics, or of the epics of the Asiatic nations within the USSR; or else in public criticism of Western culture, in which there was still opportunity for ingenuity and sharp insight and power of irony and which, therefore, despite the standard of crudity demanded, succeeded at times in giving effective expression to damaging home truths about the art and literature of Western countries. Such communication as there was between the USSR and the outside world, precarious at the best of times, which had grown somewhat larger during the better relations brought about by alliance during the war years, had diminished steadily since, and in 1949 began to approach vanishing point. Original works of art comparable with the best produced even by the attenuated cultural life of the West scarcely appeared. The purpose of all activity was the training of a certain kind of citizen, and all mental and material resources were concentrated upon this end. The State had evidently decided that its own security and that of its system left it with no margin within which it could afford to permit free self-expression to occur at any level; it was viewed as being at best a luxury, at worst a menace, to the minimum social discipline needed for survival.

VII

It might seem that no generalisation can conceivably apply to such disparate developments occurring in a single human society. There were in being, if not many, at least two worlds, distinct from, and indeed opposed to, each other in every detail of both theory and practice. Yet something like a common tendency was nevertheless discernible. Everywhere the doctrine of social responsibility was gaining ground at the expense of self-assertive individualism and

liberal humanism alike. In particular, disciplines were encouraged whose purpose it was to mould human beings in ways likely to make them fit more effectively, and eagerly, into preconceived patterns of social life; and this ideal was advanced at the expense of conceptions of existence in which men were left – or at any rate expressed the wish to be left – relatively undirected, to achieve their own triumphs and failures. Avoidance of misery was on the whole cultivated as a goal worthier than the development of independence of character with its record of conflict and frustration. The social sciences began to encroach boldly upon the territory of the older forms of humane learning; the application of social techniques on a wide scale was viewed no longer as a triumphant achievement of human intelligence and skill over human ignorance or the recalcitrance of the material environment, or as being indispensable to the preservation of what had been won against nature or the consequences of men's own technical achievements, but as being a form of activity valuable in itself. There was a growing preoccupation with the problem of self-preservation and survival in a society growing, with an apparently inevitable rapidity, less and less capable of creating or protecting what previous generations had sometimes valued beyond life itself – the disinterested discovery of the truth, the cultivation of personal relationships, the making and enjoyment of objects whose social value was of secondary importance.

This attitude had already found its way into literature and art before Germany attacked Poland in 1939. But it continued after 1945 with more vehemence and sense of urgency in the US, and in a more depressed and calm fashion in Europe. French existentialism was perhaps the last Byronic gesture of romantic defiance in which, however hopelessly, and, indeed, the more hopelessly the more defiantly, a last stand was made against total submergence and dissolution in a world without independent passions or independent responsibility. This growing primacy of social over individual problems – the conception of the individual as an element in this or that social situation or pattern rather than vice versa – was part of the doctrine upon an extreme form of which the USSR had been expressly built, and it had, in fact, advanced further in the West than the survival of cultural forms fully developed in a more individualist age might at first suggest. The sense of the final end of an era was perhaps most explicitly present in the analyses, filled with anxiety

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and melancholy premonition, of such critics as Arnold Toynbee and Julien Benda, who both published books in the course of the year, seeking to call attention to the final eclipse of the values of the post-Renaissance era.

The most obvious symptom of the new age is the half-conscious assumption that personal problems (for example, the very discussion of aesthetic or moral or intellectual issues as they affect individual decisions and duties) are peripheral, and at times almost exotic. And, per contra, all social, political and technological problems and all theories relating to them are in the forefront of attention as the battlefield where the fate of individuals and nations will be, or is being, finally decided. Consequently, all the appeals to return to private life and individual self-examination are considered as being in varying degree voices speaking from the past in wilfully eccentric or obsolete terms. In all these respects 1949 saw a further step taken in the direction characteristic of all the years since the end of the Second World War. It was not a turning point, nor did it mark a revolution or a sharp divagation. Nothing had yet occurred that enabled men to predict how far the process would carry them, for plainly the world was nearer the beginning than the end of a development of a genuinely new social age, to which the monuments of the culture of a liberal bourgeoisie would soon be only an interesting but hardly a haunting memory.

1950

I

The year 1950 was culturally undistinguished and politically troubled. It was disturbed by disorders in sixteen countries,¹ involved in acute border disputes in six crucial areas,² and was without the compensation of even the thin but steady stream of human achievement in the sciences, the arts and ideas which had marked the previous year. Moreover, it was overshadowed by a peril of far greater magnitude – the fear, suddenly grown concrete, of the

¹ Bolivia, Eritrea, France, Greece, Gold Coast, Indochina, Indonesia, Ivory Coast, Guatemala, Kashmir, Malaya, Nepal, Persia (Iran), Puerto Rico, the Philippines, South Africa.

² Berlin, China, Cominform (Tito: Yugoslavia), Jerusalem, Trieste, Saar.

outbreak of a new world war less than five years after the end of the last great cataclysm.

The nuclear physicist Leo Szillard calculated that within ten to fifteen years all human life on the earth might be extinguished by hydrogen bombs. This kind of speculation, the effect of which in previous years was to induce feelings, not only of anxiety, but also of guilt on the part of those who considered themselves responsible – in the first place physicists and politicians – now provoked a desire for self-preservation, if need be by resistance to possible enemies: a combination of terror and resolution, rather than further self-examination or self-condemnation.

The event for which the year 1950 was likely to be most vividly remembered was the outbreak of war in Korea on 25 June, when for the first time the two great systems which between them divided the civilised world finally met in open conflict. This was merely a formal climax of the most crucial development of our times; but the tension between the Communist and non-Communist parts of the world mounted with particular rapidity, with symptoms which were observable in every region of human experience.

It was not an unconscious process. The fact that the twentieth century had reached its midmost point stimulated much self-conscious reflection about the path which mankind had traversed since its early years. Obvious comparisons were made, in almost every country which possessed a free press, with the relatively deep peace in which the century seemed to open, and even more with that now almost fabulous time – the years of the middle nineteenth century in the European continent. It was an occasion for many sardonic analogies between the overflowing optimism and pride of the 1850s and our own time, with its sad prophecies about the human future, reflecting the disenchantment which unceasing material progress, with its apparently inevitable accompaniment of uncontrollable chaos and destruction, had brought to the West.

These melancholy summaries no longer possessed that note of tranquil sadness, tinged with gently nostalgic feeling, which permeated both life and letters in quieter times. The previous year, 1949, so far as literature, for example, was concerned, to some degree took refuge in 'escapist' reminiscences of the solid security of Victorianism and earlier periods. By 1950 the danger, not merely of war, but of total atomisation of peaceful populations by the newly discovered weapons of unheard of destructive power, had come too

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close to permit of even the limited comfort of pleasant daydreams of this kind. The desire to avoid facing the painful facts, which had been responsible for the partial return, in Western Europe at any rate, to purely 'aesthetic' poetry and painting, to imaginative writing preoccupied by the problems of private life, to mordant but light social satire, to memoirs and biographies in which fastidious elegance and a desire to please were more evident than deep moral or political concern – this general trend, while it overflowed to some degree into 1950, was no longer characteristic of that year. The mild, sober, pensive mood of the post-Second World War years began to give way to the anxiety and at times acute depression of what seemed a new pre-war (rather than post-war) period; while there was no discernible hysteria in the countries of the West, they appeared to be permeated by a kind of grim expectation of a new debacle; this feeling was not fatalistic, disaster might still be averted, there was no reason for resignation or despair. Nevertheless, the daily news given by the press and radio acquired a new and menacing urgency, and this was duly reflected in literature and the arts as well as the more obvious social and political manifestations of these months.

The output of books reflecting this preoccupation increased noticeably; the confessions of disillusioned ex-[xxiii] Communists (of which the most notable was the collection of essays by many hands entitled *The God That Failed*) no longer served merely to entertain or excite a public avid for sensational revelations or hair-raising 'inside stories' as such, but directly affected readers to whom the energetic conspirators from whose midst came these eloquent 'renegades' still appeared as a very real and immediate menace. James Burnham, Arthur Koestler, Ignazio Silone, Louis Fischer and Douglas Hyde were no longer merely repentant sinners or subjects of thrilling psychological autobiographies, but respected experts and daily guides to action. The kulturkampf began in real earnest, with great embitterment on both sides and no quarter given.

II

Politically, the most important single aspect of this was the reluctant but for the most part final recognition by the majority of the thinking inhabitants of Western Europe and the Americas (although not of Asia or Africa) that there were in fact two worlds; that the differences in the political spectrum were not graduated but broke

sharply at the frontier marked by the so-called 'iron curtain'; that however deeply men of liberal convictions might abhor the cruelties and injustices of the semi-capitalist system under which they lived, there was more that was common to them and their moderate right-wing opponents than between them and the rulers of Communist Russia and the police democracies. The destruction of the old 'Popular Front' solidarity of all left-wing groups against embattled reaction was a very painful disillusionment to large sections of progressive opinion. But this process, begun by Andrey Vishinsky's brutally direct speeches before various forums of the United Nations, continued by other Soviet spokesmen, and brought home by the suppression of civil liberties in one Communist state after the other, did finally begin to achieve the result of isolating Communists as a *sui generis* totalitarian group with ideals in absolute conflict with those of liberals and democrats of every shade and hue, a conflict no less violent and irreconcilable than that with fascists or ultramontane Catholics.

It was in this atmosphere that the Western powers were enabled to make a serious effort to achieve the limited objectives of the Atlantic pact – a move of self-defence against possible Soviet aggression; and arrangements for making possible a united military and economic strategy (which later in the year led to the appointment of General Dwight D. Eisenhower as commander-in-chief of the united Western European forces) obtained a degree of general support in the West scarcely possible a year or two before, when such steps would have been denounced vehemently by a good many persons and bodies in no political sympathy with Communism. Every Western country now feared armed aggression and intervention by members of the Soviet bloc, and there was less liability to illusion (although it was by no means wholly absent) either about the consequences of this, or about the possibility of remaining neutral and untouched.

The Communists, on their side, were plainly not unaware of the shift in opinion; they realised the consequent disadvantage to the USSR, and took appropriate steps. They intensified production, particularly of war material, in the Sovietised part of the world and took increasingly drastic steps to insulate their populations even more hermetically by continuing the violent campaigns against foreigners and foreign civilisations, and by reducing contacts with them to the level of the Muscovy of Ivan and Terrible. At the same

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time it became plain to them that propaganda about the immense achievements of Soviet culture was no longer proving as effective in the West as it had been, and, indeed, tended to cover its agents with ridicule; consequently, strictly political and cultural issues were played down, and a universal appeal was made for peace. Hundreds of thousands of signatures, mainly in central and eastern Europe, were obtained for a document, drafted in Stockholm, which carefully omitted controversial political issues and concentrated upon the worldwide yearning to avoid another war. The Stockholm Peace Petition was much the most successful piece of propaganda achieved by the USSR for many months, and to some degree the painful effect caused by its particularly harsh recent persecution of all intellectuals and artists who saw any good in any aspect of Western civilisation, as well as by its openly aggressive policies in Asia. The most prominent countermove to this Communist campaign was made by the Roman Catholic Church, which, by giving great publicity to the Holy Year and to the ensuing pilgrimage to Rome, further attracted attention with the promulgation by the Pope of the new dogma of the Bodily Assumption of the Virgin.

III

Thus 1950 was a year in which the general stiffening of the fronts had begun. The Roman Church formally denounced not merely association with Communism in any form, but other intellectual heresies as well, such as idealism, pragmatism, existentialism and so on, which had begun to creep into the fold in spurious disguises. A major battle had begun. In the US, anti-Communist feeling had reached a new height. A bill had passed both houses of Congress requiring Communists and 'fellow travellers' to register themselves with the newly set up agency for counteracting subversive activities, and a new immigration law (passed over the president's veto) was enacted whereby anyone who belonged, or had ever belonged, to a totalitarian community, whether of the left or the right, whether past or present, found it difficult, if not impossible to enter the US. The sense of present danger was increased not merely by the disturbing news of the growth of Communist power, particularly in Asia, but by such local events as the celebrated trial of Alger Hiss (who had been condemned for perjury in denying that he had, twelve years before, given [xxiv] confidential government documents to a Soviet

spy), which culminated in his sentence to a term of imprisonment. This was accompanied and followed by the trials and convictions of lesser figures for similar offences, in particular of scientists, some of whom by their own admissions had given the USSR secrets connected with atomic research. Of these the case of Klaus Fuchs, engaged upon secret work of this kind in England, who made a full confession, was perhaps the most notorious; not long after this an Italian physicist, Bruno Pontecorvo, disappeared under mysterious circumstances, it was supposed to the USSR.

The notion that Communist parties abroad were in effect not political organisations so much as networks of espionage began to be established in the public mind. In this atmosphere a group of US politicians led by Senator Joseph R. McCarthy declared that US government agencies, and in particular the State Department, were riddled with Communists and their sympathisers, who acted as foreign agents and spies. In particular they maintained that many homosexuals, who were open for this reason to blackmail by Soviet agents, infested US government departments and were a source of grave weakness to them. Senator McCarthy and his friends demanded a thoroughgoing purge of such persons. Departmental inquiries were duly held, followed by some dismissals, but this did not satisfy the accusers. Dean Acheson, the US Secretary of State, was attacked for conducting a vacillating foreign policy which discouraged such natural allies of the US as Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and General Francisco Franco, and gave heart to their left-wing opponents. Acheson's dismissal began to be steadily demanded. President Harry S. Truman defended his Secretary of State. The Tydings Committee cleared the accused State Department of most of the charges flung at its members. But the charge of Communist permeation had made a very deep impression upon the public imagination of the US, as shown by the defeat, later in the year, of many members of the US congress suspected of insufficient anti-Communist zeal.

The passions aroused by this drive against Communism spread very widely. Persons of liberal views, untainted by Communism, began to feel themselves affected by the political storm. Several universities demanded oaths of loyalty from their teaching staffs which some of these were not prepared to give. The issue of academic freedom became critical. A further spate of books and articles by ex-Communists and 'non-returning' refugees from the

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USSR heightened this mood, and a holy war against Communism in the US, which felt it had most to lose by the advance of Communism, was plainly in process of beginning, and might well number among its victims many innocent liberals and unpolitical persons as well as Communist sympathisers.

This phenomenon also occurred, but on a far smaller scale, in Western Europe. The pursuit of security grew to be a major public concern and the discovery of hitherto undetected friends of the USSR in positions of responsibility in various countries of Western Europe upset opinion in the US more than it did in those countries themselves. Thus the dismissal of the celebrated Communist physicist Frédéric Joliot-Curie from his supervision of French nuclear research shook, but did not cause an upheaval in, French public opinion. Repercussions of this campaign occurred in Australia and South Africa, in which bills to outlaw the Communist party were promulgated; South Africa pushed on with its policy of segregating its non-white natives in a world atmosphere less unfavourable to it than at the moment of liberal enthusiasm which followed the victory over fascism. In short, the question of one's attitude to the USSR and Communism became the central social and personal issue of the time. The USSR was ranged against the US, each ringed by its allies and dependencies, and the principal preoccupation of many Western Europeans was how to avoid being crushed in the collision of the great giants, against both of whom a rising resentment began to be felt. The kulturkampf between the two worlds had reached a stage which made other issues begin to seem irrelevant, and attempts at synthesis between the rival systems of ideas, of which there was a good deal of talk in the years immediately following the end of the Second World War, begin to seem futile.

This had several interesting and important consequences. In the countries which had been defeated by the Germans five years before, preoccupation with the danger of total destruction to some degree took precedence over older political beliefs and principles. Catholics and Communists were protected by their faith and guarded their sacred heritage; but the vast intermediate bloc of opinion, from unreflecting conservatives to left-wing non-Communist radicals, asked themselves not so much what it was they believed, what principles they were ready to defend, but the more pragmatic question – from which side the attack would come first

and how it was to be averted. This practical problem of life and death, which the experiences of the very recent war of extinction had rendered particularly real, made the older theoretical issues, such as secularism versus clericalism, collectivism versus individualism, political versus economic action, and so on, seem somewhat academic and obsolete.

One of the alternatives to becoming obsessed with immediate perils was to concentrate one's attention upon remoter fields. The success of the existentialist philosophy in lands which had been ruled by fascists was certainly in part due to the fact that, by dealing in an impressively obscure metaphysical terminology, it served as so often before to relieve, for example, many Germans of the painful need to contemplate their own past crimes and errors by sublimating the issue into a dark and lofty region where nothing was any longer sufficiently connected with daily life to stir remorse or indignation or human feeling applicable to the events of daily life. The French, with a philosophical and literary tradition less [xxv] capable of generating this kind of spiritual smokescreen, contrived to turn this mood into a literature which, in the works of M. Sartre, Mlle de Beauvoir, M. Camus and others, continued to create a very talented imaginative metaphysico-psychological fiction. thereby avoiding the sharp issues of the mounting crisis. This bifurcation – on the one hand the elimination of political philosophies and principles by an urgent preoccupation with the spectacle of approaching doom, accompanied by a search for the means to avoid it, and, on the other, elevation or immersion into a sphere above or below the terrors of daily life – did not develop in American, British or Scandinavian countries to a similar extent, perhaps because it was the result of harrowing moral experiences and a scepticism born of unbearable humiliation, to which these countries had not had to submit.

In England, and to a large extent in the Netherlands and Scandinavia also, public opinion became increasingly anxious about the approaching possibility of war between the giants; sections of opinion, both left- and right-wing, still nursed the hope of being able to remain neutral, albeit with diminishing confidence. The US – the symbol of an active attitude to the coming struggle for power – at times became almost as great an irritant to British Conservatives as to adherents of the Labour Party, which continued to be in power. The root of this attitude lay not merely in the natural resentments which painful stabilisation at a level of lesser influence and power

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must naturally induce among previously dominant nations and continents, but in the feeling, familiar enough to Americans (since it was an ingredient of American isolationism of both the right and the left in the two decades before Pearl Harbor), of wishing to be left to solve their own sufficiently acute social and economic problems without being drawn into a lethal war by powers too strong to resist, too hard to influence, and yet impossible to ignore or offend, inasmuch as one of them at any rate was the source of indispensable financial and economic aid.

And yet in spite of much angry criticism in the socialist and liberal press of Western Europe and the British dominions of what was considered heavy-handed or blundering American diplomacy in Europe, or ignorance and bigotry on the part of influential circles of American opinion, a clear majority of the groups and individuals which form Western European opinion felt the US to be their indispensable protector against the designs of the expansionist USSR. The situation was, indeed, in some respects not unlike the state of US opinion in the late 1930s: the number of Americans who were in those days positively pro-Fascist was very small, although distrust and disapproval of Europe was very widespread; there was disdainful talk of 'rival imperialisms' from whose degrading struggle the new world should steer clear; but even then it was obvious that as against Hitler and Mussolini, US opinion was solidly on the side of the democracies. So now, Western European opinion, resentfully, distrustfully and uneasily, ranged itself on the side of Washington and against Moscow, although the pro-Moscow minorities were relatively larger, more indignant, although perhaps no more influential, and held their ground more steadily, than pro-Fascist groups in the US ten years before.

IV

Certainly the Communists did not increase in influence during the year: in England and northern Europe they remained negligible. The case of Britain was instructive. In the British general election, which returned the British Labour Party to precarious power with a minute majority of six, the Communist representation of two was wiped out altogether; and bitter though controversies over such measures as steel nationalisation and the tempo of rearmament at times became in the British Houses of Parliament, the attitude to the USSR played

relatively little part therein. On the major issues of foreign policy both the Conservative and the Labour Parties were in tacit agreement, and when events made the British government's rearmament plans seem ludicrously inadequate, the government no less than the opposition accepted this fact without a struggle, so that what in fact, in all but name, was a 'bipartisan' foreign and defence policy remained singularly undisturbed, despite the temptation which a tiny government majority would have presented to a morally less responsible opposition at a less perilous moment.

In France and Italy, Communism and its sympathisers offered a far greater danger, yet even there the Communist Party made no headway. The somewhat right-wing cabinets in France of Bidault and Plevin (with a very short interlude under Henri Queuille), and the De Gasperi government in Italy, successfully stemmed the left-wing tide. The Stockholm Peace Petition had made some impression. The French CGT unions remained under Communist influence, and so did corresponding trade unions in Italy and Belgium, and these from time to time staged spectacular strikes; but the net result of this was not significant. Despite such traditionally demoralising factors as bitter disputes about wages and taxes, about electoral reform and Catholic schools, despite the attempts by Communists to start disorders by attacks on the conservative newspaper *Le Figaro*, and the campaign to build up the Communist leader Thorez into a national champion of patriotic democracy – a kind of Gambetta or Jaurès – and the fearless enemy of the cosmopolitan conspiracy of bankers and warmongers, French political life did not go through a major crisis. Some Polish Communists were expelled and relations with Poland and the USSR deteriorated. There was a violent campaign against Jules Moch, who had been an exceptionally active minister of the interior and of defence, and was attacked from both right and left, being accused by the left of brutal oppression of political liberties, and by the right of opposing German rearmament, to the detriment of France and Western defence; but this assault, from which both Communists and Gaullists seemed to [xxvi] expect much, finally petered out. The constructive imagination of France manifested itself in the so-called Schuman Plan, largely inspired by Jean Monnet, for the integration of iron and steel production in Europe under a supernational authority. In the controversy with Britain that ensued, France appeared to be speaking for Europe more truly than any

other great nation. But this was the official voice of France; there were no echoes of it in French art or literature, still absorbed, save for the Communists, with personal themes.

Even in Belgium, where a major succession crisis shook the country, stability was preserved. The very large and bitterly hostile minority opposed to King Leopold's return (which included left-wing parties, liberals, trade unionists, and so on) nearly caused a civil war. Disturbances occurred; there were violent deaths; a Communist leader was assassinated. Finally a compromise was adopted by the acceptance of King Leopold's son Prince Baudouin as king. Thus even in Belgium Communism was in 1950 not a serious internal danger, and the same was true of most of the countries of Western Europe.

Yugoslavia under Tito continued as a heretical outpost against orthodox Communism, thereby incidentally providing an outlet for the loyalty of those left-wing intellectuals in Western Europe who most of all abhor capitalism and even the kind of socialism which compromises with it, and would like to come to terms with, but cannot quite bring themselves to swear absolute obedience to, the despotic demands of undiluted Soviet Communism. Spain and Portugal continued under their dictatorships; Greece, with the Communists crushed, consolidated its economic position; Switzerland continued to be solidly Conservative, while Germany and Austria remained battlegrounds between the ideologies modified by local religious and nationalistic traditions.

The US saw itself (as indeed it was) in the role of a financial patron and saviour, engaged in shoring up the rickety European structure against an otherwise unavoidable collapse, and showed some resentment against isolationist or 'neutralist' attitudes on the part of countries which only it had saved from being gobbled by the Soviet crocodile, and who now appeared to be venting their ill temper upon their largely disinterested rescuer. Consequently, there was much talk in the US of inability to help those who showed no desire to help themselves, and of a limit to the feasibility of defending those obstinately labouring under separatist delusions. Unless Europe gave some concrete sign of federating itself into a political and economic unit, capable at any rate of some degree of serious self-defence, its military future looked to US observers very gloomy; the various international organisations seemed disappointingly unable to create a single political and economic

texture; and Britain, with its Scandinavian followers, looked like the ringleader in the prevention of a European union on US lines, because, so it was held, Britain was dominated by a selfish fear of losing its world position which depended on its extra-European connections.

On the other hand, it was allowed that Attlee's government, despite its minute majority, showed a remarkable capacity for survival; Parliament behaved with a commendable sense of responsibility; on major issues of foreign policy it seemed largely undivided, and the angry taunts occasioned by Sir Stafford Cripps's devaluation of the pound were silenced by the solid fruits of this audacious step. Sir Stafford Cripps retired, leaving Britain in a financial position stronger than that during the previous year. In the autumn the British government took the spectacular step of declaring itself no longer in need of Marshall aid, and yet this nation insisted on displaying an apparent lack of solidarity with its neighbours in Western Europe. It looked for all the world as if French and Italians, the Benelux countries and others were ready enough to form a union, but for sabotage by the British Labour government, which had shown itself no less isolationist and empire-minded than its Conservative predecessors. Winston Churchill lent his great authority to such a view and demanded a greater degree of European integration; spokesmen of the British government declared that the lowering of economic standards of living, with a sudden reversal of the British economy by 'integrating' it into the complementary continental economy, even to the limited extent proposed by the Schuman plan, with control no longer vested in democratically elected parliaments, could hardly strengthen Western Europe or the free world. Their opponents replied that this was mere defence of the obsolete, and now obstructive, concept of national sovereignty against wider forms of association, posing as a demand for democratic control.

The Middle Eastern countries, preoccupied with the internal social problems arising from the semi-feudal systems under which they live, filled with bitter hostility towards the new State of Israel, and nursing resentful memories of the defeat of their armies, and of lack of concrete sympathy from the Western allies, took up a stiffly neutral position vis-à-vis the East-West conflict, pronouncing themselves anti-Communist indeed, but in favour of a more

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cautious and independent policy of no alliances with the great powers, to avoid fresh disillusionments.

India and Pakistan, themselves in the grip of a ruinous conflict, with war between them narrowly averted and a fierce dispute about the territory of Kashmir, displayed an equal neutrality. Turkey proved the freedom of its institutions by the result of elections in which Kemal Atatürk's successor had been defeated and was peacefully succeeded by the leader of the opposition; neither party concealed its fear of the USSR, and both were unequivocally on the side of the West. Persia (Iran), which alone held the distinction of having successfully frustrated Soviet plans by purely diplomatic means, continued to tread a cautious and tortuous path. China, under a victorious Communist government, violently denounced American aid to the defeated nationalists now driven to the island of Formosa. The French were pursuing a none too successful war against the left-[xxvii]wing Vietnam party in Indochina, supported Emperor Bao Dai, and complained of insufficient help from the US in the campaign. The new Indonesian republic finally stabilised its relations with the Dutch on a solid basis and was granted admission to the ranks of the United Nations.

V

The assumption that all the new republics with seats in the assembly of the United Nations lived in the same century was not entirely justified: on 2 April the government of the Burmese republic, in the midst of a civil war against its Karen rebels, suddenly resigned; official astrologers were ceremoniously consulted, and, five minutes later, the government resumed its office. In Malaya left-wing terrorism continued, with Chinese Communist aid as in the case of Indochina. Thailand was nervous but relatively peaceful under its new king. In Korea the Soviet-supported government of the north and the US-supported government of the south glared at each other balefully across the artificial dividing line of the 38th parallel. This was the situation until June, when the North Korean government invaded South Korean territory, using the age-old formula that they had received intelligence that the South Koreans were on the point of launching a major attack upon them. On 26 June, the day after the North Koreans crossed the 38th parallel – a term destined to become unforgettable by endless reiteration – President Truman,

with the approval of the majority of the Security Council of the United Nations, offered air and naval aid to the attacked South Korean government, and a few days later, after the Security Council had formally called upon all its members to aid it in repelling the aggressor, the US, Great Britain, the non-Asiatic British dominions and other members of the United Nations sent reinforcements to support the South Koreans in their war.

VI

There is no need to trace here the vicissitudes of this war. After the initial reverses by the forces of the United Nations at the hands of the North Koreans, widely held to be armed and trained by the USSR, the invaders were repelled and driven back by General MacArthur's forces (of which much the greater part was supplied by the US) after a successful landing in their rear; the United Nations forces drove across the 38th parallel and to certain points on the Manchurian border, where in November they unexpectedly met a large Chinese army which in its turn drove the United Nations forces across the peninsula, so that by the end of the year they were arrayed near the 38th parallel, awaiting further attack. This was the first serious armed conflict between a state supported by the USSR and its satellites, and a State supported by other members of the United Nations. The possibility of world war seemed suddenly greatly increased, and under its shadow the lines were still more tightly drawn. Various agencies of the United Nations, while expressing their abhorrence of the act of aggression, unsuccessfully attempted to end immediate hostilities by an armistice or a ceasefire order.

For a period American opinion achieved greater unity than at any time since the end of the Second World War; for a time the violent personal attacks upon the State Department and US foreign policy ceased to occupy the forefront of attention. President Truman's bold act in sending military aid to Korea was acclaimed as truly representing the will of the American people. That curious combination of isolationism, acute right-wing nationalism and conservatism in domestic affairs, linked with the passionate emphasis on Far Eastern in preference to European involvement which had characterised the isolationist camp during the Second World War, for once seemed to melt, and its leaders to approach

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more closely the outlook of the internationalist leaders of the Democratic administration and the State Department. Even the preoccupation with the Communist Trojan horse took second place to the consciousness of international responsibility, of the US as the leader of the free nations against totalitarian aggression. But the mid-term elections proved that the activities of Senator McCarthy and his allies had nevertheless borne fruit; a number of liberal senators and congressmen were defeated, 'rock-ribbed' Republicans were elected by increased majorities, the inquisitors of the State Department and the US administration generally were returned in great force, and although the revered figure of General Marshall soon entered the cabinet to replace the somewhat discredited Louis Johnson, violent onslaughts on policies common to him and Acheson continued unabated.

In Europe the Korean War produced at first admiring approval, on the part of the majority, of the US president's attempt to back words with deeds and demonstrate that the United Nations could defend its interests by force as well as argument. But after the initial North Korean advance continued, reaction set in. It took the form of protests against what was conceived as an unnecessary war, particularly when this was represented as being due to the intemperate policies of the great non-European powers, who neither understood nor cared for the survival of Western Europe and its values. Opinion presently crystallised round the views expressed by Churchill (whom no one could accuse of pro-Soviet tendencies or anti-American feeling or inclination to undue pessimism) when he told the House of Commons that the Asiatic war was a diversion from the main issue, which lay in Europe – a trap into which major Western powers must not allow themselves to be drawn. This seemed only too clearly to be also the opinion of the Labour cabinet, and Attlee's swift resolve to visit Washington, DC, acclaimed in France and elsewhere as a move likely to sober alleged American extremism, emphasised this as a general European attitude, which in its turn provoked American charges of European cowardice and ingratitude. Presently certain Asiatic powers together with Arab states, who looked upon themselves [xxviii] as a neutral third force in this conflict, offered their mediation. Their proposal was rejected by the Soviet bloc, to whom the whole situation may well have looked uncommonly like a repetition of Western intervention in Russia in 1918, with Chiang Kai-shek as a kind of

Chinese Denikin or Kolchak, and the United Nations as an angry but in the end insufficiently resolute entente, bent on intervention against a nation in arms, but, as always, with inadequate forces.

In this dark atmosphere quarrels and recriminations between the Western Allies naturally grew in frequency and bitterness. Britain maintained that, if its advice had initially been followed by the US and the Chinese Communist government recognised by the United Nations at the beginning of the year, Chinese intervention in Korea, and possibly even its invasion of Tibet (which astonished and dismayed the socialist Indian prime minister, Nehru), might not have occurred. American statesmen maintained that if they had earlier been allowed to rearm the Germans, there would now have been in Europe a far more solid obstacle to Russian aggression. The French declared that to allow the Germans a large army was the most fatal of all moves – the recreation of the Reichswehr with its sinister memories of the Rapallo agreement, followed by General Seeckt's secret and successful rearming of the Germans after 1918, and finally the Russo–German pact of 1939; it was surely better to let the Germans enter a European army as individuals rather than as units. The Western Germans, meanwhile, were divided into those who did not wish to bear the brunt of war again under any circumstances, and rejected rearmament as a prelude to being turned into cannon fodder for the Western powers, and those like Adenauer, the chancellor, who for reasons of national pride refused rearmament unless the establishment of some kind of independent German military establishment were authorised.

The year closed with only a very partial compromise upon these questions, with a wide divergency of views in America and Europe as to the need to fight a full-scale Asiatic war, and in the midst of military setbacks and a prospect of a dark future. Nevertheless, the basic alliance of the Western powers remained intact and the appointment of General Eisenhower as supreme commander of the forces of the Atlantic powers in Europe was, as was noted above, symbolic of a degree of unity scarcely imaginable a few years before.

VII

Meanwhile the life of the peoples under Soviet influence remained opaque to Western eyes. So far as one could tell, the USSR itself was absorbed in the pursuit of its post-war plan to achieve greatly

increased production, at the expense of progress in the arts of peace, of both guns and butter. To the accompaniment of the (by now normal) punishments for inefficiency and sabotage on the part of those engaged in production, great economic progress was reported in the Soviet press. In the sphere of culture the acute chauvinism of the previous year was kept up, indeed intensified, and foreign influences still more rigidly excluded; apart from an exiguous but valuable stream of purely academic literary scholarship engaged in restoring the texts and publishing hitherto unknown fragments of the works of the authors admitted into the Soviet canon, nothing of general significance, or even notoriety, came from the USSR in 1950, apart from a sudden and, as it seemed to the outside world, bizarre pronouncement by Stalin himself, in which he publicly condemned the views of academician Marr, hitherto a sacrosanct Soviet authority on linguistics, who had put forward views of increasing eccentricity until his death in 1934, which had made him and his followers the laughing stock of scholars in other countries. Stalin explained in a newspaper article that language did not necessarily alter as a direct function of the change in the class structure of society, but obeyed slower laws. This was the first pronouncement for many years on a theoretical topic by the high priest of Communist orthodoxy. As such it was not merely accepted with the routine universal adulation by all Communist scholars, but gave hope that the violent drive against artists and authors accused of insufficient Marxist orthodoxy might now be somewhat relaxed, at any rate in regions relatively free from politics – that, in fact, they might share in the blessings of the linguists so suddenly and gratifyingly freed from their heaviest theoretical fetters.

In the satellite countries the process of eliminating ‘fellow travellers’ and ‘soft’ Communists from key positions continued, and the primary duty of each country was rammed home to each and all of them. In Poland an obviously precarious and short-lived arrangement was arrived at with a certain representative of the Roman Church³ whereby Catholic worship was to be tolerated on terms duly denounced as not being acceptable to the Vatican. The violent abuse of, and threats against, Tito and his heretical regime continued unabated, but the major weapons in this war of words were naturally reserved for the US. The attack used in the course of

³ Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński (1901–81), Primate of Poland.

propaganda to, and within, the Western countries was two-pronged; in each case it attributed to the US policies of which the USSR was itself more frequently and plausibly accused. It stressed the desirability of peace, endangered solely by American imperialist greed, but also it appealed openly to the national traditions of each country, and to its longing to remain free and independent, and true to its own national traditions, as opposed to exploitation and destruction as so much raw material for the ruthless American war machine.

The English were duly reminded that they were the land of Shakespeare, Milton, Dickens, and not the degenerate tools of the bankers of Wall Street. The French were invited to reflect on the past glories and the revolutionary tradition of the republic, and on the ancient friendship between France and Russia, and France's traditional hostility to England. [xxix] Herbert Hoover's call to his country to return to old-fashioned isolationism and to abandon the European continent to its own devices – if need be to perish as the victim of its own ridiculous ineptitude – was given an almost approving prominence in the Soviet press. Ever stricter Stalin worship was demanded from the satellite press and public. The last remaining non-political poets and artists in satellite countries had pressure put upon them to pay homage to Stalin as the champion of humanity and peace. The US was represented as the symbol at once of war and of a vulgar and materialistic cosmopolitanism seeking to destroy Europe, the cradle of civilisation, morally, intellectually and physically, an image made familiar originally by Nazi propaganda, and at various times applied by it both to the US and to the USSR, and then in turn used to describe Germany itself by Soviet publicists in the period of friction before the Soviet–Nazi friendship pact of 1939.

VIII

So far as the arts and letters and thought are concerned, 1950 was a remarkably undistinguished year. If we compare 1950 with the corresponding year after the First World War, the contrast is even more depressing. In 1923 such writers as Joseph Conrad, George Moore, H. G. Wells and Bernard Shaw were still full of creative power; D. H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, Sinclair Lewis, André Gide, Arnold Bennett and W. B. Yeats were at the height of their powers.

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Aldous Huxley, Edith Sitwell, Jean Cocteau, François Mauriac, Ernest Hemingway, T. S. Eliot and other exceptionally gifted writers were beginning to arouse attention. If it be said that men of genius and even of striking talent are seldom noticed by their contemporaries and loom much larger in retrospect than at the time of their emergence, and that consequently many a genius may today be writing or painting or composing and not be visible as yet to the average critical eye, it may be answered that the attitude towards the arts had greatly changed in a quarter of a century.

In those far off days the unorthodox and unconventional was often sharply condemned by the average respected critic, and sharp controversies were common about figures whom their followers claimed as men of genius, while their opponents denounced them as charlatans or the false idols of ephemeral coteries. Since then, so poor does the world seem to have grown in literary and artistic giants that the critics, so far from disparaging the unfamiliar or the disconcerting, seemed only too much on the alert to catch the faintest symptom of anything remotely suggestive of truly original talent. The danger now is not that men of gifts may be ignored or unjustly treated, but that the commonplace or the counterfeit may be over-praised by those who, in their terror of missing a masterpiece for lack of sensibility or perception, see a swan in every goose. The public can no longer, at any rate in Europe, be shocked into protest; even the most philistine assume that genius may be concealed in the incomprehensible. The capacity for sharp reaction, whether favourable or hostile, has grown very weak; the atmosphere is becalmed; eyes and ears are acutely strained to catch the faintest glimpse, the faintest whisper, of something interesting or unusual, and yet there is little enough that the most generous and comprehensive fisher of talent can catch in his net.

Among English-speaking writers, Evelyn Waugh's fantasy about Saint Helena continued his unique but by now familiar strain. Henry Green, Joyce Cary, William Sansom, Jocelyn Brooke, Liam O'Flaherty, Angus Wilson and Rose Macaulay added to the literature of imagination, but did not extend its boundaries in any dimension. In France Pierre Klossowski, André Dhôtel and M. Perain⁴ were new authors who wrote novels of distinction, but scarcely made a literary summer; Jean Giono and Julien Green

⁴ Untraced.

added small jewels to the crowns secure upon their heads; Arthur Waley added yet another to his series of exquisite translations from Chinese; in Germany Hans Jahn wrote a work of fiction worthy of serious comment. Nor was the situation very different in the field of criticism. Lord Russell, G. M. Young, Aldous Huxley, Graham Hough, Edward Sackville-West, Martin Turnell, Sir Maurice Bowra, Julien Benda, Rex Warner and Herbert Read produced essays of genuine distinction, but no new reputations were created, no well-established reputations were strikingly enhanced, no unfamiliar territory was discovered. There was much solid historical research, both in England and in the US. Henry S. Commager and Allan Nevins produced valuable historical surveys, Professor Neale and Mr Rowse made original contributions to knowledge of the Elizabethan age. Professor Feiling wrote a distinguished *History of England*. Professor Braudel produced a remarkable work on French medieval history and the Mediterranean, Professor Altamira's classical history of Spain was translated, and Menéndez Pidal's masterpiece on Spanish aesthetics may also now be read in English; E. R. Curtius put a lifetime of scholarship and thought into his book on the Latin tradition in medieval European Literature. Magistral editions of Theocritus by A. S. Gow, and of the *Agamemnon* by E. Fraenkel, were contributed by the universities of Cambridge and Oxford to the great storehouse of English learning. Monsignor Knox wrote a notable study of *Enthusiasm* – the emotional and spiritual deviations from the centre on the part of religious figures and preachers. The splendid edition of Ben Jonson, edited now by Percy Simpson alone, drew nearer to its close for example G. Coulton's monumental and authoritative treatise on medieval monasticism achieved its posthumous culmination. John Hersey celebrated the heroic resistance of the Warsaw Ghetto to its Nazi executioners in *The Wall*, a work of greater humanitarian and historical than literary merit. Professors Renier, Halecki and Niebuhr wrote thoughtful works on the nature of history and its practice. Charles Morazé pursued his bold and original reinterpretation of recent history in terms of demographical and economic categories. A noble monument by Father Dvornik on the making of central and eastern Europe made its unobtrusive appearance.

Several elegant biographies appeared of a now familiar type, of which the most informative was that of the Victorian worthy,

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Monckton Milnes, by James Pope Hennessy. This was followed by several studies of the eighteenth century with publication of hitherto unfamiliar private papers of which the most sensational was the lately discovered London journal of James Boswell. The life of Florence Nightingale by Miss Woodham Smith captured the public imagination. Bernard Berenson summed up a lifetime of critical experience in *Aesthetics and History*. Sir Osbert Sitwell added a charming pendant to his autobiography. Freya Stark, Wyndham Lewis, Sir Arthur Keith, Geoffrey Grigson, Mrs Franklin Roosevelt and Benedetto Croce wrote their reminiscences. Richard Aldington wrote the life of D. H. Lawrence and Louis Fischer a ponderous work on Gandhi. But these looked back to an older world. The public was reminded of the great distance which the world has travelled by the deaths of such great pillars of a civilisation, now oddly remote, as Bernard Shaw, General Jan Christiaan Smuts, Léon Blum, Henry Stimson, the composer Richard Strauss, the dancer Nijinsky and the actor Emil Jannings. Even the world of those who died at an age less ripe – the gifted, gay and versatile dilettante Lord Berners, the notable socialist Professor Harold Laski, Sinclair Lewis, who invented a famous literary genre – seemed cut off from contemporary life, and to belong to an almost golden age of audacious new directions which turned out to lead to reputable but hardly startling goals. Only George Orwell, the most incorruptible of all modern writers, who died in the beginning of the year, was thoroughly contemporary in the feeling and content of his remarkable satires and essays. His writings have made a genuinely deep impression on the younger British and American intellectuals, and his influence, both literary and political, in large part, perhaps, because of the moral severity and rigid integrity of his personal life, seems likely to have a lasting effect.

Meanwhile Agar, J. F. Dulles and Stringfellow Barr brought the lessons of history to bear upon the issues of our day in a large style, and based on presuppositions, which in Western Europe seemed no longer to be accepted.

IX

The poetry written during the year was neither better nor worse than that of other years, but on the whole less memorable; among the old masters, Walter de la Mare, Ezra Pound and M. Supervielle

published volumes of verse. Among the newer poets, Barker, Gascoigne, Montale and Ungaretti made some mark. But the most acclaimed works of this period were both works of poetic drama: T. S. Eliot's *The Cocktail Party* and Christopher Fry's *The Lady's Not For Burning*. The first achieved great popular success on both sides of the ocean. It offered little new light upon Eliot's outlook but it was widely recognised as an ingenious and impressive translation of his social and religious principles into the medium of drama. As for Fry, his verbal felicity was conceded by the sternest critics to be of an uncommon order but he opened no new window, created no arresting new genre; nevertheless upon so flat and unimpressive a scene it was a performance of scintillating virtuosity, and sprang from a thin but genuine vein of talent.

X

In the world of music much was written that was both agreeable and competent; apart from the performance of the posthumous works of Bartok, and the latest works of such established masters as Hindemith and Vaughan Williams, nothing appeared to mark the year; Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Poulenc, even Benjamin Britten remained relatively silent. In place of creative music there was a notable rise in the standards of performance and of critical interest. the growth of love for serious music among sections of society hitherto contented with musical banalities, or jazz, or nothing at all, was truly arresting. The exceptional number of musical festivals in Europe alone testified to the fact that a more widespread interest in music was probably taken at this moment than at any previous period in history. The festivals of Salzburg, Lucerne, Aix-en-Provence, Siena, Perugia, Venice, Besançon, Edinburgh, Glyndebourne (and, in the US, of Tanglewood, Mass.), and above all the Prades festival, organised round the violoncellist Pablo Casals, by far the greatest instrumental player of his age, and dedicated to the memory of J. S. Bach, who died two hundred years ago – as well as many less known, but no less devoted, musical celebrations – provided a great enrichment to the world of pure art. The year was marred by the death of the Romanian pianist Dinu Lipatti who, still in his twenties, was a lyrical genius of the first order.

XI

The great creative impetus which produced the remarkable Italian films of previous years seemed to be, not indeed exhausted, but running at a lower ebb. The best films, and none of these were of lasting value, were made, as so often, in France. The first classical culture of that country proved still the most solid framework for the arts. In literature, music and painting, if it produced nothing notable, it did not lower standards. Picasso alone, in his new light-hearted genial mood, produced work of wonderful gaiety and imagination. He painted ceramics, he published lithographs of satyrs and nymphs on sunlit rocks in Provence, he quarrelled with England for failing to admit his Communist friends to its shores, and paid England back by refusing to allow his work to be exhibited in London, and by designing the 'dove of peace', which became the emblem of pro-Soviet feeling on the eastern side of the 'iron curtain'.

Politics played a greater part in art than ever before. [xxxi] Creative artists of all kinds were deeply committed to both sides of the great East–West controversy; they took part in the congress dedicated to the freedom of culture held in Berlin and critical of Soviet methods, and they were involved in the counterstroke in the form of the 'peace' congress summoned originally to meet in Sheffield but finally shifted to Warsaw owing to the inability of many delegates to satisfy the British immigration authorities of their peaceful intentions. In general, metaphysical and moral considerations dominated in the world of art and letters at the expense of aesthetic and 'formal' or frankly hedonistic tendencies. The mood was of the kind that Tolstoy would have approved: preoccupied with tormenting doubts about the ends of life, which entered into considerations of every issue – whether centenary reappraisals of Wordsworth or R. L. Stevenson in England, or the historical studies in Germany (where only the very old and very grand – Alfred Weber and Friedrich Meinecke – were not engaged on apologies of German nationalism), or the metaphysical writings of French and German philosophers.

XII

In philosophy, indeed, the great chasm between, on the one hand, the clear, dry world of Anglo-American (and to some extent

Scandinavian) empiricism, with its preoccupation with the importance of different uses of language in life and in the sciences, and, on the other, the darker and more personally anguished world of French and German religious or aesthetic or political metaphysics, was never deeper or more unbridgeable. Neither side recognised merit in the other, and no interpreters appeared to explain these apparently disparate activities to the other camp. To the lucid prose-writers of the English-speaking world, the 'logic' of, for example, Karl Jaspers appeared at best as a deep, impenetrably dark, romantic meditation whose claim to be a treatise on logic bore no relation to anything which they might understand by this term. Nor did they with any greater degree of success grasp the import of the Gifford lectures of the French existentialist philosopher Gabriel Marcel, or the agonised *pensées* and fragments of Simone Weil. Doubtless to thinkers of this kind, struggling like so many Laocoons with cosmic issues on which they most suppose salvation in some sense to depend, the logical writings of such positivists as Professor Ryle of Oxford, or such logicians as Professor Quine of Harvard, must, in their turn, have appeared thin, arid and almost wholly pointless. As for that quasi-philosophical world in which literature has a common frontier with abstract thought – that unclassifiable no-man's-land between the two, whose condition serves often as the truest index of the vagaries of the zeitgeist – in that world formalism and positivism seemed to be yielding ground to a kind of neo-Romantic revival, in which criticism both of the arts and of life drew its inspiration from Dostoevsky, Kafka, Kierkegaard and the German Romantics, rather than the tradition of European enlightenment, with its emphasis on clarity, its reliance on accessible evidence, rational argument and secular values.

In the meantime the Communist writers on either side of the 'iron curtain' pursued their undeviatingly narrow path, heedless of all but the dogma to which they seemed attached with an ever growing intensity. The most gifted among them, the Hungarian Marxist George Lukács, made some impression when his literary studies appeared in the course of the year in an English translation. The world of art and of ideas seemed to be in a state of détente, possibly a trough before a splendid crest, but indubitably a trough. It was scarcely made more attractive by the sudden widespread popularity of television as a new method of mass communication; in due course T. S. Eliot gravely warned his English compatriots

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against this fatal American innovation as likely to destroy the last vestige of fastidious taste. Yet no fewer than 100,000 copies each of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were purchased in the US in the course of this same year. Matthew Arnold would certainly have abhorred the use, if not the notion, of television; but at the same time he believed passionately in the educational value of the great classics. It is difficult to measure the progress and regression of civilisations: the facts must be left to speak for themselves.

XIII

The principal trends of the moment accurately reflected the social and political state of the world. There was too much uncertainty, too much fear and tension for either of two possibilities to be realised: either of a lyrical and imaginative escape from the repellent realities, as had happened during other periods of darkening skies; or, on the other hand, of a serious effort towards some realistic technique capable of restating the central problems (even if not their solutions) in a manner adequate to the new kinds of human experience. The works most characteristic of the year 1950, whether they were inspired by Communist or capitalist ideals, whether they were objective and positivist or personal and romantic, took forms which no longer fitted their relatively new content, and therefore made the result seem either lifeless or curiously ill-compounded – in the latter case an urgent, earnest but unsuccessful effort to speak in a medium which had conspicuously outlived its usefulness to an audience all too anxious to be told whatever there was to say by anyone who had something genuinely novel to express and had discovered, what was still missing, some method of effective communication. Never was the world more patently prepared for a new turn in the development of art and, indeed, other forms of thought and imagination, and never did the emergence of new forms created by, or at least appropriate to, the crucial moment seem so obstinately delayed everywhere – no less in Marxist than in non-Marxist and anti-Marxist societies.

1951

I

The original typescript of Berlin's treatment of 1951 covers political developments at some length, but almost all this material was excluded from the published text. It has been added here as section I, incorporating extensive corrections made by Berlin in the copy of most of the relevant parts of the typescript held in the Edward Weeks papers at the Harry Ransom Centre, The University of Texas at Austin. It seems that Berlin may have offered this material to Weeks for the *Atlantic Monthly*, but it was not published there. Thanks to Michael Sevel for invaluable assistance in transcribing this section.

The year 1951, while it is not marked by events which broke with or sharply deviated from tendencies perceptible in 1949 or 1950, possessed characteristics which might, to future historians, make it seem crucial; for in the course of it formidable major developments seemed to acquire clear and decisive form.

The post-war conflict between the two worlds – the Eastern and the Western – continued, indeed, with increased sharpness; but the arresting fact consisted in the conspicuous rapidity with which both were being consolidated. It seemed possible to discern the social, economic and political contours of human society in, at any rate, the second half of the twentieth century.

The grand lines were emerging into sharp relief. On the one hand, the USSR with its allies and satellites; on the other, Western Europe. On the one hand, the crumbling of the older types of imperialism in many diverse ways, rapid and slow, violent and peaceful, planned and chaotic; on the other, the rise of new forms of nationalism on the ruins of ancient feudal and colonial systems. On the one hand new forms of economic and social integration, gradually but surely superseding older forms of national economy, but still remaining within the framework of what can broadly be described as a capitalist system; on the other, forms of planning genuinely independent of, and opposed to, the social and political traditions of the West.

None of these phenomena proceeded purely from calmly conceived, rational plans pursued for the sake of their own intrinsic merits; but, as normally happens in the lives of both individuals and nations, they sprang from urgent necessities; a sense of immediate danger, the interplay of many forces, conscious and unconscious,

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directed and accidental; and consequently had about them at the time of their creation an air of improvisation and, at times, of hurried and haphazard urgency – ad hoc attempts to stop sudden gaps at the last moment. Yet from the vantage-point of the remote historian of the future, they may well come to present a coherent pattern, and seem to proceed inescapably from the necessities of the times – so plain and immediate that it will be difficult to imagine how we, their contemporaries, could have been relatively so unaware of their ‘logic’ and inevitability, and in many cases of their obvious desirability, usefulness and virtue.

The world was no less disturbed than during the two preceding years. Again were fewer than twenty-one outbreaks of disorder,⁵ accompanied by eighteen disputes.⁶ But the scene was dominated by the major centres of violent conflict: the Korean war, the oil dispute in Persia, and the Egyptian attempts to expel the British from the Suez Canal (and to acquire full control of the Sudan); and, towering over this, the violent tension, now rising to a point where a final explosion seemed near, now falling to the level of ‘normal’ political crisis, between the Soviet sphere of influence and the loose congeries of Western nations.

Under the pressure of these events, both the great halves into which the world seemed divided began to acquire a discernible shape. The USSR continued with its policy of rearmament, and of diversion of all the resources which it could muster, both within its own territory and from that of its satellites, towards its programmes of vast armament and capital investment, leaving as little as possible for that minimum of consumers’ goods without which even the Soviet population could scarcely be expected to live or work.

The requisitions of the USSR from its western satellites became sharper than ever. While there was much talk in the satellite press of

⁵ In Algeria, Argentina, Bechuanaland, Bolivia, British West Africa, Burma, Eritrea, Grenada (WI), Guatemala, Indo-China, Indonesia, on the Israel–Syrian border, in Malaya, Nepal, Nigeria, Persia, Panama, Siam, Spain, Tibet and on the Yugoslav–Bulgarian border.

⁶ Antarctica, British Honduras, Cyprus, Ecuador–Peru, Israel–Jordan, Israel–Syria, Kashmir, Korea, Morocco, South Africa (British Protectorates), Sudan, Suez Canal, Trieste, Western New Guinea. [The total is fourteen, unless the three Protectorates in Southern Africa – Basutoland, Bechuanaland, Swaziland – are counted separately.]

the growing economic strength of, for example, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Rumania under the new dispensation, what in fact seemed to be occurring, so far as Western observers could judge, was the imposition of a deliberate Soviet policy whereby these countries were made directly dependent upon the USSR for their raw materials and the financial and general economic machinery in terms of which their economies operated. No attempts were made to encourage anything like independent economic strength, or any degree of relative national freedom, in these countries; indeed, this was precisely the heresy which was denounced so harshly as Titoism, or bourgeois nationalism, or submission to the corrupt influence of Western warmongers. The carrying through of policies so rapid and so ruthless, as if in fear of imminent hostilities, leaving little time for a solidier and less painful transformation, naturally necessitated the imposition of a degree of political conformity upon nations used to submission, indeed, but not to the degree of physical and mental discipline practiced in a fully totalitarian country; and this was inevitably accompanied by an increase in the rate of trials and purges, at once as a practical measure for the elimination of elements regarded as even in a faint degree potentially unreliable; as an encouraging example to the rest of the population; and as a means of sharpening the revolutionary temper, the élan and zeal of Communist parties, exposed, as they were, scarcely less than the rest of the population, to economic hardships which were due largely to economic insulation from the West, and needing, as the only available antidote, injections of what seemed at times highly synthetic and artificially induced moral and political enthusiasm.

Ever since the USSR compelled its satellites to withdraw from the Marshall Plan Conference of 1947, it seemed plain that a decision had been taken to build a great insulated economic unity east of the Iron Curtain; this process was accelerated by wars and rumours of wars, and expanded over a far larger area by the de facto adherence to it of China, whose programme of collectivisation of farms and rapid industrialisation of one of the greatest rural areas of the world was evidently making great strides, at the expense of a vast degree of human suffering not altogether unlike that which accompanied similar experiments in the first decade of the Stalin regime within the USSR itself.

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The intermeshing of the planned economies of the Communist states was, of course, not the result of either economic necessity or economic doctrine alone, but was a necessary corollary of the degree of political control which the dictatorship of the Communist Party entails in all the areas under its control. If the present rulers of the USSR were to make secure their own tenure of their present form of government, the one development which they could not afford to permit would be the emergence of independent or semi-independent forms of national life in territories under their influence; both because this would permit standards of living dangerously competing with their own, and because it might introduce an element of relative freedom into a system whose survival conspicuously depended upon the degree of tautness to which it could be screwed up.

Various motives were adduced by foreign observers to account for the continued trials for 'treason', in virtually all the 'satellite' countries, of clergymen, including Roman Catholics, Protestants, Jews and Muslims, as well as members of liberal professions, 'capitalists' of various types, and finally of members of Communist Parties accused of the now routine offences – nationalism, sabotage, spying for foreign powers, etc. But this seemed no more the normal accompaniment of the creation of tightly controlled quasi-Soviet systems, where a prime necessity of the party in power is to indicate to its subjects in an absolutely unmistakable fashion the differences between friend and foe. Members of Churches were punished as such; so were members of economic classes due to be liquidated; so were representatives of unfriendly powers, such as the Americans Vogeler (a businessman) in Hungary and Oatis (a newspaper correspondent) in Czechoslovakia; so were members of the dominant Party who showed signs of trying to think or argue for themselves, or belonged to some section of the population regarded as generally suspicious, or had gone too far in opposing the faction which the Kremlin had decided to back at the moment (this may account for the sudden elimination of, for example, Rudolf Slánský, hitherto Moscow's very trusted friend, in Czechoslovakia. The 'deviations' of the former foreign minister Clementis, and of the smaller fry removed with him, seemed easier to interpret).

A rigorously planned Eastern European economic system with its centre in Moscow, and tied by somewhat looser, but nevertheless strong, lines to the semi-independent Communist republic of China,

was being rapidly brought into being. The tempo with which this was attempted, and the crudity and simplicity of the design with which alone so vast an undertaking could be carried through, effectively killed such lingering forms of individual self-expression as may have survived in the countries in question through the violent transformations of the late 1940s.

The work of sovietisation appears to have proceeded both in Slav and non-Slav countries (such as Romania, Hungary and Albania) a good deal more successfully than the analogous Russification policy once so unsuccessfully practised by the tsars. Numerically fewer efforts at independence seem to require suppression: the memories of the past were being stamped out very methodically; the monolithic system in 1951 made great and obvious strides forward in creating a world within a world, blind and deaf to human activity beyond its confines. Finland alone appeared licensed to occupy a unique position as a semi-independent, semi-client power still conducting its own form of life, and refusing to adopt Communist forms, while retaining a cautious and respectful attitude towards its all-powerful neighbour.

But at the same time, and perhaps in half-conscious reaction to this gigantic process of system-building, Western Europe, for all its diversity of historical, racial and national traditions, seemed gradually, and in an unsystematic fashion, yet quite unmistakably, to be growing into a new pattern also. The number of governmental and semi-governmental instruments engaged in this process was very great and, to the layman, highly confusing. The social, economic, political and security agencies, some confined to Europe, some embracing the Atlantic Community; some organs of the United Nations, some arising out of specific multilateral treaty agreements between Western powers; some executive, others merely advisory; some representing governments, others parliaments and national assemblies – all these covered Western Europe with an apparently chaotic network of interlacing and often conflicting authorities, whose functions only those who belonged to them, or set them up (and perhaps not always even they), appeared fully to understand.

Nevertheless, out of this welter of NATO and ECA and ECU and OEEC and SHAPE; the Committee of Foreign Ministers and of the Deputy Foreign Ministers the Council of Europe, or of the Brussels Treaty Powers; the Harriman Committee or the Pearson

Subcommittee or the many overlapping conferences on tariffs or raw materials or South East Asia or trade; out of this vast ill-coordinated amalgam of activities, resembling nothing so much as the Washington administration during the war years of 1941–6, a genuine supernational structure was growing. There had been much talk by various voluntary associations both before and after the Second World War about the necessity of abolishing national frontiers and creating genuinely federal units of great size comparable to the USSR and the US. Some wanted this for all the peoples of the world; others only for the Atlantic nations; some spoke of the possibility of a Scandinavian or North European Federation, others only of countries which had formed part of one or other earlier Roman or medieval unity.

These voluntary associations were apt to be treated as worthy but impractical and, at best, harmless enthusiasts, unaware of the desperate realities of the European scene, of the economic jealousies and national hatreds, of the incompatibilities of temperament and tradition. Nevertheless, in its often naive and absurdly oversimplifying way this kind of talk was symptomatic of a genuine and powerful trend. European integration was genuinely on the way; a new Europe was emerging.

In the great argument as to whether unification should take a direct political form of federation (as in the British North American colonies in the eighteenth century), or a functional form of creating international control of industries and goods and services, the latter possibility captured the imagination of European statesmen; and, in the year in question, led to spectacular results. The so-called Schuman Plan – to set up the ‘European Coal and Steel Community’ – now virtually accepted by France, Western Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg, for the control by these countries of the most powerful iron and steel area (and one of the most powerful coal areas) in the world under the High Authority composed of the representatives, but largely independent, of the constituent countries, is an instrument of international power likely to be more effective than any arrangement since the medieval unity of these countries – forming as they do almost precisely the territories which constituted Charlemagne’s empire.

The British government adopted an ambiguous attitude towards this arrangement. On the one hand, it approved its general aims and promised full cooperation; on the other hand, it adhered to its belief

that as the centre of three intersecting systems – Western Europe, the British Commonwealth and the English-speaking world – it could not afford to allow its national policies to submit to the interests of a body not connected with its non-European commitments. At the back of the minds of British statesmen, there appeared to linger the seldom advanced but persistent conviction that any integration of the British system into an European arrangement depriving the British Parliament of full control would inevitably lead to grave lowering of the standard of living in the British Isles caused by the incursion of the competitive and non-complementary economies of Europe; and while this consideration obviously was present most vividly to the minds of the Socialist government which reigned in Britain until the last months of the year, it exercises an influence scarcely smaller upon those very Conservatives who, when they spoke a year ago at Strasbourg at the Council of Europe, displayed a greater eagerness for such association than their responsibilities, when they succeeded to power, turned out to permit.

Nevertheless, the process in Europe itself continued. The so-called Pleven Plan for the creation of a European army was another powerful factor in the creation of a genuine transnational Western European community; it was fraught with every difficulty. The possibility of a powerful West German army frightened the French no less than the Russians; the prospect of economic domination by the resurgent Germans, to all appearances infinitely less exhausted than their conquerors (at any rate in Europe), and with an ebullient energy and efficiency in reconstructing their broken economy paralleled scarcely anywhere else, was also a nightmare to sections of opinion both in Britain and in France.

The perpetual US insistence upon a greater degree of European integration, both as an end politically good in itself, and as alone making feasible that copious river of military and economic aid which the US had set itself to provide so effectively, while it caused irritated reactions among Europeans not prepared for what seemed to them tantamount to sacrificing national forms of life in return for what some regarded as economic domination by the American Colossus (together with what such persons considered to be an imminent prospect of war brought on by the very determination of the US to rearm its allies), nevertheless, in its turn, assisted towards the destruction of national barriers. The old League of Nations had

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indeed been a far more clearly designed juridical institution, and its committees and subcommittees formed a symmetrical system, lucid and intelligible as the palimpsest of the new criss-crossing authorities and agencies hardly was. Nevertheless, the League of Nations, despite its services to mankind, was ultimately a hortatory body which the first serious crisis of conflicting power progressively perplexed, humiliated and destroyed. And had its successors in the period of the Second World War confined themselves to the mild and orderly activities of the old League, the result might have been equally ineffective. But whether because of the growth of the Russian danger and a yearning for effective collective security; or because Hitler brutally and wastefully, and for evil motives, had nevertheless quite clearly weakened the concept of nationality in Europe, much as Napoleon had destroyed that of dynasties; or because technological advances and economic organisation had come to dominate political forms so openly that the older political arrangements not merely proved inadequate but were finally recognised to be so, even by the most obtuse and obstinate conservatives; for whatever reason, on the continent of Europe national barriers were visibly crumbling. The North Atlantic Alliance, stretching across Western Europe to Greece and Turkey; the Schuman Plan and the Pleven Plan, created largely under the impulsion of the genius of M. Jean Monnet, the most imaginative technocrat of our day; the presence of General Eisenhower in Europe as a token of the serious nature of US intentions; the cluster of economic bodies which derived their life and sustenance from the reality of the weapons and the material aid with which in fact the US supplied its allies (and with which they had begun, to an increasing extent, to supply themselves) – this projection of Mr F. D. Roosevelt's Washington on to the European scene had, in fact, created a going concern: an actual economic organism, still largely shapeless and inefficient, but nevertheless a functioning system whose importance in destroying the national boundaries of the states of the Western European continent emerged into the full light of day during the course of 1951.

The climax occurred on 18 April with the solemn signing of the instrument of the coal and steel authority by the governments of the

six nations.⁷ The sovereign assemblies of all these countries had not ratified this instrument by the close of the year, but this is unlikely to fail of accomplishment; nor did it seem likely that the most passionate wooing would induce any British government in the near future to commit either a large portion of its economic future or the defence of the British Isles to bodies over which it did not retain control; but it promised to approach this ideal as nearly as it could without irrevocably committing itself, and with this the European powers, not altogether happily, agreed to rest satisfied.

The mere emergence of this great new factor in European affairs is in itself perhaps a sufficient indication of the great change of mood from, for example, 1949. Then, cynicism and despondency were deep and widespread in Western Europe. Spokesman after spokesman hastened to assure the US that in the event of a new invasion from the East, nothing could induce the exhausted casualties of the last cataclysm to lift a finger in their own or anybody else's defence. This mood, compounded of terror, exhaustion and inner weakness, together with a genuine antipathy to and fear of the two great giants of the East and West, began to yield in 1950 to a realisation that war was not inevitable, nor the resources of the West, whether moral or material, so negligible as at one time they may have seemed. 'Neutralism' was not, indeed, by any means dead, particularly in France and Italy. Nevertheless, the localisation of the Korean war, and of the Persian and of the Egyptian crises; the relative economic revival of the Western European continent; and, above all, the opening of new vistas which the new economic plan, backed by persistent American advice, complaint and exhortation (and, most of all, American weapons and economic resources), transformed the scene.

The danger of a general war at the end of 1951 seemed remoter than for many months, and while resentment of dictation by the US, which as often as not takes the form of a vaunting or partly real and partly imaginary cultural superiority to American civilisation, continues in Paris and in Rome and even in Bonn and Vienna, nevertheless the Marshall Plan and its successors were among the few human experiments which had plainly justified themselves, despite all the violent pessimism and scepticism in Europe in 1947

⁷ France, Western Germany, Italy, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg.

amid which they were launched, in that they succeeded in inaugurating a movement whose full consequences are scarcely foreseeable. Its immediate result was the averting of a major slump in the European economy, the revitalisation of the economies of the European continent, and the stimulation of a trend which cannot but alter the frontiers, the occupations and indeed the outlook of the vast majority of the inhabitants of Western Europe. And this became fully plain only in the course of the notable year 1951.

Lest, however, these words suggest too positive a view of the achievement of the Western world in 1951, it is as well to juxtapose them with the wars and risings in the East with which it was faced during this period. Everything which was done occurred against a background of the Korean war; and the history of it is the story of the containment of one world by another, along the outer borders of both.

The end of 1950 saw a temporary reversal of US arms and led to a moment of genuine terror for those who feared (as did many European observers, and some US observers) that humiliated American pride, if nothing else, would sooner or later force the US into a vast aggressive operation against the Chinese mainland, and thereby unloose the Third World War. These fears, as the voices of the more sober students of American policy and temperament had steadily maintained, proved ungrounded; the armies of the United Nations – in effect, an American force with its allies – recouped its losses; the North Koreans, and subsequently their Chinese allies also, were driven back. But General MacArthur, who had sustained much criticism on account of his reported refusal to allow for the possibility of Chinese intervention, appeared to claim, even at the moment of his lowest military fortunes, that he had indeed won the original or Korean war, and that the entrance of the Chinese had precipitated a new Chinese war for which a very different strategy would be required. There were press reports that he believed that the US was engaged in a general crusade against Communism, that Communism was indivisible, that to localise or confine a war was impracticable, that the US would merely exhaust itself unnecessarily by restraining its operations to the Korean peninsula, that the enemy must be attacked in his own lair; in short, that a war against China and if need be the USSR was both inevitable and morally necessary.

Early in the year, President Truman, without impugning General MacArthur, denied any such intention on his own part; declared in

the full hearing of the world that his country was engaged upon maintaining the authority of the United Nations, and that he had no intention of converting war into an attack upon any great power as such (for example, by bombing Manchurian installations); that while General MacArthur had indeed full authority from the United Nations to go beyond the 38th Parallel which was the frontier between the old territories of North and South Korea, this was to be no more than a means to uphold that body's decision. The US Government made it clear that, unlike Britain, they had no intention of recognising Communist China; no intention of abandoning the Chinese Nationalists on the island of Formosa; and every intention of pursuing the Korean war to the bitter end.

The Conference of Imperial Prime Ministers which met in London was obviously worried by the progress of this war, and, largely under the influence, it was reported, of Mr Nehru, the Prime Minister of India (who, while not pro-Soviet, was thought to feel certain sympathies with the position of any Asiatic nation which asserted its independence), expressed a general hope that some understanding might be reached both with Communist China and the USSR by means of peaceful discussion; some supporters of the Labour Government in England saw Mr Attlee as the mediator who, by his timely flight to Washington, saved the world from major disaster; and pressed the role of Britain as mediator between what they regarded as a violently resentful Soviet power and irresponsible and ill-informed American imperialists.

The USSR denounced the Western powers, but particularly the US, as heartless murderers and ruthless capitalist exploiters and aggressors. In the spring, General MacArthur wrote a letter to the Majority Leader of the US House of Representatives in which he expressed open criticism of what seemed to him the insufficiently rigorous policies of the US administration. The letter made it plain that General MacArthur believed in the bombing of Manchuria – at any rate, in some form of violent offensive against the Chinese, as well as the North Koreans, greater than any hitherto authorised or contemplated.

Two days after the publication of this letter, on 11 April, President Truman relieved the General of his command, amid a gasp of mingled surprise, relief and indignation from the general public and the opponents and advocates of the General's policies. The President's courage in dispensing with the services of a general

of such prestige and panache as MacArthur appeared to extort the admiration even of some of who regarded his action as unjust or mistaken. This act had consequences very different in the US from those which it had in Europe. On the latter continent, it was widely approved: General MacArthur was to many Europeans a symbol of the aggressive American war spirit, which lent itself to those who wanted to represent American policy as being guided by naked self-interest or national arrogance or a mixture of barbarous folly and barbarous strength. General MacArthur as a bogey was one of the most powerful weapons in the hands of both the Communists and the 'neutralists'; a scarecrow with which to frighten all those who shrank before the prospect of another war, a pointless 'atomisation' of innocent civilians in Europe. His recall therefore was the clearest possible indication that the US was not wildly bent on aggressive war, but was controlled by men – President Truman, or the Secretary of State, Mr Acheson, or Generals Bradley and Marshall – who literally meant what they said, and desired only to support the authority of the United Nations and not a world crusade.

To this degree, President Truman's action raised the prestige of America in Europe, and weakened the resistance to those political and economic measures of which America was the strongest sponsor, and which were endangered by suspicions of its good intentions. General Ridgway succeeded General MacArthur, and the Korean war, slowly and painfully indeed, developed more favourably for the Western allies. Chinese, Russians and Koreans began to speak of the possibilities of ceasefire arrangements or a temporary armistice. The Soviet representative at UNO, Mr Malik, indicated as much in his UN speech on 23 June. Soviet obstinacy, mutual suspicion, American refusal to concede to Chinese conditions – admission to the UN and the abandonment of Formosa – caused negotiations for such a truce to drag on fruitlessly during the rest of the year, accompanied by an alternation of ebb and flow in the actual fighting, which sometimes rose to almost its 1950 level of violence (North Korean–Chinese losses rose to over a million against a reported 103,000 of the Allied Forces), and sometimes declined to a virtual stalemate.

This situation was still in existence when the year ended, the truce negotiations still wearily continuing amid charges and counter-charges of bad faith, sabotage, unprovoked attack, etc. Yet, despite almost daily losses in men and materiel, the Korean war began to

move out of the centre of focus not only of the European, but even of the American, consciousness as well. It became a localised war, with no great triumphs or defeats hoped for or feared. The US had proved that its nerves were stronger than its enemies had anticipated, and that it was capable of carrying through a long containing action with the same perseverance and moderation and efficiency as that with which the British had so long contained the frontiers of their Empire against the raids of tribesmen and the more violent attacks of small but exasperated independent neighbours.

General MacArthur was recalled on 11 April, and arrived in San Francisco on 17 April. From the moment of his arrival, his procession through the US was a triumphal tour. Cities, states, legislatures vied in paying him homage. The Republican section of Congress succeeded in causing him to be invited to address both Houses of Congress on his return, and he did so – in a speech which even his opponents were compelled to describe as a masterpiece of political skill. He denounced the shortcomings of the US Administration, and swiftly became the focal point around which gathered all those who, from widely separated points of view, felt inimical to the policies or persons of the government of the US. The nucleus of his followers appeared to be composed of those ex-isolationists who were still dominated by fear and distrust of Europe, looked upon the foreign policy of the US as dominated by persons anxious, for one reason or another, to appease the USSR or to view its policies in too rosy a light.

General Chiang Kai-Shek was represented as the only real anti-Communist champion in Asia, betrayed and abused by those blind or politically subversive agents of the US who had so fatally preferred to lean upon his left-wing enemies; General MacArthur was represented as a man not merely of military genius but of wisdom and far-sighted patriotism, recalled solely because he had had the moral courage to denounce the suicidal policies of the President and his incompetent administration.

How far the champions of General Chiang really cared about his person or prospects was not always clear. What did emerge was that the failure of the administration in its China policy was still the outstanding stick with which its opponents could continue to beat it, and that the State Department, which for many years had been regarded as the stiffest and most invulnerable of government agencies, had, as a result of the inevitable task placed upon it of

dealing with the ideologies as well as personalities of foreign countries, rendered itself noxious to attacks of partiality, bias and even serious treason to the best interests of the US. Without the moderating influence of Senator Arthur Vandenberg (who died in the course of the year), who had been one of the architects of the bipartisan foreign policy at the end of Mr Roosevelt's last administration, the moderate Republicans appeared unable to restrain the zeal of Senator McCarthy, who was allied to Senator McCarran in common distrust of and opposition to the administration's views on foreign policy, foreign doctrine and foreigners in general.

Mr Roosevelt's memory, anything but obsolete after the inevitable shadow cast upon the liberal policies of that regime by the Hiss case (Mr Hiss, an ex-official of the State Department, accused of passing information to the USSR, and incarcerated for perjury, had begun to serve his prison sentence in the course of the year), had further light cast upon it by the publication of the diaries of the late Secretary of Defense, Mr Forrestal, in a book by the ex-Under-Secretary of State Mr Sumner Welles on Mr Roosevelt's most fateful decisions; and most of all by the publication of Mr George Cannon's lectures on US foreign policy, in which the thesis was argued with brilliance and profound feeling by this distinguished diplomat and Russian expert that American foreign policy suffered from misplaced idealism, by the irruption of democratic methods into fields where only experts could be permitted to tread, and by a haphazard and casual manner of reaching decisions under the stress of moral sentiment and internal political exigencies which bedevilled the rest of the world and damaged the reputation of the US among the very populations which in a missionary spirit it sought to rescue from their own shortcomings. He advocated a return to the balance of power and warned the US against wishing to foist its own somewhat callow ideals upon nations with very different traditions, habits and ambitions. This distrust of previous US policy and plea for the experts and professionals precisely contradicted the violent appeals to the moral sense of the American people against corrupt and treacherous diplomats made by the more unbridled representatives of the reactionary opposition.

Senator McCarthy seized upon errors in policy with regard to China which the Department of State had to some degree admitted, as the most promising terrain for conducting his disruptive

operations. He made wholesale charges against a large variety of individuals, and so the McCarran Committee, charged with the inner security of the US, proceeded to investigate and cross-examine a number of persons thus accused. At least three officials of the State Department temporarily lost their posts as a result of this concentrated fire upon their persons and records. These were defended not only by the liberal press, which pronounced the charges false and the committee heavily biased, but by persons who had opposed the policy of the officials in question in the past, but regarded them as personally honest and the charges made against their personal integrity as reckless and unjust.

No conclusive evidence appeared to confute either the accusers or the accused but the air was thick with violent recrimination. It was not clear whether the Republican Party would regard Senator McCarthy as a valuable ally against the administration or, in view of the manner and matter of his denunciations, as a political liability rather than an asset. A group of liberal Republicans attacked his methods; but Senator Taft aligned himself with him. He seemed to be viewed by the average American as a demagogue guilty of much exaggeration and reckless talk, yet nevertheless the uncoverer of genuine of subversive activity in the nerve centres of national life.

When, however, Senator McCarthy went so far as to accuse General Marshall himself of having in effect made common cause with Stalin during and after his China mission, he seemed to go too far even for those who were ready to make maximum political capital out of any well-delivered attack on the Democratic administration, and somewhat discredited the anti-administration campaign. But besides its effect on Republicans or other bitter opponents of the party in power, the arrival of General MacArthur appeared to release a great deal of popular feeling long pent up against the administration for reasons very remote from foreign policy. The Democratic Party had been in power continuously for almost two decades. The acute frustration which this in itself had created suddenly burst through its dams, and in the distinguished and picturesque figure of the great soldier it found a hero homage to whom was in itself an act of protest – an expression of the many real and imaginary grievances against Mr Truman's regime. Moreover, the undeniably romantic air of the General stood out as a patch of bright and brilliant colour in what had for too long been a procession of drab events in a country addicted to dramatic events

and a heightening of the emotions. General MacArthur found among his allies such quasi-isolationists as ex-President Hoover, who urged, as he often had before, that ground troops, at any rate, should on no account be sent to Europe; that Europeans, at any rate, could or at least should be in a position to defend themselves without a perpetual drain on American lives and treasury. This was, to some degree, echoed also by Senator Taft, who was known to have presidential ambitions. General MacArthur did not, it is true, support this point of view: indeed, he made it clear that he favoured every means of stopping Soviet expansion, and was in favour of an aggressive policy of resistance, not of isolation; nevertheless, he was the natural hero and champion round whom the anti-Truman front could crystallise.

The swift conquest of China by the Communists lent plausibility to the view that the US administration had been guilty of the double crime of first letting itself be hoodwinked by Communists posing as mild agrarian radicals, and then, when it was too late, offering inadequate aid to the unfortunate Chiang. Chiang, indeed, became almost a Republican hero, and one or two Senators travelling abroad made a point of visiting him and identifying themselves with his grievances and his claims. European countries, especially those in any case only too prone to look on the US as emotionally unstable, and in the grip of mounting war fever, needed only to point to the cult of MacArthur as evidence for their diagnosis. Conversely, those in the US who favoured MacArthur found in this European attitude fresh evidence for the old thesis that the countries of Europe were ungrateful, corrupt, and either too cynical or too frightened to resist Communist penetration, and in any case not capable of being successfully defended by US arms which they did not have the spirit to use, and perhaps not worth defending by a morally upright, strong, young republic anxious to defend the enemies of all that had made it great.

Presently the administration struck back. Congress examined witnesses to discuss the Far Eastern policy and uncover the causes of General MacArthur's dismissal. Mr Acheson presented the administration's case with an impressive thoroughness, sincerity and skill. But the tide turned only when the military men began to testify to their belief in the disastrous consequences of MacArthur's policies; the Secretary of Defense, General Marshall, and the Chief of Staff, General Bradley, and General Collins, finally placed their

immense authority in the scale against the great recalcitrant; they denounced the policy of defensive war against the USSR, which they conceived that MacArthur's plan would have made inevitable, and for which by implication he stood. The situation was highly paradoxical: the bulk of General MacArthur's followers came from those who were opposed to foreign entanglements and who suspected the administration of carrying on the late President Roosevelt's, to them excessively warlike, policies. Yet this was what the general himself in some sense appeared to stand for. He declared that he had no political ambitions and that made him a figure to be set in sharp contrast with scheming and unscrupulous politicians. He denounced the present conduct of the Korean War, and that his Republican followers approved; he was the symbol of war against Communism, and that attracted to his side anti-Communists of all shades and such powerful organisations as the American Legion and the Roman Catholic Church. Yet in some sense he was understood to favour aggressive warfare; and that confused at any rate some of his potential supporters. Moreover, the immense moral weight of such men as Marshall and Bradley disposed of the image of MacArthur as being opposed only by politicians and left-wing intellectuals; and so, in the end, as the year wore on, this episode receded into the background.

The Korean War had not been lost; and it looked as if a general war had, perhaps, been averted. The great armament orders had prevented such possible economic recession in the US as might have caused international melees, prices were rising, and so to some extent were wages. Strikes occurred, but none of them too lengthy or crippling to industry; there was great prosperity in the land, greater perhaps than at any previous period; there was a good deal of political discontent, much suspicion, some of it evidently justified, of corruption due, it was thought by some, to the retention of power for too many years in the hands of the same interests. Senator Kefauver conducted an effective campaign designed to expose sinister collusion between politicians, police and racketeers of various brands. Government agencies in Washington were systematically exposed as harbouring men who behaved, if not always in a corrupt, yet often in a highly incorrect and disreputable, manner. Mr Truman's administration lost prestige thereby; its efforts to purify public life were held at times to be less energetic than they might have been because of the President's too passionate

sense of personal loyalty to his old friends, some of them considered unfit for the offices they held.

Republicans and some Democrats attacked Washington as a sink of shocking corruption; the President defended his administration and denounced its opponents; the mood, excited and disturbed, did not, however, contain that mixture of fear and despair in which strong men are raised to power by great waves of popular feeling. The US was too prosperous for Boulangism of this kind.***

Attacks on the policies of China were naturally connected with the continuation of attacks upon various persons active in Mr Roosevelt's New Deal, on the ground of their Communist sympathies and general unsoundness, and nests of them were being perpetually discovered in universities and other haunts of intellectuals. Nevertheless, the witch-hunt of last year seemed to be ebbing. The Regents of the University of California amended their decision about the loyalty oath, which caused the resignations of many members of the faculty; the champions of academic freedom appeared to be growing in strength. To foreign and indeed US observers, it did not appear as if freedom of conscience was altogether secure in the US; nevertheless, a reaction had set in, and was continuing against the indiscriminate attacks upon non-conformity of the previous year. The great universities of the East Coast had held out against the storm.

The production of weapons, aeroplanes, tanks and the like under Mr C. E. Wilson had not, indeed, reached those peaks which he and the President had foretold in a sanguine moment. On the other hand, consumer goods – cars and washing machines, refrigerators and television sets – had poured out with a prodigality never before seen in the history of the world. Food and clothing were produced in prodigious abundance; the backbone of the country – the farmers, the industrial workers, the middle classes – were not dissatisfied. Inflation had been partially checked. The financial scandals caused excitement, disgust and indignation, but not the ferocious sense of injustice which leads to the upsetting of the normal framework of political democracy. The presidential election year 1952 was approaching; Senator Taft was clearly to be a Republican candidate, the strongest representative of its conservative core. The 'liberal' Republicans, led by Senators Lodge and Duff, had chosen Senator Eisenhower as their candidate: Mr Truman declined to say whether he would offer himself for re-

election, and praised the liberal governor of Illinois, Mr Adlai Stevenson. Senator Kefauver, a democrat, entered his candidacy: there was talk of General MacArthur, of Chief Justice Vinson, of Governor Warren of California. Mr Dewey supported Eisenhower. Mr Stassen spoke in his own cause. The presidential issue began to loom larger than that of war and peace; the underlying assumption that a major conflict was imminent, which began to melt in 1950, vanished. The hoarders of goods who had banked upon an imminent war found themselves foolishly overstocked with goods; the great stores lowered their prices in precipitous competition with each other, to the astonished gratification of the general public. The only serious clouds to be observed darkened foreign skies.

The two outstanding problems of the year were the troubles in the Middle East and of Germany. The Muslim countries of the Middle East still presented an almost ideal example of the orthodox Marxist model of countries on the eve of revolution. One regime was dying, another was still waiting to be born. New economic enterprise had begun to break the ancient semi-feudal order in Persia, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, and other Arab lands. Everywhere the same, situation seemed to prevail: a rich, corrupt, astute, traditionally semi-feudal ruling caste; a depressed, illiterate and largely starving peasantry; and between these a nascent middle class, merchants, factory owners, manufacturers of various types, and members of liberal professions, some risen from below, some emancipated from above, but for the most part frustrated for lack of opportunity to develop their skills, or live the kind of life of which their knowledge of more advanced civilisations had made them acutely aware. The dissatisfaction of this frustrated middle section of the population poured itself into both Communist and nationalist channels; and, if allowed to fester uncontrolled, might well overthrow the obsolete regimes of the pashas and their equivalents, with their ramshackle temporary alliances with this or that centre of power – the army or the religious leaders – much as they had done in the Balkans and indeed in Russia herself.

The USSR did not need to do very much beyond general encouragement of this natural process – both nationalism and Communism were natural centres of xenophobia and resistance to the West, much exacerbated by the triumph of the state of Israel, which embodied sophisticated, alien, Western ways of life and was a symbol of a humiliating defeat of the backward Arabs in the hands

of scientifically trained Jews supported by American and other Western countries.

This wounded and bitterly resentful nationalism boiled over in Persia in the course of the year, when a Muslim fanatic assassinated the Premier, General Razmara, on 7 March, in the name of national independence. Nationalist agitation took the form of demands for the nationalisation of the oil which is Persia's chief economic resource; its control by the Anglo-Iranian Company was the bitterest stigma of national degradation and exploitation. After a brief interlude under a pro-Western premier, accompanied by somewhat unimaginative compromises by the oil company, behind which the British government was known to be arrayed, an ultra-nationalist politician, Dr Mossadegh, took office as Prime Minister.

Dr Mossadegh was a picturesque figure who almost at once captured the half-amused imagination of the world public. He was (and is) a rich landowner of aristocratic birth, liable to weep uncontrollably at every emotional crisis; courteous, high-strung, shrewd, and exceedingly tough, Dr Mossadegh presently declared his life to be in danger from Muslim bigots, for whom even he was not fanatical enough; and reclining in a bed in the sanctuary provided by a room in the Persian parliament, he declared himself unalterably opposed to any concessions to the oil company. The oil was Persia's birthright: she must possess and control it all.

The British government took some time to realise with whom it was dealing. During previous disputes, satisfactory compromises had as a rule been reached. The British government laid its case before the Hague International Court, which issued an injunction freezing the status quo. The Persians denounced the Court, declined to be bound by its jurisdiction, and refused to retreat before the British threat to move out, bag and baggage, with their experts and their tankers, leaving the greatest oil refining industry in the world to be managed by the incompetent natives of Iran.

The US did its best to mediate between Persia and Britain. The case, it was thought in Washington, had not been too competently handled during Mr Bevin's illness, and Mr Morrison, who succeeded him as Foreign Secretary in March, did not seem to conduct it any better. Mr Harriman was sent by President Truman to Tehran to mediate; Mr Richard Stokes, the British Lord Privy Seal, was sent at the head of a British mission to negotiate with the Persian government. Concessions were made by the British, condominium

was offered, and then further concessions. Dr Mossadegh wept, fainted, but remained adamant, and was, at regular intervals, cheered violently by great throngs of his countrymen who felt the day of liberty was at last dawning. Dr Mossadegh appeared at Lake Success to lay his case before the Security Council. The Anglo–Persian dispute was duly adjourned. The US declined economic help to a country so perversely intent upon damaging the interests of the West; nor was it prepared to put such pressure on Britain as would give Dr Mossadegh the whole loaf. It was pointed out to him by Mr Harriman that he was only adding grist to the Soviet mill, represented by the Persian Tudeh Party; it was reported by Mr Harriman’s oil advisor, Mr Walter Levy, that Persia did not hold a monopoly of world oil and would lose far more than she gained by making life impossible for her British specialists.

Dr Mossadegh throughout behaved as if he constituted a powder barrel or a bomb. If pushed too far he might explode and ruin the West – perhaps the world – in the Soviet holocaust which this might bring about. The Persian frame of mind seemed to be that of people humiliated too long by a foreign domination and therefore not to be talked out of the shining goal of liberty and independence by larger considerations of world stability and prosperity or peace. Persia behaved like a child that had been cheated too often out of what it had set its heart on by appeals to extraneous and irrelevant issues; it might be that stubborn nationalism would lead to economic ruin and consequent collapse and disappearance into the gaping jaws of the USSR – that must be for the West to worry about. Persia had no choice but to seek its liberty from an intolerable yoke.

Dr Mossadegh in effect warned Western statesmen not to irritate him beyond endurance; he exploited Persia’s strategic position to the fullest, and drove British and American statesmen to despair by his mixture of charm and refinement with blind obstinacy and exasperating nationalism. On his way back to Tehran he was greeted in Egypt as a conquering hero, as a champion of the Muslim world against the old imperialist oppressor, although he was coming home with empty hands. The British experts withdrew from Abadan. The oil flowed uselessly and was wasted.

Mr Churchill and other Conservative leaders duly denounced the Labour government for ignominious withdrawal, damaging alike to the pride and the standard of living of Great Britain. The Tudeh Party, despite occasional clashes with the Nationalists, appeared, as

might be expected, far from displeased with these developments. There were demonstrations of hysterical gratitude to the Persian statesman who brought about the disappearance of the hated alien invader. Persia was free, but in a state of economic chaos, and far poorer than before.

In this condition the year ended. Meanwhile the neighbouring Iraqis saw no reason why they too should not obtain concessions from the Iraq Petroleum Company, and this time the oil company hastened to comply. Iraqi directors were created, the royalties of the Iraqi state greatly raised; King Ibn Saud made demands upon the US Aranco Company, which holds monopolies in Southern Arabia; the sultans of the Persian Gulf in their turn extracted higher rates from their concessionaires. The Arab world was plainly beginning to assert itself. Syria and Israel had a prolonged clash over the Huleh concession, and both complained to the Security Council, which on the whole spoke more severely to Israel than to the Syrians, although it upbraided both, and instructed its Conciliating Commission to patch things up; this it failed to do, but after a time the quarrel appeared to expire from natural causes.

Nationalism, partly stimulated by the discontented embryonic middle class, led to violence elsewhere. After the assassination of a Lebanese statesman in Jordan, the King of Jordan, Abdullah, was murdered as he was entering a mosque in the Arab section of Jerusalem. This was plainly stimulated by the opponents of his traditionally pro-British policies, and his relatively moderate and tolerant dealings with even so hated a foe as Israel. His murderers were punished, but the son who succeeded him was clearly less good-humoured and judicious than his father.

Meanwhile national sentiment in North Africa had succeeded, under British auspices, in creating the new federated Kingdom of Libya, consisting of three provinces governed by the Emir of the Senussi, King Ibn Idris. Egypt, which had long smouldered with violent anti-British hatred, finally, after much rumbling towards the end of 1950, denounced the 1936 treaty upon which the presence of British troops guarding the Suez Canal, and the Anglo-Egyptian government of the Sudan (established in 1899), rested, and, inspired by the example of Dr Mossadegh's successful intransigence, and perhaps by the manner in which the state of Israel had come into being in the teeth of almost universal opposition, and refusing to listen to British arguments, provoked an incident by detaining and

searching a British ship in the Suez Canal, and, amid rising popular fury directly against all foreigners, attempted to seize control of the British military installations in Suez.

This offensive was arrested by force and led to some bloodshed. Nevertheless, the Egyptian resistance did not possess the stamina of the Persian; and towards the end of the year visibly began to crumble. Apart from a neutral Israel, where the mid-year elections restored the anti-Soviet Labour premier, Mr Ben-Gurion, to power, Turkey was the only Near Eastern power upon which the Western nations seemed able to rely in the Eastern Mediterranean. A scheme for centralised Middle East defence was devised, to be shared by the Western powers – the US, Britain, France and Turkey – and a place of equality in it was offered to Egypt, which was invited to hand over the defence of Suez to this federated body rather than Britain alone. Iraq and Syria seemed mildly to favour such a bulwark against the USSR, but Egypt sharply and haughtily refused, and there was talk of establishing its headquarters in Cyprus.

Violent nationalism and defiance of the old imperialist masters was a safety valve which no Middle Eastern government, except in the very primitive states such as Yemen or Saudi Arabia, could afford to dispense with; but the social and economic causes that created the tensions which exploded in this manner were clearly not to be cured by mere displays of national pride and independence, and it became increasingly clear as the year developed that unless some opportunity for effective social and economic development satisfying the ambitions of the frustrated *tiers état* class could be provided to fill the vacuum created by the collapse of the old forms of imperialism and the decay of the feudalism with which it had lived in a ramshackle and disreputable alliance, the Marxist prophets would sooner or later turn out to be right, and a social revolution directed against the West, and of political profit to the USSR alone, would transform the Eastern world. Consequently, more and more began to be heard in the West about the necessity of Western aid in the radical transformation of the decrepit little Eastern regimes, in preference to the present hand-to-mouth policy, likely to be punctuated by nationalist outbursts of increasing violence, until the final eruption which would bury all that is generally progressive in the Middle East under its ruins, as had already happened in the Balkans and parts of the Far East.

THREE YEARS

In South East Asia, the disturbed condition of 1951 remained unallayed; the French (and Vietnam) forces achieved minor military successes against the Viet-Minh Communist guerrillas in Indochina; these seemed due principally to the fiery temperament and enterprise of General de Lattre de Tassigny, whose death in the course of the year was a serious setback to French military power. In Malaya, assassinations and sporadic bloodshed continued. The new colonial minister, Mr Oliver Lyttelton, visited the scene of action and made a speech promising new and more vigorous policies, and a new governor was appointed to replace his murdered predecessor; but no noticeable détente had occurred before the end of the year. Malaya seemed a territory sufficiently divided inwardly, both racially and in its social and economic structure, to justify considerable Communist investment; it continued in that state of simmering disorder which is the normal prescription of the central Soviet strategists for territories where they believe their adversaries to be sufficiently vulnerable, but where, nevertheless, nothing is to be done which might precipitate a major war.

Nepal went through a revolution which, by the side of the more serious events in its neighbourhood, had something of the air of an Offenbach operetta. The king fled to India, the Rana oligarchy which had ruled the kingdom for many years was overthrown; all was patched up in the end; the king returned; the Rana family lost much, but not all, of their power; concessions to the new spirit of the times were made. The kingdom was gradually being 'integrated' into the Indian system but by Western rather than Soviet methods.

Siam went through one of its regular coups d'état, this time an abortive naval rising; the navy was duly liquidated and the status quo under King Phumiphon and Prime Minister Songgram seemed to return without further ado. In Burma, internecine fighting between the government, Communist guerrillas and Karens continued inconclusively. Indonesia was bickering with its Dutch ex-masters over western New Guinea, and further Dutch concessions were expected and duly made. The danger of a sudden Communist flood in South East Asia seemed to have receded, but the general condition of this portion of the world could hardly be called satisfactory, either from its own or from any but the Soviet point of view. Long-drawn-out and chaotic fighting between factions seldom animated by any clear ideology, and as often as not involved in purely local ambitions and receiving aid from the enemies of its

enemies, pursuing aims often deeply antagonistic to their own, frustrated all intelligible long-term policies and merely resulted in a breakdown in those valuable exports which had for so long been a crucial element in the world economy.

By far the most important Far Eastern event, apart from the Korean–Chinese war itself, was the Japanese treaty signed in San Francisco on 8 September against much Soviet resistance. In theory, this treaty, for the drafting and piloting of which Mr Acheson and the Republican leader Mr J. F. Dulles were given full credit, restored its sovereign rights to the Japanese empire. In practice, however, it was made fairly clear in Washington that Japan was expected to follow the American line in, for example, recognising the Nationalist Chinese Government of Formosa, and not that of Peking. There was some resistance to this from London, but it was plain that Japan in fact did fall within the sphere of US influence, and since the US was conspicuously paying the piper, it had by well-established tradition in such cases a claim to call the tune. With China resolutely anti-Western, Mr Nehru's India friendly but politically scrupulously neutral, a little wounded by its failure to be accepted as honest broker by both East and West, and South East Asia by no means secure, Japan was plainly the strongest potential bulwark of anti-Communist influence, if sufficiently aided and encouraged in political ways sympathetic to the West. And this was the policy actively carried out by the US and at any rate passively supported by its European allies. Meanwhile, Communist China had in effect occupied Tibet; the Dalai Lama, who had fled, was permitted to return and was promised local autonomy. In this way, what was virtually the last romantic and mysterious community left on the surface of the earth was finally robbed of its magic by the uncontrollable development of social and economic forces in their harshest and most aggressive form.

In this disturbed state of affairs, it was perhaps natural for such relatively unprotected states as Australia and New Zealand to seek means of security in the event of a new upheaval: and they duly concluded and signed a treaty with the US which stood to the Pacific powers as the Atlantic alliance to those of Western Europe. They remained self-governing sovereign dominions within the British Commonwealth, but the fact that the UK was not a formal party to the treaty, and had only a consultative role in it, indicated clearly enough the natural primacy which economic and security

requirements were not merely making, but were openly recognised as making, as against the older claims of political allegiance or historical sentiment. In short, it was clear that the reorganisation of the world along functional lines – that is, in response to economic and social needs and those of defence – was occurring in the Pacific as clearly and rapidly as in Europe and the Soviet sphere.

As for Europe itself, it went through a troubled but remarkable year. In Britain, the Labour Government began to feel the pangs of inner discontent and outer failure; Mr Gaitskell's spring budget was widely recognised as able, temperate and just, and irritated profoundly only the left wing of the Labour Party, which under Mr Aneurin Bevan revolted over the issue of undue expenditures on armament as against those on social security (although the occasion of the revolt, as often in such cases, was far more trifling than the real issue). Perhaps this rebellion would have been averted if Mr Ernest Bevin had remained alive, for he played a unique role in British politics, as being at once the most powerful leader of the trade unions in Britain – the strong and unyielding guardian of the standards of living of the working class – and a man of strongly patriotic, even nationalistic, temper, with a deep distrust of intellectuals and ideologies, which endeared him equally to the Conservatives (Mr Churchill had called him 'a working-class John Bull') and to the 'sunder' and more cautious members of his own party.

His failure in Palestine and his heavy-handed treatment of Egypt and Persia showed his strong and obstinate nature at its clumsiest and most prejudiced. But his grasp of the general political and economic tendencies of his time was genuine; by his blunt rejection of ambiguous formulae he did more to turn the tide of liberal and left-wing opinion against Soviet policy than any other statesman of his time. His interpretation of General Marshall's celebrated speech of 1947 was crucial in the development of the Marshall Plan – certainly the greatest single factor in turning the Communist tide in Europe in the last five years. Despite his errors of judgement and his vanity, his strength of mind and will and his grasp of fundamentals struck the imagination of the nation. He was not popular with left-wing opinion in Europe; but he was trusted by Parliament, by Mr Attlee, by the King and by the general public, far beyond the boundaries of his own country.

The death of Mr Bevin certainly weakened the Labour Government politically, and failures to settle the Korean war and Persian crisis increased the lack of public confidence, which the deteriorating economic situation did little to bolster. Steel was duly nationalised against furious Conservative opposition and even minor Labour qualms. The dramatic financial improvement of 1950 gave way to a mounting monetary crisis – not only the dollar gap but the sterling gap too widened to alarming proportions. The financial concessions to Egypt, one of the principal sterling creditors, at a moment when that Kingdom was showing every sign of unfriendliness, was not well received by Parliament or the press. The resignation of Mr Aneurin Bevan and the reorganisation of the government against a background of shortage of labour, coal and other raw materials made the prospect for winter look exceedingly gloomy. Mr Attlee decided to recommend dissolution.

On 25 October the Conservatives were elected by a majority of some seventeen votes, but with the help of Liberal and Independent allies, could command a slightly larger number. It was clear, after the extraordinary manner in which the Labour Government had managed to pilot its legislation despite even smaller and sometimes evanescent majorities, that this strength was sufficient for the normal discharge of the offices of the government; the degree of political responsibility displayed by both parties made Mr Attlee's promise not to indulge in factionalism ring true both to his own supporters and to the victorious Conservatives. It was clear that the country was divided very evenly, since the actual number of votes cast for the Labour Party exceeded that cast for the victorious Conservatives; it was plain that whichever government was in power would be well advised to seek some degree of de facto general solidarity, and not impose measures which the moderates in the opposition could genuinely not bring themselves to swallow.

Mr Churchill became Prime Minister for the second time at the age of seventy-seven amid very considerable popular interest in almost every part of the world; he was felt to be, it not necessarily the wisest, yet much the most brilliant and spellbinding public personality, a figure of legendary size upon the world stage. Naturally enough, the British public, long hemmed in by restrictions which some of them attributed to the tendency to puritanism and passion for social equality on the part of the socialists rather than to the pressure of economic necessity or of national needs, half

expected a sudden great relaxation of controls, and perhaps a flow of commodities; if not the flowing pre-war cornucopia which even the most sanguine realised not to be feasible, at any rate a gay, more spacious and more enjoyable life.

Nevertheless, so sharp was the economic crisis which the Conservative Government had inherited that its first measures were still further to restrict civilian goods, to impose sharper controls upon foreign currency, and altogether to give an example of belt-tightening which, some melancholy persons believed, would presently make even the austerities of socialism seem enviable by comparison. Mr Churchill made it clear that his government would not embark on revolutionary measures designed to end the constructive work of his predecessors; he would, indeed, seek to denationalise steel, but would leave the other nationalised industries, for example, coal and railways, unaltered. He would not seek to recognise the Chinese Nationalists in order to give pleasure to the US. And he obviously believed himself in a better position to negotiate with Generalissimo Stalin than his Labour predecessors had shown themselves to be. His government, besides persons enjoying his special confidence, contained a sufficient number of moderate and progressive Conservatives to indicate that no violently retrogressive steps were being contemplated.

Mr R. A. Butler, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, spoke sharply of the imminent perils of bankruptcy; he was obviously to be allowed to do whatever he thought to be required to re-establish the falling financial credit of Great Britain. There was a depressed feeling of a recurrent, undulant river in British financial affairs, by which periods of relative financial recovery seemed doomed to be succeeded by ever deeper slumps, for no means had yet been discovered to stop the swift flow of dollars back to their US source. British exports exceeded pre-war output; no charges of idleness, or even of incurable inefficiency, could be preferred against Britain: the causes of her economic ills lay clearly in her gravely weakened position vis-à-vis the rest of the Western world. And the attempt to find a form of economic life which would enable the country not only to survive but to achieve a measure of stability and even progress in material welfare was by far the greatest single problem before the new administration, and, indeed, before the country at large. The opposition would doubtless continue to oppose, but national problems, as for so long, clearly transcended those of party,

and the prospect of relative unanimity for stringent measures regarded as vital and inescapable seemed likely to be achieved.

Into foreign policy, which was now the province of Mr Eden, Mr Churchill clearly infused a blast of his old Palmerstonian spirit; Mr Morrison's cautious approaches were succeeded by a far sharper tone to the Egyptians; political observers wondered whether a tougher bargaining would occur with Americans. The Labour Government had proceeded under the necessity of avoiding charges of taking up anti-American positions for ideological rather than patriotic reasons; no such suspicion rested upon Mr Churchill or the bulk of the Conservative Party. His own profound pro-American feelings were well enough known; and he was therefore less likely to be inhibited in vigorous defence of the British point of view than some of his Labour predecessors.

The year ended without adequate evidence for or against this hypothesis. It ended in a grey mood for the inhabitants of the British Isles: in unrelieved and increasing lack of material goods, with the memory of the Festival of Britain somewhat dimmed by the approach of the cold winter months, with some anxiety about the King's health, with the Empire everywhere harassed by discontented kingdoms which it had helped to independence, and which now appeared to repay this help with what to the British sometimes seemed mounting ingratitude. Yet the general mood was calm and strong. Outside observers dilated upon Britain's troubles and displayed sympathy or contentment in accordance with their sentiments; within the island there were no visible signs of conscious decline. Morale – the feeling of inner confidence – was still firmer, and nerves stronger than in the economically far more prosperous lands to the south and the east of her.

In France, too, there had been elections in June, which, owing to the complicated new electoral system, had produced what was commonly called the Hexagon – about one hundred deputies for each of the major blocs of opinion: the Communists, the Socialists, the Radicals and their allies, the Liberal Catholics, the Conservatives and the Gaullists. Given that the Gaullists and the Communists were not, at any rate immediately, prepared to enter into any genuine coalition, this left a group somewhat right of centre in effective charge, and resembled the structure of the Third Republic to a degree which astonished those who believed that France had gone

through a transformation which had altered the basic structure of her life. Such persons had been mistaken.

The Communists were still almost as strong as before. They lost, indeed, about seven per cent of the vote, and far more in terms of seats in the Chamber, owing to the electoral law which made it possible for local alliances between parties to capture all the seats for a given district. Nevertheless, there was no increase in their strength. They were clearly being 'contained', and, if anything, were losing rather than gaining. The Gaullists made a great comeback at the expense of the Catholic MRP, and other right and centre parties, but again were not strong enough to be able to gain control. Nor had General de Gaulle, for all the fears entertained about him, done anything to suggest that he wished to seize dictatorial power. His party seemed a motley collection of genuine men of the Resistance, patriots of various colours, and a great many straightforwardly reactionary elements as well – old Vichy politicians and generals, as well as monarchists and bigoted right-wing figures of many brands.

The Socialists, as in most European countries, were in the embarrassing position of having to estimate how much support they could give to the centre parties to avoid the dangers of Communism and Gaullism without compromising too many of their own principles and becoming mere appendages to what would seem to be a ruling group of conservative-liberal texture. The government was headed now by M. Pleven, now by M. Queuille, with M. Schuman as the apparently irreplaceable Foreign Minister; this in effect represented various shades of independent conservative to radical opinion – such governments, in fact, as had ruled France not too incompetently during large portions of the last three-quarters of a century.

The French Empire, or, as it was now called, Union, had its own troubles. The war in Indochina was a great drain upon its resources; Morocco was in a ferment and demanded independence; pan-Arab nationalism had stirred up Tunis. The latter the French tried to put down with a firm hand, which appeared at any rate temporarily to be succeeding. In Syria, it was regaining positions which it had been forced to lose by the Anglo-American policy of the last years of the war, by dint of supplying armament and other economic aid to Syria and to Lebanon. Indeed, those who professed to be unable to understand Syrian reluctance to accept economic aid from the US professed to see in this the influence of French intrigue. On the

Jerusalem issue, the French fairly consistently backed the Vatican, which remained adamant in its nationalisation plan for Jerusalem, rejected equally by Arabs and Jews, but more vehemently, perhaps, by the Jordanian Arabs. But these were not the major French problems in the field of foreign affairs.

The nightmare which brooded over all Frenchmen was still that of the possibility of a rearmed Germany. Temperamentally, M. Schuman and the German Chancellor, Herr Adenauer, plainly had much in common. Both were moderate Catholics, anxious to preserve a flexible conservative structure and to avoid extremes. But the spectre of German rearmament, despite the protest against it of the German Socialist leader Herr Schumacher (and the lack of any obvious military zeal on the part of the youth of Western Germany), was a source of genuine alarm both to the Frenchmen and to other Europeans, and not least to the USSR. The Pleven plan for a European army entailed integration of German units into it, and this seemed to the French the safest way of neutralising the possibility of the revival of German militarism. It was reported that disagreements about this had occurred between the French and those American strategic planners who, aiming at the swiftest and largest-scale possible Western German rearmament, maintained that without this Western defences would be for ever insufficient, and regarded all political objections as irrelevant to this simple and inescapable issue. The year ended without a final decision on this point, but the thought that, unlike France herself in the nineteenth century, Germany had not yet been reduced by her defeats to a frame of mind where she would never psychologically once again constitute a military menace to Europe was one of the few beliefs which united Frenchmen of almost all shades of opinion.

This thought was plainly at the back of French resistance to German claims in the Saar; it was part of the attraction of the Schuman plan which broke the German monopoly of the Ruhr. It stirred uneasily in the minds of many Western Europeans who watched with mingled admiration and uneasiness the prodigious German effort of reconstruction after the ravages of war. German energy, skill and appetite for life was clearly greater than that of any other European nation, and, if she rearmed, her thoughts might easily and, as it were, by the logic of events, turn once again to the ancient dream of European domination which her numbers,

economic strength and intellectual capacity had seemed to others besides herself to make inevitable

It was clear that this fear was no less deeply embedded in the thinking of the Russians, to whom the Germans had traditionally always been the most feared and admired of nations, and, according to some competent observers, were a greater source of dread than atomic bombs. Fear of Germany was one of the factors strongest, perhaps, in promoting loyalty to the Soviet regime on the part of satellite populations which remembered Hitler and his predecessors. Indeed, the whole of the 'containment' policy of the Western allies vis-à-vis the USSR was a matter of exceedingly delicate balance, which had to be preserved to a sufficient degree of strength to discourage further Soviet penetration, and yet not so great as to provoke a terrified and over-violent reaction likely to lead to general war.

In this complex and precarious calculation, which was the heart of the Cold War in Europe, the behaviour of Germany was crucial. Every tremor provoked reactions of one kind or another on both sides; and although both the Germanies spoke of the need for union, and President Heuss and Dr Adenauer were doubtless just as sincere in their professions on the subject as Herr Pieck and Herr Grotewohl in Soviet Germany – each rejecting the others' suggestion about the possibility of joint elections as a mere trick of the imperialist warmongers or Soviet subverters respectively – yet the prospect of a unified Germany was not one which either side in the Cold War contemplated with complete equanimity, since it might add much too great an accession in weight to one or the other of the two scales in the balance of power, which still, despite the Korean war, was somehow being preserved in Europe, almost against the expectations of the powers themselves. Of this precious balance divided Germany was herself the most vivid example.

Politically, no great changes in Germany were noticeable compared to those of the previous year. In German minds all guilt about German misdeeds seemed finally to have disappeared, at any rate in the West; neo-Nazis and particularly the notorious General Remer, who had foiled the anti-Hitler putsch in 1944, had raised their heads openly and blatantly. The US High Commissioner Mr McCloy was forced to comment upon his disappointment that evil elements were still so rampant among the Germans; others, notably his assistant Mr Bittenwieser, echoed the sentiment sharply. The

Roman Church might indeed exercise a certain restraining influence, but so far as true German democracy was concerned, its toleration of subversive elements seemed to some observers to bear an uncomfortably close resemblance to the very similar behaviour of the Weimar Republic in its first years.

Nevertheless, it was thought in the West, resignedly but firmly, that abnormal situations cannot be carried on for too long. Against Russian protests, Western Germany was assisted to rearm, and the state of war with Germany was formally ended by the US, by Britain and by most of the other Western allies in the course of the year.

The situation in Italy was somewhat different. There too, the Demo-Christian Party and its allies continued to govern under the highly capable Signor de Gasperi. The Communist Party did not seem to lose in strength, but neither did it gain. The secession from it of Cucchi and Magnani, two prominent Emilian Communists who protested against excessive subservience to the interests of Moscow, raised hopes that this might cause a genuine split among the Italian Communists. But by the end of the year it had not weakened the Italian Communists seriously. They remain a large and dangerous party, capable of exploiting any suitable opportunity for the seizure of power. If no such opportunity has hitherto occurred, this is largely due to the political skill of the present government and the powerful economic aid of the US.

At the other end of the scale neo-Fascism was by no means dead. A journal with the title *Popolo Italia*, reminiscent of Mussolini's old daily Milanese journal – this time a weekly and issued in Rome – openly advocated the policies of the Italian Social Movement, a party apparently favourable to a return to pure Mussolinian Fascism. Such movements are naturally stimulated by the still uncured Italian problems of the mass unemployment of unskilled workers and of landless peasants, especially damaged this year by the great floods which rendered many persons homeless.

On the other side may be set the genuine effort on the part of the de Gasperi Government to institute agrarian reform among the great fallow estates of the southern provinces of Apulia and Calabria. The settlement of some tens of thousands of peasants upon these mismanaged *latifundia* is the very measure failure to promote which in the Germany of 1931 and 1932 was one of the causes of the downfall of Dr Brüning's government (which in some

respects closely resembled the Demo-Christians of today) and so paved the way to the great debacle.

Italian Socialists managed to achieve some degree of union when the followers of Saragat, the right-wing leader, agreed to fuse with the followers of Messrs Romita and Silone. Mr Saragat resigned from the government, and Messrs Romita and Silone agreed not to protest against American aid. But this did not seem to have made an important difference to the Italian political scene. Don Sturzo of the old Catholic Popular movement continued to be an object of veneration, but remained ineffective.

So long as the danger of major war exists it is perhaps natural for large sections of opinion to suppose that they can escape it by sitting still and isolating themselves from either of the two great contenders; nevertheless, 'neutralism' was not as powerful in 1951 as in the exasperated years immediately following the war. The USSR had itself done a great deal to discourage, frighten and embitter those who wished to represent it as, at any rate, no more wicked than the US; and US aid, although often tactlessly imposed, and leading to much mutual antipathy and friction, has conspicuously not had that enslaving effect which its opponents had always prophesied that it would have. Coca-Cola culture has not, in fact, begun visibly to corrupt the citadels of the European spirit. The Western world seemed to be a more coherent and inwardly less brittle entity than it was a year ago; a Third Force, although in theory dead and forgotten, in fact ruled Western Europe.

Italy, France, Britain, Belgium (after a constitutional crisis whereby King Baudouin peacefully took over from his father Leopold, whose behaviour during the war made him unacceptable to too many of his subjects), Holland were ruled by governments of the centre or right of centre; Scandinavia by socialists; yet the gap between these governments, in practice – certainly as far as foreign policy and even domestic policy are concerned – was by no means unbridgeable; certainly much smaller than that which divided them from Communism and the Peoples' Democracies on the one hand and, on the other, from such Fascism as still exists in Spain or Portugal and Argentina.

The East–West division penetrates all institutions. The two Labor Internationals – the old International Federation of Trade Unions and the new International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, representing Communist and anti-Communist influence

respectively – divided the workers of the world. The lines were very clearly drawn. There was an atmosphere of grim stalemate and a desire to contain and localise conflicts; and this was symptomatic not only of the Western powers, but of the USSR too. Certainly there was reason to think that Stalin viewed the prospect of a general war with as much horror as his opponents, and when so dangerous a situation as that in Persia erupted suddenly, Russian diplomacy touched it in a manner at least as gingerly as that displayed by the representatives of the West.

As for the outskirts of the two great systems, in Greece there was a swing to the right under Field Marshal Papagos, which did not, however, fundamentally alter the political complexion of the country. General Franco in Spain found himself in better favour than for many years in the past. The US had decided to recognise him and to send a military mission to discuss his share in European defence. Britain, after much heart-searching and open reluctance, fell into line with an equally troubled France, and ambassadors from these countries too duly appeared in Madrid.

In Portugal, the President, General Carmona, died and was succeeded by General Lopez. Dr Salazar continued his austere and unruffled reign. In Ireland, Mr de Valera returned to power. Sweden continued with her policy of cautious neutrality and permitted the first post-war International Fascist Congress to take place on her soil. In Latin America, Communism was growing stronger in Guatemala. The usual number of minor political coups and disturbances occurred. The concept of ‘justicialism’ was proclaimed by General Perón as a specific Argentinian contribution to the stock of valuable political ideas: thereby the interests of all the classes were reconciled in terms of his own peculiar brand of neo-Fascism. The great independent newspaper of Buenos Aires, *La Prensa*, was suppressed, and its editor sought refuge in the US.

In Pakistan, the Premier, Liaqat Ali, the most respected and the strongest Muslim politician in India after the late founder of the state, Mr Jinnah, was assassinated; a Communist or semi-Communist plot was suspected in conjunction with mutinous members of the Pakistani General Staff. But no consequences seemed to flow from this event, nor from the skirmishing along the Afghani frontier which continued unabated throughout the war. In India, Mr Nehru continued his undisputed sway; he was challenged by various politicians all of whom, in one fashion or another,

claimed the mantle of the late Mr Ghandi, but he routed all opposition easily, and showed himself one of the most remarkable statesmen of the free world in our time.

In Africa, much of interest occurred. The progressive emancipation of the natives of that great continent under British tutelage was rapidly progressing for all to see. Gambia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone adopted new constitutions, increasing the element of native self-government; the Gold Coast was governed by its first, almost entirely elected, legislature this year – a bold experiment in the granting of political liberties to a people commonly regarded as still backward, under the leadership of a Communist sympathiser, Dr Nkrumah, whose reported behaviour would, thus far, have satisfied the most exacting liberal constitutionalist.

A suggestion that northern and eastern Rhodesia and Nyasaland should be established as a new dominion under the title of 'Central Africa' was widely canvassed. This naturally caused grave misgivings to the nationalist and politically reactionary government of South Africa, with its policy of rigid native segregation, its measures directed to the depriving of its coloured population of such rights to direct voting as they had already acquired, and its general belief in repression as the only method of preserving white, and more particularly Boer, supremacy. Disorders both among the negro and the Indian populations of the Union were dealt with summarily by the government, which rejected all the claims of the United Nations to look into, let alone supervise, its relationships to its coloured or Indian subjects. Dr Malan, the Premier, protested to the British government against the admission of such 'non-white' dominions as India, Pakistan and Ceylon into its midst, saying that it regarded itself as a member of a club – the British Commonwealth – with a right of veto of the admission to it of what it regarded as highly unsuitable new members. In due course, these policies produced a reaction in the form of a movement named the Veterans Torch Commando, led by the Premier's namesake, Mr A. G. Malan, which evidently stood for a wider degree of civil liberties than that permitted by the party in power.

As for the USSR itself, its attitudes were clear enough for all to see. In foreign policy, it proclaimed to the outside world its advocacy of peace; spoke of the possibility of peaceful coexistence with the West; singled out the US as the greatest enemy of mankind; went back to President Wilson to discover the roots of this evil, and was

duly reproved with severity by Mr Dean Acheson, who alluded to several centuries of aggressive foreign policy on the part of Russian governments.

Soviet spokesmen denounced Marshal Tito of Yugoslavia in terms of greater violence than ever before, but took no specific action against him; declared that it had disarmed on a greater scale than the West, and so far from having aggressive intentions, itself feared invasion. They spoke of the encirclement of the USSR, and regarded the Japanese treaty as forging yet another link in this dangerous process. At San Francisco the USSR suffered a heavy, but scarcely unexpected, defeat. There was speculation about its motive for attending a meeting so openly arrayed against its wishes.

The USSR confirmed its support of nationalist movements in the Middle East in accordance with the Marxist tradition whereby, against foreign yokes, local nationalism is to be supported – until it is superseded by social revolution. It claimed one and a half billion signatures to the newest appeal for peace composed in Berlin; accused Britain of violating the Anglo–Soviet treaty of 1942, and the French of violating the corresponding Franco–Soviet treaty. It denounced Norway and Turkey for accepting NATO aid, and offered, as an alternative to the Atlantic Treaty, a Great Power Directorate, somewhat along the lines which Mr Roosevelt and Mr Churchill were accused of contemplating in 1944, and on which the late Mr Neville Chamberlain was thought in the late 1930s to have set his heart as an alternative to collective security provided by the League of Nations. It denounced the production of atomic weapons and demanded the outlawing of these without granting the rights of supervision over its own installations to foreign powers, and continued to bicker on this topic more, it was clear, for propaganda purposes than with any serious intention of limiting warfare. It admitted exploding at least one atomic bomb of its own, and there were confused rumours of Western scientists who had gone to the USSR to work on atomic weapons for the Soviet government.

There was in this connection puzzled and worried talk about the disappearance of two members of the British Foreign Office, Mr Maclean and Mr Burgess, who left for France and were not seen again, and whose alleged views made it possible to think that they had also tried to achieve private contact with Soviet representatives, although there seemed to be no scintilla of concrete evidence as to where they had gone or what they had done. The fact that they were

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wholly British by birth and descent did something to offset the general impression that it was aliens and refugees who formed the bulk of pro-Soviet traitors and informers in the countries of the West. In the US, a Mr and Mrs Rosenberg were condemned to death in the course of the year for giving information to Soviet agents. They were still awaiting execution when the year came to a close. Several other persons were also arrested and imprisoned in this connection.

As for internal Soviet policy, little concrete evidence could, of course, be obtained by outside observers, but it appeared that the policy of creating quasi-industrial settlements of peasants (agrocities) had not made adequate progress. The reasons for initiating this scheme were considered to be not merely economic, but political, since peasants were notoriously the least controllable and politically most non-penetrable elements in any country, and had shown an uncomfortable degree of independence and even disloyalty to the Soviet government during the late war. The purge of the USSR Communist Party appeared to be nearly complete. Fifteen of the sixteen constituent 'republics' having by now held their own party congresses, the situation seemed ripe for the Congress of the All-Union Communist Party – the nineteenth, which was vastly overdue. Mr Beria announced great increases in industrial output; Mr Stalin reached the age of seventy-three on 21 December, and ten days later, the last day of the year, Mr Maxim Litvinov died; with him the memory of the slightly more 'European' policy on the part of the USSR seemed finally to die too.

Pravda published an article by Mr Herbert Morrison after being publicly accused of never providing its readers with accurate accounts of the views of foreign statesmen, and the article was duly attacked, denounced and 'refuted' by the entire Soviet press and media within the next few days. Nothing was heard of the Cominform. The only European sovereign state outside the Iron Curtain where Communists obtained increased representation in the course of the year appeared to be the free republic of San Marino.

Meanwhile, General Chang had grown to be something like a Republican hero. The vagaries of feeling about China have zig-zagged more precipitously than any other similar attitude in the US. At the beginning of the war the Chinese were classified in a series of mutually contradictory categories as at once a very large and populous country, the largest nation in the world, with a long history

and vast wisdom, and a feeble, weak political entity, deserving of all the help which the American people could give it; as at the same time a nation of cunning orientals and as a people almost Christian and touched with grace; tortured and exploited by the sub-human Japanese; as at once fastidious and inheritors of an exquisitely beautiful civilisation, and as illiterate peasants needing many schoolteachers from the US to teach them the rudiments of the ultimate. There was ground for all these views, but they were held in a curious amalgam, a curious and differentiated amalgam often by the same persons, usually out of the influence of Sinophile missionaries.

The combination of Madam Chiang's unsuccessful tour of the US towards the end of the war, the spreading of the stories of corruption and cowardice on the part of Chiang's regime, and a certain amount of left-wing propaganda, both innocent and deliberate, undermined this ideal, and such pro-Chinese sentiment as was effective in the US in the first four years seemed mainly to extend towards the New China of farmers and town-planners, which, it was hoped, was emerging from the ruin of war.

The Communist advance destroyed this hope and automatically raised the stock of the defeated General Chiang, who, whatever his faults, was at any rate a reliable anti-Communist personality. Nevertheless, it was clear that the pro- and anti-Chiang factions, the attacks of the Old China lobby, which was held to have deceived Congress and subverted the administration, and the activities of the New China lobby, which was engaged in saying they were fundamentally concerned with internal issues in the US – for example, with the battle between the administration and its opponents, as such.

With a presidential year looming, the alignments of various candidates for the great office began to be discernible and civil liberty was one of the issues involved. On the Republican side the most likely candidate of the party-line Republicans was clearly Senator Taft, who, after considerable oscillation in this matter, appeared finally to accept Senator McCarthy as a political ally and to ally himself with him, which appeared to gravely distress some of his more respectable followers. The Progressive wing of the Republican Party, who had originally followed Mr Willkie and then found to them a somewhat disappointing candidate in Mr Stassen, finally prevailed upon General Eisenhower to allow himself to be

drafted by them. They were led by Senators Lodge and Duff, and their calculation appeared to be that a purely Republican figure was unlikely to secure the election, inasmuch as statistically it seemed that the Republicans commanded a minority of votes in the country, but that a nationally known and trusted figure of proven worth both in war and in peace, with the unique aura of General Eisenhower, might attract the floating vote on which victory depended.

Mr Truman declined to reveal whether or not he intended to offer his candidature again. There were rumours that he wished to wrap his mantle round the shoulder of the liberal Governor of Illinois, Mr Adlai Stevenson, whose personal integrity and record of good government would appeal to many an undecided voter as well as the liberal sections of the Democratic Party and its intelligentsia. Senator Kefauver, who had conducted the much publicised inquiry into racketeering in the US, announced his candidature as an Independent Democrat. There were rumours that Senator Russell would do the same as the leader of the solid and conservative South. The name of General MacArthur was vaguely bruited as a possibility. Governor Dewey made it clear he would not himself be a candidate again and offered his support to General Eisenhower.

There was much speculation about whether the Republicans, exasperated by twenty years out of office, could bring themselves to accept a candidate who, while his chances of victory might be greater than that of a regular party leader, yet might display a degree of independence which the Republican machine could hardly view with satisfaction. And this seemed to be the position of General Eisenhower, who had revealed no clear political views at any stage of his career.

Towards the end of the year it did not seem clear that General Eisenhower would in fact be drafted by the Republicans, and Senator Taft's chance of being the candidate looked moderately bright. If Mr William Randolph Hearst had lived through the year there is no doubt that his powerful press empire would have offered such support to Senator McCarthy and his friends as would have made a difference one way or the other to the inner politics of the Republican Party; but in the course of the year that prodigious leader passed away, and this offered one of the rare occasions on which the natural charity and courtesy of obituary writers yielded to their inability to repress that moral censure which Mr Hearst, to a greater degree perhaps than Col. McCormick, excited in high-minded and

scrupulous persons. The Governor of the State of California, Mr Warren, a cleverly liberal Republican, also emerged as a possible Republican candidate.

The year ended inconclusively, with the issues of foreign policy dominating over the struggle between the political parties in the US; with the Far East still in flames, the Middle East in a condition of mounting upheaval; with fear of general war on the whole abated, but the general outlook, particularly in view of Britain's semi-bankrupt economic position, far from bright. The news of the death of Henri Pétain, of Fritz Thyssen, who had supported Hitler, and of former Crown Prince Wilhelm von Hohenzollern ('Little Willie') served to comfort those who looked back upon the past as to a brighter and securer day with the reflection that the confusions and moral delinquencies and great blunders of that time seemed to itself no less dark and fatal than the present to its inhabitants.

II

One of the most notable characteristics of the literary and artistic scene during the year 1951, not merely in Western Europe but beyond its confines, was the revival of religion, in the widest as well as the narrowest sense of the word, as a central issue of discussion. Historians of opinion have often noted the fact that periods of doubt and scepticism, of criticism and analysis directed against the dogmatic certainties and orthodoxies of previous periods, are as a rule followed by new periods of faith and irrationalism.

But as a rule the ages of faith are to some degree also those of reason; there is a dominant opinion, there is also an opposition; during the ascendancy of sceptical rationalism, the voices of anti-rationalist faith are never wholly silent, and, during the rise of orthodoxy or emotional abandonment to ideals conceived as either above or at any rate beside empirical or rational enquiry, are seldom allowed to occur unchallenged but are compelled to run the gauntlet of what is usually described as radical or left-wing opposition.

Nevertheless, during the year, it appeared almost as if the rising preoccupation with religious or quasi-religious – metaphysical and eschatological – issues was becoming almost a monopoly. Who were the most discussed authors in Western Europe in the course of the year? In England they were, among the novelists, Evelyn Waugh and Graham Greene. These were authors noted not merely for the fact

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that both were members of the Roman Catholic Church, but because the issues with which they dealt were concerned with specifically religious problems and provided by them with specifically religious solutions. Indeed, the popularity of Graham Greene – his novels, stories and articles for journals – or of broadcasts and films directly or indirectly founded upon his works seemed to derive as much from the issues with which he dealt as the purely literary skill and depth with which he dealt with them.

Similarly there was interest in the work of Herbert Butterfield, because he was an avowedly Christian historian who discussed historical and metaphysical problems which occupied the thoughts of many persons; and this was one of the most powerful causes of the continued interest displayed in Europe, and far more deeply in the US, in the views and writings of Arnold Toynbee.

Among poets and essayists, T. S. Eliot occupied an easily pre-eminent place, again perhaps as much because in his essays and last plays he dealt with what were to him the most fundamental issues – the condition and destiny of the individual soul – which now after many years had become a topic which captured the intellectual imagination of the general public to a greater degree than at any time, perhaps, during the last two centuries. Some among the most distinguished literary critics in England – C. S. Lewis, Lord David Cecil, Basil Willey – were writers, if not on religious topics, at any rate with much implicit religious feeling. Even the purveyors of lighter forms of art – the popular playwright Christopher Fry, for example – found themselves treating religious issues not so much because of any obvious pre-occupation with them as because of a sensibility of the currents of thought and sentiment, a natural inclination responsive to the nature of the public interest of the times.

In France the works of François Mauriac had long been the centre of growing interest and fascination: his articles in *Le Figaro* had about them a magistral quality possessed, perhaps, by no other public prophet; and the mere fact that he was able to denounce Jean Cocteau's last play – *Bacchus* – as heretical, and formally to read the author out of the Church, was an event scarcely conceivable in the France, let us say of twenty years before. It seemed almost as if with André Gide and Paul Valéry the last great secular voices of France had ceased to speak; for Paul Claudel, their great Catholic friend and violent opponent, had won; Cocteau replied to Mauriac in a tone

certainly as serious as that in which his religious views had been impugned. It is scarcely conceivable that such an exchange on such a topic could have occurred, with such solemnity, between, say, Valéry and Charles Péguy. Yet Mauriac was able to thunder; Cocteau replied with great earnestness and dignity; the public was profoundly interested. And although the Existentialists, who still to some degree dominated the literary and intellectual scene, were by no means all formal adherents of established faiths, yet even the atheistical Jean-Paul Sartre or Simone de Beauvoir dealt with the human predicament in a sense which nearly touched the attitude of those to whom metaphysical and religious issues were of the deepest concern. And this, of course, was even more true of such religious thinkers as Gabriel Marcel, one of the most widely admired of French *penseurs*.

It is what Luther called the human abyss that was the central topic of the most prominent writers of France, and those who did not deal with this – say Valéry or Jean Giraudoux, or even the celebrated Alain, who died in 1951 – seemed more out of date, less relevant to contemporary discussion, than Pascal or Renan or Péguy. The plays of Marcel, the plays and philosophical essays of Sartre and Albert Camus, the philosophical essays of such writers as Jacques Maritain or Jean Wahl and Kojève, the interest increasingly taken in the Russian theological essayist Nikolay Berdyaev, or the Jewish theologian Martin Buber, the brooding presence of Martin Heidegger and Karl Jaspers, and behind them the greater figures of Nietzsche and Kierkegaard, dominated French intellectual circles to the relative exclusion of older liberal and humanistic writing.

Against this, virtually the only voices which were raised loudly were those of the Communists, who, unlike the more rationalist Marxists of an earlier day, preached a fanatical counter-religion of their own. The celebrated Gallic spirit – secular, detached, humane, sceptical and concerned with the empirical facts and the lives of men on earth – the spirit of Voltaire and Diderot, of Michelet and Taine, of Flaubert and Proust, seemed temporarily in abeyance. Socialism, liberalism, rationalism had won their victories and become absorbed into the texture of normal experience and lost their cutting edge. The wave of metaphysical spiritualism seemed to have engulfed all or at any rate much of what was most gifted and expressive in France, or temporarily obscured from view other tendencies which might have been stirring.

In the US, a similar phenomenon was observable. The writings of W. H. Auden and Reinhold Niebuhr enjoyed a great vogue; it was the saintly life and faith of Albert Schweitzer, not his music, that was mainly responsible for his sudden vast celebrity in America; novels which dealt with religious subjects, at all levels of artistic skill, seemed assured of wider circulation than those concerned with almost any other topic. Such an indicator of popular taste as *Life* magazine contained a greater proportion of writing on religious and metaphysical topics, supplied now and then by Waugh and Greene, and less directly by the mild humanism of F. S. C. Northrop, than it would have done, say, a decade earlier. An attack on Yale University for alleged deficiencies in its religious instruction assured its author greater fame than the treatment of any social or political topic.

This was naturally added to by the fact that, on the continent of Europe, the parties which held power, in Germany and Italy, for example, and entered into the coalitions which governed France, were avowedly religious, as they could scarcely have been fifteen or twenty years earlier; and this fact, which in certain respects resembled similar political developments during the nineteenth century, differed from them in that the anticlerical opposition in the West did not seem to possess that ancient vehemence which served to throw the issue into such violent relief during the great kulturkampf battles in France, Germany and Italy in the last century.

This growth in the religious outlook did not, as in the past, take the form either of the consolations of religion supplied to a distraught and despairing generation which had found its older values too easily flouted and overthrown by the brutality and moral cynicism of the day, nor yet of some rigorous hierarchical discipline offering a strong and secure asylum for those who found it difficult or impossible to withstand the chaos and fury of the world by their own unaided resources. Although the religious revival might indeed have had one or both of these effects, the form which it took was something relatively new, and owed more to Dostoevsky than to the orthodox doctrinaires of any of the Churches. For what the books and essays and plays and histories of the return to Christianity tended to stress was the seamier side of life, to paint with a realism as grisly and violent as any employed by the 'slice of life' writers of an earlier, more atheistical generation the least attractive aspects of social relationships and individual experience.

In a sense, this attitude was the successor to, and no less sophisticated and 'highbrow' than, the two other great movements which had dominated modern times – psychoanalysis and Marxism. And like them it conveyed to its followers the impression that it too was cutting through the mere surface of the phenomena to the hideous depths below, which must be faced because they were real, because they existed, and exercised an influence more decisive upon the course of human life than the more superficial phenomena which composed the worlds of science or common sense. And in the very chaos, irrationality and violent malformations and morbid growths which were thus rendered patent to the shrinking eye of the unhappy but fascinated observer, they discovered not the inexorable laws of psychology nor the inevitable laws of social development, nor the material for any other positive science, but the inscrutable workings of God.

In a sense this was the modern theodicy which, by stripping away the rationalisations and other constructions both of the intellect and of the imagination with which human beings had sought to screen themselves from the truth, sought to discredit reason and empirical methods in order to make room for faith as alone being strong enough to discover meaning and purpose in the abounding folly, weakness and vice which any unflinching analysis was bound to reveal in the contemporary scene; to restore faith in God and the spiritual government of the universe by making the light shine out of the darkness; the more inspissated the darkness, the brighter by comparison the saving light without which the darkness could not be judged or described or analysed at all.

It was a sign of the times when so 'progressive' and avant-garde a publication as the *Partisan Review* in New York City, for instance, devoted itself to the examination of its writers' attitude to religion and printed the works of Jaspers. To any observer dispassionately considering the artistic and intellectual scene of 1951 – when Henri Matisse completed his murals in Vence chapel, William Faulkner wrote a novel with a religious motif, Gian-Carlo Menotti wrote an opera (for television) on a religious topic, the newer popular films dealt with biblical subjects and the conversions of former Communists to the Roman Catholic Church became events of daily expectation – it appeared that this mood was not a simple 'escapism' after the disenchantment and failure of energy and morale resulting from the destruction wrought by the war, but sprang from some

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deeper cause, in this case perhaps the failure of misinterpreted psychologies or a belated reply to Marxism; for the Marxist movement had during the last twenty years been gradually changing from a characteristically critical, rationalistic Victorian doctrine, appealing to intellectuals – a sophisticated and elaborate theory, full of subtleties, and above all with a severely scientific tone – into the simple, dogmatic, fanatical faith, relying upon endless repetition of simple formulae and the worship of visible symbols of sanctity and power.

In response to Communism of this type, as practised in the USSR, and imposed upon the satellites in a very crude and all too visible fashion, there was bound to spring up a counter-faith of greater complexity, refinement, psychological depth and artistic quality, in response to the freer and more many-sided and sensitive civilisation of the West. Traditional religion provided something far stronger and more genuine – and even more anti-rational – than the ersatz faiths of the 1920s and 1930s. What seemed certain at the moment was a continuing process of slow pulverisation of all intermediate positions – of all the older forms of liberalism, secularism and tolerant humanism – between the upper and the nether millstones of the rival religions which appeal to civilised mankind. The phenomena described were, of course, not necessarily symptomatic of the prevailing views of the majorities of the populations of the Western countries; they represented at most the strongest tendencies of those literary and artistic elites which set the tone in such societies. But it is in this context that the literary and artistic life of the year 1951 should be surveyed.

III

The change of atmosphere from the first three or four decades of the century became peculiarly noticeable when contrasted with such works about the comparatively recent past as R. F. Harrod's biography of Lord Keynes and, even more, N. G. Annan's life of Sir Leslie Stephen, both of which appeared in the course of the year. In both these works a world is revealed whose principal ideals were the pursuit of knowledge, the contemplation of interesting and beautiful things for their own sake, the cultivation of personal relationships, personal sincerity driven to an almost fanatical degree, with, above all, avoidance of anything remotely savouring of the pursuit of

worldly success, or of rhetoric, or of betrayal of private to public values in any form. Despite the fact that Keynes's world was in open rebellion against that of Leslie Stephen, it shared with it its sense of revolt against the accepted institutions of the great Philistine establishment into which they were both born, and both rejected in their various ways the religious and the political orthodoxies of their time for the values of private worlds and the cultivation of artistic and personal ideals.

The death of André Gide, who was himself the high priest of a movement in France not dissimilar to this, in which the worship of beauty and of personal relationships and insistence on scrupulous sincerity and candour in both had taken the place of other social and religious values, served to underline the great distance stretching between the universe of that distinguished writer and the modern world into which he had survived. The year, too, saw the death of the essayist Alain, whose detachment and sceptical pacifism in their turn contrasted oddly with the new preoccupations of the contemporary generation in the major European countries.

In France such recognised and distinguished writers as Georges Duhamel and Jules Romains, as well as authors of the second rank such as Claude Farrère, Pierre Benoît and Paul Morand, continued to write; the works of Colette and Jacques Chardonne, as well as those of Paul Valéry, Valéry Larbaud and André Maurois, appeared in collected editions, but it was not they who set the tone. This was done to a far greater degree by Mauriac, who was the most distinguished representative of Catholic orthodoxy in France; by Jean-Paul Sartre, whose play *Le Diable et le Bon Dieu* enhanced his already dominant reputation as the most ingenious, penetrating and significant writer in France, and perhaps in Western Europe – in the sense that all the most typical tendencies of the time seemed to be, at times perversely and deliberately, but always sharply, focused in his work, and presented to the public with exceptional professional expertise. He was the leader, quite apart from his specific philosophical point of view, of all those who, in contrast with anti-political revolt, writers of an earlier generation, preached the duty of total self-commitment – the necessity of taking up a position, however personal and individual, but nevertheless a position involving responsibility, in relation to the religious, the political, the social and metaphysical tendencies of the times. In this sense, Albert Camus in his new *L'Homme révolté*, although he was perhaps a better

writer, clearly followed Sartre's intellectual leadership. So also Julien Gracq, despite his tendency to surrealism, nevertheless bowed sufficiently to the spirit of the times to make his latest allegory avowedly political. This writer rejected the Goncourt prize awarded to him, as a protest against literary academies and prizes as such, because they made for intellectual bondage and mediocrity, and stifled and corrupted much original enterprise.

This mood, sometimes earnest and almost hopeful, at other times cynical, preoccupied and engaged in emphasising the hopeless and often revolting aspects of the contemporary human tragedy, was seldom one of desire to withdraw from the scene. The inevitability of involvement was, in France, stressed explicitly or else automatically taken for granted. In this atmosphere, charged with the sense of the importance of social and political reality, the works of Victor Hugo were duly rediscovered and overpraised; the German Romantic philosophers who were themselves preoccupied with political issues, such as Hegel and Fichte, were being studied afresh. The darker living German metaphysicians such as Jaspers and Heidegger, continued to exercise a considerable influence. What was conspicuously lacking in the realm at any rate of belles-lettres was the traditional French 'classical spirit' – lucid, ironical, detached, critical, intellectually firm, free from the clouds of tormented emotion and the mixture of mysticism and metaphysics characteristic of the Germans, and scarcely able to articulate its broken vision by means of that luminous measured prose which had once been the glory of France. Such elegant trifles as those published by Louise de Vilmorin, or the poetry of such writers of genius as Paul Éluard and Jules Supervielle, or such plays, still within the classical French tradition, as those of Jean Anouilh, could scarcely be said to have secured the continuity of French letters. The central current remained dark and turbid. The only great author apparently untouched by it in France was André Malraux, who did not produce an original work in the course of the year to compare with his magnificent masterpiece, *The Psychology of Art*, of two years before.

The situation was somewhat different in England, which retained a greater degree of continuity with its own sane and sober past. Despite the impact made by Graham Green's *The End of the Affair*, which dealt with the themes, now common in the work of this author, of infidelity, corruption and salvation by faith (the novel

curiously resembled the earlier formulas of Ernest Hemingway, save that for Communism the Roman Catholic faith is substituted), there appeared a number of civilised and agreeable novels by Nancy Mitford and Enid Bagnold, Hester Chapman and Julia Strachey, L. P. Hartley and Anthony Powell, a more considerable work by Victor Pritchett, a novel by J. C. Powys in his accustomed strain, as well as one by Ivy Compton-Burnett, who pursued her thin but pure vein of gold, in apparent detachment from the gusts and waves of the contemporary zeitgeist. It was not a time of great imaginative masterpieces. As for poetry, W. H. Auden published his *Notes*, and a poem entitled 'The Chimeras', which gave renewed evidence of his magnificent gifts.

The stream of autobiographies and memoirs continued unabated. The most interesting among these was Stephen Spender's *World within World*, in which, with his accustomed candour, slowly, and without elegance, but with a direct vision of the object (which he possesses almost uniquely in the modern world), he described his youth in the literary and artistic world of the 1930s. It was perhaps the best book yet produced by this distinguished poet and critic, and was widely acclaimed and attacked for much the same reasons as similar confessions, for which Rousseau set the fashion, had been praised and assailed, and invariably survived the attacks of their detractors. Sir Norman Angell published the story of his life, and thereby of a world which now seemed remoter than that of the eighteenth century. Katherine Mansfield's letters to her husband, J. Middleton Murry, saw the light during the year, and also wore the air of extreme remoteness. Nicolas Nabokov, the composer, published a delightful book of partly social, partly musical reminiscences, and his cousin, the most brilliant of novelists and poets, Vladimir Nabokov, published an account of his early life in Russia and in England, with a gay, boldly original and sometimes acutely poignant virtuosity, which he alone possesses among modern writers. The correspondence of Paul Claudel and André Suarès was published in France.

Julien Green published the fifth volume of his *Journal*, a remarkable collection of essays on contemporary Italy, by the Catholic writer A. C. Jemolo, saw the light; Ezra Pound's *Letters* proved an extremely arresting commentary on the literary and spiritual issues with which they dealt; by comparison with this the collection of reflections by the ageing American Spanish *penseur*

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George Santayana appeared a trifle exhausted. Volumes of poetry were published by Walter de la Mare, David Gascoyne, Conrad Aiken, Robert Penn Warren and Robert Lowell. These were distinguished and sometimes beautiful, but made no new summer in the field of English poetry. Nor was the field of imaginative literature made wider by the latest works of the highly competent and readable Alberto Moravia or even by Carlo Levi, or by J. P. Marquand's or Faulkner's new novels, or the latest work of John Dos Passos, who continued along predictable and astonishingly conventional lines. There was greater life and originality in *La cometa* by R. Bacchelli, a still consistently under-estimated Italian novelist.

In Germany nothing of notable interest appeared; apart from the *pièces justificatives* of those who somewhat unconvincingly claimed to preserve their own integrity under the Nazis, and the half-apologetic literature seeking less directly to justify general German behaviour during this period. German literature seemed to have contracted into a thin and scarcely notable trickle. Ernst von Salomon, an old pre-Nazi Fascist writer, produced a new work along his old violent, nihilistic lines, a standpoint which, however exciting its effect in the early 1930s, was not merely a symptom that the hysterical irrationalism of this type was not yet dead in Germany. Hans Carossa produced a slight but charming book. Ernst Curtius published a new volume of critical essays; these were sensitive and civilised, but added little to their author's already deserved reputation as one of the few critics of European stature. Mario Praz published a collection of characteristically brilliant but uneven quality; critical writings appeared in England by Frank Leavis, Percy Newby and Charles Morgan; and there was a collection of occasional pieces by E. M. Forster of charm, beauty and depth, which, because of the dearth of writings from his pen, was a literary event in itself.

In the US, Edmund Wilson, perhaps the most distinguished of all literary critics, published a collected edition of his comments on life and letters in the 1930s and 1940s, and there appeared a collection of essays by Lionel Trilling of striking interest and distinction. William Empson published one of his characteristically meticulous and original analyses of the language of poetry. In France Jean Paulhan produced an interesting essay on aesthetics. The celebrated novelist Sinclair Lewis died in the course of the year, and brought to memory a genre very different from the fashion of the

day; as a writer he had long outlived himself. Eudora Welty and Truman Capote published novels which achieved excellence in a style which had become commoner in America than it was in Europe, in which technical perfection, a remarkable degree of professional skill and a sense of *métier* (which European writers all too often despise) did something to compensate for the absence of sufficient content to sustain so elaborate a vehicle.

In this respect, the *New Yorker* magazine (whose editor and founder, Harold Ross, a figure of great originality and life, died during the year) had created a new category of imaginative writing – its short stories were better built and better written than similar stories in Europe; they seemed to some to lack inner life, and indeed appeared often not to have quite enough to say; but their emergence as a specific literary genre was a phenomenon worthy of notice in itself, and did much to raise literary standards in all English-speaking countries from the chaos and boneless structure into which the fear of formalism, which developed in the 1930s, had threatened to plunge young English and American writers.

IV

The drama was going through a singularly fallow period. Apart from such established figures as Sartre and Cocteau in France, only Christopher Fry produced anything fresh. He seemed very much the Edmond Rostand of our day – light, gay, melodious, elegant, skilful, perhaps trivial. His plays in rhyme seemed neither intended, nor likely to achieve, immortality; they contributed to the trend towards the formally pleasing rather than the profound, the shapeless and the original, as a kind of light foil to set off the preoccupation with religious and metaphysical issues among the more serious. The best of modern actors, Louis Jouvet, died in the course of the year.

Even in the USSR this mood of marking time prevailed. No new novels or poems appeared to excite even the normal extravagant praise of the orthodox party critics. The official head of Russian literature Aleksandr Fadeev, was engaged upon rewriting his prize-winning novel, *The Young Guard*, in a manner designed to correct errors and suitably to emphasise the role of the Communist party among wartime partisans; the more eminent V. Kataev was also busy rewriting his older works, now discovered to be inadequate. The themes officially laid down for writers were those of the ‘battle

for peace', denunciation of warmongering in the West, aggrandisement of the Russian and Soviet past, and epics of industrial and agricultural reconstruction. Creative activity appeared to be quiescent over the wide area of the USSR.

In short, the literature produced in the course of the year, apart from the clear religious trend, lacked well-defined characteristics; the nostalgia and controlled despair and consciously temperate realism, as well as violent escapes into fantasy and pornography, of the immediate post-war years seemed to have ended; good authors were writing well, and inferior authors badly – but each was treading established paths, without any sense of new beginnings; 1951 was not a year likely to be notable in the literary histories of the future.

There were new scholarly editions of Montesquieu and Chateaubriand, of Hölderlin and Goethe, a new edition of the forgotten scientist and mathematician and *penseur* of the eighteenth century, G. C. Lichtenberg; the revision of the definitive edition of the works of Boswell was completed; Winston Churchill published two further volumes of his magnificent memoirs; Rear Admiral S. E. Morison continued his history of the naval war; much solid work was done on the papers and the life of Jefferson; an authoritative account of Palmerston's foreign policies was published by Sir Charles Webster; Austin Lane Poole published his long-awaited volume on English history from the Domesday book to Magna Carta; A. L. Rowse issued the first volume of his imaginative and scholarly survey of the age of Elizabeth; the end of the Austro-Hungarian empire was analysed with much learning by the German historians Hantsch and Muensch; Steven Runciman published the first volume of a history of the crusades; Bishop David Mathew published an elegant study of the age of Charles I, and B. H. G. Wormald a life of Clarendon; Julian Amery continued his life of Joseph Chamberlain; a number of scholarly studies of English literature during the Romantic age saw the light.

Two lives by Salvador de Madariaga and Waldon Frank, respectively, of the great liberator of Latin America, Simon Bolivar, were published to commemorate his centenary. Newton Arvin published the most distinguished of the many works which appeared to celebrate Herman Melville on the occasion of the centenary of the publication of *Moby-Dick*. The Italian counter-reformation received classical treatment in the hands of R. Cuazzi. In Leningrad the distinguished but unfortunate E. Tarlé was

compelled by the fiat of his Soviet critics to rewrite his life of Napoleon for the third time, in order to bring it into line with the prevailing dogma on the subject. UNESCO (the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization) published an ambitious scheme for the production of a universal history, to be composed by an international committee divided into national subcommittees of historians – the resulting compilation to appear in various formats and successive abbreviations for the use of scholars, universities and schools of the world, in order to secure a uniform objective survey of history and counteract national prejudices.

V

A number of interesting biographies and memoirs appeared. Beside the biographies of Lord Keynes and Leslie Stephen, there was a life of the humanitarian Labour politician Josiah Wedgwood by his niece, the gifted Veronica Wedgwood; there was a biography of Henry Irving by his grandson, and of David Lloyd George by his old friend and secretary of his cabinet Thomas Jones; the Duke of Windsor and General Omar N. Bradley published their memoirs, and Lord Sysonby, posthumously, his memories of three rulers. New and remarkable letters by Lady Hester Stanhope to a young man in whom she took an interest gave pleasure to a public for whom Arthur Bryant wrote his study of the English social and political scene under the Regency. There was a great outpouring of wartime memoirs, principally apologies for their activities in Hitler's regime by German diplomats; Herbert von Dirksen, E. H. von Weizsäcker, von Blücher and one or two other former minor Nazi officials sought to whitewash themselves and received condign treatment from the ruthless and unsparing pen of L. B. Namier.

An original and pungent set of lectures on American foreign policy by the US diplomat George Kennan made a deep impression: it held a plea for professional diplomacy as against the casual imposition of American ideals on peoples, and in situations, unsuited to them; it spoke in sorrow of the difficulties of democratic control of the process of conducting foreign relations. The diaries of James Forrestal, who had been US Secretary of Defense, contained much acute and controversial writing by a talented and very unusual man. A noble biography of the Swiss historian Jakob

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Burckhardt was launched by Werner Kaegi, and an interesting study of the young Ludwig Ranke was published by Von Laue. Edgar Lobel of Oxford published an exquisitely edited reconstruction of fragments of a newly discovered ancient Greek play; Sir Kenneth Clark published a beautifully written and justly admired work on the painter Piero della Francesca.

It was clear that the streams of pure scholarship were flowing once more. Long-term projects conceived on the grand scale were being launched, and an atmosphere of intellectual security and solid attention to detail prevailed. At the higher academic and intellectual levels there was an atmosphere of tranquillity for the first time since the end of the war.

VI

But by far the richest harvest was to be found in the field of music. The greatest event of the year was the staging on 11 September, in Venice, of a new opera by Igor Stravinsky, *The Rake's Progress*, whose libretto was composed in English by the English poet W. H. Auden, assisted by Chester Kallman. It was an occasion of great social brilliance, and attracted the kind of attention which a new opera by Verdi or Wagner used to receive in the nineteenth century. There was a general agreement that the opera was a masterpiece – the music was limpid, elegant and inspired, and possessed that peculiar magical quality which Stravinsky's best works had never lacked. It seemed as if this composer had begun on that phase of austere and luminous creation, compounded of a blend of exquisite, serene and ironical melody and a spontaneous and arresting new kind of counterpoint, which sometimes qualifies the late phases of great artists, when the sensuousness of their middle works is vanishing, and a noble, transcendent, life-giving gaiety takes its place.

The year saw the death in California of Arnold Schoenberg, the founder of the twelve-tone scale – perhaps the most discussed composer of the age. Schoenberg's works, from which an *opus postumum* was performed in the course of the year, never became intelligible to the general public, and his final value awaited the verdict of posterity. But there is no doubt that he transformed the musical consciousness of his time, and, abandoning the late Wagnerian romanticism with which he began in his earlier, central European, phase, he created a new musical language, a new

framework within which a whole new art of expression came into being, and commanded the most passionate, and at times fanatical, devotion of his followers, among whom there were several composers of undoubted genius. Whether or not Schoenberg himself was a great composer cannot be decided save by those who recognise no other master. But no critic competent to judge musical works would easily deny that title to Bela Bartók, who was deeply inspired by Schoenberg, or to Alban Berg, the lyrical and dramatic composer whose best opera, *Wozzeck*, was, amid much acclamation by the musical world, programmed both in London and in New York City in the course of the year. Schoenberg had among his disciples, too, the noble and austere composer Anton von Webern, the lively and interesting innovator Ernst Krenek, and many other musicians of varying gifts, temperaments and degrees of originality. Perhaps, like the composers of the Mannheim school of the eighteenth century, he was the cause of greater creative gifts in others than in himself; but his theories and his compositions, his gifts as a teacher, his self-denying devotion to his musical ideal, his very personality (about which there was hot controversy after the semibiographical sketch which, according to some, Thomas Mann had given of him in one of his last novels) created an abiding monument in musical history. With Bartók and Stravinsky he remained one of the greatest composers of the first half of the twentieth century.

There were a good many other musical events of interest and of value. There were two new works by Arthur Honegger, and a work entitled *Winter Campfire* – not heard in the West – by the still prodigiously creative Sergey Prokofiev; a dignified ‘morality’ opera entitled *The Pilgrim’s Progress* by the ageing British composer Ralph Vaughan Williams; and, by him also, a cantata, *Sons of Light*. Benjamin Britten, still the most talented composer of opera in Britain, conducted a performance of his *Billy Budd*, adapted by E. M. Forster from the story by Herman Melville. Like all the works of this musician, it overflowed with musical gifts, was at once original and echoing with eclectic reminiscences, and possessed exceptional skill in construction. Oddly enough, the Italian composer Shedins, apparently unaware of Britten’s plans, also wrote a *Billy Budd* a year or so before; and this story was, during 1951, adapted for the stage in two versions: in these matters the zeitgeist seemed to operate with an almost pedantic promptness.

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The Italian-American composer Gian Carlo Menotti produced an opera written for television, entitled *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, a fantasy on the journey of the Magi. An opera entitled *Incognita* by the celebrated musical historian and composer Egon Wellesz was produced at Oxford, and astonished its listeners by the fact that it was not atonal, as had been expected. The Spanish composer Roberto Gerhard wrote a gay work entitled *The Duenna*; and the German composers were again singularly prolific. Werner Egk, Carl Orff, Hermann Reutter and Karl Amadeus Hartmann poured forth works with a copiousness worthy of Hindemith himself. A somewhat more interesting composer also continued to produce work of remarkable lucidity and elegance – the German-Russian composer Boris Blacher, of whom much was expected. In the US new works were written by Roy Harris and the very gifted Lukas Foss.

Beyond the 'iron curtain', besides Prokofiev, there appeared twenty-four preludes and fugues for the piano by Dmitry Shostakovich. The unfortunate composer was once more called to order for incurable formalism and an unlucky inability to escape Western influences. The ancient war horses of the regime, Dmitry Kabalevsky and Herman Zhukovsky, produced routine works – the latter not without sharp political criticism. Czechoslovak music, which seemed promising both before and after the war, had been subtly flattened out by the new regime, and the spate of such works as *Hands Off Korea*, a *Cantata for Gottwald* and so forth were credibly reported to possess no musical merit. Somewhat exotic works, performed in Paris, by the Russian émigré composers Ivan Wyschnegradsky and Maria Scriabin (daughter of the celebrated composer Alexander Scriabin and presumably a relation of V. M. Molotov)⁸ left both the critics and public totally perplexed.

Interesting books on music were published: a posthumous volume by Schoenberg; authoritative studies of Schubert; and a collection of critical essays by Virgil Thomson, who, after the death of the gifted English composer and writer Constant Lambert, stood out as one of the most arresting contemporary critics of music in the Western world.

The greatest loss in the world of musical interpretation was the death of Artur Schnabel, one of the greatest musicians, and the

⁸ [Molotov was born Scriabin, but was not related to the composer.]

foremost player of Beethoven, of his day. As teacher and player he possessed a moral and intellectual authority in the musical world which was equalled perhaps only by that of Pablo Casals.

The number of musical festivals in Europe and America was once again evidence of the fact that music, or at any rate the performance of it, was enjoying a flowering unlike that of any other art. Not only the great festivals of Edinburgh, Salzburg, Perpignan and Aix-en-Provence, but at least a dozen others both in Europe and America, were occasions for a great volume of music both old and new, performed with a quality which was steadily rising. A work entitled *Polyphonie X* by Pierre Boulez evoked protests from the audience at the Donaueschingen Festival – a rare occasion on which a musical audience was not sufficiently cowed by what appeared to it cacophony to give open expression to the violence of its sentiments. There was a festival in Tiberias of Israeli music. Behind the ‘iron curtain’ an opera composed by Paul Dessau, with libretto by Bert Brecht, was given in Berlin. This work, however, was condemned as insufficiently conformist.

Arturo Toscanini conducted a series of incomparable concerts in New York City. Toscanini’s style appears to have risen in his deep old age towards a luminous and transcendental ideal, and while the unique combination of absolute discipline, ceaseless electric tension, noble breadth and depth, and an almost superhuman freedom from self-indulgence had, if anything, reached an even higher level, the Italianisms – the fiery Italian rhetoric, the tendency towards the operatic – had altogether fused away.

The year also saw the passing of three celebrated conductors. The Dutchman Willem Mengelberg was once a singularly dynamic and vigorous figure in the world of music, but his collaboration with the German invaders of his country had plunged him into a disgrace from which he never completely recovered. Fritz Busch, with his brother Adolf Busch, belonged to a musically gifted German family; after raising the performances of the Dresden opera to a great height, he then performed the same services for the Glyndebourne festivals in Britain; without attaining to genius, he was a conductor of very great distinction. The third conductor to die in the course of the year was Sergey Koussevitzky, who conducted with all the charm and *douceur de vivre* of the Russia of the *ancien régime*. He made the Boston orchestra one of the best bodies of musicians in the world. Without attaining to the heights of a Toscanini or an Otto

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Klemperer, he conducted gracefully and delightfully, and with unparalleled pleasure to himself and his audiences. Nicholas Medtner, who died in March, belonged to this culture too. He was a Russian composer and pianist of singular sincerity and charm, whose gifts were less recognised than they deserved, and who was perhaps the last representative of the great Russian school of composition to which Nicolas Rimsky-Korsakov and Sergey Rachmaninoff still belonged, and from which Stravinsky and Sergey Prokofiev represented a bold and successful rebellion. During his last years he attracted the interest of an Indian potentate who subsidised his concerts and founded a Medtner society to record his works.

While no specific, powerful new trend was discernible in musical composition, the variety, life and sheer quantity of composition was at this moment so great as to justify belief that there was beginning a musical renaissance, even if only of an Alexandrian and derivative, rather than a wholly original, kind. The US, with its 702 symphony orchestras, was in a unique position to commission and perform the works of the young composers.

VII

In the other arts there was relatively little to report. The Italian school of films, which two or three years earlier presented the most creative experiment at that moment in progress in the world, was worthily represented by the film *Miracle in Milan* (produced by Vittorio de Sica), which, like the earlier films of this school, was filled with progressive liberal humanism – a kind of artistic reflection of the liberal socialism of the Italian non-Communist left-wing intelligentsia.

Apart from a sensitive, and almost over-tragic, Swedish film based on Strindberg's *Miss Julie*, nothing appeared worthy of exceptional note, although a great standard of technical excellence now seemed assured in the major countries of the West, particularly in British documentary films. Perhaps the best of such films were the Swiss film *Four in a Jeep* and Jean Renoir's poetical *River*; the American *Death of a Salesman* and *A Streetcar Named Desire* translated the precise qualities of these plays efficiently and not altogether unmemorably into the medium of the screen. But the popular films of the year, responding to the religious trends, were such vast and

tasteless shows as *David and Bathsheba*, *Samson and Delilah*, *Quo Vadis* and *Fabiola*, which precisely corresponded to the vast, harmless, religious novels and literary standards of the type of *The Robe* or *The Big Fisherman* or Francis Cardinal Spellman's *The Foundling*, deeply enjoyed by vast numbers of readers in the US and Europe.

VIII

The greatest show of the year was the Festival of Britain, in which an attempt was made to paint a national autobiography. The pavilions on the South Bank of the Thames river were built in what was for Britain a daring and elegant modernity; the use also of a decorative 'skylon' – a stylised lozenge pointing upward from the centre of the exhibition – was a worthy tribute to the uselessness and beauty of objects made for their own sakes. There were distinguished sculptures by Henry Moore and others to decorate the exhibition. The progress of the sciences and the crafts was recorded with some skill; there was an exhibition of sculpture in a portion of Battersea Park, and a number of minor musical festivals as well as that of Edinburgh celebrated the occasion. Ships carried microcosms of the exhibition to the coastal cities of the British Isles. But the most imaginative portion of the affair was the Pleasure Gardens in Battersea Park in London, which John Piper and Osbert Lancaster designed, and which provided a charming, ironical and delightfully witty evocation of the mid-Victorian period, when the original Great Exhibition, of which this marked the centenary, first came into being. The gloom of British post-war depression was genuinely lightened by the dash and style and brilliant colour of the gay pastiche here provided with such gusto, and a half-sentimental, half-ironical nostalgia. The performances in the two theatres of the Pleasure Gardens carried on this quality of sophisticated satire. The number of visitors was great; and with the celebration of the second millenary of Paris, which caused that city to make an elegant display of its own unique and unsurpassable qualities, formed two bright centres in an otherwise somewhat sombre day.

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IX

It was a thin year in the visual arts. Expressionism and surrealism seemed enfeebled, and abstract painting and sculpture of various types appeared to dominate the field in a peaceful but not striking fashion. The greatest living painters were growing older, though not less productive, and genius seemed tardy among the young. Matisse completed the Vence chapel; Georges Rouault and Georges Braque were painting, but did not exhibit. The greatest of all, Pablo Picasso, still appeared to be in the state of marvellous gaiety and youthfulness, in which he had decorated clay and porcelain dishes, illustrated the *Natural History* of Buffon, painted satyrs on the rocks of the Riviera, and was obviously still launched upon a sea of delights and fantasies which sprang from his own unique vitality and perpetually self-renewing genius.

In the US attacks were launched upon an alleged propensity on the part of American museums for 'left-wing' art – a paradoxical development, inasmuch as such cultural 'Bolshevism' is, of all forms of art, the most abhorred and persecuted in Communist countries.

X

In the sciences there was no spectacular advance although much progress was noted in mathematics. In medicine – notably in the field of antibiotics – scarcely a day passed but the hope of new drugs to cure ancient diseases was expressed both in general and in specialised publications.

New types of atomic weapons, particularly light missiles, suitable for use against troops in the field rather than cities and great installations, were reported to have been perfected in the US, and to have transformed the art of war.

Another pronouncement from an authoritative quarter on a scientific theme came from the Vatican, which published an elaborate statement of its attitude towards the discoveries of modern physicists. The trend of the statement was to the effect that fundamentalism was not a dogma of the Church and no Catholic was expected to believe that the world was created literally in seven days; a reconciliation with the facts of geology, astronomy, and palaeontology was offered, not altogether unlike that which the Christian philosophers of the early eighteenth century had

advanced. The statement went on to maintain that such modern doctrines of the physicists as the indeterminacy principle, the implications of atomic fission and other advances in physics and mathematical physics had served logically to confirm the truths of Thomism and of the great doctrines of the Roman Church, whereby the flux and chaos of the world presupposed permanence and eternity, and the modern astrophysical cosmogony logically entailed or in some sense presupposed the existence of a Principal Cause outside the natural order to give the impulse which set the universe running; modern physical doctrines were interpreted as in some way administering a death-blow to those nineteenth-century forms of materialism according to which the world was uncreated and was governed by immutable material laws needing neither a First Cause nor an immutable being other than the laws themselves.

To this very fundamental pronouncement, seeking to reconcile modern physics and the philosophy founded upon it with Catholic dogma, no rejoinder or comment of a prominent kind was made in the course of the year. There was no doubt that the Roman Church was enjoying a prestige greater than it had had for many years.

The only serious blows which it suffered, apart from the persecution of its ministers and members in Eastern Europe, was the eruption of Protestant indignation to the proposal of the President of the US to send an accredited American Ambassador to the Vatican. This was protested against by many Protestant groups as violating the fundamental separation of Church and state upon which the American Republic was founded. It drew little reaction from the US hierarchy itself, which appeared to concentrate its political energies upon the war against internal Communism or upon internal left-wing thought incompatible with its authority.

XI

In philosophy the great chasm which still yawned between the empiricists and logicians of the English-speaking and Scandinavian countries, and the metaphysicians and quasi-religious thinkers and philosophical scholars of the German and Latin countries, continued to divide the two philosophical worlds as sharply as ever.

The more rigid forms of positivism were still melting, both in Britain and in the US, into a far more imaginative and sensitive, if not less empirical, instrument – and this appeared to be largely the

effect of the oral doctrines of the Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, who died in Cambridge, England, in the course of the year, leaving disciples devoted to his memory and his methods to a degree of which no other philosopher of the day could boast. Wittgenstein had begun as a logician and the follower of Bertrand Russell, but at the height of his philosophical development altered his views, and practised a technique whereby more light was thrown upon some of the most tormenting problems of modern philosophy than the older and more mechanical methods had succeeded in doing. This new and more flexible method required qualities of imagination and insight, and even a kind of poetical genius, which Wittgenstein himself possessed to a degree not shared by even his most gifted disciples. His teaching was the most fruitful contribution to the abstract thought of the day made by any single human being. His influence, powerful enough already, seemed likely to spread further, as a result of the vigorous proselytising activities of his disciples. Otherwise, though much competent technical work was published by positivists and their allies, nothing of exceptional importance emerged.

In France Gaston Bachelard wrote imaginatively in his own unique manner about the philosophy of science; Wahl continued his metaphysical reflections, influenced by both Kierkegaard and Jaspers. The metaphysical works of the German Romantics received renewed attention. A philosophical congress held in the capital of Peru merely served to underline the distance which separates such philosophical analysts as A. J. Ayer of London – perhaps the most lucid exponent of modern positivism – from such French metaphysicians as Gabriel Marcel, between whom there was scarcely any common ground for philosophical discussion, only some possibility of meeting in terms of social or political concepts which did not form the main interests of either of these thinkers.

In the USSR the formal logicians, who in the guise of applied mathematicians had hitherto escaped the purges which had decimated other departments of knowledge, were finally, after two decades, attacked in their little enclave, together with the mathematicians proper. The practitioners of these abstract disciplines, which because of the relative lack of interference by the Communist party had, in the realms of both pure mathematics and mathematical logic, accomplished distinguished work in the past few decades, were informed that such formalism was highly prejudicial

to the orthodoxies of Marxist doctrine. They were further informed that mere lip-service to the Marxist dialectic, and the conventional compliments to Stalin, would no longer be sufficient; they must transform their outlook radically, and bring their studies into line with the rest of the Soviet ideology. It was too early to tell whether or not this rang the final knell on the only independent abstract studies still pursued in the USSR.

In chemistry a vigorous Marxist polemic against Western theories of valency was launched by the adherents of more materialist models. It was difficult to tell how far this was due to party pressure, to anxiety to conform to the party's demands on the part of the scientists, and how far to genuine addiction to the material models of the nineteenth century on the part of Russian chemists who, brought up in the tradition, were relatively insulated from Western influences.

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Posted in the Isaiah Berlin Virtual Library 7 January 2019

1951 section I added 29 May 2019