

Europe Revisited:

A Report on Current
Cultural, Intellectual
and Political Trends

By ERNST ERICH NOTH

The traveler who returns from a trip abroad may be expected to have some new information and fresh impressions to share with his friends at home. Travel can indeed be a very instructive and highly educational pastime. Yet some of the fresh impressions which I received during my recent tour I would have preferred to miss. For my trip was not precisely to the best of all possible Old Worlds.

It is now about half a year since I have been back, having heeded that remarkably eloquent piece of advice adorning so much mural space almost everywhere in Europe and which reads, even though occasionally misspelled, "Ami, go home!" This slogan oddly enough seems to be popular even with many Europeans who would be more than alarmed if it ever became popular with Americans too. Emotionally and politically, the slogan expresses much more than the primitive Communist propaganda in which it originated. I, for one, was appalled not only by the number but often the undeniable intellectual stature of non-Communist Europeans who were inclined to believe that this unkind formula may have merit as a recipe for solving the cold and preventing the shooting war. The facts are that not everything is too well either within the Atlantic community of nations or within that smaller unit which is called, for lack of a better name, United Europe. The easternmost boundary of Europe is no longer the Ural mountains, but the Elbe river. And this revised map of the old continent is unlikely to stop at the Elbe. Indeed it will not be re-revised by way of some "roll-back," at least in a foreseeable future. As a matter of fact, if we are not very vigilant and more than alert to the danger, we may witness in our lifetime the dreaded and dreadful coming of Eurasia established under the Red Banner as a political reality instead of remaining merely a term of geographical identification. And I *do* mean that we must be not only strong in purely military or economic affairs, but efficiently intelligent in our political evaluations and conceptions, especially in the all important psychological and intellectual fields.

To report my impressions of the current

intellectual and political trends in Europe received during a sort of blitz trip, which included visits to fifteen countries and twice as many cities in only sixty-odd days, is a difficult task. For elementary background information, I should like to remind you that the purpose of my trip was strictly of a literary nature. I was to plan in personal interviews with leading literary figures a survey of the situation, at mid-century, and the evolution of the various national literatures during the past twenty-five years, to be published in the form of special articles in *Books Abroad* under the provisions of a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation on the occasion of our periodical's Silver Jubilee. Respectful of that Iron Curtain, which has the unpleasant tendency of shutting tightly behind one who would dare penetrate it after having written some books which are rather disrespectful of the masters of the slave states behind that curtain, I limited my visit to the countries of Western Europe. These were, in the order listed: Eire (and you had better say Eire if you want to get along with the touchy nationalism of a still-young state), Great Britain (and you had better say Great Britain rather than England), France, the Saar, Belgium, the Netherlands (they like that better than Holland), Sweden, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, and Portugal, with briefer stop-overs in Denmark and North Africa.

These vital statistics must immediately be complemented by at least as vital a personal factor. This was my first visit after almost eleven years to Western Europe and especially to that country which is claimed to be everybody's second home—France, where I had lived for about eight years—and my first visit in nineteen years to my native Germany, which I had fled from in March, 1933 when Hitler came into power. With the exception of Eire and Sweden, I knew all the countries visited from previous more-or-less prolonged stays. But the point I really want to make here, and yet cannot truly convey, concerns my personal, intimate reaction to such a sudden plunge into what once was home ground; the emotions involved in the rediscovery of the

familiar, and in the more shocking discovery of radical changes in scenery and mentality; the conflicting impulses of delight and distress in witnessing, no longer from a remote distance but at closest quarters, the spasms of rebirth amidst ruins, the anguish of a physically diminished but spiritual dynamic continent torn between hope and gloom. I must admit to these emotional reactions; they may have much bearing on what I have to say; they are likely to color my report, probably with darker shades than would have been visible to a less prejudiced visitor.

There could hardly have been a more pleasant first renewal of contact with the Old World than my leisurely train ride from Shannon airport to Dublin. Here for once I am tempted to yield to the customary pattern of the pleasant travelogue which touches only and ever so lightly on the incidentals of local color and atmosphere. At the risk of being trivial, I must mention that the hills and pastures of Eire, even in the middle of winter, are much greener than legends have them, greener even than the loudest Saint Patrick's Day display and decoration over here. The easy-going cordiality of one's traveling companions made one feel immediately comfortable, even though the train was not.

Country and city look prosperous; the days of the poverty-haunted peasant and workman, driven to emigrating, are things of the past, although there has recently been a slightly alarming increase of unemployment in the overcrowded larger cities. If the literary minded looks in vain for scenes of such shocking misery as certain Irish writers of the period before the national independence have led him to expect, he also looks in vain for that other extinct Irish figure, the reckless rebel. The triumphant national revolution, now institutionalized along patterns of petty bourgeois, complacent conformism, has exhausted the spirit which had borne and sustained it. The intellectual and artistic penalty which the surviving friends or younger successors of Yeats and Joyce have

had to pay for their country's politically successful emergence as a well-to-do, independent nation is distressing.

The reasons for this literary decline have been ably developed in Sean O'Faolain's masterful article "Ireland After Yeats," published in the autumn issue of *Books Abroad*. Referring to the difficulties of writing in a country where, as he puts it, "the policeman and the priest are in a perpetual glow of satisfaction," he pictures contemporary Irish society as "acquisitive, bourgeois, unsophisticated, intellectually conservative and unadventurous, rigidly controlled by a Church at once loved and feared." That there is a strictly enforced, clerically inspired literary censorship is regrettable indeed. There is no contemporary Irish writer of renown—and this includes fervent Catholics—who has not had at least one of his books on the banned list. But truly amazing, for a country otherwise so proud of its newly-won independence, is the fact that one finds no literary trade publishers of any importance at all. This has created the highly paradoxical situation that Irish writers, with proud Gaelic names, who had played a leading part in the revolution against the British, must depend for a reading public and even for their very livelihood, on the publishers in London. Gaelic, incidentally, although together with English the official language of the new state and compulsory in all schools, prominently displayed on all street signs and official buildings, seems to enjoy less public favor than the founders of the republic so sanguinely expected. Arriving in Dublin and having to make an appointment with Sean O'Faolain, I did indeed not know how to pronounce his name. In order to avoid embarrassment, I asked a telephone operator in my hotel to make the connection for me. She was a native of Dublin, but she did not know the correct pronunciation either, and had to consult with two or three members of the hotel staff before finding out for herself.

Politically, Eire, though strongly and outspokenly anti-Communist, is steering a neutral course, trying to stay out of contractual, international commitments, such as the Atlantic Pact. For many reasons, among which family ties have their importance, you do not find in Eire that none-too-cordial feeling toward America which is prevalent in many other countries. However, my poor luck had it that I arrived at the very moment when our government had turned down an Irish request for arms, since Eire does not participate in the Atlantic defense system and priority is legitimately accorded to member states. The press comments were angry and revelatory of a certain brand of European neutralism which seems to be based on the impossi-

ble proposition of having one's cake and eating it. But in general, absence of tension and conflict characterizes the Ireland of today. Even the issue of the "captive" provinces of Ulster has lost much of its sharper polemic edges, and the feelings toward the British are surprisingly mild. One of the depressed group of writers whom I met—and as one does not drink water over there, but rather firewater, such discussions can become lively after a short while—ventured the opinion that the Irish intellectual uneasiness is due to the fact that the British are no longer there. "We miss them," he said, "we all miss them. The ones because they have no longer someone to fight, and the others because they no longer have someone to admire." Yet many Britishers are in Ireland, especially over the weekends, though the Irish neither fight nor admire them. On the contrary, they are gently condescending toward these famished tourists who drop in for a few hearty, unrationed meals in this new land of plenty. One cannot help being impressed and depressed by this unexpected, special type of British tourism, which seems indeed to be symbolic of a drastic reversal of political and economic fortunes.

You have to come to London to realize that this apprehension regarding a decline of the British fortunes is to a considerable extent a misapprehension. Indeed, in many respects England may be considered the real loser of the last war, were it not for the fact that the English themselves are far from being convinced of this. The surface aspects of life in England, such as rationing and the scarcity of food caused by deliberate import restrictions, may well be of a second-

ary nature. They are an integrating part of a courageous struggle for more than survival, namely for an economic and political come-back conceived in terms of long-range policy and not of shortsighted expediency. Morale is an important factor. Twelve years of uninterrupted privations and shortages of essential goods may have affected that morale in some subtle, invisible way. Yet for all you can see, they have certainly not broken the spirit of a proud people, always at its best in putting up a brave front when it faces a challenge of overwhelming odds. The expert may wonder if any economy of continuous austerity is not of too defensive and uninspired a nature to prevail. What is often ignored is that this strict financial policy of belt-tightening, in sharp contrast to that of many a neighbor country across the channel, is an utterly honest one; that it is a policy of grim and yet highly responsible self-denial by virtue of its refusal to strangle the next four generations under the suffocating burden of a tremendous national debt. Other countries have already cheerfully sacrificed the future of their great-grandchildren, but not the English.

In England traditions still weigh heavily. Superficially, at least, the far-reaching social measures of nationalization have not considerably affected the behavior patterns of a particularly stratified society. You still happen, with every step, especially if you are an informal, easy-going American, into what you may take as manifestations of caste-mindedness. But for this too, there are redeeming circumstances. It was my privilege to witness the true meaning of crown and dynasty, the absolute and genuine devotion of the British people to their nominal ruler. Here are emotional and yet highly practical bonds which are most ef-

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ficiently holding together one of the most complex of modern commonwealths.

I was in London when the king died and was deeply impressed with the sincerely moving manifestations of popular mourning. Incidentally, the news was broken to me so gently that at first I could not even grasp it. This was done by the lift-boy, who, in what I considered the utmost in British understatement, said to me: "Not such good news today about the king, sir. . ." At the same time, the succession of the young queen, hurrying back by plane from far away Africa, was a tremendous morale booster. Taking their cue from Churchill's masterful speech, the newspapers hinted at the coming of a new era, a new Elizabethan Age, and hardly a reader seemed disinclined to believe in them.

I would not consider it good business policy to summarize beforehand the remarkable paper on English letters by Stephen Spender, which will be published in the forthcoming winter issue of *Books Abroad*. Suffice it here to venture the personal opinion that the currently predominant poetic aesthetics of T. S. Eliot, and the Catholic-inspired novel *à la* Graham Greene and Evelyn Waugh, do not necessarily reflect a lasting trend. As the anecdotal is sometimes revealing, and as the jocular vein occasionally presents us with welcome relief in the tragedy of mutual misunderstandings in which all countries are busily engaged, you may be interested to know that it is common practice among the younger and smarter literary set of London to pretend to deplore the superior and shrewder business sense of the Yankees who presumably made the better of the deal when swapping for naturalization the American-born T. S. Eliot against the British authors W. H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood.

If you remember the many daring and often rewarding experiments in new writing carried out in London before, during, and even shortly after the war, especially in a host of interesting literary magazines, you will realize the loss suffered by present-day British literature through the disappearance of practically all purely literary periodicals. This has deprived younger authors of a vitally needed outlet. Another sign of the times, which I think could be an alarming one, is the fact that precarious living conditions and a certain "welfare state" mentality have forced many of the British writers into what amounts to "civil service" jobs, mainly with the BBC, whose excellent third programme provides employment for innumerable intellectuals. Many a British writer has confessed to me that such "officialdom" is not always inspiring, and that it interferes with creative work.

Paris was my first real homecoming, for here I was immediately on familiar ground, in the only city of the world which is so truly a writer's workshop. But to be "an American in Paris" was a new experience and not always pleasant, because considerable hard feeling exists over various political, economic, and psychological issues. The honeymoon of the liberation is long since over. The French do not take too gently to the idea of being no longer considered a first-rate power. They have some misgivings regarding our intellectual qualifications for world leadership, and they are in outspoken disaccord with our policy in and toward Germany. This, they fear, will lead to the re-establishment of German military hegemony over Europe, especially while the French are bleeding themselves white and losing their cadres of military leaders in the costly war in Indochina, one of the most unpopular wars ever fought. Many Frenchmen also seem to suspect us of uncharitable and selfish intentions in North Africa, where the situation is critical and tense indeed.

Among the many factors responsible for the present French uneasiness, the problem of the increased North African population on the French mainland, particularly in the outskirts of Paris and in the larger port cities of southern France, looms as truly alarming. For the first time, the organic integration of a minority group into the generally tolerant cultural and political pattern of French life and society may fail. The explosive potentialities of this accumulation of underprivileged racial groups, whose nationalistic resentment is easily exploited by Communist demagoguery, must not be underestimated. As in Italy, where conditions are similar, Communism in France has remained a force to be counted with, especially in matters of foreign policy, or in the event of war. The reported weakening of the Communist Party's voting strength must be taken with many a grain of salt: statistics are misleading whenever they pertain to the number of elected parliamentary representatives exclusively. Their number has been reduced but mainly through the dubious device of an amended election law calculated to deprive both the Communists and the de Gaullists of parliamentary strength. The more revealing total in popular votes still would indicate that one-fourth of the population must be counted in the Communist column. Yet a hopeful sign is the fact that this total includes fewer hard-core party members than one would think. Many of the votes cast for the Communist party are protest votes, be it against the high cost of living, heavy tax-

ation, or most especially against a foreign policy of close association with the United States. In the alarmed opinion of the many who have suffered from both the German occupation and the military devastation which accompanied the liberation, such a policy is likely to bring about a new war in the near future.

Similar apprehensions explain the steadily growing movement of so-called neutralism in France. Its slogans and program play into the hands of the Communists, nevertheless, it would be a distinct blunder to consider this trend as a Communist-inspired or Communist-directed conspiracy against the security of the West. Unfortunately, this blunder is being made by superficial political experts who give the Reds a little bit more credit than they really deserve. Most followers of the neutralist line in France are politically left-of-center but not Communists. An impressive number of middle-of-the-roaders and right-of-center partisans are also neutralists. As a matter of fact, the most influential newspaper to follow the neutralist orientation, *Le Monde*, which continues the former very conservative *Le Temps*, cannot be suspected of harboring any sympathy for left-wing ideologies. More paradoxically even, neutralism as conceived by some responsible political thinkers, ultimately aims at bringing about what our own diplomats also want to achieve, though with different emphasis and through different methods, namely, a strong and independent France within a united and independent Europe.

The neutralists emphasize the word "independent," a Europe independent of both America and Russia, and securing the rôle of mediator between these two giants now deadlocked in irreconcilable differences. But be that as it may, the well-known Communist charge that the United States is furthering the cause of imperialism and Fascism finds many believers in French non-Communist ranks. This should not surprise anyone aware of France's legitimate concern over the strengthening of German militarism and her distrust of Franco Spain, whose recent admission to UNESCO, apparently preparing its admission to the United Nations, has provoked the most vociferous misgivings, especially among French intellectuals of various political loyalties. And these intellectuals are, politically speaking, much more influential in France than anywhere else. Their comments have a far greater impact on French public opinion than many an uninitiated official or uninformed reporter knows or likes to think.

As one who loves France, and knows her well in both her achieve-

ments and shortcomings, I was distressed by the signs of estrangement between two great democracies which should be forever close to one another. The tragic comedy of errors responsible for the present crisis can still climax in a happier ending. To correct the situation, better psychology and greater tactfulness are needed by both sides for their mutual benefit.

In the rôle of the privileged, we should develop a keener understanding for the over-sensitivity and touchiness prevalent in Europe as the result of great physical suffering and moral frustration. And lest we forget, the yearning for peace is so overwhelming in Europe's war-torn countries, the necessity of peace so evident, that the temptation to yield to "peace at any price" looms large indeed. France is a tired country; the energies of her people, exhausted by two invasions within twenty-five years, are now being absorbed by a dreary and difficult struggle for earning one's daily bread and making ends meet. The tax burden is heavy and resented. It is more and more blamed on assumedly unnecessary military expenditures, imposed by an Atlantic Pact policy in which America plays so large a part that she is under constant suspicion of lording it over the weaker members of the alliance who must also rely on her economic help. All the West European countries, in order to be nursed back to health and full vigor, would need at least one generation's life span for reconstruction and physical recovery. We also know that peace during such a span of time is far from being guaranteed, and that this peace can at best be secured only behind the strongest possible protective screen to whose construction the ailing countries are, however, unable to contribute to the limit of their possibilities, especially as far as manpower is concerned. You cannot serve in an army and rebuild a factory at the same time. Yet the solution of this predicament may well spell the difference between peace and war or between victory and defeat for the rapidly shrinking number of countries which are still free.

Paris is still the world's capital of letters, although there are signs that even this long established claim is being seriously challenged; at the present time, most seriously by Italy, where a notable and immensely gratifying intellectual and artistic renaissance has dawned. In spite of a better than normal book production and a brisk literary activity, French writing today does not compare in achievement and significance with the unusually brilliant period between the two wars. The ranks of outstanding literary personalities have thinned out with the death of Bernanos, Gide, and many others. The representatives of the older generation, all or most in their seventies,

are out of touch with drastically changed new surroundings and aspirations; and a truly new generation has not yet established itself. Existentialism is receding, with Sartre and Camus involved in a bitter and violent personal feud and in political quarrels. In these, the latter is upholding the cause of the free world against totalitarianism, the former is drawing nearer and nearer to the Communists, who, nevertheless, reject and insult him as a decadent pervert and morbid bourgeois.

Innumerable literary schools there are and many "isms," but less individual originality. Living conditions have forced many writers into journalism or other fields of more reliable bread-winning, even to their holding several jobs at a time, a development not without harmful consequences for their creative work. Political commitments, usually in the ranks of the extreme left or the extreme right, are diverting many French writers from proper tasks.

One of Europe's choice trouble spots is the Saar. This mineral-rich region, economically complementary to the iron-ore, steel-producing French Lorraine, has an entirely German population. It enjoys the materially advantageous status of economic union with France, while it is politically independent, within certain limitations, and culturally autonomous. The official language is German. My visit was to the young European University of the Saar. The campus is a transformed German panzer garrison. There are sixty-three French and forty-four German nationals as well as representatives of twelve other European countries among the faculty members. The majority of the students are natives of the Saar, but many come from other countries. The rector or president is Dr. Angeloz, France's foremost Germanist, another fact underlining the absence of any attempts at cultural imperialism by the French. What with such a symbolic location, the bilingual setup, an international staff and student body, this university potentially represents a hopeful achievement of the aspirations toward a united Europe. Alas, all this is jeopardized by the present Franco-German conflict over the Saar, which is rapidly growing in verbal violence and viciousness. And thus, instead of being an inspiring model for future practical and constructive co-operation between the European nations, the Saar may become the graveyard of all hopes for a genuine Franco-German rapprochement, and, worse even, the stumbling block against which all hopes for a rapid and organic European community may be shattered.

We have heard much in praise of the so-called Benelux experiment, based on the agreement entered into by Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg, by which

these countries decided to abolish tariff walls and to work together in economic accord, even to the extent of mutually foregoing some specific rights of sovereignty. Here, one would think, is one big step toward a United States of Europe for which the abolition of customs barriers is an essential prerequisite. There has been less talk lately about the results of the Benelux agreements, and more than one crack has opened in this system which began so promisingly. Business circles in both Belgium and Holland are accusing each other of taking unfair advantage of the agreement in order to practice economic dumping at each other's expense; and tiny Luxembourg utters discreet insinuations that the two bigger brothers are not overly mindful of the interests of their smallest partner. Public opinion in the three countries has become more than lukewarm toward the experiment. If the issue were put to a vote, I would be surprised if a majority in each country were not in favor of calling the whole thing off.

The most vital and critical area of Western Europe—Lorraine, the Saar, the German Rhineland, Luxembourg, Belgium, and Holland—gives the impression of being particularly vulnerable, torn by competitive strife, territorial bickering, ideological dissent. To make matters worse, this complex region is not well organized for defense. Much of the Belgian and Dutch reluctance to commit themselves to the limit of their possibilities to their Atlantic defense obligations is caused by their understandable concern over that disquieting next-door neighbor, Germany, where economic reconstruction and military rebuilding proceed at an impressive rate, a Germany whose rôle as aggressor and invader will not soon be forgotten in these two small countries which have suffered beyond proportion.

Belgium was the first country in Western Europe to recover from the ravages of war. Her economy is one of the strongest though it is heavily dependent on foreign trade and off-shore orders. Brussels is a luxurious capital. An air of abundance and comfort is almost intrusively discernible everywhere. The political scene—and here again we have an example of the impact of traditions—is still determined by the old rivalry between the French-speaking Walloons and the Dutch-speaking Flemish. This competition and clashing between the two languages, evenly balanced among the population, with their significant cultural-political overtones, naturally overshadows the literary scene. There are, for instance, two Royal Academies of language and literature, the French and the Flemish, two

official writers' organizations, and the official radio station broadcasts in the two languages. Maybe because of all this, the literary activity in Belgium is dynamic. The French-Belgian writer, it is true, prefers to be published in Paris and the Flemish writer in Holland, yet there is a host of very fine publishing houses for both languages in Belgium proper, and a flowering of excellent literary and cultural periodicals. Poetry is the dominant literary genre, and the dynamic group of Belgian poets gathered around the well-known *Journal des poètes* has recently attained world-wide recognition by organizing and sponsoring the Biennial Poetry Festival of Knokke, the first truly international get-together of poets from all the four corners of the world.

Holland is an ideal literary crossroads. Here the foreign author dominates the book market. Foreign writers, especially Anglo-American, French, and German, are widely read in the original and more so in translation. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that Holland, to the best of my knowledge, is the only country in Europe to have a literary periodical not unlike *Books Abroad*. To anyone versed in three or four foreign languages, I would emphatically recommend reading that periodical, *Litterair Paspoort*. Dutch letters suffered a tremendous loss when in 1940 its three leading authors, then just in their late thirties, died as a result of the Nazi invasion: Menno ter Braak committing suicide, Eddie du Perron victim of a heart attack in Java, and Marsmann drowned while trying to escape to England.

Amsterdam is as neat and clean and crowded with bicyclists as ever, but something has changed. The Nazi invasion and the loss of the Indonesian colonies have severely affected Dutch prosperity. The struggle for economic survival has become intense, and Dutch currency, once the hardest and most sought after in Europe, is now pitifully soft and weakened. I had some Dutch florins left when arriving in Stockholm. Hotels and banks bluntly refused to exchange them against kroners; only in Germany could I get rid of them—at a distinctly unfavorable exchange rate.

The American, convinced of the merit and future of a competitive society where under the challenge of opportunity, private initiative will unfold its highest energies, may find it difficult to believe that a planned or guided economy, and prosperity for practically everybody, in the form of Socialism, can be reconciled instead of being mutually exclusive. Well, Sweden is one of the most prosperous countries today, and this prosperity has been achieved within the framework of a comparatively mild, almost paternalistic

state socialism. Sweden has achieved a cradle-to-grave type of social security for every citizen without apparently killing the goose that lays the golden egg of free enterprise. This package-program of social security embodies such attractions as a state pension, sufficient for securing a decent living for every citizen attaining retirement age, notwithstanding his previous earnings, accumulated savings, the field in which he had worked before, nor even for that matter if he had previously worked at all. And all this comes without penalty of austerity and without any loss of personal or civic freedom, for Sweden is one of the freest nations in this world. The only restrictions in existence—and these are somewhat resented in a country which has always liked its drinking hard and heavy—are in the rigidly enforced laws limiting the sale of alcoholic beverages to strictly rationed amounts, and especially to customers in restaurants who can order a drink only while taking a meal. The potency of the Swedish aquavit being what it is, and Swedish hospitality being of the finest, and the Swedish custom of starting off any meal, including breakfast, with a drink, still leave the allotted dose more than generous.

Yes, Sweden is well off. Yet, in a subtle way, there is some uneasiness about all this, as if purely material well-being were not enough, or maybe too much, as if a certain thirst for things of the spirit remained unsatisfied. Shrewd and cultured observers, who have felt uneasy themselves in an ambiance of occasional intellectual dullness, point out that being always assured of having enough to eat does not necessarily render people happy. This strange, underlying unhappiness, I noticed in almost identical forms later on in Switzerland, another of the few materially happy countries in Europe, but one



Battle for Freedom

When a man hath no freedom to fight
for a home,

Let him combat for that of his neighbors;
Let him think of the glories of Greece and
of Rome,

And get knock'd on his head for his
labors.

To do good to mankind is the chivalrous
plan,

And is always as nobly requited;
Then battle for freedom wherever you can;
And, if not shot or hang'd, you'll get
knighted.

Lord Byron, 1820.

where prosperity has been achieved within the economic framework of traditional laissez-faire capitalism. Sweden's neutrality is now endangered by the nearness and provocative attitude of Soviet Russia. Intelligent political observers agree, privately, that this time there will hardly be another chance for Sweden to sit out a world war. Russia's recent actions in the Baltic sea, a vital corridor of communications and trade for Sweden, which the Russians are considering more and more as their *mare nostrum*, have made that point quite clear.

Literary interest in Sweden is keen, the outlook decidedly cosmopolitan. My visit and the literary project underlying it received front page attention in the Stockholm newspapers. Publishers like Bonnier are among the world's best; the literary periodical, as well as the literary page of important newspapers, is flourishing. Stockholm, as you know, is headquarters for the Nobel Prize of literature which is awarded each year by the Swedish Academy. I had a very courteous reconciliation with many of its members. You may recall that we published over a year ago a symposium under the title "What's Wrong with the Nobel Prize?" in which we challenged the wisdom and merit of not a few of the Nobel Prizes awarded by that distinguished body. The Academy had not been enthusiastic about our outspoken criticism, but its members do not nourish resentment.

"To think of Germany during sleepless nights," as Heine stated the lot of the exiled writer, is easier than to find oneself back in broad daylight of reality in the land of one's childhood. I had many reasons for feeling apprehensive at the idea of such a return, if it were only for a passing visit, and these reasons are too intimate and fearful to be discussed in public. The search for things past is as vain as attempting to steal a glance at the future. The old house is no longer there; how solid and habitable the new one will be nobody knows. But reconstruction is under way and is going on at impressive speed, in which one must recognize the best elements of German application, industry, and thoroughness. They are hardworking people, and in their hustling rebuilding they are far ahead of their neighbors. The mixture of ruins and streamlined new buildings is both heartbreaking and heartening. After so long an absence, one is lost in a labyrinth of landscapes changed beyond recognition. In Frankfurt, for instance, where I spent my student days and where I knew every corner, I lost my way. Many an old friend was found again, but there were all too many graves. When word of my coming had got around, a meeting of my senior class at the *Gymna-*

sium was called. Only three of us came. We discovered, or rather already knew, that during some of the worst years of our lives we had been busy trying on opposite sides of the front to reduce our number even further.

Not that this mattered; bitter experience has taught the thinking Germans that Hitler's attempt at world conquest was raving madness and that war is a poor investment in the country's future. I have found, especially among the survivors of my generation, and more surprisingly among the youngest generation, innumerable Germans who have learned that lesson so well that they are now reluctant ever to take up arms again. These Germans are against an armed participation in the implementation of the Atlantic Treaty, and are suspicious that they may be used as cannon-fodder on a battlefield which would be their own devastated homeland.

Far be it from me to question here the wisdom of our policy which is making of German rearmament something very much like the cornerstone of the Western European defense system. The psychological impact of our change of front, from the outlawing of war and the chastising of the military spirit to what almost amounts to high-pressuring the Germans into putting on uniforms again, has engendered confusion and bitterness.

After having preached that militarism was Germany's undoing, we have now come dangerously close to suggesting it as her salvation. You may answer that the issue is not militarism but an unavoidable rearmament against an undeniable aggressor. You may also answer that Western Germany now is a democracy. But if you know German history, the fundamentally hierarchic system there, and the mentality of the ruling castes, you cannot explain how you can have rearmament in Germany without the tempting danger toward militarism with all its brutal ideology and authoritarian tradition.

Already the hard-core Nazis are rising openly and boldly; a psychological barrage of a kind we could never have wanted or expected is blazing away at a bewildered, half-repelled, half-attracted people. The German pulp magazines are prominently displaying tearjerker biographies of the Hitlers, Goerings, Goebbels, and their ever-loving wives or inconsolable widows. Ever present in everybody's mind is the question of the German East Zone, the yearning for re-unification, combined with the fear that pushing this issue too hard and too far may lead to war. Refugees from the Communist ruled Eastern provinces stream into

The Good Man

The Enquiry in England is not whether a Man has Talents & Genius, But whether he is Passive & Polite & a Virtuous Ass & obedient to Noblemen's Opinions in Art & Science. If he is, he is a Good Man. If Not, he must be Starved.

William Blake, *From Annotations to Sir Joshua Reynolds's Discourses*, 1798.



West Germany, steadily making more acute the problem of their integration into the economy of that over-crowded division.

One sees everywhere the energetic drive and hard work of rebuilding. And equally hard play, for not only are the factories and offices bursting at the seams with activity, but so are all the places of amusement which offer escape from the pressures of daily living and the fearful problems of peace or war. Incidentally, some of Germany's neighbors are afraid not only of her possible comeback as Western Europe's leading military power, but also as an irresistible competitor on the world markets. This comeback is definitely in the making. A paradoxical result of the destruction of German factories is that the shining new factories being built from scratch are by far the most modern, most efficient in the world, equipped with the latest technological devices.

The military and political earthquake which split Germany into two parts has also deprived the country of a true administrative and intellectual capital. Berlin is no longer the artistic focal point it came close to being before Hitler; and Leipzig, once important for book publishing, is now in Russian hands. This has caused a mass exodus of German publishers to the Western Zone, and German writing and publishing have undergone tremendous changes. Cities which previously were not distinguished for contributions to literary life have suddenly become important publishing centers. As a result of these changes, German intellectual life is now heavily under the sign of a new "particularism," or provincialism. None of these new centers has pre-eminence over the others, and there is amazing little spiritual intercourse among them. One is scarcely aware in Hamburg of what is going on in Frankfurt or Stuttgart or Munich.

A good illustration of this situation is provided by the existence in Western Germany of two academies, one in Mainz, one in Darmstadt, geographically not even fifty miles apart, but feuding and competing with one another. Right now three German groups of the Pen Club are bitterly

opposing each other. The atomization of German literary life is also evident through the existence of various groups, each mainly interested in pushing its own particular literary and political ideology. Book production has reached a new peak, but not too many young writers of great talent and promise have appeared. Their work is not yet sufficiently well-defined for us to ascertain who is likely to take over the waning older generation. The term "young writer," furthermore, must not be interpreted in terms of chronological age; it rather refers to the writer whose work has been published only, or mainly, after the war because his books could not be printed during the Hitler regime. The best known representatives of the so-called younger generation are almost all in their late forties.

I found my visit to Vienna in many ways most impressive and rewarding. The capital of the glory that was Austria is an island of Western civilization surrounded by the raging seas of Russian encroachment. The Russian part in the Four Power occupation of Vienna strikes one immediately as the most obtrusive. In contrast to Berlin, even the airport used in Vienna by the Western Allies is located on Russian-held ground. There is indeed a grievous background of social misery which unfortunately has become a permanent part of Vienna since 1919, when this fine and beautiful capital was degraded to a frontier city and became the overgrown hydrocephalus of a shrunken hinterland without adequate resources for a self-supporting economy.

Yet against this background, and the menace of the Russian military, there is a dynamic literary, artistic, and intellectual life in tradition-rich Vienna which can still summon an occasional brave smile and put on her truly irresistible charm. This is not to fall into the operetta cliché of "gay Vienna." That smile and that charm hide the inner toughness of a people intent on going on with the grim art of survival, an art in which Vienna, long an advance post of the Occident, has accumulated considerable experience. The Russians must have found that out, too, for they have replaced practically all their troops of European stock by Kalmuck and Tartar regiments presumably less sensitive to this corrupting environment. Vienna, and all of Austria for that matter, has not much use for Communism. One of my most hopeful and heartening experiences was the discovery that the closer people live to the Iron Curtain, the more they know and see of the Soviet way of life at closest quarters, the less vulnerable they are to Communist propaganda and pressure.

In Vienna, I was particularly impressed by the courageous efforts, initiatives, and

attitudes of the younger generation; by the considerable scholarly achievements of many publishers and learned societies; and by the good will toward arts and letters manifest in various undertakings of the Austrian government. Austrian writing today continues a glorious tradition and great reputation. We too often overlook, or ignore, the fact that twentieth-century German literature is at least fifty per-cent Austrian writing.

Happy countries, or maybe countries happy enough to have avoided destructive wars for a considerable period, do not have an exciting literary history. This is true of Switzerland, although such a sweeping statement would do injustice to a few talents of promise. At any rate, Swiss letters today offer no striking innovations. Swiss publishing, however, is among the leaders in Europe. It is also to the everlasting credit of Swiss publishers that during the war years they generously put at the disposal of persecuted German and French writers their facilities and purses, thus insuring the continuity of the best in German and French letters. It is also a particular pleasure to mention the delight one has in reading the Swiss newspapers. Nowhere else does one find such factual, reliable, and unslanted news-coverage; such well-balanced, level-headed, and fair-minded editorials; such sober makeup and presentation. Here is the very opposite to journalistic hysteria which in many countries contributes so much toward further poisoning an already poisonous atmosphere in international relations.

The vigorous renaissance of Italian letters since the end of the war is one of the most striking and gratifying features in European writing today. Only now, after having read the works of that host of very gifted younger authors who have emerged from anonymity, can we appraise what a powerful and indispensable instrument was silent, in the orchestra of world literature, during the prolonged intermezzo of Italian Fascism. All over the country, a stimulating and invigorating climate of intellectual and artistic curiosity combines with great awareness of the social problems and the spiritual challenge of the age. It looks almost as if the center of Western European artistic life were moving from Paris to Rome. Not only in the domain of letters is this Italian renaissance manifesting itself. You know all about Italian films and their striking innovations. Much interesting experimentation is going on in architecture, and even Italian fashions are giving the Paris dress designers a close contest for supremacy.

But this encouraging picture has no

counterpart in the political and economic life of the country. If you could see the painstaking care with which the Italian farmer squeezes a maximum yield out of every available inch of ground, if you could see the overcrowded cities, you would realize that Italy's clamor for outlets for her excess population is justified and must be answered. The present middle-of-the-road government is on shaky ground, relying on a precarious parliamentary coalition which may not survive the next general elections. Inflationary pressure is strong and full employment seemingly an unattainable goal. Communism is far from receding and neo-Fascism is gaining ground and new influence. Certain manifestations of nationalistic ambitions do not bode well for the near future. I happened to be in Italy when sentiment over Trieste was riding high. On street cars and house walls you could see slogans which called Tito by the name of that otherwise useful animal which provides our breakfast bacon, and this name was also generously applied to the British and Americans. While innocently taking a stroll in Milan, I found myself surrounded by a gang of howling students who asked me with threatening gesticulations to give Trieste back to them *pronto*; and I had an uneasy time of it explaining to them, until the arrival of the police, that this was too big a rush-order for an utterly unimportant American citizen. Such incidents are reminiscent of similar demonstrations which in the early twenties had preceded and prepared the Fiume incident and had paved the way for Mussolini.

The less said about Spain, or rather the Franco regime, which still has a stranglehold over Western Europe's most unfortunate and poorest country, the better. A high dignitary of the Church has recently returned to this country from a visit to Spain and reports that Franco was never before so popular with the Spanish people as now, and who am I to contradict on mere evidence of observation so respected an authority? Of late, gentle hints have come, intended to make many of us swallow one of the bitterer pills of political expediency, that Spain's ruler, in return for our financial favors, may mend his authoritarian ways. News of the pending loosening of the grip of censorship and other oppressive niceties apparently had not yet reached the authors and scholars of Spain when I was there. One of them, for instance, and he is among the world's better known scholars and writers, bravely asked me to put down in writing whatever questions I might have in connection with my literary project so that he could submit them for guidance to the "proper authorities."

Nextdoor Portugal, my last stopover, is technically a dictatorship too, with censorship in a much milder form than Spain, however; with more than occasionally prison terms for opposition writers; and with economic sanctions, such as firing from jobs and blacklisting for future employment. Nevertheless, its literary and intellectual life is remarkably vigorous. Most writers seem to be in the opposition, and in, or just out of, a short jail stretch. At the time, they all seemed to be out, and did not seem to care much if, while they openly voiced their criticism on the terrace of a cafe, the man at the next table was or was not an informer. Smilingly, one of them explained to me that the difference between the Spanish and the Portuguese dictatorships is about the same as between the Spanish and the Portuguese style of bull fighting. In Portugal, the matador is not allowed to kill the bull, he just teases it along and playfully sets it up for a humiliating exit. During my visit, everybody must have been in playful or lenient mood, for I was given a reception attended by writers representing both the regime and the opposition, an opposition which, incidentally, stands for nothing more radical than a traditional liberalism. I have hardly ever witnessed a more cordial get-together. I took off from beautiful Lisbon by plane exactly ten and a half years after having left Europe, under more trying circumstances, from the same port for the same and permanent destination.

Well, ladies and gentlemen, it was quite a trip, and I may have taken you on a much too long and very arbitrarily guided tour. However, it is my hope that my remarks have not been so completely unrevealing as those of a Cook's Tour guide I overheard in the Uffizi art galleries in the room displaying Titian's two reclining Venuses. He explained to his flock of hurried and bewildered tourists, in somewhat debatable French: "Here you see the two reclining Venuses by Titian. The one is more beautiful than the other." The pictures I have had to show admittedly are not always beautiful. But even unpleasant truths must somehow be shared so that we may think together what to do about altering the picture. And whatever seeming violation of the laws of optics and mechanics may be involved in an odd figure of speech: the unveiling of these unpleasant truths had to be done by letting my hair down.

When speaking of Europe, we must remember that its organic structure is one of spiritually integrated diversity. At present, the problem of European unity or fed-

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noon, buy some pork chops, rush home, treat them lightly to a hot skillet, and then eat them with some canned French fries and frozen peas—all of this being prepared and downed in a matter of minutes, so each can meet an early evening appointment. As we all know, it tastes fine, but unfortunately the pork is not cooked well enough in this manner to kill the parasites. Since the pork becomes infected in the first place by feeding hogs raw garbage containing poorly cooked pork scraps, the disease is perpetuated in both human beings and hogs by this method of cooking.

The practice of feeding raw garbage to hogs is not only a universal practice in the United States, but in many large cities is looked upon as the most satisfactory method of garbage disposal. Hence, the incidence of trichinosis is higher among Americans, with the highest standard of living in the world, than in most other nations. The incidence and severity of the disease among Americans differs from that in other nations by virtue of the method by which pork is dispensed. The American custom is to buy pork at the butcher shop rather than for one family to kill and consume an entire animal. As a result of this, any infected animal is parceled out over the counter in small bits to many families; hence the intensity of infection seldom becomes great in any one individual, but the rate in the population is increased. If it were our custom to butcher animals and consume them within a family, we would have many more acute cases of the disease, such as occur, for example, in certain European countries. Again, therefore, the perpetuation of the disease is dependent upon a particular custom, and the fact that we as Americans are usually not acutely infected is also the result of a peculiar custom.

Much has been said and is being said about the relationship of man's comfort to his education and the general socio-economic standards. In this brief article I have attempted to give examples of diseases which affect continuously large segments of the world's population and which are responsible for a tremendous amount of morbidity as well as mortality. They are also directly related to the social customs and economic status of peoples. Even highly civilized countries, such as the United States of America, and in highly prosperous areas, such as Oklahoma, we have examples of debilitating diseases which owe their existence almost entirely to carelessness, ignorance, and deep seated customs. Only recently I was engaged in a campaign to have all of the Boy Scouts in my area immunized against tetanus before they went to their summer camps. In one instance, two boys, the sons of highly

educated people who were community leaders, were not allowed by their parents to take these immunizations. The explanation was that they saw no reason for these immunizations since the boys did not have tetanus. This illustrates the fact that among the highly educated there may be considerable ignorance.

As one who is interested in the well-being of the human race, particularly from the standpoint of infectious diseases, I am strongly convinced that the solution to the control and eventual eradication of many diseases, including those which I have mentioned in this article, as well as many others, can be accomplished only on the basis of better knowledge of health through education, and improved socio-economic conditions under which people live. It is unfortunate, therefore, that more attention is not given to the relationships between the general well-being of the population and the knowledge which is extant concerning its debilitating infirmities.

The world is now experiencing a complete new era in transportation. Within a few hours we can move from any one point on the earth's surface to almost any other point. This brings up an entirely new health problem wherever you happen to be on the earth's surface. Now, we as Americans can not think only in terms of controlling the diseases to which we have been accustomed in the past, but must think in terms of controlling diseases wherever they occur because distance is no longer an effective barrier. This is illustrated vividly by an occurrence in the early 1930's in the region of Natal, Brazil. A French mail plane flying from Africa to Brazil transported one of the world's most important malaria transmitting mosquitoes from Africa to Brazil. This new and more efficient vector was responsible for one of the most devastating malaria epidemics that the Americas have ever known. Luckily, through the efforts of the Rockefeller Foundation and the Brazilian government, this mosquito was eradicated before it reached limits beyond control. This illustrates, however, the fact that a new and more efficient tool, which is now at our hands, can very well result in catastrophic consequences. Man must never forget the relationships between his infirmities and his way of life.

Europe Revisited . . .

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eration is glaringly vitiated by political expediency. Far be it from me to underrate the importance of military and economic factors. Yet their overemphasis tends to falsify the real issues. The impact of tradition—the impatient and exasperated may

call it fossilized history—is such that no hastily improvised, exclusively organizational pattern can prevail if it be not integrated into the predominant organic structures.

The exasperating fellow, the European intellectual, is a key figure in our relationship with foreign countries. I think I was only frank in more than merely hinting that the intelligentsia in many of the countries I visited are either out of touch or often out of sympathy with this country. While such an attitude is fully to be expected from Communist writers, it also is found in a host of non-Communist and even definitely anti-Communist authors. We of *Books Abroad* are modestly convinced that we are going in the right direction in keeping Americans informed on the mentality and aspirations of foreign countries by disseminating pertinent literary information. But another and equally important step would be to provide European intellectuals and especially European writers with a chance of knowing us better. This could best be done in this country, by an arrangement which would allow these foreigners, as our guests, truly to share our living conditions, both our work and our play, our certitudes and our doubts. Such an arrangement, I am sure, would signally contribute toward dispelling many of the vicious and harmful prejudices and misunderstandings prevalent in Europe about our true intentions and our true nature. I am sure that quite recently by the impact of certain visa refusals under the provisions of the McCarran Act, there has been the growing suspicion in Europe of anti-intellectual bias in this country and of discrimination against writers. This reporter on more than one occasion heard the international goodwill character of his trip and its planned literary survey challenged with the statement that "we did not even let European writers enter the States." As there are instances in which a literal application of the Act has alienated, disturbed, and upset genuine friends and political allies; and as, moreover, the better-known European writers greatly influence political opinion and attitude, this situation must be viewed with serious concern. Many of the current prejudices and misunderstandings regarding this country stem from unfamiliarity with the American scene and spiritual climate, rather than from the insinuations of a hostile and often diabolically clever propaganda. Moreover, because a certain provincial, traditionalistic, and nationalistic outlook of some European writers, especially in the economically underprivileged countries, could easily be corrected by giving them the opportunity of acquiring a broadened universal outlook, I feel very strongly that

an intelligently conceived and carefully implemented exchange-program for European writers would go a long way toward eliminating distressing and mutually dangerous misconceptions. Should my paper this evening in any way have stimulated interest and support for such a suggestion, I would consider myself richly rewarded.

What Is Marxism? . . .

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us is enriched by this process. I appropriate something from you, you appropriate something from me. The process of exchange, the give and take of ideas is richer than any of the partners is who contributes to it. In order to be successful, we have to open ourselves to the others. Without veracity and trust in the veracity of others we cannot arrive at any truth. If we thus risk ourselves, we also expect kindness and respect from the others.

The philosophical name for this process is *dialectic*, derived from the Greek "dialogue," which means to speak something through together. Democracy is the political realization of dialectic. Hegel conceived the whole history as such a dialectical process on a grand scale. Marx took the term and, as usual, perverted it into the absurdity of a "Dialectical Materialism." Marx is related to Hegel's philosophy as a dog is related to the corner of a cathedral.

Hegel's historical dialectic is the clarification of opposites within the divine-and-human spirit. This dialectic of the divine-and-human is reflected in the unity of all logical opposites, such as apparent and real, temporal and eternal, finite and infinite, etc. By working out a principle, its limitations are discovered and overcome in a wider and more comprehensive knowledge. Dialectic is meaningful only if it refers to thinking human beings who can freely express themselves. "Matter" can not be dialectical and a "dialectical materialism" is a wooden iron.

Marx transformed Hegel's logical opposites into a clash of brute power groups. Their "dialectic" is merely a clash of force against force, without a common human ground. And these forces, in turn, were narrowed down to economic classes. The whole intellectual, spiritual, moral, aesthetic, and religious culture and their dialectical relations disappear in the bloody monotony of class-struggle between "the bourgeois" and "the proletarian" classes.

Their clash is an absolutely unintelligent process, in which the greater mass and the greater number determines the unavoidable result. In an official pronouncement of the Supreme Soviet of 1931 it is not orthodox to speak of this class-struggle as "mechanical-causal," which is

proper for machines, but as "deterministic-causal."

Freedom of thought and of speech, the true dialectic of the human mind, is incompatible with "dialectical materialism," just as a true democracy is impossible within a "people's democracy." The living human mind and spirit is the creator of all historical realities, including natural sciences and technical machinery, and it is not a product of a "deterministic causality."

The priority of logic over its embodiments and applications is the refutation of "dialectical materialism." But, unfortunately, a logical refutation is not convincing to an enemy who considers an appeal to truth as treason to the party line. He leaves us no alternative but to defend our freedom by force.

This enemy is Marxism. It can not be separated from Russian imperialism. It is the communistic manifesto of Marx which makes such a distinction between political practice and philosophical theory ridiculous; which abolishes all private ownership; which gives to the state the right to send you to work where the state pleases; which foments trouble and fans hatred all over the world to soften this world up for a communistic world-conquest. Russian imperialism is merely the secular arm of the Marxist creed, in which all Russian youths are indoctrinated.

Marxism is the denial of religion, reason, progress, and freedom. Now—destructive negations are simple, co-operative construction is difficult. Marxism is so simple that even Communists can understand it.

Books

How the Russians Thought

THE RUSSIAN MIND From Peter the Great Through the Enlightenment, by Stuart Ramsay Tompkins. University of Oklahoma Press.

In this book Stuart Ramsay Tompkins, whose knowledge of Russian history, literature, and language qualifies him to discuss the Russian mind, provides a psychological portrait of the Russian mind until 1855. Supporting his conclusions with facts—frequently the result of careful historical detective work—he shows clearly that the mechanisms employed today by the Soviets spring from comparable methods and institutions of the Russian past.

The Communistic system, however, has perverted these methods in startling ways in order that they might serve the control features implicit in a Communistic regime.

The Russian mind and characteristics from the Middle Ages up to the Crimean War are examined in detail. Education,

classes, the press, censorship, journalistic activities, and a host of other institutions necessary to a society of free peoples are analyzed carefully and related to the political and social milieu of the monarchs of Russia from Peter the Great to Alexander II.

Handbook for Politicians

PRIMARY ELECTIONS IN THE SOUTH, by Cortez A. M. Ewing, University of Oklahoma Press.

Perhaps no one is better qualified to reveal the complex political scene in the South than Cortez A. M. Ewing, who in this book discovers the strength and weakness, the democratic and undemocratic methods, and the false and real motives underlying Southern political strategy. He answers such vital questions as: What power does incumbency give a candidate? How are votes bought and sold in large blocks? How can a corporation "railroad" its candidate into an influential post?

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