# Retort

## ECONOMICS OF ANARCHY

DON CALHOUN and HOLLEY CANTINE

## FRANCE REVISITED

GEORGE WOODCOCK

## PARADOXES OF SOCIAL LIFE

HELEN CONSTAS

*ESSAYS . POETRY . BOOK & MUSIC REVIEWS*

ROBERT BEK-GRAN .. GEORGE SIMS .. DACHINE RAINER

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# RETORT

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# EDITORIAL

## *THERE IS NO SOCIAL CONTRACT!*

There still appear to be liberals, who while they may be skeptical of the justice, power, or potential achievements of the U.N., fail to see the injustice, arbitrariness, and invariable failure of the single 'nation' or state.

Few are so naive as to suppose that the present peace show is anything more than a vehicle of power politics, which—if it has even *that* function—allocates the division, repression and rule over smaller 'nations'.

Yet when the power of any particular state, more particularly their own or some power they conceive to be representative of them—is called into question, they immediately hurl about 'lawfully delegated federation', 'just and equitable commonwealth'. They conceive of the 'state' as possessing powers that will prevent their house from being broken into and robbed.

Such liberals resent the charge that they consider man to be fundamentally evil. When one points out, that even in terms derived from their own beliefs, that the state could then be nothing more than a coercive instrument for protecting the majority of good men from the small number that is evil, they are not content.

The more sophisticated liberals, particularly those with academic philosophical training pretend to believe that the powers of the state are delegated through a social contract by men that are *neither* good nor evil, but capable of both. It is, then, against the evil in all men, rather than evil men, that the state devolves its powers. But consider the blatant idiocy of the claim that the state is an agency for the prevention of the evil in man's nature from rising to ascendancy, (cf. Calvinism) when we can see that the organized evil of the state, perhaps more in contemporary times than ever before, has no match for setting loose the satanic furies that are supposed to lurk in men—that very state designed to protect the good in men.



The question we must ask these men, who in years of such transparent cynicism and despondency have 'evolved' in their thinking from Rousseau to Hobbes, is: if man is neither good nor evil, why is evil so much more powerful than good, that an *organization* of good—the state—is required to keep the evil in check? Furthermore, how do they reconcile their definition of the state as an organization of the good in man with its being a '*necessary* evil'. Liberals will time and again give this schizoid definition of 'the state'.

In this connection they use society and the state interchangably, arguing that if there were no state there would be no organized society; progressives continuing in this vein, feel that the increasing complexity and corruption are inherent and inevitable. The idea or possibility of establishing a society of simplicity and statelessness is consequently incomprehensible to them.

We must omit 'necessary' from the definition and substitute 'unmitigated'. The state is an unmitigated evil. Aside from the usual discernable reasons, there is a further one that must be recognized by radicals: that is, the irresponsibility—which if man may be said to have any inherent qualities—seems to be inherent in man. Man invariably and willingly relinquishes his individual duties to a group. It is not merely gullability, which many of us have hitherto believed to be a dominant cause for the failure of revolutions such as the Russian; it is the unwillingness of individual men to assume responsibility for their own well being.

It does not appear likely that any satisfactory social change will occur until man has developed an ingrained mistrust of all forms of institutions and organizations, except perhaps small groups within which he functions with full responsibility and an equal share of control. We may no longer think in terms of social contract—power delegated by us to some mythical organization of the popular will. For while there is an organization of a small minority of people with power over us all, its power is not delegated; it is usurped. THERE IS NO SOCIAL CONTRACT!

# THE ECONOMICS OF ANARCHY

## AN EXCHANGE BY DON CALHOUN & HOLLEY CANTINE

### some questions by DON CALHOUN

An anarchist writer, in answer to the charge that the anarchist criticism of society is largely negative and if effective would lead to nothing but chaos, recently replied, 'We tried the existing order long enough. Let's try chaos for a while; it couldn't be any worse.' I am inclined to agree with his point; the notion that criticism must be 'constructive' in order be valid has always annoyed me. But at the same time I have also been annoyed by the anarchist tendency to label as reactionary or anti-libertarian all those who raise serious questions as to how an anarchist society could be made to work, and to dismiss the questioner by saying that he lacks an essential faith in humanity. Just because the war and the growth of the total state have driven more and more thinking people in the direction of anarchism, I think it is important to raise certain questions, particularly concerning the economics of anarchy, which I hope are answerable and will be answered on a somewhat systematic and analytic level.

I The first question which I have failed to see faced in specific terms from an anarchist standpoint is: What do you propose to do with our present highly specialized, and therefore relatively efficient world-economy? How high a level of productive efficiency, i.e., how high a standard of living, is it possible to hope to maintain consistent with anarchist political objectives? How far are we willing to sacrifice the division of labor and the coordinated planning that goes with it in order to maintain freedom? Conversely, how far are we willing to compromise perfect individual and local autonony in order to gain the benefits of specialization and a wide market



economy? Or if the opposition between efficiency and freedom as I have just stated it is a false one, just wherein is it false and how can an economic order be organized which will sacrifice a minimum of both?

In broad terms, there seem to be three possible forms of decentralist economy. The first would be based on the complete self-sufficiency of small productive units limited in size by the area in which face-to-face contacts, the 'town meeting' form of economic and political organization, is possible. There would be no exchange, or at least only the most informal and personal kind of exchange, between such communities; it would be much on the level of primitive trade. Such an economic organization could provide at best only a very low material standard of living. It would have no typewriters, no automobiles, no vacuum cleaners, no milking machines, no phonographs, and so on. It would parallel such present cooperative enterprises as the Macedonia community, minus the large quantity of specialized goods which even such a present community imports. Its great advantage would be that economic and political freedom would be proportional to people's ability to sit down and work things out face-to-face.

The second possible type of economy would involve complete local control over political life and production, but would not be organized on a self-sufficient basis. There would be geographical specialization in the production of certain commodities; a given community might produce typewriters, another washing machines, another refrigerators, above furnishing their own subsistence. But there would be no centralized control or planning of production. Each local group would maintain control over its conditions of work, the amount of product turned out, the amount of community income set aside for expansion of existing enterprises or the development of new ones. Such an economy would be modified capitalism rather than a socialist society, in the sense that socialism implies ownership or participation in control of the means of production by all people involved as *consumers*, as well as by the *producers*.

Nor is the distinction purely verbal. In such a society, where the ownership and control of productive facilities is limited to the group involved as *workers*, rather than being socialized as far as the *market* for the goods produced extends, two basic characteristics of a capitalist society are bound to creep up. First, the fundamental planlessness of capitalist production, which adjusts production to

consumption only over the long run through a trial and error process in the market, would exist here too. The gains in efficiency which would accrue through substituting common social planning by all those concerned as consumers would be lacking. Second, such a system would be near-capitalistic in that, the productive units being not society as a whole but small local groups, the economy would tend to become competitive. Where each small community was a homogeneous unit, a primary group interest in the production and exchange of commodities would tend to rise above general social interest. An omen in that direction is the present competitive, not to say exploitive, character of many cooperatives organized chiefly as mutual benefit, self-interest groups.

The third possibility is one in which at least cetain features of the economy would be planned for the whole area over which the market extended, i.e. over which a common consumer interest existed. Such planning would eliminate the neo-capitalistic tendencies in the previous system by estimating consumer demand over the whole area and drawing up perhaps annual production plans to meet it. It would make decisions about what part of the annual income was to be considered as capital and how it should be apportioned to meet consumer wants. Such planning agencies could be decentralized as far as possible: that is, regional, sub-regional, and local groups would work out detailed plans for production in their areas, and larger planning bodies would coordinate them. Representation on such planning bodies might be by direct worker-consumer election. The chief danger in such a system is more than obvious: it involves, inherently to a certain degree, the restriction of local and personal choice and contains, whether inherently or not, the danger of increasing centralization.

In outline, these seem to me the alternative ways in which a new economic system might be organized. Personally I have little doubt that a considerable sacrifice of technologically possible efficiency would be justifiable and probably necessary in order to maintain personal freedom. What I should like to see is a concrete anarchist statement on how we may proceed to establish an economic system which will actually have some chance of *working* at a minimum sacrifice of either material welfare or personal liberty.

2. The second question is a specific one. Under what conditions can we have free consumer choice of goods, free worker choice of jobs, *and* equal money income? In the Winter 1945 issue



of RETORT, the editor took me to task for suggesting that in a free society it might be necessary to vary pay or other inducements in order to distribute labor throughout the economy. Such an idea was referred to as reflecting the mentality of "intellectuals who dangle carrots in front of donkeys." The February Conference on Non-Violent Revolutionary Socialism raised the same question when it went on record as favoring free consumer and worker choice *and* an equal standard income.

In any economy more complex than a face-to-face community, my guess is that to have these three simultaneously is impossible. For them to operate at the same time, it is necessary that at every moment people's choices of goods which they wish to consume correspond quantitatively, industry for industry, with their spontaneous preference for jobs. The only possible way I can see of avoiding the problem is through productivity so great that all goods will be free, i.e. that the problem of consumer choice will for all practical purposes vanish. While it is conceivable that a highly efficient and specialized economy making full use of all potential productive powers could make all, or almost all, goods as free as air, water, and soap, I doubt whether within any foreseeable future it can be done by a *decentralized* economy which will sacrifice efficiency for the sake of freedom.

This means, then, it seems to me, that the only way to insure both consumer choice of goods and freedom to take or leave a job is to make, not the *money* income, but the *total* attractiveness of the various occupations (including such factors as wages, freedom from monotony, freedom from health hazards, degree of training required, and purely individual taste or distaste) such that at any time people will distribute themselves as *producers* in a way corresponding with their desires as *consumers*. And since people's demands as consumers will be changing, so the conditions of work will have to be constantly changed on an economy-wide basis. If people demand more coal and fewer shoes, something will have to be done to make coal mining equally attractive with shoemaking for an additional number of people.

In an economy of self-sufficient communities on the other hand, there would seem to be two alternatives to such a system: rotation of jobs, or volunteering for unpleasant ones.

Rotation would be possible; but I question its necessity. Economically, it would be undesirable insofar as, by decreasing the division

of labor, it would decrease the efficiency of production and thus force the community to spend more working time in making the same quantity of goods. Ethically, it seems unnecessary, for reasons which I shall go into shortly. It is possible that people might *prefer* to change jobs rather than stick to the same one, even at a sacrifice of efficiency. They might also feel that work done for the community was creative and pleasant rather than a task, and therefore not worry about having to do a little more of it. But rotation of jobs should then be justified on these grounds, and not because it is the best or the only just way of distributing labor.

Volunteering, without rotation, would be hard to put into practice as a permanent method of allotting jobs, though probably not impossible. Here we might be justified in putting a good deal of faith in community spirit. But aside from its feasibility, I would question it on grounds of justice.

Why should some people, even if their choice proceeds from inner and not external compulsion, do jobs which are to them relatively more irksome than those of other members of the community without additional compensation? Would not such a system be making a fetish of equality of *income*, at the expense of real total equality of sacrifice and share in the community? Is it it not a rather materialistic point of view which makes equality in the ability to command goods and services in one's non-working time more important than equality of sacrifice, of personal comfort, health, tranquility, or creativeness in one's working hours? Why should one not be compensated in the one for what he sacrifices in the other, even though the sacrifice in making a particular commodity which the community wants may be purely a subjective one, one of personal preference? Why not make the total life balance of good and services *minus* objective or subjective sacrifices equal for all members of the community? Since the goods the community will want will be constantly shifting, and since for various reasons people will be reluctant to shift jobs correspondingly, why *not* make it worth their while? Is this dangling carrots before donkeys?

I ask, therefore, whether it is *possible* to operate an economy which gives free consumer and worker choice without provision for an economy-wide shifting of inducements offered by different jobs; I question, further, whether any alternative system would be any more *ethically justifiable*, or as justifiable, on grounds of justice, equality and freedom.



3. The final question is more a political than an economic one. How do we proceed from the existing society to the free society? It is granted that we reject the whole fabric of the existing social order, and the state power as the executive of the dominating class. In rejecting it we reject the possibility of employing the state apparatus for revolutionary purposes. How, then, does our revolution come about?

There is at least a large segment of anarchists or near-anarchists who reject violence as a revolutionary technique, and with them I agree. But what are the alternatives, and how do they work?

One is the direct seizure of shops, factories and farms, by non-violent direct action, for the purpose of socializing them *within* the present economic order. The question is, can non-violent seizure be effective on a piecemeal basis? The unique character of non-violence lies in its ability, as a *mass* movement, to withhold support from the existing economy and thus paralyze it. But what happens when the consent is withdrawn by only a small local minority, while the rest of the population assents? What happens when the goon squads and the police and the army move in on our non-violent occupants? And they will, if the seizure of plants is local and sporadic while the vast majority of people still support the status quo and its violent power.

Another possibility is the establishment of a parallel economy within the existing framework without seizure of plants. The theoretical foundation is the fact that revolutions occur when the seeds of a new social order within the old have grown to the point where the two sets of institutions can no longer co-exist. At this point the breakdown of the old leads people to accept the new. But how does a parallel economy of cooperative communities, producer and consumer cooperarives, and worker-owned industries touch that great bulk of our economy known by the unhappy phrase 'the commanding heights'? How do the parallel institutions undermine the existing economy when the bulk of its power is centered in a few overpowering key industries with which cooperative enterprises cannot hope to compete? How can a parallel economy become a serious rival to General Motors, U.S. Steel, General Electric and A.T. & T.?

A still further alternative is more in line with traditional revolutionary theory; it calls for a *general* withdrawal of support from the existing order, a general strike, political and economic, which will paralyze the old economy in toto. There is no doubt that an effective general strike would make the continuance of

capitalism and the state impossible. But the weak point in the general strike, from the anarchist standpoint, lies that in being *general* it depends for its effectiveness on that centralization and coordination of activity which is most to be feared.

While the *timing* of a general walk-out, granted that the crisis has really become revolutionary, might be spontaneous and snowball as it went along, a general strike on a nation-wide level would run into vast difficulties, for example, unless transportation and communication were not merely cut off from the reactionary elements but were also systematically operated in behalf of the revolution. While the policy would certainly not be to starve *anybody*, the power of the strike in specific locations would depend on the coordinated supplying of food to local groups of strikers and their families through operation of the transportation system. But all this assumes some group which is coordinating—the revolutionary leadership in the traditional sense. How can a revolutionary movement using the general strike protect itself against this, its own leadership?

Although at points I have stated rather definite opinion, I think most of these questions are genuine questions rather than answers. The central problem is that of beginning where we are, with our highly developed technological and state machinery, and charting specifically where we are going and how to get there. We want to build a revolution, not wait for it to happen. And though we need faith in man's ability to work out his own destiny, if we can't also reach some fairly concrete idea *now* of how a working free society would be set up, I doubt whether, for all our faith, we are likely to do it after the revolution.

reply by HOLLEY CANTINE

1. In my opinion, the greater part of our present world-economy will have to be scrapped—not only because it is so largely devoted to producing articles that are either practically worthless (such as cash registers and neon lights) or actually harmful (munitions) from any rational standpoint—but because its structure and organization make it impossible to be converted to, or operated under, a system in which freedom, equality, and human dignity are respected. (I will discuss this more fully under 3.)

I suspect that in a free society productive efficiency may not



be very high (although it has yet to be demonstrated whether efficiency really depends on centralization and mechanization. For example, in a recent test, a Japanese with an abacus proved able to solve problems faster than, and as accurately as a comptometer.) but that once we have rid ourselves of the prejudices and habits which cause present generations to identify felicity with an ever increasing number of showy gadgets, and produce only those things which are really necessary to well-being or provide genuine satisfaction in themselves, it would not require very much labor, even at a low level of efficiency. The ideal of a steadily rising standard of living is essentially a product of capitalism—a system which must continually expand its markets or collapse—and has no real meaning except within a context of competitive display—'keeping up with the Joneses'. If and when people come to value freedom and equality sufficiently to establish a society in which they can flourish, they will necessarily come to place less value on acquisition and ostentation. As long as greed and envy remain the dominent motivating forces of society it is pointless to talk about the possibility of establishing genuine freedom and equality. These things are polar opposites. The fundamental emphases of a free society will be solidarity and creativity, and material wealth will occupy a relatively small part of the people's interest and attention. Secure in the knowledge that they can count on the help of others in times of need, they will no longer be troubled by the present-day obsession with economic security, an obsession which leads to an over-valuation of goods as symboly of security and a concomitant intensification of alienation from human relations, which alone can really satisfy the need for security.

Of the three alternatives Calhoun mentions, I should imagine that the second would be the workable and satisfactory as a general rule, although the first might be preferable to some groups—there is no reason, of course, why both types of community couldn't coexist. To call capitalistic, as Calhoun does, a social system in which all productive property is owned communally, and there is no exploitation of labor is an unwarranted misuse of terminology. His fears, moreover, seem to me groundless, since in an atmosphere of genuine freedom and equality the obsessive character of modern commerce would not exist and there would be no reason for serious economic competition between communities. What would they compete for? If there were no profits to be extracted from the sale of goods

—if, that is, the enterprises were really owned by and operated for the workers, there would be no economic incentive to produce unlimited quantities of stuff and try to crowd other producers off the market, which is the leading characteristic of capitalist competition. A certain amount of sharp trading might persist, and an occasional customer might be gyped, but this sort of market practice is certainly pre-capitalistic and exists among many primitive peoples with essentially cooperative economies. As a matter of fact, the economy of most of Melanesia is very similar to Calhoun's second alternative: each tribe produces its own subsistence and some special product to exchange with its neighbors. Thus the Trobriand Islanders specialize in wooden articles like tools and weapons, others make pottery, or baskets, etc.

A certain amount of rough planning, incidentally, would not be incompatible with the above system, although I doubt if it would necessitate the erection of a special planning agency. Each community could simply let each of the other communities in its trade network know how much of their specialties it expected to use in a given period of time, and production schedules could be arranged accordingly.

2. I don't feel that this question is quite as significant as Calhoun seems to think. The concept 'free consumer choice' is largely a fetish of an essentially capitalistic way of thinking, i.e. the assumption that the production and consumption of goods are the fundamental interests, a condition I do not believe can prevail in a free and equal society. In such a society, material requirements would be relatively simple and stable, and sudden shifts in consumer demand involving a major reorganization of the economic system would be extremely unlikely. This phenomenon exists today as a concomitant of mass advertising and the general excessive preoccupation with commodities that results from lack of creative satisfaction and the complexity of existing institutions. In a free society, people would have more creative outlets for their egos than they do today. Their relationship to the economy would not be passive, and they would be in a position to satisfy their own special demands for themselves. One does not need an unlimited variety of products to choose from when one possesses the material resources and abilities to meet one's own requirements.

I believe that rotation of jobs is the only really effective way to avoid stratification and the manipulation of the worker. If, as



Calhoun suggests, working conditions in the various industries are 'equalized' in terms of hours, wages, etc., this would imply the existence of some sort of overall control board which sets the standards of work and alters them according to changing circumstances and I can't avoid feeling that it further implies that the workers are too stupid to see that certain jobs are necessary for their own well-being, and must be coerced or cajoled to take the unpleasant ones.

I don't feel that rotation would lower efficiency if it were not overdone. If work were divided into three or four general categories: skilled manual crafts, unskilled heavy work (ditch-digging, lumbering, mining), professionel services, and unskilled light work (housekeeping, gardening), and each individual did one job in as many of these categories as he was physically able to work in, for the amount of time that kind of work was needed, the rotation might actually raise efficiency, since it would keep the workers from getting stale. Over-specialization is one of the curses of present-day life, and a society genuinely concerned with human well-being would have to eliminate it. The available psychological and physiological evidence indicates that a varied routine is closer to man's natural requirements than concentration on one type of activity.

Finally, it must be borne in mind that labor would not be considered the end of human existence in a free society; men would work only enough to satisfy their real material needs, which are very simple, instead of being driven by emulative compusions to accumulate junk. They would devote the major part of their time to creative activity and play.

It is argued by some that without a highly centralized economy the amount of labor required to produce even the bare necessities would leave no time for anything else. This is an error, based on an overestimation of both the efficiency of mass production methods and the quantity of material goods that is needed for a satisfying life, and an underestimation of man's ability to produce efficiently on a simple economic level. The idea that a highly complicated economy would ever cut economic activity to a minimum has always seemed to me an arbitrary paradox with no objective basis. Those societies which prize leisure and creativity have always been rather primitive economically, while those which are sufficiently obsessed with economic activity to develop an elaborate system of production tend to make a religion of work and to regard non-productive activity—or inactivity—as wicked.

3. I believe that the revolution must come about through the setting up a parallel economy of cooperative communities. This process would be a slow one, and would not, at least for a considerable period, make any attempt to capture the world market from existing economic institutions. Rather, it would attempt to undermine them by drawing away their labor supply, providing a new way of life for the workers which, while it may not at first provide as high a material standard of living, would be characterized by self-respect, independence and individual dignity. This new economy would scarcely resemble the existing one, being based on small, largely self-sufficient units, with a minimum of productive equipment, and which could function underground if this were necessary to thwart the efforts of the status quo to destroy them.

The existing world-economy is based on a set of values, and is organized in a way that has no relevence to the sort of society we would establish. Its huge factories, with their elaborate division of labor, are not only largely devoted to the production of commodities which have no value except within the framework of a warlike, emulative society, but are also based on methods of production that degrade the workers. An increasingly large proportion of their products are designed solely for making war, and are thus clearly of no use from our standpoint. Of the remainder, much is pure junk, whose only purpose is enriching the manufacturer and which can only be disposed of by means of high-pressure salesmanship. Even the minor fraction of products that are undoubtedly of some practical value are unnecessarily complicated, designed to wear out as quickly as possible, and produced under working conditions that insult humanity.

The problem of rivalling such monstrosities as General Motors, etc., on their own terms, is meaningless—there can only be rivalry when the competitors are engaged in a similar pursuit. Except for the workers they employ, General Motors, etc., have nothing that could be utilized by a free, equal economy—nothing, that is, but scrap metal and second-hand building material. The conflict between the two systems is truly fundamental, a conflict which cannot be resolved by one simply taking over the other. Our methods of production and productive equipment would resemble their's so slightly that there could be no reason to desire the seizure of their plants.

The withdrawal of workers from the existing economy and their integration into a new one might be regarded as a kind of strike, but one which is perpetual and cumulative rather than depending



on a sudden total paralysis of the system. In the course of time, as more and more workers were removed from the labor-market, the existing economy would not be able to function, no matter how impressive their material equipment. Obviously, this process would be one of enormous tension and conflict. The state would use every means at its disposal to tie the workers to their jobs in big industry and to destroy the developing workers' cooperatives. It would thus be necessary to function illegally and clandestinely, as the underground industries in Europe did during the German occupation.

Under such circumstances, only very small, inconspicuous industrial units would be feasable. However, since piecemeal expropriation of the existing industrial system is impractible—even if it were desirable—and a general strike would not only entail too much centralization to be successful, but would leave the workers in control of a system that they could not operate without continued delegation of authority and consequent stratification, there is no other method.

Generally speaking, I would say that Calhoun's questions, while well integrated and coherent, reflect too much of an implicit acceptance of the values and mores of the society we are endeavoring to destroy. He still tends to think of the future society in terms of existing institutions, and to assume that the transition can be effected by taking over those institutions and reorganizing them. In my opinion, nothing so simple as this is conceivable. What we are faced with is a basic conflict between two entirely different ways of life—a conflict that extends through all aspects of social organization, economic techniques, and political institutions.

The new society will neither spring fully formed from the ashes of the old, nor will it make very much use of existing social and technological structures. It can only be built up slowly and organically—not so much within the shell of old as on its periphery—and will have to improvise a great deal of its resources and institutions, since nothing like them can be found in either the existing society or in the past, although of course it will have to build upon the technical and scientific discoveries of previous societies. These discoveries will have to be fitted into a new pattern, and altered according to the needs of that pattern. If such alteration proves impossible, the discoveries, not the pattern, must be rejected. For the values of mutual aid, liberty and equality are the true bases of our society, and anything that cannot be harmonized with these values has no place in it.

# GEORGE SIMS

## *SHE TURNS FROM WHITE HUDDLED HOUSES*

She turns from white huddled houses
Moves against mirrors of winds
Intransigent in evening
And past fields of crowded dead
Leaves the street's sight. Nowhere has trace,
Nothing remembers her. Her dress
Is folded with some autumnal thought
Trees play with other laughter
And river slowly sorting silver
On dusted surfaces has forgotten
River this day all light. Where in
A wood's care, in paths of the last
Of summer she lay, unmuscled
Stalks strive to break our
Bracken beds but there she slept
And slept in me her sleeping beauty.

## *ESTUARINE*

To the barbed and savage brushwood
a few swallowed whimbrel feathers
and other restless dunlin godwin
stint, caught like the heavy flying swan,
punished at last
with all the sea's ignominy
sliding on shallow's colours
slight pinks, shrimp reds browns
littering with ebb's soiled treasures
ceaseless vomit of summer's pleasures
drunken bottles, wens of hair
the merganser's useless body.

Sacks, shrouds, a hundred dust
weed garments thrown upon lovage grounds
and frittering rain runnels
blinding marl where fennel strove.
Thrift, blite, my lady's fingers
trodden under as salt climbed
up in his master's footsteps;
thick clumps of spewed leaves
upon the barren strawberries trail.
More ravels of seasonal illness among
the lovers' springtime pallets,
a cottage lost and whither as fume
joins clouds indivisibly and one
fire against the mist illusion.

# DACHINE RAINER

## *THE PSYCHONEUROTIC*

the incident is principle
a rationalized focal shift,
each new center a rosary and an axe.
fixed upon the cross, disciplined

nails still hold the moldy order
of charred bone. convolutions
occur not in the brain alone, but
spiral endless acres of sand dunes,

and create their own temptations.
between the cactus and the palm,
in the desert was the fall.
the incident is the principle.

## *TO VENUS, ASLEEP*

In the eye this beauty lies
your face flows in my eyes
cateracts all other light
of yellow midday flowers, of
wind whitening the grass.

In the eyes this beauty
this beauty flows into hours
until you are the object of time,
and around the sun, the purposeless
earth revolving, finds a new center

In my eyes your beauty lies.

*"Denn nah am Tod sieht man den Tod nicht mehr"*
Rilke: *8th Duino Elegy*

prophetic is a realm that breaks with man,
with the now of world, with object and memory;
the flow of was to is again freezes wish to be.

TIME. . . in and out thru ice

if only this and should I dare
if die is cast upon the breaded sea
that parts for no love's tread

time swallows, time endures, time enters a hollow cube;
but not time *is*
but now was . . .

was time for you, and did the ritual fail,
was a cradle foreshortened, a maturation time shunted,
what shrank our time into a recognition?

contact remains stilled
and you will have this, as I prophesy:
a breviary unfilled with time-grain, a windmill,
an atrophied form of Wander, eternal.

your unmitigating reapers will know this loss
as immutable, as logically caused, as finite.

# ON SAYING 'NO'

ROBERT BEK-GRAN

The day is approaching which will compel western men to say clearly to their own civilization: No. They will be coerced to such action by circumstances over which they never had and never shall have any control. They will be forced not only to be negative towards their environment but to declare their total disinterest in the fate of their society. They shall act thus to save their own integrity which to them will seem more vital than breath and bread. Certainly it will be their last and only resort against a flood whose volume, weight and color pale into utter insignificance all preceding secular or ecclesiastical tyrannies. No organized resistance will have a chance against this inevitable reckoning. Isolated objectors will be swept aside and buried in obscure graves. There will be no appeal to other men for aid or comfort—because the rare dissenter will not be understood. They are certain to be treated as lepers or as atavistic anachronisms by this new age which will pride itself on its 'reasonableness' and on its 'democratic dignity of man'.

It is not surpising to see this overdue civilization bound unerringly for the straitjacket of a world-wide state-capitalism (under the misnomer of socialism). Men will be proud to serve its equally obnoxious political and cultural tyranny in the wake of the final victory of 'planned' economy without the 'man'. One can be certain that the intellectual will define this coming disaster as a new born Golden Age, or as they will label it: "the final liberation of man".

This thought of the Occident's mutation into a series of satrapies is not surprising in the least when one takes the trouble to scrutinize the balance sheet of its so-called evolutionary progress. Shorn of its bombastic claims of achievement and its vain promises, its accomplishment is contained in a prolongation of the average man's lifespan in certain very limited spheres. This is its only *positive* deed and contribution to human welfare *in*

spite of its science and technology. This joker in its otherwise astounding failure is solely due to the efforts of men to whom reason and its method meant more than a mere improved economy or an exclusive esoteric semi-culture. The West has failed its people in every other respect.

It has not freed man from an overbearing bondage of his environment, nor has it made him an individual. The myth of the individual is carefully nurtured by apologists of historic grandeur but those defenders of historical 'success' have never bothered too much with the little fellows who provided the convenient background to the drama. Theologians and academicians have carefully nurtured the belief that a god or an obscure ethic holds man responsible for his deeds. They claim that Christianity freed men from the shackles of an erroneous acceptance of blind fate. Various systems of philosophy which influenced the ethical concepts of Western Man tried in vain to bridge the gap between that theoretical individual's responsibility and the overwhelming dominance of a society which abhorred and ruthlessly extirpated at all times those who dared to say No to the dictates of its impersonal collective will.

Yet only by saying 'No' does a little fellow become an individual who can build his own world without compromise and conformity. (the almost obscene fetish of our psychologists for the word 'mature' meaning the acceptance of compromise and conformity as the proper approach to 'reality' intensifies the necessity of teaching people to say 'No'.)

Only the terms have changed: Greek fate became modern envirnment. The objects of fate had en masse as little control over it as modern man has over his milieu. Our complex national, political and economic machineries plunge blindly into a future that is fairly predictable and unavoidable. They drag a mute mass of millions of men into a series of catastrophes which could be avoided if men were reasonable individuals. But since they are not reasonable individuals the historic 'progressive' process has to end like the Greek tragedy. Rationalizations propounded by pundits of 'free will or economic determination' or 'collective wills' are at best (in their logificatio post festum) dreamlike fairytales and at worst 'scientific' inquiries into assumed postulates of an otherwise meaningless process that goes under the name of history. This vaunted thing history seen from the bottom upwards has not changed basically the fate of its objects one iota since its conscious inception. Succeeding societies with their growing technological and 'progressing' scientific concentration have only enhanced economical and political power in various forms of state or nation. One can say quite freely that a Roman peasant or artisan under Augustus Caesar was closer to the ideal of becoming a 'free' man than most men born since.



What is considered in our time as an 'individual': are the slight aberrations of a stipulated accepted norm. The expressions 'character' or 'personality' are used to emphasize the variations of a theme as long as they do not run contrariwise te the conformity of an accepted social pattern.

The implications are obvious: we have never had a form of society which encouraged non-conformity and provided for the emergence of the individual. Rare pioneer periods which could have produced traditions of individualistic growth invariably bogged down in this respect due to the fact that their daring was mainly economic. The Greek and humanist attempts to create individuals were exclusively esoteric and aristocratic and never reached for the bottom, which is the burden bearer of civilization.

The difference between the social status of a tenement dweller in New York City and that of his brother in Moscow is one of degree in favor of the American. But to see in either one of them an individual is very difficult.

The rare individual who rose in spite of and contrary to his dominent milieu has been and will be invariably ostracized and his burial in a pauper's grave is a foregone conclusion. Society (as we know it) has simply never provided space for the dynamics inherent in the individual. Its collective will cannot tolerate a radical negation and an equally radical attempt to build a new house denying the past.

The coming forms of society threaten to emphasize even more the collective will in their State-controlled economies. They are the consistent outcome of modern science and the Industrial Revolution. The two reasons for this 'evolution' are obvious: the interdependence of technology and the tendency towards absolute economic security. Both causes automatically strengthen the inherent absolutism of the State as the sole arbiter and enhance a latent collective conformity.

This is the danger: its inevitability is assured. A concerted action by a few individuals to break down the trend and direct it

into a more equitable organizational form of society is unthinkable and practically impossible. Aside from that: such a group of individuals does not exist.

One cannot build a new house by patching up the old one with new fangled facades. There are times when the old structure is so corroded that a face-lifting cannot save it. This is also true of the state. It will be a long time before its structure corrodes and it has outlived its functions. Under present circumstances, every positivism towards the state succeeds in strengthening its collective will. Every negative organizational attitude follows the same trend. Both approaches are unable to lead towards a stateless form of society.

Thus far it is possible to forsee a road (which a few can travel): it may be nothing else than a preparation of those who shall dissent. They have to be taught to live in a dreadful diaspora and to wander obscure and homeless like the Socinians over the earth. Their offspring's agnosticism and doubt can be the yeast.

## *LINES*

True to the revolution and what comes to pass
but lies in my heart: hardly myself
is uttering the far- off sounds infallible.
Patient, firm, duteous, insincere,
and true; alas! that those [some of my dearest]
who have an ear for hypocrisy
mistrust me—they are right—and go wrong.
Cry out to them! cry out to them
that the words are good measurements of things,
that only the thoughts are malevolent.
For I have governed my resentful tongue
to speak of joy and simplicity,
of the strength of the duration of the world
and the immediate violence that heals.

PAUL GOODMAN

# THE PARADOXES OF SOCIAL LIFE

HELEN CONSTAS

In the history of sociology Bernard de Mandeville is at present a figure of relatively secondary importance. Yet in his own day he was very influential not only in his own country, England, but in the intellectual life of France, where his influence is vouched for by the numerous editions of his translated works. A list of figures upon whom his mind made a strong impression would include such notable men as Pope, Voltaire, Montesquieu, and Adam Smith. But it is not the purpose of this paper to trace Mandeville's rôle in the history of ideas. Suffice it to say he was a center of controversy in his own day for he allied himself with the growing movement of rationalism.

Mandeville's claim to fame does not rest on a well worked-out system of thought. Essentially he was a dilettante who earned his living as a physician, and writing was merely his hobby. His chief work is a short tale in verse form entitled 'The Fable of the Bees.' To this he later added a number of remarks elucidating and elaborating the various ideas put forward in the original fable, and these were further supplemented by an essay entitled 'A Search into the Nature of Society'. Despite the fact that Mandeville was not a profound and systematic sociologist, he nevertheless brought out many important problems which deserve serious attention. It will be the purpose of this paper to discuss some of these problems in the advantage of the 200 years' perspective we now have in regard to the 'Fable'.

The thesis of 'The Fable of the Bees', stated by Mandeville in the preface, is "to show the impossibility of enjoying all the most elegant comforts of life that are to be met with in an industrious, wealthy, and powerful nation, and at the same time be blessed with all the virtue and innocence that can be wished for in a Golden Age; from thence to expose the Unreasonableness and Folly of those,

that desirous of being an opulent and flourishing people and wonderfully greedy after all the benefits they can receive as such, are yet always murmuring at and exclaiming against those Vices and Inconveniences, that from the beginning of the world to the present day, have been inseperable from all kingdoms and states that ever were famed for Strength, Riches and Politeness, at the same time." This theme is stated over and over again in many ways and with great ingenuity of example in the manner of a polished essayist who mixes humor and serious controversy in pleasant proportions. Thus 'The Bees' enjoy a thriving commercial prosperity on the basis of

"Millions endeavoring to supply
Each other's lust and vanity."

Mandeville, following strictly in the Machiavellian tradition, berates previous writers about social life on the grounds that "One of the greatest reasons why so few people understand themselves is that most writers are always teaching men what they should be, and hardly ever trouble their heads with telling them what they really are." And it is Mandeville's intention to describe social life as he himself has experienced it, free from any theological attitudes. He wished to explain human society purely on its own terms, treating society as a world of its own, and not as derived from something else. Mandeville's examination of the various fraudulent practices in law, business, medicine, the priesthood, the army, and the government leads him to conclude that paradoxically the sum of the bad parts of society result in a wealthy and powerful kingdom. And the secret of the means of reconciling private vices for the public good is to be found in the sphere of politics.

'And virtue, who from politics
Had learned a thousand cunning tricks
Was, by their happy influence
Made friends with vice; and ever since
The worst of all the multitude
Did something for the common good.'

In the preforatory remarks in the section on 'The Origin of Moral Virtue' we find the same view expressed. "It is visible, then, that it was not any heathen religion which first put man upon crossing his appetites and subduing his dearest inclinations, but the skillful management of wary politicians; and the nearer we search into human nature, the more we shall be convinced that the moral virtues are the political offspring which flattery begot upon pride."



Thus morality is not a product of the innate goodness of man. Mandeville explicitly rejects the concept of Shaftesbury concerning human nature as 'inconsistent with our daily experience'. He prefers the 'pessimistic' Hobbesian view of human nature. His description of the real motives of human behavior (envy, pride, avarice, etc.) is a veritable catalog of the seven deadly sins. 'No societies could have sprung from the amiable virtues and the loving qualities of man, but on the contrary, all of them must had their origin from his wants, his imperfections, and the variety of his appetites.' It is apparent that, by breaking with the Erasmian humanistic tradition that man is merely human, and by putting foward a theory of the innate corruptness and evil of men, Mandeville does not advance beyond the prevailing religious idea that man is sinful. Mandeville has no appreciation whatever for the Erasmian concept that there is no human nature, only social nature, and he overlooks the concept of mutuality in social relations.

In this old controversy about the nature of human nature, I think we may safely conclude one thing by now—that is, that human nature is not intrinsically only good or only bad. Rather man is potentially capable of almost any social attitude and behavior pattern. The results of modern anthropology in particular show the plasticity and potential range of human nature. Of all the animals man is undoubtedly capable of the greatest variation in types of social life, and is not restricted to any one pattern which is then a mere inherited and instinctive reflex. It is precisely because man's social life is not purely instinctive as that of the social insects, for example, that man has moral problems at all. For the moral sphere is the area of choice. Since all the potentialities of all human beings cannot be realized, the problem of morality, of the hierarchy of values, of choice and free will come to the fore.

The old controversy as to whether man's nature was originally and fundamentally good or evil was useful perhaps in showing the range of human nature but the views advanced were polemical, partial perspectives based frequently on theological considerations rather than scientific inquiry.

If this were all Mandeville had to say on the relation between human nature and morality, he would probably be ignored today. But Mandeville's merit is to see morality as a social product, as the result of the neutralization of one vice by another through the

skill of politicians. "Everything is evil which art and experience have not taught us to turn into a blessing." This take morality out of the sphere of biology, instincts, and human nature. It represents an attempt to base morality on some rational procedure connected with empirical inquiry. But Mandeville's 'morality' remains a rather weak thing essentially, a political trick played on evil men by wary politicians. It suffers from all the defects of the Machiavellian, Hobbesian tradition in which Mandeville has his place. In general Mandeville is confused on the question of virtue and he uses the word in several senses. Sometimes virtue is the mere negating of one vice by another—which gives virtue no positive character whatever. At another time, virtue is the state before choices have to be made, i.e. the pre-moral sphere of an imagined idyllic agricultural existence before the rise of industrialism. This nostalgic fantasy obviously corresponds to the state of Man in the Garden of Eden before the Fall. But Man in the Garden of Eden is not moral man—for he has no choices to make. Morality starts with Man's *choice* to eat the Apple, and his subsequent Fall and future Redemption.

To Mandeville's credit, however, we must say that he does see one very important truth about the relation of morality and social action, namely that human action is always limited and morally dualistic in its effects. There is no event so overwhelmingly evil that it does not bring some good, and conversely, no good that does not entail some evil. While we may procede from absolute ideals, in practice these can only be approximated and never fully achieved. 'The Fable of the Bees' might be succinctly described as a study in the mixed social effects of the vices and the virtues. 'It is in morality, as it is in nature, there is nothing so perfectly good in creatures that it cannot be hurtful to anyone of the society, nor anything so evil, but it may prove beneficial to some part or other of the creation: so that things are only good and evil in reference to something else, and according to the light and position they are placed in.'

Thus through the confusion in Mandeville's thought about morality, one thing emerges fairly clear—Mandeville has left the security of religious Absolute moral principles, and has entered the quagmire of Relativism. He has done this almost unconsciously, and is entirely unaware of the implications or the problems of this position. But he is hardly to be blamed for failing to solve a problem which we today, over two hundred years later, have not



yet solved. His understanding of the problem of moral relativism is at the simple level of such popular adages as, 'It's an ill wind which blows nobody good', or 'Every cloud has a silver lining'. Had he lived until our day he could have participated in the general debate about the morality of the atom bomb, and while his remarks might not have been any profounder than the usual ones, they would at least have had the merit of being wittier.

Mandeville has touched on another matter which I think is important, but which again he sees only partially, i.e. the problem of *necessary* social relations. Thus for Mandeville, dirty streets and congestion are necessarily connected with industrial and commercial life. In this respect the traditional Bolshevik would go much further. 'Wars, depressions, imperialism, scarcity are all evils inherent in capitalism, and cannot be abolished except by transforming capitalism into socialism.' But for the traditional liberal these are not *necessary* correlations at all. On the contrary, the evils are the abuses of capitalism, and the acts of individually evil men. They feel that capitalism, properly functioning with perhaps some governmental aid and direction, could provide housing projects, health centers, and an ever increasing standard of living based on improved technology, peace and international collective security. And liberals, in their turn, would attack Bolshevism on the basis that there is a necessary correlation between the Bolshevik organizational ideas and practices, and totalitarianism. The Bolsheviks, in their turn, would reply that one party rule and totalitarian practices are not true Bolshevism at all, but the *abuses* of Bolshevism by Stalin (or if more favorably disposed to Stalin would say they are the abuses forced upon Bolshevism by the hostile capitalist encirclement). Thus both the liberal and the Bolshevik have their own particular set of necessary social correlations. As is to be expected they do not agree. Mandeville, too, has his set, and it will undoubtedly be countered by the modern liberals who are quite opposed to it. 'Streets don't have to be dirty. We can have traffic zoning, municipal planning, the mechanization of street cleaning, etc.'

So far most social correlations have been a matter of arbitrary choice or partial insights, and are immediately denied by those who do not have the same axe to grind. Perhaps this is one of the fields where sociology may contribute. It may be possible to make a science of social correlations that will have a high degree of correlation-probability. By insight and study of the consequences of a course

of action, we may be able to conclude that if you do A in social life, B will most likely follow. Thus sociologists may aid in the proper choice of means to achieve a certain end. They may also be able to predict [and thus prepare for] the evil consequences of each course of action which are as much a product as the preponderant good sought, and which, if not considered, may well vitiate the desired end. Sociology may also be able to make a scientific correlation between values held and institutions built, and the mutual interaction of these two. Thus we may be able to take the first steps to overcome the paralysis and paradoxes of relativism.

All these remarks do not yet exhaust the problems Mandeville was concerned with in 'The Fable of the Bees'. Another aspect of his thought involves the nature and problem of social change. Like Toynbee, Mandeville has essentially a concept of challenge and response as the explanation of the motive force of social change. In remark H for example, he states that the intellectual difference between the clergy of Italy and Germany is occasioned by the fact that in Italy and Spain the clergy was unopposed, and hence grew lazy and ignorant; whereas in Germany the clergy met opposition, and was forced to be learned and active. The opposites complement and assist each other by goading each other into action. Thus from the point of view of a wealthy and powerful society 'content is the bane of industry'. And where the feeling of contentment is widespread, commercial and military power are impossible. But for Mandeville the nature of the challenge is completely bound up with his view of the evil nature of man.

"Envy itself and vanity
Were ministers of industry."

The basic drive making for historical change is the desire for luxuries, and an ever increasing standard of living.

"The very poor
Lived better than the rich before."

In remark P Mandeville states "Man never exerts himself but when he is roused by his desires: whilst they lie dormant, and there is nothing to raise them, his excellence and abilities will be forever undiscovered."

This view is undoubtedly one of the most widely held theories of social change. It is expressed, for example, though in different language, by Marx in his concept of the automatic development of the productive forces and the drive by the proletariat to increase



its share of the products, and thereby raise its standard of living. Of course this theory raises as many problems as it settles. If men are on the whole alike in their desires, why do only *some* societies develop, 'raise themselves' as Mandeville says, 'increase the forces of production' as Marx says? Why don't *all* men act the same way, being driven by the same desires? Once the process of competition for luxuries is started, we today can see quite clearly how it can assume an automatic character of its own, and through the medium of advertising, mold the people into the pattern of seeking 'better things for better living', 'the latest', 'the most modern'. Life's meaning becomes the acquisition of technical improvements as an end in itself. Man himself is lost as a human being, and his entire meaning of life is equated with the process of acquiring new commodities. This becomes the accepted mores, and those who fail to follow it must suffer the social consequences of ostracism (which few people are capable of bearing). The greatest social error and defect then becomes 'being out of date', 'out of the swim'. Man becomes completely alienated from himself through the products of his own making.

Mandeville did not like this modern quest for luxury. He preferred the country lanes to the 'stinking streets of London'. He felt that it was most probable that men could enjoy true happiness in 'a small and peaceable society'. And in contradiction to his express opinion, he was a city man to the marrow of his bones. Preceding as he did the nineteenth century evolutionary conception of social life, Mandeville was clearly able to see that all 'progress' had to be paid for; that what we gain in one sphere, we pay for in another. And while at first this view may seem rather depressing, a thorough understanding of it should serve us as a preventative to the shocks of the unexpected realities that the insoluble paradoxes of social life constantly present.

# NOTES ON FRANCE REVISITED

GEORGE WOODCOCK

The first impression of the continent of Europe, revisited after seven years was bleak and depressing. There was a mist over the channel, which lifted slightly as we put into Calais Harbour, and revealed a seafront of broken buildings, of timeless clock towers haggard among the twisted steel wreckage of warehouses and transport sheds. Here was already a more obliterating destruction than we had seen in England, and as we settled in our train and looked over the town, we had an almost terrifying feeling of being on the edge of a whole continent of death and irremediable decay. The old feeling of anticipatory pleasure, which we had felt on visits before the war, was replaced by a half-desire to return to the close little prison of England rather than go on to what we feared we might encounter.

Undoubtedly, had our journey lain eastward into Germany, we should have seen enough to confirm our worst anticipation. But in France the really bad destruction has been mostly peripheral, in the great battlefield of the north and the cities of the east, like Belfort and Mulhouse, where later we saw a destruction equal to that in Calais and Boulogne. As we journeyed south-west into the heart of the country we began to see a landscape whose agricultural resiliance was bringing a natural recovery that had nothing to do with the misplaced activities of politicians or bureaucrats. It was obvious that there were vast difficulties to be overcome—the herds of cattle were too small for the available pastures, much land lay waterlogged or had reverted to scrub, and agricultural methods were still too primitive in a land where it is an event to see a tractor. In a journey which took us right across France, we saw everywhere the same waste of land and the same obsolete methods retarding production, The only exceptions we perceived were the extremely well-cultivated market gardens around Paris, and the peasant holdings



in Alsace which, in spite of the destruction during the 'Liberation', are again models of competent and productive farming. Yet, backward as French agriculture may be, the efforts of the peasants might have been far more successful in feeding the population if it had not been for bad transport, inefficient distribution, a black market tacitly ignored by the government officials, and a failure to provide the peasant with manufactured goods which would induce him to contribute an adequate share of food for the town population.

When we arrived in Paris, at the end of May, this chaotic food situation was the dominant topic of public concern and political controversy. At that time a gradual improvement was just becoming evident, in the form of fairly large supplies of fresh fruit and vegetables. But it is doubtful whether, at that time at least, the workers and petty bourgeosie were gaining any great benefit from this improvement, as their wages of 6,000-8,000 francs a month left little margin to buy fruit and tomatoes at 50 to 60 francs a pound. There was still, moreover, a great shortage of cigarettes (English brands cost 150 francs a packet on the black market) and of wine which, apart from the ration of one bottle a month, cost upward of 160 francs. There was food in plenty for those who could pay, while the black market in food and clothes operated openly in many shops. But for the ordinary worker or petty official, whose wages had lagged far behind the rise in cost of living, life was still scanty. All their resources had to be spent on sheer necessities.

A good index to the fortunes of the various classes could be gained by observing the cafes. The upper-class establishments, round the Etoile and the Opera, were full of well-fed and richly-dressed men and women. The middle-class cafes enjoyed a very quiet business from frugal drinkers. The little working-class bars, formerly so full of life and noise, were silent and almost empty. A similar comparison could be made between the well-stocked jewellery and dress shops of the Rue de la Paix, and the crowded 'flea markets' in every poor quarter of Paris, where the working people went in crowds to buy and sell the most pathetic fragments of work clothes for a few francs.

A short time after our arrival, the June elections were held, and the days surrounding this event provided an interesting crystalization of the political situation. In Paris there was a good deal of more or less open strife. For the first time since the 'Liberation', Communist

influence over the city was being challenged by the right wing. Communist meetings were broken up by the young men of the P.R.L. (extreme Right-wing grouping), fights between students of the rival factions took place in the Latin Quarter, and the P.R.L. propagandists disguised their own reactionary intentions by a campaign against Red Fascism. Meanwhile, the M.R.P., in spite of participating in the same government as the Communists, were accusing them of political murders, and entered into an electoral arrangement with the P.R.L. The Communists themselves, so far as Paris was concerned, followed a more or less defensive line, and before the election were doubtful of their prospects.

The voting revealed a new triangular situation in French politics, that of the two totalitarian groups and the abstainers. The Communists, to their own surprise, held their ground in most places, and compensated for losses in Paris by gains in reactionsry peasant districts. The right-wing, M.R.P. and P.R.L., gained substantially, at the expense of the centre, particularly the Socialist Party, which, having lost its influence over the C.T.G. to the Communists, has fallen to a very minor third among the larger parties. Over against the Red and Black groups of the reactionaries, stand the solid block of 20 percent of abstainers, who in France represent more a conscious disgust with politics than any apathy towards social issues. The attitude they represent is actually stronger than at first appears, for many of the workers who voted for the M.R.P. did so, not from reactionary motives, but from dissatisfaction with the Communists and Socialists who had so signally failed to find a solution to the food crisis. At the farthest point of the 'abstainers' stand the anarchist and syndicalist movements. These have grown very rapidly during the past year. The anarchist movement had declined almost to nothing before the war, but it has now undergone a surprising renaissance. In Paris alone there are thirty active groups, not counting the youth movement, while the circulation of the anarchist weekly, *Le Libertaire*, varies between 60,000 and 80,000 copies. The syndicalist C.N.T. already includes a fair number of workers who are dissatisfied with the reformist-Stalinist policy of the C.G.T. On the edge of the libertarians stand such groups as those supporting the former Resistance paper, *Combat*, which follows a federalist and anti-Communist policy, and the intellectual weekly, *La Rue*.

In general, the political barometer shows that the Communist



wave is beginning to ebb, while the Catholic and right-wing factions are still increasing their strength. But these two great groups balance each other so well that neither is likely to secure complete power. In such a situation of more or less equal rivals, there is always the tendency for their forces to cancel out, and so for new opportunities to arise for a vigorous libertarian movement to gain influence. Thus, while there is no cause to be overoptimistic, France seems to offer a much more promising situation than any other European country, except Italy.

In Paris now, there is a constant feeling of movement, of life working beneath the surface, ready to burst into growth which may, indeed, be very monstrous, but which may be very beautiful. This vitality is evident not merely in politics, but also in intellectual life. There is a great production of literary and artistic periodicals, many of them vigorous and interesting, while there are many art exhibitions, some of them very large. The cinema has not yet resumed its old vitality, but the theatre has produced a number of new plays and interesting young actors, while some of the great actors of the previous generation are giving their best work. I saw a particularly fine performance by Jouvet in Jules Romains' 'Knock'.

In spite of the great intellectual and artistic activity, little has emerged that seems of permanent greatness. Most of the writers are engaged in journalism, or works too closely bound to ephemeral motives to have lasting value. There is much good satirical writing, some good criticism, but little poetry of a really high quality and few good novels. In painting there is nothing immediately impressive. The older painters, Matisse, Braque, Picasso, have not equalled their own past, and there are no really striking younger painters.

But I do not think there is need to be pessimistic over the future of French art or literature. The writers and painters are still too near the tumultuous social experiences of the past few years to consolidate their feelings into really creative work. But I am sure that very soon this great bed of activity will throw up some really magnificent flowerings of painting and poetry.

An encouraging tendency is the loosening of Communist influence among artists and writers. After the Liberation many were lead into supporting the Communists and such centralised, Stalinist-controlled bodies as the Union of Intellectuals. In the

intervening time, however, the Communist writers have shown themselves so Fascist in spirit, and the Communist reviews have made such ridiculous statements that their influence has waned considerably. An example of sheer silliness, which did much to discredit the Communist intellectuals was a campaign initiated by one of their weeklies, *Action*, for the burning of Kafka and other so-called 'black' literature! A revulsion against such dangerous manifestations has become evident, and has produced a considerable movement towards libertarian ideas. Andre Breton recently published an article in praise of anarchism in *Combat*. Sartre's latest book, *l'Existentialisme est un Humanisme*, gives a definitely humanitarian slant to that fashionable philosophy. A new organization of artists, *Art Libre*, organized by anarchists on a federalist group basis, has just held a great exhibition and claims more than 400 practicing artists among its members. These are just a few of the more hopeful signs.

The vitality of present-day France was emphasized for me by an interlude in Switzerland. Entering Basel after an uncomfortable, foodless, thirsty night journey across France, I was at first astonished and overwhelmed by the sheer quality of material goods. And throughout an Englishman's stay in this country he is bound to find a certain pleasure in the contrast between Swiss abundance and English frugality.

But, spiritually, Switzerland is a dead country in comparison with France. There is a certain complacency about the people, which seems to cover a kind of guilt that they have not shared the war experience of the rest of the world. And, indeed, in some ways the Swiss *have* suffered mentally from failing to participate in the war. They were neutral for the wrong reasons; instead of adopting a revolutionary defiance of militarism, they accepted the political principles that cause war, and merely evaded its consequences. Far from being a pacifist nation, they can be compared more justly with the jingoist who supports war, but evades fighting to save his skin. The Swiss never felt a really compelling reason to keep out of the fighting; if they had been attacked they would have fought as a militarist nation. Consequently, unlike the Danes who took a really pacifist attitude and gave a great example of successful non-violent resistance during the Copenhagen general strike, they are afflicted by a half-conscious guilt which makes them shut their minds to the experiences out of which European thought and art are beginning to spring forth. Mentally, they are of the



age before two wars,—the Edwardians of modern Europe. A few are alert and aware, but most—even among the workers—live in an obsolete middle-class culture, a culture of liberal values, Manchester economics, and centrist politics. Their minds are as unresponsive to contemporary problems as damp cardboard to writing.

Returning to Paris in the middle of July, I found a great improvement in material standards. Fruit, vegetables, cheese, had become abundant and fairly cheap. There was talk of more wine. Only meat was really short, except for some bad Canadian tinned meat from which many people contracted food poisoning. Compared with the slow recovery, with periodical regressions, of conditions, in England, the rapid improvement in France is quite impressive. It is significant that this is more than anything else an intellectual recovery; in other words, due to the efforts of individuals and small groups rather than government and industrial trusts. Peasants printers, artisans in small shops are working hard and producing a steadily increasing contribution towards feeding the material and mental needs of the people. Large industry, transport and the government are still well behind, doing little constructive and impeding the renaissance which the efforts of individuals are producing. England is slower than France in recovery, precisely because the government and the big industrial trusts play so much greater a part in its economic life than they do in that of France. Here, once again, is a demonstration of one of the essential lessons of our age, that large-scale industry is no longer relevant to modern tendencies of life, and that its continuance will impede both the development of an organic decentralized society and the rise of a libertarian social form complimentary to such an economy.

In France today the struggle may seem to be between forces of the Left and the Right whose internal and foreign policies are equally malignant to personal liberty and world peace. But, as I have shown, important tendencies in French life are making a great resistance which may well neutralize the chauvinistic and totalitarian aims of the politicians. Even the large parties are threatened by the hesitancy of their own supporters, and it is possible to envisage a general breakdown of the political structure in which the retention of absolute power by any group will be made impossible, and the free activity of the people will neutralize the interference of rulers. France may yet resume its old revolutionary leadership of Europe.

# THE INTERNATIONAL

*Of the translations we have received in response to our printing the original French text in the last issue, we prefer the following:*

It's the last of all struggles:
Let's form groups & next day
The only International
Will be the human race.

Arise! O galley-slaves of hunger!
Arise! O damned ones of the earth!
Reason thunders in her crater:
It's th' eruption of the end.
Of the past, let's make a *tabula rasa:*
Slavish crowd! Arise! Arise!
The world will change its very basis;
Now we are nothing!—Let's be *all!*

There is for us no ruling saviour:
No god—no caesar, no tribune.
Let's save ourselves, we producers:
Let's decree the common good!
To make the robber cough his swag up,
To free the Spirit from its cell,
Let's blow—ourselves!—upon our forge now,
Strike the iron while it's hot!

The State represses us, Law tricks us,
The taxes bleed us,—*us*, the poor;
No duty falls upon the rich ones,
The 'right of the poor' 's an empty word!
Long enuf we've languished under 'guardians':
Equality wants other laws:
'No rights' she thunders 'without duties:
Equals! no duties without rights!'



Hideous in their apotheosis,
The kings of the mine & of the rail:—
What have they *ever* done for us
But steal the value from our toil!?
Into the strong-boxes of these gangsters
What it creates has disappeared.
In ruling that they give it back now
The people calls for but its due!

The kings have filled us with deer-s--t;
Peace among us!— To the tyrants war!
Let's use the Strike against the armies:
Let's break ranks, gun-butts in air!
If they persist,—these cannibals,
In making heroes out of us,
They'll soon find out that our bullets
Are for our own damned generals.

Workers, peasants,—we are the
Great party of the working class.
The earth belongs but to the real men,
The idle must go somewhere else.
On how much of our flesh they've feasted!
But if these vultures, if these crows,
One of these days shd disappear,
The sun will shine forevermore!

It's the last of all struggles:
Let's form groups, & next day
The only International
Will be the human race.

*Translated, with a note, by Jackson Mac Low*

**Note: I think this rendering falls within any definition of scrupulous literalness, ever tho it is so obviously weighted in an anarchist direction; i.e. 'form groups' rather than 'unite' (which implies a sort of mass movement); the 'only International' is of course my own invention & can be defended on metrical grounds as well as polemical. In the chorus as well as thruout the poem I emplcy one-half rhyme; in some parts of the poem I dispense with rhyme entirely for the sake of literalness. The poem isn't strictly metrical either: my norm of rhythm is neither a strict meter nor freer speech rhythms, but rather some sort of singability with the usual tune; in places one has to sing one syllable over 2 notes, in others 2 or even 3 [eg: l. 25] syllables to a note, but this is all right: I think it is better to lose smoothness of rhythm once in awhile [especially in such a song as this] for the sake of retaining more of the spirit, more of the original [if possible all] images and turns of phrase.**

# BOOKS

*DICKENS, DALI, & OTHERS. Studies in Popular Culture. By George Orwell. Reynal & Hitchcock. $2.50*

For pedantry, absolutist aesthetics, and arbitrary political interpretations of moral and aesthetic problems this series of essays by George Orwell has little in common with the art of criticism.

It is impossible to agree that 'History has to move in a certain direction, even if it has to be pushed that way by neurotics'.* It is unlikely that 'history'—the Marxist's monistic ahuman force—has *any* 'direction'; it is logically untenable that it aspires towards some predetermined end; it is least likely that any ends that Orwell or any other approximation of a Marxist or Progressive would desire would be at all compatible with any moral means.

Questions of morality appear in various essays—mainly by indirection—and where the treatment is direct, as in the piece on Dali, Orwell's League for the Protection of Decency and his bewilderment at the schism between the artist and the human being—more comprehensible, perhaps, as the antagonism between creative (anti-social) and moral (social) man—are blatantly apparent. He concedes an indulgence: 'when the artist is an altogether exceptional person, he must be allowed a certain amount of irresponsibility, just as a pregnant woman is', and proceeds to violate it a few lines down the same page: ' . . .it should be possible to say, 'This is a good book or a good picture, and ought to be burned by the public hangman'.

Orwell 'considers it a *doubtful* (my italics, D. R.) policy to suppress anything'—Not a decidedly amoral one! While political behavior does not come under the realm of moral jurisdiction for Mr. Orwell, individual behavior does: Dali is a necrophilic, egomaniac, narcisst. This leaves Orwell at a loss to explain his preference for Dali's painting by feeling obligated to exonerate Dali's moral patterns, (and at the same time to priggishly disassociste *himself* from any moral vageries) on the wobbly theory that this age is to be held accountable for any glaring irregularities in Dali's makeup. Awfully good painter, but he couldn't play for the gentlemen, you know!

* Essay on Koestler.



Orwell exploits the schizoid in Dali; it would be a neat trick if he could get away with it. But since he fails to correlate Dali's 'moral depravities' with his painting we must conclude that the social reflection is on Orwell's side with the implicit acceptance of the dominant values of this society. It is Dali who reflects the age as artists do, in protest.

Orwell's moral intolerance is matched only by his political density, and that, only by its bad taste. All three have a difficult time standing up against his lack of imagination, and his rather generalized ignorance. For example, in his essay on Yeats, he is ignorant of the simplest techniques of versification: he protests that Yeats is affected and suggests at one point that Yeats should have omitted one word from a stanza that 'imports a feeling of affectation', and again 'even in this short poem there are six or seven unnecessary words'; it would be apparent even to the most cursory reading of the two passages by a grammar school boy that every word is necessary for scansion in that metrical form, *if* for no other reasons. Since Orwell has no quarrel with the form per se we rather suspect that Orwell was brought up on 'Boy's Weeklies'.* One wonders where Orwell's discussion of 'affectation', his mockery of Yeats' imaginative power by terming it 'hocus pocus', and his scoffing at the cyclical concept of history will lead to.**

We do not have long to wait. 'Translated into political terms Yeats' tendency is fascist'. He goes on to 'prove' the authoritarian implications in the poetry—but if ever an authoritarian menace were convincingly presented to the reader it is that of a critic who finds that artistic energies *can* be 'translated into political terms'. Orwell continues this harangue by proclaiming Yeats an 'obscurantist and reactionary'—yet we cannot refrain from wondering how it is that if Yeats' meaning in this simple passage is somehow obscured from Mr. Orwell, how it is that he divines *what* he *is* saying is reactionary?' His point of departure is taken from the Marxist, V.K. Narayana Menon, and the bigotry lies heavily on both.

Most 'progressives' still equate reactionary with fascist. Yet while fascism was opportunistic ideology so that workers as well as business were made to think that fascism was their baby, in practice

*British adventure stories and the title of one of the duller essays in this collection.

**Here one sees Orwell's own evolutionary concept of progress; in this essay as in all the others, one does not learn much about Dickens or Dali et al but one does learn considerable about Orwell, and he does not improve with further acquaintance.

it soon became 'progressive' with the rising interests of its own statism, and with little concern over the fate of *either* class. Yet pseudo-radical progressives still cling to one half the fallacious ideology of fascism, completely forgetting the support the workers gave the rising movement, and label all reactionaries 'fascist'. Since fascism is a progressive movement (in an historical, if not a teleological sense) and progressive phenomena like the B.L.P. are supported by Orwell, it is more certain that Orwell is a fascist, than that Yeats was ever one.

Orwell is a futurist as progressives generally are; the theory of one justifies the rationalized malpractice of the other. Altho radicals are called utopians, it is those who function within the framework of the nineteenth century who are. When one maintains a constant picture of the Kingdom of Heaven, no act is conceived in terms in which a consideration of means is at all commensurate with ends; history must be pushed along and it little matters who does the pushing.

It should be adequate to dismiss any writer who professes any serious concern with moral problems by pointing to his support of a war. It is even simpler in Orwell's case: '. . . getting rid of Hitler is still a worth-while objective, a necessary bit of scavenging in which motives are almost irrelevant'.* One cannot take *such* slap-happy thinking, such impromptu generalizations, such moral intolerance seriously. One cannot imagine why the Left in America has been at all hoodwinked by such sham performances—as for instance the London Letters in Partisan Review which rivals P.R.'s poetry in very dullness. There is in the more sophisticated mind of the British Left no ambiguity about the blimplish commonplaceries of Orwell's observations.**

DACHINE RAINER

* Essay on Koestler. ** As we start printing this, I hear that Orwell has a piece in the latest issue of NOW (British anarchist cultural journal). Being 'hoodwinked' is apparantly an international calamity.

*CASUALTY by Robert Lowry. New Directions. $2.00.*

It is morning in January, 1945, and the first snow falls on the American army photo reconnaissance wing based in Italy. The gentle snow halts the terrible restless forces of war, covers the battered ugly world outside, stirs a change inside the tired, wearied men, and allows a respite. For a moment the men relax, look at themselves and question, ponder their miserable existence in the inhuman mess, and then become casualties of these very human ponderings. Lowry's novel *Casualty* vividly and pointedly describes what happens when the human seeps out of the de-humanized military beings in the person of a private first class, a corporal, a sargent, a lieutenant, and a colonel.



Life for these humans is sheer chaos from beginning to end. Within this chaos the highly touted myth of efficiency lies exploded and exposed, discipline becomes absolute insanity, brains a taboo, responsibility a sham and pretense. The pettiness, stupidity, viciousness, brutality of the caste system as it functions rouses disgust and revolt. [Thus it functions in all bureaucracy!] In the words of the private: '. . . to hell with the whole false mess of men and ambition in this war. There isn't an officer in the Wing who's thought of war in terms any bigger than his own personal position in it. There isn't one who would throw his weight around and take a bust to see justice done to a man who could be of no value to him. The army brings out the worst in everybody.'

Yet there is a method to the madness of the chaos. For 'Any philosophy is difficult. . .It's difficult because you're only supposed to have one emotion: happiness at being alive...Even getting killed, he thought with a laugh, would have its advantages. The truth of the matter is that each of us feels his own death more acutely than any real death around him. This sedentary life that's been going on for two years over here is the realest kind of death because we don't have any decisions about our personal lives, our future or our present.' The true function of chaos!

The snow falls, and by the next morning of chaos the private is crushed by a truck, the corporal cracks and is sent to a hospital, the sargent is busted both in rank and in spirit, the lieutenant lustfully looks foward to promotions, and the less than mediocre colonel continues his debauched life.

Nevertheless, the chaos produced some real questions: 'Why haven't more of us done more desperate things against this life?... Why haven't more of us cracked up,insulted officers, gone over the hill? It would really be more logical in an outfit like this...' Indeed, *why*?

A note about the author: Lowry is a young writer who spent 39 months in the army, 23 of them with the A.A.F. in Africa and Italy. Out of these experiences, shared and suffered with other 'casualties' in the world, he has written this fine book, his first.

ALEXANDER LANG

*ONE WORLD IN THE MAKING. By Ralph Barton Perry. Current Books, Inc. $3.*

Some years ago a valuable book was published called *The Illiteracy of the Illiterate*—a title that might well serve as the theme of any human appraisal of the latest book on world problems by Ralph Barton Perry. It may seem paradoxical to hear this belligerent supporter of the late unpleasantness and author of *Our Side is Right* proclaiming 'We must not be ashamed to make morality the leading subject'. But Professor Perry has maintained a fairly clean record, if not for philosophical consistency, at least for holding fast to previously formed opinions. In a review of this book in *The N.Y. Times*, R.L. Duffus remarks that although it was written some time since 'the end of the war, the creation of the United Nations Organization and some disturbing developments in world diplomacy have not weakened or made obsolete anything Professor Perry said.' The reason is obvious. The author's premises have little relation to the world as it is, so that it is distinctly possible to build upon them a structure that has neither time nor place. It is in fact as a case study in the characteristic failure of idealism as a political philosophy that the book merits attention.

Perry seems to have got wind of the suspicion to which many have come, namely that there is and must be a deep fissure, an ambivalence in the nature of things, between the norms of personal and collective morality. Thus he lashes out against those (Beard?) who hold that no nation *qua* nation, can act unselfishly, who hold that policies of enlightened self interest, multilaterally pursued, will add up to true, as the only available, policy of human welfare for our present age. Yet so self-contradictory is academic 'internationalism' today that the author, who really disagrees with the Beardian view *toto caelo*, can occasionally accept an unconscious paraphrase of it as his own thesis: 'We must generate this kind of self-interest the enlightened realization of which will be generally beneficient, or which will fit into a world based on justice and humanity.'

On the purely political side, the greatest puerility and grossest confusion of thought stems from the failure of our anti-perfectionists to extend their 'realism' from the partial and derivative problem of international politics to a general realism in political science. When will they abandon the fallacy that political planners are not subject to the corruption of power, the notion that they are less selfish



than other men, the chimera that the answer to the biggest explosion in history is the biggest government in history? Sometimes it seems as though none of our 'one-worlders' had ever heard of *civil* war. Or have they admitted, not to mention examined the possibility that an international government with the titanic powers they desire, including control of all the resources of atomic energy, might eventually extinguish the natural rights of man? If eighty percent of the American people, aroused to unusual watchfulness, were yet unable to prevent their government from waging an undeclared war, how are the peoples of the earth to control the new world juggernaut? We are aware how great are the shortcomings of big democracies, even in stable nations with democratic traditions. How difficult it is to secure an effective voice for minorities; how easily abuses creep in; how hard it is to dispel them once they become established. In the light of such facts, and of such facts as the Shearer incident at the Geneva disarmament conference, have our globalists offered us the faintest prospect of harmonious devolopment or the feeblest guarantee of freedom?

R. H. CRUM

*ART & SOCIAL NATURE. By Paul Goodman. Vinco Publ. Co. $3.*

The fields of fiction, critical writing and political interpretations have all been considerably enriched by the work of Paul Goodman. This series of essays represents some of the most provocative work Goodman has done in at least two of these fields: his critical writing on cultural subjects in essays as: 'The Shape of the Screen' and his political writing in such little pieces as 'On Treason Vs. Natural Socities'.

An anarchist freqently has special insights into non-political problems;—since adherance to any doctrine, attachment to any institution on the necessity of conformance is not a *sine qua non* of his allegiance, radicals can be especially fortunate and free; they may examine all with an unattached eye, and their freedom will flow from their analysis, not their analysis from their previous commitments.

There is an area into which Goodman wanders in these essays and elsewhere where he is neither fortunate nor free. Psychology leads Goodman into those peculiar and occasionally purely semantic dances which his deriders find so disengaging; it is generally a blind alley into which orthodox psychology has mazed him—and thru which he attempts an illegitimate exit, since the obvious ones are

too conspicuously closed—the schemata [Freudian psychology] and the fraud (Reich). Goodman is a Freudian, resolving some of the behaviorist's embarrassments by bizarre embellishments. We object to the teleology and to the categories predicated on some myth of 'natural' man. Nature follows a complex social pattern, rather than one based on individual needs. There is no norm for man; natural man is social man—but not in the exclusively materialistic sense of the Marxist;—it is rather that natural man is a *fortuitous* outcome of social man. Nature is a negative check. Our problem is to discover social mechanisms for limiting some of this society's 'natural' evils, e.g. jealousy; but that could be done as the Eskimos have, by placing greater value on hospitality than on marital fidelity.

The justification for any pattern is human need; the sole and self-imposed restriction is the degradation of another. For Goodman there exists a behaviorist pattern based on physiological needs, with its arbitrary ages of man: the early years of investigation and parental sexual 'direction'; the middling years of homo-sexual preference; and finally the coming out party of THE FREE (and hetero-sexual) MAN! If you've had a birth trauma or haven't nursed properly, it's that much harder, of course. And for the Freudian, every stage must be exhausted. While it is 'natural' for the adolescent to be homo-sexual, at some arbitrary period one must 'go on' (nineteenth century concept of progress). It is likely that the pattern of adolescent homo-sexuality in Freud comes from the purely empirical fact of its existence in so many, since mores in western society prohibits a bi-sexuality irrespective of age group. To be free, it should be possible to consider such a relationship 'natural' at any age, or conversely, unnecessary that one observe a latent homo-sexuality in any who have 'repressed' that phase. What is there compatible between categories and freedom?

Goodman adds a dash of quackery (Reich) to his behaviorism. How much of Reich's orgone distributors 'sun lamps' and cancer cures he accepts is not evident from this writing, but he does believe that sexually free peoples will be politically unrepressed, a myth that the findings of anthropology exposes as just another panacea.

His further accepts adult coercion as a natural convention; the Eskimo parent differs, and conventions should be universally applicable. 'Limiting freedom to man may be a necessary restriction, with a free society predicated on the enslavement of other species. That is just only if justice is finite. For its considerations we should proceed from the total freedom of all people [including children], not end with it.

DACHINE RAINER

# RECORDS

*BACH: 'Cantata No. 78: Jesus, Thou My Wearied Spirit'. Bach Choir of Bethlehem & Orchestra, Ifor Jones, Conductor. Victor Set DM-1045 4 12 inch records. $4.50*

An amazingly *noble* work! Whether joyous or grieving it radiates dignity & strength, a *rooted* full spirituality which is the inner meaning of the doctrines of the Incarnation & the Resurrection of the *whole* person, both spirit & body. The opening chorus, a Chaconne based on the same theme as the *Crucifixus* of the B Minor Mass sets the tone of the whole work: a complete *aliveness* informing the highest solemnity. The self-possessed *onwardness* of the 2nd section, the choral duet 'We Hasten with Feeble but Diligent Footsteps' is an unique achievement even for Bach; the use of female voices alone in this section gives it a wonderful 'airiness.' I don't care for the tenor Lucius Metz in the recitative Ah! I am a child of evil!' of the 3rd part; he succeeds in projecting the agony of this passage, but seems a bit shaky & melodramatic. He does much better in the 4th part, the lovely voice-flute-piano trio (reminiscent of Bach's Sonatas) 'Thy blood which doth my guilt redeem'. The bass, Mack Harrell does beautifully in his recitative, 'The Wounds' & his aria, 'O Lord, My Conscience' which last, tho a plea for forgiveness, is positively *militant* in its faith & hope. On the whole, an excellent recording.

*STRAVINSKY: Ebony Concerto. Woody Herman's Band conducted by Igor Stravinsky. One 12 in record.* Columbia 7479-M. $1.05.

This remarkable work integrates not only the idioms of jazz & the 'name' bands with that of the latest works of this master, but even those of the Debussy woodwind chamber works & of the Poulenc rapid-march movements. The 1st movement is built mainly of 'name-band' elements, but Stravinsky has transmuted them thru his knowledge of rhythm & sonority into something entirely new. Somehow thru oppositions of high & low winds in continuous staccato he has achieved the most incredible whistling, rasping & scratching. The treatment of the blues theme in the 2nd movement reminds me of Milhaud's *Creation du Monde*, but there is no question of influence with the master who penned *Ragtime* over 20 years ago. The 3rd movement begins with another blues theme that cd be Cab Calloway's, moves to a name-bandish section, back to the blues theme, then this theme as it might have been treated by Debussy, then the Poulencish rapid march, followed by reminiscences of the 'Debussy' & the original blues & a few very calm dignified chords, ending the work.

*BACH: Brandenberg Concerti, Nos. 3 & 4. Prelude in E. Boston Symphony Orchestra, Conducted by Serge Koussevitsky. Victor Set DM 1050. 4 12 inch records. $4.50*

No. 3 is well-performed. However, it seems to me a mistake to insert the Sinfonia as a slow-movement between the 2 Allegri: Bach saw fit to place there no more than 2 calm meditative measures of transition—why violate his conception? I recommend skipping the Sinfonia & returning to it later, for this lovely, intensely sorrowful work is performed exquisitely. In No. 4 the Concertino (Richard Burgin, violin; Georges Laurent & George Madsen, flutes) is especially to be recommended for its tonal beauty & clarity. In the transcribed Prelude, however, the superbrilliance of tone is just plain nerve-wracking. While there is is something to be said for the performance of the Concerti by a full orchestra, there is no question as to *this*.

*MILHAUD: Le Bal Martiniquais. Robert & Gaby Casadesus, duo-pianists. Single twelve inch record. Columbia 71831-D$ 1.05*

An early Milhaud, I shd think. The 1st movement, 'Chanson Creole,' alternates a beautiful gentle song-theme (the treatment of which reminds one sometimes of the Debussy piano preludes) with a theme of rapid syncopation—definitely 'Martiniquais'; there is occasional use of the now-familiar device of polytonality—the 2 pianos playing in different keys—in this movement. Rapid & syncopated, the 2nd movement, a terrifically gay 'Beguine', is a brilliant example of the Parisian treatment of South American material; artfully, tho only occasionally, it employs polytonality & dissonant counterpoint. The work is interpreted with great verve & sensitivity by the Casadesus.

*MOZART: Concerto in E Flat Major for 2 Pianos and Orchestra. Vronsky & Babin & the Robin Hood Dell Orchestra. Conducted by Mitropoulos. Columbia Set MM-628. 3 12 inch records. $4.05.*

I dont know whether to blame Vronsky & Babin or Mitropoulos for the monotony of beat & inadequacy of rhythmical nuance in the 1st movement. Nevertheless! the work of Mozart shines thru. The slow 2nd movement is performed with *much* greater sensitivity: I think they succeed in conveying the Vergilian elegiac tenderness of this movement (tho I wonder whether those climactic chords at the end of the 2nd theme in the exposition & recapitulation shd be *that* heavy!) They are again somewhat metronome-plagued in the closing rondo, but not nearly as badly as in the 1st movement & sometimes they achieve effects of great brilliance here.

JACKSON MAC LOW