

and Politics tells us nothing about the former, it is very revealing about the latter. The only principles mentioned are those operational principles of government to which the author is so deeply attached. He makes clear beyond doubt that national financial priorities are decided predominantly by electoral considerations—in other words by the politicians' devotion to the cause of staying in or getting into office, regardless of other considerations. But electoral considerations are also an instrument that can be used

to shame or bully a government into switching expenditure from one channel to another. As the deplorable facts about the present state of the Health Service become generally known, the public may well instruct its politicians that it would prefer a more effective Health Service to vast expenditures on obsolescent national extravagances. Any of us may urgently need a bed in a first-class hospital, today or tomorrow. If the service is to be salvaged there is not much time.

International Commentary

In the Shadow of the Apocalypse

By Raymond Aron



AT THE TIME of President Kennedy's arrival in the White House the guiding idea from which I started to try to think about the international conjuncture was one of *the solidarity of the two*

great powers against total war of which they would be the first victims. Inevitably hostile to each other because of their rivalry and the incompatibility of their ideologies, the United States and the U.S.S.R. have one supreme interest in common. They neither wish to nor are capable of ruling together; but they are resolved, in so far as each of them is now exposed to the attacks of the other, not to engage in mutual destruction. This politico-strategic doctrine was openly taught in America's universities and specialised institutes; it was officially adopted by President Kennedy who had been convinced by the arguments of advisers recruited from Harvard or the Rand Corporation.

At that time, however, the logically implicit limited agreement between the great powers (as we see it today) was paralysed by three factors: uncertainty as to the relationship of their nuclear forces, Mr. Khrushchev's language, and the Berlin crisis. World opinion had ended by being shaken, less by Soviet boasting, than by electoral polemics in the United States. Would American inferiority in ballistic missiles (the famous "missile gap") become a reality in 1963 or 1965? Supposing that this partial in-

feriority did not really affect the world balance of terror, would not the Soviet leadership be induced, even by an illusory consciousness of superiority, to take risks and underestimate American steadfastness?

These questions were all the more legitimate in that, five years ago Soviet leaders—Mr. Khrushchev as well as official military writers—most often talked as if they did not wish to enter into the American way of thinking. The Soviet Prime Minister used to threaten, in rather vague terms, either to "reduce to ashes" airfields used by American espionage aircraft (the U-2) or else to reply to "imperialist aggression" in any part of the world by the use of ballistic missiles and nuclear weapons. John Foster Dulles' concept of "massive retaliation" which had been abandoned by President Kennedy had become Russian doctrine. American authors put forward the doctrine of the "flexible response." Soviet authors described the inevitable escalation that would follow once the two great powers clashed. So that I asked myself whether the asymmetry of the strategic doctrines and the Soviet refusal to sign a nuclear test-ban treaty (the practical moratorium which had lasted since 1958 ended in autumn 1961) were not due to an error in calculation: whether Mr. Khrushchev did not think he could profit from the fear then aroused by atomic war—a fear that he felt quite as strongly as his opponent, but which he pretended to ignore.

The Cuban crisis of October-November 1962 dispelled this illusion. Mr. Khrushchev was rash enough to build a base for medium-range ballistic missiles in Cuba, and an American semi-ultimatum forced on him the choice between a response in another part of the world (where he would have enjoyed a superiority in

conventional weapons comparable to that of the United States off the Florida coast), the use of the ultimate weapon, or retreat. It appears that the men in the Kremlin scarcely hesitated, and that they preferred retreat and Chinese accusations of "capitulationism" to the unforeseeable risks of a long crisis.

NOT A SHOT had been fired except by the Cubans who had brought down an American reconnaissance plane, and yet diplomatic notes supported by military preparations had conveyed to Moscow a message whose meaning was clear. Deterrence ceased to be an abstraction. The Soviet leaders discovered (perhaps with surprise) that, in certain circumstances, the President of the United States would not hesitate before the dangers of direct confrontation, even with a state in possession of thermo-nuclear weapons. Mr. Khrushchev knew the moral of the crisis and the defeat. He ceased trying to change the *status quo* in the old capital of the *Reich*, and henceforward began to speak the same nuclear language as John F. Kennedy. In this respect nothing has changed since Mr. Khrushchev left the political scene and Lyndon B. Johnson entered the White House.

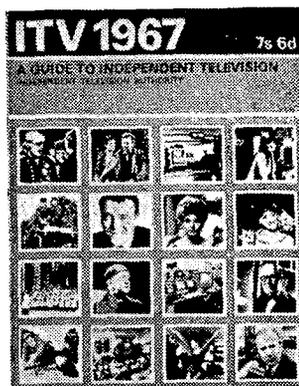
Soviet strategists may continue to show a certain scepticism with regard to the subtleties for which American analysts show such predilection, and they sometimes still suggest that local wars will bring about unlimited escalation if nuclear powers are involved. But the men in the Kremlin are now more inclined to prudence, possibly more than U.S. presidential advisers—even without taking into consideration the superiority now assigned by most observers to the U.S.A. in numbers of nuclear weapons and vehicles of delivery.

In any case, the phase of acceleration of the armaments race of the early '60s (the restarting of atmospheric nuclear testing, first by the U.S.S.R., then by the U.S.A.) has been replaced in the mid-'60s by a phase of slow-down. Both are developments strictly in accordance with the logic of this curious hostility limited by the common will not to perish together. The signing (in July 1963) of the Moscow Treaty on a partial nuclear test ban and the establishment of a direct line between the Kremlin and the White House were the symbols of this pact between enemies against total war—a war which would be far more catastrophic for either of them than a local defeat in any part of the globe.

THE RUSSO-AMERICAN rapprochement has as its basic objective the reduction of the nuclear danger. But it has a political context

which has brought it about and which it affects in turn. For example, we are today better informed about the various episodes of Sino-Soviet conflict. In 1957 an agreement was reached between Moscow and Peking providing for Soviet aid to the Chinese atomic programme. Two years later, after operations carried out in the Formosa straits in 1958 by Mao's forces, this agreement was denounced by the Soviet Union. The Russians clearly wished to keep the monopoly of nuclear weapons within "the Socialist camp," and this was one of the causes of the break between the two great Marxist-Leninist powers. This was a conflict in accordance with century-old experience of the relations between sovereign states. One power wished to carry by itself the "supreme responsibility" for the strategy of the alliance, the other power nursed the traditionally legitimate ambition of "depending on no one." These contradictory demands do not date from the atomic era. But how can they be reconciled when the decisions to be taken concern the possible use of nuclear weapons, that is, the life and death of millions of men?

Perhaps Mr. Khrushchev only decided to sign the Moscow agreement in 1963 after having lost hope of re-establishing the unity of his Socialist



ITV 1967

ITV 1967 takes a fresh and up-to-date look at Independent Television. This gay and handsome book covers the whole field of Independent Television: the Authority and its programme companies, the programmes and personalities, advertising, and the transmitters. Its attractive presentation makes it a book of wide popular appeal as well as a valuable work of reference.

Published by the Independent Television Authority.

224 pages, over 250 illustrations, 9" x 7", 7s. 6d.
Publication 30th December 1966.

Available from booksellers and newsagents

camp. For, by signing a treaty with his enemy whose evident purpose was to make the acquisition of nuclear weapons more difficult for his Chinese ally, he revealed to the eyes of the world a schism which was to be aggravated still further by public polemics. To be sure, the Paris of General de Gaulle interpreted the Moscow treaty in exactly the same way as Peking. The three members of the atomic club were trying to prevent other states from doing what they themselves had done. Relations between Paris and Washington suffered from a treaty which leaders in Washington thought to be in the interests of peace and, therefore, of humanity itself. General de Gaulle saw it as a demonstration of the egotism (and even of the cynicism) of states, *ces monstres froids*.

However bad relations may be today between Washington and Paris, however comparable the French and Chinese refusals to accept the authority of the "leader" of their respective camps may be, the differences are more marked than the resemblances because the diplomacy of democratic states has different rules from that of totalitarian ones. Common ideology is not enough to hold an alliance together. The split between Moscow and Peking may have had as its starting-point a clash of national interests. But it would not have had the same character if each of the two rivals had not immediately translated into the language of ideology its own conception of its objectives or of the expedient strategy, and had not tried to win over to its cause the other Marxist-Leninist parties throughout the world. Both in their alliances and in their disputes Communist states are neither exclusively determined by their ideologies nor indifferent to the historical philosophy in which they claim to believe. The United States and France remain allies more easily even when they do not arrive at an understanding—because strategic controversies, great political debates, differences of opinion, all belong to the normal routine of democracy.

Still, one question intrudes itself. The *détente* between the Soviet Union and the United States, the Sino-Soviet conflict, the efforts of France and China to build up national atomic forces, a Gaullist diplomacy independent of the U.S.A. in Europe and opposed to American policy in South-east Asia—do all these developments mean the end of the bi-polar system and the beginning of a new period of international relations?

FIRST, it should be remembered that bi-polarism was only ever effective on the military plane and in a limited area of the world (for the sake of simplification, one might say "in the northern hemisphere"). Now, militarily speaking, bi-polarism still remains in

force: the weapons possessed by the Russians and the Americans are incomparably superior to those available to any other state. The old world—like Germany, like Berlin—remains divided. But the way in which men experience these historic facts—thermonuclear bi-polarism, the division of the old world—has changed.

The capacity for destruction possessed by the giant states does not correspond to a proportionate capacity for controlling their friends or their enemies. The most terrifying weapons simply do not happen to terrorise those deprived of them. Albania defies the Soviet Union; Cuba defies the United States. It is as if nuclear force were changed into diplomatic power with greater difficulty as the weapons become more monstrous, more inhuman, weapons of "the last resort" whose use against a state which has none is "inconceivable." Or it is as if the Russian and American thermo-nuclear systems mutually paralysed each other. They serve to forestall the widening of local conflicts, but they only exercise a very limited influence on relations between great and small powers, especially in the southern hemisphere.

Certainly it would be wrong to underestimate the constant, though most frequently invisible, effect of nuclear weapons which is partly comparable to the effect of the British Navy in the 19th century. Communist China harasses with words the "revisionist" ally (or the "imperialist enemy") in the Siberian north and in South-east Asia. It does not plunge into an open aggression, or even take the risk of intervention in Viet Nam. If the United States can with impunity keep a garrison in West Berlin, send an army of 300,000 men to South Viet Nam, and bomb Hanoi and Haiphong, it is because it is militarily the strongest power in the world. America is capable of destroying North Viet Nam, but it can have no assurance of forcing the capitulation of the Hanoi leadership and, less still, that of the Viet Cong forces. Military strength remains the basis of the international order; it is not decisive everywhere or in all circumstances.

INSIDE THE TWO EUROPEAN BLOCS symptoms of disintegration have multiplied in the course of these last years. Helped by the Sino-Soviet conflict each of the East European states in its own way has affirmed its desire for independence. They have all re-established relations with the West, and all have rejected the exclusive domination of Russian culture or Marxist-Leninist ideology. Goods, men, and ideas are passing more and more through what once was the "Iron Curtain." Bilateral agreements between individual countries of Eastern and Western Europe are increasing whether it is a question

of trade, technology, or culture. Since 1956 the Moscow leaders have adapted themselves to a progressive transformation of their "camp": it was once a mono-cephalic bloc and it has now become an alliance guided by the strongest state, but which does not deprive the other states of a certain freedom in the management of their affairs or even participation in the common strategy. Since the Cuban crisis these same leaders have accepted (at least provisionally) the present status of Berlin and no longer brandish their weapons to obtain its modification.

IN THIS calmer atmosphere, in the absence of real fear of war, members of the Atlantic alliance feel less compelled to solidarity with the United States, whose protection is still essential for them, but seems to them in any case established. In particular, French diplomacy which, since 1958, had asserted its independence in various ways (withdrawal of certain military units, veto on the entry of Great Britain into the Common Market, recognition of Communist China, criticism of American policy in South Viet Nam) has passed to an additional stage by withdrawing from NATO. In the course of his journey to Moscow General de Gaulle even conjured up an alliance between "France and Russia" (or the Soviet Union)—true, only a partnership concerning science and culture, and not a military or political alliance. It is nonetheless a fact that all these changes give rather a different picture of the old world from that which an observer would have seen five years ago. In the line of present events it is not impossible to imagine on history's horizon the reunification of Europe "from the Atlantic to the Urals."

But, for the time being, it is only a question of more or less distant contingencies. As long as Germany remains divided, the basic stake of the Cold War in Europe will remain unchanged and the consequences of the Second World War will not be liquidated. It is on the territory of the *D.D.R.* (*Deutsche Demokratische Republik*) that the twenty Soviet divisions are stationed which represent a threat to Western Europe and compel the states of Eastern Europe to a minimum of discipline. A territorial settlement different from that which has allowed Western Europe's recovery—and then a *détente*—can only be the end-term of a long evolution. Negotiations, if they were to take place tomorrow, would require the participation of everyone: of the rulers of Bonn and Washington as much as of those of Paris or Moscow.

Outside the two European blocs the so-called "uncommitted states," with multifarious versions of neutrality and neutralism, are more numerous and still less united today than they

were five years ago. The African states are attracting less attention from the two great powers because of their instability, their weakness, and the passive resistance they have put up to Russian and Chinese "infiltrations." Perhaps the international system is tending to split up into sub-systems, some with their own balance of forces, with local rivalries (the Middle East, the Indian sub-continent), all connected in some way to the global system but without being a reflection of it.

AT THE PRESENT TIME, one event dominates international relations: the Viet Nam war. This, like the Korean war in 1950, is probably due in large part to accidental circumstances. Sixteen years ago, the men in the Kremlin made an error in their calculations and were mistaken as to real American intentions. In Viet Nam the United States has become progressively involved without ever having taken the decision to do so in total awareness. The main American aim now is not to "safeguard democracy" in South Viet Nam, but to prove that it has the material and moral capability to check subversion in the same way as open aggression.

It is a tragic affair, but the Viet Nam war, like that of Korea (which had spread such a vast fear throughout the world) should prove to be only what historians coolly record as "a vicissitude" provided that the course of history does not escape men's control. The Chinese have no means of effective intervention nor have the Russians, so distant from the battlefield. Neither of them has any interest in a direct confrontation with the military power of the United States. North Viet Nam can probably gain most of its objectives by submitting to a change of method, and moving from the jungle and rice-paddies to the conference table.

With whatever mixture of optimism or disquiet immediate perspectives may be viewed, the fundamental problems of power relations between states remain the same. Tomorrow China in its turn will possess a nuclear arsenal. Like the United States and the Soviet Union, like Great Britain and France, it will have to learn the art of using nuclear weapons in diplomacy in such a way as never to have to employ them in a military way. But how long can one threaten without having to execute one's threats? Can the diplomatic strategic game in the shadow of the apocalypse be prolonged indefinitely? Is it possible to get out of this game?

The great powers, provided they are reasonable, will not be faced with *une guerre à mort*. But if philosophers have often called man a reasonable being, they have rarely applied this adjective with the same assurance to man's history.

BOOKS & WRITERS

The Literature of Silence

From Henry Miller to Beckett & Burroughs — By IHAB HASSAN

O lovely green dragon of the new day, the undawned day, come, come in touch, and release us from the horrid grip of the evil-smelling old Logos! Come in silence, and say nothing.

D. H. LAWRENCE, *Apocalypse*

NOWADAYS, the idea of an *avant-garde* in literature seems unduly naïve. Inured to crisis, we have also lost the confident sense of direction. Which way is forward? Literature, turning against itself, aspires to silence, leaving us with uneasy intimations of outrage and apocalypse. If there is an *avant-garde* in our time, it is probably bent on discovery through suicide. Thus the term anti-literature, like anti-matter, comes to symbolise not merely an inversion of forms but will and energy turned inside out. Is the future, then, all vagrancy and disaster for all who profess the Word?

Though I cannot believe that the Word exhausts the possibilities of spirit, I know enough to admit that disaster comes and goes in cunning rhythms. Mystics have always maintained that the way down is always the way out, and that the end of things heralds a new beginning. Negative transcendence, as we nowadays say, is transcendence nevertheless. And therefore silence in literature does not necessarily augur the death of spirit.

The point to be made about the new literature is different: whatever is truly new in it evades the social, historical, and aesthetic criteria which defined the identity of the *avant-garde* in other periods. The force of evasion (or absence) in the new literature is radical indeed; it strikes at the roots and induces a great silence. But the same force, moving in trunk and foliage, bursts into a great babel of noises. The most audible of these is the cry of outrage, the voice of apocalypse. Henry Miller and Samuel Beckett, both intimates of silence, are both such obsessive babblers; between them, they sound all the

notes of the new hollow speech. Their conjunction is therefore no mere conceit. Standing as mirror images of the contemporary imagination, they end by reflecting its peculiar assumptions. In old-fashioned parlance, they are the two masters of the *avant-garde* today.

BUT MY DISCOURSE on Miller and Beckett may become inaudible without some clarification of the terms of silence. Let me begin with outrage.

"Is art always an outrage—must it by its very nature be an outrage?" Lawrence Durrell, who had Miller in mind, once asked. We can grant that art contains an element of danger and even subversion without conceding that all art is outrage. A particular genre of modern literature, however, seems to vindicate Durrell's view; it constantly touches on the experience which awes him. That experience is one of metaphysical revolt: Ahab striking the sun if it insulted him, or Ivan Karamazov returning his life-ticket to God. It is metaphysical revolt and at the same time metaphysical surrender, which is the desire for nothingness: "the cry of the mind exhausted by its own rebellion," as Camus put it. In outrage, then, the very being of man is put on trial. What ensues is a dialectic of violence, demonic action and demonic reaction compressed into a terrible unity which becomes finally a naught.

The violence I associate with the new literature is obviously of a special kind. It presupposes Dachau and Hiroshima but is not necessarily limited by them. It is absurd in the sense that no meaning or value can be assigned to it. Its function is to turn men into things. Under its pressure, the metamorphosis of the human form is downward, towards the worms of Beckett, the insect people and sentient ooze of Burroughs. It is not temporal but spatial, not historical but ontological, an inescapable