

The pathos of his final condition is very great, yet tempered by his will to bear it. Kostoglotov is a man without hope, but even so he has lived as long as he could, without damage to his innocence, without harm to his fellow-men.

And in this effort—to carry on when ordinary avenues of fulfilment are closed and death lies visible ahead—the heroism of survival reaches its limit. In the end Kostoglotov has nothing, nothing at all but this short reprieve, this extra life free and his own. But for the survivor this is everything. Pathos dissolves in the liberation of total loss, and renunciation of life's particulars opens on the glory and power of the main thing, the presence of life in itself.

SOLZHENITSYN'S CELEBRATION OF LIFE is the outcome of his own apprenticeship. It owes nothing to the abstractly-conceived vitalism of the last century, and is something hardly to be known by thought alone. And yet, since the survivor loses everything except life, life and his capacity to see an absolute value therein,

we cannot but wonder what it is he finds, what is *there* to hold and sustain him. Why one man survives and another does not, is not fully explicable; chance and character play their part, but something else as well, a sort of grace. And what the survivor arrives at by reaching past despair *and* hope would seem to be similarly unnameable. But surely he comes on something, an entrance to the heart of being, the furious purity of an endless energy, of life in itself, something unexpectedly uncovered when the spirit is driven down to its roots, all insolence lost, and through its pain brought to a pristine concentration, and to a sense of finality and quietude that, once again, surpasses understanding. In another age we might have called it God, God the bleak, the rush, the final point of a vibrant, unshakable peace.

Whatever it is, the survivor is driven to embrace it, aware of its power and holiness. And whatever it is—to call it life will have to do—it is the fundament of flesh and the soul, the ground on which the survivor stands, upright in innocence and in the will to continue as a human being.

### Woman of Sagami

That person, from my naked body's  
Finest point, withdrew  
First my ring of antique gold.

Then my hairpins too  
Slowly he groped and disengaged,  
And laid them down beside  
Our pillow.

I could feel the skin  
Beginning to elide.

Then, for the first time, I could feel  
The skull's true jelliness;  
Even the smallest bone began  
To melt, to deliquesce.

And after that a violent force,  
Too violent to escape,  
Fangled my naked body back  
To surety of shape.

*Anzai Hitoshi*

*translated by Graeme Wilson and Atsumi Ikuko*

# The Path Ahead to Europe

## LEOPOLD LABEDZ: *On Losing an Empire*

**E**VER SINCE the First World War, Great Britain has shown symptoms of a marked reluctance to face changes in the international situation. Decisions to meet new challenges affecting her position were made after long delays in the recognition of their true nature. This was the case with the abandonment of the Gold Standard and with the slow acceptance of the need to resist Hitler.

Historically, the change in the international situation amounted to the ending of the Era of European expansion and domination which began in the 16th century. The first World War radically undermined European imperial positions; the second World War destroyed them completely. European empires everywhere began to crumble. The fact that Britain was one of the victors of the last War did not make much difference to the outcome: the "end of Empire" was part and parcel of the general European contraction. The fate of Great Britain was substantially linked here with that of Europe as a whole—the real question was how she would adjust herself to the post-imperial era.

Since the Second World War the British position in the world balance of power has become immeasurably weaker. Yet the demise of Empire did not make the national inhibition about facing international reality any less pronounced. This was partly due to the luck of the British in avoiding the fate of other European countries during the last War—German occupation—and also to British political wisdom in carrying out the Imperial withdrawal in an orderly fashion. There were thus no traumatic experiences to bring home the full realisation of the salient features of the new situation. On the other hand, the British reluctance to join the European community had deep historical roots, reinforcing the attachment to the status quo of yesterday and resulting in the politics of nostalgia.

The pattern was not unfamiliar. At first there was the refusal to admit the necessity of choice and then there were delays in making it, so that when the decision about the application to join the Common Market was finally made its implementation became difficult and the price of entry and of adjustment higher than it might have been if the decision about it had been arrived at more promptly.

Britain emerged from the War weakened but because of her stand during her "finest hour" her prestige was higher than ever. Yet when she could have had the leadership of Europe on a plate she was against European involvement. Her post-War

foreign policy was based on a cosy rationalisation in the form of the "theory of the three concentric circles": the special relationship with America, the hub of the emergent Commonwealth, and cross-Channel connections. When the Common Market was formed Britain did not believe in its success; if she had joined it at the time much of the present discussion about the price of entry would have been irrelevant. Those who are not in principle against "joining Europe" must surely realise that there were political and economic costs involved in the delays which were due first to the British and then to the French unwillingness to promote the European idea. It would be a pity if now that the governments of the two countries are ready for it, Britain should fail to use this historic opportunity. If it is missed it would involve paying a far higher price than those who concentrate on economic issues are willing to contemplate. They no longer invoke now "the theory of the three concentric circles" but simply engage in *Greuel-propaganda* about the economic price of joining the Common Market and the loss of cultural identity and political sovereignty which it allegedly involves. But they do not put forward any coherent argument about the future over-all orientation of British foreign policy and the premises on which it is to be based. When Mr Acheson remarked that Britain had lost her empire but had not yet found a new role in the world, he came in for a good deal of criticism in this country.