

innocent men, women, and children). Science and religion—the former not yet “established”, and the latter supposedly long ago “disestablished” in America—joined hands in this apotheosis of militant nationalism. Science cannot reclaim the luxury of an extra-national existence, which it had enjoyed for a while when it was unimportant. Scientists cannot quit the world of international competition and power contests, and say: “We don’t want to play in this game any more.” It is not so simple and easy. The existential basis of the whole of mankind must be changed, not that of science alone.

The radical change, which the human condition has undergone in our time, is twofold. In the first place, the destructive capacities which modern science has placed in the hands of nations are too great to be used in the pursuit of any national aims. In the second place, sources of national wealth have ceased to be limited (as fertile fields, hunting and fishing grounds, or fuel and ore deposits, had been throughout history). Science and technology are showing us ways to create wealth from widely available raw materials—common minerals, air, sea water—with the aid of potentially unlimited sources of energy (fusion power, solar energy). Thus we enter an era in which fighting between closed societies for limited resources of energy and materials will be not only prohibitively destructive, but also fundamentally unnecessary.

Bronowski suggests that scientific communities should opt out of their national societies, while leaving the latter to pursue their traditional power politics. This seems too superficial and self-centred for me. Or is it meant to be a clever strategy, like Szilard’s international conspiracy of scientists hiding behind a tankful of dolphins as pretended source of superhuman wisdom? Bronowski seems to me a follower of the King of Saxony, who resigned his throne in 1918 with the words “*Macht euch euren Dreck alleene* (Wallow in your muck by yourself)”, rather than a follower of Szilard.

THE ANSWER to the human predicament of the nuclear age lies not in intellectual communities “copping out” of the traditional framework of national existence, but in all who are aware of the source of this predicament joining hands in a political and educational effort. Mankind must make a new departure, based on subordination of national interests to universal interests of mankind. It must do so not out of “unrealistic” idealism, but out of realistic understanding that in the age of space travel and thermonuclear weapons, the old adage “united we stand, divided we fall” applies to the whole of mankind, and not to any of its separate parts. There is no salvation in isolation—neither for any nation, nor for any group within a nation.

Eugene Rabinowitch

Just So

A dull man all his life
 he leapt to fame at Chalk Farm
 on an ordinary March morning
 in a clerk-grey suit. Impulsive,
 sick of the scrapings, of his
 two drab semis (wife and home),
 he threw himself, just so, without ado
 beneath the eight thirty-two.

Your Attention Please, Attention Please
 official voices brayed, proclaiming
 the news to the waiting queues
 at Colindale and Brent. And for thirty
 time-is-money minutes, while passengers
 cursed, were “subject to some delay”,
 while long trains stirred, he
 was as good as there, in lights,
 with Bank, with Waterloo,
 a neon hero for a moment or two.

Jeremy Robson

LETTERS

Khrushchev Expertise

I AM AFRAID both Mr J. L. B. Phillips (July) and Mr Tibor Szamuely (August) failed to grasp the point of my article, which was (if I may quote myself) to offer not "yet another answer to the Khrushchev 'whodunit,' but rather an inquiry into the validity of some of the answers presented by the experts thus far." And so I cheerfully plead guilty to their charges that my "hypothesis" was no more convincing than the theories I had set out to criticise.

In point of fact, until the Kremlin archives (or perhaps even the *Time-Life* files) are opened, the Khrushchev "memoirs" are destined to remain one of those perennial (and by now rather tedious) Sovietological mysteries, and it simply won't do to claim (as did Mr Szamuely in his *Spectator* article) that one has the answer to it. In addition, I wish Mr Szamuely would shake off his old political habits and stop embellishing the truth, levelling extravagant accusations and engaging in paltry *ad hominem*s in order to defend a fixed position. He happens to be right on two points: first, on "misplacing of Khrushchev's own birthplace" (a phrase added by ENCOUNTER based on what *The Times* had added to The Khrushchev text); and on the biography of General Vlasov (which was not a book, but an unpublished manuscript circulated by Vlasov's supporters at a conference held in Frankfurt in the late 1940s; I have this on excellent, though regrettably not divulgeable, authority). All other charges of "gross factual errors," "substantial liberties with the texts," repeated contradictions, etc., are pure balderdash. For example, some time ago Mr Szamuely told me personally how "delighted" he was with my article on Victor Louis in *Problems of Communism*. Now that I, too, have become a critic—which I suppose, using his ideological vocabulary, makes me an "enemy"—of his it suits him to charge me with lack of consistency (or worse).

As for the matter of Mr Heren's remarks on the role of the KGB, it should be clear to anyone who has read the two articles (*The Times*, Nov. 17 and 20, 1970) that Mr Heren was engaged in *speculations*, however tenuous or naïve. Mr Szamuely, however, disingenuously congratulates the latter for having "had the courage to admit that *The Times* was publishing material sold by the KGB in the interests of the KGB." Mr Heren said (Nov. 17) that "there was reason to believe that [the Khrushchev manuscript] is in the possession of the KGB." In his *Spectator* piece, Mr Szamuely quoted this sentence *without* the words "there is reason to believe." He now cites the whole passage, and adds sententiously: "Exactly as I had quoted." In his second article, Mr Heren speculated on the "peculiar" nature of the Soviet secret

police, which is prone, in his words, to "combining simple brutality with most tortuous subtlety." This, to Mr Szamuely, was nothing less than an "extraordinary paean of praise to the Soviet secret police." Yet he accuses *me* of "slipshod methods." Good grief.

ABRAHAM BRUMBERG

London

"An American Expression"?

WITH ALL RESPECT, but with some amusement, may I suggest that any Englishman who writes "to use an American expression" would do well to pause, and then *not* use what he imagines to be an American expression?

In your June issue (p. 46) John Weightman writes: "... remains as impassive as—to use an American expression—a drug-store Indian."

There is, of course, no such thing as a drug-store Indian. The reference Mr Weightman intends is to a *cigar-store* Indian. Once there was such a thing as a drug-store *cowboy*, but it would take too long, and probably be futile anyway, to explain these distinctions. They are the sort of thing that, for instance, make Clive Barnes look ludicrous so often in the *New York Times*. (Poor Mr Barnes, if he lives to be ninety, will go to his grave unable to distinguish between Norman Rockwell and Ring Lardner.)

Lest I seem to be giving myself superior American airs, I hasten to concede that American writers should be at least as wary of writing "—to use an English expression—."

RICHARD HANSER

Larchmont, N.Y.

Before Fiedler

"R" IS TIMELY in pointing out [July] the weirdness of Dr Leslie Fiedler's attitude in writing and lecturing as though he had re-invented the Dadaism of Zurich and Paris of 1919-20. Listening to a lecture of Dr Fiedler's not long ago, I had a strong impression that when asking us to reject Western art and other values wholesale, he was genuinely unaware of the whole army of his predecessors in this suggestion, especially his fascist and Communist predecessors. Yet how strikingly similar Dr Fiedler's expression is to theirs. The passage from Dr Fiedler's contribution to *Playboy* ran as follows:

The kind of criticism the age demands is death-of-art criticism, which is most naturally practised by those who have come of age since the death of the new poetry and the new criticism. It seems evident that writers not blessed to be under 30 (or 35 or whatever the critical age is these days) must be reborn in order to seem relevant to the moment and to those who inhabit it most naturally: the young. But one hasn't even the hope of being reborn unless he knows first that he is dead.

Compare this with D. H. Lawrence, writing in 1915, a generation before Dr Fiedler's new élite—the young—were born: