
POINTS OF THE COMPASS

With Brandt in Jerusalem

Germans & Jews

By H. U. Kempfski

NOT UNTIL THE END of her set speech did the heavy serious expression vanish from Golda Meir's face. She gave a ghost of a smile. Her commanding voice, which itself partly explains her ability to govern, took on a softer tone. For almost half an hour and without a note Golda, as everybody calls her, had been paying tribute to the German Chancellor as a statesman whose peace policy was calculated to open new horizons for the world. Then suddenly she stopped. The audience stared at her as if spell-bound, as if they expected something out of the ordinary, something which could only be said by this old woman who rules the Promised Land with the unchallenged authority of a strong man.

Then, softly and with a smile, Golda let fall a word which no public figure had so far dared to utter since the state of Israel was formed. She spoke of "friendship" between the Jewish people and Germany. Of course others have referred to reconciliation and good relations but in a way which made it clear that, for as long as anyone could foresee, the West German Federal Republic would have to appear in the role of repentant sinner. Golda Meir mentioned the obligation not to forget the past and in doing so she referred neither to Germans nor to Nazis. Then she turned to Willy Brandt and offered for the future "*Friendship based on honour and integrity*," and she raised her glass of champagne to drink to such a future. The thunderous applause seemed to contain an element of pent-up emotion. It was the applause of men who found it hard to believe that the sense of blood-guilt still existing between Israel and Germany could ever permit of *Freundschaft*.

HANS ULRICH KEMPSKI is one of Germany's leading foreign correspondents. He has recently been in China (interviewing Chou En-lai), in Washington (covering Watergate) and in Israel with Chancellor Willy Brandt's entourage. He is a senior editor of the "*Suddeutsche Zeitung*" in Munich.

Some three hundred guests had been invited. Three enormous highly-coloured Chagall tapestries gazed down upon them as they sat in the great lobby of the Knesset on Givat-Ram, the Jerusalem hillock overlooking the austere countryside where Israel's parliament has made its home in a concrete structure looking like a temple. In honour of Brandt, the first visiting head of government from a country of international status, the lobby had been decked with pink roses. A hundred-strong choir from a *kibbutz* sang patriotic songs. And Golda, who usually goes about in a plain dress looking like some widow who has no more to hope for from life, had put on a shimmering gown, a long embroidered brocade robe with golden sandals and a great string of pearls.

DURING THE PRECEDING BANQUET she had done her chain-smoking utmost to be an entertaining hostess to the Chancellor. She seemed to be trying to show that she felt flattered to receive a visitor who, in her eyes, possessed virtues which he did not even realise himself. In none of his visits to foreign capitals had Brandt heard such eulogies. Golda seemed to assume that she and Brandt looked at the stage of world history from the same viewpoint; she described the Chancellor's "Eastern policy" as a model for the settlement of disputes in other crisis areas. A sense of realities, prudent compromise, and a readiness to make sacrifices (she said) were the factors which might bring about a peace settlement in the Middle East too.

Such views had never before been expressed in this country in all the six years since Zion's soldiers scored their *blitz* victory over the Arab hordes. On the contrary, only a year ago Golda Meir was making no secret of her scepticism over Brandt's *Ostpolitik*. At the time she was afraid that the Chancellor's efforts towards a *détente* in Central Europe would free the Soviet Union to become more active in the Mediterranean area. Since this did not happen, since in fact there are now indications that the Russians and Americans are engaged in a common search for some peace initiative in the Middle East, Golda is busy building up a fresh position for herself. Nevertheless there is little to show that she is prepared to recommend Brandt's recipe as a model for Israel. She clearly has the Arabs in mind—they are the people who should imitate Brandt.

DURING THE LAST FEW DAYS before the Chancellor's arrival the country's malleable press had been preparing its 3.3 million inhabitants for Golda's banquet speech. Public opinion seemed to be ripe for a change. The majority of

Israelis have reached the point where they appeared ready to make their peace with the Germans. Recent opinion polls showed the majority of the population to be in favour of Brandt's visit. The overall organisation of Victims of Nazism was even prepared to call off any organised counter-demonstration such as those to which all prominent visitors from Germany have been subjected hitherto. There was barely a threat to the Chancellor's security. It was nevertheless safeguarded by an élite squad of soldiers who followed him with machine-guns and automatic rifles at the ready as if a pitched battle might start at any moment.

It was such good flying weather that Brandt's *Luftwaffe* plane reached the coast of Israel ahead of time. It circled over Tel Aviv for half-an-hour. Stretched along its five-mile beach packed with sun-tanned citizenry, the city lay there shining in the sun, apparently holding out the promise of all sorts of doubtful pleasures. The bird's eye view, however, stimulating though it may be to the imagination, is deceptive. The city may glitter in the sun, but it goes early to its bed. Its life is governed by European petty-bourgeois conventions, by the modest level of average earnings, and by the rules of an austere pioneer ideology which brands luxury as a sin. The only truly oriental attribute of this city is its name. Tel Aviv means "Hill of Spring."

Brandt flew on to Jerusalem by helicopter. His four-day programme opened in Yad Vashem, the colossal monument outside the city gates erected in memory of the six million murdered Jews. Brandt's hosts had promised that he would not be subjected to same treatment as that meted out to Walther Scheel, the German Foreign Minister, two years before; then an attempt had obviously been made to produce so great and unexpected a shock effect that the German would be ready to act as some kind of wheel-horse to the chariot of Israeli desires. Gideon Hausner, chief prosecutor at the Eichmann trial, had issued Scheel with an ultimatum: "You must leave it to us to judge the best methods of guaranteeing our survival. We assume that you will support us, both politically

and morally, in all aspects of international life. That is what we expect."

This time the prosecutor remained silent. Nevertheless, although the original programme had been cancelled, Brandt was given to understand, shortly before his arrival, that he would be expected to attend a service of commemoration. It was read in Hebrew—and the translation was into English only. In the great circular memorial built of solid rock no syllable of German had yet been heard. To break down this taboo Brandt insisted that he be permitted to speak a few words of German in this place. The memorial's Board of Curators indicated only an hour before Brandt's arrival that it was prepared to accede to this request.

"I will read," Brandt said, "from Psalm 103, verses 8-16." He read from a slightly amended Martin Luther translation beginning with the words:

"Barmherzig und gnädig ist der Herr, geduldig und von Grosse Güte; er wird nicht immer hadern noch ewiglich Zorn halten. . . ."

"The Lord is full of compassion and mercy, long-suffering and of great goodness. He will not always be chiding neither keepeth He His anger for ever. . . ."

There stood a man reading slowly, loudly, and clearly from the psalms, with Prussian simplicity and the voice of a Protestant preacher. Never has Brandt been able to illustrate so clearly, almost visibly, that prestige is dependent not upon action but upon influence.

NATURALLY HE KNEW THAT, even twenty-eight years after

the end of the war, "normalisation" is still a dirty word for many people in Israel. Neither 14 billion marks in reparations aid nor the establishment of a democratic Federal Republic based on the rule of law had changed this. The Chancellor understood this perfectly. In his view, however, despite all material normalisation, certain unfortunate tendencies still existed that were prejudicial to spiritual and intellectual normalisation; their purpose was to keep alive the political and material expectations stemming from a "special relationship" with the Federal Republic. This, too, Brandt said to Golda Meir without mincing his words until finally he had brought her



Weltwoche (Zurich)

to see that there must be a factor more potent than all the problems dividing the two nations—a mutual determination no longer to allow the past and the present to overlap, no longer to allow common sense to be overlaid by emotion.

Subsequently, in his after-dinner speech, he insisted that he had neither the authority nor the power to act as the Middle East's peacemaker; with many shades of emphasis, however, he continued to repeat his thesis that an assured peace is only possible if people are prepared to forgo their illusions. One sentence stood out, and he had discussed it at length with Golda beforehand: "Stabilisation of peaceful conditions in Europe is, in my view, itself a contribution to the security of our neighbours in the Mediterranean and Middle East areas."

The background to this sentence was the Chancellor's concept that the process of *détente* initiated in Europe can only achieve lasting success if peace and security are established in the Mediterranean area as well. Brandt regards Europe as the buttress of the Mediterranean countries. It is primarily Europe's requirement for an uninterrupted supply of energy which makes it essential for the European community to work for relaxation of tension in the Mediterranean. Brandt's advice was that, in the light of her military superiority, Israel should be prepared to adjust her rigid concept of her claims and, at least in so far as diplomacy was concerned, to be more generous and forthcoming.

THIS BEING THE BACKGROUND, it is easier to understand why Defence Minister Dayan hit upon the idea of avoiding a meeting with the Chancellor. It was aimed at Golda Meir, not Brandt. According to the programme agreed between them separate discussions had been arranged for the Chancellor with Foreign Minister Eban, Finance Minister Sapir, Deputy Prime Minister Allon, but not with Dayan. Golda is prepared to use every method to eliminate the Defence Minister as her potential successor.

Allon too opposes Dayan because the latter aims to produce *faits accomplis* in Israel's sovereign territory, the size of which was trebled in a matter of a few hours during the Six-Day War. The recently published "Allon Plan", which already provides the guide-lines for Israeli settlement policy, visualises an arrangement satisfying the Israeli security requirements without at the same time including the majority of the Arab inhabitants in the state of Israel. In the internal political controversy over this plan Eban and Sapir have come out on the side of Allon. These three are held to be ready to compromise and are labelled "doves". They are, of course, rivals in the struggle for the succession to Golda Meir.

Reliable information indicates that both Brandt

and Dayan were equally sorry not to meet each other. Dayan had let it be known that he was ready to talk to the Chancellor anywhere at any time but that he was not prepared to do so during some purely social occasion as Golda would have wished to compel him to do. On his side, for reasons of personal curiosity, Brandt was anxious to meet Dayan. He would have liked to make his acquaintance as the only man who seemed to be a sufficiently charismatic leader to cause the people to make those bold sacrifices necessary if Israel is to have a stable peace. Initially, however, Brandt did not think it wise to press to see Dayan. He had no wish to become involved in those internal conflicts of opinion nicknamed "the Jewish wars", the stubborn parliamentary battles waged by Israeli politicians, frequently equalling those of biblical history in all their self-mutilating bitterness. On the Friday, however, he let it be known that "I will nevertheless see Dayan." Dayan is known in Israel as the "Lone Wolf." His only calculable characteristic is his incalculability. The government party is increasingly inclined to write him off as an ageing maverick who had best keep himself out of politics. Dayan makes things easy for his enemies because he is no vote-catcher, because he keeps himself aloof from party politics and does not care if he appears unsociable, insulting or self-seeking. The complex traits in his character spoil his public image. The vast majority once revered him, confident in his magic as a warlord, but the trend of his popularity curve is now downwards and at present it stands around the 25% mark.

THE "LONE WOLF" has assembled enough troops in the Holy City to conceal from Brandt the true tempo of life there. It is true that upwards of 60% of Israelis still agree with their Defence Minister when he declares himself opposed to any plan involving relinquishment of even a yard of conquered territory. But, convinced of their continuing superiority, these men are finding it increasingly hard to believe in a threat which could endanger their existence. The previous permanent state of alert at home has given way to a mood which can only be described as apathy in face of the Arabs' warlike noises. The masses are far more concerned with the galloping inflation, paradoxically coupled with a rapid economic upswing known by people here as *boomchik*, a "boomlet", than with Dayan's speeches prophesying peril. People are beginning to suspect that he is keeping the crisis alive because he will only be satisfied with a peace which he has made himself.

AFTER HIS FIRST ROUND OF TALKS Brandt said: "I have no intention of going around in Jerusalem teaching people their business." This was his answer to one of the 153 journalists who had flown specially to Israel and who wanted to know

more about a remark by Brandt made as a sort of interim conclusion: "The Middle East conflict and the problems of this region were naturally the subject with which we were particularly concerned." He added: "You may take it from a man who is no longer a youngster that reading is important, conversations are sometimes even more important, but direct personal impressions are often irreplaceable. . . ."

The evening before he had gathered a highly personal and unexpected impression. After Golda's banquet he had been taken aside by Teddy Kollek, the rumbustious mayor of Jerusalem. Golda, seventy-five years old and not too quick on her feet, had been unable to keep up with them as they hurried through the underground "Bible Treasury", where ancient copies of Holy Writ are kept under bullet-proof glass to show that the history of Jewry is no legend.

It was midnight before the two reappeared, clearly thinking that Golda would long since have gone to bed. But there she was, standing shivering in her golden sandals, still waiting for her guest from Germany. With a spontaneous expression of sympathy Willy Brandt offered her his arm and the old lady, ostensibly the undisputed ruler of the Promised Land, clung to it as if she had found a support which she did not wish to let go.

NIGHT FELL quickly. After a scorching hot day a tepid breeze blew across the lush lawns of the Arcadia Grand Hotel in Tel Aviv where 2,000 people were assembled to shake the German Chancellor's hand. They swarmed round the great swimming pool on which lanterns floated with bunches of red carnations between them, apparently suspended in mid-air. A pathway over fifty yards in length led past buffets and bars in vaulted arbours illuminated by coloured lights. Floodlights picked out white flagpoles carrying numerous little streamers in the German and Israeli colours. The sea sparkled under a bright yellow moon hanging in the sky like a great Chinese lantern; the waves foamed gently on to the hotel beach.

It was all like a romantic Hollywood film-set. Had it been so, there would be nothing more to say. The interest of this scene lay in the fact that it was more indicative than all the other functions of the fundamental change in relations between the Jewish and German states. In honour of Willy Brandt, Bonn's Ambassador in Tel Aviv (Jesko von Puttkamer) had invited 2,100 Israelis; in addition to the official leaders they included everyone of rank and influence in the political, cultural and economic life of the country. There had been about one hundred refusals, but practically everybody whose name counted had appeared. So lively and relaxed was the atmos-

phere that it seemed as if a vast change of heart had taken place since that first evening of the Chancellor's visit when Golda Meir had let fall the magic word "friendship."

Once more Golda was there, although not compelled by protocol. The evening before she had been the Chancellor's guest at a dinner given in the King David Hotel in Jerusalem, for members of the government and other VIPs of the great city. Brandt was not in the habit of buttering up the Israelis but in his speech at this dinner he had hit upon words which earned him a round of applause with no trace of reserve. Without appearing to be over-pious, the Chancellor had said, he wished to deal with a question raised in one of the psalms—the question whether God could really spread a table in the desert. The Chancellor's answer was: "Yes, He clearly can." A little later he added that this country illustrated the truth of a phrase no longer applicable to the mass tourist trade, which tended only to reinforce preconceived notions—"Travel educates both the mind and the heart."

Such emotional pronouncements were the outcome of his stay in a *kibbutz*, one of those collectively defended villages in which some 4% of this people of 3.3 million voluntarily eke out an existence. Brandt's impressions from this Sabbath day's journey had by no means been fragmentary. During the return flight to Tel Aviv he had been able to judge the tenacious effort required to wrest new fertile territory from the desert. Brandt had flown along the old frontier line in a rocket-carrying "Sikorski 54," a military cargo helicopter. The whole time he had stood at a half-open cargo hatch taking in a picture which could leave no one unimpressed. On the Arab side an arid waste with poverty-stricken villages; on the Israeli side green fields, well-kept, thickly-populated villages with peach orchards and orange groves. At the Chancellor's request he was not taken over occupied territory. He did not even go as close to the Golan Heights on the Syrian frontier as his hosts would have liked—he was determined to avoid any step which could be taken as provocative by the Arabs. He had no difficulty, however, in visualising the permanent military threat to Israel previously represented by the Golan Heights when he stayed twenty-four hours in the *kibbutz* of Ginossar on the shore of Lake Genesaret. Half the population of Ginossar, founded thirty-seven years ago, was of German-Jewish origin.

UP TO THIS TIME this *kibbutz* community had sternly refused to have contact of any sort with Germans. This taboo was abandoned, however, when the vast majority of the people of Ginossar decided to accept Brandt as a visitor. The decision was not taken lightly. The *kibbutz* movement, as

a special form of democratic socialism, had been the hallmark of the state of Israel in the eyes of its founders; today it still provides more than its share of younger leaders, particularly in the army.

The impression left on Brandt by the people of Ginossar was quite the opposite of the proverbial uncompromising members of a *kibbutz*, sometimes ultra-chauvinist. Those the Chancellor met were quite different. Having realised that an "ideal peace" was not possible, they were in process of calling in question many of the old Israeli postulates. They ruminated philosophically on how to defend their own rights without infringing those of the enemy. In Ginossar, too, the Chancellor was handed documents of the terrible concentration camp period—and requested to autograph them as a reminder of this day when times had changed.

ONE OF THE CO-FOUNDERS of Ginossar is Yigal Allon, now Deputy Prime Minister. His position in the government rests upon the confidence placed in him by the "Old Guard", the *Palmach*, an élite self-defence organisation of Israeli settlers in Palestine, of which Allon was the commander. Brandt and the ex-general have become personal friends. In front of all the members of the *kibbutz* Allon addressed the Chancellor as "My dear friend and comrade." It is conceivable that there will now be a German-Israeli cultural agreement, something hitherto vetoed primarily by Allon. As a young major Allon had been in the trenches opposite a certain Egyptian Major Nasser. Brandt recalled that he had once heard President Nasser say: "With that man I would make peace."

There is, however, another personality to be considered, one who, if circumstances so required, would not hesitate to slaughter the most sacred of cows. He is Pinchas Sapir, a sort of super-Minister for Finance, Industry and Commerce and one of the most powerful men in the Labour Party which has governed the country for so long. His aim is a purely Jewish state, as far as possible free of Arab minorities.

Anyone in the know in Israel swears that, if Golda ever resigned, Sapir would be her successor, provided he wanted it. At one time everything seemed to indicate that Sapir liked power but not high office. When Brandt received him the Chancellor took care to have witnesses present. Sapir is said to be adept at gathering in ever more millions for the support of Israel; he is known as "Mr Goldfinger."

THE CENTRAL SUBJECT of all Brandt's private discussions was the Middle East—at first sight an odd fact since Brandt has no sort of standing in the matter. His halo as a political mediator, however, and his reputation as one of the generally best-informed statesmen were such that the idea

of Brandt having a deciding voice in a peace settlement gathered force daily.

He was careful to avoid making himself ridiculous by over-estimating his influence. He persisted, however, in his self-chosen role of spokesman for Europe bent on exerting a moderating influence on the "hawks", trying to persuade them not to counter all future peace proposals with rigid negative formulae. The main background to his arguments was the assurance recently given him by Brezhnev that, if a balanced comprehensive peace settlement could be arrived at, Moscow would be ready to guarantee it together with Washington. This explains why the Chancellor was continually repeating the admonition: "The counterpart to peace in Europe must be a peace settlement in this area, so closely linked to us by geography, history and interest."

Undoubtedly one of the Chancellor's subsidiary aims was to give a new twist to the Israeli thesis that the German reconciliation policy should serve as an example to the Arabs. This he did with particular clarity in Beth Berl, a building estate near Tel Aviv where the Israeli Labour Party's training centre is housed. He spoke to some 400 members of the government party's Executive Council and, under the chairmanship of Golda Meir, they gave him as warm a welcome as he usually gets from his Social Democrat supporters in West-Berlin.

Michael Holroyd

Unreceived Opinions

Thirty luminous essays, book reviews and random sallies into print by the biographer of Hugh Kingsmill and Lytton Strachey.

£3.00


Heinemann

Brandt's audience became visibly more thoughtful as he hammered into them the fact that the Federal Republic had reaped good results from its resolute peace policy. For many people, however, he said, this had entailed a painful abandonment of their illusions and necessitated a readiness to overcome the inhibitions stemming from taboos—"Many of my fellow-countrymen felt this to be a national sacrifice. We must, however, face realities if we wish to improve them. . . ."

In the subsequent discussion there was only one note of criticism. Brandt was asked whether he might not be suspected of being in danger of allowing the Arabs to impose their friendship upon him. He laughed sarcastically and somewhat patronisingly before replying with some asperity (it sounds blunter in English than in German): "Have friendship imposed on me? I won't even stand having enmity imposed on me."

During his two-and-a-half hours in Beth Berl, Brandt took the opportunity to act the pedagogue in another connection. This he did because he knew that, within the Israeli Labour Party, democracy was on the wane with the result that the Israeli youth was coming to regard politics with scepticism. He did not refer to the matter directly; he merely said that he was by no means unhappy over the fact that in Germany the young Social Democrats were no longer prepared to accept the authority of a party leader or a chancellor without question or examination. "They seem," he said, "to be not merely generations but worlds removed from the picture of the typical Prussian German—once described by Heinrich Heine as 'so ramrod stiff that one would think they had swallowed the stick with which they had once been beaten'. . . ."

Golda, who is used to having even senior ministers obey her every glance, did not appear to feel that this was aimed at her. On the contrary, she looked at Brandt almost adoringly; she was openly flirting with him. As the days passed and she became increasingly at ease with him, she seemed to have a new sense of well-being. Most people are already saying that she will not resign after the autumn elections. Instead, they say, she wants to govern until she can be the one to make peace. Already she seems to be following in Brandt's wake when she talks of the burdens of victory, of readiness to compromise, of close cooperation with neighbours now still hostile. Is she really in process of abandoning her position of defiance? Has she lost the "Massada complex" generally attributed to her?

BRANDT'S TRIP TO MASSADA on the Monday was the last he made by air—it might have been his last by any method owing to a faulty and very hard landing by the helicopter. Massada is the

name of a fortress situated on a rocky plateau between the Desert and the Dead Sea. Here, precisely 1900 years ago, the Jews made their last desperate stand against expulsion by the Romans. When Massada finally fell, the remaining defenders committed suicide—several hundred men, women, and children. Remnants of the fortifications have been preserved and are regarded as a national shrine, a token of the new Jewish state's power of resistance. "Never again will Massada fall"—Golda Meir's saying is everywhere repeated.

SHORTLY BEFORE the Chancellor flew back to Bonn he was awarded Israel's highest honour. The Weizmann Institute made him a Doctor *honoris causa*, only once awarded before, and never before to a foreigner. In his acceptance speech Brandt said: "I consider such confidence in the political leadership of the Federal Republic of Germany to be the true reward of this visit." He has said that he undertook this journey with some trepidation. Now he is curiously sad at the thought that, after a successful visit to Israel, there is nowhere else in the world where, as head of government, he will have to meet the challenge of breaking down anti-German barriers.

But he is anxious about something else too, and he indicated as much to Israel's intellectual élite in the Weizmann Institute. He feels that for many foreigners he has already become a sort of monument and he fears that, even at home, he may not be able to live up to his legendary reputation. As if to shake himself free, he behaved in front of these scholars with a deliberate lack of solemnity, saying: "You will forgive me if I say that the encounter with your fellow-countryman Ephraim Kishon brings to my mind the fact that compliments have never killed an author. Are we quite sure of this?"

As he took off from Tel Aviv in his *Luftwaffe* plane he left no communiqué behind him. The Israelis regret this, but the Chancellor wanted it that way. In this he was supported by Paul Frank, the State Secretary of the Bonn Foreign Ministry; the increasing addiction to the production of communiqués is liable to create difficulties rather than contribute to political progress.

In order, however, to pay the Israelis a compliment as straightforward as it was sincere, the Chancellor spoke two words of Hebrew which, he maintained, he had picked up during his four-day visit—*Kol Hakavot*. Though normally used as a casual phrase, Willy Brandt wished these words to be taken as an expression of his appreciation of all the remarkable achievements by the men of the Promised Land. "I mean these two words", he said, "to be taken as literally as possible." *Kol Hakavot* means "With all respect."

AUTHORS & CRITICS

Dostoevsky's Realism?

By Michael Egan & David Craig

IN HIS DEFENCE of what he calls Dostoevsky's "historic veracity" in *The Devils* [ENCOUNTER, March 1973], Joseph Frank ends up facing in two directions at once. On the one hand he claims the novel is "a work of art and not either literal history or reportage"; but, on the other, he asserts that Dostoevsky "based his political plot on a dramatic actualisation of the tactics and aims of the Nechayev movement." Having retraced the well-known parallels between Nechayev's *Catechism* and some of Peter Verkhovensky's outbursts, he concludes: "Sources and parallels for every other politico-ideological feature of *The Devils*, even those that seem the most extravagant and the least credible, can be found. . . ."

But, first, *The Devils* is not an historical novel after the manner of Scott, as Frank suggests. He is curiously silent about many of the details surrounding its composition. In fact it was written straight from the newspaper on Dostoevsky's breakfast table, as a propaganda exercise in support of Czarism and the Greek Orthodox Church. Further, like many 19th-century novels it was serialised, and began publication in the reactionary Moscow journal, the *Russian Messenger*, in February 1870. These points are important, because many of the "facts" about revolutionary organisations, the wording of leaflets, and the circumstances of Ivanov's murder, closely follow accounts of police witnesses at the show trial of 79 young nihilists (none of whom was Nechayev) in July 1871. In other words, Dostoevsky placed the convolutions of his story virtually at the service of the Russian state prosecutor and conservative daily press. The novel is a dramatic actualisation, but of the case for the prosecution in a Czarist police-state. It is an attempt to render that case credible.

Publicly, Dostoevsky put a bold front on it. He told Maykov that he wished to be "even nearer reality" than he had been with *Crime and*

Punishment, and "directly concerned with the most important contemporary question." In his letter to the Crown Prince he claimed the book to be "almost an historical study" through which he sought "to explain the possibility in our strange society of such monstrous phenomena as the Nechayev movement." (Frank quotes the first observation, laying great stress on the qualification, but keeps quiet about the rest which contradicts his reading.) In his opinion these phenomena were not accidental but "the direct consequences of the great splitting away of all Russian education from the native and original bases of Russian life." The Czar will have read these words with great pleasure, since his own view of the current discontent (viciously suppressed at the time by the feared Third Section of police, who had initiated a terror campaign in 1866) was that the universities had become centres of sedition. He was looking to his new Education Minister, Dmitri Tolstoy, to ensure that in future only religion and the classics were studied.

Privately, however, Dostoevsky was less confident. The effort of bending reality to accord with his prejudices was proving almost too much for him. He confided to S. A. Ivanovna that he was "unable to cope" with the difficulty, adding: "I am turning out decided trash, but to discard it is impossible because I like the thought too much!" In April 1870, he admitted to Strakhov that his book was becoming a political pamphlet: "I am anxious to express certain ideas, even if it ruins my novel as a work of art. . . . Let it turn out to be only a pamphlet, but I shall say everything to the last word." And to Maykov: "What I am writing now is a tendentious thing. Let the nihilists and Westerners howl that I am a REACTIONARY! To hell with them."

Our conclusions here are, first, that a novelist in this frame of mind is unlikely to deal objectively or accurately with his material, and secondly, that *The Devils* is not an historical novel like *Ivanhoe*. On the contrary, it offers itself as an eye-witness account of contemporary events, and therefore the standards of accuracy we should demand of it are the same as those we expect, and find, in a novel such as Silone's *Fontamara*.

Frank further asserts that Dostoevsky limits his attack to Nechayev, not being concerned to smear the radical movement as a whole. But this is obviously untrue since the novel repeatedly claims that Peter is working under the direct control of Marx and the *Internationale* (pp. 250, 419, 459, Penguin edition). More seriously, however, Dostoevsky widens his attack to include all critics of Czarism and Greek Orthodoxy, so that terrorism, socialism, atheism, nihilism, liberalism and even leniency by prosecutors and juries, are all viewed as of a piece.