

It was then that I first heard the words said aloud which my mind had shaped but had tried to ignore during this year. For she looked at me in surprise, and said, 'But it has already begun'".

In the last chapter of her book Margaret Black sets out the reasons why she believes that revolution is inevitable in South Africa in spite of the built-in stabilisers in South African society. "Is there any way", she asks "of averting this end?" Her answer to this question deserves careful consideration, even though I doubt if the encouragement of a general outflow of whites from South Africa will succeed especially among the Afrikaaner whites. Some may leave if they are "told about the customs and terrain of other homelands" and are "offered a welcome and a chance for their children, a place to belong outside this land of displaced persons". But will they leave in large enough numbers to avert the impending catastrophe? One hopes that she may be right, but for my part I have serious doubts. *Ambrose Reeves.*

Hofmeyer by *Alan Paton* (O.U.P. 58/-)

This is a formidable book in more senses than one. It is large, long, detailed and documented, and it costs a lot of money, but it is worth every penny. For anyone interested in history, in the movements of ideas and the influences of outstanding personalities, for anyone particularly interested in South Africa, for anyone interested in problems of human personality and, perhaps most of all, for anyone interested in the application of religion and morality to politics, it is a book that is consistently absorbing and stimulating, and in the end it is deeply moving.

Alan Paton is a most scrupulous biographer. Given his talent as a novelist, his warm, wide and imaginative sympathies, his friendship with Hofmeyer, and his personal identification with the liberal cause in South Africa, it could have been so easy to slant the story, to write up certain elements and write down others, to heighten the drama; but this he never does. His method is to assemble all the relevant facts, to suggest possible interpretations, including the ones that were given, just to raise the wide general questions, and to leave the rest to the reader. He seldom praises, he never condemns, but with the utmost skill, sympathy and tact, he presents. And the result of this method is to raise every kind of fascinating speculation which will continue long after the last page of the book is turned. To read it is an experience and an education.

Three strands of this complex and fascinating story seem to me to stand out, though all is woven together with a beautiful balance. The first is the history of South Africa in which Hofmeyer was involved from his earliest days. We are given a picture of the gradual rise and the eventual triumph of the Nationalist party. One concession after another is offered to the racialists, but the tide of reaction only flows more strongly. The war years, 1939-1945, produce a kind of artificial idealism, largely unrelated to the realities of life in South Africa, but this false dawn is quickly extinguished by a darker night. Throughout this process Hofmeyer was prominent in public life. In 1919, at the age of 25, he became principal of Witwatersrand University, in 1924 Smuts made him Administrator of the Transvaal, a post he filled brilliantly, and in 1929 he went into politics. From 1933 until 1948, with the exception of the year 1938 only, he was continuously in office and held every Cabinet post with distinction. He was never Prime Minister in name, but in fact he filled that post for months on end during Smuts' long absences abroad.

The second strand is the study of Hofmeyer the man, this strange, shut-up man, and of his relationships with other people. Two figures dominate this story, Hofmeyer's mother, and the brilliant figure of Smuts. Mrs. Hofmeyer was dominating, sharp-tongued and iron-willed, some people were charmed by her, but many were antagonised. "She was one of those women who could destroy what she loved", writes Alan Paton. It is exceedingly difficult not to feel that Hofmeyer might have been a greater man, might even have been the leader for whom the liberals longed, the man who might have changed the bitter history of South Africa, if only he could have broken free from the dominance of his mother and taken a wife and lived as other men. But Alan Paton never allows us to believe that this is anything more than a supposition. Again and again he insists that the "true inwardness" of a situation will never be known.

It is the same with Hofmeyer and Smuts; and undoubtedly this was the most important relationship in Hofmeyer's public life. When, in 1938, Hofmeyer at last brought himself to resign on a matter of principle, he could not then bring himself to lead a new liberal party, as he was constantly urged to do, because, or largely because of his feelings about Smuts. Whether these were feelings of loyalty or fear, how much he was subjugated by Smuts' amazing charm, how much it was due to his own timidity or fear of committing himself, we do not know—the true inwardness is not revealed.

The personal history, like the national, is tragic. Hofmeyer was a prodigy of incredible brilliance, he collected first class degrees like other boys collect stamps, they just seemed to come to him as did all the high offices of state one after another. Yet at the end he died, worn out and disappointed, seeing the almost total eclipse of his deepest hopes and aspirations.

His aspirations: these are the stuff of the third strand of the story. This is the man who said again and again, "One has to go on making it clear that I am not prepared to stay in politics at the price of a moral principle". And this is the man of whom Smuts said, "Hofmeyer was South Africa's conscience. Now that Hofmeyer is dead, South Africa will not have a conscience".

We watch Hofmeyer's gradual development towards an increasingly liberal position, until at last he can say that his ultimate aim is the abolition of the colour-bar. We see also his hesitations, his contradictions, his evasions and his compromises. Again and again the question is raised as to whether one should withdraw altogether from the power that corrupts or whether one should retain responsibility, with its inevitable series of compromises, in the hope of making things a little better than they are, or of preventing a worse evil. The question is never satisfactorily answered. How could it be? But, unlike Smuts, Hofmeyer was unable to preach freedom, democracy and brotherhood abroad, while failing to practise them at home.

Quite early in the book the obvious parallel suggested itself to me, that between Hofmeyer and Sir Stafford Cripps, the first patron of Christian Action. I was fascinated to discover that Hofmeyer had copied into his diary something written about Cripps, with the comment that the words might just as well be applied to himself.

"He is religious, analytical and logical. It may seem impossible for any man to be deeply and consistently all three. Be that as it may, Sir Stafford is. The depth of his religious feeling deprives him of the full effect of ambitions' goad. The other two deprive him of power to win popular liking as well as popular respect".

Both these men endeavoured to apply their religion consistently in their political lives and they were bitterly criticized both because they appeared to follow their consciences too stubbornly, and also because they sometimes appeared to be compromising with their consciences. Both died prematurely, worn out by excessive public service, and also perhaps by the agony of trying to hold fast that which is good in the conditions of high political office.

Hofmeyer was an extraordinary man. With his deep reserve, his logic, his puritanism, and apparent lack of human feeling, he cannot always have seemed attractive. He was a man "lacking in mousike", that poetry of personality which draws people to itself, and yet, in the end, Alan Paton makes us love him. Hofmeyer was a great man; he has a great and deeply sympathetic biographer.

Diana Collins

The Christian in Industrial Society by *H. F. R. Catherwood* (Tyndale Press)

It was interesting to be reading this book for review at the same time as another by Harvey Cox called *The Secular City*. Both are trying to see what it is that the Christian needs to be saying to contemporary society but the approach is radically different.

Catherwood basically takes the individualistic approach which has always been characteristic of the Conservative evangelical. He does not believe in the social gospel: he says so himself on page 11 of his introduction. "There is, therefore, no social gospel. The gospel is addressed to the individual. Society collectively cannot be redeemed". Harvey Cox speaks of "the mistaken idea that social problems can be solved only by converting individuals one by one. The truth is that our freedom in the age of organisation is a question of the responsible control and exercise of power". The weakness of the whole approach of this book seems to me that it does not ask or consider the really fundamental questions about power, planning, the effects of cybernation on the whole vocation of work as market-defined or the radical changes made by the secularisation of life and industry.

As a result of the individualistic outlook shown throughout this book there is betrayed both a lack of sympathy with the kind of planning necessary in a modern state, a thinly-disguised conservatism politically, and the Protestant ethic which still must regard all work as a religious vocation. To say as Catherwood does on page 3: "No labour is degrading" is just not true: a great deal of labour is degrading and if cybernation is to rescue men from this kind of work in order to give them really creative work which is not market-dominated but the turning of what we often call creative leisure into paid work then we should welcome it rather than condemn as does the author on page 6. The Protestant ethic of hard work, thrift, obedience to state authority, and morality in matters of drink, gambling, etc., are all here as they have always been in this approach but while these things are important there is also the ethic of the redemption of the corporate society, the bringing about of the kingdom in the social gospel which are more or less unrecognised in this book. This also leads to a certain bias towards capitalism and away from socialism which has always characterised this kind of thinking, e.g. page 21: "If capitalism is far from perfect it does give at least the freedom to change, whereas where the state is the sole employer the individual loses a very real freedom"—a statement open to much questioning. Again on the two chapters on big business and the trades unions it is noticeable that an argument met (it is true objected to but not definitely

claimed to be untrue) in the case of the latter is the extraordinary use of the text "be not yoked with unbelievers" as a serious argument to be reckoned with for not joining a union. No mention is made of the use of the same text as an argument for not joining an association of employers!

While this book has some useful comments to make on the part of a Christian individual in his personal relationships within society I cannot commend it as having anything really important to say in the whole debate on the dialogue of the Church with the secular city.

Douglas A. Rhymes

The Truce by *Primo Levi*, translated by Stuart Woolf (Bodley Head 21/-)

The Seeds of Hiroshima by *Edita Morris* (Macgibbon & Kee 16/-)

The Americans by *G. W. Target* (Duckworth 25/-)

In the vocabulary of human suffering there can be few more terrible words than Auschwitz and Hiroshima. It doesn't do to let the mind dwell on them too often but now and again it may be salutary to take a look. If you are aware of this painful necessity in yourself, here are two books to jog your memory. Primo Levi's book relates to the first of these events, Edita Morris' to the second. *The Americans* by G. W. Target is different. It is a kind of meditation in depth on certain contemporary issues that have evolved out of the holocaust of our times, as reflected in the small town society of South-East England. They are all three, stories of man's inhumanity towards his fellow creatures, though the gloom is by no means unrelieved. There are illuminating flashes of tenderness, humour, even beauty, which to some extent mitigate the horrors.

The difficulty in writing of these events is to convey both the hugeness of the agony and also the smallness of it as it affects particular individuals. Man has been torturing his fellow-men in various diabolical and revolting ways since time began, but never before on such a gigantic scale. The means, if not the will, for such wholesale cruelty has, hitherto, been mercifully lacking. On the other hand, as Blake said "He who would do good to another must do it in minute particulars", it follows that he who suffers ill from another suffers it in minute particulars also. No man can suffer beyond the limits of his own experience. The whole creation may groan and travail together, but for each living creature it is the particularity of his own pain with which he must come to terms. The tension of balance between the microcosm and the macrocosm of suffering is a very delicate one to preserve. To concentrate overmuch on the former is to lapse into sentimentality and self-pity, while to take too cosmic a view is to harden one's heart and forget the minutiae of pain which is man's lot.

It is the genius of Primo Levi that he manages to communicate both the universal and the personal aspects of his subject. The inter-play of public and private calamity is, throughout the narrative, brilliantly conveyed. Levi, an Italian Jew, was deported to Auschwitz in 1944 on account of his partisan activities. In the early days of 1945 the Germans, under threat of the Russian advance, evacuated the Camp, taking with them all healthy prisoners but leaving behind about 800 sick and dying. Of these, 500 died before succour reached them, and another 200 were too far gone to respond to the help that finally arrived. Levi was one of the remaining hundred that came out of that place alive. The book relates the story of his journey home.

It took him eight months to reach Turin by a fantastic route through Russia, Roumania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Austria. He describes a continent in