



THE
PUBLIC REPORT



Receiving in the mail the last issue of *Tract*, a journal published in England (three times a year) which we have quoted with relish, we take this occasion to pay our respects. *Tract* was the creation of Peter Abbs, an English teacher who became its editor and publisher. The enterprise had a somewhat heroic character and should be remembered as such — and mined as such. The first issue came out in October, 1971, and Mr. Abbs now quotes from it in the last:

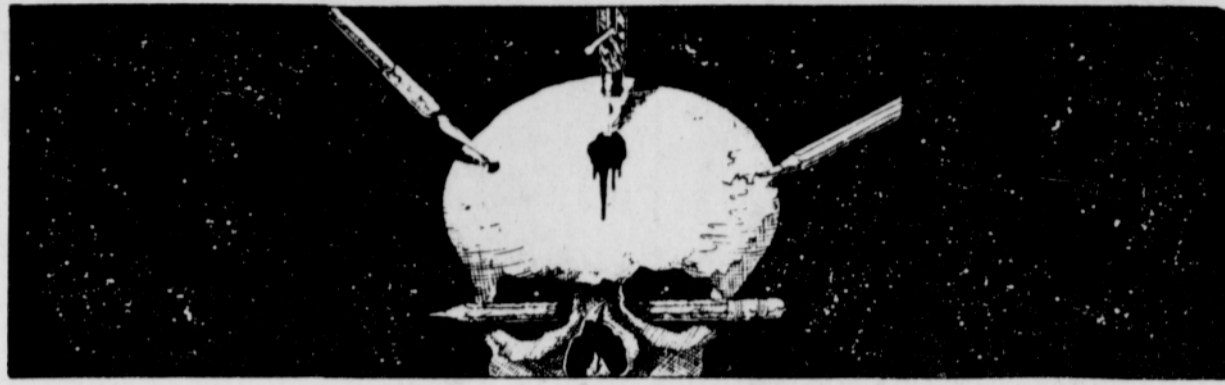
"Whether we are directly involved in education or not, the pressures of contemporary life are so relentless that we are all liable to overlook the need for fundamental values and aims. As a result we find everywhere a tendency to place means before ends, methods before purpose, techniques before content. *Tract* is opposed to this tendency."

Ten years of carrying out this policy makes a notable survival record. That *Tract* was able to last so long bespeaks the courage and determination of the publisher and the loyalty of the readers and supporters. During that time it spread the seed of like enterprises — however untraceable — and it gave help and encouragement to others doing similar work around the world. (Since the last ten back issues are available at a pound each, we give the address: The Gryphon Press, 38 Prince Edwards Road, Lewes, Sussex, U.K.)

In his valedictory Mr. Abbs says: "Looking back we can say that our purposes have remained fairly constant. We have attempted to establish a comprehensive criticism of our civilization and to have hinted at an emerging more generous epistemology in which the feeling and imagination are included as much as reason and experimentation. In developing our critique of industrial culture and in elaborating the pattern of a deeper and broader philosophy, we have ranged widely. We have considered architecture, art, science, ecology, mass-culture, anthropology, mythology, psychotherapy, literature, philosophy, education. Through the fragments of our age, through the bewildering specialization of subject matter, through the divisions of our own painful experience, we have looked for a common thread in order to weave a unified fabric. At times we have had to attack rather than create. Yet our trenchant criticism of current orthodoxies — the visionless orthodoxies of the modish art world, the mechanical gobbledygook of the educational establishment, the centralized tyranny of mass-culture — has never been merely iconoclastic. The criticism has always come from a perspective, always been informed by a notion of remedy and possible renewal."

Then the editor says:

"It is significant that not one of our challenges was taken up. This preser-



Hail & Farewell

from MANUS

ved the journal from becoming temporary fodder for the metropolitan fashion machine, but at the same time, it made us feel we were grappling with fog rather than tangible actualities — and it also effectively prevented us from finding an audience. Intellectual life has become unreal in England. There seems to be a general dissociation which undermines the life of the engaged imagination and of the committed intellect. Writing in England is like having a relationship with a person who, when challenged, constantly disappears. The mediocrity of our culture has much to do with the existential unreality of our institutions and our split-off private lives. The problems are there, but there seems to be no context in which they can be productively encountered, challenged, questioned, thought through, resolved and transcended. We have monolithic controlling institutions and opaque private lives.

"On any realist criteria *Tract* has failed. We have not entered a public world of discourse. Given our civilization, given our premises, given our resources, it could not have been otherwise. There could not have been another narrative."

Well, if Mr. Abbs will forgive the allusion, this is his version of "Prometheus Bound." Zeus never gives in. His hirelings have no ears. He owns the ball park and his minions call the shots. It is the human situation as known to Sisyphus as read by Albert Camus.

But what if the bread a paper like *Tract* casts upon the waters does indeed come back a hundredfold, even though the influence of a *Tract* cannot be tracked? The flow of ideas from mind to mind leaves no marks for statisticians to compile. Who knows the dynamics of the gases and molten solids that one day erupt in a lava flow? And who can explain what multiple influences caused a Gandhi to begin his beneficent eruption in South Africa toward the end of the

nineteenth century? He was a very great man, but he didn't do it all alone. All good men, all serious thinkers, all thoughtful critics, add their deposit of ideas to the axial currents that will someday turn into axes of crystallization. Tom Paine was an Englishman — later a citizen of the world — and he became an axis of crystallization in America. Blake, another Englishman, performed in the same way at another level. The fruit of doing what you think — practically know — is right is in most cases invisible, but it is not ephemeral, and men like Peter Abbs are able to declare to themselves that, even if they can't see its results, the work must be done.

There are lots of aphoristic ways of saying this — fortunately, since it needs to be repeated again and again. He concludes his editorial:

"Yet with all the limitations of our own thinking and writing, we believe that we have not been far wrong in our common emphasis; that we were right to foster a more expansive epistemology, right to question the provincialism of metropolitan "intellectual" life, right to attack the manipulating symbolism of mass culture, right to emphasize wholeness of human life and to celebrate the inward dimension of being. Perhaps the simplest way of stating our case is to say that we have attempted to represent a certain kind of intelligence which is in danger of dying out. How could it best be described? As an intelligence which is, at once, passionate and discerning; an intelligence which gravitates always toward coherent principles and which is historically awake; an intelligence which is radical in that it seeks to penetrate the modish and fashionable cults which surround it, radical also in the sense that it is ready to go back to tested sources so that its energies can be replenished and its insights honed. Above all, such intelligence is the very reverse of cleverness, of knowing about; it is not scholarship; it is not a body of skills or a body of knowledge; it is not measured by a list of qualifications or a list of publications. It is only where it exists as an energy in individual life, desiring circumference, the psyche attending in order to increase its own domain, being becoming. Of course, we have failed to always embody such acts of passionate intelligence. Yet it has been our aim to represent such radical intelligence."

We have a note on literary criticism to add. The closing article in the final issue of *Tract* is "The Case Against George Orwell" by D.S. Savage, a skillful redresser of balances. The discussion is searching and valuable, even if the criticism seems merciless. The reader is likely to understand better why reading "1984" made him so uncomfortable. Actually, no human is admirable in that book. Orwell seems to celebrate the total disgrace of mankind. This is not "realism" but defeat, as Mr. Savage makes clear. He concludes his review:

"The case of Orwell is complicated both by his wearing of the mask of the no-nonsense common man, and by the convergence of his own fears and fantasies with the general mood of the times. As a one-eyed man in the country of the blind he was elevated to a position of shaky eminence from which, with a change of circumstance and mood, he is bound to be dislodged."

But there was another side to Orwell, perhaps the earlier Orwell, which should not be forgotten. While planning his introduction to an edition of Orwell's "Homage to Catalonia," Lionel Trilling exchanged bibliographical information with a student, who then said to his teacher, "suddenly in a very simple and matter of fact way, 'He was a virtuous man.'" The two talked about this feeling about Orwell, which they shared. In his introduction, Trilling related:

"We were glad to say it about anybody. One doesn't have the opportunity very often. Not that there are not many men who are good, but there are few men who, in addition to being good, have the simplicity and sturdiness and activity which allow us to say of them that they are virtuous men, for somehow to say that a man 'is good,' or even to speak of a man who 'is virtuous' is not quite the same thing as saying 'He is a virtuous man.' By some quirk of the spirit of the language, the form of that sentence brings out the primitive meaning of the word virtuous, which is not merely moral goodness, but also fortitude and strength in goodness."

"Orwell, by reason of the quality that permits us to say of him that he was a virtuous man, is a figure in our lives. He was not a genius, and this is one of the remarkable things about him."

Orwell, Trilling concluded, "told the truth, and told it in an exemplary way, quietly, simply, with due warning to the reader that it was only one man's truth."

In contrast, Savage says:

"In evaluating Orwell one must take into account that he belonged to that peculiarly damaged generation of writers (Greene, Waugh, Isherwood, etc.) who in their tender adolescence were shocked to the core by the terrors and horrors of the Great War, and who in maimed youth and early manhood had somehow come to terms with the collapse of values of post-War Europe, for which their upbringing had in no way prepared them. The inhibition of their growth into normal, responsible maturity left them open in the first place to intellectual victimization by undigested, schematic pseudo-religious or pseudo-political creeds, eventually discarded. . . . As novelists they are able to identify sympathetically with only one type of character, the rootless, disoriented male drifting miserably, or jocosely through a wretchedly loveless and meaningless world: that is to say, with endless versions of their undeveloped selves projected in fictional form. . . ."

Savage seems presumptuous, but he obliges serious consideration. His case against Orwell is perceptively argued. Who, then, is "right"? Trilling or Savage? Reading both of them helps to the conclusion that this is not a very useful question.

A major contribution of *Tract* has been its stimulus to such reflections.

The obituary of *Tract* has been reprinted from MANUS, which is itself, continually financially deprived. For those who are unfamiliar with MANUS, it is, by its own view, "a journal of independent inquiry, concerned with the study of the principles which move world society on its present course, and with search for contrasting principles — that may be capable of supporting intelligent idealism under the conditions of life in the twentieth century. The word "manas" is from a common root suggesting "man" or "the thinker." MANUS is issued weekly (except during July and August) at \$10 a year, by the MANUS Publishing Company, P.O. Box 32112, Los Angeles, California 90032.

A LESSON IN POLICY

The murder of Anwar Sadat, President of Egypt, by one of his soldiers can hardly be regarded casually as one more in a series of assassinations or killings which keep on occurring — and which, however reluctantly, we have come to expect. Sadat was a man on whom a great many people in the world pinned vague hopes. He seemed to have made an honest attempt to bring peace — or the beginnings of peace — to the Middle Eastern region which has been torn by almost continuous violence for generations. He risked much — even his life, we now must say — in making this attempt, and his political enemies chose to eliminate him.

The "civilized world" is shocked and saddened. Where does this barbarous logic — if you disagree with a leader's policies, kill him — come from? And what sort of humans would claim "credit" for such a crime?

The Western nations — the shapers of what we call our civilization — have never rejected violence or war, but they have maintained that the use of violence as a tool of statecraft must be controlled. War, as Von Clausewitz put it, is the continuation of policy by other means. This seems a way of saying that violence is a tool that must not be exercised ex-

cept by "responsible" policy-makers. And this, at any rate, is how we explain our own military enterprises to the young men we draft into the armed forces: Killing is all right if the nation declares it necessary.

But now the doctrine is spreading, and being applied by "irresponsible" individuals and groups. These people are saying, "My principles are better than yours, and if you don't adopt my principles I'll kill you. They also argue that this is a way of teaching the world the importance of their principles."

You could even say that an assassin is a free lance "hawk" who feels free to do what various governments are doing on a larger, more "controlled" scale. After all, assassins are not identified as assassins when they have behind them the formal decision of a legislature.

For fifty years or so, we have explained to the world that the offenses of less civilized people require us to use our form of controlled, technological violence to bring order and decency to international affairs. Well, the lesson has been learned. Violence has become the order of the day, and now it is out of control.

— MANUS

WINTER PLAY

KLOOCHY WOMEN'S THEATER

First Meeting Sunday
Nov. 15, 8 P.M.

BILL'S TAVERN
CANNON BEACH

Call Helen Patti, 436-1266