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The Long Farewell to Europe

BACK in Oxford, routine was pleasant enough. I went to the College, saw colleagues and students. I set about expanding the essay on ideology from the UNESCO series into what years later would become the short book *The Crisis of Industrial Society*. At the time, however, I was dissatisfied with what I had written, and did not continue. Converting my thesis into a book was postponed—if not daily, weekly. I wrote some interesting shorter articles, made my debut in *Der Spiegel* with an essay on Germany originally published in *Commentary*. A longish article on the United Kingdom and its culture and politics published in an American anthology had a good response among British friends. For all of my connections with others and ostensible political passions, I had ceased to develop, intellectually.

I was a prisoner of the categories of a critical sociology, taking literally if implicitly its denial to modern society of the capacity to experiment. Certainly there was little experiment in my own life.

My intellectual immobility was discerned, much to my irritation, by a student at the Free University in Berlin when I gave a talk there in 1963. He declared, with commendable forthrightness, that all I could offer to meet the current social crisis was a faithful summary of neo-Marxism—with a disembodied critical intelligence as a poor substitute for any revolutionary agency. The student referred to the forthcoming text *One-Dimensional Man*, by Herbert Marcuse. I am reminded of David Riesman's observation that in the post-war years, the Europeans proclaimed existential despair with considerable exuberance, whereas Americans treated optimistic progressivism as a heavy burden. Marcuse did not think

his responsibility ended with a description of one-dimensionality but saw the description as the beginning of a struggle to end it. I was to see much of him in Germany over the next years. His native country (and especially his native Berlin) seemed to stimulate him to mix inspiration with analysis. I originally wrote that perhaps he was re-enacting his youth. He spent part of his youth in the army of the Kaiser in the First World War and then was an assistant to Heidegger before attaching himself to the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research and its desperate encounter with modern history.

Meanwhile, history made itself felt in a very pressing way: in the fall, the Cuban missile crisis was upon us. My memory is of a pervasive atmosphere of dread—and of a sense of acute passivity, a recognition that decisions affecting life and death in or of the United Kingdom were being made in the US and the USSR. The inhabitants of the United Kingdom were not being asked for advice, and Harold Macmillan apparently grasped that he was not being asked either. Kennedy sent Dean Acheson to tell the Europeans about the blockade of Cuba, and Macmillan was driven up to an American airfield north of London to meet him. Acheson went on to Paris, where he was told that President de Gaulle would receive him not that morning but at his customary hour, five in the afternoon. (Acheson passed the time by flying to Bonn to visit Adenauer.) French legend has it that when Acheson began to talk, de Gaulle interrupted him: “Are you asking me or telling me?” There is no record of Macmillan allowing himself that much irony. I recall the extraordinary crack in the voice of the otherwise imperturbable BBC news announcer when describing the Soviet freighters’ advance toward the US Navy blockade line. Afterward, there was relatively little triumphalism in British commentary; rather, a large collective sigh of relief. It was only later that reports of Kennedy’s resistance to the pressures of his generals were published—increasing the very large esteem in which he was held in the United Kingdom.

The missile crisis had a special incidence in Germany. There, the weekly *Der Spiegel* was jeeringly disrespectful of Germany’s culturally and politically conservative elites, whose personal and political collaboration with Nazism it delighted to anathematize. The journal also had reliable informants in business, culture, gov-

ernment, and politics. It made life very uncomfortable for many. Shortly before the missile crisis, it published a Defense Ministry report on the German armed forces which suggested that the new German army might not in case of conflict make good the failure of its fathers: the Soviet army could stop it. One of the weekly's antagonists was the defense minister, the Bavarian Franz Josef Strauss, a man of boundless ambition and vanity, and no small talent. He was also not immune to the temptation of monetary rewards, and his position certainly gave him ample opportunity to profit from the West's struggle against (Godless) materialism. He thought of *Der Spiegel*, which enthusiastically recorded the less sublime aspects of his career, as an obstacle on his way to the Chancellorship and seized on its publication of the report, in the midst of the crisis, to retaliate. He persuaded Adenauer to agree to seizing the magazine's editorial premises and files, arresting its senior editors, and charging it with treason. The city official in charge of the police in Hamburg, Helmut Schmidt, at first demurred, and Adenauer threatened to send the armed forces to the city. In an entirely appropriate touch, the arresting officers were all Gestapo veterans. In the end, the charges were dropped and Adenauer sacrificed Strauss lest he himself have to resign.

What made the episode distinctive was the public reaction. The more liberal elements in German society did not content themselves with indignant articles in their newspapers or the hostile inquiries of the oppositional Social Democrats in Parliament. An entire student generation, in universities and the gymnasia alike, came alive and took to the streets—often with their teachers, and with large contingents of trade unionists joining them. Someone in Germany wrote of the emergence of a *Gegen-Öffentlichkeit*, a counter-public—but it was more accurate to describe it as a public. The (rare) older survivors of opposition to Nazism were conspicuous in the movement, but it was dominated by younger persons—many of them (like the arrested *Spiegel* editors) war veterans, some younger still. One element in the situation especially enraged the protesters. Strauss had arranged for the arrest of one of the accused editors, on vacation in Spain, by Franco's police. There had been Easter marchers in Germany to protest nuclear weapons, and before that a substantial movement in the mid-fifties to protest re-armament.

These groups were reanimated and joined to a much larger public in opposing what was, clearly, a reversion to the crudest sort of authoritarianism.

The colleagues and students organizing protests at the Free University of Berlin asked me to identify cultural and political figures in the United Kingdom who could send messages of solidarity. I was glad to do so, obtained some notable names, and reinforced in the process my own alliance with persons and groups in Germany who were not so long thereafter to transform life in the Federal Republic. The transformation was long prepared, as I had seen on the universities and in the study centers of the Protestant Church. German conflicts were much intensified by their historical dimensions—sometimes stated, sometimes not. Everyone seemed to be confronting, at once, a contemporary political situation, their parents and indeed their grandparents. They lived in the Federal Republic, but acted as if the Third Reich, the Weimar Republic, Imperial Germany, if not still extant, had expired only yesterday.

John Kennedy was murdered, in circumstances still obscure, a year later. The evening of his death and the days following remain unforgettable. I was giving a seminar at Nuffield College (on the structure of industrial society) at the customary Oxford time—5 to 7 p.m. When we came out (it was 1 p.m. in Dallas) we learned of the shooting. Some forty minutes later, we had gone into dinner, the college butler whispered in the warden's ear. He stood up, visibly paling, and informed us that the president was dead. No one spoke for what must have been ten minutes, then a low murmur of anguish rose in the hall. There were the usual ten or so American students and some senior academic visitors at the college for the year, a couple of occasional visitors, and of course the rest—African, Asian, from the Commonwealth and Europe, and British. Distress knew no national boundaries.

I hurried home through what seemed to be a deserted city. Nina was numbed. Anna, five, was still awake. "Pappi, something terrible: Mr. Kennedy has been killed."

I can still hear the BBC announcer, opening the nine o'clock news, "The BBC announces, with very great regret, the death of John Fitzgerald Kennedy, thirty-fifth president of the United States." There followed the prime minister, Lord Home, and a mov-

ing personal recollection from Harold Macmillan, an older man who sounded much older that night. We were too shocked to think of the future, and discussion of the assassination itself waited for some days.

John Kennedy had been in the United Kingdom with his family when his father was ambassador, was a frequent visitor as a senator, and was viewed by many as incarnating the ideal aspects of American existence: our openness, vitality, newness. 1963 was only nineteen years after several million Americans had crowded into Great Britain preparing to land in Europe, and thousands had come back to return to the US with British brides.

The President's elder brother had died in a flight from the UK. Kennedy, and the Kennedys, were adopted by the British. During the 1960 election. Isaiah Berlin was generous with gossip from his wartime friends in Georgetown. He was so voluble about the contest that I reminded him that we were only electing a President, not a Warden of All Souls. From Oxford High Table to the popular dailies, the Kennedys became family. The day after the murder, I boarded my usual bus on the Woodstock Road.

It was a very British bus. Conductor and passengers had traveled together for years. Occasionally, if someone was in an expansive mood, he would remark that it was a bright day and likely to remain so—or that an Oxfordshire drizzle would continue. Mostly, we nodded good morning to one another and left it at that. That morning the conductor paused after taking my fare. "Excuse me, sir, but aren't you the American gentleman at Nuffield?" I had done some British television and I supposed that he had heard and seen me. "May I, and also on behalf of my wife, extend my most sincere condolences?" He extended his hand. A few of the other regulars stood up, shook my hand, and wordlessly returned to their seats. I remain very, very grateful to them.

The British nation did not leave its television sets for the next days—from the murder of Oswald to the funeral. My French friend Edgar Morin later summed it up in an article: *Une Télé-Tragédie Planétaire: L'Assassinat du Président Kennedy*. Lyndon Johnson's Texan origins and manners were, at first, cause for dismay among my British colleagues and friends. Few knew enough to recall his New Deal credentials. I overlooked them myself, or rather thought of

these as long since abandoned, portrayed him as an extraordinarily skilled ordinary politician. The reality was much more complex, and he may indeed have been recalled to his better self by the civil rights movement. All of that, early in 1963, lay before us.

There was a certain amount of discussion, public and private, in the United Kingdom as to who or what had killed Kennedy. When the Warren Commission presented its report in 1964, concluding that Oswald had acted alone, it met as much skepticism in Great Britain as it did in the United States. I found the view of Oswald as a solitary actor difficult to accept, but never did any of my own research on the matter—or even very wide reading. My skepticism was fortified by two later encounters: a college classmate, Norman Redlich, as one step in a very full career (he was also counsel to the City of New York with Mayor Lindsay and dean of New York University's Law School), was deputy counsel to the Warren Commission. Whenever, after my return to the US in 1966, I met Norman, he was at pains to assure me that I was wrong to be skeptical of the Commission. Perhaps—but since I had never put my doubts to paper, or uttered these to him, he was engaging in a pre-emptive strike, and perhaps protesting too much. More importantly, when I came to know the Galbraith family, I gathered from them that the Kennedy family (and especially his widow, who was very close to the senior Galbraith) had severe doubts. I believe that it would be impossible to find a public record of the Kennedys endorsing the Commission's work: they preferred silence. I would have liked to learn what de Gaulle thought (and knew) of the matter: it was certainly not the European Left alone which thought that there had been a conspiracy to remove the President.

The development of the civil rights movement and the emergence of American feminism, combined with the protest of the Vietnam War and American civil unrest, all took Europe by surprise. Those who knew American history, with our social movements and theological passions, were few—and even the most sophisticated had been convinced by the American votaries of consensus. The European welfare-state advocates, such as Anthony Crosland and many on the Continent (including Willy Brandt), were convinced that the US had struck a reasonable balance between state intervention and market freedom. The Johnson Great Society pro-

gram of 1964 onward struck them as a return to the traditions of the New Deal. Those discontented with their own European versions of social democracy were quite receptive to those on the American Left who were so critical of what was then termed “corporate liberalism” in the US. One obstacle to a clear view of the American situation was posed by much of the American New Left itself. Our own analysis (at the time, I followed C. Wright Mills) taken literally would have precluded our own emergence.

I followed these developments from Oxford with a mixture of astonishment and enthusiasm, alternating with several varieties of self-reproach. Having been a consistent critic of the warfare-welfare state, should I not hurry back across the Atlantic to participate actively in its undoing? I did have a considerable role and plenty of recognition as a transatlantic cultural and political commuter, but in those years, little or nothing could compensate me for my lack of greater literary and scholarly achievement. Looked at in another way, the 1962 trip had brought me closer to a reconciliation with Kennedy’s America. With Kennedy gone, Johnson was leading a country I had great difficulty in joining—even in imagination. The new prominence of ideas I had held for my entire adult life increased my sense of alienation. I could not decide on what side of the Atlantic I belonged, and in what capacity. The temporary respite afforded by my Oxford position made avoiding the problem easier, and I avoided confronting the avoidance by any number of substitute activities. I wrote and spoke; connected with colleagues, political comrades, allies, in Europe and the US; traveled quite a lot to the Continent, and had lots of visitors in Oxford itself. Much, indeed most, of what I did and experienced was interesting and intrinsically valuable, and has provided ample lessons and memories in the intervening five decades. The trouble was that at the time I lacked the inner resources to master the situation, and consigned myself to drift.

Rather than turn inward again to confront my problems (above all, my problems of self-regard) I again sought a change of environment. I arranged, not without difficulty, for a visiting appointment in sociology at the University of Strasbourg. We had been in Strasbourg, before, for six months. It provided, with its ample library and faculties of theology, as well as its archives, ample resources on

the Reformation. The city itself, as a Free Imperial City, had been a very important center of Protestant activity. It was more open than many states and cities which had shifted allegiances, allowing a variety of Protestant churches and doctrines to compete. The Catholic Church and the Bishop were not suppressed but suffered a worse fate—challenged to maintain themselves in a largely Protestant setting.

Something else had drawn me to Strasbourg since I first visited it in 1953 en route to Burgundy. I knew of Marc Bloch, later learned a good deal about the *Annales* School, founded at the university in 1929. The complex, even tortured, history of the city of German-speaking Alsatians incorporated in France in 1648, struck me as evidence for the depths of Europe. I knew that the city and region had had a Jewish population, and in my imaginary search for an alternate identity, wondered what my life would have been like had I been born there instead of in New York. One obvious answer was one I did not dwell upon: in all probability, I would have shared the fate of French Jewry, been abandoned by the French government to the Germans, deported and murdered. I had by the time we went to Strasbourg in 1964 any number of French friends who were Jewish, but in fact my single closest friend in Strasbourg was the dean of the Faculty of Protestant Theology, Roger Mehl.

There was an old European adage, now seen as a quaint reminder of a distant past: every civilized man has two countries, his own and France. If anything has replaced it, it is the fascination of much of the world (including Europe) with the culture of the United States. I grew up in a world in which the culture of metropolitan France still counted for much. Why else would Fitzgerald and Hemingway and Miller have gone to Paris?

The old American ambivalence to France was expressed by Henry James. France was the country of rigid tradition, incorporated in church and family. It was also, however, the land of sensual delights which appealed immensely to the guilty imaginations of English-speaking Protestants.

France and French intellectual tradition figured little in my early education, and what I collected was a *mélange* of impressions. I read Zola and a bit about the Dreyfus case, without being able to situate it in the history of modern France, of which I knew almost nothing.

That the French Revolution was a very large event was clear, but what had caused it and what followed were matters of perplexity. I read Stendhal, took Rousseau out of context, was enthused by Malraux. I read Malraux as witness for the entire European Left, not as a figure embedded in France. Mostly, I think, France was the country of its own films. (When I first visited Paris in 1952, I took the Metro to Porte de Lilas to see whether it was like the film named after it.) These depicted segments of France (the countryside, the urban milieu) in no way I could put together. Lots of French artists and writers were in New York after the fall of France, and some very important thinkers (Gurvitch, Lévi-Strauss and Weil among these) came to the US as well. Eugene and Maria Jolas worked at the Office of War Information but I had only a vague idea of their journal and their participation in Parisian literary modernism, thought of them as indeed striking figures from a distant world. I occasionally went to exhibitions of French art at the Museum of Modern Art, understood what I experienced as part of modernism. Sartre came in 1945 and delivered a talk on the French theater, which I attended in the conviction that he was a significant figure, but I could not insert him in a coherent narrative. *Partisan Review* and Dwight Macdonald's *Politics* published Camus and Merleau-Ponty. Their work struck me as important, but I could not say why.

Harvard, with its obsessive cult of modernization, did not help. I recall a project by historians and social scientists who knew France: they concluded that France was not and could not become modern. They did so just as France had begun what the French later termed *Les Trente Glorieuses*, the thirty years of continuous and rapid post-war economic and social transformation. Harvard's debates on history sometimes involved the English Revolution; the French case stood alone and largely ignored. There was something approaching a cult of de Tocqueville, and the very unanimity with which his account of the United States was praised sufficed to move me to ignore it. There were occasional French visitors in sociology and university teachers and graduate students in the other disciplines working on France, but much of what happening there simply was outside my field of vision.

I did some reading in graduate school on the French Revolution. The historian Crane Brinton was the Harvard expert on it, but

I did not study with him, and I did not get beyond a rather simple understanding of the narrative. The transformation of revolutionary fervor into fanaticism, the fate of Catholicism, resistance to the Jacobins, and the transition from revolutionary France to Napoleon's imperial nation all remained historical puzzles I could not solve—even when I read the standard French authors, such as Aulard, Mathiez, Lefebvre. A serious debate on the Revolution was taking place in Paris, and I had hints of that from my reading, but could not profit from it. I also did some reading on Calvinism and early French Protestantism. I had a bit of knowledge of the sixteenth century in France, but the fate of Protestantism thereafter, its stubborn presence in French culture, was something I learned much later, in France. What was completely beyond my ken was the most obvious element in French history—its version of Catholicism. I interpreted French history and politics in absurdly reductionist terms, with Dreyfusards and anti-Dreyfusards identified with the resistance and the Vichyites—again, about which the available narratives were entirely one-dimensional.

Occasionally, I read novels—and Sartre's series *Les Chemins de la Liberté* conveyed something of the atmosphere of pre-war France, rather like old films. I read Sartre's political writings, bought and struggled with *L'Être et le Néant*, but had no idea of his dependence on Heidegger, or of Merleau-Ponty's on Husserl. Few in American philosophy and certainly no one at Harvard at the time bothered to read these texts, although Morton White did so a bit later.

I did read, from my graduate school days onward, some of the French sociologists. That enabled me to understand France as its own unique instance of a class society. In that respect, I dealt with France as I did with the US or the UK or even, at first, with Germany—as a concrete instance of a general idea. I did not begin to realize how shallow my ideas were until having been thoroughly challenged by living two successive years in Germany and then in Great Britain. It was, in fact, a British friend who made it possible for me to achieve serious knowledge of France. My London School of Economics colleague Tom Bottomore had lots of French friends, and he had introduced me to the Dominican Henri Desroche, who retained a very large interest in religion, and close contacts with contemporaries and teachers in the Church. Through Desroche, I

met some of the worker priests, and an entire group of scholars (most former priests) who had transmuted their theological criticism of the Church by studying it as sociologists. I also met Dominicans in considerable difficulty with the Vatican, such as Fathers Marie-Dominique Chenu and Jean-Yves Congar—who emerged under Pope John XXIII as theological inspirers of Vatican II. Best of all, I came to an understanding of the complexity of Catholicism which replaced the schematic notions of it I had acquired in the United States—and with that, acquired a different view of France.

When Nina and I visited Paris from London in 1953 and 1954, we sometimes stopped at the corner of Boulevard Saint-Michel and Rue Soufflot to look at the windows of the Centre Richelieu, the Catholic student center. We were struck by the variety of offerings of talks and study groups, by an obvious opening to much of France's secular culture.

It was a French Catholicism which was certainly not a morose, angry defense of traditionalism—not fighting old battles. The new ones had to do with achieving citizenship and solidarity for the French working class, with a positive view of modernity. Evangelization was a major current in it, perhaps conversion would be a more accurate term. One key text was a book written by the Abbe Godin during the war, *La France, Pays de Mission?* The vanguard thinkers of the Church were aware that France was no longer entirely or even majority Catholic. They could, like the Protestants, now make the best of their marginality.

The forces of lay France, meanwhile, were by no means united. Marxists and former Marxists, liberals and technocrats, Communists and ex-Communists, argued strenuously about the future of France. De Gaulle had retreated to Lorraine, but a current of nationalism (some of it enlightened, some of it less so) spoke in his name. The Third World was much in view and the Algerian insurrection was about to break out. A European party held that France had to reconcile with Germany and (a project which met at least as much resistance) accept Great Britain as a full partner. The United States as transatlantic colossus loomed large, to strident arguments about our culture and power.

What the Catholics contributed to all of this, despite their own divisions (accompanied for many by a large distrust of Rome and

considerable lack of enthusiasm for the person and views of Pope Pius XII) was, first, their sense of the continuity of French history. They had seen regimes come and go; agrarian France was even then being replaced by the advanced industrial nation we are accustomed to; Sartre (after an interval) had followed Voltaire. History, for the French Catholics, was shared—and interpretations of it, or lessons from it, had to be shared, too. More importantly, they also contributed their ideas of the primacy of solidarity, of the value of the human person. That kept the more naked forms of economic thinking from dominating French Catholic consciousness.

The differentiated France we see today has gone beyond the antithesis of *la France Catholique* and *croyante* and *la République indivisible*, the opposition of two churches. The belief that society is more important than the market persists.

Catholic intellectuality was, equally, new to me. I was inwardly surprised to learn that the tradition of Talmudism I had inherited (with no personal immersion in the Talmud) wasn't the only royal road to the heights of thought—a background in patristics did as well. The Catholics I met were at home in much of human thought and had an ecumenical attitude to the varieties of human culture. Sure of their own national and religious legacies, they were totally unthreatened by matters different or new.

The situation of some of the secular intellectuals I met at the same time was very different. I became friendly with Edgar Morin, who was Sephardic Jewish, at the beginning of a career which made him a figure of reference for two generations. He studied mass culture and film and inquired into the sub-stratum of modern culture: his book on *La Rumeur d'Orléans* is a study of contemporary anti-Semitism, and his depiction of the response to the murder of President Kennedy an early study of cultural globalization.

Above all, Edgar's sardonic critique of the rigidities of the French Communist Party (to which he had once belonged) was a triumph of moral intelligence. He was at the center of a group which had the same itinerary—like Robert Antelme, who had been deported as a resistant, and Denys Mascolo. I met the young Claude Lefort in this company, and learned that in addition to *Les Temps Modernes*, there was *Socialisme ou Barbarie*—which dared to imagine democratic and pluralistic forms of revolution.

Well before I went to Strasbourg in 1964, my friends from these two circles helped me to a privileged view of French culture. The Catholics taught me that, in France at least, many remained Catholic in spirit even if rejecting the substance of Catholic teaching. Having written that, I am unsure of it. They remained attached to the idea of a church, seeking it in the future since the actual church proved disappointing. They interpreted much of human history (and not only the history of religious groups, which they studied so intensely) as attempts to ground true churches—true in the sense of responding to basic human needs for solidarity and support. That is, no doubt, what accounted for my admiration and wonder (mixed with no small amount of envy) of the group: I never had so enduring an attachment. That they expected all these efforts to fall short increased my respect for them: it was evidence for a rare absence of illusion, even a good deal of spiritual heroism.

The former Communists had a distinctly similar historical progression in mind. They had served the inauthentic revolution, the untrue church—but still believed in a major social transformation. Their problem was: who would effect it, and how could it retain and deepen the democratic traditions of France? Both groups lived with hope (it was not quite expectation). There was an eschatological aura about them, an undercurrent of anticipatory excitement. I made their acquaintance in 1954 and 1955, before Raymond Aron published his mocking tract *L'Opium des Intellectuels*, in which he turned Marx's view of religion as illusory consolation against them.

I am now quite unsure that Aron, for all of his sober brilliance and vast knowledge, fortified by the closest of examinations of French and world politics, was right. In his devotion to studying ordinary and workaday politics, he was himself devoid of neither hope nor moral commitment. He had experienced at first hand the transition to Nazism in Germany—and returned from his studies to write an excellent book on German sociology and another on German philosophies of history. He made his way to London during the war to work with de Gaulle, toward whom he maintained a somewhat skeptical distance. De Gaulle apparently reciprocated, as I recall hearing Aron with some pleasure quote de Gaulle on their relationship: *Je ne peut pas lui saisir* (“I really can't grasp him”). Aron wrote several times a week for *Le Figaro* and had a very large

influence, of course, in the English-speaking world and elsewhere in Western Europe.

It would be erroneous to describe him as a conservative. He did have a large measure of realistic skepticism of human motives, thought that parliamentary democracy with a considerable welfare component was the most appealing as well as plausible of political forms, and certainly sympathized in the United States with Humphrey, Kennedy, and Stevenson, and in the United Kingdom with Attlee and Gaitskell. Yet he served as a *bête noire* of the French Left. His support for NATO and a rather sympathetic attitude to the American interpretation of the Cold War accounted for some of the antagonism to him, but his generalized skepticism, his amusicality regarding revolutionary themes may account for more of it. He did point out (in his book on classes in France, *Dix-Huit Leçons Sur La Société Industrielle*) that the transition to an industrial from an agrarian society in France, a rising standard of living, was itself a major change.

Indeed, an ascending generation of French sociologists set out to map it. They included Pierre Bourdieu, Serge Mallet, and Alain Touraine. Their work combined exacting description with historical generalization. It served the technocratic reformers in politics around Pierre Mendès France (who represented an entire segment of the French elite, installed in the ministries whatever the political colors of the governments which rather rapidly replaced one another) as a Michelin to the new France. Their work owed much to a figure in the older generation, Georges Friedmann, who was a serious student of industrial sociology—and who, politely received and as politely ignored, had visited with the Harvard sociologists when I was in Cambridge.

The large figures of French intellectual life (Aron, de Beauvoir, Sartre, Lévi-Strauss, Malraux, Merleau-Ponty, Ricœur) were so important to contemporaries abroad because they evoked universal themes. Even those working on French history, such as Furet, insisted on its larger significance. It was a culture in which learned monks (Calvez, Desroche, Lubac) wrote about Marx and a Jewish immigrant (Goldmann) about Pascal. Contrasted with what I depicted at the time, perhaps with too little nuance, as the triumphalism of American thought, they struck me as authentic seek-

ers after the truth of our common history. The contrast with Great Britain (even with the British Marxists) could not have been greater. Confronted with my last sentence, most British colleagues would have immediately voiced distress at the vagueness of terms such as “common history” and “truth.” The prominent philosopher Austin made it a point to warn against *l'ivresse de grande profondeur* (the intoxication of the pretension to great depth). He and his Oxford colleagues need not have worried: they were in no danger of intoxication.

I had the good fortune to work at Strasbourg alongside one of the most imposing thinkers of the generation which preceded Sartre's: Henri Lefebvre. From the southwest near Pau, the son of a local civil servant, he was active in the twenties when Sartre and the rest were still students. Attracted to surrealism, he later joined the Communist Party, which regarded him as an intellectual adornment and allowed him rather more philosophical liberty than usual: it had little choice. Henri was in the Resistance and after the war joined the exodus from a Communist Party which remained Stalinist until well after Stalin's death. In the meantime, he wrote (tellingly) on a great range of themes: the social life of his native region, the modern city, and contemporary culture and its political implications. His writing was inseparable from his person: it bore his *joie de vivre* as well as his amused and often sardonic, but sympathetic, view of the human situation.

Somehow, we became friends. He insisted, always, that I write more—and when I eventually overcame a long fallowness, well after I left Strasbourg, he was genuinely pleased. Henri saw no need to spare his colleagues and friends the cutting edge of his judgements. These were often right, and in any case, accompanied by a full measure of warmth. It was as if he had saved, for the colder climate of northern and eastern France, a good deal of the color and sun of Navarre. I think that he learned something from me of a more positive side of the United States: he was not surprised when I declared that for all of the rigidities of our Protestantism, we did have John Dewey. Henri was old enough to have appreciated Roosevelt, and visited New York in the thirties. He knew Italy quite well, and lots about German thought. One of his close friends, with whom he had written, was the Polish Jewish exile in France, Nor-

bert Guterman. Together, they produced in the thirties the earliest French writings on the idea of alienation in Marx.

At Strasbourg, Henri lived with his younger companion, Nicole Beurain. Nicole came from a working-class family, her father was a Communist trade unionist at Citroën. He and a friend had once driven to the USSR and when they crossed the border en route to Moscow could convince no one that they were Communists: their Citroën proved the opposite. Nicole was the first in her family to attend university, and the family was exceedingly distressed at her liaison with an elder teacher. Her father had some notion that Henri had had some connection to the party and when he enquired (after Henri's departure) was informed that Henri was a British agent. Eventually, the family were reconciled: the birth of Armel in the fall of 1964, just when we came to know them, helped. Nicole and Nina and Anna and Antonia became good friends. By a stroke of good fortune, they lived just around the corner from us, and the girls could visit by themselves.

We placed Antonia in a French kindergarten and arranged for Anna to go to school across the river in Kehl, the German border town. Some six weeks after, Antonia went around the corner one afternoon to visit with Nicole and the baby. Nicole came back with her and asked whether we knew: Antonia had acquired enough French to talk with her. There was also a very welcoming Alsatian family around the corner, the Ungerers, with an attractive mixture of children.

Life in Strasbourg was very agreeable. The faculty had its divisions, but there was general agreement that the visitor from Oxford had shown much discernment, intelligence and wit in choosing Strasbourg rather than obtaining a post in Paris.

(I always met colleagues when I took the morning express train to Paris and recall Roger Mehl declaring that the outer suburbs of Alsace were not, after all, that distant.) We were often invited to dine and had our own set of visitors, from Great Britain, the United States, and Germany.

In Germany in 1952, I discovered that the universities were not all that remote from their Wilhelmenian progenitors. In France in 1964, the Third Republican model of the university was dominant. The system was national but in Strasbourg, especially, local roots

were cultivated. I occasionally breakfasted with deans of the several faculties on the express to Paris and they were invariably under way to extract money from the minister or the director of higher education at the ministry. Often, the matter concerned the fact that too much (or anything at all) had been given to Nancy and not enough to Strasbourg. One argument was that Nancy was a provincial university—not, to be sure, without its limited merits, but not to be compared with the great European center of learning that was Strasbourg. Another, even more effective: the minister had only to look across the Rhine at the well-financed and well equipped German universities. If he preferred that *la jeunesse Alsacienne* cross the river to pursue its studies, he had only to continue his (inexplicable) policy of restricting money for Strasbourg. Returning on the evening train, it was usually possible to enjoy a celebratory glass with a triumphant dean: he had the check in his wallet.

De Gaulle is said to have declared that of all the *Corps d'État* he found the university teachers and the scientific researchers the most difficult to deal with. He took revenge, with not much subtlety. The political philosophical tendency of his antagonists was generally some form of radicalism, occasionally in its socialist variant, sometimes joined to left Catholic social doctrine. There were plenty of Gaullists in the universities and the research institutes, convinced that the President used the traditional language of national pride to achieve a project of modernization. De Gaulle confounded friend and enemy alike by ensuring the appointment to senior university posts of any number of Communists, on the grounds that they too were part of the nation. Certainly, the Communist Party was not conspicuous in the protest movement against the Algerian war, possibly because the French working class was quite unenthusiastic about the Algerian presence in France. Meanwhile, I can testify that the presidency's intelligence services functioned to perfection. One day I spoke at a discussion of Cuba and praised French policy (de Gaulle had to be severely advised by his staff not to visit Castro) as *à la hauteur des événements et à l'honneur de la France* (responding to the demands of history). By mid-morning, I had a call from the professor dealing with higher education at the Élysée Palace in Paris, suggesting that I drop by for lunch one day.

Looking back now, I understand de Gaulle's impatience with

the professors. In the humanities and some of the social sciences (the natural sciences and technology generated different attitudes): they clung to an artisanal model of production. They were right to do so—but since the society paid for only a certain number of artisans, competition for places was intense and a guild-like closure of the system resulted.

Meanwhile, the universities were full and over-full, short of the most elementary resources, their skeletal administrative services overwhelmed. The professoriate confounded its considerable privileges with the future of culture. Most of the citizenry sought expanded life chances and increased income, and the most influential part of the elite was devoted to developing an institutional framework for a measuredly democratic society of consumption. The academics' insistence on things unseen was certainly right. The difficulty was, they thought not only that their vision was legitimate, but that alternate views were perverse. They thought of themselves as Jacobins, but the state they wished to serve had long since become Bonapartiste. The revolution, briefly, was behind them.

No doubt, their capacity for ideological obstructionism was great—and strengthened by their total sincerity, their identification of themselves with French democracy entire. I recall the day we arrived in Strasbourg. The teacher and student organizations were striking, to protest budgetary insufficiencies. There were a couple of desultory pickets in front of the old Wilhelmenian building housing the faculties of letters and the two theological faculties, and the building was dark. I started to make my way upstairs, to see whether the dean was there. A figure emerged from the gloom: Monsignor Nédoncelle, the dean of the faculty of Catholic theology. We chatted a bit and he asked me whether *messieurs les collègues* at Oxford also went on strike from time to time: not very often, I told him. He was very proud: his faculty's rate of participation in the strike was one hundred percent.

We parted and Roger Mehl, dean of the faculty of Protestant theology, appeared. He noted that I was talking to his eminent colleague and expressed skepticism about the Catholic theologians' militancy. I observed that they were, according to their dean, all on strike. Perhaps, Roger said, but they belong to the Christian teachers' union and we to the real one—of the Left.

I went on upstairs and found the dean of the faculty of letters and social sciences alone in his office. He declared that we would go out for a drink to mark my arrival. These must be difficult days for you, I observed, since I had read in *Le Monde* that the minister of education had instructed the deans to provide lists of teachers joining the strike, so that appropriate deductions could be made from their salaries. Maybe the minister has asked that, said the dean, but since the concierge is striking no mail has come to me. If this request does come, he noted, of course I will circularize the professors and all the other academic ranks, ask anyone who was striking to inform me, so that I can give their names to the minister. In the event (purely hypothetical) that no one responds, he concluded, of course I will tell the minister that I have no names to give him. A year or so later, at a discussion in the Academic Senate of university reform, one of the professors, a senior figure with the Rosette of the Légion d'Honneur in his lapel, rose to declare: "I remind everyone that we are servants of the state. It follows, that it is our duty to resist the minister to the utmost of our ability."

De Gaulle was wise to conclude that to fight with the professors would constitute an unnecessary rear-guard action. A considerable number of them supposed that they incarnated France's traditions of democracy, even if de Gaulle and his party kept winning elections. (It was a sensation when in the 1965 presidential campaign, François Mitterrand forced de Gaulle into a run-off.) De Gaulle had succeeded in dividing the live forces of the nation, drawing much of the technocratic elite to his side. The passing agitation at the University of Strasbourg left most of the students greatly unmoved. Strasbourg had a splendid faculty, and some research units of international standing. The best students in France were not, however, at the universities but at the Grandes Écoles. The Strasbourg students were predominantly from the region, anxious about careers or confident that their families would be of help, and in no case ready or willing to take to the streets for any cause whatsoever. On Thursdays (when schools were out in France) large numbers of ecclesiastics appeared. Church schools could obtain subsidies if they had qualified teachers, and these were ordered to the universities to obtain their degrees. Nothing, absolutely nothing, in the university or the city could have been interpreted as anticipating the turbulence of 1968.

Sociology attracted a very mixed set of students. It was grouped with philosophy, psychology, social anthropology in those days in what was termed the section of philosophy. Students preparing to teach philosophy at Lycée took some sociology; we had a large number of students who intended to enter the field of “communication,” as they put it, and some from disciplines such as history or political science (but not very many, despite the fact that Strasbourg was the home of *Annales*). We also had a small group of students, mainly European, who were in some measure eccentric or engaged. The eccentric ones were disturbed because no one noticed their professions of anti-bourgeois faith; the engaged ones were saddened by the absence of large causes, or any cause at all.

Lefebvre of course attracted some exceptional students—a couple from the Maghreb, who came to Strasbourg specifically to study with him.

Some of *les enragés* (angry young French) did so as well, and these were especially drawn by his views of the city as a potential utopia, a place for a permanent festival. Some joined the movement termed *Situationniste*, which proclaimed its affinity with surrealism and dada, and depicted much of modern culture as an oppressive fraud—which, in turn, obliged those able to see through it to employ any and all means to replace it. What would follow? The revolution in spontaneity was program enough. These views were set down by the French writer Guy Debord, who, on a visit to our department, proposed that we make the dinner that usually follows a visitor’s lecture the main and sole event.

Lefebvre objected that that would exclude quite a few persons who could not be accommodated at the restaurant from the benefits of listening to him, since he did not propose that evening to seize the restaurant. The senior Strasbourg philosopher Georges Gusdorf suggested that Debord was running from an argument. One promptly ensued, and Debord later pronounced himself entirely satisfied with the very minor disruption he had caused: more ample consequences, unspecified, would follow. We finally proceeded to dinner.

The *Situationniste* students were in fact attentive, friendly and supportive, and took what we said in our courses very seriously—in short, model students. Some of them in the fall of 1967 would

be elected to run the student government, and provoked the university administration to obtain a judicial order stripping them of office. As I understand it, they sought to abolish the counselling services at the student health program as *psychiatrie policière* (police psychiatry). Additionally, they sought contact (at considerable cost in telephone bills) with the most radical elements of the Japanese student movement.

They did make a contribution to national and international discussion by publishing a brilliant and witty pamphlet, *De la Misère en Milieu Étudiant*, in part a complaint about economic and sexual deprivation, in part a demand for more attention from their teachers, in part a derisive rejection of our pedagogy as fraudulent—inauthentic preparation for an incomprehensible world.

They moved, shortly thereafter, to the suburban Parisian university at Nanterre (to which Lefebvre had moved in the fall of 1965) and in March 1968 launched the campaign which led to the revolt of May at the Sorbonne. When, in New York in 1967, I read solemn accounts in *The New York Times* of their success at Strasbourg (the entire attention of France was concentrated on their antics), I asked friends in Strasbourg whether the docility of most Strasbourg students had been succeeded by zeal not seen in the city since the 1790s. Not at all, was the response; the *Situationnistes* were a vanguard without anyone behind them—a judgment, in the event, rather too hasty.

My own teaching at Strasbourg consisted of a *cours magistral* (a lecture course, given once a week for two hours), seminars of my own, some work with the teachers of American studies, and participation in Lefebvre's seminars for advanced students.

The *cours magistral* was a serious matter, quite formal. I gave the first on modern social thought and followed it by one on modern industrial society. As I began the first lecture, I thought of my high school French teacher and his low opinion of my abilities and performance in his class. He would have been deeply shocked at the thought of one of his more mediocre pupils entrusted with a major French cultural responsibility. Somehow I managed, and my imperfect French became less imperfect as time went on.

That had been a theme when I first met the senior philosopher at Strasbourg, the learned and sardonic George Gusdorf. He had

to approve of my appointment, and I called on him in his office down the street (Rue Goethe) from the old villa housing our department. He began, frankly enough, with the observation that my French was quite inelegant. All the more reason, I said, to hope that he would sympathize with my candidacy for a teaching post. Too old to obtain a scholarship from the Alliance Française, it would give me a chance to practice. Gusdorf then tried another tack: I suppose, he mused, that you are one of the great thinkers in *le monde Anglophone*. No, I said; I would prefer to be thought of as having a more modest status—rather like his in France. That did it: he came around from his desk, extended his hand, and welcomed me to Strasbourg.

Gusdorf came from an Alsatian family that moved to Bordeaux in 1871 rather than live under the Germans. His total devotion to the life of the mind had as a corollary a low evaluation of the rest of existence, as if it were intrinsically disappointing. Bald, short, dressed in conventional dullness, curt and precise of address, he looked like someone in a satiric film about French academic life. He seemed thoroughly secular, yet was motivated by a great passion—the belief that thought could seize existence and perhaps one day master it. If he had been asked about Freud's remark that religion was subject to disproof and that the scientific pursuit of truth was the only road to integrity, he would have disparaged Freud's certainty—but he was very close to that view himself. He did not admit a principled distinction between natural scientific and philosophical enquiry—all of existence was his laboratory. Rooted in his milieu (a professor Unrat who, unlike the character in *Der Blaue Engel*, would not dream of visiting a nightclub), he was quite adventurous in thought.

Fixed provincial rhythms marked life in Strasbourg, but some of the university's teachers were adventurers of the intellect. The others were certainly at a very high European level. Alsace's experience as a historical crossroads—an experience which, given four shifts from France to Germany and back (1871, 1918, 1940, 1944), which many of its inhabitants would have been glad to have been spared—imparted more than local interest to its peculiarities. The university was certainly at least as open to the world as Oxford—if only in its own way.

We had plenty of visitors. I recall George Lichtheim, on his way back to London from a visit to Habermas in Frankfurt, as more than usually open about his habitual melancholy. He had written a very positive—justly positive—review of some of Habermas’s work in the *Times Literary Supplement*, and not neglected to regret the narrow and local limits of contemporary British social thought. That was not all he regretted, and perhaps not the main thing. He talked more openly than he had in England about his own fate. Had matters been different, he said, I too would have been a professor in Germany with an institute, junior colleagues, and students. George had also visited in Bonn, whose restricted politics he regarded with patronizing distaste. He did not think the neutralization of Germany was possible, but thought that the Bonn republic for all of its strengths (its younger people and newer intellectuals) exhibited a peculiar combination of whining self-pity and subservience to the “West.” George knew, of course, of the CIA funding of the Congress for Cultural Freedom and had benefited from some of it himself. I did not challenge him about it, but he could have defended himself: no amount of money would make him alter his judgement of the amateurishness of American politics, particularly after the murder of Kennedy, whom he admired. George spent some time at Columbia University in 1965 writing a book on French Marxism—and was duly grateful for the books I sent him and general ideological reportage I provided. He was a critical but admiring observer of de Gaulle, in whom he found a European authenticity.

Other visitors included the Habermas family. I do not recall what deep themes we discussed. I do recall a walk through the monumental parts of the city, and Jürgen’s response to it: “Beautiful, but I could never live here; it is too close to Germany.” With much of his German generation, in fact, he preferred New York to Paris, and it was only relatively late in his life that he realized that he, Foucault, and Ricœur had more in common than divided them.

I made any number of trips. I recall one into the Soviet bloc to give talks in 1965. I began in Budapest, where Ágnes Heller, Ferenc Fehér, and Ivan Varga were my hosts. The revolt and the Soviet invasion were not quite a decade in the past, but were not directly talked about.

The leader installed by the Soviet Union, Janos Kadar, had pro-



With Jürgen Habermas.

claimed his version of openness (“those who are not against us are with us”). That entailed encouragement of the pursuit of private purposes, and Budapest in its shabby/genteel décor was strikingly different from East Berlin with its iconography and slogans. While the Opera Café in East Berlin was at the time stolid and grey, for example, the old Gerbaud Café on Vörösmarty Square in Budapest animated. The waiters were quite like those in Vienna; in their deliberate pace they seemed to be thinking of the departed glories of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy.

My friends in Budapest constituted a circle, allowed to write and think differently about philosophy and even a bit of meta-history, as long as they did not challenge the existence of the regime. They still sought an ideal Communism; the purged party wanted to increase the production of consumer goods. So Ágnes Heller wrote about ideal needs while the party, much undisturbed, set about satisfying the actual ones. In these trying circumstances, I was taken to call on the iconic figure of unorthodox orthodox Marxism, György Lukács.

He had been minister of culture in the short lived independent government of Imre Nagy in 1956, then taken to Romania, and was allowed to return to Hungary a year later, but was not for a long while published in Hungary. His long—very long—works

were published instead in the Federal German Republic. It is striking that he was spared the fate of Nagy, who was executed (or murdered) by the restored pro-Soviet Hungarian regime in 1957: Lukács's extinction would have caused an uproar among western intellectuals. As to whether the decision to spare him was taken after consultation with the Soviet regime, it is difficult to reach a firm conclusion. Presumably, they feared the political consequences of eliminating him. By letting him continue to work, if in exceedingly abstract terms, they kept open the possibility (and, as importantly, the impression) of preparing an alternative dogma in case a major change were needed. More prosaically, however, they might have decided that his exceedingly dense prose would bring no one onto the streets.

I did not use the visit to ask him about his repudiation of his own masterpiece, *History and Class Consciousness*, attacked by the Soviet party when it appeared in 1923. I also left his course thereafter unchallenged, and did not even ask how he had managed to stay alive and out of jail during the purges of the thirties in Moscow. I'm now sorry I was so hesitant. He was insistent that I give him my view of Western Europe and the US. In the ensuing discussion, it was clear that he had much ground to make up: he was under the impression that *Partisan Review* was as committed to social revolution as it had been (and even then with plenty of reservations) in the thirties. He had some knowledge of the Frankfurt School, of Sartre, but entire areas of Western thought were either outside his ken or reduced to their own caricatures. He was very appreciative of the visit, and gave the impression of serenity rather than resignation: he was devoting his final energies, the world having been so disappointing, to describing the essence of a better one. I now see that I responded to the opportunity with too much reverence. There would have been no point in asking him why he did not emigrate to the West, or publish critical works of much more historical specificity, since official restrictions and censorship were evident—although I regret not asking him what unpublished writing was in his files.

A small group of younger persons had organized itself around him. One of them was András Hegedüs, unlike the others not Jewish, a recruit to the revived Communist Party after the arrival of the Soviet Army in 1945. By 1956 he was prime minister, and was

sent by the Soviet embassy to Moscow along with the senior leaders of the party when the Nagy government was formed. I recollect his saying that in the airplane, Rákosi and the others declared the rising against them the work of "fascists." He said the moment marked the beginning of his own journey from Stalinism: if so many "fascists" remained in socialist Hungary, there was something wrong with their model of socialism. He studied social sciences at the Soviet Academy of Sciences and returned to Hungary as deputy director of the official office of social statistics. In fact, he became quite an acute sociologist, concentrating on questions of labor and (within limits) citizenship. His work exemplified the uses of empirical inquiry in a situation in which reigning dogma denied the obvious: domination and exploitation in state socialist relationships of production. The philosophers and theorists emigrated, eventually; Hegedüs remained to experience a considerable loosening of party controls and the beginnings of the transition to electoral democracy.

I went on to Warsaw. By contrast with the official tediousness of Budapest, Warsaw was in permanent ebullience. The party had to share influence and some power with the Catholic Church, and the uneasy co-existence of the mutually suspicious hierarchies produced a certain amount of free space in the assortment of journals, publishing houses, research institutes, and universities which marked Poland's intellectual life.

I was told, many times, the story of the day in 1956 when Gomułka was visited in prison by his party comrades. There was, they said, good news and bad news: the good news was that he was to be released; the bad news was that he was now general secretary of the party. Gomułka in his turn promptly released Cardinal Wyszyński from confined residence in a village, asked him to resume command of the Polish Church, and conferred with him about the economic and social crisis of the nation. The Warsaw intellectuals, Catholic, Communist and other, frequented the café of the Hotel Bristol in those days, where the coffee was good, Carpe Juvive better, and foreign newspapers available. A Communist burst in on the group, asked if they had heard the news of the meeting, and provoked a response from a Catholic friend. "They have met? How terrible; now everything will be forbidden." I found that sardonic atmosphere, not at all concealed, nearly everywhere I went.

My hosts were the sociologists, fully in touch by then with work in other countries, and engaged in a range of projects on Poland's actual institutions. They did not hesitate to employ a class analysis of Polish society, and found support or at least tolerance for this from Adam Schaff, the party's more or less official philosopher. When I was there, he was less so, since the Polish edition of his book on Marxism and the individual had been published after first being published in West Germany. There was a public discussion of the book and Gomułka himself had been heard to complain. When the party threw him in jail for seeking a more open course, he said, Schaff joined in condemning him. Now that Poland had that course, Schaff found that there were large amounts of alienation in Poland. Not a profound thinker, Gomułka found that unfair. Schaff was neither sent to jail or dismissed from the Academy of Sciences, where he had a major role in the social sciences—but was subjected to a good deal of criticism. When I arrived one night at the Kołakowskis' for dinner (they lived near the truly hideous Palace of Culture given by the USSR), Leszek showed me the Polish literary weekly, with a long article on the book. "Who wrote it," I asked. "A great thinker," replied Leszek. "Great thinkers were rare," I objected. "No," he said, "the man thinks all the time—as to how he can keep his job as head of state radio."

I wondered to what extent, as an adaptation to Poland's position as a Soviet satellite, the sardonic voice I found in 1965 Warsaw was a continuation of the defense against total anguish by a nation always beleaguered. I experienced another kind of cultural continuity: the Baumans took me to the opera, and the public and their manners were far more reminiscent of La Scala or Covent Garden than of some *Proletkult* performance—and that dread seriousness and organizational hypertrophy which marked East Berlin was totally missing.

I walked around what had been the Ghetto and its monuments, of course, and drove to my grandfather's city, Radom, on empty highways. At the municipal records office, there was a card on a Birnbaum family which had emigrated to Sweden at the end of the war, but no indication of how they had survived it. I knew who they were—distant relatives who had then moved on to Israel. There was not a trace of Jewish life in the town otherwise: no synagogue,

no Jewish merchants. Leszek Kołakowski had grown up there, and had recalled it as full of orthodox Jews.

As with the rest of my intellectual and political life, the search for roots, the concern with Jewishness, the fascination with anti-Semitism and the Holocaust, was there—but subordinated (perhaps I should say sublimated). What was central was my attention not to the past but to present and future, a critical approach to real existing society, a search for the way to transcend it.

My Polish friend Jan Szczepański (who was not a Marxist) had declared that if political interference were eliminated, the scientists and applied scientists would move humanity forward. There were resemblances, in his approach, to the work of the Western thinkers who under a miscellany of names were saying much the same thing. The new working class, the knowledge elite, would not only take control of the processes of production; they would extend that to the governance of society entire. The widespread diffusion of education and a general rise in the educational level would do the rest, as an enlightened body politic would control those with specialized knowledge. Just how the obdurate refusal of the Communist parties in the East, and the political class in the West, backed by citizens skeptical of a knowledge elite, could be overcome no one quite knew. A new agency of liberation, or rather progress, had been imagined to replace a revolutionary working class which shirked its historic duty. Old or new working class, liberation or even substantial progress toward it, still lay over a perpetually receding horizon.

Poland, two years later, was to suffer the consequences of the 1967 war in the Middle East. A nationalist faction of the Communist Party denounced “Zionists,” by which they meant the socially integrated and highly educated Jews who had influential positions in government, the party and the professions. It was a convenient way to combine Polish nationalism with the appearance of service to the Soviet Union, where Brezhnev and his regime were themselves hostile to intellectuals, Jewish or not, whom they suspected of excessive interest in a larger world. Many Polish Jews left the country (the Catholic Kołakowski did so in general disgust, and because his wife was Jewish). Ideological troublemakers were removed from the nation. Their posts, however, went to politically conformist ca-

reerists incapable of dealing with the many problems of the society. Their short-term success led to a heightening of the tensions which, little over a decade later, engendered the movement of Solidarity (*Solidarność*) and all that followed.

There were almost no Jews to expel from the German Democratic Republic, but it managed dissent by brutal repression—or by expelling dissenters, often against their will, to West Germany. Still, the regime insisted on the appearance of contact with the West. I was invited to visit colleagues at the University of Jena who worked on the sociology of religion. My host, Olof Klohr, met me at the rail station in Leipzig and explained that the drive to Jena would be slow. The Warsaw Pact was engaged in maneuvers, and the party daily *Neues Deutschland* was extremely proud of one German general—described as commanding a multi-national force at “the front.” We encountered a Polish airborne unit, if in trucks, and a tank column from the Soviet Army itself, many of the crews obviously from the Asian republics. Klohr was from an old Communist family that had moved to Communist Germany from Hamburg, and his wife was the daughter of state Defense Minister General Hofmann (who, as General Gomez, had defended Madrid as an International Brigade commander thirty years earlier). Klohr and his colleagues did not use their protected situation to try intellectual experiments.

Their sociology of religion was a schematic view of secularization, as a necessary consequence of the triumph of instrumental reason. It was an orthodox Marxist version of Western modernization doctrine. Since alienation was ending with the development of socialism, it was only a matter of time before its residues, such as religious belief, also disappeared. What was not explained, or even confronted, was the existence in the Democratic Republic of an intellectually and socially (and in the end, politically) active Protestant church. Part of it had a positive relationship to the regime (*Kirche im Sozialismus*, or Church in Socialism). Another, smaller segment, was carefully and selectively oppositional. The entire church cultivated relations with the church in West Germany (the two had not institutionally divided until the erection of the Berlin Wall in 1961). The regime had a minister who dealt with the church, and the Ministry of State Security certainly had it under observation. The Jena group, however, appeared to keep its distance from the church.

The Protestants who certainly did not limit themselves to attendance at Sunday service, but who worked in the church's institutions of education and solidarity, were not culturally backward. Despite large obstacles to admission to universities put in their way at different times in the history of the Communist German state, they were very well educated, frequently in science (such as Angela Merkel) or the professions. Their spiritual cousins in the Federal Republic opposed the total rationalization of life in capitalism—and the Protestant vanguard and no small part of the main body on the other side of the Wall were engaged in a similar effort in state socialism. Asked about it, their usual reply was that they sought to construct a different sort of social space—and to be ready for history's unexpected ruptures. The collapse of the regime twenty-four years after I visited Jena in 1965 showed how right they were—and how obtuse my Jena colleagues.

Back in France, I made regular visits to the weekly seminars directed by Henri Desroche. The seminar themes included issues of community development in the Third World to resistance to cultural homogenization in the First, studies of the most varied secular and social movements, and inquiries into the persistence and transformation of religious belief and practice in different historical settings. Desroche was immensely sensitive to cultural and psychological nuance, but insisted nonetheless on returning to his own beginning point: the liberty of spirit in a world of constraint.

His institute occupied the top floors of a building on a cul-de-sac in Paris Seven, not far from the Seine. The attic had been converted into an apartment for the family. As always, Henri was a totally devoted and loyal friend—which, he thought, entailed the duty of speaking frankly to those he considered close. In my case, he argued that I should write more, noted that I seemed more at ease in spontaneously developing ideas than in formally presenting them, and regretted that I was missing opportunities to join a larger dialogue. His admonitions did not add to my misery, since I had long since made their obvious truth my own. They did not stir me to immediate devotion to larger projects, but as marks of friendship they were invaluable. Henri lived to experience what was, much later, more creativity on my part. I think he appreciated that as a delayed tribute to our friendship.

Another friend of the period in Paris was Lucien Goldmann, who was at the same institution with a chair in cultural studies. Lucien had come to France from Romania, managed to flee to Switzerland during the war (and to evade the Swiss border police, so that he was not sent back to certain death), and studied there with Jean Piaget in Geneva.

He developed his own version of Piaget's *structuralisme génétique*, a version he thought a contribution to Marxism but which in many ways was quite original and in any case entirely un-dogmatic. He studied the inner development, psychological emphasis, and intellectual structure of ideas in historical contexts. His masterpiece was a book on Pascal, Racine, and their situation in seventeenth-century France, *Le Dieu Caché (The Hidden God)*. In his essay, "Juif et Anti-Sémite," written years before Goldmann's work appeared, Sartre mocked the French anti-Semite who believed that no one with a Jewish origin could understand French culture, and named Racine as a totemic figure. I wonder if that, in part, spurred Lucien to choice of theme. He was a large person, direct, even at times obstreperous, with firm conviction that he had great talents precisely where they were not immediately evident even to benign observers—in the analysis of the larger movement of politics and in the conduct of smaller campaigns in the French academy.

He was generous and sympathetic, and I owe to him my introduction to Henri Lefebvre and the support from Georges Gurvitch that opened the way for my appointment to Strasbourg. He and his wife, Annie, who studied film, had an apartment on the Rue de Rennes some few blocks from Saint-Germain-des-Prés and Les Deux Magots. Lucien at times wondered, absurdly, whether he was too far from the action. Any number of foreign and French visitors were always at their table. Lucien had a struggle to be appointed to the École, but the excellence of his book and the discussion it stimulated made it impossible for his detractors to block his ascent. Nothing so pleased him as his international recognition, and I recall his triumphal visits to the Free University of Berlin and to the United States. It was cruel that he died relatively young—with much unsaid and unwritten.

As all of these events were occurring, and as Nina and Anna and Antonia so visibly enjoyed Strasbourg, I struggled to find an

answer to the question: what next? My Oxford appointment was to terminate in 1966; there did not seem to be any plausible openings in the small world of Great Britain; I was considered for chairs in Germany but had no offers. I could have remained in Strasbourg as a visitor for another year, and that could have become permanent at some point—perhaps. My sense of floating in cultural space was acute, drew upon a deeply rooted conviction of rootlessness. There were good reasons why I was so attracted to the problem of alienation in modern culture. It was unclear what would overcome, or lessen, my own. I had to admit to myself that I was suffering from homesickness. News from the United States, visits from American friends, correspondence with others, had a poignancy I did not experience in other connections. I was very glad to have been asked to review Christopher Lasch's *The New Radicalism in America* by *Partisan Review*, and the new *New York Review of Books* asked me to review Brzezinski's and Huntington's book comparing the United States and the Soviet Union.

What complicated the situation was a very acute sense of failure. The Oxford matter weighed upon me and, far worse, I felt intellectually sterile. I did not revise my thesis and make it into a book. I did not make my own contribution (aside from brief papers) to the discussions of industrial society or secularization. I was intellectually productive in discussion, but could not (or did not) discipline myself to produce a sustained piece of written work. That was, clearly, a disadvantage in my search for a post in two senses. It weakened my bargaining position, and my lack of self-esteem narrowed and indeed distorted my capacity to make realistic assessments of the situation as I negotiated with several institutions. Even without a good deal of written work, my international experience and capacity as a teacher were very large assets. What I had written, meanwhile, was mostly quite good and some of it very good or even excellent. Colleagues were sure of that much; I was not, and some or much of that must have been communicated to my interlocutors.

I visited the University of California at Santa Cruz the year before it opened, and Wesleyan. Santa Cruz offered me a visitorship; Wesleyan, nothing. I finally settled for a three-year appointment to the graduate faculty of the New School for Social Research, accom-

panied by vague (and worthless) assurances of a tenured appointment at some point. At least we could live in New York.

Nina was emphatically unenthusiastic about moving to the United States, and I was distressed that she did not understand why I thought it necessary to return home. My distress was real, but her understanding might have been greater had I confided in her more. In that, as in other things, I did her an injustice. Mostly however, I did myself an injustice, shrouding myself in self-recrimination. Nina complained of having to live with a severely depressed person, and her complaint was thoroughly justified. The one thing worse was my having to live with myself.

Somehow, I staggered through the year. I was helped by returning to London for a month to work with my original psychoanalyst there, Dr. Walter Joffe. My initial analysis with him, begun in 1954, had gone well, and seemed quite promising when he left in early 1956 to return to South Africa. A month or so isn't a long time in a lifetime of inner conflict, but I gained an indispensable minimum of clarity.

My search for a post had one entertaining consequence: somehow, my name appeared on the list of candidates for a chair at the new German university at Konstanz, and the founding committee wrote to Henri Lefebvre asking for his views of the matter. Henri was busy and suggested that I draft the letter—which, as I wrote it, could not be described as balanced. "*Mon cher Norman,*" said Henri, "*ce n'est pas précisément un chef d'oeuvre de modestie*" ("it is not exactly a masterpiece of modesty"). I responded that I did not see the point of ignoring the advantages presented by an unusual opportunity. Henri may or may not have sent substantially the text I gave him; for whatever reason, the appointment was not offered. Looking back, I note that quite apart from my not wishing to renew the Strasbourg appointment, I made no very systematic efforts to generate possibilities in the UK or in Germany.

As Nina intuited, I had decided to return to the US with as much inner finality as I could muster: reaching that decision took such strength as I had, and dealing with multiple possibilities was beyond my capacity. I could have been more flexible about the US, but treated the process as an experiment in validation, not a test of the job market. Actually, the job market was very much to the ad-

vantage of plausible applicants, and much of my anxiety was self-generated.

I visited New York with Anna and Antonia in the spring of 1966. We stayed with my parents in New Rochelle and looked at schools. The girls, as always, treated the trip and the impending changes as a promising occasion. I owe a very great deal to the love and spontaneous enjoyment of life they showed in those uncertain and troubled months. They were my connections to the happier dimensions of existence, and I regret that I did not allow them to teach me more about it.

One final academic engagement in Europe remained—the 1966 International Congress of Sociology at Evian. In contrast to the ideological tensions of the three previous meetings (1956, 1959, 1962), this one was quite routinized. The presence of the sociologists from the Soviet bloc was a matter of course; little energy and time was expended on familiar conflicts, as if a wind of sobriety were blowing in constantly from Lake Geneva.

Considerable attention was given to the common structures of the advanced societies, as if many of the participants were either tired of political argument—or, not quite the same thing, seeking a different way to express it. The turbulence in Germany and the US did not bother the German and American sociologists too much. As it would soon turn out, these events were far from local. What the next years would actually bring, few prophesied—least of all those of us looking for a secular substitute for socialism.