

# Humanities

## *Prejudice and Potatoes*

At some point in his development, virtually every Irish-American Catholic learns of the travails to which his immigrant forebears were subjected: the huddling in the dank, dreary, teeming tenements of "Hell's Kitchen"; the "Help Wanted—No Irish Need Apply" signs; the exploitation of Irish men, women, and children to expand the railroads, mine the coal, and produce the shirtwaists under all the varied sweatshop conditions of a rapidly industrializing society that valued profits above humans.

It is a familiar story, essentially one of prejudice against the newcomer, with the special fillip of Catholic-Protestant animosity. In the traditional American rendition, it has a happy ending: like the Germans who came with them, like the Italians, Poles, Greeks, and others who followed, the Irish fought their way up in the Land of Opportunity until their sons and daughters shared all the hazards and happiness that America offers—as symbolized by the election of one of them to the Presidency.

Prejudice is real, the story admits, but so is the promise of equal opportunity. Just give America time.

Now comes an American of Irish descent to spoil the story by arguing that it took much more than time and opportunity to eradicate the early prejudice against Irish Catholic immigrants and that, in fact, the people who hung up the "No Irish Need Apply" signs were not necessarily acting on prejudice; they were also exercising objective judgment.

The Irish who came to the United States in the great waves of the 1840's and 1850's, according to Emmet Larkin, were discriminated against not just because they were strangers, but because they were "objectively objectionable." Their gradual assimilation into the American "melting pot" resulted not from the magical powers of that much-celebrated cauldron, but from a dramatic improvement in the character of the immigrants themselves. That improvement stemmed from a major reform of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland, and that reform, in turn, was related to a lack of potatoes.

Larkin is professor of British history at the University of Chicago. His credentials, both as scholar and as Irishman, are impeccable. He is the author of a well-received book, of a number of articles in prestigious journals, and of a manuscript that will soon go to press

as the first of a projected, five-volume history of the Catholic Church in Ireland. He has been a Fulbright Fellow (London School of Economics), and the recipient of a series of grants from the American Council of Learned Societies, the American Philosophical Society, the Social Science Research Council, M.I.T., Brown University, the University of Chicago and, most recently, the National Endowment for the Humanities.

On the ethnic side, he is a second-generation American, New York-born-and-bred, the son of a father who spent nearly three years in jail for his I.R.A. activities in the 1920's, the grandson of a man who was banished from *his* father's house following a bitter quarrel between the two over Parnell. Readers of James Joyce will recall that the division among Irish Catholics over the downfall of this charismatic, Irish Protestant nationalist following a divorce scandal figures prominently in *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (the Christmas-dinner argument between Mr. Casey and Dante) and in the short story, "Ivy Day in the Committee Room".

Such personal details would be beside the point were it not for the nature of Larkin's thesis. Considering his view that the Irish Catholic Church was principally responsible for the better caliber of immigrants who came here in the 1860's and after, Larkin is careful to point out that his thesis rests not on the theological view of religious institutions as providing opportunities for God's grace, but as social institutions whose influence can also be analyzed in basically secular terms. Leaving aside questions about a possible religious stake in his findings, he invites one to listen to his case and examine the evidence.

## *Ancient but Sturdy Nuisance*

As the 1800's opened, Larkin says, the Irish Catholic Church was emerging from a "quasi-legal to a legal status." During the latter decades of the 18th century, it had achieved a certain acceptance by the English government as an ancient but sturdy nuisance which, having weathered a variety of repressions, could on occasion prove useful. Irish of every persuasion (including Anglicans and Presbyterians in the north) periodically grew restive under English rule; at several critical moments the Vatican—in exchange for moderate British policies toward Catholics in other parts of the Empire—had managed to mute the belligerence of Irish Catholics toward the Crown and toward their

Protestant landlords.

Yet Catholics in both Ireland and Great Britain were penalized by a host of political and civil restrictions. Until 1793, they could not vote at all—and after that, only if they owned a certain amount of land. Catholics could not hold senior military rank. Their sons could attend Trinity, but not earn a degree. The Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, appointed by the King, could not be Catholic. The Church itself functioned as an underground, side-street organization that was allowed to operate as long as it did not become too obtrusive.

There was little danger, in 1800, that the Church would make itself conspicuous by success. Because of the legal restrictions on its activities and the economic consequences of those restrictions, the Church could not support nearly enough priests to serve its widely scattered, predominantly rural people. Though the mass of Irish had for centuries maintained their loyalty to the Church, that loyalty, Larkin contends, was not simply a matter of adherence to a well-defined moral code, but also a way of preserving cultural identity. The display of a scapular, the use of a rosary, the refusal to eat meat on Friday, were not so much evidences of genuine devotion as they were symbols of a common front against the decline of the Gaelic order, the submergence of Ireland into the English nation, and the gradual erosion of all the great and small traditions that had ever distinguished the Irish as a people.

### Religious Realpolitik

Recognizing that “Catholicism” was more symbol than substance for most Irish, the hierarchy was anxious for a relaxation of the restrictions that prevented its clergy from being effective. Accordingly, in 1800, the Church supported the Act of Union, which merged Ireland into the United Kingdom. In effect, the Church turned its back on Irish nationalism for the moment in exchange for a promise from England that Catholics would be allowed to vote and, in general, exercise the same privileges that Irish Protestants had always enjoyed. But the bargain also reflected an Irish Catholic *realpolitik*: the Catholics preferred, according to Larkin, “domination by a tolerant majority of English Protestants to domination by an intolerant minority of Irish Protestants.”

As so often happens with politically sensitive promises, however, those given Irish Catholics in 1800 were not fulfilled for nearly 30 years. In 1829, finally, the remaining civil disabilities on Catholics and their Church were eliminated; finally, the hierarchy could begin the work of converting its many nominal Catholics into practicing ones.

Unfortunately, the Church was in no shape for such an overdue endeavor. The first problem was that of sheer numbers: in 1840, the Church had about 2,150 priests and 1,000 nuns for a Catholic population of more than 6.5 million—a ratio of one priest for every 3,000 Catholics, and one nun for every 6,000. “This,” comments Larkin, “was obviously an impossible pas-

toral load”—the more so because many of the clergy exhibited greater weaknesses of the flesh and spirit than any of their parishioners.

In a poor land, ordination and assignment to a parish, no matter how mean, guaranteed at least a minimal income. For a good many clergymen, the priesthood was a way to keep their parents and all their relatives afloat. Though the Irish priests did not recreate the worst abuses that led to the Protestant Reformation—selling indulgences, for example—they sometimes came close, charging for religious services that Catholics regard as central to their practice of religion: baptism, marriage, and the last rites.

The unifying character of many of their clergy was known to the hierarchy, but the paucity of priests made it difficult for the bishops to discipline wayward pastors. In the realization that they had no replacements for any but the worst, and in the hope that even a bad priest would do *some* good occasionally, the hierarchy resigned itself to making the best bricks it could from the straw it had.

Not entirely resigned. By what Larkin terms an “heroic effort” and one that he cannot quite explain yet, the Church managed, between 1840 and 1845, to lower the ratio of people to priests very slightly. Yet the population kept increasing at a rate that would have made it impossible, in the long run, for the Church even to maintain the 3,000-to-one ratio of 1840. Without the intervention of some outside force, the hierarchy’s strenuous pastoral efforts in the 1840’s would eventually have been reduced to futility by the sheer increase in numbers of Irish Catholics.

That “outside force” appeared in 1845 in the form of a blight on potatoes. Blight is essentially a mold that kills leaves, blooms, or an entire plant; it turns potatoes into an inedible mush. The blight that appeared in the potato crop was probably brought over from the Continent. It could not have survived, Larkin notes, without steamships, because the life of the bacteria is too short to survive a lengthy ocean crossing. The chemistry of potatoes is an interesting thing. Though the Irish peasant ate little else, he ate lots of them—and potatoes supply every nutritional requirement for human growth except vitamin A and calcium. Despite their poverty, most rural Irish owned a cow, and usually ate their potatoes with milk. Milk supplies vitamin A and calcium.

### Potatoes Were Life

Blight was noticeable in the Irish potato crop of 1845, but it was not widespread enough to ruin a bumper harvest. In 1846, however, the blight was complete. The entire potato crop was destroyed, all of it a soggy mess. Irish peasants were not totally dependent on potatoes; they also grew grain. But they had always used the grain as a cash crop to pay rent. Potatoes were subsistence. Potatoes were life. And the potatoes had failed them. Without potatoes, they had to sell everything: grain, cows, whatever home furnishings they possessed.

The Great Famine had begun.

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## Second Look at Paradise

Brazil did not abolish slavery until 1888, about 25 years after the U.S. did. It made up for its slow start by moving rapidly to a society in which acceptance was to be based entirely on personal achievement and education—on "class", not color. The U.S. abolished slavery only after a long and bitter civil war, the effects of which are still with us. In Brazil, abolition was achieved entirely by legislation and greeted by parades in the streets. Students of comparative race relations point out that Brazil has never had a civil rights movement—obviously because its Blacks never felt the need for one.

All appears to be harmony: whites, Blacks, Indians and *mestizos* mingle with and marry their equals regardless of color. Mexican writer Jose de Vasconcelos felt Brazil would be the first American nation to develop a "cosmic race," an amalgam of Europeans, Africans, and Indians. "With respect to race relations," wrote Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre, "the Brazilian situation is probably the nearest approach to paradise to be found anywhere in the world."

Lately, some scholars have taken a second look at "paradise" and suggested that the racial problems that bedevil the U.S. also affect Brazil; the two societies just give their forms of discrimination different names.

Among these scholars is Dr. Robert B. Toplin, assistant professor of history at Denison University. After five years of study here and in Brazil, he notes that whites dominate both societies, and that while Brazil's middle class does indeed include extraordinary numbers of persons of African descent, they tend to be light-skinned; dark-skinned Blacks, he says, "noticeably cluster in the economic ranks of marginal people such as day-laborers, cleaning women, landless tenant farmers—in general, the inhabitants of rural shacks and urban shanty-towns."

In the U.S., a person with any African blood is designated "Black" or "non-white". Brazil has a host of terms to describe various mixtures, such as *cabra*, *pardo*, *moreno*, *mulato escuro*, and *mulato claro*. According to traditional interpretations, these categories reflect the heterogeneous composition of the Brazilian people and their liberal attitudes toward interracial marriage.

But they have also, according to Toplin, frustrated any civil rights movement because "in Brazil; the mulatto can be cajoled into identifying himself with the well-established classes, a situation which drives a wedge between his own interests and those of the *negro* population." Precisely because U.S. whites have not recognized any distinction between "pure" Afri-

cans and light-skinned Blacks who have as much European ancestry as, or more than, African, the uniform U.S. classification has generated a sense of racial solidarity that gives the civil rights movement much of its effectiveness. Indeed, militant Afro-Brazilians such as Abdias do Nascimento have pointed to the U.S. as an example of what Black unity can achieve, and have been frustrated at the refusal of light-skinned mulattoes to drop their supposed class superiority and join dark-skinned Blacks in a common front.

In fact, Toplin argues, the U.S. has done as good a job in race relations as Brazil—in some respects, e.g., opening economic opportunities to Blacks, perhaps even better. Scholars must, he believes, take a closer look at interpretations that have invariably favored Brazil.

Yet he finds no ground for U.S. complacency after spotting some serpents in the Brazilian Eden. Both nations, he contends, have a long way to go, and can learn from each other. Through a comparative study of race relations in the two countries beginning with the colonial experience, he hopes to identify those lessons and, perhaps, stimulate each of us to copy the other's homework.

## Law from the Outside

"If you want to know the law," Justice Holmes once remarked, "you must study it from the viewpoint of the bad man." Few law students ever get that chance, according to Douglas Ayer, associate professor at Stanford Law School; they tend, instead, to learn law from the perspective of good men—as future practitioners who will never be in trouble themselves, and who will earn much of their keep by steering clients away from the legal shoals.

That, of course, is what most lawyers get paid for; clients generally want advice to avoid the toils of the law, not perspective on those who run afoul of it. And law schools have typically tried to produce what Ayer calls "legal technocrats" who regard law as a smoothly operating machine rather than as an important battlefield for society's conflicts—or as a bag of tricks rather than as a *humanity*, one of man's noblest responses to the problems of living in harmony with his fellows.

But, Ayer believes, the law-school emphasis on a consensus model of the legal system, coupled with the average citizen's view of law as a quasi-divine, unchanging code of behavior to which all good men must pledge their allegiance, explains much contemporary student criticism of such basic social institutions as law, order, and police enforcement. What if, out of

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In the next four years, the population of Ireland dropped by two million. About 500,000 died, either of outright starvation or from increased susceptibility to disease caused by malnutrition. The other 1,500,000—the figures are careful guesswork—emigrated. Some went to England. Most went to the United States.

A poor, illiterate, immoral mass they were. It was this wave of "Famine Irish," Larkin contends, who gained for themselves and their countrymen the reputation for being lawless, irresponsible, drunken, violent, and ignorant.

By any standard, the Great Famine was a catastrophe, and it is admittedly callous to note that the reduction of the Irish population enabled the Church, for the first time, to minister to its flock. But that ministry also had important social consequences for Ireland and for the United States.

By 1850, the Church had one priest for every 2,000 Catholics and one nun for every 3,300. Though the blight continued intermittently for several years, a long series of good potato harvest years began in 1851. Because of continuing migration, however, and the recruitment of more priests and nuns, the ratio of clergy to laity kept improving through the 19th century:

	Population	Priests	Nuns
1840	6,500,000	2,150	1,000
1850	5,000,000	2,500	1,500
1860	4,500,000	3,000	2,600
1900	3,300,000	3,700	8,000

Between 1840 and 1860, then, the Church had reduced the ratio of people to priests from 3,000-to-one

to 1,500-to-one. By 1900, it had one priest for every 900 people, and one nun for every 400.

Such an improvement in pastoral statistics would almost inevitably have a major impact on a people's spiritual lives. But Larkin does not base his argument on the spiritual effects of the Church's new ability to serve its adherents. He bases it on quite practical, even homely effects.

For one thing, the Church could now discipline its clergy. It didn't have to have a man in Ballinasloe or Clonakilty simply for the sake of showing the flag; under the new "devotional revolution," as Larkin calls it, the Church could replace a delinquent priest with a good one.

In addition, the Irish peasant now had someone in the neighborhood who cared about the quality of his life and that of his family—not about whether he paid his rent, nor about his loyalty to the English government (the Irish Catholic clergy remained nationalists), but about how he lived. Did he beat his wife? The priest would be around before long to talk about that and, with a combination of concern, cajolery, and heaven-inspired bullying, to administer "The Pledge"—the dreaded promise not to drink.

Did he send his children to school? If not, the priest would be around to talk about *that*. In 1840, when the Irish Catholic population totaled 6,500,000, only 100,000 Catholic children attended school daily. By 1900, when the population had been reduced to half the 1840 figure, 500,000 children went to school every day.

The moral consequences of the "devotional revolu-



The Irish Famine—Scene at the Gate of the Work-House. Contemporary print from The Bettmann Archive, Inc.

tion" are difficult to trace. Arrest-records for various ethnic groups would offer one index, but the state of crime-reporting in the 19th century was so informal that such data would be of questionable validity.

But one consequence is relatively easy to pinpoint. In 1841, 53 percent of the Irish could not read or write, and the percentage of emigrants who could not read or write was likely to be higher in that they were pushed by famine rather than pulled by opportunity. By 1901, 60 years later, only 14 percent of the Irish were illiterate.

For purposes of comparison, Larkin offers these illiteracy figures for ethnic groups entering the U.S. in 1905, among immigrants 14 years of age and above: Scandinavians, 0.6 percent; English, 1.3 percent; Finns, 1.8 percent; French, 2.7 percent; Germans, 4.2 percent; Dutch and Flemish, 5.3 percent; Northern Italians, 14 percent.

The average illiteracy rate for these and other Northern European groups that year was 3.7 percent; at 3.8 percent the Irish, Larkin says, "were finally in the running, they were socially competitive." By contrast, the illiteracy among Southern European immigrants—Neapolitans, Sicilians, Greeks, Spanish—was "on the order of 60 percent."

It is worth noting that these Southern Europeans inherited the burden of prejudice that the Irish and Germans had borne in the 19th century. Their speech was mimicked, their ways ridiculed—and the Irish passed from being "micks" and "paddies" to being just plain Americans who could sling an ethnic epithet as readily as any other patriot.

In sum, the Irish had *become* more assimilable by 1900, and the cause was not simply to be found in the stimulating environment of the New World, but in the changed environment at home. The "shanty Irish" of the 1840's and 1850's had been succeeded by the "lace-curtain Irish" of the post-Civil War period. Not only did the new arrivals better share the personal and social values that well-established Americans held, but they helped elevate the compatriots who had preceded them.

If Larkin is right, American historians will have to revise their interpretations of the immigrant experience. For they have, he says, treated the Irish and other ethnic groups as "cultural constants"—as raw material of unvarying quality that was transformed into better stuff by the purifying American fires of opportunity and social competition.

If Larkin is right, and if his thesis about the Irish can be generalized to apply to other groups that have yet to be fully accepted into American life—Blacks, American Indians, Puerto Ricans, Chicanos—opportunity is not enough. A relatively small percentage of any ethnic group can pull themselves up by their own bootstraps, given motivation for doing so. Most of us, however, even those of us who are convinced we came up The Hard Way, stand on the shoulders of our fathers—or at least got a boost from somebody along the line.

For the Irish, the Church served that function. In the



American relief ship bringing supplies to the starving victims of the Irish Potato Famine, which strengthened the Church and stimulated emigration to the United States. Cartoon by Thomas Nast from *The Bettmann Archive, Inc.*

present era when churches generally seem to be losing their power to move men's hearts or regulate their behavior, it may be that other agencies—government and education, probably—will have to redouble their efforts to achieve an assimilation which, in the past, we have always assumed would be taken care of by the American environment.

Larkin leaves such speculation to others, preferring to get on with the remaining four volumes of his history of the Irish Catholic Church. He's been at it for 12 years now and estimates that he will need another 20 to complete it.

The rest of his life, he agrees, but the prospect doesn't bother him. "It's a great thing when a man finds his work," he says, "almost as good as finding his love." ■

*Editor's Note: A detailed, footnoted, bibliographed, and in other ways more respectable treatment of Dr. Larkin's thesis is scheduled to appear early next year in the American Historical Review under the title, "The Devotional Revolution in Ireland, 1850 to 1875".*

## NEH Notes

AN APPROPRIATION ACT signed by President Nixon on August 10, 1972, made \$24.5 million available during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1972, for NEH programs. This is more than double the amount available last year (\$11,060,000). An additional \$3.5 million was authorized for matching private gifts made to the Endowment. (In 1971 \$2.5 million in matching funds was appropriated.)



## A Reading List on Violence and Human Relations



This is the third of Endowment-sponsored reading lists in its "Good Reading in the Humanities" series. Previous lists on the American Revolution and the Environment are available on request.

This reading list on Violence and Human Relations was prepared by staff of the Lemberg Center for the Study of Violence at Brandeis University: John Spiegel, director; Ralph Lewis, associate director; and Joyce K. Hartweg, staff associate.

Reader comments are invited.

### The Subject

The turbulent 1960's made "violence" a household word. The phenomenon, as it swept urban centers and college campuses and involved both large masses and individuals, appeared to many Americans as something new, foreign, and incomprehensible. The books described below have been selected with the hope that they will help the reader gain an increased understanding of the background and many facets of violence and thus be in a better position to cope with it.

The definition of violence used by the Lemberg Center describes a very specialized form of aggressive behavior which, although taking many forms, involves the use of physical force in order to injure or harm persons, objects, or organizations; it can be planned or spontaneous, individual or collective, legal or illegal.

The books on the list have been arranged in a sequence (although they need not be read in that order), beginning with the roots of violence in biology and its function in Nature, through a look at its psychological aspects, and concluding with an examination of violence in the social context, including its historical and political significance.

### Good Reading

ON AGGRESSION, Konrad Lorenz. Translated by Marjorie Kerr Wilson. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1966. 306 pp. Available in paperback, Bantam Books, 1967.

While the "killer instinct" is found in man and beast alike, wanton destruction is found only in man; while animals kill only their prey for food, and rarely fight their competitors to the death, this is not true of man. These are some of the many insights to be found in

Lorenz' succinct, well-written, and fascinating discussion of aggression in Nature and the differences between animal and human behavior. An important contribution to the study of the biological roots of violence.

HUMAN AGGRESSION. Anthony Storr. New York: Atheneum Publishers, 1968. 127 pp. Available in paperback, Bantam Books, 1970.

In this thoughtful synthesis of ideas drawn from studies of animal behavior and psychoanalysis, the author examines human aggression as an instinct deeply rooted in human nature. Storr believes our aggressive impulses—although too often used to our disadvantage—can serve beneficial functions for the preservation of the species.

This work is particularly illuminating in showing how human beings try to cope with these impulses—in childhood and adult life, in various psychiatric disorders, in the political and social arenas, and in the relation between the sexes. Firmly grounded in recent research but avoiding a technical tone, the book is a vivid and comprehensible explanation of man's hidden and basic drives.

VIOLENCE AND THE STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE. David N. Daniels, Marshall F. Gilula and Frank M. Ochberg, Editors. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1970. 451 pp.

Shocked by the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr., and Robert F. Kennedy in 1968, members of the Department of Psychiatry at Stanford University addressed themselves to developing an understanding of the violence in our country. Their authoritative work, clearly written and based on solid scientific research from varied fields, surveys such critical topics as the effect of the mass media on violence, political assassinations, the roots of violence in biology and society, and man's use of violence to adapt to the world around him. An invaluable synthesis of the many facets of violence.

THE VIOLENT GANG. Revised 2nd Edition. Lewis Yablonsky. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1970, 313 pp. Available in paperback, Penguin Books, 1970.

The result of painstaking and sometimes risky research in the streets of New York, this classic study of urban fighting gangs shows in fascinating detail how violent gangs can become so important to city youths. In this revision, Yablonsky also examines the similarities between gang behavior and today's ghetto and campus turmoil. The book includes verbatim interviews with gang members, who explain, blow by blow

and in their own language, how the "rumbles" occur, how the gangs are organized, why they murdered a polio-crippled teenager for no apparent reason, how leadership is distributed, and other aspects of the gang life style. Yablonsky's sharp analysis finds the patterns beneath the chaos and makes brilliant sense out of seemingly senseless violence. An invaluable guide to understanding the phenomenon of youthful violence.

**REBELS IN EDEN: MASS POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN THE UNITED STATES.** Richard E. Rubenstein. *Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1970. 201 pp. Available in paperback.*

A thought-provoking examination of "why, in a constitutional democracy, so much violence has accompanied the rise of so many groups to power." Using numerous examples from our nation's past, Rubenstein argues that riots, uprisings, and revolts from Shay's Rebellion in the 1790's, through the 19th century slave revolts and labor disorders, to the college and ghetto disturbances of the 1960's, are not the senseless and irrational acts of lawless riff-raff. Rather, according to the author, they represent genuine value conflicts and/or power struggles during periods of intense social change between the "haves" and the "have-nots." An excellent bibliography is included for those who want to delve more deeply into the subject.

**AMERICAN VIOLENCE: A DOCUMENTARY HISTORY.** Richard Hofstadter and Michael Wallace, Editors. *New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970. 478 pp.*

Combining the flavor of "You-Are-There" reporting with summary narratives, this comprehensive, thoroughly readable collection of original documents from journals, newspapers, diaries, and other eyewitness accounts shows that ferocious and turbulent domestic conflict is not a new phenomenon in America. Hofstadter's eloquent and instructive introduction is especially recommended.

**VIOLENCE IN AMERICA: HISTORICAL AND COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES.** Hugh Davis Graham and Ted Robert Gurr, Editors. *New York: Praeger, 1969. Available in paperback, Bantam Books, 1969.*

This superb book, one of many reports prepared for the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, is a highly useful collection of historical and sociological articles by noted authorities on such subjects as the frontier tradition of violence, the history of working-class protest, and perspectives on crime in the United States. Using an interdisciplinary approach, the authors have produced an invaluable guide to an understanding of political and social conflict in America.

**THE POLITICS OF PROTEST.** Jerome H. Skolnick. Washington, D.C.: *U.S. Government Printing Office, 1969. 276 pp. Available in paperback, Ballantine, 1969.*

In this insightful survey of recent political activism, done for the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, the author examines both the roots and the circumstances accompanying contemporary political violence, including that associated with resistance against the war in Vietnam, violent campus demonstrations, Black militancy, the Weathermen, police brutality, and white militancy of the radical Right. Skolnick finds few segments of our society immune

from turbulent outbursts of violence. His book, which includes an excellent bibliography, will help readers compare the various circumstances under which political issues are given violent expression.

**THE ANATOMY OF REVOLUTION.** Revised and Expanded 3rd Edition. Crane Brinton. *New York, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965. 324 pp. Available in paperback, Vintage Books, 1965.*

In this landmark study Brinton compares the French, English, Russian, and American experience to illuminate various facets of the process of revolution, such as the nature of popular discontent, structural weaknesses in the overthrown regimes, personality characteristics of the revolutionists, and the revolutionaries' eventual management of their new government. Combining vivid detail, a highly readable style, impressive scholarship, and a well-annotated bibliography, Brinton's work contains perceptive insights into the role of revolution in Western history. The revised edition also includes a thoughtful look at more recent revolutions, such as in Africa and Southeast Asia. Must reading for anyone wishing to grasp the nature of revolutionary violence.

### *Suggestions for Discussion*

1. Man has taken giant steps throughout history in the area of technology. Why has he remained so primitive and destructive in resolving conflicts? If it is true that most animals do not kill within their own species, why is it that man can kill wantonly?

2. Given the fact that we seem to be living in increasingly violent times, is it at all feasible any more to use violence to resolve conflict? What practical alternatives exist?

3. Violence is not a new phenomenon in American history; indeed, it has been present from our earliest beginnings. Could the United States have achieved technological, industrial, and international power without the use of violence? What does your answer imply for the future of our society?

4. If the United States was born in revolution, does that mean that our "Founding Fathers" were abnormal? When, if ever, is violence "healthy"?

5. Was it accidental that the 1960's were so turbulent in the United States—particularly when compared with the 1950's just preceding? Was it an accident that America's three major cycles of race-related riots in the 20th century coincided with our involvement in major wars? If simply accidental phenomena, to what extent can study of them help us deal with or prevent their recurrence? ■

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poverty, despair, ignorance of the paths by which the rich, powerful, or educated gain redress of grievances, a substantial number of citizens decide to live outside of the law as a means of forcing its alteration?

Many of the civilization's outlaws later proved to be its heroes. The barons who forced King John to sign the Magna Carta under threat of war violated the law; so did the American revolutionaries who pledged "our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor" to support their inflammatory Declaration. These "bad men," outlaws by the standards of their day, passed so long ago into the pantheon of mankind's patriots that they seem the stuff of sermons, not seminars.

But what of other "bad" men and women—those whose bloody confrontations with power fostered the young labor-union movement, whose arrests gave women the right to vote, whose widespread violations of the Volstead Act led to the repeal of Prohibition, whose sitting at segregated lunch-counters triggered the civil rights movement? And what, finally, of such radical outlaws as the anarchists of the late 19th century or the early 20th century "wobblies," the International Workers of the World?

In retrospect, some of these rebellions seem sacred, some amusing, some still unthinkable. It is such shadings that Ayer wants to encourage students to investigate in the hope of increasing their understanding of similar phenomena in our own time. Today, protest that

sometimes goes beyond the confines of the law is affecting our national attitudes toward birth control, abortion, pornography, draft-resistance, drug-use, and "passive resistance."

As a professor of law and one who deeply loves it, Ayer is not interested in encouraging its violation. But he believes law students would benefit from viewing law through the eyes of "society's losers," who feel—whether out of utopian logic or inarticulate passion—that they cannot be heard under society's present rules.

After a year of study as an NEH Younger Fellow Ayer feels prepared to "illumine the present national controversy about the meaning and interrelationship of law and the social order" through a new course at Stanford entitled *Political Trials and Social Conflict: An Historical Approach*. Because "the returns are by no means in" on a number of current radical outlaws, Ayer plans to restrict his students' inquiries to well-documented, half-forgotten controversies such as the trials of the Haymarket defendants, Eugene V. Debs, and the IWW.

He also hopes to offer a similar course to undergraduates who will never practice law but will "use it" to enhance their lives as businessmen, property-owners, voters—as good citizens. Seeing law from the outside, he feels, may give those of us who can afford to live within it a keener understanding of those who break it. ■