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The Next Stage in Foreign Policy

By WALTER TAPLIN

THE world situation itself has changed so drastically in the past few months that a new view is absolutely essential. If we go on behaving as we did before the manufacture of hydrogen bombs was thought of, before China went communist, and before the whole complexion of the cold war altered, then we shall lose our grip on reality and soon find ourselves in an even worse position than we are in now. The only thing to do is to look at these enormous changes in terms of practical politics. And that is what I want to do here. I shall stick to those three main topics: the new position of China, the effect of the hydrogen bomb on policy, and the state of the cold war.

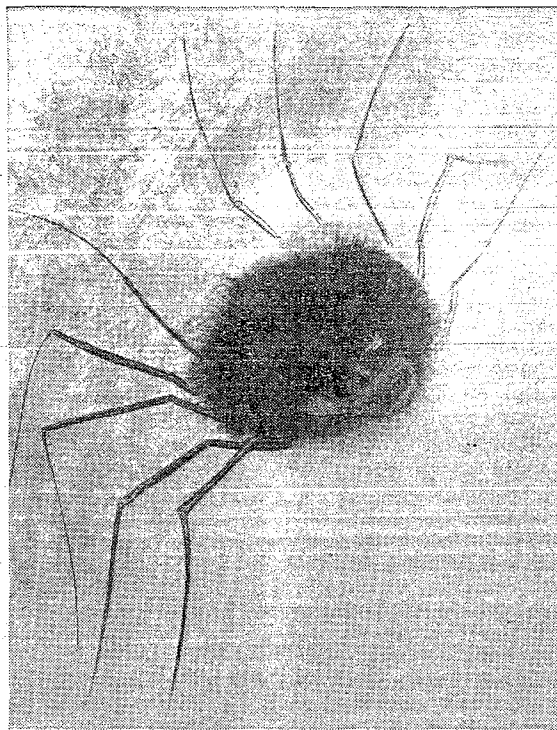
Let us take China first. The central point here—the point which dominates all the others—is not that the government of the country is run by communists or that some sort of agreement has been reached between Mao Tse-tung and the Russians. The real point for British policy and for western policy generally is that for the time being we have no direct influence whatever over developments in China. We are out. Whoever is settling the new position of China, whether it is Mao or Stalin or both, it is not us. If we want to achieve some sort of stability or certainty in the Far East, then we have all the way to go. And the first thing to do is to clear out all vague hopes. For instance, it has been said that the traditional forces of Chinese civilisation will be too strong for any new doctrine like communism and that what will come out in the long run will be something not entirely unfavourable to the west. Even if that is true—and I do not know whether it is true or false—it does not help. We cannot wait to see what comes out in the long run. It would be much more realistic for practical purposes to assume the worst

—that purely national Chinese resistances will be rooted out.

That brings us to a second vague hope. It has been suggested that Mao Tse-tung may have had to spend two whole months in Moscow before the Russo-Chinese Treaty could be signed simply because the two sides could not agree. For all I know that may be true. But even if it was true it would not help us very much. Mao and Stalin could find plenty to quarrel about between themselves and still agree on a hostile line to the Western Powers. If they quarrel it will not be for our benefit. And the safest line for us in the meantime will be to prepare for the worst. On the day that Mao Tse-tung left Moscow he said this: 'Long live the teacher of the revolution all over the world, the best friend of the Chinese people—Comrade Stalin'. It is best to assume, for practical working purposes, that he meant what he said.

Once we have got these points straight we are able to consider much more realistically what the western policy ought to be. And one thing is quite certain—western policy ought to be something much more effective than it is now. The struggle that the Americans had last month before they even managed to get to the beginning of a policy for China was an indication of how we have fallen behind in this part of the world. It was only in the middle of January that Mr. Acheson cleared up American policy in the Far East. He made it clear that there would be no military intervention in China; he emphasised that the United States would defend Japan and the Philippines; and he said that it was willing to lend a hand with any promising schemes for economic aid in South-East Asia. But by that time the British Government had already recognised the Communist Government in Peking. In fact the Western Powers

Is Odilon Redon more helpful? Three of his paintings may be seen in the present exhibition at Burlington House. In a quiet way, he has some lucky and picturesque finds, frank contrasts and dubious correspondences. His line, which is thin and finicky, broadens and achieves power and authority in his black-and-white work—'blacks regal as the purple, and whites of such pallor . . .'. He works from nature: one can't always be working in a dream. None the less, with his soft trails of vapour and misty quiverings, he invented a technique of dreaming—'you flutter amid our silence the plumes of Dream and Night'—destined to be considerably exploited by his surrealist successors, who seem nevertheless to ignore him. But we of today are generally unmoved by his monsters, whether hideous or charming—the severed head with its anxious expression, the pensive drowned woman, the prophet mounted on elephant's trunks or spider's legs—symbols of a heaven and a hell that the painter explored from the comfort of his own fireside. Perhaps we have seen too many such things—real ones. Perhaps the perception of the draughtsman is not convincing enough. He looks at Pegasus, up in the clouds, exactly as you or I would look at our neighbour's horse in its field. Just a horse, with wings fastened on its back—wings which are as out of place as those that Maurice Denis, at the same period, tacks onto the shoulders of his prematurely angelic schoolboys. Redon may have felt as much. Sometimes he contents himself with strands of wool floating in spirals, microscopic nebulae, shreds of darkness. . . . The beholder can ascribe whatever



'The Dancing Spider', by Odilon Redon (1840-1916)

meaning he pleases to these pretty devices—or do without a meaning and look at them for their own sake.

Never has the 'transcendent reality' of pictorial Symbolism seemed so far away from us. The Idea behind the works it produced—which were to be seen in the recent exhibition at the Musée d'Orangerie in Paris—shifts and changes according to the whim of each exponent. Logically, words and sentences would be needed to set forth a plot crammed to that extent with psychological allusions and intellectual implications. The 'noble, ingenious, profound, sublime' intention becomes indistinguishable from the subject—which on the one hand completely engrosses our attention and, on the other, tends, by its over-emphasis, to annihilate the painting, that affair, so they tell us, of rhythms freely disposed and colours assembled in a certain order. In these circumstances, what is left of the 'spell-binding' quality of the work? Moreau and Redon did at least remind us, with considerable persistence, in the wake of the Romantics, that certain subjects can lead the thoughts of the painter and his reader to a further and loftier point than others. Rembrandt's 'Christ at Emmaus' automatically takes precedence over his 'Quarter of Beef'. Vincent Van Gogh was not of this opinion.

The question is still debated in some studios—those from which the Christ and the quarter of beef were not evicted simultaneously about forty years ago, when cubism came along. And even around the lofty eyries of abstract art, the ghost of the 'subject' may be glimpsed, hovering and flapping—an obsession.

The English Novel—VIII

James Joyce: the Triple Exile

By HENRY REED

IFIND it difficult to indicate briefly the nature of the art of James Joyce and what I take to have been this author's effect on the English novel. I must needs be sketchy. About Joyce's life it is relevant to say that he was born in Ireland and that he spent the early years of his life in Dublin, where all of his work is set. He was an apostate from the Roman Catholic church, which he never re-entered. Nor did he ever forget it; and perhaps on this account it is sometimes said that his work is, in the religious sense, 'orthodox'. This view is borne out by nothing in his text; it could, I believe, only be advanced by critics lacking both an intimate knowledge of the books themselves and a knowledge of the nature, consequences, and residues of apostasy. Joyce was not an atheist; he was an agnostic: he appears in his own books as Stephen Dedalus, the young would-be artist, who says of the Eucharist that he neither believes in it, nor disbelieves in it; and of his doubts, that he does not wish to overcome them. All his more important work was written in a triple exile.

His sole surviving play is called 'Exiles'; Leopold Bloom, the hero of *Ulysses*, is a non-practising Jew in Dublin, a member of a nationless race; the sleeping Earwicker, the hero of *Finnegans Wake*, is of Danish descent, a Protestant among Catholics. But the sense of yet another exile, 'the banishment from the heart', runs more profoundly through both books. This is the third exile, the exile we all have to undergo and to inflict: the exile we have to impose on our parents and our brothers and sisters; the exile we have to suffer from our children. This is the central theme of both his longer works, as it is the central theme of modern psychology. Of the family relationship it is as if Joyce thought: We are born children; we become parents. That is all I know on earth;

I must try to make it all I need to know. That is truth; I must try to make it beauty.

He works outward to this embracing assumption from his own experience. With what exactitude the adventures of Stephen Dedalus tally with those of Joyce himself, I am not quite sure; but closely I suspect. His novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, which stands as an ante-chamber to his later work, ends with Stephen's first departure from Dublin; he has recently wounded his mother by his refusal to make his Easter duty to the Church. At the opening of *Ulysses*, we find Stephen back in Dublin: in the interval his mother has fallen ill, and he has hurried home from Paris to her death-bed, where she has again asked him to submit to the Church; he has again refused. We find him in the cold grip of agony: it is not the abandoned Church, but the banished mother, that torments him; only a hurt done to a parent can thus fret the heart, and thus frets it his. We are with him for three chapters, and then we turn to Mr. Bloom, the real hero of the book, with whose adventures through a hot summer day and night the body of the book mainly concerns itself. *Ulysses* is a re-organisation, in domestic terms, of the major incidents in Homer's *Odyssey*: I mention this only to insist that it is not necessary to know it in order to enjoy the book; if you do know it, you must be prepared for important and significant divergences at the climax. It is perhaps better not to know it, in fact. It may mislead you. It has misled others.

Mr. Bloom is also an exile, and in every sense. Throughout the long day two especial thoughts dog him: the knowledge that his wife will that afternoon commit one of her many acts of adultery; and the memory of his dead son, the infant Rudy. Bloom, as Joyce once said

emphatically in conversation, is meant to be a *good man*. He represents love at its most self-sacrificing, kindness in its most disinterested forms: and this in the face of every discouragement. He is not meant to be perfect; but his efforts at naughtiness are of the most half-hearted. And with his appearance, the texture of the book becomes, in the main, comic.

The climax of *Ulysses* happens in a brothel; Bloom, who is strangely attracted by Stephen—he sees in him a sort of fulfilment of his image of his dead infant son—rescues him from the drunken soldiery in the place. Stephen has fallen unconscious; Bloom mounts guard over him till he recovers; he takes him home, gives him food, looks after him, and they part. Since his recovery we have not entered into Stephen's thoughts; but we feel a change has come over his life, that a new life is beginning. That is the mystery of the book that we are left to solve, as we are left to solve the mystery of 'Hamlet'. It is not true, I think, to suggest that Stephen has found in Bloom a spiritual father, though that is Bloom's hope. For Stephen there will be no spiritual father. But there will be, what there has not been hitherto: his art. The change that comes over Bloom from this encounter is more precise: he goes to bed and before he goes to sleep he just very slightly and in the humblest terms asserts his position as Molly's husband. It is a very modest version of the return of Ulysses to Penelope. Ulysses slaughtered the infamous suitors of his wife and took his place once more as lord and master. Bloom goes less far: but at least he kisses his wife, on a not usual place, and asks her to get his breakfast next morning. And she submits.

In *Ulysses* Joyce deals with his particular problems—the problems of mankind—as they appear above the void, in waking and variable states of consciousness; but he knew that in the void itself (which is far from being empty) the origins, the undisguised forms of these problems, for ever circle. There is one world where it seems that we come near to ultimate truth, and that is the world of sleep. *Finnegans Wake* is for the most part set in the sleeping mind of its principal character, the inn-keeper Earwicker. Only for a few concessive moments do we see Earwicker and his wife half-awake. If we were not granted these few moments we might never get at what was going on: for *Finnegans Wake* is in some ways a very difficult book to read.

A good deal of literature has been written in a dream-setting; but from it you would never guess that its narrators had ever actually been to sleep. Nor is that their preoccupation. They did not believe in dreams as we do today, and the admirableness and point of their productions lie elsewhere. To Joyce's purpose it was essential that the real nature of dream feelings should be evoked: his aim was to find the best way of doing that, and of doing it at different levels of density. To this end he evolved a complicated version of the lingo used in the Jabberwocky poem in *Alice Through the Looking-Glass*. You will remember that it is Humpty Dumpty who recites the Jabberwocky poem to Alice: Humpty Dumpty, who suffered a great, irremediable fall. And the fall of man is Joyce's comic theme, as it was Milton's tragic one. The sense of shame, of guilt, of anxiety, of exile from Eden, that dogs mankind, Joyce believes to come from the pressure on us of those uncommitted sins whose nature is sometimes dimly revealed to us in dreams before the waking mind cleans them up a little and makes them fairly bearable. Joyce's conclusions, if you can call them conclusions, do not disagree with those of Freud; but though he mentions Freud and other psychologists I get the feeling that he would have arrived at these conclusions by himself: certainly he felt so.

The book is hard to read; it is an epic and is meant for readers of epic: not, perhaps, a large number. It demands, on a happily reduced scale, just those forms of preparation other epics in a foreign language demand. We must learn the language well enough to be able to write it a little; we need to be told the general outline by pioneer commentators, and then to tackle the high-spots or the easier passages. I do not feel these demands to be excessive; for those who do, there is plenty of great literature elsewhere, to which they may proudly turn. It is not immediately that the spell of an epic can build itself around you; but when it has, you can enter your epic at any point you like and emerge where you like: that is a fundamental quality of epic.

The problems of behaviour about which George Eliot and Henry James wrote would have seemed too small and limited for Joyce's purpose; so would the tragic collisions of Hardy's men and women. Joyce needed something that would start smaller and end bigger than those things. He made therefore for the centre of life. In addition he wanted not something that moved forward in time and was eventually finished—like a tragedy—but something that revolved perpetually and was never finished: the course and recourse of existence. And so *Finnegans Wake* ends in the middle of a sentence: the end of the sentence is at the beginning of the book.

Finnegans Wake is Joyce's greatest work. But it is complete in itself, and is not fated, I imagine, to bear progeny. It is not *Finnegan* but *Ulysses* that has borne children; and this was inevitable. It is my tentative belief that *Ulysses* has completed the history of the novel, at all events for a time; and that there has been no great novelist to emerge since *Ulysses* appeared in 1922. There is a good deal of readable fiction still being written; as a reviewer one may praise and welcome it, for we do welcome pictures of ourselves in our own time pinned down and



James Joyce, 1932: from a photograph by Lipnitsky, Paris

From 'A James Joyce Year Book' (Transit Press, Paris). By courtesy of Mme Léon

wriggling under competent and intelligent pens, of whom there are no fewer, probably, than at any other time. As a reviewer, one praises them, I have said; if one is able intermittently to attain to any critical sense, which is very difficult for a reviewer to do, one is forced to disregard them. I think that *Ulysses* stands as a barrier, which our novelists have not yet surmounted: its psychology and its language are the hindrance. What has been its effect? There have of course been a number of straight derivatives from it. Virginia Woolf, in books like *Mrs. Dalloway*, has provided a neat and serviceable Housewives' Joyce. On the stage Mr. Thornton Wilder has obliged with an admirable *Finnegans Wake* for the matinee-audience in his play 'The Skin of our Teeth'.

It is Joyce's diffused effects that are more important. Scarcely a novelist has, directly or indirectly, been untouched by him. You will find much Joyce, variously sophisticated, debased or vulgarised in the work of Aldous Huxley, Graham Greene, Henry Green, Elizabeth Bowen, Joyce Cary and countless others. They have never made good use of him; good use of him can possibly not be made. They have approached the great barrier, fecklessly snatched what they can and made off back. They have made off back to the past; they have not got over into the future. And so it is that in reading so many modern novelists you get the feeling of a pathetic retrogression and the inevitable afterthought that what they do has been better done already. Modern novelists—I can only speak of England—are desperately engaged in mopping-up operations; and they are often put to ill-considered stratagems in order to ginger a little originality or life into these operations: hence, I suppose, the crude religion so often draped along the top of modern fictions; hence the sadism and the dirty sexuality; hence also perhaps the curious ruse of writing about children; and, most alarming of all, the frank, crude, comprehensive ambitions of those novelists who avoid the analytical only to attempt the synthetic: who promise us a bastardisation of Kafka, or who threaten to do for our time what Dostoevsky or Balzac did for theirs.

The novel, like the drama, is a form, a temporary shape of art. The

drama has often died. Reborn, it has always been a new sort of drama: no sort has lasted for ever. The novel is not conveniently short, like the lyric, which has always survived—as perhaps the short story and the *nouvelle* may survive. There is no sign, I think, that the novel is wholly alive at the moment. I repeat that its value as sensitive and intelligent commentary at least makes it readable; and add that not very much art

endures in any case. I cannot produce wholly satisfactory reasons for this: at least I cannot be sure that they satisfy anyone else. But I remember that Mr. T. S. Eliot, writing of Virgil, suggested that he realised to the full, for the first time, the possibilities of a great language; and thereby finished it off. Can it be that James Joyce has done as much for English prose?—*Home Service*

Gardening

The Vegetable Garden in March

By F. STREETER

FOR the gardener this month is one of supreme importance, and much of your success or failure will depend on the way in which you take every advantage of the weather. The first thing is to try to get all arrears of ground work put straight. If you have not already sown all the seeds that should have gone in last month, seize the first opportunity to get them in now. A week of January frosts, which pulled the ground to pieces beautifully, and then six inches of February rains, was just what we wanted.

If you have got your plot all dug, it is a good thing to fork it lightly again as this will help to dry the soil and check the weeds, especially those little annual weeds, and anything you can do to check these now is well worth while. If it rains after you have forked up the beds, don't be afraid to fork it again lightly before preparing your seed beds; you cannot put in too much work on this preparation. Give good seeds their proper chance and they won't let you down.

Besides the general run of things in the vegetable line, why don't you try a few novelties this year just to show that the list of vegetables and salads grown in this country is not so small as some people think? For a start, what about a few globe artichokes—the round or blunt top variety, not the sharp-leaved fellows, as these are not nearly such good quality. The globe artichokes are really ornamental, too, with their large grey leaves. Those who already possess a bed should remove the protecting mulch given in the autumn and fork in a little manure round the roots: they will soon start away—in fact this year they have not died down, so you should get some really early artichokes.

About the third week in the month rake off the rough soil on the asparagus bed but do not disturb the covering of manure given last November; leave the surface of the bed smooth and then as soon as the growth comes through it will be ready for cutting. Fork up the alley, but I should leave the first dressing of salt for another month or so as it is inclined to keep the bed damp. A new asparagus bed? Well, if that's what you want now is the time to do it. Whatever you do, always prepare the bed before the arrival of the new plants from the nursery. The great thing in asparagus growing is to see that the roots are never dry, and plant up your bed with the plants fifteen inches apart and three rows to a bed; this is to save undue reaching or stepping on the beds. Cover the crowns quickly with a prepared compost, and don't cut anything the first season; if you give them a good start they will easily repay, but early cutting means weak crowns for ever after.

I wish more people would grow a few rows of seakale. Look what a godsend it is in a season like this when greens are in such short supply. Seakale is easy to manage and you can raise it either from seed or by cuttings. I always do it from cuttings—they are called thongs and are pieces of the roots, about six inches long. These thongs are taken from the plant as it is lifted each autumn after the foliage has died down. They are put in a deep box of sand and stood in a cold place out of doors until January when the box should go into a frame or shed to get it started into growth. Little red leaves burst all round the crown and in March they can be planted out on well-prepared ground with eighteen inches between the rows and the cuttings themselves twelve inches apart in the rows. It soon starts away, and the chances are that several shoots will start, so these must be thinned down to the strongest one only. All you have to do then is to keep your seakale cutting bed well hoed until the foliage covers the ground.

I know from the letters I get that many people have trouble with turnips—generally, I think, because they are sown too thickly and don't get thinned soon enough. Remember, too, that the turnip is one of the vegetables that requires a hard bottom soil in which to root; it will never do well if your ground is loose and soft—look how the farmers

produce them in the fields. So select a piece of ground lightly dug and draw the drills twelve inches apart. It is not a bad plan (unless you live on a chalk soil) to add some wood ash. Three nice coloured varieties are Snowball; Veitch's Red Globe; and Orange Jelly.

If your soil is light, why not try purple or green kohlrabi? This is much easier than turnips. Sow in drills and transplant the seedlings a foot apart when they are large enough to handle. The Germans used to think so much of this vegetable that they grew it in pots in their cucumber houses! I'm not quite so fond of kohlrabi as that—but it is a good vegetable. There is no crop that pays so well as peas for better cultivation, with something rich underneath. The pea is very deep-rooting and will go down as deep as its height if you will let it. And don't be mean with the space between the rows—the more light and air the better. The right way with peas is to draw a shallow trench, say four inches deep, and sow your seed in that. It is a mistake to sow them on the surface, for the peas not only dry out, but by the time you have staked and earthed them up, they become whipped by the wind and straggly which is just what you want to avoid. Another thing to aim at is to have peas in the garden over as long a season as possible. For your March sowings, rely on the variety called Little Marvel; or Meteor is another good short-growing pea—2 foot 6 inches to 3 feet at the most.

Now for a few early rows of potatoes. Here again the better you treat them the better the crop. You will never get either the quality, or the quantity, by just digging the ground and putting the potatoes in. It is possible, select a site that was manured and dug in the autumn, and this month lightly fork it over. Don't put in a lot of artificial manures. See that the tubers are nicely sprouted with those little pink roots just showing under the growth—that is the time to get them in. Next open a narrow trench with a spade and if your potatoes suffer from scab, place a couple of inches of grass clippings along the bottom on which to lay the tubers. Place them carefully at the required distance with the shoot pointing upwards; then cover them lightly and neatly, leaving the surface smooth but not too fine; then turn over the next spit till the next trench is ready, and so on. If you like a yellow flesh, waxy in texture, try Duke of York; and for other first earlies of a more 'mealy' character when cooked there are Pilot, Sharpes Express or Ulster Chieftain.

The best way to grow good parsley is to sow thinly the seed of the variety called Imperial Curled in an ordinary seed box, just covering the seed. It takes a week or two to germinate, but as soon as it is nicely up, prick it out into other boxes, two inches apart. When the seedlings are large enough, plant them out with a nice ball of soil alongside the edge of the path near the back door. A box of parsley seed sown like this and pricked out would last twelve months.

It is too soon to think about sowing small seeds; wait until the soil is warmer and the days longer. Just a few early lettuce and carrots and a box of leeks could go in now, but it is far better to wait a while for marrows, tomatoes and cucumbers. Talking of tomatoes, I think the yellow type is well worth trying—especially the varieties called Golden Perfection, and Golden Queen. They require exactly the same treatment as the red varieties, but the flavour is there and most pronounced.

The next few weeks are just right for making a new herb border, and this is worth doing if your present plants are getting worn out. Make your herbs fit into a corner or a border like a miniature rock border with stepping stones planted in the crevices with lemon thymes. Don't mix your herbs with either the vegetables or flowers. Kept by themselves, all neatly labelled, they are an attraction.

—From a talk in the Home Service