

For though *Born to Believe* may be inadequate as a contribution to the history of the last thirty years it is completely successful as an unconscious self-portrayal. Perhaps it is precisely because it was never intended as self-revelation that it is so self-revealing. Studying it in the year 2000 an historian could at least learn from it who and what Frank Pakenham was—the Lord Edward Fitzgerald of our time.

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SOCIOLOGY OF COMMUNISM. By Jules Monnerot. Translated by Jane Degras and Richard Rees. (George Allen and Unwin; 30s.)

The other day the editor of one of the left-wing weeklies, wise after the event, was able to write with all solemnity of 'Stalin's perversion of Communism'. This is a typical result of the polyvalent nature of Communism, for despite the spate of books which pour from the presses on Communism, Marxism, Stalinism, written by Communists, ex-Communists and anti-Communists, there is no agreement about the definition of Communism itself. For some it is more of a method of discovery than a complete system of beliefs, while for others it provides an order which they cannot find elsewhere in their scientific work. For M. Monnerot these sympathisers, whose numbers are far greater than those of believers, are 'men of the threshold', all of them blinding themselves to some aspects of the complete system. Hence M. Monnerot's approach, writing as a historical and psychological sociologist with a fine objective strain, is valuable. He treats Communism as a broad sociological fact and a total social phenomenon, showing how Marx (in his later stage) was the prophet, and the decisive influence of Lenin in his *What is to be done?* which turned the party into a para-military organisation. 'During the nineteenth century world history seemed to be at the mercy of economic forces: but the twentieth century has been remarkable for a determined effort to control history by ideology, and the bolsheviks have undertaken, in the name of historical materialism, to impose the will of a few individuals upon the entire human world. Lenin inaugurated *the era of staff campaigns*.' M. Monnerot emphasises the mobile and dynamic character of Communism by frequent references to 'the campaign': the Party is the means of permanent revolution.

Russian Communism is a military organisation with outposts of its army in most countries of the world, and it uses domestic policy as infantry and foreign policy as artillery. But more important than this, it is a religion; and although *sui generis* as a secular religion, M. Monnerot finds many points of similarity with Islam. The sharp distinction made in liberal thought between religion and politics is no longer recognised, the search for a middle term between the desirable and the possible has been abandoned in favour of pursuing historical necessity. Although it is stiff reading,

the chapter on 'The Psychology of Secular Religions' is one of the most valuable in the book. The campaign, he insists, could not continue if it were not religious, where the Party claims absolute faith in its infallibility here and now and in the certainty of the millenium in the future.

But as well as being Islam, i.e. the union of a religion and a people for the purpose of conquest, Communism is also a tyranny, i.e. 'a regime in which a victory in factional strife is consolidated and ensured, by an apparatus of power and social coercion, against the fickleness of history and changing circumstances'. This political aspect is illustrated by a wealth of comparison drawn from the history of Persia, Greece and Rome, and it is here that M. Monnerot is on least sure ground. Historical parallels have manifest limitations, although very recent history seems to confirm the view that rule by a triumvirate is the least secure form of dictatorship. But then who is to say that there is not some other, more shadowy, figure behind Molotov and Malenkov?

Incidentally, in the course of his general analysis, M. Monnerot makes many points of general importance covering a wide field. Thus, to mention a few: The fact that Communism received a certain tolerance because the workers' claims were approved by the bourgeois conscience—although the supposed dichotomy and duel between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is one of the grossest assumptions made by the Communist leaders. Again, Communism as a political structure in Russia is based on a real economic and sociological substructure; in other countries it is not. Hence the party in these countries is made to imitate the Russian party but with no relevance to the facts of the situation. Many instances are given of the dilemma of the liberals. Thus, 'totalitarian diplomacy would lose one of its trump cards if the democratic powers were to forbid their newspapers to be quite so sensational at certain times. The freedom of the press in their opponents' countries is in some ways extremely useful to the totalitarians.' The psychological judgments however are at times a little too hidebound by technical phrases. Is it really enlightening to say that Marxism is a neurosis resulting from an affective trauma, and that the cause of the trauma is the proletarianisation of the masses? Jargon apart, and despite an involuted style (translated in a workmanlike fashion), this is a valuable book.

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SELECTED POEMS OF GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS. Edited by James Reeves. (Heinemann; 6s.)

A HOPKINS READER. By John Pick. (Oxford University Press; 2s.)

It is time for a selection of Hopkins' poetry at what publishers are pleased to call a popular price; Mr Reeves' selection is entirely adequate, consisting of all the mature poems and sufficient examples of earlier work to throw light on methods and principles. There is so little of Hopkins'