

# Correspondence

## To a Young Christian Radical

To the Editors: The letter "To a Certain Young Christian Radical" (*Worldview*, June) offers an analysis of the intellectual instability and guilt of the young radical and is quite convincing. Despite the rejoinder of Robert G. Hoyt ("A Response From a Not-So-Young Sometime Christian Radical"), Inge Lederer Gibel's arguments make good sense. While Mr. Hoyt may feel uncomfortable about what she said, the reality of Christian acquiescence in Arab propaganda commands our attention.

I have only one additional comment to offer. The Arabs of Palestine already occupy 80 per cent of territorial Palestine, and Hussein sits upon a Palestinian majority. Since the original Balfour Plan was to grant a Jewish National Home in Palestine whose borders would stretch from the Mediterranean to Iraq, Israel is entitled to the West Bank. Her reasons for sovereignty are more than security and less than the arrogant reasons of manifest destiny. They are primarily reasons of legal precedent and simple justice.

I wonder, however, if by joining in the speculation concerning a Palestinian state in the West Bank, Ms. Gibel is not undermining Israel's position, which is based upon the compelling record of the international proceedings from 1917 continuing under the League of Nations Mandate and the United Nations. Let us remember, as does Arafat, that Jordan is also Palestinian. Possessing neither land, it is easier for Arafat and his cohorts to muster Arab support for a thrust against Israel than it would be for an assault upon Jordan. It is time young Christian radicals as well as middle-aged former radicals see the Middle East in its true historical context rather than within the parameters of a quasi-history that, for them, begins in 1967.

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## "Carter on Apartheid"

To the Editors: Ross K. Baker's article, "Carter on Apartheid" (*Worldview*, May), was highly informative and much needed. But it carried a tone of pessimism that I do not share. I really believe that President Jimmy Carter and U.N. Ambassador Andrew Young can get something done toward ending the horrendous system of racial separation in South Africa. Furthermore, I believe they will, with the help of God and of those people in South Africa and America who believe in the dignity of the human person as a child of God.

Palmer Van Gundy  
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## Fixing China With a Glittering Eye

To the Editors: An ancient ex-mariner with some knowledge of the subject was bemused at Miriam and Ivan Londons' revelation of a "surprising aspect of life in contemporary China" ("Prostitution in Canton," *Worldview*, May). True, he was never in Canton, and his information is restricted to observations during a four-year period from the spring of '27 through '31, mostly made on the sleazy side of Shanghai's Soochow Creek. Embarking in rickshas at the Bund launch landing, we would hasten to a first drink—if American seamen, at the Broadway Hotel & Bar, a longish stone's throw past the Creek; if British, at Frank's Place, a bit farther on.

The Londons' questioning of a young ex-Red Guard: "If you could recognize the roadside chickens [prostitutes], couldn't the police?" Yes. But during that time—1970-73—conditions in Canton were very confused....

Confused? Steaming up the Whangpo in May, 1927, we had passed the anchored dozen or so cruisers and destroyers of an international flotilla—American, British, French, and Japanese—with guns peaceably holstered in white canvas covers, as though paying a courtesy call at any friendly port. Not so with the machine guns manned by British soldiers at principal street intersections that we passed with a tinkling of ricksha bells downtown. Pedestrian traffic flowed around their sand-bagged emplacements as un-

(Continued on p. 58)

# WORLDVIEW

## Statement of Purpose

The purpose of *Worldview* is to place public policies, particularly in international affairs, under close ethical scrutiny. The Council on Religion and International Affairs, which sponsors the journal, was founded in 1914 by religious and civic leaders brought together by Andrew Carnegie. It was mandated to work toward ending the barbarity of war, to encourage international cooperation, and to promote justice. The Council is independent and nonsectarian. *Worldview* is an important part of the Council's wide-ranging program in pursuit of these goals.

*Worldview* is open to diverse viewpoints and encourages dialogue and debate on issues of public significance. It is edited in the belief that large political questions cannot be considered adequately apart from ethical and religious reflection. The opinions expressed in *Worldview* do not necessarily reflect the positions of the Council. Through *Worldview* the Council aims to advance the national and international exchange without which our understanding will be dangerously limited.

Philip A. Johnson, *Publisher*

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## Briefly Noted

### The Way the Wind Blows: An Autobiography by Alec Douglas-Home

(Quadrangle; 320 pp.; \$10.95)

No doubt Sir Alec Douglas-Home (it rhymes with "rhéume") is a most welcome after-dinner speaker at British Conservative Party functions. There his unpretentious homilies, his unadorned and very commonplace commonplaces, and his homey reflections about the circumstances of life and politics are surely understood and appreciated. Likewise his particular genius for sapping any subject of its interest and for making even the most stirring topic dull. There is nothing the responsible middle class likes more than the comfortable command of the obvious and the ability to calm.

Unfortunately, no matter how serviceable for pleasing the sensible-shoe crowd, such a talent does not go far toward making an interesting or significant book, especially one dealing with the upper echelons of British government. By lulling us to sleep pleasantly, effortlessly, Douglas-Home's style may cause us to overlook a number of touchy points in his long political career. Which may be, of course, why such a style is so lethal.

Few men have held so many powerful offices: principal private secretary to Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, Secretary for Foreign Affairs and Commonwealth Relations, Lord President of the Council and Conservative leader of the House of Lords, Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary once again. It seems doubtful he could have led such a peaceful and generally unruffled life as these anodyne memoirs suggest.

In fact he did not. For forty years the deft Douglas-Home—first as Lord Dunglass, then as fourteenth Earl of Home, then (after renouncing his peerage to become Prime Minister) as Sir Alec Douglas-Home, and more lately (upon being given a life barony) as Lord Home of the Hirsel—has moved with virtually unerring grace through the quicksands of high-level diplomacy and politics, a master of timing and maneuver. But of the details of his enviable dexterity he gives us no hint.

For instance, we know nothing more than we did before about his relationship with Chamberlain (and his influence) during the period of appeasement before World War II. Now we may never know more, for with the recent death of Anthony Eden, Lord Avon—then Foreign Secretary—Douglas-Home is the last man alive who had significant dealings with the Prime Minister in those crucial days. Nor do we know, despite the cursory explanation he gives, how it was that Douglas-Home emerged as the unlikely Conservative Party leader and Prime Minister in 1961 upon the resignation of Harold MacMillan. No light is shed on the backstairs process that took him (most unwillingly, he says) from the Foreign Office to No. 10 Downing Street.

But of course there is no accident in all this. Sir Alec is the most discrete, the most diplomatic, and the most calculating of men, and though his book is utterly bare of interest, it is not without a purpose. By writing it he has beaten other more critical and appraising eyes to imposing an interpretation upon his interesting and important government career. Thus one supposes that he hopes a most comfortable life can continue comfortably to its unstirring close. For members of the Establishment in our turbulent days such an end is reckoned an undeniable success.

—Jeffrey L. Lant

### Karl Barth: His Life From Letters and Autobiographical Texts by Eberhard Busch

(Fortress; 569 pp.; \$19.95)

By any measure Karl Barth was one of the giants of our century. Beginning with his commentary on *Romans* immediately after World War I and sustained until his death in 1968, Barth provided a religious alternative to the cultural liberalism that had collapsed under the weight of twentieth-century horrors. Barth has been depicted as the great nay-sayer, and there is truth in that. But Busch's magnificent book makes clear beyond doubt that Barth's No was premised upon a prior and overriding Yes to the grace of God in the revelation of Christ. Using fragments of Barth's barely started autobiography, plus innumerable letters and conversa-

tions, Busch tells the story in a way that remarkably combines the merits of biography and autobiography. He is both candid and kind in describing troubles in Barth's personal life, and he gives ample voice to those who opposed Barth on both theological and sociopolitical grounds. A leader in the opposition to Hitler, Barth was considered by many to be curiously indifferent to the threat of communism following World War II. It is a mark of Busch's achievement that he helps us to understand Barth's aversion to anticommunism, without attempting the futile task of persuading the reader of Barth's consistency of wisdom on this score. Busch, who personally attended Barth in the last period of his life, has written a book that is a model not only for describing the theological life but also for the art of biography itself.

### Here's to Your Health, Comrade Shifrin!

by Ilya Suslov

(Indiana University Press; 204 pp.; \$8.95)

A satirical novel that is variously delightful and somber. Suslov, who published a number of books in the USSR and was an editor of Moscow's *Literary Gazette*, now lives in Washington. The work at hand follows the "career" of a young Jewish man named Tolya, a blithe spirit caught up in, and sometimes weighed down by, the very unblithe organization of Soviet life. At the end Suslov has a number of Russian "readers" reflect on Tolya's developing decision to get out. Their reflections reveal alternative ways in which Russians learn to cope in a system they admit is stifling but also suspect is somehow necessary. There is also an informative foreword by Maurice Friedberg on the state of *samizdat* and other literary efforts in the Soviet Union today.

### Correspondence (from p. 2)

concernedly as it would around street-repair barricades, but they did impress a newcomer as evidence of some confusion. Just who, he wondered, were their

prospective targets?

They were not his affair; they merely gave a fillip of derring-do to what was. Disembarked at the convoy's first stop, he heard other evidence of confused times, amidst which, it seems, counterfeits always thrive. Before dropping into the till his five silver cartwheels (\$5 Mex) for a first round of drinks. Old Man O'Brien's Chinese bartender plunked them one by one on an oblong stone set into the bar top. It was the newcomer's introduction to the then ubiquitous sounding-stone of Chinese retail trade. At his request the barkeep fished out a shining cartwheel from under the till to demonstrate the difference between its spurious responses and the authentic ring of silver.

"(Do men know where to find such a girl?) I've had no personal experience, but I did learn something about this from others.... They told me the ways you could tell whether a girl was a roadside chicken. Only insiders knew."

Imagine that! Even a newcomer quickly had personal experiences in how *not* to find such a girl—if, indeed, the hunger-blurred eyes from whose mute solicitation one averted his own were those of a girl and not of an old woman. At dusk they used to swarm like mosquitoes to the brightly lit entrances of bars, restaurants, and dance-halls. There they would be brushed back into the shadows by a Sikh watchman's rattan stick. It turned every way to guard the trees of life. When they emerged, especially American seamen, the shadows would stir in anticipation of flung handfuls of brass coins to be scrambled for.

What did the Londons seek to prove by evidences of furtive prostitution in the Peoples' Republic? Decay of sexual morals after the Cultural Revolution? "(Then, would you say that such girls [dropouts from "inferior" schools during that period] later became prostitutes not for economic reasons, but because they enjoyed that life-style?)"

"Inferior" schools? Life-style! How one wishes that the Londons could have seen those swarms, not of "light-hearted and optimistic" road chickens but blurry mosquitoes, that drifted through Shanghai dusks and were, reportedly, still doing so when Chiang fled to Taiwan. Conceding that journalistic apologias for the Peoples' Republic have a false ring, so do the Londons' counterapologias fail to re-

verberate authentically on history's sounding-stone. Both coinages are too much alloyed with forensic naivetés.

Peyton Bryan

Smithville, Texas

Miriam and Ivan D. London Respond: Is Mr. Bryan suggesting that today's roadside chickens have come a long way, baby, since yesterday's blurry mosquitoes? Or that our young interviewees are less real than fifty-year-old memories? We're a bit confused—even without gunboats.

### "Who Speaks for the Church?"

To the Editors: A footnote to history—or at least to my personal history and the story of a book. One reviewer of my *Who Speaks for the Church?*—Professor Roger Shinn of Union Theological Seminary—was discerning enough to note that I did not want *my own* (or any other) *specific* views on social and political questions to prevail at the Geneva Conference. Besides, I was not a voting member, expected no influence, exerted none. I came away distressed, not disgruntled.

Looking back through the file of articles and reviews stimulated by my little manifesto, I see again that many people wrestled with the issues I had raised. Evangelicals and liberals alike were troubled. Unfortunately, we do not have in this country—so far as I know—a Christian journal comparable to *Sh'ma*, a "journal of Jewish responsibility" edited by Eugene Borowitz, whose columns welcome and receive contributions from Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform alike, both rabbis and laypeople. Where's the horizontal ecumenism across the breadth of Christianity today, or the vertical ecumenism from grass roots to top?

I am concerned for Richard Neuhaus's future happiness. My book accomplished nothing; nor—I predict—will his article ("Toeing the Line at the Cutting Edge," *Worldview*, June). There is no way to stop a runaway trolley car, or much hope of turning it around. Institutions seem to have to wear out. Indeed, Constantinian sectarianism in secular clothing seems to have invaded the seminaries. Better to take the word of voices from the trolley (but not their meaning) when they tell us

that the Holy Spirit is at work elsewhere.

The first hundred people out there who will read my rare book, to which Neuhaus drew attention in his article, can receive a copy by sending me 25 cents and a stamped, self-addressed envelope 7"x10".

Paul Ramsey

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### "The U.S. in Korea: What Price Security?"

To the Editors: After reading Donald L. Ranard's article in the January/February issue ("The U.S. in Korea: What Price Security?") I wondered whether people like him really care about the Korean people or whether they just care about abstract ideas while using this as an excuse for a U.S. pull-out. If they really care about the human rights of South Koreans on which they constantly harp, wouldn't they want to give constructive help to these poor repressed people?

With a withdrawal, U.S. leverage on Park would lessen, and if you believe what people like Ranard write about Park, it seems he would become more repressive because he would be paranoid about his own and Korea's survival; with a takeover by the North it won't be a question of violations but of the complete extinction of human rights. At any rate, as most experts think, war will come and hundreds of thousands will die, and dead people don't enjoy human rights—at least in this world. How could this be a moral policy?

But I suspect that Mr. Ranard, as his recent telling of Japanese opposition leaders that the LDP is taking bribes from Korea shows, has other plans. With the LDP out, the Socialists will be in, and that would mean the U.S. couldn't use the Japanese bases for the defense of Korea and that the Japanese-Korean economic cooperation would end. So Korea would be left isolated, in economic trouble, and without U.S. ground troops. And the U.S. air units and the ROK forces would be tactically hard to resupply.

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