

food from existing sources' and 'food from new sources' Fr McCormack turns to the crucial point of aid to the under-developed countries. Here the reader is heartened by the story of the growth of international assistance, especially through the United Nations Technical Assistance Programme which in nine years has been responsible for sending more than 100,000 experts on missions to 125 countries. It is a pity that this work does not gain the headlines now given to the debates of the Security Council or the General Assembly; for this is the way in which one world is being built. It may be a bitter pill for the politicians to swallow, but their contribution is negligible compared with that of the technicians. But vast capital resources are still needed and Fr McCormack does well to give so much space to the project for an International Development Authority worked out by Commander Sir Robert Jackson. Such bold vision is needed, backed by generosity from the 'have' nations, which would produce a world-wide Marshall Plan. Not the least of the values of this book is that it leaves the reader with a conditional optimism—the condition being that we of the West must take our principles of Christian charity seriously and realize that we are our brothers' keepers.

JOHN FITZSIMONS

THE GONCOURTS. By Robert Baldick. (Bowes and Bowes; 10s. 6d.)

KAFKA. By Günther Anders. (Bowes and Bowes; 10s. 6d.)

THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE. By Walter Kaufmann. (Faber and Faber; 30s.)

What are we to make of these sick and sensitive aristocrats, the Goncourt brothers, frantically searching in a world that resounded with the trying din of birds and little girls for some quiet place in which Jules might die, peacefully, of syphilis? They are remembered only for their *Journal*, but Mr Baldick's study is mostly taken up with salvaging the novels from oblivion (they sound like inferior Zola written by Proust). It is little more than literary history, challenging no larger significance.

The study of Kafka in the same series could not be more different. Published originally in German in 1951, this is a compassionate and profound analysis not only of Kafka's novels but of the whole ethos which they represent and fascinate. It is not odd, in Kafka's nightmare world, to wake up one morning and find yourself under arrest for nothing, or turned into an insect; or to spend the whole of your life merely as a thing in other people's way. This normalization of the sinister and the inhuman offers a prophetic image of the domestication of horror which characterized the tyranny of Hitler, the experience which dominates Herr Anders' conscience. Kafka died in 1924, but the organization men of the gas-chambers, pottering happily in their spare time like good family men, were the historical reality of his irresponsible bureaucrats.

The heart of Herr Anders's argument, however, is that, though he realized what it meant for man to live in a demoralized world, Kafka could not help conniving at bringing it about (and perhaps this was why he wanted his work destroyed). For all his painful and illuminating insight into the horror of totalitarianism, he never freed himself of a certain fascination with

terror. The dilemma of having to live humanly without a strong sense of what it is to be human is not uncommon, and there is a certain moral scepticism, perhaps Kafka's, which disables one, ultimately, from being sure that the gas-chambers *were* evil. If this goes with a suicidal ambivalence in the face of violence and outrage, as is perhaps the case here, it is well that we should be provoked to reflect, to see what may be involved in Kafka's moral position, and in enthusiasm for his novels. This is, at any rate, a deeply serious and far-reaching study.

But it is possible not to be worried at all by the strain of living without ultimate sanctions, and even to glory in it. Mr Kaufmann, who left Germany in 1939 at the age of eighteen, became an American citizen, and now teaches philosophy at Princeton, has no time for 'men who lack the power to find meaning in themselves'. His own *weltanschauung* (it is certainly nothing less) was formulated in an earlier book: all that need be recalled here is his immense distaste for the basic Christian attitudes and his belief that Nietzsche is the prophet of a new era. To suppose that men are not self-sufficient (as Christians do) is a radical falsification of the human condition, and the underlying aim of this book is to disabuse people of the stultifying picture of human life that religion fosters.

Or rather it is to present an alternative attitude, by showing how it is possible to live and to celebrate life, knowing that death is the end and it is all absurd. There is no need to whimper when the gods fail: on the contrary, Shakespeare, Goethe and Rilke are there to promote and fortify a disciplined atheism which is free from *angst* and resentment. The life of Freud too bears witness, as 'an abiding image of humanity'; and presiding over the birth of the godless hero is the gigantic figure of Nietzsche. It is certainly time that we took the measure of the challenge to our faith which is made by this form of humanism, though it is not common in England.

What is more immediately exciting and entertaining are Mr Kaufmann's splendid polemics. His savage exposures of Karl Popper's slovenly and tendentious chapter on Hegel in *The Open Society*, and of the whole enterprise of Toynbee's *oeuvre*, are surely indestructible; and his informed report on the state of philosophy in the German universities is very interesting. His account of a lecture by Heidegger is even alarming. He grants that Heidegger is one of the most interesting philosophers of our time and obviously a superb teacher, but the disconcerting irresponsibility of his fake etymologies, and the way he and his pupils dominate German philosophy, are very strange.

This book is impossible to review but well worth careful reading. It may be noted here, however, that Mr Kaufmann is sometimes tendentious too. His impatience with Thomists is not unforgivable, but the constant scoffing at their master goes too far in the reference to 'Aquinas' Inquisition' (page 25), and the remark that 'Aquinas built confidently for all eternity' (page 205) is more conventional than one has come to expect from Mr Kaufmann. One wonders if Nietzsche's attitudes were truer to the real movement of the human spirit than the essentially tentative and provisory humility of St Thomas.

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