

## HISTORY

## AND PRESENT PROBLEMS

A dream, or perhaps a nightmare, could conceivably haunt the historian's night, in which he imagines that by some chance the agencies in our society which pour forth largesse to subsidize research should undergo a startling conversion and, frightened by social problems or wearying of the senseless march of technology, permit themselves for a moment to doubt whether what our civilization needs most is more and more instruments of destruction, trips to the moon, ever faster and noisier airplanes, etc. Suppose in sheer desperation they turned to the historian for help? What would he answer? It is perhaps comforting to know that such a turn of events is all but inconceivable. Still, the mere thought leads one to reflect, and to remark how little systematic consideration is given to this simple and obvious question. What *can* historians and history contribute to the solution of existing political and social problems?

It is possible to view the history of history as a series of failures to fulfill the expectation that history, as an eminently practical

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science, can answer to the needs of society in solving its problems. Such an outline of the history of history would stress three main phases, each based on the hope of practical problem-solving success, and each ending in failure. The first of these, the ancient school which lasted in many respects down to the eighteenth century, flatly set forth the claim for history that it was above all a practical guide to policy. (The Chinese classical view of history was much the same.) From Thucydides to Machiavelli, and on to Bolingbroke in the earlier eighteenth century, the Classical view of history was that it was the training of statesmen, the Ciceronian *magister vitae*, "philosophy teaching by example" (by which was meant supplying the concrete instances of general ethical principles, and thus effectively instilling them into people,) and aid to present action. Virtually without academic standing, save as a kind of handmaiden for Rhetoric or Grammar, it was felt to be *the* study suitable for the rulers of men. There they found a storehouse of experience the study of which, with absorption of its "lessons," would equip them to face their tasks of statesmanship.

Eventually this view of history was seen to be based on the absence of historical-mindedness. Only if nothing ever changes can what happened in the past can be used confidently as a prediction of what will happen in the future. If the same situations recur, then we can be sure that what happened before will happen again, and we can gauge our actions accordingly. "Wise men say, and not without reason," observed Machiavelli, "that whoever wishes to foresee the future must consult the past; for human events ever resemble those of preceding times." (Machiavelli's attempt to construct a science of statecraft drawing forth all the lessons of history was no different in principle from Thucydides, Polybius, Tacitus, and all the mainstream of Western historical thought since ancient times.) Perhaps this was almost true of a people like the Chinese whose civilization presumably changed little, and was marked by a high degree of continuity and homogeneity. (Machiavelli added that "it facilitates a judgment of the future by the past, if nations preserve for a long time the same character.")<sup>1</sup> But modern historical-mindedness

<sup>1</sup> Arthur F. Wright has observed that belief in the pattern of repetition (the Chinese "dynastic cycle") helped it to happen. (Certain stock market

knows that everything changes and so yesterday's experience is not much good for today, or very marginally good. We can be sure that "what happened yesterday will not happen tomorrow," moreover that it will not happen to the same personalities under the same conditions or lead to the same results. Doubtless there are some constants in the form of basically similar situations—the simple logic of power affecting alliances, for example—but there always are enough differences to make prediction hazardous. (In military history, Hans Delbrück found no single strategy correct for every age.) While statesmen and the general public still cling pathetically to the delusion that what happened in their youth is a sound guide to the political questions of their age, usually of the misfortune of their country and mankind, most historians readily see the fallacy of the "lessons of history," and the phrase raises a smile.

And so the Classical school failed. Professor Herbert Butterfield once discoursed on "History as emancipation from the past." In modern times historians have indeed liberated us from the old belief that history teaches lessons, and may in time teach statesmen the folly of applying yesterday's formula to today, of preparing to fight the last war or shaping foreign policy in the image of a previous crisis in another part of the world. Perhaps the teaching of history could make clearer than it usually does how carefully and how futilely Louis XVI studied the mistakes of Charles I, and Charles X those of Louis XVI; why it would have been better for the world if the peacemakers of 1919 had know nothing at all of 1815; what a major role in the tragedy of 1940 was played by French and British absorption of the lessons of 1914-1918; and so on down to the unhappy present determination to look at the '60's in the light of the '30's internationally speaking. Disaster comes from this sort of usage of history more often than not, a point which all do not yet seem to have clearly grasped. Even historians may occasionally stumble into the sort of statement that says "history is a great storehouse of examples of potential value for the solution of present problems." But there is little substance to such statements.

prognostication theories seem to work the same way). Louis Gottschalk, ed., *Generalization in the Writing of History* (University of Chicago Press, 1963), p. 42.

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It might be argued that a statesman's knowledge of history makes him aware of a variety of options as he faces some particular decision; he will be able to think of many near parallels and this will help him pick a solution. But this hardly removes the objection that awareness of other instances can be dangerous as often as helpful, or can simply be irrelevant. Nor that this sort of experience can as readily be acquired in the current world—in politics or business—as by the study of history. And also that statesmen noted for their historical awareness do not exhibit marked superiority over those who do not. In recent times Harold MacMillan is a good example.

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The second failure is not unrelated to the first, but took a distinguishably different form. Inspired by the successes of other sciences, eighteenth and nineteenth century Positivists resolved to make history into an "exact science" in the image of the others, the assumption being that all science is the same. Except for a few incongruous echoes, the vogue of scientific history in the Positivist sense died shortly after 1900 and today arouses as much sad amusement as the "lessons" of the exemplar school. It too promised much and completely failed, leaving behind "little more than a collection of misapplied metaphors." This methods proposed to collect well-established facts and from these derive generalizations or "laws" of precise validity, which then could be used to predict and control current problems. The continuing infatuation of Toynbee and others with it cannot conceal its flaring fallacies. The materials of history are not like those of botany and physics; history is not to be subsumed under some general scientific method. At bottom, the error is related to the first one. (Thucydides and Machiavelli were really seeking a science of human affairs, though the prestige and vocabulary of Newton had not arrived to bolster their claims.) There can be no "laws" of history because the data do not repeat themselves, the present being unique and not a reiteration of the past. This view is no more historical than the first, and indeed Positivists notoriously opted for Sociology after some initial flirtation with "social dynamics." If it is a matter of collecting specimens of human

behavior from which to build general laws, we ought to be able to find enough to them in current affairs, without dipping too far into the past. Maitland's remark that a man can be a good lawyer without knowing much legal history—and assuredly a good scientist without knowing the history of science, which is the condition of most scientists today—is pertinent to both these first two schools. "Politicians and philosophers are perpetually exhorted to judge of the present by the past," John Stuart Mill complained, "when the present alone affords a fund of materials for judging, richer than the whole stores of the past, and far more accessible."<sup>2</sup>

From Montesquieu and Condorcet to Comte and Buckle and then Bury and Henry Adams, this false analogy with the natural sciences, leading to the hope for valid historical laws, haunted historians and was responsible for stimulating much of the modern interest in the subject. It is no longer a tenable faith. It was slain by Dilthey, Rickert, Croce and Collingwood in historiography's most brilliant and convincing theoretical advance of all time. The imposing historical sociologies of Spencer and Marx were exposed as *a priori* generalizations, beautiful theories slain by a few ugly facts. The neo-positivism of some recent analytical philosophers of history, to whom an "explanation" can consist only of the application of scientific laws, has been convincingly refuted.<sup>3</sup>

The real foundation for the great nineteenth century upsurge in historical studies—admittedly blending in a somewhat confused way with the above<sup>4</sup>—was what has been called true "historical-

<sup>2</sup> *The Spirit of the Age* (1831), p. 3. Similarly, the view that history is useful because it trains the mind in critical methodology, teaching habits of careful observation and social analysis, is vulnerable to the criticism that this kind of skill can as readily be acquired by working on present situations.

<sup>3</sup> See especially William Dray, *Laws and Explanation in History* (Oxford University Press, 1957). The massive rejection of Toynbee's essentially positivistic system may be seen in numerous places, perhaps best in Toynbee's own *Reconsiderations* (Oxford, 1960). The rather confused revival of scientism among some younger historians, some of whom seem to think that using a computer makes one a scientist, is scarcely worth noting except as a sign of the current malaise among historians; for some comments see G. R. Elton, *The Practice of History* (Thomas Crowell, 1967), pp. 27-39.

<sup>4</sup> A good deal of modern scientific historicizing has combined the two in proposing that there is not one great stream of history but a number of separate and distinct societies or civilizations, whose patterns of development may be compared so as to yield "laws" expressed as similar and necessary

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mindedness," or historicism (in Karl Popper's sense of the term): the view that the historical process itself is a logical development. It was affirmed that there is a plan, a pattern to the stream of history. The law to be found is not a generalization from various diverse particulars in the past, a wholly unhistorical method; it is rather the law of movement of the historical process. Whether the great plan of development was designed by God, or the World Spirit, or is immanent in the world organism makes little difference here; the point is that there is such a plan, a discernible and comprehensible plot to the long narrative of historic time. Though the law of life is change, change is not capricious but rational and meaningful.

To the extreme historicist, such as Cousin or Saint-Simon or Hegel, solving present problems was not within the reach of the historian; the owl of Minerva flies too late, we can only understand the logic of history after it has happened. Those who face toward the past are the least qualified to appraise the future. Men are the unwitting agents of the historic process, a force which guides them. "The supreme law of progress . . . carries along and dominates everything; men are its instruments." Problems will be solved as History wills, and not otherwise. Human knowledge can have no effect on the solution; if it could, History would not be sovereign. The point was expressed by Croce as the maxim that true historical inquiry, which is thought and not action, never condemns; the historian sees that both sides were right, all positions were justified though they opposed each other at the time. If it were possible for the historian to read the pattern of the future, he could not act, he would be paralyzed by his knowledge<sup>5</sup>. Such a judgment agrees with the experience of most historians when they carefully examine

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states or processes through which all societies must pass. If there was only one stream of history, the impossibility of prediction would be clear: "If a unique plant lived forever and suffered changes throughout its career we should not be able to formulate any law in regard to its life cycle as a whole." Morris R. Cohen, *The Meaning of Human History* (Open Court Publ. Co., 1947), p. 40.

<sup>5</sup> For a discussion see R. G. Collingwood, *Essays in Philosophy of History* (University of Texas Press, 1965), pp. 13 ff. In his recent biography of Gibbon, Joseph Swain notes that the great historian was a failure as a practical politician because he saw both sides of questions, quite a handicap in Parliament.

all the evidence of some conflict or crisis: *tout comprendre est tout pardonner*.

Though there is an almost inescapable logic to this, it was natural that minds less acute but more imperious would alter historicism to mean that men can detect the currents of historical change a little in advance and act with them, thus hastening if not creating the future. Historical knowledge can serve, in Marx's image, as midwife to lessen the pangs of birth; or as "signposts showing (man) the way he has to walk along."<sup>6</sup>

Mill spoke, somewhat confusedly, of "determining what artificial means may be used . . . to accelerate the natural progress insofar as it is beneficial," while Marc Bloch hopefully suggested that "the lesson history teaches is not that what happened yesterday will necessarily happen tomorrow" but that "by examining how and why yesterday differed from the day before, it can reach conclusions which will enable it to foresee how tomorrow will differ from today."<sup>7</sup>

Today we see this widespread nineteenth century creed as an illusion, a form of mysticism no longer believable, though we still have some desperate adherents. There are innumerable examples of the failure of historicism to produce results; two of the best from the nineteenth century are Marx, whose prophecies were wildly inaccurate,<sup>8</sup> and Guizot, perhaps the best example of the statesman-historian, whose brilliance as an historian convinced of the existence of great historical patterns did not prevent, and probably helped him to misread his times utterly and become a prize example of blindness in office.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Ludwig von Mises, *Theory and History* (Yale University Press, 1958), p. 285.

<sup>7</sup> *Strange Defeat* (Oxford University Press, 1949), p. 118.

<sup>8</sup> See for example M.M. Bober, *Karl Marx's Interpretation of History* (Norton, 1948), pp. 392-398. Marx usually refused to predict, calling this utopian and saying that "the man who draws up a program for the future is a reactionary." He went astray mostly in mistaking an actual happening for something else which his theory led him to expect.

<sup>9</sup> See Douglas Johnson, *Guizot* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963), also Karl Weintraub, chapter on Guizot in *Visions of Culture* (University of Chicago, 1966). Johnson notes that Victor Cousin's "eclecticism," which was the source of Guizot's historicism, tended to "follow events rather than direct them," presenting "no ideal and no vision." It must be noted that the ideal and the vision, in the case of socialist and other prophetic historicisms,

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There is no such thing as “inexorable historical destiny;” the future is unpredictable for all practical purposes; there are no laws of historical evolution.<sup>10</sup> We may salvage some “trends” which are however usually too imprecise and uncertain to predict confident calculations, unless they are too trivial to matter. “The historian who tries to forecast the future is like a tracker anxiously peering at a muddy road in order to descry the footsteps of the next person who is going to pass that way.”<sup>11</sup> And, again, the anxious politician scanning the horizon for clues to guide him in decision-making need not summon the historian; he might just as well read the newspapers. After it happens tomorrow’s cataclysm will seem to be a logical outgrowth of the past, but this does not mean that knowledge of the past is of much help in predicting it before it happens. Life, as Kierkegaard observed, can only be understood backward, but must be lived forward. And, indeed, in searching for the “causes” of some great denouement, in order to shed light on present solutions or future recurrences, the historian finds himself floundering in an endless sea of factors and forces with no possibility of reaching a firm conclusion.<sup>12</sup>

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The modern view, post-scientific and post-historicist, has tried to make the best of a bad job without (one may argue) succeeding in making history relevant to current problems. Whether in the guise of relativism, Crocean idealism, pragmatism, or existentialism,

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do not really come from history, but are imposed upon it from outside and married to historicism in a dubious ceremony.

<sup>10</sup> Karl Popper’s *The Poverty of Historicism* (Beacon, 1957) is the most celebrated demonstration of these points.

<sup>11</sup> Collingwood, *op. cit.*, p. 68. That historians are reluctant to abandon the prophetic function is suggested in H. Stuart Hughes, *History as Art and Science* (Harper, 1964), p. 88, in a line or two of wistful support for “the predictive character of (the historian’s) thought” on which, however, nothing more is said despite a promise to do so in the next chapter.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Cushing Strout, on “Causation and the American Civil War,” in George H. Nadel, ed., *Studies in the Philosophy of History* (Harper, 1966): “After nearly a hundred years of passionate and dispassionate inquiry into the ‘causes of the Civil war’ the debate is still inconclusive,” and moreover endlessly repetitive.



historical writing becomes only the expression of a point of view. Caught up as he is himself in history, unable to leap out of his skin, a participant, stationed at a particular juncture, the historian can have no objectivity and find no certainty. He may make the most of this by using the fashionable vocabulary of "commitment" and "involvement," but what it boils down to is that the historian makes the past do his bidding. History is a pack of tricks we play on the dead; she is a harlot who always deceives us, as Herbert Butterfield wrote,<sup>13</sup> and who complaisantly does whatever we ask of her. Though history may be used to fortify them, the values we choose and act on do not come from history. History can and does inspire revolutionaries and conservatives, doves and hawks, realists and idealists, and so on; it supplies no solution, since it can supply any or all on order. It has lost its autonomy. Neither as storehouse of examples, yielder of scientific laws, or rational process does it supply any answers to the problems of the present. Those answers are found somewhere else, and imposed on the past. It has long been understood that "You may justify anything by a pointed example in history. You may find in it excuses for any act or any system." It is a set of alphabet letters from which we may spell any words we want.<sup>14</sup>

Historians may be keenly interested in politics and civic affairs; insofar as they are, this bears no logical relationship to their being historians. And, while historians may console themselves with the thought that they are more useful for having shed the illusion of scientific objectivity, every week brings fresh evidence that much historical writing is little more than an imposing documentation of private whim and prejudice.

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While inclined to be discontented with the state of their profession, to talk of a "crisis," and to resort to some fairly desperate expedients in order to resolve the crisis, including some

<sup>13</sup> *This Whig Interpretation of History* (Norton, 1965), pp. 131-132.

<sup>14</sup> Frederic Harrison, *The Meaning of History* (1894), p. 7. Cf. James Anthony Froude, "The Science of History," in *Short Studies on Great Subjects* (1867), and Paul Valéry's famous comment, in *Discours de l'histoire* (1932), that "It teaches

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inane experimentations and astonishing archaisms, historians show little inclination to fold up shop and go out of business. They were invited to do so a few years ago, by a well-known philosopher, on the grounds that "In any rational organization of academic teaching, there would be no place for a separate and independent Department of History," since history is not a separate subject matter but an aspect or way of thinking about other subjects.<sup>15</sup> That these disciplines usually show so little interest in their own history suggests the practical disutility of history; it also brings one sharply back to the historian's fundamental excuse for existence, that he deals with the totality of a culture and not its separate compartments; that, as Michelet said, "history is a reconstruction of life in its wholeness." To study history is to express an urge toward unity and integration, to seek (as Ortega y Gasset has written) the structure of life, the radical human reality. This quest may be futile, but at least it gives the historian a less myopic vision than most other branches of learning, and suggests a way in which he may be useful. No matter that the academic historical profession at times seems hard at work trying to destroy the instinct to wholeness initially present in all those who choose history, by compelling them to "specialize" ever more narrowly; all worthy historians manage to evade this institutional imperative, as indeed they must by the very nature of their work. That the historian is best equipped to "connect" and to see larger patterns and interrelationships, while reaching out to touch all the aspects of life dealt with by various departments of knowledge, suggests that he is qualified somehow to preside over or coordinate programs drawing on the resources of all the humanistic arts and sciences. In fact, whatever doubts "interdisciplinary" projects may raise (and there surely are enough of them, evidently doing very little of much practical value,) there is obviously a need to coordinate the knowledge of such different "departments" as lie separately

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precisely nothing, for it contains everything and furnishes examples of everything." For a typical example of making the best of this by way of praising the "committed" historian, see Page Smith, *The Historian and History* (Knopf, 1964), pp. 228-231.

<sup>15</sup> John H. Randall Jr., *Nature and Historical Experience: Essays in Naturalism and in the Theory of History* (Columbia University Press, 1958), pp. 23-28.

about the university campus, largely working in isolation from each other, and each dividing up the whole man or society into artificial pieces.

By "problems" we may mean anything from inflation and balance-of-payment (fairly narrowly technical, though obviously involving political decisions) to such matters as racial riots, urban decay, and international war, which are patently intricate and touch many dimensions of human existence, not only economic but cultural, intellectual, social, political, psychological, esthetic. The present state of academic work directed toward solving political and social problems is hardly encouraging. It is dispersed and therefore narrow, with tendencies to sink into barren and wildly unrealistic academic busy-work. Of an all too familiar type of "research" carried on by a certain kind of student of international relations, Max Beloff has recently observed that

Apart from the indecency of making an intellectual game out of large-scale human suffering, the idea that what Ho Chi Minh or Mao Tse-tung are likely to do in certain circumstances can be discovered by graduate students playing about with mathematical formulae is breathtaking in its absurdity.<sup>16</sup>

It is an absurdity subsidized by many millions of dollars annually. A distinguished economist has lately ventured the opinion that his university is awarding Ph. D.'s to ignoramuses. Doubtless political scientists, sociologists, geographers, economists and miscellaneous others are performing many useful tasks in various ways, but it may be that the larger problems escape us entirely because of the failure of an integral view of man. It may be thought that an eighteenth century statesman who had read the classical histories was better off than the modern one equipped with computers; misled as the former was concerning the lessons of the past, he at least learned from them a little about human nature in real situations. The staggering miscalculations about Vietnam indicate something like a total breakdown of understanding with the aid of vaster amounts of information than ever before assembled.

Writing in 1937, Charles Beard and Alfred Vagts felt able

<sup>16</sup> *The Listener*, September 14, 1967, p. 323.

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to assert that historiography, increasingly well equipped and on the march forward, "furnishes such guides to public policy as are vouchsafed to the human mind."<sup>17</sup> If thirty years later such confidence is less frequent, we still hear pleas for the historian as best able to interpret the present and so guide political action.<sup>18</sup> The negative note is prominent, however: this isn't much, but what else is there? Asking whether we are not forced to "concede that history is, in itself, useless," W. B. Gallie has recently answered by merely suggesting, in a discussion remarkable for its lack of forcefulness, that "historical understanding" does in various equivocal ways equip us for grappling with the complex world of human relations better than anything else, chiefly by giving us a sort of feeling for the game.<sup>19</sup> Probably few historians would disagree; but the argument is so tenuous as almost to be useless, and can hardly stand criticism. (It could scarcely be denied that Adolf Hitler had a keen sense of history and a great "feeling for the game," for example.)

The conclusion that history has very little to offer to the statesman or public official of direct use to him—or to the citizen interested in acquiring intelligent opinions about current public issues—does not, of course, mean that history is without value. Professor Robert Schuyler once addressed himself to "The Usefulness of Useless History"<sup>20</sup> in a way that suggests the point. Apart from the elemental fact that history satisfies a human urge to know and to understand, there are so many of these indirect utilities it is hard to enumerate them all. By its very scepticism, its crushing indictment of all the hopeful nostrums and pat answers, history discourages fanaticism and encourages moderation. It is personal therapy, expanding the horizons of the individual: "The most fundamental reason we

<sup>17</sup> "Currents of Thought in Historiography," *American Historical Review*, vol. XLII (1937), p. 482.

<sup>18</sup> Hughes, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

<sup>19</sup> *Philosophy and the Historical Understanding* (Schocken Books, 1964), pp. 126-139. Gallie argues that historical examples *fortify* our beliefs and that this in some sense constitutes *supplying* them, but surely this is a logical error. He admits that history could provide us with "wrong" as well as "right" values; doubtless he means that Hitler and Stalin felt as much fortified by history as Churchill and Roosevelt.

<sup>20</sup> *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. LVI (1941), pp. 23-37.

have for studying history is that it enables us to complete ourselves in a way not otherwise possible.”<sup>21</sup> It has the soteriological function noted long ago by Polybius: “the memory of other people’s calamities is the clearest and indeed the only source from which we can learn to bear the vicissitudes of Fortune with courage.” By providing us with a basis for comparison history enables us to criticize and thus conceivably to improve the quality of our culture. And, whether or not history is useful or useless, pleasurable and fulfilling or the “nightmare” from which Joyce said he was trying to awaken, clearly *cannot* be escaped, it is a dimension of human existence that must be reckoned with and come to terms with. A culture that comes to terms badly with its past is subject to certain other afflictions that will handicap it in any attempted solution of its problems. Perhaps the trained historian’s most important function is to correct the myths inevitably produced by popular versions of history, which spring up naturally. One cannot prevent history being written about any great and dramatic occurrence: a Dreyfus affair, a Yalta Conference, a Paris uprising spawns its own legends in profusion. “Take away the historian and there will soon be the most fantastic jungle of myths to inspire hatred between peoples and classes.”<sup>22</sup> The historian finds himself criticizing naive and tendentious interpretations, which if unchecked lead to false usage of the past. A society without good history is inevitably at the mercy of bad.

The historian stands guard when uncritical remembrance of the past produces “blind faith in false analogies of the past,” to use Coleridge’s words. He can reveal more fully the entire context in which the past solution or failure occurred, and thus show to what extent it may be trusted to apply to the present situation. The historian may be said to teach the important lesson that the past teaches no lessons, certainly no easy ones. He demands at any rate that we examine the analogy carefully and completely, in all its manifold circumstances, before attempting to adapt it to current use. Again, the choice is between a critical and uncritical attitude toward the past.

<sup>21</sup> Paul Weiss, *History: Written and Lived* (Southern Illinois University Press, 1962), p. 52.

<sup>22</sup> Folke Dovring, *History as Social Science* (M. Nijhoff, 1960), p. 91.

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We need good history, then; and good history normally does not address itself to present problems. In an essay on James Anthony Froude, Joel Hurstfield remarked that Froude's belief that history's function was "to help solve problems on his own day" is a doctrine "widely held as it is, which has done more harm to the study of history than the activities of any number of deliberate falsifiers."<sup>23</sup> The belief that history reveals an answer to contemporary problems leads too readily to the belief "that history confirms the political creed which he happens to have embraced." We need civilized men and women who know a great deal of history, among other things; we do not need ideological bigots who have fortified their prejudices with doses of selected history.

In a sense we have come full circle. The ancients thought of history as the most sensible and practical of studies, while denying it all claim to the higher knowledge, a function then filled by philosophy. In modern times we have come to see that it has little or nothing to contribute to practical questions, but with the abdication of philosophy history has gained in speculative and even metaphysical importance. Its understanding has largely eluded us, yet is felt to be pregnant with potentialities. "God will not forgive the historians," Ortega y Gasset thought, for having left these vast possibilities unrealized. Others from time to time have sensed this same frustration:

History, for the most part, is written without intelligence or conviction. It is mere narrative, devoid of instruction, and seasoned, if at all, by some trivial, habitual, and second-hand prejudice of the author. History has never been understood...<sup>24</sup>

Perhaps the only lesson we are entitled to draw from the long record of historiography is that when it stops trying to be useful, it will become more valuable, because more philosophical.

<sup>23</sup> Joel Hurstfield, "That Arch-liar Froude," *Listener*, July 9, 1953.

<sup>24</sup> G. Lowes Dickinson, in *Atlantic Monthly*, January, 1915. For Ortega's view, see the chapter on him in Weintraub, *op. cit.*