

In Memoriam

Katherine Griffith

Mrs. Katherine Griffith, retired Secretary of the Department of Political Science at Ohio State University, died on July 13, 1980. Mrs. Griffith worked with every chairperson of the department beginning with Henry Spencer in the 1930s until her retirement in 1973. Her many friends and acquaintances at Ohio State University and in the profession of political science will remember her able service and regret her passing.

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Hans J. Morgenthau*

For Hans J. Morgenthau, life was an unending search for truth about man, politics, human destiny. He set out alone in a hostile social environment moving across uncharted ground. His goal, as he defined it, was discovering "ultimate reality beyond illusion." He took no comfort from oracles nor any of the world's grand simplifiers. His vision expressed itself in the "searching mind, conscious of itself and of the world, seeing, hearing, feeling, thinking and speaking," seeking for light until the end.

He grappled with the most intractable of problems: the dilemmas of politics and of conflict. It was his postulate that the harsh realities of the body politic, like fatal diseases which ravage the human body, yield only to tough-minded analysis and clearcut diagnosis. Prescription depends on the statesman-physician's understanding of human nature and of the inescapable rivalries among men and nations. Interest and power were his roadmaps, not fanciful notions about political man early transcending himself through reason, virtue or reform. As nostrums followed panaceas in rapid succession in the postwar pursuit of peace, he was the first to measure them against political experience. Although he remained outside the corridors of power, he spoke more truth about selfish pride and the ambiguities of power than multitudes of practicing politicians in government and universities who pursued raw power with unacknowledged deceit.

In 1937, he had come to a country which offered him the promise of its national purpose, *equality in freedom*, while denying him initial personal advantage or professional favor. (Unlike many refugee intellectuals, he arrived upon

American soil without a sponsor.) When he trudged up the long steps of Columbia's Law Library, he discovered that the one scholar who might have helped him had died less than a year before. As he had migrated from Coburg in Central Germany to the University of Frankfurt and fled to Geneva and Madrid, he crossed his adopted country from Brooklyn to Kansas City to the University of Chicago returning in his later years to New York and the City University and New School. However unnoticed his beginnings, within a decade he had carved out a niche for himself at the pinnacle of international studies. By prodigious labors, he left a vast and abundant heritage of principles that we have only begun to fathom and not yet made integral to American foreign policy.

The core of that legacy can be found in rigorous criticism of prevailing national moods and trends which Morgenthau insisted crippled the nation's ability to cope with its most urgent problems. In his earliest writings he challenged not individuals (something he resisted) but popular trends and movements of thought which exalted illusions such as the belief that science and technology could save us. Rationalism, as the handmaiden of science, looked to reason and technical knowledge to produce easy harmonies of interest. Yet politics was the realm of contingency and incongruity, of the best under the circumstances. From the viewpoint of practical wisdom, the rationally right, the ethically good and the politically possible were not readily equated. The statesman shapes society *not* by "appeals to reason pure and simple" but by "that intricate combination of moral and material pressures which his art creates and maintains."

A few years later Morgenthau challenged those who blindly heralded a brave new world. Against men who touted new international organizations as substitutes for traditional diplomacy, he maintained that the struggle for power was an enduring aspect of international politics, no mere passing phase of state relationships. But his critics and some of his followers misunderstood him; his preoccupation was with power in its broadest dimensions and with its interconnections with purpose as reflected in the subtitle of his classic text: *The Struggle for Power and Peace*. "To say a political action has no moral purpose is absurd," he wrote, "for political action can be defined as an attempt to realize moral values through the medium of politics, that is power" (*Dilemmas*, p. 85). With Reinhold Niebuhr, he believed that "Politics will, to the end of history, be an area where conscience and power meet, where the ethical and coercive factors of human life will interpenetrate and work out their tentative and uneasy compromises" (*Moral Man*, p. 4). He joined Meinecke in affirming that "... moral life cannot be regulated like clockwork and ... even the purest strivings for good can be forced into the most painful choices."

If Morgenthau's legacy had been no more than

*The memorial above was originally delivered at the funeral service for Hans Morgenthau on July 22, 1980 at the Riverside Chapel in New York City.

a coherent framework for relating morality and politics and rethinking foreign policy, his contribution would have been enormous. Yet for those of us who were students, friends, and admirers, his heritage is more profoundly personal than philosophical or intellectual. As a teacher, he never rested in the demands he laid on us to try, as our British friends would say, to get things right. How often the retort, "a good speech but you misquoted Cromwell." As a friend he was more steadfast in hard times and adversity than others were in good times and success. By moral example, he taught those he inspired to live with uncertainty, contradictions and tragedy, remembering the text: "For He makes his sun rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the just and the unjust." As moral philosopher, he rejected moralism—making one value supreme—and recognized the wisdom of Justice Holmes: "People are always extolling the man of principles; but I think the superior man is one who knows that he must find his way in a maze of principles." He not only wrote but lived in the midst of history's most perplexing era confronted by the clash of conflicting purposes.

Having reflected on Morgenthau as a scholar and thinker, what remains is to pose one final question about the man. What was the source

of his personal magnetism? Why were we so drawn to him? What galvanized loyalty and guaranteed respect? Was it the wry smile and quick wit? Steady resolve and determination? A presence that became commanding as he lectured without notes? An abruptness that never quite veiled his underlying compassion? An undisguised shyness that curiously enough gave strength to others who feared rejection? The signs of having suffered and known pain? Easy friendships with young people despite his eminence? A mind storing and retrieving vast treasures from the broad sweep of culture? A character untainted by hypocrisy? A lifelong habit of shielding others from needless embarrassment? The courage to change? The ability to hold fast? My list of questions is long but not long enough; we cannot comprehend what we know we felt.

After everything has been said, there remains an element of mystery about his greatness. At the close of a conference in the 1960s Walter Lippmann turned to Hans and said: "How curious you are misunderstood. You are the most moral thinker I know." To that we would add, yes, and forever the example of a courageous and compassionate friend.

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A Gentle Analyst of Power: Hans Morgenthau*

Hans Morgenthau was my teacher. And he was my friend. I must say that at the outset because so many obituaries have stressed his disagreement with policies with which I have become identified. We knew each other for a decade and a half before I entered office. We remained in sporadic contact while I served the government. We saw more of each other afterward.

It is not often that one can identify a seminal figure in contemporary political thought or in one's own life. Hans Morgenthau made the study of contemporary international relations a major discipline. All of us who taught the subject after him, however much we differed from one another, had to start with his reflections. Not everybody agreed with Hans Morgenthau, but nobody could ignore him. We remained close through all the intellectual upheavals and disputes of two and a half decades.

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Establishing international relations as a discipline was not an easy matter in the United States. For the temptation to treat the subject by analogy to our domestic experience was overwhelming. There existed in America a well-developed literature on international law that saw international relations in terms of legal processes. There was a pragmatic tradition of solving issues that arose "on their merits." There was the belief in America's moral mission that had produced both isolationism and, later on, global involvement.

Morgenthau sought to transcend all these disparate tendencies. He was passionately convinced that peace was a statesman's noblest objective, but he did not believe that this yearning alone would avoid war. He was a liberal in his political view but he thought his convictions required not simply an affirmation but sufficient stability at least to enable man's humane aspirations to prevail. He was willing to confront the political leader's fundamental dilemma—that moral aims can be reached only in stages, each of which is imperfect. Morality provides the compass course, the inner strength to face the ambiguities of choice.

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