Viva Viva

La Junta Nazionale

National Party Policy

Brockie
LETTERS

THE ETHICS OF RACISM

Sir,
It has become fashionable for our supporters to claim glibly: "I don't believe in mixing politics and sport." This claim has sent many anti-tour people (including HART) into a frenzy of activity to try and justify "politics in sport".

It seems to me that the "politics in sport" phrase has been a very effective red herring dragged up by some clever friends of South Africa (white, that is) to obstruct the anti-tour movement from the real issue: ethics in sport. The South African cult of Apartheid is built on a religious belief (of early Dutch Protestant origin) of God-given racial superiority — similar to, but less sophisticated than, the foundations of Nazism. For the white South African racial oppression and slavery are thus morally justifiable. For most of the rest of the world (including us) they are not. The real question about the tour is: what place does ethics have in sport?

D.L. Armstrong

WHOSE HOUSE IS WORSE?

Sir,
The suggestion by Student Movement Onlooker that NZUSA should investigate the Malaysian Ilias is a "Big Joke".

NZUSA has been "Desperately" trying to elect a President for this year, and to be involved in petty quarrels of these kinds is nothing more than a farce!

For God sake, suggest something feasible.

T. Chua

MSAMSSA NOT ON

Sir,
For the past five weeks I have been following with great interest the big debate in SALIENT. Attacks, reprisals, all nothing short of verbosity and ignorance of a small number of Malaysian writers. I had no interest in that thing, to add my own chapter for a spell of emotio and hostile words could do more harm than good. On the other hand, mere silence on the part of MSSA may, to some be indicative of our guilt of forsaking their basic principles and philosophy. It is high time it put the record straight.

It is true, there has been some talk among the MSSA and MSAMSSA leaders about cooperation between the two associations. It is NOT true that there was talk about a merger. Such a merger contravenes the basic philosophy of MSAMSSA — an independent body free from government influence and subscribing to the spirit of NZUSA and VUWSA constitution only.

It is abundantly clear that 'Student movement onlooker' is not prepared to see a united Malaysian and Singaporean organisation such as Vuc.

I cannot see how my article "The Only Way" provokes the MSAMSSA leaders are willing to surrender. Surely 'Student movement Onlooker' is living in a blissful state of ignorance not caring to read the article in full. For the article merely sets out the issues that confront the Malaysian people in achieving national unity, the obstacles the Racial clique are engendering to overcome, which, as I pointed out, are not that easy for at least another twenty years. I suggest 'Student Movement Onlooker' read it once again, he may be surprised to discover it further emphasis on the political philosophy of MSAMSSA in a rather radical mood.

Shanmugan Vasanathan
Editor, MSSA Critique

TILL DEATH DO US PART

Sir,
The controversy over the MSSA/MISSA issue is actually a non-controversy. The real issue seems to be rather an attack on the Malaysian Govt and its activities and policies.

Two major points seem to arise from the letters that have been published. MSSA is a tool of the Malaysian Govt, i.e., under its control. (2) There are 'spies on campus' who are reporting the activities of Malaysian students to the Malaysian Govt.

1. MSSA controlled by the Malaysian Govt of a matter of fact. May I suggest that those who allege it attend the MSSA Committee meetings and look into its books. There does not appear to be any clause in the MSSA constitution prohibiting observors to the MSSA Committee meetings as well as to look into records of MSSA. The question is: "Are you really concerned?" Or as you just attacking the Malaysian Govt. using MSSA as a scapegoat?

2. If there are 'spies on campus working for the Malaysian Govt., they are by definition difficult to detect. Witness the earlier meeting this year held in the student union to find out if the N.Z. Police were on campus. It is fair to comment that the meeting reduced itself to the recital of 'anecdotes' and this was admitted by Peter Cullen who himself also told a few anecdotes. If spies do exist on campus and in these days of the Black September Movement and that sort of thing an increase of security officers on campus might be expected, there is really nothing one can do except to pin them down and this is of course a most difficult task. Espionage and counter-espionage is a real art.

However, there is at the moment actual armed conflict (bang! bang!) in Northern Malaysia and the borders of Sarawak between the Malaysian armed forces and fugitives who want to like themselves National Liberation Fighters. In Sarawak, the battle sometimes takes place in the towns, especially Sibu. This armed conflict (bang! bang!) is not just a joke. If anybody thinks it is not true, read the STRAITS TIMES freely available in the Main Library. You don't have to run through many pages as an incident with the insurgents happens nearly every day. Furthermore, the SARAWAK TRIBUNE is not available in the Main Library but anyone interested will just have to call out and it will be handed to him for personal. In the light of this, can one really blame the Malaysian Govt for having spies on campus?

It is our firm belief that many of those who have written to SALIENT seem to think the Malaysian Govt. have great sympathies and not to these National Liberation 'Fighters back home. Please study their letters carefully again. I usually sign my name in letters to you, Mr. Editor. But this time I will not. The reason is because I know these freedom fighters i.e. I have a license to kill and massacre, i.e. I have freedom to slit throats (please read STRAITS TIMES and SARAWAK TRIBUNE for details). Mean Business. If my name is revealed, you might not get another letter from me.

Thankyou Mr. Lee Kuan Yew.

Peace Loving Malaysian.

AN OPEN NOTE TO THE EDITOR OF THE MSSA CRITIQUE

Sir,
I do not claim to be a veteran reader of your MSSA Critique, but having recently read three issues of your magazine, I have felt moved to burst into print for the first time.

While it may be worthwhile having a magazine of such a nature for it seems to serve as a "forum" catering for a section of the realise Malaysian students, it is nevertheless a bit "misunderstood". Indeed, some of your articles have "stood up, bold and brave," yet I find in reading them that there is a synthesis of very scanty self-awareness, albeit there is in effect an unduly superficiality of inter- alia, wobble and waffle.

It may be ideal too, to present facts and views of "home politics" to the Malaysian students who are concerned about the well-being of the country, but I doubt if the manner of comment and criticism so adopted in your magazine can achieve any favourable reciprocal ends. Politics may be ugly and unmanaged, but in vitriolic form or otherwise it should be clear and open. Without constructive suggestions or actions is always more harm than good. Articles of the "monstrous, mud-digging, pridefully aggressive, innaturally logic substance or element" should best be avoided. Indeed, "The Race of the Lock" may have opened the flood gate of the "real imitators or abettors" who could have easily led us to the subversion, violence and disorder, and if this is what your magazine is intended, then, I am afraid that the rage is being committed with a degree of callousness and cruelty that would leave the world in its place.

Stephen Chai

THE CYCLOPSECARY

Sir,
The hope is that the Business Administration Dept. will get rid of that secretary. In addition, they don't get rid of her they had to give her notice that the Business Administration Dept. employs a secretary to aid students, not students to aid the secretary. Removal of all those stupid little notices of "do's and don'ts" at the door would do a lot to help in this matter.

Ulysses

NATIONAL YOUTH TRAINING CAMPS

Sir,
Allow me to use your columns to offer advice to any students considering one or more years of teacher training.

Training Colleges are conservative. Depending on your orientation you might say "good", or "all the more reason to avoid them" or "all the more reason to go there". Our advice is for those in the latter category.

If you really want to get into a training college don't give the recruitment officer or selection panel any reason to suspect you are unwilling to take shit lying down. Keep quiet about your involvement in H.A.R.T, COV, CND and all the rest, radio-left organisations, at least until you have written confirmation of acceptance. Neither is it wise to voice ideas about progressive or even liberal education. Save these ideas for reactionary lecturers and fellow students.

Don't be shy in seeking further advice from us who have gone before you. Many T.G. graduates will be only too glad to help you attempt to put these instructions back in touch with reality.

The Three R's.
Politics or Pampering

NZUSA - No President

NZUSA met at Victoria on 9th and 10th of September. Like the August Council meeting at Christchurch a major item on the agenda was the election of a President for 1973. Like the Christchurch meeting an acceptable candidate could not be found.

The conflict between political action and welfare work for NZUSA members again divided the Universities. The more politically aware were conscious of the demands the proposed Springbok tour may place on NZUSA and pumped for Gary Emms. Otago and Canterbury Universities felt Emms lacked ability and with the addition of Auckland's vote, prevented Emms from obtaining a majority of the votes.

Cuthbert has agreed to stay on until a replacement is found and the next attempt to do this will be November this year.

YOUR MONEY SPENT

Despite the second fall on the Presidential bill, the meeting last weekend passed the 1973 budget, $1000 allocation for Anti-War activities and $500 for Anti-War work. The meeting allocated $2,500 for U.S.P. work.

Despite the strain within NZUSA and the mutterings of withdrawal from some constituents, the storm will be weathered and a compromise candidate will wind his weary way to the presidential pillow. Nothing much will have changed - despite the interim therapy.

HYPOCRITES & SLAVES

The major dilemmas of NZUSA seem to be:

(a) Primarily white, middle-class students adopting socialist and revolutionary international policies, the realisation of which would destroy their middle-class security and complacency.
(b) The simultaneous adoption of grossly selfish welfare policies, and selfless international ones.
(c) The hypocrisy and ignorance surrounding the setting of environmental policies compared with the informed seriousness evident in discussions on welfare matters (e.g., NAC reductions).
(d) The disproportionate amount of time, effort, and money spent on general, selfish, welfare activities in relation to education reform.
(e) The pointlessness of student representatives adopting policies which their constituents have not even discussed (or may not even be interested in); and the hypocrisy of such 'leaders' voting against their constituent's policies on less than rational and altruistic grounds.
(f) The spending of the vast majority of NZUSA's income on bureaucratic functioning, and almost nothing on individuals, groups, and activities to which we make policy commitments.
(g) The hypocrisy of having idealistic policies which could be enacted but about which it is deliberately intended to do nothing.

"Are Trade Unions Relevant?"

DO THE UNIONS HAVE A PLACE IN SOCIAL REFORM?

Local Unionists also speaking are Ken Douglas, Drivers Union, Ken Findlay, Freezing Workers.

A P.S.A. Representative

Brian Brooks:

Secretary, Auckland Clerical Workers Union
Executive, W.E.A.
Lawyer, and Lecturer in Industrial Law
Secondary School Teacher.

Thurs: 28th September. 12-2pm. Union Hall.
demystifying economies

Peter Wilson's reply to Professor Philpott's reply

The assert paternalism, moralizing tone, smug Ricardo about young people and loaded phrases like "demands real accomplishment" which constituted a good deal of your reply to my criticism, are all quite predictable in the context of an educational system which sees the teacher as knowing everything the pupil nothing and which therefore demands of the pupil that he respectfully acquiesce in the work of the teacher who is there to fill him, like a vessel with the correct knowledge. Should it appear at any stage that this relationship is being transgressed, then the transgressor naturally, is guilty of rudeness, arrogance, offensiveness and insolence. That you can level these charges at me in a text which is laden down with institutionalized and overbaked ingenuity is not so much a personal failing as the outcome of your role. Therefore, well not dwell on the irony that you advance this invective in the course of substituting for my allegedly emollient "brat", a calm "insobered approach". Other aspects of your myopia are more significant.

When you say that I "...will find [myself] in agreement" with most of the things contained in your speech, I am not quite sure whether you are expressing a wish or simply giving it order. Either way you are dead wrong. Lay aside your claim that your speech was "...concerned basically with the need for realism informed by more realism and less romanticism" on the grounds that it can only have been meant facetiously. I would like to make a number of points before returning to my basic reason for criticising your speech in the first place.

You make much of the fact that I had not read the full text of your speech at the time I wrote criticising it. The fact that I did not get invited to select anything such as the Institute of Management Convention or the National Development Council and do not have access to the documents available there is hardly my fault.

Next, the term "bourgeois economist" is not a "fashionable slogan" (First used 1890) nor is it intended to sug

gest that you are necessarily a "yes man" for the status quo. What it does say is that your ideology is limited, in theory, by the limits of bourgeois society in reality. Thus in developing your economic model you fail to transcend existing society, you are unable to be the limits set by that society. And just as in practice there are certain problems which cannot be solved within the existing framework, so in theory certain dilemmas occur whose solution necessitates giving up the specific ideal of bourgeois society. It is precisely because you assume this framework that you are condemned to reproduce the same old answers which will not solve them in reality. However the term "realism" is often used as a euphemism to justify this state of shortcoming. With that in mind, let us return to your advocacy of growth as the panacea for the coun-try's ills, and here I owe you an apology in passing. My statement that your call for massive growth "suggested you had not heard of ecology and the environment" was obviously wrong, and I now accept that you have heard of both. However, your answers to two of my other points in particular, struck me as puzzling because they were not answers at all. Firstly, in reply to my statement that you cannot reconcile private gain with public good you refer to Gallbraith and Affluent Society. I thank you for that, because "private affluence and public squallor" was of course, the theme of that book, and evidence for the fact that private gain is in contradiction to public good abounds — which is, after all, exactly what I asserted. Secondly you provide in reply to my statement that capital profitability is your overriding criterion in deciding what kinds of commodity production to encourage, an outline of the need to provide above a basic level of industrial protection an extra 20 per cent or so — for existing or new industries which contribute to some of the social non-economic goals such as quality of life..." Social non-economic goals is a phrase worth pondering as expensive as the bias of capitalism, but more than that it poses the question as to what you regard as eco-nomic goals. The answer apparently is, those which yield the greatest profit, or in other words, capital profitability and the pursuit of monopolist expansion, necessary if you want to fulfil your objective of keeping N.Z. up in the "international league table", cannot be attempted to-gether. The one cannot be pursued without the other. Hence, either social expenditure must be stab-ile (at its present low level) or reduced even furtherly, by aggravating shortages in areas such as housing, so as to increase saving and private consumption with the inten-tion of saving a given amount and re-creating the illusion, or there must be stronger moves towards the socialization of the economy. These are the only realistic alternatives, for

even if the social checks you seek to impose on your mas-sively growing economy were technically feasible, that ignores the critical fact that they are and will be politi-cally unacceptable to those who matter, the same people on whose capital this massive expansion of growth dep-ends. What they want and will get is an intensified campa-gain against trade unions and "non-productive" ele-ments like hippies and "operators-out", or in short, a sys-tem which integrates logic of profit pulls even tighter and expresses its demands even more stringently.

Your reference to getting "the message" across to trade unions and your pitiful attacks on young people for their "general loudness" "unwillingness to cope with soci-ety" and "morbid eccentricity" are no more than a recognition of what is in fact a much more difficult, but even more vital task of finding ways to communicate and express the problems of the society you seek to impose.

The accelerated expansion of social and collective services

In a letter last week your correspondent Mr A. McDonald expressed scepticism of my declared preference for higher levels of social expenditure on the grounds that I did not express this view to the Royal Commission on Social Security.

My view in this regard (as I said in reply to Mr Wilson's) is personal view—a value judgment and other people will have different value judgments. Apart from the fact that I was talking about the wide field on collective social expenditure in general and not just about social security, I can say no earthly reason why my value judgments should have been press-ed on the Royal Commission or should carry any more weight than anyone else's. The place for me to express my opinion or value judgments is as a writer, not as an economist.

There are of course special areas of expertise in this field concerning the present but with the financing, administration and economic effects of social expenditure. They are not areas in which I personally specialize. In relation to them there were people on the Commission and on its staff(including some from the University Department of Economics) who did have these areas of specialization and therefore less likely to spare the time of the Commissioner than I advancing in this specialist area.

Dr Philpott has indicated that he is prepared to pay and pay heavily for social and economic improve-ments. But, he adds, this is the role of society. implying that he 'llough it up if it is necessary and most people in the Social and Economic Improvement Fund. It doesn't take an economics professor to realize that wealth comes from labour, not from capital, and most people the fact that any social or economic improve-ments have been paid for and paid heavily by the work-ing class, in money, labour and time. I am sure that personal sacrifice may be a fair test of ideals, but, incidentally it's a test on which professors don't have any monopoly either.

Don Franks

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Dr. Professor Philpott has indicated that he is prepared to pay and pay heavily for social and economic improvements. But, he adds, this is the role of society. Implying that he ’ llough it up if it is necessary and most people in the Social and Economic Improvement Fund. It doesn’t take an economics professor to realize that wealth comes from labour, not from capital, and most people the fact that any social or economic improvements have been paid for and paid heavily by the working class, in money, labour and time. I am sure that personal sacrifice may be a fair test of ideals, but, incidentally it’s a test on which professors don’t have a monopoly either.
PhD's $10 Refund

PhD students are entitled to a repayment of $10 because the rise in the fee was never officially approved.

The University Council at its last meeting decided that an increase in the fee was not valid for this year as the approval required through the University Grants Committee had not been given.

So, if you’re a PhD student and hard up at the moment, a trip to the Registry to enquire about this will be well worth your while.

AUSGIE RULES
Taranaki Memorial Park, Sat 24 Sept. at 2pm
Any enquiries phone 769-042
All welcome

HART MEETING
Tuesday, Thurs. 22 Sept at 8pm
Union Hall, University Union.

BLOOD

Students are not noted for their generosity, but they are especially known for their psychopathological tendencies. The old obsession with hot coursing blood is as strong as ever, and there is no indication that it has anything to do with the increasing popularity of horror films. You have an opportunity to experience hot coursing blood.

Donate some. In the exhibition Foyer on the mornings of the following days: Monday 25 Sept. Tuesday 26 Sept. Monday 2nd Oct. or Tuesday 3rd Oct. from 9.15am-12noon. You can donate your blood.

Tea & biscuits will be provided to the survivors, but to participate in this infrequent rite you must fill in an appointments sheet in the Main foyer of the U.U.B. Eat some breakfast before participating, and don’t sit exams or tests afterwards. Members bring your blood identity cards.

NON-GRADUATE RECRUITS

WHO? WHERE? WHEN? WHAT?

If these questions pertain to the campus, and you can answer them, then you’re our man (or woman).

So why not answer them for the benefit of others as a CONTACT OFFICER next year (1973).

All the job entails is that you be available for 1 hour a week to answer campus queries.

Drop in, and book in CONTACT OFFICE, OPPOSITE LOUNGE, S.U.B.

Smash and Grop

The Condom Vending Machine in the Men’s Toilets at the eastern end of the S.U.B. has been interfered with three times recently.

On the first occasion some unknown broke the perspex and extracted 50 condoms. Two days later a merchant stole another 36. The following day an entreprenuer tore the machine from the wall, scattering condoms all over the toilet floor, and made off with more.

Unfortunately he discovered it was no use on its own, and he returned with it to find all the condoms that he had left on the floor were stolen. Formerly he left the machine there.

The moral, and there must be one in this instance, is that you are not the only bastard, but a lot of bastards. Your parsimony is a waste of time; have you heard of the gentleman who had a machine of his own, the last time interfered with? He gave 75 cents, and wound up with 100 of the things, and he will do it again.

And if you object, you are only a blockhead; if you don’t object, you are a layabout; if you object, you are a fool. The Condom Machine is a splendid invention; a man has a right to know what he is going to put in his body. We now have a man guaranteeing that the contents are what he says they are.

It is all a good lesson to you, you layabouts and blockheads, and there must be a moral in it somewhere.

Non-smokers and layabouts will be out of luck on this one.

It seems that Peter Frank has finally got the upper hand in the Peter Frank debate that has haunted SALIENT correspondence columns all year.

Last week, Frank and Roger Steele were appointed joint editors of SALIENT 1973. Mr King's fight next year is sealed. However, this doesn't mean that disaster must take over. Both Peter Frank and Roger Steele have shown themselves to be volatile writers. Frank is versatile enough to write shit and brilliant critique. Certainly we can expect from these two a SAlIENT of very professional proportions, and with a provocative and critical orientation.

CAPPAICIDE, has fallen to the clutches of that veteran of publications who is probably editing the magazine to complete the list. Graeme Collins. This means CAPPAICIDE will be good, meaning a lot better than the nonsensical garbage that we were landed with this year.

ORIENTATION HANDBOOK which has of late become a sort of “Yellow Pages” has been promised a spring clean by its Editors Graeme Nebbitt, Les Atkinson and Rick Sturrock.

DRIVERS UNION STUDENT MEMBERS

NZUSA and the Wellington Drivers Union have come to an agreement over students doing driving work over the summer vacation.

The Union will recognise students who are members of NZUSA and they will be given full membership rights of the Drivers Union for the period of their employment, for a fee of $5. Students concerned are recommended to make membership arrangements prior to commencing employment.

The purpose of such an agreement is to avoid friction between groups of workers and to ensure that students will be kept in accord with the Union's practices and traditions.

The Union's local area extends to Palmerston North. Anyone working in the Wellington Office, Trades Hall, Vivian St. Ph. 566.019.

PIZZA COMPETITION AND “THE LOVE ROOT”

Bring your Pizza along between 7.30 and 8pm to the smoking room (S.U.B.) Enjoy at 8pm “THE LOVE ROOT” an Italian movie with English subtitles then at 9.30pm back to the Smoking Room where a cookery book on Italian food will be given as a prize to the best pizza maker. Pizza Wine, Movie, Music - All for 50c come along. Bring your pizza - All welcome.

Propagandists

Bryant, Nebbitt has promised the magazine will be ‘gnorant and real freksy’, so next year’s fresher will be subverted earlier in the piece.

Unfortunately ARGOT, the association’s literary magazine has been ignored in the grab for the more prestigious positions. ARGOT is possibly not even known in Variety publications, yet is often the best. Someone must be interested in fostering literature so for your information the position of editor is still open.

Lastly we come to Treasurer, the man who does a lot of behind-the-scenes work. Warwycx Drive proved both in Easter Tournament and in publications that he is efficient and his re-election was undoubtedly deserved. Still these commerce gentlemen seem to share a golden thread, and like Byron Cullen, Warwycx will learn that money is a necessary evil, and is to be respected solely in times of crisis.

This impressive line-up and enthusiastic team will spend every cent of your dollar for the revolution.

Peter Booker.

mini-meals

The Ground floor Caf is now serving mini-meals on menu items that are easily divisible. These are small helpings for lower prices and have been brought in at the request of students.

vegetarian meals

Every day the Ground floor Caf will now be including one vegetarian item in the hot meal menu. This is again in response to a petition by a number of students who do not eat meat.

SPLENDID OPPORTUNITY

For graduate and near-graduate (B.A. or M.A.)

To enter JOURNALISM & PUBLIC RELATIONS Must like meeting and interviewing people and be keen on writing. Variety and wide scope for initiative. Please reply: 'OPPORTUNITY', P.O. Box 3541, WELLINGTON.
How the Housing Shortage Helps the Protest Movement

The encroachment of American monopoly capital (imperialism) has been observable in NZ for twenty years, and equally inevitably the development of anti-imperialism as a popular movement.

In view of the objective circumstances, it is surprising that anti-imperialism is not further developed and more widespread than it is. Over recent years, anti-imperialism has led to the Vietnam protest movement and behind the conservationist movement in the fight against the anti-war movement, but in those movements it has not yet come to the fore. The first open manifestation of anti-imperialism in NZ was the demonstrations against the Pacific Basin Economic Council conference at this university in May.

The PBC events therefore marked a very significant advance. But this advance to open anti-imperialism, so far as it has occurred, remains confined almost completely to students. The Vanguard role of students in the anti-imperialist movement is historically normal. It occurred in China in 1919, when there was a great outburst against Japanese imperialism. But students are too small and ineffective a social force to be itself on an American scale. There must be alliances in this struggle. U.S. imperialism is the willing co-operation of powerful elements of the NZ bourgeoisie (big capitalist class) who constitute the NZ ruling class. These elements know that their future is tied hand and foot to U.S. imperialism. According to them, they have to make the development of anti-imperialism of students here and their political henchmen have gone into action to turn the tide. By open and behind-the-scenes means, the attempt will be made to defuse the recent student developments.

In China in 1919 the urban workers and others nationwide quickly joined the students in opposing imperialism. This was the start of the popular movement which after various turns and setbacks carried through the Chinese revolution. In NZ a similar process by workers and others is necessary if the student initiative is not to peter out. Fortunately, this advance by workers is occurring, although far too slowly. The workers are the main enemy of capitalist exploitation and the main constituency of the downtrodden mass in society. The present wave of house occupation in Wellington is part of this advance. An analysis of the house occupations needs to be made to show this.

In May-June this year a Modern Study Group met on a number of occasions at the instigation of the CPNZ but with other groups attending. In the course of discussion, it was decided that the police should be called to deter the deteriorating conditions brought about by imperialism. This group of people is trying to get support to house unemployed and houseless people. The group is largely made up of workers and those left unemployed and houseless. The attempt was therefore decided to try and promote some activity on these issues. Certain lines of activity were undertaken or explored, but with-out result, and later on these lines were criticised as too formal and dropped.

Certain elements who were at the Modern Study Group meetings took part in a number of militant activities on various topics, as a result of which a small, organised group of activists took shape, consisting of workers and students. This group continued its work with the unem-ployed and the houseless, and this concern came to the surface in the occupation of 275 Taranaki St. as a protest over the housing situation.

The important thing about the 275 Taranaki St. occupation is that it occurred. It marked a new turn in the protest movement in this period. But in other respects it was not important. Its participants — students and workers — were the same as had been seen in earlier protests. It lasted only a couple of days, was effectively broken up by the police, and ended with some success gained. But the roles of the two social groups were significant. The liber-als in the form of the Tenants’ Protection Association took an interest, but their tactics of negotiation got nowhere, and the activists came to see that such tactics were only self-defeating. The other group was the bikers. They took an interest in the occupation to the extent of arriving on the scene and clashing with the pol-ice. They had no contact with the activists who were barri-caded in.

The activist group showed its might by not letting the matter drop at this point. Instead, they discussed their experience among themselves and with others, they in-vestigated the whole situation regarding vacant houses in Wellington, and decided that they would occupy a second building which was the largest un-occupied in town, was state-owned, and was in a neighbourhood with many working class residents — Kent Flats.

The Kent Flats occupation started off with much of the same ingredients as the 275 Taranaki St. occupation. But as it continued new features emerged. New politically advanced youths appeared on the scene from outside the student milieu. Houseless, unemployed people joined the occupation. These new arrivals gave the occupation a material instead of an idealist, basis, since these new groups had the motivation of actual need. At this point in time, members of the VB gang arrived on the scene, but unlike at 275 Taranaki St. they were invited to join the occupation, and did so. This development caused great distress to the liberals of the Tenants Protection Association and other petty-bourgeois elements, who walked in terror of the VB boys, and very quickly de-camped. The students decamped at the same time, poss-ibly for the same reason, but possibly for the holidays. The result was that the Kent Flats people were now a solidly working class group of mostly unemployed houseless people. This was a very significant transformation, because it brought into existence for the first time in the present period a militant working class protest movement completely independent of the trade unions. The shift from Kent Flats to Kelvin Grove marked a major stage in the development of the groups associated with Kent Flats, but in the process the unity of the groups involved was cemented. This unity was demonstrated by the occupation of the inter-island ferry Maori, in which youth of all groups took part. The three-hour occupation of the Maori was the high-water mark of the housing protest. That ship is indefinitely laid up, has no useful bed, and would make a good hostel for students, a possibility already raised in the past. This occupa-tion also demonstrated the concern of the working class elements for students’ welfare. Whether as a result of this or not, students have since begun to take an inter-est in the Kelvin Grove community.

The occupation of the Maori had another still greater sig-nificance. By this occupation, the working class activists challenged the overseas monopolists, the imperialists, and ultimately U.S. imperialists, who with the NZ government, and others own the Maori. It was an attack on the property of imperialists, an attack on our ruling class viewed with all seriousness, as they showed by sending twelve car loads of police to defeat it. Although only a small incident in itself, the occupation of the Maori demonstrated that a mighty social force, the NZ working class capable of great daring, imagination and humour, had entered the direct struggle against imperialism.

Neil Wright, Communist Party of N.Z.
The Great Housing Controversy

Coloured slides and bleeding hearts were all that Wellington people were offered at Monday night’s public meeting on housing. About 1000 people turned up and many of them were quickly angered by the non-answers offered by their political ‘leaders’.

A pamphlet advertising the meeting promised “a new style public meeting” which would be “entertaining, informative, challenging”. It was not a new-style meeting at all. The programme was dominated by tiresome, waffling politicians and academics. Little time was given to discussion and questions from the floor, and when sections of the large audience started to express their disgust, the Chairman, Public Administration Professor John Roberts tried, unsuccessfully to shut them up.

Towards the end an obviously pre-arranged motion was moved from the floor. Roberts refused to accept any amendments to it, and then declared it carried after refusing to take a vote! Some bemused political science students in the audience wondered at the hiatus between the democratic theory Roberts teaches and his practice as a chairman. To others, who had seen this political martyrdom in action at the Public Participation & People conference a fortnight earlier, his behaviour was no surprise. There Roberts had refused to vacate the chair when motions were moved disagreeing with his ruling and expressing no confidence in him.

Sociologist Ray Bradley began with an academic address on a survey he had organised in May on Wellington’s housing problems. Bradley’s coloured slides and academic discussion did not help to clarify the problem though the results of his survey have shown up the problems a lot of people knew existed through their experience of living in bad housing.

Bradley’s slides were followed by the Wellington City Council’s housing committee chairman, George Porter. Porter didn’t have any problem with demands from the audience to do something because, as usual, he simply called for more assistance from the government to help the council build houses. That’s a pretty good line that George Porter has developed, and he said “we’re well aware of the problem and we’re anxious to help solve it” at least four times, to hammer home his concern.

At least Porter was the only Tory speaker on stage to sound even vaguely credible. Ken Comber, Holyoake’s spin doctor and the National candidate for Wellington Central, made a complete laughing stock of himself with his ignorant, bumbling answers to questions. He told the meeting, which was reeling with mirth, about the great work Dan Riddiford had done to solve the housing problems in Wellington. That sort of crap really brought the audience on. In comparison, Labour candidate Dave Shand performed quite well and certainly stood out among the politicians on the platform. He supported a capital gains tax on all urban property transfers which was suggested by economist C. Gillison, and rent control, although he seemed unsure about Labour Party support for these measures. Poeticon M.P. Fraser Colman did not clarify Labour’s policy on either proposal. Comber did not support a capital gains tax which was hardly surprising as he is a landlord. About the last thing that can be said of Comber is that, if elected, he will be a fitting successor to Dan Riddiford.

Eric Holland, the Minister of Housing, showed quite plainly his inability to solve any housing problem anywhere, let alone one as serious as Wellington’s. Starting off by saying how the Government has to protect the taxpayer from the costs of more housing (presumably he was thinking of his constituents in Fendalton), he confided that he thought there was nothing wrong with people who made a profit out of renting houses. Of course Holland did deplore exploitation of tenants by landlords but he did not say where he drew the line between fair profit and exploitation. Obviously in practice he cannot do so and therefore his approval of making money out of people’s need for a place to live shows that he is part of the problem and incapable of a solution.

Interestingly, none of the official speakers had much to say about landlords at all. They were all content to mouth about the ‘housing problem’, but none stated clearly that the ‘housing problem’ in Wellington is very much a landlord problem. In a situation of extreme housing shortage, the opportunities for people to make large and quick capital gains from housing are enormous, especially when there is little government finance at cheap rates of interest for council housing, and few state houses being built. The Tenants Protection Association produced a hard hitting leaflet explaining the real problem of housing in Wellington. But the Association’s chairman, George Rosenberg did not get a respectful hearing on the stage and the chance to speak with all the dignitaries. Nor did the squatters, who have been the only people to produce an immediate solution to part of the housing shortage all year.

Tim Dye, whose Wellington Citizens Committee on Accommodation organised the meeting, praised the squatters actions in his speech. But why didn’t he invite one of their representatives to explain what they’d done and their solutions from the platform. Dye will have to realise one day that he won’t get very far without offending the likes of Frank Kitts and Eric Holland. If he doesn’t the homeless of Wellington will still hear Frank Kitts referring to the ‘Good Book’ as a solution to the problem of housing in ten years time.

The meeting was organised so that the politicians and academics had all the time in the world to mouth platitudes while the people in the audience had none. With that sort of democracy it is scarcely surprising that many people got pissed off and started yelling at the politicians’ droning paternalism. If Mr Dye organises any meetings on housing in the future, he should keep the politicians away and turn the platform over to the people like Tenants Protection and the squatters who know the problem and have done the most to find a solution. - Peter Evans

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"Love is an open wound"—Charles Brash.

There isn't a great deal of New Zealand writing we can fairly call literature; and what there is of it isn't especially marked by violence, either in manner or content. I suspect it would be rather better as literature, if it were more violent. And it wouldn't be difficult to argue that New Zealand writing has become progressively more violent, more frank and brutal and uncompromising, as it has matured. One could easily illustrate this by tracing a line, say, from Lady Barker through Jane Mander and Katherine Mansfield to Janet Frame, or from Alfred Dunsany through Arthur Conan Doyle and K. R. K. Mason, to Smat Campbell, and James K. Baxter. These earlier writers don't often do the most violent, but they have written it. And the power to shock is surely one of the marks of an adult and living literature.

There are two main snags, however, about this historical, "evolutionary" approach. First, it tends to assume that creative writing, like social development, is not merely continuous (which it is) but also some kind of steady progress and advance (which it isn't). Second, the whole modern age since the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars has been a pretty violent one—a tract of time crammed with private anguish and public slaughter on a scale hard to match in the long annals of man's inhumanity to man. Literature, like the other arts, has had to reflect and keep pace with all this: so that modern literature almost by definition is literature of violence. The veneer of civilization has worn thin; we are all aware of the destructive forces it covers.

To find words for modern life is as brave an act as that of the cave artist who drew the slender figures of primitive men confronting the most powerful of predators. In the case drawing the monster is faithfully observed, the artist's technique assured. Our modern monsters aren't as easily brought to view; and we are still struggling to find the techniques to present them.

I am not a philosopher, still less a theologian; so I don't venture into any discussion of the age-old problems of evil, violence, and human suffering. Even in the most hopeful of religious schemes, the Judeo-Christian man, has fallen from grace before he's got fully started and the first mortal birth is the birth of a murderer. To account for the presence of an Adversary, for the force of evil in the heart of man, we have to presuppose a revolt of angels and war in heaven for a word, a primal conflict, suffering and death. As Keats said, whether or not they share the hope of man's ultimate redemption, agree in recognising the chief facts of the human condition: for good or ill, we all inherit conflict, suffering and mortality. As Keats's Hamlet puts it, "You're on earth, there's no cure for that."

Now this whole business of painful or tragic conflict between good and his neighbour, between man and his fellow men, has always been the stuff of great literature. There is no drama in Fiddle till the serpent enters it. The death of Abel is the first tragedy. The Old Testament, in sum, is a fairly blood-stained record of the fortunes of the chosen people, and it reaches its greatest eloquence in the warnings and lamentations of the prophets. Homer's Iliad, a book of blessings and curses and despair, and one of the greatest. Goethe's Faust shrinks in comparison with Dante's Commedia, we might claim, not because Goethe was a less gifted poet, but because his enlightened scepticism couldn't face the full horror of human depravity that Dante (fortified by Aquinas) took in his stride.

And since Goethe, the characteristic mark of modern literature has been "to exact a full look at the Worst." What I am trying to suggest is not that great literature must be violent in tone, or must approach the special effects of Greek tragedy, but that it must somehow accommodate violence, at least if not plunge into the tragic flux of human suffering, whether in Mazon or in Nelson. If violence alone made great literature, Seneca would be greater than Sophocles, and he isn't. Politburo novels like Jane Austen or Henry James can convince us by a mere terror, by the slightest of vibrations in the crystal, that they are not contemptible, by igniting the pressures of their time as more flamboyant writers like Stendhal or Dostoevsky. One of the most violent novels ever written is that exquisite poisoned exchange of letters in French high society, Les Liaisons Dangereuses.

May we agree then (discounting a number of nice problems in aesthetics) on one general working assumption? In all times and places, but especially in our own time and to some degree in our own place, good imaginative writing must always, like Blake's Songs of Innocence and Experience, show the two contrary states of the human soul. I think this is as true for a short lyric as it is for the longest and most elaborate work of fiction, "Without Contraries is no progression," whether we name the contraries as Love and Hate, Reason and Energy, Good and Evil, Faith and Unfaith. And without contraries there is no art.

It isn't the artist's task to resolve the contraries though of course we all recognize some supreme works of art like Sophocles' Oedipus at Colonus, and Dante's Commedia, and Shakespeare's final plays, and Rilke's Duinesi Elegies which seem to have achieved this miracle. But he must somehow include them—the tiger along with the lamb, the Satanic hills along with the beams of Love—if he is to convince us that he is a man speaking to men, that his work is rooted in life as we know it.

If we turn, then, from the company of masterpieces to what has been written in or about our own islands, the general trends should still apply. How fully, or how adequately, have our best writers managed to accommodate violence? I am too ignorant of traditional Maori chant and song to bring it into the picture—though it is obvious that in the celebration of heroic myth, and in the bawdy humour of satirical exposure, Maori poetry has resources nearer to those of Homer and Aristophanes than pallid modern English words can easily compass. Nor can I fairly bring in probably the finest verses ever composed in this country, the doom-laden and prophetic poems in excurses of the German-Jewish refugee, Karl Wolfski.

Quite arbitrarily, I want to suggest a few broad categories with their own convenient labels. These might be: Cosmic Violence ("Man against the gods"); Natural Violence ("Man against nature"); Social Violence (organised and in some sense licensed conflict of bodies of men, as in war or periods of class struggle); and finally the very elastic compartment I can only call Human Violence—the shocking things men and women do to themselves and one another, with whatever motive, and too often gratuitously.

Cosmic Violence (Here we must miss some reference to the oldest Maori poetry.) The first example I would cite of a new Zealand writer who has found words for what Keats called "the great agony of the world" is the poet R.A.K. Mason. Mason, these days, is something of a forgotten man. Of course he's in all the anthologies, a few by his best poems are to familiar that they've been called smooth as pebbles. It is somehow typical of latter-day attitudes to Mason that the lines of his most frequent quotation should be the odes of his "Sons of Brother hood"—

"... then what of these beleaguered victims, this our race betrayed alike by Fate's gigantic plot here in this far-pitched perilous hostile place this solitary hard-assaulted spot fixed at the friendless outer edge of space."

The assumption is commonly made that the poet is speaking of New Zealand, as a sort of Tristan da Cunha nesting in the night on the remote fringes of southern oceans. But of course he is speaking of men isolated in earth, on the outer fringe of a hostile or indifferent universe; to read the poem otherwise is to diminish it, to reduce a vision which, through narrow, reaches as least as far as Galileo's telescope.

This isn't, of course, to claim that Mason is our first truly philosophical poet, or that his youthful attitude a almost total revolts is a satisfactory one. There had been philosophers haunting our shores before him one thinks of Samuel Butler's Erewhon, or the chunks of unlike German metaphysics in Donner's Rainfiel and Motion, or one recalls the work of other poets who project more easily acceptable views, such as Ursula Beetham, Eileen Chattan, J.R. Hayes, M.K. Joseph, J.E. Weir. What matter in poetry is not philosophical validity but urgency of apprehension, controlled intensity of expression. Mason is the one New Zealand poet who could write with utter conviction.

All the seives that have been slain have so drenched this place with pain how can any soul endure where the whole ground is impure with its own dead..."

Before our poetry could come of age, before it could learn any deeper resonance, one poet at least had to be crucified: and Mason was that poet. I think that for this I would honour him more than any other of our literary ancestors.

There is one other example I should like to cite of new attitudes, and it comes from an even more neglected poet, Ruth Dallas. Her letter to a Chinese Poet, publishe a dozen years ago in Landfall, still seems to me of the most impressive imaginative achievements in verse reaching out from those lands across the century to pay tribute to a Chinese poet of the Tang dynasty, N. Chue, and easily assimilating Tausi or Buddhist notion of flux and recurrence, of a continuity that need not be hateful.
Warning: a set of new bones
in the old fire of the sun, in the fashion
Of all men, and horns, and blackbirds.
Finding myself upon the planet earth,
Among the short journey
Equipped with heart and lungs to last
Not as long as a hare, or a pretty rose,
Travelling in the midst of a multitude
Of soft and breathing creatures
In different wondrous colours, feathers, fur.
A tender population
For a hard ball spinning
Indifferently through light and dark.
It turns to an old poem.
Fresh as this morning's rose.
Though a thousand summers have shed their blooms
Since the bones that guided brush or pen
Were dust upon the wind.
So soon turned to a carved stick
That held the lonely history of the tribe.
Round the sun and round the sun and round.
We have left the tree and waterhole
For a wildness of stars...

Round the sun and round the sun and round.
Th Dallas ends this section of her poem with a tribute
the makers, to all those who by the power of art have
written the earth richer than when they came...

We choose these two poets to illustrate two extremes,
Life and acceptance, among possible attitudes to the
Old Irish predicament. Art, like life, needs both
Rebels and their recoilers. And those deceptively simple
soul of Dallas.

A tender population
For a hard ball spinning
Indifferently through light and dark...
So to me it: "Accommodate violence" with a serenity
of the old Chinese master is savouring

I add a word about two prose-writers, to comple-
ment the two poets already mentioned: These are, in my
two of the most gifted writers of fiction New Zealand
and, both are women. Katherine Mansfield and
Frank Sargeson.

he are impressionist writers; neither would commonly
thought of as "philosophical." Yet clearly both write
of experience, often painful experience, and both offer
views of life that is tragic rather than consoling. May
mind you of the well-known passage from Katherine
Sargeson's letters in which she writes to her husband:

"...I've two 'kick-offs' in the writing game. One is
joy-real joy... and that sort of writing I could
only do in that state of being in some perfectly
blind way at peace... The other "kick-off" is my old original one
Not hate or destruction (both are beneath contempt
as real motives) but an extremely deep sense of
hopelessness, of everything doomed to disaster, all
mostويلfully, stupidly... There! As I took out
a cigarette paper I got it exactly—a cry against corrup-
tion—that is absolutely the nail on the head. Not
a protest—a cry, and I mean corruption in the wid-
est sense of the word, of course.

Because she was a supreme artist in words, and because
she could sometimes write directly out of her own joy
in the viable world, Katherine Mansfield has
left us some of the most perfectly achieved lyrical
stories of this century. But a shadow falls across the sunny
lawn of The Garden Party, the sea at The Bay grows chill
and numbing, in Bliss, Prelude and the rest we are
seemingly unaware of what is happening in the maniacal leaf.
If this is an art in illustration, like Jane Austen's, it is still
one that comprehends the full range of existential ten-
sions, however delicately pointed. And in one tiny story,
The Fly, though it may be directly referred to the time
of the first World War and a single useless death, she has
expanded a metaphor from King Lear into a hauntingly
parable of the human condition—tormented, struggling,
but doomed.

Janet Frame, most obviously the heir of Katherine Mans-
field in her early stories of New Zealand childhood, in
her equally acute sensibility and her comparable mastery
of verbal texture, offers us a view of life infinitelyadder
and more anguished than Katherine Mansfield's. The
reasons for this have been acutely analysed by Professor
Joan Stevens in a remarkable radio talk given earlier
this year. For Janet Frame "life is a terrifying brilliance
from which most of us must hide": mortals are all in a
state of siege; any apparent security we try to construct
is illusion. Here is a true art of criss, but because she
has made herself capable of being both one social
and satirical novelist, with an assured control over a much
broadly carried than the short story can offer, she is able
to map her own universe of pain and human isolation in
a number of moving explorations of men and women
who grope and collide and rarely find happiness: but in whom
we can, indeed, recognise ourselves.

It has often been remarked that New Zealand lacks any
major work of fiction—its large in scope or theme, say,
In Henry Hallam Richardson's Fortunes of Richard
Makory, or the later novels of Patrick White, which can
establish for us a really representative blue offlife. Kath-
erine Mansfield was moving towards this in her assem-
bled sketches of the Boome family: Robin Hyde tried it
fragmentarily, and under pressure in The Godwit Fly.
Sargeson made his most ambitious attempt in I Saw
in my Dream. But Janet Frame came closest to achieving it.
I believe, in One Dozy Bit—that distressing saga of a
foolish family in Waimaru—and her later and increas-
ingly sophisticated novels are considered together, they
add up to an exposition in depth—t the terrifying depth,
and pitched in an unremitting terror of violence—the
quality of life as it is very often lived in these islands.

Natural Violence

On my second category of "Natural Violence." I propose
to say very little a comparison with Australia might
again be fruitful. Because of the same nature of that
continent, the extremes of climate, the harshness of its
desert interior, and the great migrations suffered by the
first explorers, the struggle of man against nature has
been a recurring theme for painters and writers. Such
legends as those of Burke and Wills haunt the Australian
imagination. A novel like Patrick White's Voss makes
brilliant use of this rich heritage. We have nothing com-
parable, and the best passages about human endurance
and determination in the face of natural hazards are to
be found in the plain factual accounts of some of our
earlier explorers and pioneers.

Yet three obvious challenges remain: the sea, the bush,
and the mountains. They are still the proving ground for
many young New Zealanders, and there must be a few of
us who have not lost friends who came to grief in con-
fronting them. The mark of these three permanent fea-
tures of our environment is fiercely emoted in our fiction as
a continual counterpart to the easy comfort of subur-
ban and small town living. Not too far from the brightly
decorated canalside and the high-placed cafes, there are
bush, and some of the stormiest waters in the world. We
must all remember scattered episodes that point this
particular confrontation: the lonely bush farm in John
Mulgan's Man Alone, and Johnson's battle for survival
in the drooping forests of the Katimakaras, or Forbush's
ordeal among the skus and penguins in the isolation of his
Antarctic hut. The novelist who has concentrated on this
theme of natural hazards is Ruth France, in two con-
vincing stories of man against sea and flood. The Race,
and Ice Cold River, which hold their suspense with no
hint of strain or exaggeration. But the field remains un-
derworked: for example, the high drama of mountain
climbing in New Zealand that one might have expected
long before this, is still to be written.

Social Violence

I turn now to more fertile ground: the literature of war,
and of social violence. Considering our relatively brief
history, and our relatively small population. New Zealand-
ers have had a pretty fair dose of this. And most of it
has been of our own choosing. For New Zealanders Maori
and Pakeha alike are a pretty aggressive lot. Whatever
they may profess publicly, they really like fighting, they're
quite good at it, and if there's a war going on anywhere,
they can't bear to be out of it. Just why this should be so
whether it's due to historic conditioning, "The strain of
blood that writes a scene as Patriotic, as if it is.
spirit, or to Rugby football, or to eating too much meat.
I must leave to the social historian or the psychiatrists
to determine. But the facts seem to be beyond dispute.

Well, of course there's a very considerable literature—
both documentary and imaginative about New Zealanders
at war. It's only quite recently that we've begun to get the
Maori Wars into perspective; but there are two fictional
treatments, William Satchwell's The Greenstone Door,
and Errol Braithwaite's impressive recent trilogy The
Flying Fish, The Needle's Eye, The Evil Day, that
are well informed, sober and mature. And such a poetic
sequence as Alistair Campbell's 'Sanctuary of Spirits'—
A splendid evocation of the blood-botted ghosts of
Kapiti, is a good deal more successful than anything pre-
vent in suggesting the explosive, obsessive violence of
Maori warfare in the old leading days.

If the First World War has left for us a single literary mem-
orial worthy of its trench-blocked, gurning destruction
it is Katherine Mansfield's short story The Fly. But there
are three other books I should like to mention, documen-
tary rather than fictional. These are Robin Hyde's tour-
de-force of imaginative reporting, Passport to Hell—a book
so rare nowadays that very few have read it, but totally
venerating in its raw presentation of 'vicious war experience.'
And two others that exactly complement each other, like two crowns framing an arch (though hardly an arch of triumph). First, We will not Cease, the testament of the pacifist Archibald Baxter who with a group of like-minded conscientious objectors was forcibly shipped overseas, sent into the front lines, and given field punishment lashed to a post under enemy fire. And second, Alexander Atien’s Galapagos to the Somme, a classically objective account of infantry soldiering at the Dardanelles and in Flanders.

The special strength of these two books lies in their restraint. There is no rhetoric in the book, no allusion, no attempt to explain. The only purpose of the book is to give the exact description and detachment with which they record the war. To illustrate these qualities, here is Atien on Goose Alley, 1916:

“...The road here and the ground to either side were strewn with bodies, some motionless, some not. Cribs and groans, prayers, injunctions, reached me. I leave it to the sensitive imagination; I once walk it all down, only to discover that horror, truthfully described, weakens to the merely clinical. A few yards back from the road a man lay forward supported on his elbows, not letting his body touch ground, one could but wonder why he did this. He remains void, indistinguishable from the place... Yet there is something to be confused. Under the strongest eye of truth, my sympathy for these men at that moment was abstract almost to vanishing point. I endured their pain, I knew I should feel as grievous beyond measure; but I was still wholly mathematical, absorbed in the one problem—whether pairs of consecutive explosions of those howitzers showed the slightest difference in direction. It seemed to me that they did."

So Atien shifted his own position, and lived to tell his tale. From Archibald Baxter I cannot quite except at length; instead, here is his son’s poetic tribute, from Pig Island, Letters, to his father’s experience:

When I was only seven in a glade
Or less than that, my father hung
From a tortoise point at Mud Farm.
Because he would not kill. The guards
Failed suspect, and as the snow came darkly.
I feared a death by cold in the cold ground
And plotted revolution. His black and swollen thumbs
Explained the brotherhood of man...

These events occurred early in our century: we have had fifty years to forget them, if not exactly in tranquility. The characteristic attitude of those directly involved in the First World War was one of traumatic shock, of unannounced disbelief that such things could happen. When it all began happening over again some twenty years later, the mood was very different. Any comparison of the literature of these two wars will show that combatants and civilians in the second, unlike combatants in the first, could no longer brook being anything but opposing sides by either side.

The writer who most strikingly links the gross tensions of the depression years, the political passions of the Spanish Civil War, and the looming shadow of a greater conflict, is John Steinbeck. His novel, The Red Pony, is a couple of short books hastily written in the very short time allowed by the minor miracles of our literary history. The content of these two books, Man Aflame and Report on Experience, is limited; but the selection of detail is so sure, and the writing so clean and forceful, that an astonishing amount of the coming-of-age of his own generation is packed into them. Above all, Mulgan succeeded in achieving a new stance and temperamental, intellectualized, comic, with their feelings firmly under control—that for the first time seemed adequate to the presentation of class conflict, war policy, and the peculiar savagery and reprints of partisan warfare.

Mulgan’s special strength in his lucidity, his power to strip down his bare narrative to the significant episode only. Dan Davin’s For the Rest of Our Lives much the most ambitious war novel attempted by a New Zealander is work of arguable merit. It is richly loaded with detail, full of bravura set pieces and baroque flourishes. I’m fond of this book myself; but it’s one of the few that suggests that some New Zealanders at least could see war—in that ancient Mediterranean theatre—as history, could think and dream ideas even in the front line, or when having a bash amid the fireposts of Caser. To suggest the quality of the writing, of Davin’s brooding response to the tangled motives and questionable credits of war-time, I should like to quote once page from an early chapter. Here Frank, an intelligence officer in Caser, is interrogating a New Zealand soldier who has been decorated for a brilliant solo escape from German captivity in Greece—an escape achieved by an unsuspected talent for the quiet strangling of a series of guards and sentries.

“By the way, sir,” the soldier ends. “That strangling business. There was nothing else I could do, was there? I mean, a man had to get away, didn’t he?”

“Of course you had to get away. Serve them bloody well right.”

“Still, it’s not like shooting a black.”

“Forget it. You impress these characters. Made good Germans of them.” They shook hands.

Frank, remembering the incident, adds his comment:

“Tha every man. Man every partice, that in the bag with the cock, the snake and the monkey, and flung into the sex of solitude, landlocked and still. There, plunging in silent nights the dark, bottomless pit of self and its knowledge of guilt, closed in the black of the bag with the bird, the reptile and the beast. And through the meshes poured the waters, closing on isolation and closing at last the beasts eyes of cock and snake, the terrified eyes of man and monkey, personal through breast and past fang. To the end of that man’s life doubt would come seeping in through the coarse mesh of praise.”

Somehow the R.S.A. and the New Zealand public generally, have never taken Davin’s war fiction to their hearts. They much prefer Guthrie Wilson, whose Brave Company came out some four years later, and with the vivid actuality of its combat scenes in Italy, its concentration on the fate of a single small unit in a single phase of action, has many claims to being the typical novel of New Zealanders at war. This is an authentic picture of the close fraternity of fighting men, appreciation of each other and the understanding between officers and soldiers at base and the women at home who sometimes let them down. That is an old-hands stereotype, really, and though Wilson can be quite thoughtful about the ethos of war, and even try to ram home a few moral truths about it, the strength of the book is the stimulus of its action and dialogue, rather than in the balmity of its reflection. Basically, I think, Wilson is a conventional Kiwi with a strong liking for the tough stuff, which he can handle with real power.

But there is one later book of his, The Feared and the Flee of 1954, which calls for mention— if only because it is perhaps the most violent novel New Zealand has yet produced.

This is a genuine Gothic horror tale..., with a central figure—"If Bruto?, a New Zealand infantry officer whose giant form and distinctive skull would make him appear a sort of mindless monster spawned by war itself—that is quite unforgettable. Bruto is a superb natural fighter and leader of partisans, a kind of Colin Meares from Aces. But he is so determined to keep his independent command that he is implacably ready to kill off friend and foe, man and woman, with utter lack of scruple. Of course he is mad, and it is the war-wound that has made him mad. The uncertainty logic of a true hunter’s instinct for survival, and the special skills in destruction that war has given him, make him for the time being irresistible. The first part of this book, the whole Italian sequence, with its not too improbable love interest, and with Bruto at last gunned down by his closest friend and most loyal lieutenant, seems to me masterly in its kind: a completely self-sufficient and deeply imaginative parallel of war. Unfortunately, by carrying his story back to New Zealand, and by turning Bruto into victim as well as hero, a cloud of the battlefields keeping his rendezvous with God on the slopes of the Tararua, Guthrie Wilson ruined what might, I fear, have been his finest work.

There are other war books that deserve mention—among them Errol Braithwaite’s beautifully written study of a Japanese officer in the Pacific islands, An Affair of Men, which faltong with Lauren’s van der Post’s A Bar of Shade seems to me one of the few really perceptive treatments in English of Japanese war psychology.

Human Violence

Now I must try to sketch a few headnotes for my final category of human violence, before suggesting a few tentative conclusions.

I begin again with our earliest indubitably first-rate birof artist, Katherine Mansfield. There is one scene she opened up, in a few early stories not widely published until after her death, which is quite uncharacteristic of her later work. This is the deliberately tough genre-study of life-in-the-run we meet in The Woman at the Store and Ole Underwood. No one who has read these stories can forget the idiot-child who maliciously betrays her mother’s secrets, or the crazy old decretal who briefly assuages his own lonely anguish by flinging the little cat down the sewer drain. Sooner or later someone was bound to take this kind of thing further.

The Woman at the Store is clearly the prototype for Jean Demeny’s The Butcher Shop, and the little cat, victim of human frustration, is more grotesquely caricatured in Sargeson’s Safe Day, when it is thrust by a disgruntled farmhand into the open range under the freezing crops. And the second act of the story, by the way, in my mind, introduces the idea of using violence as a deliberate effect of art—the telling stroke that points up unbearable strain.

Violence, Frank Sargeson, and there is plenty of it, between the delayed charge of A Great Day"
and the positively Jacobean piling up of corpses at the climax of 'The Hangover' is almost always the result of desperation, of the warping of human instincts by the cramping environment of a joyless, repressive, still fundamentally puritan society. The Hangover is a particularly revealing instance, for the spectacular homicidal outbreak that stains its final pages with gore comes from an apparently normal youth who is the special pride of his hardworking respectable mother—and who has taken the precaution of wearing for the occasion a number of lightweight plastic raincoats, so that he can strip these off one by one as he proceeds to each encounter with his chain of victims. The symbolism here is almost too near, the whole fiction perhaps too near a textbook study of the era that produced Truman Capote's In Cold Blood, but the point is made, in the novel's own terms, with a stylized and stilted elegance.

Sargesson's art is his own: I wish I had time to discuss it. Nor would it be difficult to cite examples from other writer's of the 'eighties and nineties—from the 'three Maurices'—Duggan and Gee and Shadbolt, from Sylvia Ashton-Warner and Ian Cross and O.E. Middleton—of a similar, if generally less subtle, exploitation of the violent outbreak to point up and explode emotional and social tensions. The two sisters have been especially adept in their handling of near-psychotic conditions: Fleur Adcock in her poetry, and Marilyn Duckworth in a series of brittle but closely-observed novels of human disorientation. Fleur Adcock has written some notable hate-poems, and has also been able to suggest, in verse-fables that mix the language of dream and fable, something of the nightmare encounters in which we all become involved, whether in domestic relationships or in such public disasters as the Vietnam War.

Can I, in any meaningful way, attempt a summation? The literature is important, I think, would be the only time admit that we have something however patchy and unevenly developed—we can call New Zealand literature. It can show some significant achievements in poetry and the short story, with at least two novels—Sargesson and Janet Frame of striking and advance quality. Drama—the most open form of all internationally, these days—remains pretty thin, though at least more New Zealand plays are being written and performed than ever before.

In general, our literature is modest in scope and intention, restrained in statement, low-keyed, avoiding extremes of passion or rhetoric. And this in a country with an early history of singular boldness and imaginative sweep, with a native tradition of fierce myth and bewildering humour that has remained unexhausted to our own day. Perhaps at last we are beginning to tap it: we must be especially grateful for such a poet as Bone Tuwhare, who reaches for some of his rhythms and images into these deep ancestral wells.

In a setting of sea and hills that remains beautiful but harsh, we have evolved our own comfortable, materialistic, egalitarian society—that is also conformist, intolerant, and too often small-minded. Does our literature exactly reflect us? I think we, as a people, meagre, strained, and lacking in generosity;

Out of Ireland have we come; Great hatred, little room, Maligned us at the start.

Yeats wrote of his own country. If the lines were modified to fit New Zealand, they might read:

Great rancour, little joy
Maimed us from the start.

That is why Frank Sargesson, in a precise sense, our first truly national writer, because he has shown us from within, shown us the narrowness of our own hearts.

May I take the parallel with Ireland just a little further, to make my last point? For in this parallel we may find, I think, both a warning and a challenge.

Ireland at the turn of this century, in the bitter cruel of her struggle for national identity following the fall of Pearse, most needed two writers of a very special kind: Yeats and Synge. Yeats, who had first tuned his own exquisitely instrument to sing nostalgically of the misty past, found new modes and a new compact when he faced the realities of his own time: he made himself into the great violent poet we all know, hanging suspended in deathless verse the extremes of savage passion and formal, balanced control. Synge, a gentle, lonely, compassionate man, wrote violent humorous plays that flayed his own countrymen as mercilessly, and as surgically, as Apollo flayed the fain. Without the work of Yeats and Synge, would the splendid flowering of literature from this one small Atlantic island have been possible?

New Zealand's social crisis, in our time, came between the two world wars. We have no Yeats—though I have always felt that Mason, with better luck, might have been one too. Yet the influence of Yeats, beyond that of any other modern poet, helped to inject energy and urgency into our own post-war poetry. If there are two New Zealand poets who have, since then, produced a substantial body of work that follows a similar trajectory to his, I would suggest that they are Charles Brach and James K. Baxter. In the latter poetry of these two writers of two generations—more so than in Synge I believe Baxter—there is a readiness to accept the full complexity of most of our modern dilemmas, and meet them in terse, colloquial, unstrained but arresting language. I am sure that the real nature of Brach as poet is insufficiently recognised.

Baxter is perhaps a little over-valued, especially by the young. But for his determined immersion in the destructive element, his passionate commitment to the cause of the direct and drop-outs of our too-compliant society, I have nothing but admiration.

Love the Sole Vacation

Have we a Synge? I suppose Sargesson comes nearest, especially in such a story as An International Occasion, which appeared in Landfall last year. This is a brilliant little portrait of our fragmented social condition, in which the mixed, isolated lodgers in a decayed boarding-house are brought together through the misspent zeal of a Swedish swine-cook, share an uncomfortable communal meal, and retire, variously affronted, to their private quarters until flushed out, or trapped and burnt in their rooms, a fire started by the shadowboxing

Chris is the unimposing element—a simple Kiwi working-man who is paying off old scores for what the welfare state has done to him. Duggan and Gee, too, in their best stories, have a hard cutting edge, a tough satirical twist, we stand badly in need of.

Well, there it is. Perhaps we have had better writers than we deserve, though, on the whole, our public attitude towards them has almost as unappreciative as the Irish attitude towards Synge and O'Casey, Joyce and Beckett.

Twenty years ago, Denis Glover used his mouthpiece Harry to outline the poet's task:

Sing all things sweet or harsh upon
These islands in the Pacific sun,
The mountains whitened endlessly
And the white horses of the winter sea.

How often since then the lines have been quoted as merely lyrical and picturesque, in the manner of paintings in a Kelleher Art Competition! But these mountains that beckon can kill; these waves that enchant can drown, suddenly and savagely. Over the years since Glover announced his "Threnody", it is the harshness rather than the sweetness in our way of life that has nourished our art, and prompted its most searching insights.

Today the art that begins in joy is rare indeed. As for the "Ode against corruption": "The art is full of our tears," I end with some lines from Charles Brach's Not Far Off, which seem to me to catch the tone of these last years better than most:

To see your neighbour as yourself
His heart stripped self-naked
Is to confess in every heart
The hatred and the crooked
Beneath its lies and boasting,
And at the costs of it all
The trivial and the void
To shun your neighbour as yourself
Maddened with self-knowledge
The void and the trivial
That bear no human message—
Destructiveness, forgiveness
Worketo the one issue
Let hatred wreck its outrage.

Thus, the love, "the purpose, the mask of the faked, frustrated human lover, who cries again,

Where I love I hate
And cannot
Love where I hate
But, blind in the net
Turn and burn and
Use the bleeding heart.

Whether indeed we live now in a cold anti-utopianist, or in some kind of empty fire, the vision on the canvas imagination is all too clear. Again, perhaps Brach has found the best words for it:

Love your fellow men
Never ask to be loved
Love your given and chosen land
Do not look for its love in return

Love is first and last confession
And sole vacation.
Love that gives itself
Into men's unpart hands
Love that will not be healed
Love is an open wound.
Ligslurp Contd.

Sir,

As a past resident of Bowen Hostel, I would like to express a word of thanks before I conclude. I am grateful to University for offering me the place to stay. This is really the only hostel where personality, social and intellectual developments rapidly improved. All residents know each other well enough that fun and true friendship are prevailing, when we come to conversation. This is what every University hostel should have if good character is to be cultivated. Regular meetings were held to ensure that it was functioning well, especially on the food. An experienced student was put in charge. The warden is also a student who is a distinguished person on our campus. He can handle anything without hardship, except sometimes annoyed by the hot water system.

A retired resident

The N.Z.E.S.P. Society is a research and University oriented body whose aims are to investigate all forms of so-called Extra-Sensory or para-normal phenomena on a logical scientific basis.

Included in such investigations would be: Telepathy (communication between persons without, apparently, the use of the recognised senses); Premonition or premonitions, including dreams, which apparently predict events which subsequently occur; Spiritualistic phenomena, such as Mediumship, Poltergeists, and Hauntings; Ectomatic Experiences (out of body or astral travel).

This body grew out of the Auckland University Society For Psychical Research, formed in 1967 and has been in existence for four months.

It is felt that researchers throughout this country need a central body to exchange ideas and research material on these topics, and also a well presented journal along the lines of The International Journal of Parapsychology.

In 1971 a preliminary survey was carried out in Auckland with the help of the news media, to try to gauge the number of such experiences and to find people who would be interested in examining the topic. This proved successful, and the body wishes to extend its research throughout the country.

To date one symposium has been held in Auckland with the guest speaker being Dr. F. W. Knowles, R.E.G. Department, Sunnyday Hospital Christchurch; who has been active in this research for 40 years, and has had a number of papers published throughout the world. (A transcript of this symposium is available in the University Library.) Should qualified people be obtainable, one symposium a year is planned.

One member of the committee is preparing a Masters thesis on the topic of survival after death and we are aware of at least one other thesis being prepared in this country.

Interested students and staff are needed to examine reports of phenomena in the Greater Wellington area and also as experimental subjects. However, it must be stressed that we are in no way associated with religious or sectarian bodies.

If this article has interested you or you require more information please write to:

The Secretary, N.Z.E.S.P. Society,
P.O.Box 2629, Wellesley St. West,
AUCKLAND.

Alice Shaw interviewed Mrs. Kath Walker. The following is a copy of the statement of the interview and her address at Victoria. Kath Walker has worked for the civil rights movement for seven years in Australia. She retired two years ago only to return to the cause. She has also written books of poetry and prose published.

The central issue in the struggle for civil rights is undoubtedly land rights...unless we get land rights back to the Aborigine we go to any direction. We are in limbo until they settle this issue and it must be settled so the Aborigines can develop a policy of self determination.

The Aborigines want to live outside the main-stream of life. They want to emerge and to live according to their own ideals and ideas with the maintenance of the tribal system, and all that goes with it.

The main enemies in establishing self-determination are the government. It is so shortsighted it is not funny and the apathy of the public. We are in a racist country...most Australians are no more than a nuisance. In the countryside they would like to put us on an island out of their way. They do not even think of the land as ever having belonged to the Aborigine. And the big miners, the Beef Barons and other industry. BUT the 5th generation Aussie no longer owns the land either. They are now living from outside the country. What stolen once will be stolen again. It has got so bad that a group of people have now got together and formed Australian Heritage a Company to buy Australias land, to keep ownership in Aussie. I serve on the board of directors, along with John Grey Gorton and others. It was formed to try and prevent the land grab.

The main causes of the most classic examples of discrimination, were the beef barons. In the olden days the white man came in and took a land block...that also entitled him to the tribesmen living on that land...he could and did enslave them to work the land. People like the Vestey Bros. who have been in the country for 50 years, that is how they got rich...they own 40,000 square miles and they pay the Federal Gort 50 cents a year per square mile.

Recently legislation has come in that provides for the equal pay of Aboriginal stockmen. That happened about two years ago and now the Gurindji people pulled the young stockmen together and they are standing by them and demanding equal pay. They demand a guarantee in writing.

BLACKS UNDER CONTROL

It now appears as if the whites of the U.S.A. and other parts of the world are coming to Australia because there the black man knows his place. They are not scared of the blackman in their own country and they come to a country where they think the blackman will always be under control. But I doubt that they are right for in the next ten years there will be a drastic change, for the students are now working with and standing in with us in our fight. The Aborigine will be a force to be reckoned with. Most of the work of the Panthers has been done in the cities and with the urban Black. But we are getting contacts with the nomadic and the semi nomadic people we pass it on to our contact and he tells others, the aborigine has a very repressive mind and there is also the aboriginal telegraph...the bush telegraph and I'll back it against anything they have in the F.M.G. in any country. You can bet that if I speak in Brisbane then within three days the Gulf of Carpentaria will know what I said, word for word. But anyone who speaks English is almost regarded as an agent of the white man. This will take a while to get over, but it will come. The young must also have a negotiator and to speak over their elders is a disrespectful thing to do. The Panther has always worked to work with them, to speak for them. I speak for them sometimes but they do not even accept me logical. To them I am a threat. To the white man I am a threat to the white man. It must be admitted that my generation has not achieved that much.

I don't trust the white politician even though I work to influence them. I don't believe on turning your back on the white man. To do that is to be a Saxoner and don't ever accept me logical. To them I am a threat. To the white man I am a threat to the white man. It must be admitted that my generation has not achieved that much.

200 YEARS RENT

If we were given enough money — we are asking for 200 years rent for the land stolen — the urban aborigine would probably leave the cities. Given land rights there would be no urban aborigine. We are looking for a separate society within the main Australian society. The white man's education is of no use to us at all. We don't need the sciences it would be of no use to us in our own way of life. The education we need to fight the political battle ahead can best be given to us by the students who now stand with us. However at present we do not pose a threat. In 5 years time perhaps we will and then the govt. will move to chop those who stand with us as well. With regard to the Queensland laws they are sending out scores of material exposing the Act and asking the public whether they would like the govt. to have such powers over them. The public can believe that these laws exist. But the Australian is a racist and the immigrants are running from their own black people and coming to Australia where the black is well behaved. They think that here we will remain under control.

The Panthers feel that the only good white man is a dead one. That makes them as racist as the white, but perhaps I am too optimistic. They may say this only to frighten us. I don't know. However I believe that we must get the best together so the people of the world can live together. However the Panthers say the white man can not be trusted. They can cite many examples of lies and cheating. They say that he is a greedy man and that he is a violent man and they are correct, but we are stuck with him, he won't go away. I feel
that before you bring on a revolution you must know what you are going to do after the revolution. We are only 1 percent of the population, I feel that the Panthers may be committing suicide, our job is to stay alive.

CHURCH CONTROL
What the Moanjim people outside of Derby have done is to turn their backs on the white man and are living their own life. But they are still under the ultimate control of the Presbyterian church. That church has tried to give these people their land back but the Govt. is placing obstacles in their way, the church runs foul of the govt. in this area. They are determined to hand the land back but the law is built in such a way that they must negotiate with the govt before they can. However they do run their own lives and they do have self determination. There is about 200 people and they show our flag, the blood and the black. They are allowed to hunt their own food and they are the healthiest people I have seen. They make their own minds up and the church takes it. It is important the factory manager is a paid servant of my people. We do not stand in the way of progress as long as we control our own destiny. If we discovered mineral on our land then we would find it easier to control our own destinies. We do not stand in the way of progress.

We want to chuck out the white man’s liquor, and another law would be set up, keep away from our women and they mean it. They would put in schools and hold the right to hire and fire. They would fight intermarriage but not forbid it. If this happened the white would have the chance to become an honorary aborigine (god help the words). On the main the Aborigine is not a race.

“I would like to see a conference between all the indigenous people of the Pacific. We all face common problems and a common enemy and we could produce a very solid charter of rights for the indigenous people of the Pacific.

If the church groups are not prepared to finance such a venture I am prepared to go to Russia or China for backing, perhaps not Russia, but certainly China... they’ll back us.”
Apolitical science

by ROB CAMPBELL & PETER WILSON

The last few years have seen an increasing concern amongst students over the content of their courses and of the values inherent in that content.

All social life is political and capable of scientific investigation in one way or another. The content of all social and political investigation; however, is the method of inquiry.

Many of the social sciences have become tied down at various stages in methodological wrangles which have diverted them from investigation. Political science lies at the other end of the spectrum, and little is done at this university to promote a consciousness of methodology in Pol. Sci. students.

We believe that 'objectivity' is used merely to avoid the important issues. In the 'objective' study of American politics in the first year we learn a descriptive and functional account of the Presidency, Congress, the Supreme Court and the main political parties. We might even learn of the reasons for a political convention, but not of the reasons for the vote outside the Democratic Convention in Chicago (1968); we might learn of the formal and legal extent of the powers of a President, but not of President Johnson's policies in Vietnam and the consequences of this policy for the Vietnamese; we might learn of certain decisions of the Supreme Court, but not of the reasons for the massacre of prisoners and hostages in Attica prison. A poor white in the South, a negro in Watts, even an American suburban housewife would not recognise the politics we learn. Mass, non-institutional politics in America are ignored.

The same kind of 'objectivity' occurs when politics in New Zealand is mentioned; we learn of the powers of Parliament; the role of the MP; the powers of Parliamentary Select Committees and, above all, of the presence of pressure groups in our society which encourage compromises and thus "make democracy viable". We do not learn that once an opposition party arrives in Parliament it is effectively castrated; we do not learn that Members of Parliament are mainly party 'packs'; we do not learn that certain people (prisoners, widows, homosexuals, rent-payers, children, for example) get screwed because their pressure groups are ill-equipped and ineffective. If the students of political science cannot learn these things then they too are being castrated, albeit slowly and in an ideological way.

We are not being given the tools with which to understand and interpret the modern world. The School of Political Science is still living in the 1950's - trying to stimulate bourgeois liberal thinking and to accommodate assumptions and terminologies of the Cold War at the same time. We believe that Marxism, Existentialism, Fascism and other philosophies should be studied, and not merely as historical artefacts. Ideas are being fought for on the streets of the world. We want to understand these ideas and we want the thinking skills and attitudes whereby we can not only understand what is happening but also make a commitment one way or the other. This is the understanding of political studies in its true sense.

There is a tendency in political and all social sciences to objectify man. They tend to put up a division between the study of the subject (i.e., the student) and the object (what you are looking at). "Persons are distinguished from things in that persons experience the world. Things do not experience. Personal events are experimental. Natural scientists is the error of turning people into things by a process of reduction that is not itself part of the natural scientific method." (Laing, Politics of Experience, 53.)

An important consequence of the 'liberal' analysis of politics is we are offered - that politics is either about how people reach agreement in a dispute or about why they should reach agreement - that our learning trains students away from political activity and makes them 'impartial observers'. Many students who claim to be activists outside the classroom are constrained, by the type and content of the teaching, to be observers when in class. Yet, we all know that what is needed today are actors, not spectators, no matter how well-trained" the latter may be. Though many of us feel and experience this, the 'liberal' may be truly. Though many of us feel and experience this, the 'liberal' may be true.

In order to do this, it has been necessary to bastardise the word 'objectivity'. It comes to mean seeing that 'there are arguments for both sides', and so we are faced not only with the politics of consensus, but also with the political science of consensus. The idea that there are arguments for both sides is a useful educational idea because it can sometimes open the mind of the bigot; but often there is (according to one's morality) only one side, and sometimes there is a multiplicity of viewpoints. Our argument is that the political science of consensus we are taught is too rapid; it cannot allow these alternatives, and thus we are denied insights and new information.

What does this form of 'objectivity' mean when it is applied to a concrete situation such as the war in Indo-China. It means that the 'Victory to the N.L.F.' slogan is unacceptable because we have been taught that there are "two sides to every story".

WHAT IS OBJECTIVITY ON THE OTHER HAND IS

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We recognise our demands as minimum demands. The real demands can only come from the mass of students. This demands will be based on the recognition of the experience of what political science should be about - rath- er than what they are told it is that the experience of the students and the experience of the contact between staff and students? Why are students continually left out of discussions? What do their teachers have to protect? Surely as teachers they should instil students' understanding of the situation.

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OVER THE HORIZON

Poems: Arthur Baysting

SALIENT — Page 10

BOOKS

While it would be wise to set up the New Zealand Listener as the Edinburgh Review of the twentieth century, its wholly destitute literary section created a review of Baysting's first selection of poems made the said faction that the selection was uneven. Different themes, and different style contrast to the point where, if it were not for the general level of competence, one might imagine oneself reading James K. Baxter.

The Listener not withstanding standards for first books of New Zealand poetry are not high, and these poems show some wit versatility and observation than the work of many older poets. The poems range their predecessors read in literary poetry meetings in distant years. What disturbs less than the variety of poetry, since an absolutely homogeneous first book of poetry in an academic strip, is its motivation. There is, so much that poems often seem days of copy. The emotions of the poet occasionally appear, like tears from under dark glasses, exotic and restrained, though expressing commitment. The style avoids complexity like heroin in a pilgrimage towards transparencies.

Why are these poems written? They are too elegant to be alive, too simple to describe complexity, and too balanced to cope with universal numinosities. Like well-tended trees at the centre strip of a motuway, they embody a formal and irrelevant symmetry, though Baysting, unlike the Ministry of Works gardeners, understands that the entire operation is an unconscious joke. The humour, still, seldom passes the unspoken barrier of absurdity. After the absurd simplicity of Bob Dylan, Baysting's wit is romantic nostalgia for the days of Bracken. Alan Bruton's poems in the 1972 Arts Festival Literary Yearbook is about a far more meaningless and therefore realistic world. Without endorsing any particular Auckland school of poetry, the only differences between poems are between the screams and the rave.

-Gwen Gager

STOP YOU'RE KILLING ME!

Or I can't take it any longer — somebody help me!

by James Leo Herlhy

AT UNITY THEATRE until 30th September.

Unity's latest offering is a superb production by Bill Juliff which does full justice to the bright humour of James Leo Herlhy, and his frightening picture of America breaking down. I say 'bracing' because the comedy is neither zany, wholosome, stomach—aching nor wholly black and bitter despite the author's efforts to chill our sniggers with a thrill down the spine. It lies entirely between the humour of what Herlhy calls 'someome' people — people alienated, afraid of other people's getting involved. Their fear lies primarily in their inability to treat each other as individuals. They resort to categories, talk of 'they' make jokes, about marriage, suburban groups, people with long hair, 'so you can't see her face'—defensive, nasty jokes. They can't converse — most of the talking is monologue.

In the first play, Gloria, Manhattan socialite of a lower order, recounts the events of an unexpected party to friends, ability her husband at suitable moments to crack a cruel one at his expense.

But America as monster is something new to us. Jim — Leo Herlhy fails to pass on his fear of his own monster which manifests itself in the bestiality of the characters fail to move or frighten; the audience leave counting of trivialities. I can't help comparing it unfavourably with Jack Gene Van Hulle's America Hurrah which it shows as we did a few years ago. Perhaps it had the advantage of forecasting a whole school of similar horror plays, but it had the audience uncertain and silent at the end.

Stop You're Killing Me! can't be simply written off as a dash of New York froth, but the author is too paralysed by his own fear to frighten his audience, to confront and knock their dearly held concepts.

— Cathy Wyle

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