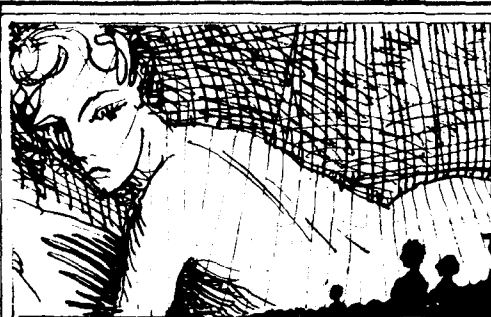


democratic government that has been propagated by our most prominent contemporary social critics and political scientists. Many of the diagnoses that have been offered of the affair, like Galbraith's, reflect an extreme narrowness of perspective, and most of the remedies that have been proposed would at best be inefficacious and at worst would exacerbate the causes that contributed to it.

These causes include the diminishing sense of responsibility and respect for law on the part of the populace as well as some members of the government, the obscuring of the difference between Constitutional democracy and simple majoritarianism, and the misapprehension of the nature of democratic statesmanship. If our recent Presidential crisis should be an occasion for a moral self-examination

by the American people, it ought equally to give rise to an intellectual re-examination by American social scientists and social critics of the premises of their political analyses, and particularly to a serious reconsideration of the thought and statesmanship of men like Lincoln and Hamilton. Should any of these events occur, Watergate will not, after all, have been bugged in vain. □

## The Talkies



by  
**Benjamin  
Stein**

### Lacombe, Lucien

It is the summer of 1944 in Nazi-occupied France, hundreds of miles from where the invading allies and the Germans are slugging it out. In a tiny farming village, a seventeen-year-old boy returns to his home to find that his mother has taken up with another man and that this man does not want him around. The boy does not want to return to his job in a nearby province capital as an attendant at a nursing home. So he tries to join the Maquis—the Resistance.

The local leader of the Maquis, a schoolteacher, turns him down curtly. The boy is too young. He feels lost and homeless.

As he rides his bicycle back to the nursing home, he passes through a town and sees a gaily lit hotel with pretty, heavily made-up girls in a window through which dance music is floating.

In an instant, he sees, and we in the audience see, that for a boy like him, he is looking at paradise—a place that is warm and bright and luxurious amidst a cold, dark, and rude existence. But the place he has stumbled upon is the local headquarters of the French collaborators' auxiliary to the Gestapo.

The boy is taken inside and is treated considerably and with kindness. He is taken into the very bosom of the collaborators and within hours is telling them about the schoolteacher who is a resistance leader. Lucien Lacombe, so accustomed to being treated as a cipher that he routinely gives his last name first—Lacombe, Lucien—has found a home.

The home is with murderers and swine, but it is a home. In that sequence, which begins *Lacombe, Lucien*, the cryptic French director Louis Malle has given us a clear and beautifully filmed insight into the motivations of people who join organizations that most of us find repellent. Indeed, it is an insight into why people join any organizations at all.

Lucien Lacombe is not Sartre or Camus. He is a boorish peasantly clod. All his life he has been on the outside, on the bottom rungs of society. Suddenly, by throwing in his lot with the Nazis, he turns the tables on the society that has treated him with so little notice. Instead of being a figure of pity, he is a figure of dread. He gets the respect born of fear instead of the disregard that characterized all his former life.

What Malle is showing us then is not how a suave and worldly person would respond to the temptations of joining an evil fraternity, but how a virtual animal would feel. And there were and are plenty of Lucien Lacombes in the world.

If Malle had just shown us that stage of Lucien Lacombe's life, he would have been doing us an informative service and he would have had a neat twenty-five-minute short subject. But the film is much longer and says a lot more.

The Gestapo—French division—is desperate for recruits, what with the war clearly turning against them, so they give Lacombe authority and a fairly free rein. He falls in with a slothful and vicious pro-Nazi French nobleman who plays murderous tricks on people and tries to act gallant while he is a butcher. The nobleman takes him to a formerly famous Paris tailor, a Jew who has been hiding out in the province town for the whole war and from whom the nobleman has been extorting money while getting elegant suits of clothes. He has a suit made for Lacombe, the first the boy has ever owned.

(The scene where the tailor delivers the suit to Lacombe is the best scene in the film. The tailor gives the suit to Lacombe and tells him that the suit has golf pants, which the tailor always considers more elegant for a young man. Lacombe, in the barely controlled frenzy of hatred and fear that the uncivilized poor feel for the

world of those who wear golf pants, and in genuine ignorance, asks, through clenched teeth, "What are golf pants?" The look of rage and confusion on his face, and the look of despair and confusion on the face of the tailor when he realizes he is reduced to making clothes for people who do not know what clothes are, are masterpieces of acting and direction.)

As fate would have it, the tailor has a beautiful daughter whose first name is France. The alternately wheedling and bullying Lacombe pays her visits and tries to be nice to her, while her father—terrified and yet contemptuous—slowly falls apart. Lacombe takes France, played by the anemic-looking yet lovely Aurore Clement, to a party at the Gestapo headquarters.

When a cleaning lady who had briefly been Lacombe's lover spots the two together she calls France a great many vile, anti-Semitic names. France runs away and when Lacombe finds her she buries her face in his neck and cries. "I'm so sick of being a Jew," she wails over and over.

And again, Malle has shown us an extremely intelligent insight into a facet of human character. When people are persecuted and tormented because of something about them, even if that something is, by any decent standard, nothing to be ashamed of, eventually there comes a time, even if it is fleeting, when the persecuted long to change, to lose that distinguishing stigma.

Again, the girl France is not Golda Meir or Helen Keller. She is just a frightened teenage girl who knows that her life has been wrecked because she is a Jew. She knows she can blame it on the anti-Semites, but she also knows it would not have happened if she were not a Jew. She longs to blend into the large, unpersecuted mass.

And here is the beauty of the coming together of the swinish Lacombe and the lovely and delicate France: he wishes to be lifted out of the herd and she wishes for nothing more than to sink into it. They more or less pass each other on their way up and down.

There is more to *Lacombe, Lucien*, especially the elegant and bizarre suicidal behavior of France's father and the

dawning decency of Lacombe when he saves France's life shortly after raping her.

The movie is marvelously well acted. That means, of course, that it is marvelously well directed. Unfortunately, the movie is about 135 minutes long, and could have done everything it had to do in an hour and a half. Malle is too fond of the slow, slow, slow motion of life, even

evil life. He has too few cuts. He lingers too long on a scene—well beyond the point at which we get the message.

Still, the film is a beauty and full of thought. It tells us something about ourselves and why we do things that we are not proud of, and yet it does so without preaching and moralizing. It is overly long but it is an extremely lucid and lovely parable. □

Book Review/George Nash

## Beleaguered Tory

In a line that some conservatives like to quote, T.S. Eliot once remarked that there is no such thing as a lost cause, for there is no such thing as a *gained* cause. History is contingent, he seemed to be saying, and the fortunes of nations can change in the most drastic ways. Eliot's statement is not, of course, literally and invariably true; the past of every country is strewn with causes that are irrecoverable. But there is a sense in which his aphorism is shrewd indeed: if causes can be defeated on the plains of history, they are seldom extinguished in the realm of historiography. Few causes are so forlorn that they will not one day find someone to defend them—with the pen, if not the sword. Hopes may fade and dreams may wither, but the arguments of historians go on for generations.

One such "lost cause" which is increasingly receiving sympathetic understanding, if not defense, is that of one of the most despised minorities in American history: the Loyalists who were crushed in the Revolution. It is a fact too little known outside historical circles that the drive for independence, 1775-1783, was opposed by at least one-fifth of the American population. So fierce, so unremitting was the struggle that as many as 80,000 Loyalists—those who stood by Great Britain—were eventually driven into exile. Despite their obvious importance, the Loyalists have until lately been rather neglected by historians. On the very eve of the nation's two-hundredth birthday, however, scholarly work on this subject has blossomed. Just as we are preparing to celebrate our victorious Revolution, the "lost cause" of Loyalism is enjoying a revival. So noticeable is this current interest in the losers that one colonial historian, Pauline Maier, has observed wryly, "The Loyalists lost the Revolution, but they seem to be winning the Bicentennial." T.S. Eliot, one suspects, would have savored the irony.

Of the proliferating recent studies of Loyalists, one of the most impressive is Bernard Bailyn's biography of the most important one of all: Thomas Hutchinson, the last native-born colonial governor of Massachusetts. Already highly regarded

for *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* and *The Origins of American Politics*, Professor Bailyn has turned in his latest work to a study of the principal *bête noire* of John Adams and thousands of other Revolutionaries. For more than a decade Bailyn has immersed himself in the tracts and pamphlets of the men who forged the independence movement and has become an outstanding authority on the ideology of the Revolution. Now, quite deliberately, he has altered his focus.

Why? Not, he hastens to stress in the

### *The Ordeal of Thomas Hutchinson*

by Bernard Bailyn  
Harvard \$12.50

preface, because he has become a latter-day Loyalist—although his treatment of Hutchinson is sympathetic in many respects. Rather, Bailyn believes that the time has come when a comprehensive, balanced understanding of the Revolution is finally possible. The eras of "heroic" and "Whig" interpretations, with their inherent limitations of perspective, are past; the "wholeness" of the Revolution can now, at last, be grasped. But if this third and, in Bailyn's view, most profound stage of historical comprehension is upon us, knowledge of only one side—the winners—is not enough. We must strive, says Bailyn, to understand why intelligent and honorable men could ever oppose the Revolution. "I turn," he states, "to the losers sympathetically in order to explain the human reality against which the victors struggled and so to help make the story whole and comprehensible."

The result, as those who have read Bailyn's previous works have come to expect, is a brilliant and provocative book that is a model of historical craftsmanship. *The Ordeal of Thomas Hutchinson* is a vividly written, poignant story of the defeat, humiliation, and destruction of a capable, decent, and increasingly helpless man who never accurately fathomed the passions and aspirations of the Revolu-

tionary movement. In 1760, Lieutenant Governor Thomas Hutchinson of Massachusetts was forty-nine years old. Harvard-educated, successful in business and politics, widely respected, this fifth-generation Yankee was—or so it seemed—destined for even greater success. Indeed, in the decade that followed he became Chief Justice and then Governor of the province; every significant political honor that he could hope to acquire was bestowed upon him. But it would all turn to ashes, and in the end his career lay in ruins. More than that: when he yielded the governorship in 1774 to General Thomas Gage, he was almost universally regarded throughout Massachusetts not merely as a failure but as a traitor. In Hutchinson's record as Governor and as defender of the rights of Parliament, patriots of every rank saw not misplaced good will, not even honest error, but willful, deceitful malevolence. Hutchinson, it was alleged, had repeatedly lied to his British superiors about American goals and intentions. He had plotted to "abridge what are called English liberties" in the colonies, all the while concealing his criminal intent. He had wronged his countrymen to gain privileges and favors from Britain and had worked to destroy the ancient harmony within the empire in order to advance the cause of tyranny and his private greed.

It is one of the conclusions of Bailyn's splendidly written biography that most of these charges were completely false. Far from being a "vile serpent" (as John Adams called him), Thomas Hutchinson emerges in Bailyn's book as an honorable, prudent, reflective man who avoided appeals to passion and strove always to be thoughtful and judicious. He did not secretly attempt to sell out his native province. He did not support such hated British measures as the Stamp Act, which, in fact, he had opposed. To the cautious, calculating Hutchinson, however, continued American dependence on Great Britain in the 1760s and 1770s was a necessity. It was self-evident that in a world of ravenous nation-states a close, protective tie with England was essential. This inescapable fact of life inexorably