

Letter from NEW YORK

Passion and Politics in America

AMERICA in mid-century is in many respects a turbulent country. Oddly enough, it is a turbulence born, not of depression, but of prosperity. Contrary to the somewhat simple notion that prosperity dissolves all social problems, the American experience demonstrates that prosperity brings in its wake new anxieties, new strains, new urgencies. Conventional political analysis, drawn largely from 18th and 19th century American experience, has been at something like a loss in the face of this new situation: hence the bewilderment and mystification before the phenomenon of McCarthyism.

Politics in the U.S. has been looked at, usually, from three standpoints: (1) the rôle of the electoral structure, (2) of political tradition, and (3) of interest groups, sectional or class.

Perhaps the decisive fact about American political structure is the two-party system. Each party is like some huge bazaar, with hundreds of hucksters clamouring for attention. Life within the bazaars flows freely and licences are easy to obtain; but all trading has to be conducted within the tents; the ones who hawk their wares outside are doomed to few sales. This fact gains meaning in considering one of the striking facts about American life; America has thrown up countless social movements, but few long-lived political parties.

"It is natural for the ordinary American," wrote Gunnar Myrdal, "when he sees something that is wrong to feel not only that there should be a law against it, but also that an organisation should be formed to combat it"—and, we might add, to reform it. These reform groups have ranged from Esperantists to vegetarians, from silver money advocates to conservationists, from trust-busters to

socialists of fifty-seven varieties. These groups, intense and ideologically singleminded, have formed numerous third parties—the Greenback Party, Anti-Monopoly Party, Equal Rights Party, Prohibition Party, Socialist Labour Party, Union Labour Party, Farmer-Labour Party, Socialist Party. None has succeeded; few have lasted long. One important reason is the constraining rôle of the electoral system.

The wheat farmers of the north central plains have a homogeneity of cultural outlook and a common set of economic problems which national boundary lines cannot bisect. Yet in Canada, the wheat farmers formed a Social Credit Party in Alberta and a Cooperative Commonwealth Federation in Saskatchewan, while their brothers in North Dakota could only, at best, form a Non-Partisan League—within the Republican Party.

These factors of rigid electoral structure have set definite limits on the rôle of protest movements, left and right, in American life. ("Let me make the deals, and I care not who makes the ideals," an American politician has said.) They account in significant measure for the failure of the right-wing Lemke-Coughlin movement in 1936, and of the left-wing Wallace-Progressive Party in 1948. They account for the new basic alliance between the unions and the Democratic Party. Whatever lingering hopes some trade unionists may have had for a labour party in the U.S., they were dispelled by Walter Reuther at the C.I.O. convention in November 1954 when, in answering transport leaders like Mike Quill, he pointed out that a third party was impossible within the nature of the U.S. electoral system. This is a lesson that every social movement has learned. And any

social movement which hopes to effect or resist social change in the U.S. is forced now to operate within one or the other of the two parties. This itself places an enormous strain on these parties.

POLITICAL tradition, the second of the conventional categories, has played an important rôle in shaping American political forms. The distinctive aspect of the political tradition in the U.S. is that politics is the arena of the *hoi polloi*. The "common man" is the source of ultimate appeal, if not authority. This was not so at the beginning. The "founding fathers" feared the "democratic excesses" which the poor and propertyless classes could wreak against those with property. In 1787 self-consciousness of property, and a desire to limit the electoral rôle of the people, was uppermost in the minds of those who framed the Constitution, and was reflected in the erection of such institutions as a non-popular Senate, selected by the States; an appointive judiciary holding office for life; and a President elected through the indirect and cumbersome means of an electoral college.

But these barriers soon broke down. The victory of the Jeffersonians was the first step in the establishment of a "populist" character to the American democracy. The Federalists, seeing the success of the Jeffersonian methods, realised the necessity of imitating those "popular, convivial, and charitable techniques"; but it was too late, the Federalists had already lost. Thirty years later, however, their spiritual descendants, the Whigs, beat the Democrats at their own game. Casting aside Henry Clay, whose "Hamiltonian" views were too well established, the Whigs nominated General William Henry Harrison, the hero of the battle of Tippecanoe, against Andrew Jackson's successor, Martin Van Buren.

The campaign tactics, so strangely modern, were set down by Nicholas Biddle, Jackson's antagonist and the former head of the National Bank. "If General Harrison is taken up as a candidate," he said, "it will be on account of the past. . . . Let him say not one single word about his principles, or his creed—let him say nothing—promise nothing. Let no Committee, no convention—no town meeting ever extract from him a single word about what he thinks or will do hereafter.

Let the use of pen and ink be wholly forbidden."

The "cider election" of 1840 was a turning point in American political life. Harrison travelled from place to place in a large wagon with a log cabin on top, and a barrel of hard cider on tap for the crowds. In shameless fashion, Whig orators berated Van Buren for living in a lordly manner, accused him of putting cologne on his whiskers, of eating from gold plate, and of being "laced up in corsets such as women in town wear and if possible tighter than the best of them."

Harrison won, and the lesson was clear. Politics as a skill in manipulating masses became the established feature of political life, and the politician, sometimes a front-man for the moneyed interests, but sometimes the manipulator in his own right, came to the fore. Increasingly, the upper classes withdrew from direct participation in politics. The lawyer, the journalist, the drifter, finding politics an open ladder for advancement, came bounding up from the lower middle classes.

IF THE politician spoke to the people, he acted for "interests." The awareness of the interest-group basis of politics, the third of the conventional categories, goes far back to the early days of the republic. Madison, in the oft-quoted Number Ten of the Federalist Papers, had written, "the most common and durable source of factions has been the various and unequal distribution of property. Those who hold and those who are without property have ever formed distinct interests in society."

The threat to property on the part of the small farmer and the landless formed the basis of the first disquiet in American politics. The supporters of the Shay Rebellion in Massachusetts and other insurgents, General Henry Knox complained to George Washington, "believe that the property of the United States has been protected from the confiscations of Britain by the joint exertions of all." Madison, looking to the future, anticipated that "a great majority of the people will not only be without land, but any other sort of property." When this has occurred, he predicted, the propertyless masses will "either combine under the influence of their common situation; in which case the rights of property and the public liberty will not be secure in

their hands; or what is more probable," he continued, with the lessons of the Roman demagogues in mind, "they will become tools of opulence and ambition, in which case there will be equal danger on the other side."

The early factional struggles in American political life, rustic in form because of the agrarian weight of the population, soon became sectional. This was inevitable since the different regions developed different interests: the rice, tobacco, and cotton of the south; the fishing, lumbering, commerce of New England. National parties came into being when the Federalists succeeded at first in combining the large planters of the upper and lower South with the commercial interests of the North Atlantic region, and when Jefferson challenged this combination by uniting the grain growers and other small farmers both north and south into a rival party.

Since then the national parties have been strange alliances of heterogeneous sectional groups: mid-West farmers with Eastern financiers; Northern urban immigrants with racists and nativists in the South. Ethnic and functional groups have often flowed into one of the two parties by historic accident: the Negroes, because of the Civil War, for sixty years or so voted Republican; the Irish, because of their original relation to Tammany Hall, became Democrats; the Germans, settling in the mid-West, became Republican; the urban Italians, in reaction to being excluded from city politics by the Irish, at first were Republicans.

In 1933, heralded by the New Deal, the feeling arose that a new era was emerging. In a widely-quoted book, Professor Arthur N. Holcombe of Harvard wrote: "The old party politics is visibly passing away. The character of the new party politics will be determined chiefly by the interests and attitudes of the urban population . . . there will be less sectional politics and more class politics."

The emergence of "functional" groups, particularly labour, and the growing assertion by ethnic groups, seemed to underscore the shift. The fact that Franklin Roosevelt was able to weave together these groups, some of whom like the farmers had been allied with the Republican Party, seemed to indicate that some historic realignments were taking place. Some realignments have, but not so dramatic as once thought. The trade union movement, politically articulate for the first time, is out-

spokenly Democratic; but the working-class vote usually has been Democratic. Ethnic groups which came to the fore have, by and large, retained their loyalty to the Democratic Party; but there are many indications that, as a result of rising prosperity and higher social status, significant chunks of these nationality and minority groups are beginning to shift their allegiance. The farmers, despite the enormous financial aid granted them by the New Deal, have returned to the Republican fold.

But while sectional politics has somewhat diminished, class politics has not taken its place. Instead, there has been the spectacular rise of pressure groups and lobbies, part sectional, part class, part ideological. The most dramatic use of this kind of pressure-group tactic was made by the Anti-Saloon League, which, starting in 1895, was able in less than a decade and a half to push through a Constitutional amendment prohibiting the manufacture and sale of liquor in the U.S. Since then, the pressure-group device has been adopted by thousands of organisations, whether it be with regard to tariff reform, opposition to Federal medical programmes, or political aid to the State of Israel. In 1949 the Department of Commerce estimated that there were 4,000 national trade, professional, civic, and other associations. Including local and branch chapters there were probably 16,000 business men's organisations, 70,000 local labour unions, 100,000 women's clubs, and 15,000 civic groups carrying on some political activity. The enormous multiplication of such groups obviously cancels out many of the threats made to candidates defying one or the other of the interests. But it makes possible, too, for small interests to exercise great political leverage. Thus, when peanuts were eliminated from a farm subsidy programme in 1955, over 100 Southern congressmen held up a crop support Bill until the subsidy was restored—although Georgia peanuts account for less than one half of one per cent of farm income.

The multiplication of interests and the fractioning of groups, occurring simultaneously with the break-up of the older family capitalism and the rise of new managerial groups to power within business enterprises, makes it difficult to locate the sources of political power in the U.S. More than ever, government in the U.S. has become, in John

Chamberlain's early phrase, "the broker state."

II

GRANTING the viability of these conventional lines of political analysis—the rôle of the two-party system in limiting social movements and social clashes; the political tradition of direct appeal to the people; and the force of interest-groups in shaping and modifying legislative policy—they nevertheless leave us somewhat ill-equipped to understand the issues which have dominated political disputes in the last decade. These lines of thought do not help us, for example, to understand the Communist issue, the forces behind the new nationalism of, say, Senators Bricker and Knowland, and the momentary range of support and the intense emotional heat generated by Senator McCarthy.

For Europeans, particularly, the Communist issue must be a puzzle. After all, there is no mass Communist Party in the U.S. such as one finds in France and Italy—the Communist Party in the U.S. never, at any single moment, had more than 100,000 members. In the last five years, when the Communist issue came on to the national scene, the Communists had already lost most of the political influence they once had—the Communist unions had been expelled from C.I.O.*; the Progressive Party, repudiated by Henry Wallace, had fizzled; they were fast losing strength in the intellectual community.

It is true that liberals have tended to play down the Communist issue. And the contradictory stand of the Truman administration compounded these confusions and increased the alarms: on the one hand, leading members of the administration, including Truman himself, sought to minimise the degree of past Communist infiltration; on the other hand, the administration let loose a buckshot charge of security regulations which had little regard for personal liberties and rights. The invasion of South Korea and the emotional reaction against the Chinese and Russian Communists, which carried over to domestic Communists; the disclosures, particularly by

Whittaker Chambers, of the infiltration of Communists into high posts in government and the existence of espionage rings; and, finally, the revelations in the Canadian spy investigations, the Allan Nunn May trial in Britain, and in the Rosenberg case that the Soviets had stolen U.S. atom secrets, all played a rôle in heightening national tension, but even after the natural effects of all these are taken into account, it is difficult to explain the unchallenged position so long held by Senator McCarthy. Nor can conventional political analysis shed much light on him or his supporters. Calling him a demagogue explains little; the relevant questions arise in relation to whom and what he was demagogic about. McCarthy's targets were indeed strange. Huey Long, the last major demagogue, had vaguely attacked the rich and sought to "share the wealth." McCarthy's targets were intellectuals, especially Harvard men, Anglophiles, internationalists, the Army.

But these targets provide the important clues to the right-wing support, a "radical right," that backed him, and the reasons for that support. These groups constituted a strange *mélange*: a thin stratum of soured patricians like Archibald Roosevelt, the last surviving son of Theodore Roosevelt, whose emotional stake lay in a vanishing image of a muscular American defying a decadent Europe; the "new rich"—the automobile dealers, real estate manipulators, oil wildcatters—who needed the psychological assurance that they, like their forebears, had earned their own wealth, rather than (as in fact) through government aid, and who feared that "taxes" would rob them of that wealth; the rising middle-class strata of the various ethnic groups, especially the Irish and the Germans, who sought to prove their Americanism (the Germans particularly because of the implied taint of disloyalty during the Second World War); and, finally, unique in U.S. cultural history, a small group of intellectuals, some of them cankered ex-Communists, who, pivoting on McCarthy, opened up an attack on liberalism in general.

THIS strange coalition, bearing the "sword of the Lord and Gideon," cannot be explained in the conventional terms that are applied to American politics. As a result, there has recently been some hard rethinking by American historians and political

* By 1952 the Communists controlled unions with fewer than five per cent of U.S. labour membership as against a peak control of unions with twenty per cent of union membership in 1944.

analysts, and they have come up with ideas that do provide some frame of reference, particularly to explain the factors of the "new rich" and the "rising ethnic groups." One key concept is the idea of "status politics" advanced by the Columbia historian, Richard Hofstadter, and adumbrated, amongst others, by Professor David Riesman of Chicago.

Hofstadter's central idea is that groups that are advancing in wealth and social position are often as anxious and politically feverish as groups that have become *declassé*. Many observers have noted that those groups which have lost their social position seek more violently than ever to impose on all groups the older values of a society which they once represented. Hofstadter demonstrates that groups on the rise, in order to establish themselves, may insist on a similar conformity. This rise takes place in periods of prosperity, when class or economic interest-group conflicts have lost much of their force. Hofstadter argues further that economic issues take on importance in American political history only during depressions, while in periods of prosperity "status" issues emerge. But these issues, usually "patriotic" in character, are amorphous and ideological.

Whether these groups congeal into a political force depends upon many factors. Certainly McCarthy himself is, at the moment, at the nadir. By the logic of his own political position, and by the nature of his personality, he had to go to an extreme. And he ended, finally, by challenging Eisenhower. It was McCarthy's great gamble. And he lost, for the challenge to a Republican President by a Republican minority could only have split the party. Faced with this threat, the party rallied behind Eisenhower, and McCarthy himself was isolated. In this respect, the events prove the soundness of the thesis of Walter Lippmann and the Alsops in 1952 that only a Republican President could provide the necessary continuity of foreign and domestic policy initiated and maintained by the Fair Deal. A Democratic President would only have polarised the parties, and given the extreme Republican wing the license to lead the attack; the administration of a moderate Republican could act as a damper on the extreme right.

The lessening of international tensions may confirm McCarthy's defeat, as a flare-up of war in Asia, particularly Chinese Communist

action over Formosa, might give him a platform to come back. Yet McCarthy has to be understood in relation to the people behind him and the changed political temper which these groups have brought. He was the catalyst, not the explosive force. These forces still remain.

III

THERE are several consequences to the changed political temper in American life, most notably the introduction on a large scale of "moral issues" into political debate. By and large, this is new. Throughout their history, Americans have had an extraordinary talent for compromise in politics and extremism in morality. The most shameless political deals (and "steals") have been rationalised as expedient and realistically necessary; yet in no other country were there such spectacular attempts to curb human appetites and brand them as illicit—and nowhere else such glaring failures. From the start America was at one and the same time the frontier community where "everything goes" and the fair country of the restrictive Blue Laws. At the turn of the century, a sharp cleavage developed between the big-city conscience and the small-town conscience: crime as a growing business was fed by the revenues from prostitution, liquor, and gambling that a cynical urban society encouraged, and which a middle-class, rural, Protestant ethos sought to suppress with a ferocity unmatched in any other civilised country. In America, the enforcement of public morals has been a continuing feature of our history.

America is a country, and Protestantism a religion, in which piety has largely given way to moralism, and theology to ethics. Becoming respectable is "moral" advancement, and regulating conduct, i.e. being "moral" about it, is a great concern of the Protestant churches in America.

This moralism, itself not unique to America, is linked to an evangelicism that is unique. Puritanism and the "New England mind" have played a large intellectual rôle in American life. But in the habits and mores of the masses of the people, the peculiar evangelicism of Methodism and Baptism, with its high emotionalism, its fervour, enthusiasm, and excitement, its revivalism, its excesses of sinning and of high-voltage confessing, has

played a much more important rôle. Baptism and Methodism have been the favourite American religious creeds, because they were the rustic and frontier religions. In his page on "Why Americans Manifest a Sort of Fanatical Spiritualism," Alexis de Tocqueville observed: "In all states of the Union, but especially in the half-peopled country of the Far West, itinerant preachers may be met with who hawk about the word of God from place to place. Whole families, old men, women and children, cross rough passes and untrodden wilds, coming from a great distance, to join a camp-meeting, where, in listening to these discourses, they totally forget for several days and nights the cares of business and even the most urgent wants of the body."

The Baptist and Methodist churches grew, while the more "respectable" Protestant bodies remained static, precisely because their preachers went on with the advancing frontier and reflected its spirit. "In the camp-meeting and in the political gathering logical discourse was of no avail, while the 'language of excitement' called forth an enthusiastic response," H. Richard Niebuhr has observed.

The revivalist spirit was egalitarian and anti-intellectual. It shook off the vestments and the formal liturgies and preached instead the gospel and roaring hymn. This evangelicism was reflected in the moralism of a William Jennings Bryan, a religious as well as an economic champion of the West, and in the urban revivalism of a Dwight Moody and the Y.M.C.A. movement that grew out of his gospel fervour. The evangelical churches wanted to "improve" man, whereas the liberals wanted to reform institutions. They were the supreme champions of prohibition legislation and Sabbath observance. Reform in their terms meant not a belief in welfare legislation but in the redemption of those who had fallen prey to sin—and sin meant drink, loose women, and gambling. This moralism, so characteristic of the American temper, had a peculiar schizoid character: it would be imposed with vehemence in areas of culture and conduct—in the censorship of books, the attacks on "immoral art," etc., and in the realm of private habits; yet it rarely was heard regarding the depredations of business or the corruption of politics. On this the churches were largely silent.

And yet this has had its positive side: to the extent that moral indignation played so small a rôle in the political arena, the U.S. has been able to escape the intense ideological fanaticism—the conflicts of clericalism and class—which has been so characteristic of Europe.

THE singular fact about the Communist problem is that, on a scale rare in American political life, an ideological issue was equated with a moral issue and the attacks on Communism were made with all the compulsive moral fervour which was possible because of the equation of Communism with sin. In itself this reflects a curious change in American life. While we gain a more relaxed attitude towards private morals, we are becoming rather more extremist in public life.

This tendency to convert political into "moral" issues is reinforced by the activities of what might be called the "McCarthyite" intellectuals — James Burnham, William Schlamme, Max Eastman, and their minor epigoni. The rise of intellectual apologists for a reactionary right is, too, a new phase in American life. The ironic fact is that many of these men were Communists or near-Communists who repudiated at first, not the utopian vision of Communism, but its methods. In the thirties the crucial intellectual fight was to emphasise, against the "liberal" piddlers who sought to excuse the harshness of Stalinism by reference to the historic backwardness of Russia or the grandeur of the Soviet dream, the truth that in social action there is an inextricable relation between "ends and means," and that consistently amoral means could only warp and hideously distort a noble end. Yet all of this has been forgotten in the defence of McCarthy. Schlamme, the author of a fine book about Stalinism, *Die Diktatur der Lüge* (The Dictatorship of the Lie), applauds McCarthy as a man who is seriously interested in ideas. Max Eastman, slightly critical of McCarthy at times, worries most, not about McCarthy, but that the liberals by attacking him might be playing "the Communist game"; as if all politics were only two-sided, in this case McCarthy or the Communists.

How explain this reversal? Motivations are difficult to plumb, but one significant fact is clear: the hatred of the right-wing intellectual is not so much of the Communist, but of the

"liberals," and the root of the problem goes back to the political situation of the thirties. Although the Communists certainly did not dominate the cultural field in that decade, they did wield an influence far out of proportion to their numbers. The official institutions of the cultural community—because of the Spanish Civil War, the shock of Fascism, and the climate of New Deal reformism—did look at the Communist with some sympathy; they regarded him as ultimately, philosophically wrong, but still as a respectable member of the intellectual community. On the other hand, the vocal anti-Communists (many of them Trotskyites at the time), with their quarrelsome ways, their esoteric knowledge of Bolshevik history (for most of the intellectuals, the names of the Bolsheviks who stood in the dock at the Moscow trials, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin, Piatakov, Sokolnokiov, Rakovsky, were simply unpronounceable) seemed extreme and bizarre, and were regarded with suspicion. The anti-Stalinists, by raising "extraneous" issues of a "sectarian" nature, were "sabotaging" the fight against fascism. Hence, in the thirties, one found the Communist possessing a place in the intellectual world, while the vocal anti-Communists were isolated and thwarted.

Here is one of the sources of the present-day resentment against the "liberals." And this knot of "militant" anti-Communists, now having moved from the left to the right, once again find themselves outside the pale of intellectual respectability. While the liberals, particularly in the universities, have felt themselves subject to attack by powerful groups, the pro-McCarthy intellectuals see themselves as a persecuted group, discriminated against in the major opinion-forming centres in the land. A personal incident is relevant here. A few years ago I encountered Robert Morris, then counsel for the Jenner Committee on Internal Subversion. He complained of the "terrible press" his Committee was receiving. What press, he was asked? After all, the great Hearst and Scripps-Howard and Gannett chains, as well as the overwhelming number of newspaper dailies, had enthusiastically supported and reported the work of the Committee. I wasn't thinking of them, he replied. I was thinking of the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. And, to some extent,

he was right. These pages, few in number, are influential as shaping "elite" opinion. And on civil liberties, they have been on the "liberal" side.

The paradoxical fact is that on traditional economic issues, these "liberal" papers are conservative. All three supported Eisenhower. Yet traditional economic issues no longer count in dividing "liberals" from "anti-Communists." An amorphous, ideological issue, of whether one is "hard" or "soft" towards Communists, rather than an interest-group issue, has become the dividing line in the political community.

THE "ideologising" of politics gains reinforcement from a third, independent tendency in American life, the emergence of what may be called the "symbolic groups." These are the inchoate entities known generally in capital letters as "Labour," "Business," the "Farmers," *et al.* The assumption is made that these entities have a coherent philosophy, a defined purpose, and that they represent tangible forces. This tendency derives from varied sources, but the biggest impetus has come from the changing nature of economic decision-making and the changing mode of opinion-formation in modern society. The fact that major economic decision-making has been centralised into the narrow cockpit of Washington, rather than spread over the impersonal market, leads groups like the National Association of Manufacturers, the Farm Bureau, the A.F. of L., etc. to speak for "Business," for "Labour," for the "Farmers." At the same time there is an increased sensitivity to "Public Opinion," heightened by the use of opinion polls in which the "Citizen" (not the specific individual with his specific interests) is asked what "Business" or "Labour" or the "Farmer" should do. In effect, these groups are often forced to assume a unique identity and a greater coherence beyond what they would normally do.

In modern society the clash between ideological and utilitarian decisions is often as intense within groups as between groups. The American "Labour Movement," for example, has strongly favoured lower tariffs and broader international trade; yet the seamen's union has urged that U.S. government aid be shipped in American, not foreign bottoms, while the textile unions have fought for

quotas on foreign imports. Politically-minded unionists, like Mike Quill in New York, have had to choose between a wage increase for their members and a rise in transit fares for the public at large. The teamsters unions have lobbied against the railroad unions and the coal miners against the oil workers. In every functional group in the society, these conflicts of interest have taken place—industry, agriculture, etc.

Nevertheless, there is a tendency today to convert interest groups into ideological groups. So political debate moves from specific clashes of interest, in which issues can be identified and possibly compromised, to ideologically-tinged conflicts which polarise the various groups and divide the society.

IV

THE tendency to convert concrete issues into ideological problems, to invest them with moral colour and high emotional charge, is to invite conflicts which can only damage a society. "A nation, divided irreconcilably on 'principle,' each party believing itself pure white and the other pitch black, cannot govern itself," wrote Walter Lippmann many years ago.

It has been one of the glories of the U.S. that politics has always been a pragmatic give-and-take rather than a series of wars-to-the-death. One ultimately comes to admire the "practical politics" of Theodore Roosevelt and his scorn for the intransigents, like Godkin and Villard, who, refusing to yield to expediency, could never put through their reforms. Politics, as Edmund Wilson has described T.R.'s attitude, "is a matter of adapting oneself to all sorts of people and situations, a game in which one may score but only by accepting the rules and recognising one's opponents, rather than a moral crusade in which one's stainless standard must mow the enemy down."

Democratic politics means bargaining between legitimate groups and the search for consensus. This is so because the historic contribution of liberalism was to separate law from morality. The thought that the two should be separate often comes as a shock. In the older Catholic societies ruled by the doctrine of "two swords," the state was the

secular arm of the Church, and enforced in civil life the moral decrees of the Church. This was possible in political theory, if not in practice, because the society was homogeneous, and everyone accepted the same religious values. But the religious wars that followed the Reformation proved that a plural society could only survive if it respected the principles of toleration. No group, be it Catholic or Protestant, could use the State to impose its moral conceptions on all the people. As the party of the *politiques* put it, the "civil society must not perish for conscience's sake."

These theoretical foundations of modern liberal society were completed by Kant, who, separating legality and morality, defined the former as the "rules of the game" so to speak; law dealt with procedural, not substantive issues. The latter were primary matters of conscience, with which the State could not interfere. This distinction has been at the root of the American democracy. For Madison, factions (or divergence of interests) were inevitable, being rooted in liberty and "the diversity in the faculties of men;" one could only deal with its effects, not smother its causes. One curbed these effects by a federal form of government, separation of powers, and especially by representative government, which—by including almost all significant interests—could keep up "the antagonism of influences which is the only real security for continued progress" (Mill) while yet achieving a consensus.

In the past forty years, those interest groups that were insufficiently represented, notably the smaller farmers and the organised workers, have secured a legitimate place in the American political equilibrium; and the ideological conflicts that once threatened to disrupt the society, particularly in the New Deal period, have been mitigated. The new divisions, created by the status anxieties of new middle-class groups, pose a new threat. The rancours of McCarthyism were one of its ugly excesses. However, the U.S., so huge and complex that no single political boss or any single political grouping has ever been able to dominate it, will in time doubtless diminish these divisions too. This is an open society, and these anxieties are part of the price we pay for that openness.

Daniel Bell

Letter from NEW DELHI

Predicament in Goa

GANDHI was in his time dubbed by Indian Communists as a “policeman of British imperialism” because, placing means above ends, he halted the civil disobedience movement whenever it exceeded the bounds of non-violence. Nehru is today literally employing the police to stop Indian demonstrators from entering the tiny Portuguese pockets of Goa, Daman, and Diu. He is being likewise accused of betraying the cause of freedom, by the Socialist and chauvinist Hindu sections of the Opposition, as well as the Communists.

The comparison is limited by the fact that whereas Gandhi acted on absolute moral grounds when he called off a popular movement which threatened to get out of hand (he once confessed his “Himalayan blunder” in supposing that the masses would remain non-violent), Nehru’s action is an expedient dictated by circumstances rather than the assertion of a principle. Nehru has offered no moral argument for banning the peaceful invasion of foreign territory; he has only pleaded the practical embarrassment caused to his Government.

Satyagraha, the novel technique of peaceful resistance developed by Gandhi, consists in the defiance of what is considered to be illegitimate authority and the calm acceptance of any punishment that follows, in the hope of bringing about a change of heart in the adversary. During the struggle for freedom this technique was accepted by many non-pacifists, including Nehru, not as a creed requiring the absolute avoidance of force but as a tactic found effective in actual use. In the three decades during which satyagraha was practised against the British, peaceful demonstrators were lathi-charged, tear-gassed, and ill-treated in jail, but were never mowed

down as they were in the Portuguese settlements on August 15th last, the eighth anniversary of Indian freedom, when a few thousand unarmed Indians crossed the border in symbolic defiance of the alien régime. British troops opened fire often enough, but only when crowds became threatening or threw stones, rarely without any provocation. Had the rulers of British India been as callous as the Portuguese, there is no doubt that Gandhi and his small band of pacifist followers would still have adhered to non-violence and faced immolation. Equally, there can be no doubt that the nationalist movement would have taken a far different course. Gandhi lived to see freedom come to India through largely peaceful means, but the Hindu-Muslim massacres which accompanied the country’s partition finally convinced him that the non-violence of Indians during the anti-British struggle was the non-violence of the weak, not of the morally strong. As angry mobs rioted in Bombay and other cities in protest against the Portuguese firing and demanded military retaliation, Nehru rediscovered the fundamental incapacity of the masses for satyagraha.

THE ban on satyagraha against the Portuguese settlements should have logically followed Nehru’s declaration in Parliament on August 16th, within twenty-four hours of the killing of a score of Indians on the border, that he would adhere to peaceful methods despite any provocation. “Let them look for another Prime Minister,” he told a party whip who brought word that many Congress members were dissatisfied with his tame reaction. Adherence to the policy of peace required that the shooting of Indian citizens should not be allowed to recur, since it would