

DURING THE LAST WAR I saw Faber every week, at first sharing in the middle of the week the Fabers' basement shelter, and later fire-watching with him at Russell Square; and I was privy to two of his wartime activities. The first was when, as President of the Publishers' Association, he organised the protest which obtained the remission of the purchase tax to be levied on books. The second was when he drafted the report on Secondary Schools as Chairman of a Committee appointed by the Minister of Education. At one time Faber had thought of standing for Parliament. He had the integrity, the constancy of purpose, and the firmness of principle of the Statesman, but not, perhaps, all the arts of the Politician.

It is chiefly, however, as Publisher and as Friend that I wish to-day to remember Geoffrey Faber. Any calling that Faber had accepted would have been, with him, the occupation of a gentleman; but for him that of Publisher most certainly was. He loved good books, and what he chiefly wanted as a publisher was to publish good books. If they were good enough, they were worth losing money on. And it was not only the books that he himself liked that he was glad to publish. Having chosen his col-

leagues, he trusted them, and was happy to publish any book that one of them thought good enough to be worth fighting for. And I shall not forget the patience and skill with which he conducted our weekly book committee. He endured our vagaries and our divagations; he was judicious in settling our arguments, and genially tolerant of the practical jokes and horse-play with which some of us, in the early days, would occasionally disorganise the meeting.

Geoffrey Faber was endowed with many talents which he employed happily and well. He was fortunate in many ways, fortunate especially in his marriage. His wife, I know, was his wise counsellor, even in publishing, particularly in the early days when we were learning to be publishers; the partaker of all his interests and his strong rock and his bulwark in his last painful years of illness. Our thoughts and our prayers to-day must be with her and with their family, as well as with him. I remember Geoffrey Faber in many situations, in peace and in war, in work and in play, on land and on sea, at home and abroad. I loved the man, and part of my own life is in the grave with him. May he rest in peace.

T. S. Eliot

The False Prospero

Observations on Mrs. Elspeth Huxley — By EDWARD SHILS

THE SMALL CIRCLE of men and women in each African society who wish to see their countries free and modern, while remaining essentially African, are having no easy time of it. They themselves are so few. Diseases afflict the people and their beasts. The soil, from which their people must continue to live for the foreseeable future, is unresponsive to their elementary technology and they lack capital for a more complex technology. They have not yet come to form coherent societies. Tribal loyalties still prevail, inhibiting the internal unity of the new states and endangering the probity of their public services. Creative activity is slow in coming forth; traditionality, the preponderance of the aged and awe of ancestors, deadens the outward impulse. Their people have little civility; they are too submissive or too refractory in their relations with authority, and often excessively attracted by charismatic qualities in their leaders. Politicians find it too easy, in the face of the more intractable problem of economic growth, social welfare, educational development, and administrative efficiency, to summon up the demons of tribalism, xenophobia, intolerance, revivalism, and demagoguery.

These truths have not been neglected by friendly and detached observers of the new states and they have been trotted out time and again by those whose attachment to the *ancien régime* of Africa before World War II renders them unsympathetic with the already or prospectively sovereign states of present-day Africa. Seldom, however, have they been put with the vividness and eloquence of Mrs. Elspeth Huxley's flashing polemic against the possibility of a modern Africa which would be alive, progressive, and decent. Mrs. Huxley's ease of movement among the facts of African life commands respect. Her arguments are, however, enfeebled by irrelevance and by fictitious construction. The scornful tone of her strictures, the style of a Cassandra half-pleased with the prospect of catastrophe, can neither improve the liberals nor hearten the Africans in whom at odd moments she appears to repose a little confidence. There is something else which weakens the persuasiveness of her brilliant essay. That is an insufficient forthrightness. Mrs. Huxley seems to find the prospect of African freedom abhorrent. A sense of the awfulness of African freedom dominates her argument with-

out ever being formulated into a rational argument against the principle of that freedom.

OF COURSE, ARGUMENTS which deny the worthwhileness of African freedom are too late to determine whether Africa will be independent of European sovereignty. To the extent that it has not already happened, it is inevitable. Decisive sections of the population in each African country wish to rule or share in the rule of their own countries (or, at the very least, they prefer to be ruled by human beings with whom they have some sense of affinity). That is why they will be free and why they should be free. The course of African countries once free is, however, still indeterminate and the attitude taken in the West towards it will have some influence on its direction. Africa might flounder and become like Latin America in the first century of its independence, free, incompetent, squalid, miserable, and convulsive. It might become a continent of oligarchies, self-righteously repressive and mixing some ambitious efficiency with much slovenliness. Or, alternatively, it might, pursuing the ideal of national improvement, become a continent of imperfect democracies, more or less like the older democracies, humanitarian, liberal, open, and economically and socially progressive, with much to criticise and with corresponding opportunities for criticism.

The outcome of African freedom will be affected by indigenous traditions of belief and action, some of which are obstructive of progress—on these Mrs. Huxley lays great weight—but it will also be affected by others more conducive to progress. (She mentions none of the latter.) The outcome will also be a function of the equipment with modern institutions such as schools and universities with which the new states enter upon their independence. It will be a function of the political skill, good-will, and moral character of African politicians under the strenuous conditions of independence; these in turn will be affected by the traditional and the modern inheritances of the African societies. The outcome will also be much affected by Western conduct and relations with Africa, and this not only in the form of economic and technical aid, but in the moral disposition which governs this and much else. It is in this last and most important aspect that I find Mrs. Huxley's article so unsatisfactory.

It is important that we accept African freedom without reservations; that we accept it as morally justified even if it is not used as well as we would like. We must acknowledge the equal moral dignity of Africans, not just in principle or charitable deed but in our sentiments. We must regard them and ourselves as part of the same species. This involves an educa-

tion of sentiment. The following is an effort to specify the ground, in principle, for this transformation of sentiment.

THE CASE for African freedom is not dependent on the good sense of its friends and abettors abroad. They might well be frivolous simpletons or irresponsible rogues; they might be haters of their own countrymen; they might be Utopian phantasts; they might have the worst possible motives for wishing to see Africans free of rule by Europeans. (They certainly do not, in their anti-colonial rapture, pay enough serious attention either to the problems which new states must cope with once they are independent or to what must be done outside Africa to help the new states. Mrs. Huxley does not bother with this deficiency which is graver than any she derides.) The fact that a generally motley crew supports the movement to end colonial rule and the hegemony of European settlers has nothing to do with the merits of the case for African freedom. Mrs. Huxley adds no persuasiveness to her argument by deriding her opponents. The real problems are whether Africans will make good use of their freedom, once they obtain it and whether even if they do not make good use of it, they are entitled to have it anyhow.

The argument that Africans should rule themselves does not presuppose that Africans are more virtuous than Europeans or whites, any more than the justification for American and European self-government rests on the moral superiority of Americans or Europeans. Mrs. Huxley gains nothing by her truthful intimation that Africans are not more virtuous than Americans or Europeans. In many specific things they might well be somewhat worse, but that makes no difference. The fact is that they are human and their societies have some inarticulable essence of their own, like any other societies. That is enough. Positively the argument rests on the ground that those who exercise authority over a society should be part of that society in other than their authority-exercising capacity. They must be involved in its kinship system, in its systems of culture and beliefs; they must possess that quality of membership which comes from a sense of affinity with the society and the territory on which it is based. Collective self-determination—an admittedly obscure phenomenon—is a good thing, just as individual self-determination is a good thing. Negatively, the case for African sovereignty rests on the ground that no moral reason exists for a small minority of Europeans, either as civil servants or as settlers, to impose their rule on Africans, however backward they might be.

The greater industry and productivity of the Europeans, their greater contribution to the economic growth of an African country, does not give them a right to a monopoly of authority or even a constitutionally guaranteed preponderance. Their residence qualifies them to share with other residents the powers involved in self-government and their achievement entitles them to the deference and dignity which a decent society pays to worthwhile achievement. But a white oligarchy in any African country is even less justifiable than a Negro oligarchy which, unattractive as it might be, contains at least some trace of affinity between oligarch and subject.

IT IS TRUE THAT CONQUEST establishes and time often legitimates. Where, however, conquest and the passage of time have not so fully legitimated the authority of the European "outsider" that he has ceased to be an "outsider" (both in his view and in the opinion of the once conquered and then ruled), then he cannot claim that his power enjoys the legitimation of a consensual or civil tie between rulers and ruled. Nowhere in Africa has European rule fully legitimated itself to the Africans. Everywhere that it still remains, it is experienced as the rule of outsiders, outsiders in a very fundamental sense of sharing neither the primordialities of kinship and territory, nor the consensus of a civil society.

This last proposition does not mean that Europeans must withdraw at once from Africa or abdicate completely and immediately. The miserable condition of the Congo testifies to the need to apply the principle of self-government with concern for the aftermath of withdrawal. Such European rule as survives in Africa must be no more than a transient custodianship, used (as John Stuart Mill contended restrictions on liberty must always be used) to train the unfree to live fitly in freedom, and, I would add, to form a civil society in which the White Africans, Indian Africans, and Negro Africans who reside in the territory will be bound together in a common citizenship.

Mrs. Huxley does not enter on the questions which I have just discussed but she implies a negative answer by arguing that Africans will not make good use of their freedom; that if they have self-government, they will not have good self-government. The right of self-government does not entail that the self-governing should provide good government, efficient government, progressive government or liberal and democratic government—and that failing this, they should renounce their sovereignty to outsiders. The rulers of a territory inhabited by a modern society must share the central institutions of that society with the ruled. They must

feel bound to the ruled by a sense of affinity which is deeper than kindly solicitude or veterinary care.

A person taking Mrs. Huxley's position might well argue that this is all very well in theory but that in practice there is no real society in most of the new African states, only societies which are separate from each other, even hostile to each other. There is something in this argument, but not enough, I think, to annul the moral case for African self-government. The task of defining the societies which should enjoy self-government in Africa is not a simple one. Most of the African countries are ethnically composite. They are, as Mrs. Huxley says, tribes with little or uncertain sympathy with their own still incipient nationhood. Nevertheless, in none of these countries (even in the Congo) does an unalloyed tribalism prevail among those who have become political. The educated and the politicised—who are nearly but not quite identical—have become the cultivators and the carriers of the idea of nationality. They formed that idea, it is true, more as a counter-image to the colonial dominion than as an extension of something which had pre-colonial reality. The first lineaments of the national society are to be seen primarily in them. But not entirely. There is a rudimentary sense of nationality fairly widely spread in the population. This faint, dimly sensed nationhood is the political society, the existence of which underlies the legitimacy of the claim to self-government.

The alternatives are the continuation (or re-establishment) of colonial rule which is impossible as well as immoral, or the disaggregation of the new states into their tribal constituents which is undesirable. Of course, it would be better for all concerned if there were a real polity, a "true nation" from which those who exercise the powers of government could be drawn. At present, the constitutional legitimacy of the élite derives in part from their accession to the coerced legitimacy of the colonial régime which they regarded as illegitimate. Its moral legitimacy derives from the existence of a polity formed by modern education and political consciousness in the face of the colonial ruler. As the civil society grows, as the nation is formed, as primordial ties of kinship and tribe become a little more attenuated—which will certainly happen with the spread of education, with the improvement of transportation and communication, and the establishment of an effective civil service and political leadership—the legitimacy of self-government will become correspondingly stronger.

Are not these régimes, with their partially established legitimacy and with all their frailty, more legitimate morally than the colonial régimes which, nowhere and never in Africa,

succeeded in establishing their legitimacy in a way in which either the rulers or the ruled really believed? Mrs. Huxley condemns Western and African romanticism about non-existent virtues and mythically glorious pasts. She shows herself to be no less romantic when she suggests that there was a time before the outbreak of the mania for self-government when European settlers provided "shelter and protection" for Africans, thus satisfying "the black Caliban's" need to be dependent. There were undoubtedly some colonists who did this—some undoubtedly exist even to-day in South Africa—but they were and are certainly a minority. They never succeeded in creating a lasting belief in the legitimacy of colonial rule throughout the indigenous population, and that is why African self-government is right as well as inevitable.

EVEN IF the governments of the new African states make a mess of their affairs, even if they behave illiberally towards their own people, the establishment of the government of Africans by Africans would be justified. Few African politicians are, however, satisfied with "self-government" as the be-all and end-all of their activity. They put themselves forward as democratic, liberal, humanitarian, and progressive, more or less on the model of the liberal metropolitan powers which once ruled them. Some but not all of the sympathy which they receive in the West is supported by these aspirations. It is at this very point that Mrs. Huxley is most scornful of the hopes of the supporters of African freedom. She says Africans really do not want such régimes and their Western well-wishers delude themselves into thinking that liberal-democratic values are "for export," and if exported would be good for their importers.

It is true, as Mrs. Huxley says, that not all of the population of African societies wish to have their societies transformed in a more liberal direction, towards a greater degree of democracy and humanitarianism. That does not make these values less valuable. Their existence in Africa would make African societies better, even if practically no one had been in their favour when they were initiated. Just as collective self-determination is better than foreign rule, so rationality is better than rigid unthinking repetition, humanitarian compassion better than cruelty and indifference, individual creativity better than stodgy repression, respect for individual dignity better than disregard for it. These are values of universal validity, and the régimes which in some measure embody these and related virtues are better than régimes which negate them—and not only for ourselves but for others too.

Arguments based on moral and political philo-

sophy are less important to Mrs. Huxley's conservatism than the weightier evidence of experience. Mrs. Huxley says that liberal democracy or its reasonable facsimile will not work in Africa. The people do not want it, the traditions of African society are against it, the very map of Africa is against it. It is not easy to refute her. There is no conclusive evidence on either side of the argument regarding the prospects of African progress in freedom; and of the little available evidence not all of it runs against Mrs. Huxley. The hamstringing of opposition in Ghana, the unnecessary continuation of military government in the Sudan, the problematic affair between government and opposition in Sierra Leone in the days just before independence, the new crisis in the Tamil areas produced by the narrow-mindedness of the Government in Ceylon—these are only a few scraps of the kind of evidence which can be cited for Mrs. Huxley's argument. She is quite convinced that the elements of modern, liberal, democratic régimes with which African self-government begins, will be unrecognisably distorted and even destroyed by the inheritance from the tribal, traditionalistic, hierarchical régimes of the old Africa.

IT IS CERTAINLY TRUE that a modern liberal system of society and government is difficult to maintain. It is difficult to conduct properly in our own countries which have much longer experience, and more favourable economic and cultural conditions. In America, electoral improprieties still persist; civil liberties there have to be guarded zealously all the time, and not always successfully. In Britain, bureaucratic woodenness disfigures the face of good intentions, and inequalities of status damage the souls of the favoured and the disfavoured. In France, rigid parochialism led to a rapid succession of unstable governments and then to the destruction of the Fourth Republic. In Germany, the whole thing blew up in a disaster of world-wide repercussions. Throughout Western democracy, and not just in Africa, as Mrs. Huxley seems to think, personal qualities as well as principle and party enter into electoral choice. It is therefore unjust to the Africans to criticise them from the standpoint of a perfection which is implicitly attributed to us—as Mrs. Huxley does—and which we do not possess.

To be sure, we are more favourably situated than the Africans. Our cultural and political traditions are certainly more favourable to liberal democracy than the indigenous African traditions. Our economy is capable of sustaining a set of professions whose incumbents—journalists, lawyers, university teachers, politicians, trade-unionists—are devoted to the care of a dispersion of power and the prevention of its

concentration. The Africans are extremely short of educated persons with civic spirit and a concern for public liberty; most of their best people are drawn into the Civil Service, leaving too few over for other civic activities. Those who go into politics are soon beset by the strains, the moral wear and tear of the political game. Whether they have one-party régimes, coalition governments, or a genuine party system, populist politics combined with great ambitions and deeply heterogeneous electorates are terribly conducive to demagoguery and dirty work.

One may not, furthermore, dismiss out of hand Mrs. Huxley's observations about the strength of traditional tribal attachments which suppress the growth of individuality and breed an insufficiently rational attitude towards authority, or her remarks on the absence of a tradition of legitimate and organised opposition, the tradition of gerontocracy. But the picture which she presents is not the whole picture.

If it were the whole picture, then it would have been impossible to find a place in it for what actually exists: the modern political movement, the Africanised Civil Service, the considerable number of "graduates" and "been-to's" whom she so disparages, and all the other phenomena which are shaking Africa out of its primordial condition. Most important is the fact that rational liberal democratic values have strong proponents among African politicians, though they are, of course, not always equally attached to all of these. They are occasionally of two minds about certain aspects of them; sometimes they are concerned about becoming too "un-African;" which leads them towards an antipathy to things of Western origin. Sometimes they are victimised by the current intellectual cliché which asserts that in order to make economic progress it is necessary to sacrifice the liberty and well-being of your fellow man. Nonetheless, there is, among African politicians, though not equally or in all of them a genuine commitment to national liberal and democratic values, no less real than their attachment to indigenous African traditions. Mrs. Huxley does less than justice to the reality of this commitment.

THE MOST modern of African societies indisputably exists: political parties, parliaments, and civil services exist, schools and colleges exist, hospitals exist. Co-operatives and banks, wireless stations and newspapers (even a few periodicals) all exist. Each of these has its own personnel, trained to do the job, many doing their jobs with some devotion to standards, and some doing them outstandingly well. This devotion and achievement represent a commitment to the extension of modernity, to the

formation of a modern society. It is all very imperfect, on a very small scale and very delicately poised. Some indigenous traditions are both fruitful and intrinsically worth preservation; others are neutral and easily compatible with modernity; still others are noxious to a decent modernity. Intelligent and sensitive Africans are more aware of this tension than we are. If they do not have a ready solution, it is because of the uniqueness of the task of reconciling the modern and the traditional. This reconciliation must be a pragmatic one, to be discovered in the course of confrontation with the concrete tasks of improving agricultural techniques, the legal system, the educational syllabi, etc.

The very existence of the tension (which Mrs. Huxley acknowledges) is evidence that modernity *has* taken hold in Africa and that it will not easily yield. It has created its own "vested interests," and these will be advantageous to the progress of Africa, to its economic development, its representative institutions, and its public liberties. There are people now in Africa who have a stake in their country as a modern country. Their attachment to their own professions and the traditions which they have acquired by their modern training and practice will make them resistant to regression. Although *their* "modern countries" will not be the same as ours, they will be societies with a greater measure of equality, more individuality, more appreciation of achievement in professional tasks, more sense of civic responsibility which over-rides tribal responsibility, more humanitarianism than now exists or than Mrs. Huxley claims has any chance of existence.

Mrs. Huxley sees the cracks in the structure of traditional society: the refusal of youth to accept unquestionably the authority of age, the tension between politician and chief, between medicine and the witch-doctor's craft. But when she alludes to these cracks in the traditional structure, she stresses only their deleterious aspect and does not admit their positive value.

By and large, moreover, she takes it for granted that traditions are invariably unyielding and that only modernity is yielding. Yet traditions which appear to be immutable are often sustained only by the failure of their adherents to perceive feasible alternatives. Once African society is opened up to new opportunities through education and a wider experience, much will change. Such changes in the pattern of tradition have happened in other societies—how else could mediaeval Europe have become modern?—and there is every reason to believe that they will happen in Africa too.

ALMOST ALL OF Mrs. Huxley's arguments are devoted to the attempt to demonstrate

the hopelessness of African efforts to establish modern societies, peacefully ruled and allowing for diversity of groups and individuals. Yet, towards the end of her analysis, she acknowledges briefly the existence of these other forces which I have emphasised. She acknowledges the existence of Mr. Julius Nyerere, who with a little luck might become the conscience of African politics and the model for the best of African youth. She sees the young miner reading through the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (I hope he will not be discouraged by Dr. Einbinder's recent ENCOUNTER article); she sees the "spellbound children gazing at blackboards as if at the face of God." She sees other Africans "peering through a microscope, masked at the operating table, patiently explaining how to cure tobacco, plant tea or cure soil erosion, driving locomotives, giving Holy Communion..." Near the end, in a tone much more compassionate than the tone of the rest of her article, she expresses the

hope that once the torrent of boys... has poured from these proliferating schools, through new colleges and training centres and universities, out into the current of African life, the changes that have got to come will come quickly... that once their destiny is back in their own hands, Africans will gain the confidence to run their country sensibly...

She sees there "the positive pull, through literacy and Western values, to carry Africans away from their old shrines and into the mainstream... of atom-age life."

Of course, African societies, when modern, will "look both ways." Does not modern Britain remain British and retain continuity in fact and sentiment with the British past; does not modern France remain French, modern America remain American? We would regret it if they did not. Why should we regard it as a defect if modern African societies retain much of the charm and awfulness, many of the virtues and vices of primordial Africa, in new combinations with modern liberal-democratic, humanitarian institutions? There are dangers of a traditionalistic revival in Africa, and even greater dangers in an excessively slipshod and incompetent modernisation. All of the new Africa could come to resemble the old Liberia, or the Latin America described in Conrad's *Nostromo* (which remains the most severe warning to optimistic well-wishers of African freedom and the most important text-book on the politics of new states). There is also, however, the plain fact of the modern education of Africans, at home and overseas. This is a monumental fact and Mrs. Huxley's dislike of its beneficiaries—reminiscent of an earlier settlers' generation's dislike of the "educated Indian"—

cannot diminish its inevitable consequences. Once modern education became established in Africa, the old Africa could never be restored. The growth of modern education in Africa and for Africans overseas deepens the foundation of modernity in Africa. Many African students may be idlers—we find them among all students everywhere—and some probably want never to go home, some may be incompetent or dull-witted—but many are serious and intelligent, and what they acquire by their modern education is most unlikely to be eradicated. On the contrary, its beneficial effects will go on piling up and making modernity more secure.

I WOULD LIKE TO CONCLUDE these remarks with the observation that articles like Mrs. Huxley's, brilliant and true in parts as they are, are not spoken within four Western walls. They are part of a discussion in which Africans are the main participants, but in which our voices are not without significance. Disparagement, ill-willed predictions of failure, the eager welcome accorded to acts of suppression of opposition parties (or to scandalous corruption) as proving that Africans cannot rule or be ruled in a civilised manner—all count in the determination of the strength of liberal, decent, humane modernity in Africa. The agents of modernity in Africa can only be discouraged and embittered by articles like Mrs. Huxley's because they must take them as evidence that there is no fraternal feeling for them among those from whom they need it. They are made to feel more alone when important intellectuals in the West derogate them: the distrust of liberal ideas (which they necessarily must, to some extent, feel about ideas which carry them away from their own past) is heightened.

Africa needs not only material aid for economic development, it needs intellectual and moral collaboration given in a fraternal way among equals. The forces of liberal modernity in Africa—men with "tolerance, common sense, energy, and goodwill"—exist and are active, but they are weak because they are new and not numerous. Their small numbers are a great handicap—they are too few to do the jobs that need to be done, and they are too few and insufficiently in contact with each other to sustain themselves. They need intellectual amity, the best that we have to offer, in criticism and discussion, in training and collaboration. Anything short of that is not good enough. That is why I regret, however much I appreciate, the powerful article of Mrs. Huxley, which is so lacking in understanding and fellow-feeling towards the "graduates" and "been-to's" of Africa. They are the best hopes of Africa's future and, in an important way, of our own as well.

BOOKS & WRITERS

A. J. P. Taylor, Hitler, and the War

By H. R. TREVOR-ROPER

IT IS OVER twenty years since the war began. A generation has grown up which never knew the 1930's, never shared its passions and doubts, was never excited by the Spanish civil war, never boiled with indignation against the "appeasers," never lived in suspense from Nuremberg Rally to Nuremberg Rally, awaiting the next hysterical outburst, the next clatter of arms, from the megalomaniac in Berlin. Those of us who knew those days and who try to teach this new generation are constantly made aware of this great gulf between us. How can we communicate across such a gulf the emotional content of those years, the mounting indignation which finally convinced even the "appeasers" themselves that there could be no peace with Hitler, and caused the British people, united in pacifism in 1936, to go, in 1939, united into war? For it was not the differing shades of justice in Germany's claims upon the Rhineland, Austria, the Sudetenland, Prague, and Danzig which caused men who had swallowed the first of these annexations to be increasingly exasperated by those which followed and take up arms against the last. It was a changing mood, a growing conviction that all such claims were but pretexts under which Hitler pursued not justice or self-determination for Germany but world-conquest, and that, now or never, he must be stopped. And even across the gulf such a mood must be conveyed by those who teach history to those who learn it: for it is an element in history no less important than the mere facts. Or is it? Mr. A. J. P. Taylor, it seems, does not think so.* He sees the gulf all right, and he wishes to speak to those on the other side of it; but in order to do so, he has decided to lighten the weight he must carry with him. Stripping himself of all personal memories, and thus making himself, in this respect, as naked

as they are, he has jumped nimbly across the gulf and now presents himself to them as the first enlightened historian of the future, capable of interpreting the politics of the 1920's and 1930's without any reference to the emotions they engendered, even in himself. Their sole guide, he tells them, must be the documents, which he will select and interpret for them; and indeed, by selection and interpretation, he presents them with a new thesis, illustrated (we need hardly say) with all his old resources of learning, paradox, and *gaminerie*.

THE THESIS is perfectly clear. According to Mr. Taylor, Hitler was an ordinary German statesman in the tradition of Stresemann and Brüning, differing from them not in methods (he was made Chancellor for "solidly democratic reasons") nor in ideas (he had no ideas) but only in the greater patience and stronger nerves with which he took advantage of the objective situation in Europe. His policy, in so far as he had a policy, was no different from that of his predecessors. He sought neither war nor annexation of territory. He merely sought to restore Germany's "natural" position in Europe, which had been artificially altered by the Treaty of Versailles: a treaty which, for that reason, "lacked moral validity from the start." Such a restoration might involve the recovery of lost German territory like Danzig, but it did not entail the direct government even of Austria or the Sudetenland, let alone Bohemia. Ideally, all that Hitler required was that Austria, Czechoslovakia, and other small Central European states, while remaining independent, should become political satellites of Germany.

Of course it did not work out thus. But that, we are assured, was not Hitler's fault. For Hitler, according to Mr. Taylor, never took the initiative in politics. He "did not make plans—for world-conquest or anything else. He assumed that others would provide opportunities and

* *The Origins of the Second World War*. By A. J. P. TAYLOR. Hamish Hamilton, 25s.