

architecture would be as misleading as to dismiss them wholly as "visionaries" without further qualification. Architectural historians have often forgotten that many painters at this time were also indulging in strange new styles that were only temporarily submerged by a rigid neo-classicism before they erupted into Romanticism. It seems clear that all these architects began at least to plan their fantasies well before the outbreak of the Revolution, and the temptation to link their innovations with the ferment of ideas that heralded the big political change has naturally proved irresistible. But the connection, if it exists, is not a simple one.

In a recently published and lavishly illustrated book, which aims to relate the art, ideas, and history of the 18th century,¹ Professor Starobinski defines Boullée and Ledoux as the "architects of will-power (*volontarisme*)" and suggests that they and their circle were rebelling against that domination of Nature, which had for so long been the touchstone of 18th-century taste,

¹ Jean Starobinski, *The Invention of Liberty, 1700-1789* (Skira, 1964).

however variously interpreted. As he also emphasises, the revolt came, as it were, from within the doctrine of "nature" itself, as can be seen in some of Ledoux's more fanciful projects to accommodate man's "natural" inclinations. Certainly the aggressively masculine style of many of the designs produced by these two men is far from suggesting any allegiance to Rousseau, and Professor Starobinski could have pointed to at least one curiously revealing instance of this change from submission to mastery. When he was actually in charge of the saltworks, Ledoux built a carpenter's cottage, which was as delightfully simple and rustic as anything that Marie Antoinette herself could have hoped for. Later, when designing his Ideal City, he altered this into something far grander with an enormously long colonnade stretching out in front of a bare façade broken only by doors and a Palladian window. And, at a time when the *volontarisme* of Boullée and Ledoux had long since been forgotten, the example of Nietzsche was there to prove that a derivation from Rousseau could still lead to some strange conclusions.

Gull

(For L. and C.)

Flung
far down,
as the
gull rises,
the black
smile of
its shadow
masking its
underside
takes
the heart
into the height
to hover
above the ocean's
plain-of-mountains'
moving quartz.

Charles Tomlinson

NOTES & TOPICS

Collective Guilt ?

IT IS NOT EVERY DAY that debate in the United Nations touches on an issue in the realm of philosophy. This is what happened, however, last December 11th, in the course of debate on the controversial operation whereby Belgian paratroopers had, some two weeks earlier, rescued foreign hostages held at Stanleyville and Paulis by the Congolese rebels under Mr. Christophe Gbenye.

For two days before December 11th, agitated African representatives in the Security Council had been denouncing Belgium and the United States (which had supplied the airplanes for the operation) in such terms that, for the honour of the United Nations and of the countries involved, one wishes that their remarks could be expunged from the record. In the competitive violence of language that had developed among the speakers, racial hatred had at last been invoked and one among the races of mankind had, at least by implication, been collectively indicted for something like moral turpitude.

After two days of this, Foreign Minister Paul-Henri Spaak of Belgium made his response in a long and moving address that had a quality almost unknown to political oratory since the days of Woodrow Wilson. He said that, so as not to aggravate the racial antagonisms already aroused, he would refrain from detailing the atrocities committed against those whom Mr. Gbenye had held as hostages. Having, however, made even so light a reference to atrocities committed in Africa, he had the grace to follow with a reference to Buchenwald and Auschwitz, the scene of atrocities committed by white men in Europe. Then he said:

My sincere belief is that there is no such thing as a guilty race. My sincere belief is that there is no such thing as a guilty people. My sincere belief is that there are only misguided men and contemptible men. Hitler was a contemptible man. I am sorry to say that Gbenye is a contemptible man.

I cite this passage because it is exceptional in its rejection of the doctrine of collective guilt, a doctrine that has been used to justify massacre and genocide since the day when the population of Sodom was exterminated in retribution for the offences committed by some of its members.

The question whether a race or a nation is

guilty of crimes committed by some of its members is a philosophical question, but one with the greatest practical implications. Although I have referred to Sodom, our own time is rich in examples. It happens not infrequently among us that bewildered Jewish school-children find themselves accused of having crucified Jesus. Under Hitler this kind of thinking led to the slaughter of some six million Jews.

It is the doctrine of collective guilt, above all, that twice in this century has prevented the termination of a world war by the conclusion of a veritable peace. During World War I, Woodrow Wilson had insisted that not the German people but the Kaiser's régime was the enemy. This, however, was too sophisticated a view for popular acceptance. In popular thinking an abstraction was made of the German people as a ravaging monster bent on conquering the world; so that the decent Weimar régime, after it had replaced the Kaiser's régime, was compelled, on behalf of the German nation, to sign an admission of guilt, and to take the punitive consequences.

From the beginning of American participation in World War II, President Roosevelt explicitly attributed the war-guilt to the German people, of which he held Hitler's régime to be simply representative. Consequently, the Atlantic allies gave no encouragement to the movements inside Germany for the overthrow of Hitler's régime; they insisted on the unconditional surrender of the German nation under whatever kind of régime; and they adopted the impracticable post-war objective of keeping Germany prostrate and helpless, under whatever kind of régime, for an indefinite future. It was the insistence on the total elimination of German power that, in turn, made possible the alarming westward expansion of the Russian empire—and this insistence was based on the concept that the Germans, like the Italians and the Japanese, were an "aggressor" people (by contrast with the "peace-loving" peoples of Russia, China, Britain, and the United States).

In a book published in London in 1941, entitled *The Behaviour of Nations*, Morley Roberts wrote: "...we are being told that if Germany discards Hitler all will go well, that the Germans will cease to be Germans, and may safely be admitted as citizens. They are, however, cunning enough in defeat to discard him, while attributing to him tribal acts long meditated." Here was a conception of the Germans that corresponded to Hitler's conception of the Jews. As in the case of Hitler, it led Mr. Roberts to the logical conclusion that, "if the Germans are again overcome, it must be held that the massacre of a whole population is justifiable if no other means can secure an inoffensive nation